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Hallowe'en: Not Just Tricks And Treats

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Hallowe'en has long been my favourite holiday. The fun that a person can get up to on Hallowe'en far outweighs any sense of enjoyment that I have got from other holiday seasons. Going to Hallowe'en haunts, horror movie festivals, and other spooky events are among the things that I love taking part in this time of year. It doesn't just stop there. I love decorating the interior and exterior of my house for this day. The pleasure I get from Hallowe'en has expanded into more of a lifestyle than just a once-a-year event.

For me, every day is Hallowe'en. I look for the wonder, surprise, whimsy, and delight that I found in Hallowe'en as a child in the everyday situations I now find myself in. Not being afraid of the unusual has helped me enjoy the unexpected and sometimes the grotesque without feeling put off by such things.

Finding beauty in the unexpected takes me on unpredictable journeys in my stitching. While I enjoy working on pieces that have step-by-step instructions, I find more fulfilment out of those where I deviate and create something different. I feel that embracing the spirit of Hallowe'en in my everyday life has helped me look for these less common stitching techniques and left me more open to be willing to explore them and experience them than I may otherwise have been.

Cats and crows being the favourite animals for myself and my partner has also opened my imagination to how these animals interpret the world around them. The inquisitiveness of both these animals has rubbed off on me and helps encourage me to explore any crafting technique that I come across that piques my interest. Being a standard theme in Hallowe'en, cats and crows are a dominant feature in our household decor.

To this end much of my crafting has been centred around Hallowe'en and its themes. My family and friends have also started to



encourage and indulge my love for this celebration by crafting their own Hallowe'en-themed items that they give to me throughout the year. My craft room is decorated and populated by these items, and I would like to share a few with you here.

First is this *Happy Halloween* cross stitch. It was designed by Jody Rice of Satsuma Street and was stitched by me. I chose this pattern because it had both a crow and cat in it. This cross stitch piece was fun to do because of the various fonts and its colourfulness reminded me

of collages that I made while in elementary school. It is stitched on 14-count cream-coloured Aida cloth using cotton embroidery floss. The cord was worked with the basic three-strand braid using silken cord and the entire cross stitch is bordered with a black-and-white zigzag cotton print.

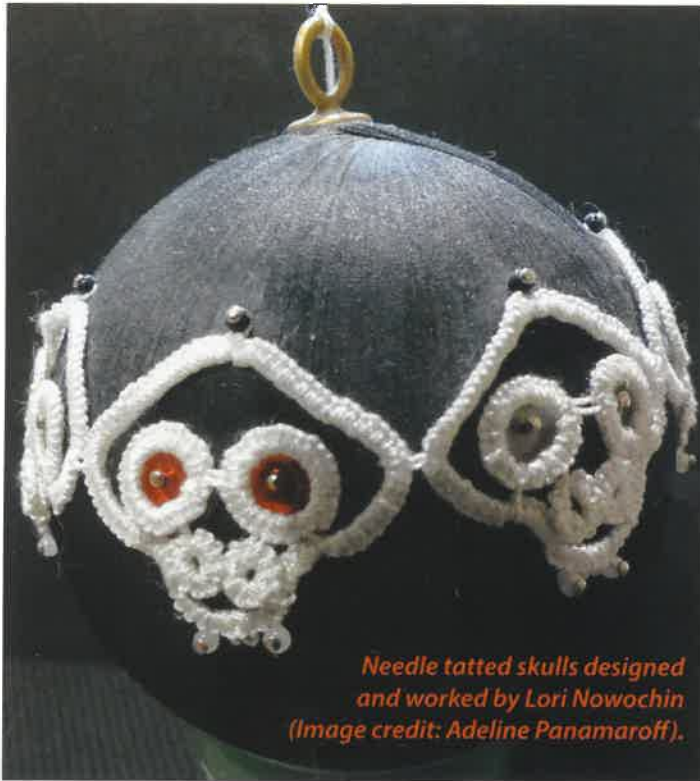


This cross stitch design of Pennywise the clown entitled *Pennywise Ultimate Chibi* was designed by Stephanie Adshead, and stitched by me. Choosing this design goes deep into my love of horror novels, particularly by Stephen King. This latest rendition of Pennywise from the 2017 movie adaptation of the well-known book *It* was designed in a popular Japanese cartoon style called chibi where the head is much larger than the body with the intention of making the character look cute and harmless. This is my first cross stitch in this style and I think it will be the first of a series of cross stitched clowns from horror movies that I wish to do. Stitched on black Aida cloth with black, white, red, and grey shades of embroidery floss, this Pennywise has a cute yet sinister quality.



These two monster friends were a collaborative project between my mother, Mary Ann Slonowski, and me. We decided to work on this project together because I wanted her assistance with the knitting, and she needed help with the faces. She knitted the body, arms, and legs of each doll from scraps of yarn while I assembled the body parts and designed the faces. Created with simple-to-knit squares and four long narrow knitted rectangles for the arms and legs, the

From top: *Happy Halloween* cross stitch, designed by Jody Rice of Satsuma Street; *Pennywise Ultimate Chibi*, designed by Stephanie Adshead; *Monster friends* by Mary Ann Slonowski and Adeline Panamaroff (Image credits: Adeline Panamaroff).



Needle tatted skulls designed and worked by Lori Nowochin (Image credit: Adeline Panamaroff).

construction of these monster dolls is pretty simple. To create some shape in the arms and legs I inserted pipe cleaners into the eyes for the purple and white monster. I then sewed white felt and black pom-poms to cover the pipe cleaners and the mouth was stitched with black embroidery floss. The black and green monster doll has two flat buttons for eyes and pink embroidery floss for the mouth.

Last of all are these needle tatted skulls, designed and worked by Lori Nowochin. These are pinned onto a black Christmas tree ball. Coloured sequins are used for the eyes. It was a gift some Christmases ago because Lori knows my preference for Hallowe'en over Christmas. It adorns our black and orange Christmas tree every year as the ornament of honour.

Incorporating Hallowe'en-themed print fabric into pieced cloth bags, quilts, everyday wear, backpacks, and other items that I use throughout the year has become common practice for me. Having something around that either I created or was made and presented to me that celebrates Hallowe'en helps lift my spirits (no pun intended) when I get the winter blues. Hallowe'en reminds me to seek the small hidden joys that can be found all around if I look hard enough. Stitching with Hallowe'en motifs, even when out of season, is often a good conversation starter with members of the Edmonton Needlecraft Guild who tend to focus more on the Christmas season when they do any sort of holiday stitching.

On the whole, keeping Hallowe'en in my heart has helped me both spiritually and socially.

Dates to remember

2021

- September 1 1st deadline for Memorial Fund applications
- September 1 Registration opens for the annual seminar
- October 31 Eleanor Thomas Youth Award application forms due
- November 1 Seminar Grant application forms due
- November 1 Seminar Class Lottery
- November 10 Submissions due for *Embroidery Canada* (Spring 2022)
Theme: Blue

2022

- February 1 Seminar Group Project Intent to Submit notices due
- March 1 2nd deadline for Memorial Fund applications
- March 31 EAC/ACB Service Pin Nomination forms due
- April 1 Members' Exhibition entry forms due
- April 1 Original Design Award application forms due
- April 15 Pulled Thread Award application forms due
- April 15 Pauline Glover Educational Grant application forms due
- May 10 Submissions due for *Embroidery Canada* (Fall 2022)
Theme: Stumpwork
- May 16 – 21 Seminar 2022: Hues in Harmony
- May 17 Annual General Meeting, Toronto ON