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# SUSAN HENSEL

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621 Presents

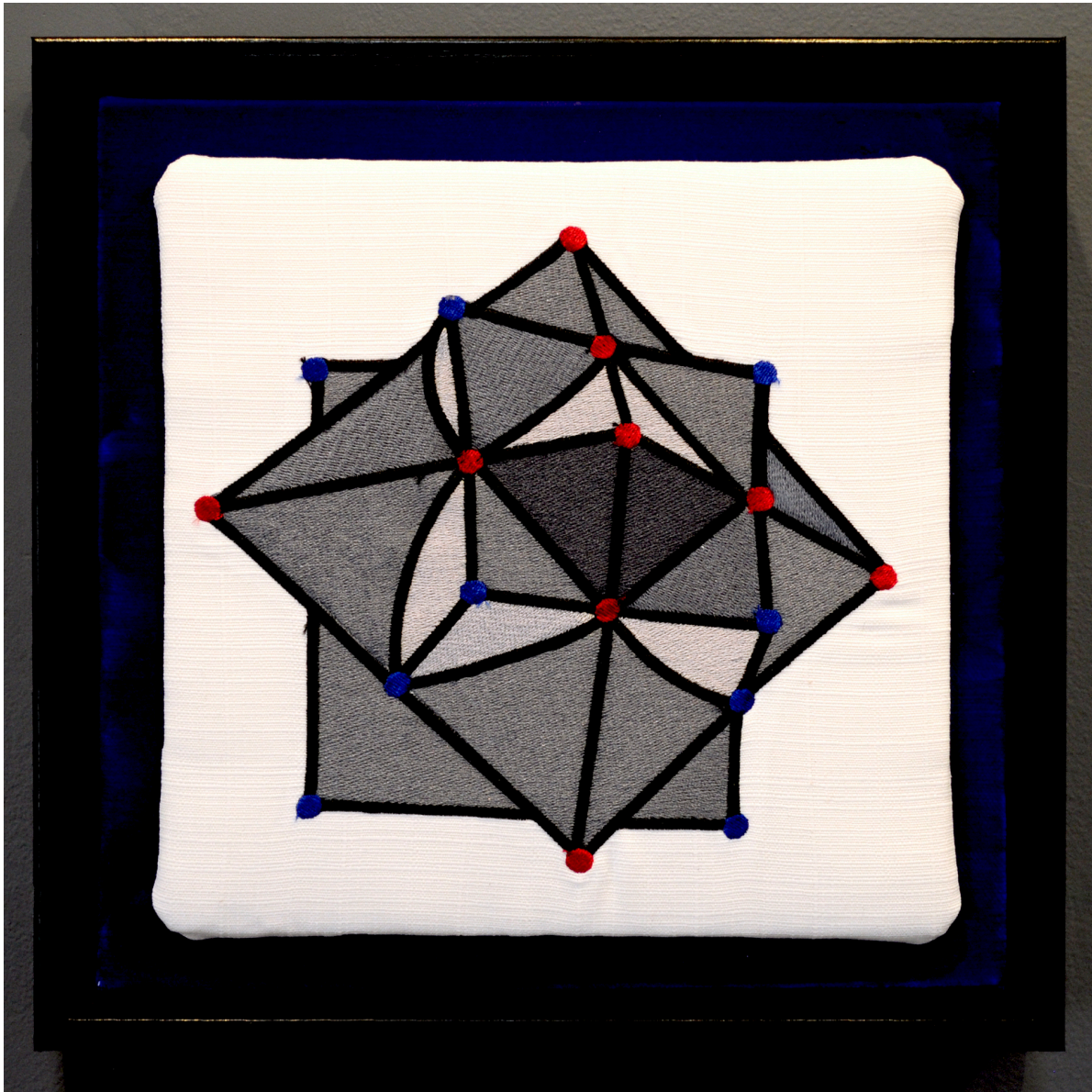
## ABSTRACT STITCH

*an exhibition by Susan Hensel*

Opening Reception | March 5th, 2021

Doors Open at 6:00 PM | Talk Starts at 7:00 PM

Exhibition Dates | 03.05.2021 – 03.26.2021



*Artist Statement:*

A single stitch is made by stretching a thread between two holes. The line formed by it can be loose or tight. It can be thick or thin, depending on the diameter of the thread. It can be long or so short that it barely exists. But, it can never exist as more than a single defined geometric event, a sort of singularity. The combinations of these singularities create planes, lines, forms, and geometrical space.

For several years, starting with the support of a Jerome Foundation Project Grant for Textile Art in 2014, my intense media focus has been on digitizing for machine embroidery. There is an

assumption that the machine dictates the outcome, doing all the work for you. The computer and the embroidery machines are the tools that allow me to produce my vision. To quote Jane McKeating. "Color drips off the needle every bit as richly as that from a brush."

The process is highly technical, using several software packages that can only be described as a non-intuitive cross between Photoshop and Illustrator. Creating digital embroidery is limited by the geometry and the capability of both the machine and the materials. Needle and thread have real dimension and stitches can only be straight, joined together to suggest curves and forms.

Digital embroidery lends itself to hard edge geometry as well as biomorphic form. The combination of high tech with "women's work" provides a delicious contrast of hard/soft, nostalgic/current, objective/non-objective. It also lends itself to modular repetition and re-combinations. Themes can be played out quickly in the computer and then stitched and sampled oh so slowly on the machine; combined with and without mixed media in a wide-ranging exploration of forms in space.

In this chaotic time, digital textiles seem like a way to begin to bring order to the world. Order is, however, always unstable, a glimmer of a hope, cut off by random acts of chance or intent. It is no different in digital embroidery. In the computer, all things seem orderly, put together, and logical... as though the human propensity for chaos did not exist. In the production, chance operates: human error, flawed thread, broken needles, run out bobbins, high humidity, low humidity, fabric popping out of hoops and the panicked phone call from a friend. Repair savvy, canny attention and a spirit of wabi sabi is essential.

#### *Artist Bio:*

Susan Hensel received her BFA from University of Michigan in 1972 with a double major in painting and sculpture and a concentration in ceramics.

With a history, to date, of well over 200 exhibitions, 32 of them solo, twenty garnering awards, Hensel's desire to communicate stories through art continues to be a powerful motivator.

Hensel's artwork is known and collected nationwide, represented in collecting libraries and museums as disparate as the Museum of Modern Art in New York and The Getty Research Institute with major holdings at Minnesota Center for Book Arts , University of Washington, Baylor University and University of Colorado at Boulder. Archives pertaining to her artists books will be available for study at the University of Washington Libraries in Seattle in 2017.

In recent years Hensel has been awarded multiple grants and residencies through the Jerome Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, and Ragdale Foundation.

Hensel's curatorial work began in 2000 in East Lansing, Michigan with the Art Apartment and deepened with ownership of the Susan Hensel Gallery. Hensel has curated over seventy exhibitions of emerging and mid-career artists from all over the United States and Canada.

**for more information visit their website: <https://susanhenselprojects.com/>**

## HOURS

Thursday – Sunday 1PM – 5PM

We are closed the last Thursday through Sunday of every month to re-install for First Friday.