



a f t e r  
b l u e  
w o r k

Recently, closer to now, I bought a small cloth the size of a table placemat at the Beachport second-hand shop inside the museum. Crepe silk is stencil-printed in blocks of colour. The image/pattern is doubled on the same side and appears on both front and back of the cloth. The design includes two indigo birds in wire cages, two indigo circles (each circle has another inside), two green arch bridges, and several brown, blue, and taupe maple leaves, twice. The leaves appear again, in cobalt blue, amongst two lines that border the cloth. What I didn't understand before I read the article in *Piecework* is how the hem came to be stitched on the right side of the work. I'd thought it was a deliberate mistake.

Motifs were used repeatedly—horses, fish, monkeys, birds, stone bridges, apple blossoms, peaches, chrysanthemums—as wish or hope, as prayer, chant, or incantation. Remnants of this kind of stitching have been dated to the first century A.D. which is also the time of the Tang Cháo Dynasty.

*Blue-and-white embroidery have been found in many provinces including: 1. Hebei (Hopeh) 2. Shaanxi (Shensi) 3. Sichuan (Szechwan) 4. Hunan 5. Guizhou (Kweichow) 6. Yunnan.*

The names of provinces have been anglicised from Chinese characters in various translations with the unbracketed (or the bracketed) considered closer to the pronunciation of the characters. This means the characters are symbolic and have to be learned.

*In small village shops, locally grown cotton was woven into cloth 12 to 25 inches (30.5 to 63.5 cm) wide. Embroidery thread was hand-twisted and dyed with indigo from the plant *Indigofera tinctoria*. Cross stitch was the most common stitch, but occasionally double-running stitch (called *erg mien ti*, 'with two faces,' because the stitch was identical on both sides of the cloth) was used. The hems were turned to the front of the cloth, where they served as another border.*

I felt a clearing in my mind / As if my brain had split; / I tried to match it, seam by seam, / But could not make them fit. // The thought behind I strove to join / Unto the thought before, / But sequence unravelled out of reach / Like balls upon a floor. —Emily Dickinson

Among the various traces humans leave behind, some are products with entirely different ends from any conversation with memory: a clay pot for example, is not a tool made to transmit memory. But it does so, spontaneously nevertheless, which is why archeologists consult it in their work... —Bernard Stiegler

slight books  
2014 v.2  
ohlogic@gmail.com

January 2014 for  
#5 InstitcheS  
Esther Gallery Beachport

Teri Hoskin  
After blue work



Victorian gold-rush, he'd anglicised his name: Xu to Shuey. Xu could be the wrong way to write the name phonetically. He is buried in the town called Bright, a little place on the Great Alpine Road in Victoria.

#### Works

Untitled, linen thread on organ bellows cloth  
Untitled, cyanotype on canvas, gold funeral paper, both 1988  
with ...

Blue cross stitch embroidery by Beverley Hoskin  
and tapestry stitched by Mandy Hoskin

#### References

Emily Dickinson, 'The lost thought' in *Emily Dickinson, Three Series Complete*, Project Gutenberg e-book.

Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 3, 2011, p131.

Sue Lenthe, 'The blue and white embroidery of China,' *Piecework* vol. 10, no. 4 (2012): 39-40.

English name Guangzhou. Grandma's grandfather came for the  
migrant from Canton, the mega city now returned to its pre-  
me. Her mother's mother (Nana) was the daughter of a Chinese  
My mother embroidered a willow pattern in cross stitch as a gift to  
coloured satin taken from a skirt lining.  
completed and stitched up as a firm cushion backed with salmon-  
the embroidery 'kit' (four sisters and a visitor) that came back  
memory returns via my sister, with the occasional exception like  
Mostly I am annoyed that the stuff I've attempted to remove from  
every now and then and usually triggered by moving house.  
to get rid of a lot of stuff, something I'm compelled to do  
skip in the driveway on Floriedale Road, Greenacres. I was keen  
a barely begun tapestry kit was retrieved by my sister from the  
In the spirit of Agnes Varda (*The Gleaners and I, The Vagabond*)  
China to the Japanese tourist trade, to the Beachport thrift shop.  
It seems that blue-work makes time loops from peasant cross-  
stitch, to porcelain, to cloth; from blue to many colours, from rural

Organ bellows cloth is a rubberised fine cotton weave, a cloth with un-cloth like properties. At that time I'd finished binding a lot of books and the left-over thread reached toward the coated fabric like a dark song.

I mention the books because they were on my mind while I made fast loose stitches — The Thing of Writing, the Act(ion) of Writing, the Erasing and the Making of Time, the one-step-at-a-time Time that simultaneously makes space. Careful binding of blank pages, making covers of fabric scraps and found things: none of these actions satisfied my desire to mark those pages with something other than what was already here: to call something up. Words could only stop things dead and I needed things to go on and on. Inside of me was a life and I didn't know him.

*For centuries the peasants of Western (now Central) and Northern China embroidered their white hand-woven cotton cloth with blue cotton thread or (less frequently), blue cloth with white thread.*