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Embroiderers' Guilds of Australia collection

Repository National Museum Australia

Details

This collection of fabric samples, stranded wools and cottons, samplers, seams, design cartoons and transfer material, mounts, needlework equipment, notes and photographs details the process of the making of the Parliament House Embroidery by members of the embroiderers' guilds of all eight States and Territories.??The Parliament House Embroidery was created in a community gesture as a gift to the nation, one of many such initiatives around the time of the Bicentenary of European settlement in Australia. However, the scale of the embroidery was without precedent in Australia and the process of its making could be considered a historic event. The collection documents the extent of research, practice, experimentation and discussion undertaken by the highly skilled and imaginative needlewomen – all of whom were volunteers – as they evaluated materials and explored techniques to best interpret designer Kay Lawrence's painted cartoon. In charting the realisation of the Parliament House Embroidery, and its own concepts of national identity and relationships to land, the collection also provides opportunities for discussions of the art/craft debate, women's creative expression, collaborative and community art, and the nature of volunteering in Australia. The collection is additionally invaluable in documenting the evolution of a traditional craft practice into an art form in twentieth-century Australia.

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