

Selwedge

DESIGNER EDGE



HEATHER EVERITT

When Heather Everitt visited an English-museum's butterfly room, her embroidery style took flight. "Instead of the traditional Victorian displays of butterflies impaled with pins, they had a butterfly room with the gorgeous creatures cleverly suspended under Perspex so they looked as if they were flying." And the spirit of their beauty captured Heather's imagination and set in motion her own craft-art collection.

"I see nature's masterpieces and gasp. Making mine live up to that beauty is always nerve-racking," says North Devon artist Heather. But her fabric creations have a splendour all their own, with jewel-coloured fabrics, touchable texture, intricate stitching and glittering beads.

They come in various forms, from beauty and fashion accessories to room decorations. One or two pretty butterflies may alight on your hair or dress, for example, or a whole kaleidoscope of them can fill a corner of a room. Heather produces jewellery pieces, hair adornments, pins for furnishings, wallhangings and framed artworks. And sizes shift and change according to the latest concept. Heather has made a teeny 5cm-wide butterfly alongside more substantial creations, such as her French door panel cover.

Occasionally, she'll turn her attention to flowers, birds and bees, but she's always drawn back to the beauty of the butterfly. "I've had requests to make different types of flowers, from orchids



to daffodils, and animals, including zebras and badgers," she says. "But the variety of winged creatures amazes me – their beauty and fragility, too."

Lots of sketching takes place before Heather can put needle to fabric. Once a pattern is created, she layers her linens, cottons, wools, sheers and silks. "It's fortuitous that there is an insect link to my favourite fabric – silk," she says. The final layer is usually a shot organza to add iridescence. She cuts out sections (reverse appliqué) to reveal the hidden layers within her wing patterns. Edges are neatened with satin stitch, and veins and ridges on the wings and body

are created with free-motion stitching. She uses rayon embroidery threads, including metallic and variegated varieties and adds extra sparkle with tiny beads and micro sequins.

Embroidery has led Heather to exclusive and unusual opportunities – making butterflies for wedding dresses, artworks for shop-window displays, television appearances, pitching to Liberty of London and even to something a little more sacred. "I also make ecclesiastical and masonic banners and furnishings; replicas of old banners and designs for new ones, too. I have to be much more disciplined about this sort of work; the imagery has to be very accurate," she says.

For further information on Heather Everitt Embroidery, to see more artwork images and for purchases, visit www.heatheremb.co.uk and www.etsy.com/shop/Heatheremb. You can also get in touch with Heather via email, mail@heatheremb.co.uk.

– Janai Velez