

Does Stitching Benefit Mental Wellbeing?

Student Number : 1908267

Course Name: Surface Pattern & Textiles

Word Count: 4575

Supervisor: Cath Hammerton

Throughout the course of history, arts and crafts have played a crucial role in enhancing and nurturing psychological well-being. Engaging in creative pursuits, such as designing and creating art, has been found to have numerous positive effects on mental health. These effects include stress reduction, emotional expression, and cognitive improvement. Among the various art forms, stitching has consistently stood out as a revered craft that not only serves as a medium for creative expression but also as a therapeutic practice. The purpose of this paper is to explore the historical and contemporary significance of stitching in relation to mental Wellness. By examining the evolution of stitching practices, we can discern that this craft is not merely limited to adorning fabrics; rather, it has emerged as a powerful means of healing and personal growth. Tracing its journey from ancient traditions to its modern applications provides valuable insights into the changing perceptions and therapeutic efficacy of stitching techniques across different cultures and time periods. The transition from the historical to contemporary use of stitching unveils a profound connection between this craft and mental well-being, a connection worth exploring in an academic arena.

This paper undertakes an in-depth exploration of the therapeutic benefits of stitching, tracing its historical journey and examining its present-day implications for mental wellness. By analysing the origins and cultural significance of stitching, as well as its role during times of conflict, this essay aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the therapeutic potential that stitching holds now and in the past. Through the inclusion of case studies and an examination of various stitching techniques, we highlight the diverse ways in which stitching enhances mental health. Additionally, this essay will explore the integration of stitching in current mental health approaches, its role in collective healing, and conclude with a discussion on the enduring significance of stitching in promoting mental wellness. Overall, this paper seeks to shed light on the rich tapestry of therapeutic benefits that stitching offers, transcending both time and cultures.

Section 1: The history of stitch and wellbeing

The act of stitching has a rich history that dates back to ancient times, fulfilling both utilitarian and therapeutic purposes. Initially, needlework was primarily undertaken for practical reasons such as crafting clothing and textiles essential for survival. Over time, however, stitching evolved beyond its mere physical aspect. In societies like Ancient Egypt and Ancient China, it began to incorporate symbolic elements connected to spiritual and emotional healing (Betsworth, 2015). For instance, embroidery, with its use of specific colours, patterns, and motifs, was believed to bring protection, good fortune, and overall well-being to individuals (Pöhlmann, 2014). The earliest evidence of stitching can be traced back to prehistoric times when our ancestors used animal sinews and bones as rudimentary needles and

threads. As civilizations evolved, so did the techniques and materials used for stitching. The Ancient Egyptians were known for their intricate embroidery work on linen garments, while the Greeks and Romans introduced more advanced sewing techniques such as darning and quilting. The art of stitching, often seen by many as a woman's craft, involves using a needle and thread to create intricate designs on fabric. This skill has been passed down through generations, primarily taught to women. During this time stitching was often seen as a domestic craft, a feminine role and chore of the household. In medieval Europe, stitchwork became an essential skill for women who created elaborate tapestries depicting historical events. During this period in time, Europeans who were wealthier, would employ seamstresses and tailors to repair and make their own personal clothes. Sewing was mainly a woman's occupation and all sewing before the 19th century tended to be for a practical use such as repairs. "Clothing in this time was expensive so women had the important job of extending the longevity and the durability of these items of clothing" (Betsworth, 2015). Making clothes from scratch was long and tedious which meant that women were able to barter their expertise in particular skills, with one another. Decorative needlework such as embroidery was a highly valued skill at the time and was then being practised as a hobby to help individuals mental health also. (Hot Pink Haberdashery, 2018).

From the Middle Ages up until the 17th century, sewing tools such as needles, pins and pincushions were included in the trousseaus of many European brides, progressing the knowledge and the availability of stitch. From the delicate embroidery from ancient civilizations to the intricate lacework that was created in the Renaissance period, the art of stitch has been associated with mainly women through these ages, their homes, and their role as caretakers. Even today a handmade piece of clothing made by a mother is considered precious and sentimental, filled with love and care. Stitch has had many uses over time however its benefit to mental health and wellbeing has always been understood. Even though stitch is historically seen as a woman's hobby there are many instances that men have used this art form as a way of coping with their mental health and surroundings. Since ancient times, sailors of all kinds needed to have the skill of stitch, as they relied on meticulously stitched sails, ropes, and clothing to embark on lengthy voyages and trade expeditions (*Embroidering the Truth: Sailors and the Art of the Sea*, 2023)

From the Vikings' intricate sail stitching techniques that were all hand made by the crew of up to 30 men, to the British Navy's dexterity in canvas mending, history provides ample evidence of the intellectual prowess and the high level of stitch needed in these times. During the 1800s sailors in the war used to pass their time at sea by creating and producing "Woolies" or a string picture (Sothbys – 2023)

As seen in figure one, these embroidered pieces were usually of ships, flags, landscapes or symbols. Sailors used to create these tactile pieces of art as a way to

keep their minds sharp and calm and their fingers nimble through the countless cold and windy nights they experienced.



Fig.1: *English School*

Historically, stitching has helped varying demographics in a range of circumstances, overcome or ease psychological traumas for many reasons. During the First world war, veterans of the UK, Australia and New Zealand practiced needlework as a form of therapy for their experiences of shell shock during their time served. Soldiers in the 1910s used to call the art of embroidery “fancy work” and the subject matter ranged from rural landscapes, flags, or sometimes just images of everyday objects (Crewel Work - 2023). They were usually created as decorative pieces for their parents or sweethearts back home as you can see in figure two. Soldiers at the time found such solace and mindfulness in practising embroidery that an entire organisation was then set up to help disabled veterans return to the workforce by producing domestic and luxury textiles for sometimes high-end companies (Embroidering the Truth 2023)



Fig.2 - *British soldiers sewing for the Syrian refugees (1917)*

According to (Desai, 2019) During this time in history, stitching was a sought-after as a coping mechanism during periods of conflict and distress. In times of war and societal upheaval, it offered individuals a sense of stability and psychological refuge. An illustrative example can be found in World War I, where soldiers in the midst of combat turned to embroidery as a means to combat stress and anxiety (Desai, 2019). This act of stitching served both as a distraction and a therapeutic outlet, allowing soldiers to channel their emotions into a creative endeavour. Similarly, in concentration camps during World War II, stitching played a similar role, offering solace and hope amidst unimaginable suffering. The Disabled Soldiers' Embroidery Industry was in operation between 1918 and 1955 to help with these issues (Roehr, 2017).



Fig 3- The Disabled Soldiers' Embroidery label (1918)

The Disabled Soldiers' Embroidery Industry acted as a form of rehabilitation for men who were wounded or permanently effected by the second World War. These men suffered a range of ailments mental and physical, through the art of stitching many men finally found peace and came to terms with their current circumstances. This organisation helped many men to find jobs within this field after the war was over.

“The problem of work for disabled soldiers is always exercising the minds of people; and thanks to a variety of efforts, suitable employment has been found for many men whose wounds seemed at first likely to prove a permanent barrier to their usefulness. Even the blind and the limbless have been found occupation and trade.” (Ernest The Siger - 2023)

The historical foundations of stitching as therapy have laid the groundwork for contemporary approaches to mental wellness. In the early 20th century, the rise of occupational therapy acknowledged the therapeutic benefits of engaging in crafts such as stitching (Malchiodi, 2007). Stitching was integrated into structured therapeutic interventions as a means of promoting physical and mental well-being. This recognition of stitching's potential for healing led to the development of therapeutic models that combined creative expression with psychological support, such as art therapy and expressive arts therapy (Kossak, 2015).

Section 2: How stitching is helping today

In the past, stitching was often seen as a woman's domestic chore or a means of creating practical items for the household (Gipson F, 2022). However, in recent years, it has evolved into an art form that allows people to express themselves in a different way and to showcase their handmade pieces. From delicate embroidery to bold tapestries, artists are now pushing boundaries and redefining what it means to stitch. One reason for this resurgence in stitching is its therapeutic and mental health benefits. “Sewing can be almost meditative. You concentrate on what you're making, and the process of your construction...your focus is solely on the activity of stitching” (Schreuders, 2020, p.).

Contemporary society is fast-paced, filled with technology and constant distractions, with many people finding solace in the rhythmic motion of needle and thread. Stitching allows them to slow down, focus on the present moment, and create something beautiful with their own hands. Mindfulness is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2023) as “the practice of being aware of your body, mind and feelings in the present moment, thought to create a feeling of calm”. The calm that comes from practising mindfulness is said to have numerous benefits to mental health and along with drawing and colouring in, needlework is brilliant for promoting and achieving it.

The link between mental health and stitching is not a new discovery. Recent years have witnessed a growing recognition of the therapeutic benefits of stitching within the field of mental health. (Crewel Work. (2023)

The integration of stitching in therapeutic settings, such as art therapy programs and clinical counselling, emphasizes its potential as a complementary approach in promoting mental well-being. Through structured activities that involve stitch work, individuals are provided with a safe space to express their emotions, foster self-reflection, and develop coping mechanisms. The tactile nature of stitching adds a sensory component to the therapeutic process, enabling individuals to engage their senses and cultivate mindfulness. The process of creating a tangible object through stitching promotes a sense of achievement and self-efficacy, nurturing feelings of empowerment and fostering a positive self-image, stitching has also been found its place in occupational therapy and cognitive-behavioural interventions as well. Occupational therapists incorporate stitch work into their treatment plans to address various mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and trauma-related disorders.

By engaging in stitching activities, fine motor skills are enhanced, hand-eye coordination is promoted, and overall dexterity is improved, supporting the goals of occupational therapy. Additionally, stitching is utilized as a mindfulness based cognitive behavioural intervention to assist individuals with impulse control and emotional regulation difficulties. Stitching can be seen as a form of meditation that induces a sense of calmness and relaxation. The deliberate and rhythmic movement of the needle and thread has a soothing effect on both the mind and body. This particular aspect of stitching has been shown to significantly reduce stress levels and enhance emotional well-being (Malchiodi, 2007).

Similar to other meditative practices, stitching encourages individuals to let go of intrusive thoughts and find an inner sense of peace (Johnson & Emunah, 2009). Stitching has been recognized as a powerful tool for reducing stress and regulating emotions. By channelling their emotions into a tangible form of expression, individuals experience a profound sense of release and catharsis through stitching (Riley, 2001). The repetitive motion involved in stitching allows individuals to enter a state of deep relaxation, effectively reducing both stress and anxiety levels (Pöhlmann, 2014). The rhythmic and repetitive nature of stitching provides a calming effect on the nervous system, enabling individuals to manage their emotions more effectively and develop healthy coping strategies. The value of stitching in augmenting treatment approaches is now being recognized by modern healthcare professionals.

Stitching is increasingly employed as an adjunctive therapy in a range of mental health settings, including hospitals, clinics, and community centres. Psychologists, social workers, and occupational therapists, among other healthcare professionals, incorporate stitch work into their practices to address a wide range of mental health

issues, such as anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse. Through the utilization of stitching activities, healthcare professionals aim to create a holistic treatment experience that combines creativity, self-expression, and self-care into the therapeutic journey. By incorporating stitch work into their practice, healthcare professionals can provide individuals with a unique avenue for healing and personal growth.

Various case studies have highlighted the positive impact of stitching on mental health. For instance, Malchiodi's study (2007) delved into the use of stitching as an art therapy intervention for individuals diagnosed with depression. The participants reported a significant reduction in depressive symptoms and an overall improvement in their well-being after engaging in stitching activities. Similarly, Roehr's study (2017) found that stitching projects reduced anxiety and promoted relaxation in individuals with high-stress levels. Furthermore, case studies have demonstrated the therapeutic benefits of stitching for individuals with various mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and eating disorders (Betsworth, 2015; Pöhlmann, 2014). Engaging in stitch work has been reported to improve emotional regulation, boost self-esteem, and enhance overall mental health. Through an exploration of the historical journey of stitching as a therapeutic craft, it becomes evident that this practice has persisted through time and cultures, consistently offering mental health benefits. Starting with its origins and initial therapeutic uses, stitching has served as a powerful instrument for healing and personal growth, as noted by Betsworth (2015) and Kossak (2015).

The act of stitching has long been associated with mindfulness, providing individuals with a meditative space to focus on the present moment, as discussed by Desai (2019) and Johnson & Emunah (2009). As we transition to modern times, we witness the enduring significance of stitching in mental wellness. Research increasingly recognizes its positive effects on stress reduction, emotion regulation, and cognitive functioning, as highlighted by Malchiodi (2007) and Riley (2001). Looking ahead, the future of stitching as a therapeutic craft holds great promise. As society continues to evolve, there is a growing recognition of the importance of holistic approaches to mental health, which includes engaging in creative and expressive activities like stitching, according to Prain (2014) and Roehr (2017). Advancements in technology provide exciting possibilities for the future of stitching. Virtual communities and digital platforms offer scalable and accessible avenues for individuals to engage in stitch work, regardless of physical limitations or geographical location, as noted by Betsworth (2015). Moreover, virtual reality and augmented reality offer immersive experiences that can enhance the therapeutic potential of stitching, as proposed by Desai (2019). Technological advancements and virtual communities can play a crucial role in advancing the therapeutic dimension of stitching. Through digital platforms and social media, individuals can connect with like-minded individuals, form virtual communities, and share their stitching projects and experiences, as suggested by Pöhlmann (2014) and Robertson & McDaniel (2018). Online forums

and communities dedicated to stitching provide spaces for individuals to exchange ideas, seek support, and gain inspiration, as mentioned by Prain (2014) and Roehr (2017). Technology can enhance the educational aspect of stitching by offering online tutorials, workshops, and masterclasses. Accessible learning platforms provide individuals with the opportunity to acquire new stitch techniques and enhance their stitching skills, as discussed by Betsworth (2015).

Section 3:

What Organisations helping now?

Stitching has already become a platform for social activism online and within many communities all around the world. Many individuals are using this traditional craft as a medium to address important issues such as gender equality or environmental sustainability. Through artwork many people raise awareness and spark conversations about these pressing topics. Furthermore, technology has played a significant role in transforming stitch into a contemporary art form. With access to online platforms and digital tools, artists can now connect with like-minded individuals from all over the world. They can share ideas, learn new techniques, and gain inspiration from diverse cultures. Through this lens, the art of stitch takes on a new meaning—one that challenges the notion that femininity equates to weakness or inferiority. Instead, it becomes a powerful tool for self-expression, socio-political and storytelling (Maddock, 2018).

Historically, stitching has predominantly been associated with femininity and domesticity, leading to its devaluation as a skill altogether. However, this perception fails to acknowledge the immense talent and creativity required for this craft. Women who stitch often possess exceptional attention to detail, patience, and artistic qualities that are needed and should be celebrated rather than dismissed. Stitching allows women to tell their stories in a way that is unique to them. Through needle and thread, they can create intricate designs that reflect their experiences and emotions. The Red Dress project, conceived by British artist Kirstie Macleod, provides an artistic platform for women all around the world.

The Red Dress is an ongoing collaborative embroidery project that was started in 2009 and in that time the Red Dress has been sent across the world; “Constructed out of 87 pieces of burgundy silk dupion, the garment has been worked on by 367 female artists from 51 countries” (Kirstie Macleod - 2023).

Many of these women are vulnerable and currently live in poverty, with the dress becoming a way to tell their personal stories through the art of embroidery. This dress has become more than a few pieces of cloth, it has become a voice for these

women to send a message to the rest of the world. Through working on the Red Dress project many of these talented women have gained the recognition they deserve and found the courage to start their own businesses, speaking up about the problems that surrounded them.

Initially the project sought to generate a dialogue of identity through embroidery, uniting people around the world without borders. However, over the 14 years the dress has also become a platform for self-expression and an opportunity for voices to be amplified and heard (Kristie Macleod - 2023). This dress has become a visual message from multiple women across the entire world living in unbearable circumstances. Through the power of stitch they have made their message heard.



Fig.4: Red Dress Project (2020)

This form of art no longer challenges the notion that women's work is limited to just women; stitching is for everyone. Textile artists and stitchers can now showcase their creativity and talent on an equal footing with other forms of artistic expression. *The Stitching Together* exhibition is a safe space for women to showcase their talents and creativity. *Stitching Together* is made up of multiple different charity groups which provides a welcoming space for refugee and asylum-seeking women in the Bristol area to be creative and make beautiful and useful textile-based art, clothes, and homewares, while gaining confidence and making new friends. (Arnolfini- 2023). These groups offer women a space to feel safe and appreciated as stitchwork requires patience, attention to detail, and the ability to envision a finished product; through this slow and meticulous process, a contemplative and introspective mindset can be cultivated. The art of stitch offers a therapeutic outlet as these women can translate their thoughts and emotions into a tangible form, enabling them to express themselves visually and symbolically.

“*Stitching Together – An Exhibition* is created by [Bridges for Communities](#) and Arnolfini to celebrate and share the unique partnership that has developed over the

last three years, drawing out the special moments and projects that have helped the partnership to grow” (Arnoflini- 2023).

The art of stitch, whether it be knitting, embroidery, or sewing, has been found to have numerous positive impacts on mental health and well-being. Research has shown that engaging in stitching activities can reduce stress and anxiety levels, promote relaxation, and improve overall mood. “The repetitive nature of stitching helps to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for calming the body and promoting relaxation” (Kossak, 2015).



Figure 5: Stitches (1999)

Engaging in stitching activities, such as the *Stitches Doll Project*, not only allows individuals to express themselves creatively but also provides a therapeutic outlet for confronting personal challenges and illness. *The Stitches Doll Project* is a project founded by Kathleen Gerus in 1999, created to help and raise awareness for HIV across her community. This group has created a safe space for women to go and create and to have a community of other like-minded people to talk to about their problems. They cover serious topics that women face that are constantly overlooked or forgotten about. Not only does this group give these people a creative space but always a place to voice their experiences. Through the process of designing and creating these dolls at workshops that are held for the group, individuals can explore their cultural and personal views of illnesses like HIV/AIDS and redefine their identity as persons living with the condition (Lewis & Gerus-Darbison, 2014). The therapeutic benefits of stitching are not limited to the individual, but also extend to the community. The communal nature of stitching, especially in projects like the *Stitches Doll Project*, creates a sense of belonging and support. This fosters social connections and bonding, which can combat feelings of isolation and loneliness. By sharing their stories and experiences through stitching, individuals can validate their emotions, find new perspectives, and educate others about their struggles. Through its mindfulness and meditative aspects, stitching nurtures present-moment

awareness and provides a serene and rejuvenating experience for anyone at any age. By aiding in stress reduction and emotion regulation, stitching equips individuals with effective tools for managing their emotional well-being, which is perfect for people with mental health issues and community led groups aiding those people. Furthermore, through cognitive engagement, stitching enhances hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, and critical thinking abilities. Numerous case studies and ongoing community groups have demonstrated the positive impact of stitching on mental health, underscoring its potential to alleviate symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions.

Conclusion:

Throughout this essay, we have explored both the historical and contemporary significance of stitching in promoting mental wellness. Starting with an acknowledgment of the long-standing importance of arts and crafts for psychological well-being, we have specifically focused on unraveling the vast therapeutic potential that stitching holds. Our investigation has led us through the transition from the craft's historical applications to its modern-day implications, allowing us to comprehend the profound impact it has had on personal growth and healing from the soldiers of World War 1 to people suffering from mental illness today. Additionally, we have provided a clear definition and scope of mental wellness concerning stitching, illuminating its various dimensions and the specific avenues through which this innovative craft enhances individual well-being. In the subsequent sections, we have delved deep into the psychological benefits that stitching has to offer, paying particular attention to its mindfulness and meditative aspects, its crucial role in stress reduction and emotion regulation, as well as its implications for cognitive function. Through the presentation of case studies, we have provided concrete evidence of the significant improvements in mental health that can be achieved through the practice of stitching. We have also examined the process of creating art through stitching and its profound effects on mental well-being. By meticulously analysing the intricate mechanisms through which stitch work can promote healing, we as a society have developed a comprehensive understanding of the therapeutic potential this craft holds. Placing stitching within the context of modern mental health approaches, we have examined its integration in therapeutic settings, where it is effectively employed as part of occupational therapy and cognitive-behavioural interventions. We have also discussed how healthcare professionals in today's world are skilfully utilizing stitching to augment treatment. Furthermore, we have dedicated time to exploring the role of community stitch projects in fostering social support and collective healing. By shining a light on their potential to strengthen mental wellness at a communal level, we have emphasized the profound impact that collaborative art projects, such as The Red Dress Project and the Stitching Dolls Project which are centered around stitching, can have on community health, showcasing the powerful role this craft plays in promoting collective well-being.

As we deeply reflect on the vast tapestry of therapeutic benefits that stitching offers, it becomes evident that this craft possesses undeniable value in the realm of mental health. By seamlessly merging creativity, mindfulness, and emotional expression, stitching provides individuals with a unique means to improve their psychological well-being. The overwhelmingly positive effects that stitching has on stress reduction, emotion regulation, and cognitive functioning find support not only in historical accounts but also in contemporary research.

Stitching holds immense societal relevance through its ability to foster social connections and contribute to collective healing. Community stitch projects have time and again demonstrated their extraordinary capacity to create a profound sense of belonging and unyielding support, thereby playing a pivotal role in promoting mental wellness not just at an

individual level, but also at a communal scale. Engaging in collaborative art projects involving stitching allows individuals to experience a shared sense of purpose and accomplishment, thereby contributing to the fortitude and resilience of the entire community. Furthermore, as we stand witness to the rapidly evolving world of technology, the future of

stitching as a therapeutic craft is brimming with infinite possibilities. Virtual communities and the countless advancements in digital platforms offer new avenues for engaging in stitch work, potentially expanding access to the profound mental health benefits it offers. By seamlessly integrating technology into stitching practices, we can bridge geographical gaps, connect individuals with shared interests, and pave the way for enhanced therapeutic experiences. In conclusion, stitching represents an enduring testament to the everlasting significance of art and craft in promoting mental wellness. Its historical journey and contemporary implications interweave to form a compelling narrative of its extraordinary therapeutic benefits.

From researching and looking back on what I have found out about the art of stitch and its true healing properties I sense that stitch is going to keep growing amongst the younger generations either as an art form or as a way to aid in struggles of daily life. From my own personal perspective and from my own life stitching and the use of my hands has helped me tremendously with my anxiety and my overactive brain, I find the soothing repetitive motions and the tactility of the materials very calming and meditative. I By wholeheartedly embracing the mental wellness that stitching encompasses, we come to realise that it possesses the enormous potential to significantly improve individual well-being and fortify communities.

Bibliography

Books-

Betsworth, L. (2015). *Sewing, Fighting and Writing: Radical Practices in Work, Culture and Politics*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Desai, C. K. (2019). *Crafting Health: The Therapeutic Benefits of Textile Arts*. Health & Place Publishing.

Gipson F (2022). *Women's Work: From feminine arts to feminist art*. London: Francis Lincoln

Johnson, D. R. & Emunah, R. (2009). *Current Approaches in Drama Therapy*. Charles Thomas Publisher.

Joseph McBrinn, (2018) 'The work of masculine fingers': the Disabled Soldiers' Embroidery Industry, 1918–1955, *Journal of Design History*

Kossak, M. S. (2015). *Therapeutic Attunement: A Transpersonal View of Expressive Arts Therapy*. The Key Publishing House.

Malchiodi, C. A. (2007). *The Art Therapy Sourcebook*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Pöhlmann, C. (2014). *Stitching Stories: The Art of Embroidery and Storytelling*. Stitch Press.

Riley, J. (2001). *The Healing Power of the Needle: The Social and Psychological Aspects*

Roehr, S. (2017). *Stitch Consciousness: An Inquiry into the Benefits of Handcraft*.

Wellesley-Smith, C. (2021). *Resilient stitch : wellbeing and connection in textile art*. London: Batsford.

Online Sources-

Arnoflini (2023). *Stitching Together - An Exhibition*. [online] Arnoflini. Available at: <https://arnoflini.org.uk/whatson/stitchingtogether/>

Cambridge Dictionary (2023) *Mindfulness*. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mindfulness> (Accessed: 1 December 2023)

Crewel Work. (2023) <https://www.crewelwork.com/blogs/news/world-mental-health-day-embroidery-as-therapy> [Accessed 13 November 2023]

Ernest The Siger.(2023). *Ernest Thesiger and the Disabled Soldiers' Embroidery Industry*. Available at: http://www.ernestthesiger.org/Ernest_Thesiger/Disabled_Soldiers_Embroidery_Industry.html. [Accessed 5 Dec]

Gerus-Darbison, K. (n.d.). *Stitches Doll Project*. [online] www.stitchesdollproject.org. Available at: <http://www.stitchesdollproject.org/about.htm> [Accessed 4 December. 2023].

Hot Pink Haberdashery. (2018). *The History of Sewing*. Available at: <https://hotpinkhaberdashery.com/blogs/news/the-history-of-sewing>. [Accessed 6 December 2023]

Kristie Macleod (2023) Available at: <https://reddressembroidery.com> [Accessed 12 November 2023]

Sothbys- <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2021/important-america/sailors-woolwork-picture-a-woolie-of-a-royal-navy>. [Accessed 23 November 2023]

Stitching Together . (n.d.). *Stitching Together – Bridges For Communities*. [online] Available at: <https://www.bridgesforcommunities.com/programmes>. [Accessed 20 November, 2023]

Turnbell, P. (n.d.). *World Mental Health Day - Embroidery as Therapy*. [online] The Crewel Work Company. Available at: <https://www.crewelwork.com/blogs/news/world-mental-health-day-embroidery-as-therapy>. [Accessed 16 November]

Waterford Treasures (2023). *Embroidering the Truth: Sailors and the Art of the Sea*. Waterford Treasures. Available at: <https://www.waterfordtreasures.com/embroidering-the-truth-sailors-and-the-art-of-the-sea/> [Accessed 4 December. 2023].

List of Illustrations -

Figure 1: Unknown (1860) *English School* [embroidery]. Available at: (<https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2021/important-america/sailors-woolwork-picture-a-woolie-of-a-royal-navy>)

Figure 2: Unknown (1917) Photograph. (Available at:
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017672050/>)

Figure 3: Unknown (1910) An Embroidered tag. Available at (http://www.ernestthesiger.org/Ernest_Thesiger/Disabled_Soldiers_Embroidery_Industry.html)

Figure 4 The Red Dress (2020) Exhibiting the Red Dress project in Glastonbury
Available at: <https://reddressembroidery.com>

Figure 5: Stitches (1999) Available at : <https://www.thebody.com/article/the-stitches-doll-project>