

# R.E.D. project

## ROOTS OF THE EUROPEAN DESIGN RESEARCH

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# Ricamo

## (Embroidery)

In Italy, the embroidery was born as an expression of Saracen culture. Not surprisingly, the first school of embroidery is based in Palermo and dates back to the early second millennium. It is only in the twelfth century, however, that the activity is spreading across Europe. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were produced the most monumental works of embroidery known, the French, English, German tapestry and, to a lesser extent, the Italian one - not to be confused with the tapestry itself, which is an artistic technique of weaving.

In the meanwhile, the Italian school, was dislodged from the initial oriental taste, it puts its center in Florence and creates true masterpieces in various techniques, different from the tapestry. In Florence was active Raffaellino del Garbo, but the workshop with more orders was that of nuns, the Murate, on via Ghibellina, which provided the vestments for the more solemn occasions. In the fifteenth the biggest committed was made by the Baptistery, between 1466 and 1480. Were embroidered copes, chasubles dalmatics on which was reported the 26 scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist, by Paolo da Verona, Coppino di Giovanni da Malines, Piero da Venezia and other designs by Antonio Pollaiuolo. In 1477 approximately it was made by Francesco Malocchi the frontal offered in Assisi by Pope Sixtus IV, with figures of Antonio Pollaiuolo.

In Milan, the mid-century, Filippo Maria Visconti called to his court Florentines and Venetians artists to work with him, so the style of Florentine and Venetian met in arabesque decorations of oriental taste. Examples include the frontal of Varese, in 1491, and the one in Santa Maria delle Grazie. It also develops the white embroidery, the one with counted thread and reticello which will then give rise to the classic needle lace and filet lace.

A first classification of the various types of embroidery pattern may be the following:

Embroidery design;

Counted thread embroidery;

Embroidery reported.

The base points of the embroidery are many and require constant confirmation in images.

### **Embroidery design**

The preparatory phase foresees the preparation and the choice of a design scheme, to accurately reproduce on the fabric (traced in pencil) and to paint with variously colored or precious threads.

If there is no use of colored threads, we speak of "white on white" embroidery, or tone-on-tone, and it's used for personalized clothing, underwear and bedding.

### **Counted thread embroidery**

The counted thread embroidery provides the use of woven fabrics quite wide and regular as to be able to count the threads in weaving, so as to allow the execution of embroidery from the points of uniform size. The texture is smooth when 1 square centimeter of tissue contains the same number of wires, both for the plot that for the warp. A linen 10x10, has ten threads per square centimeter (very large plot), a linen 22x22 (thick texture) contains twenty-two threads per square centimeter. The drawing is not reported on the fabric. Embroidering directly onto the fabric by counting the warp threads and weft threads that must be covered or left exposed. "Puntocroce", "small point", "squared point", the "royal point", the "points in screen"

(or ajourés) and “upholstery points” belong to this genus. Various associated together make up the points counted thread embroidery styles ornamental elegant, refined and very old; the best known are the point Assisi, the “ancient point”, the “Hardanger”; but the literature we have, illustrates many others in all cultures, Nordic, Baltic, Eastern European and Middle Eastern. Usually they use the “ancient point” points, Goblin, “Half a point”, “cross stitch”.

It falls into the same category even embroidery for the upholstery, which uses the repetition of geometric patterns. In these styles usually the drawings are composed of modules of limited size and is the embroiderer that decides their arrangement and the repetition of the various designs on the fabric. As is intuitive, the fabric, the design, its size, the yarn must be chosen in harmony with each other and agree on brightness, strength, grace; all because of the destination of the finished work.

In the technique “a giorno” you have to remove from the fabric two or more contiguous wires in order to obtain a line of only warp or only weft, which is then finished with small points along the edges. It is frequent the use of this particular technique, even in applications of lace as an insert or as a finish of a head. You can use “simple à jour “ or “à jour compounds” among which the most classic and the most frequent is the “Gigliuccio” completed the “square point”.

### Embroidery reported

They are part of the embroidery reported that works, although falling as drawing in the first two categories, can not be transposed in pencil because of the particular material that is to be used.

For example for embroidery on velvet or silk there are special ways of reporting the design, but almost always prefer to work directly with the needle, without the prior design on fabric, with the only visual reference to the original painting that can be reduced to a mere suggestion. The same happened with gold embroidery, being the yarn very difficult to manage and so precious that it can not certainly be wasted.

Today the golden threads are in fact only yarn just a little more rigid than others, the technique used is that of the embroidery design.

