

Embroidered Stories: Interpreting Womens Domestic Needlework from the Italian Diaspora

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EMBROIDERED STORIES

Interpreting Women's
Domestic Needlework
from the Italian Diaspora



Edited by
Edvige Giunta and Joseph Sciorra

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#915836 in Books 2014-07-29Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.21 x 1.00 x 6.14l, .0 #File Name:
162846013X304 pages | File size: 59.Mb

From University Press of Mississippi : Embroidered Stories: Interpreting Womens Domestic Needlework from the Italian Diaspora before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Embroidered Stories: Interpreting Womens Domestic Needlework from the Italian Diaspora:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Embroidered Stories is a wonderful contribution to cultural historyBy cecilia brunazziAn important book on frequently overlooked art and artisanship traditions. A real

contribution to history and specifically to women's history as well as the cultural history of immigrants. Scholarly and well researched, it is also a very good read. I recommend it for anyone interested in needlework. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Lovely collection of stories. By Ms. Ayesha Karim I love this book. It has several memoir pieces from women from the Italian diaspora. Annie's piece was my favorite. I took memoir at NJCU with Edvige Giunta. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Weaving an Enduring Legacy By Maria Terrone Editors Edvige Giunta and Joseph Sciorra have done a masterful job in bringing together poets, scholars, memoirists, fiction writers and visual artists to explore the tradition of needlework (biancheria) that Italian women brought to America. A marker of culture and identity in Southern Italy, the tradition was sometimes met with indifference by New World generations. Ironically and thankfully, this is beginning to change as appreciation for the unique and handmade grows stronger. Through its many voices and beautiful photos, this book powerfully explores the changing meaning of domestic needlework--in the home, the garment industry, and in female identity. Highly recommended.

For Italian immigrants and their descendants, needlework represents a marker of identity, a cultural touchstone as powerful as pasta and Neapolitan music. Out of the artifacts of their memory and imagination, Italian immigrants and their descendants used embroidering, sewing, knitting, and crocheting to help define who they were and who they have become. This book is an interdisciplinary collection of creative work by authors of Italian origin and academic essays. The creative works from thirty-seven contributors include memoir, poetry, and visual arts while the collection as a whole explores a multitude of experiences about and approaches to needlework and immigration from a transnational perspective, spanning the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. At the center of the book, over thirty illustrations represent Italian immigrant women's needlework. The text reveals the many processes by which a simple object, or even the memory of that object, becomes something else through literary, visual, performance, ethnographic, or critical reimagining. While primarily concerned with interpretations of needlework rather than the needlework itself, the editors and contributors to *Embroidered Stories* remain mindful of its history and its associated cultural values, which Italian immigrants brought with them to the United States, Canada, Australia, and Argentina and passed on to their descendants.

Embroidered Stories is a glorious collection of stories by great Italian American writers with a firsthand interest, passion, and knowledge of the art created by our foremothers with a needle and thread. These artisans, the women in our families, created magnificent art on fabric, whether it was a sampler of the alphabet, delicate lace, colorful cutwork, shimmering beadwork, or the detail work on sumptuous gowns and costumes. To this day, somewhere buried deep in an attic trunk or a drawer in a spare bedroom, you will find examples of their artistry. You may find a simple nightgown with an inlaid lace placket, or a wedding gown with delicate seed pearls set in gold leaves sewn by hand and when you do, you will know the story behind the craft. This collection is a treasure of all that is sacred and dear, the unsung women in our lives who made the world more beautiful with their talents. Adriana Trigiani, author of *The Shoemaker's Wife* *Embroidered Stories* assembles the evocative words of poets, artists, art historians, historians and folklorists, as they reflect on and analyze needlework's significance within and beyond the homeland of the Italian diaspora. For, although this art and craft was to some extent lost as second and later generations of immigrant women went on to other endeavors (including work in textile and garment industries), the objects and the narratives surrounding them survived and are being rediscovered. Replete with vivid memories of mothers and grandmothers' skills and aesthetic sensibilities, and illustrated with well-chosen photographs, this book is testimony to the historical weight and richness of Italian women's needlework. Jane Schneider, professor emerita, PhD program in anthropology, City University of New York About the Author Edvige Giunta, Teaneck, New Jersey, is professor of English at New Jersey City University. She is the author of *Writing with an Accent: Contemporary Italian American Women Authors* and coeditor of *Teaching Italian American Literature, Film, and Popular Culture* and *The Milk of Almonds: Italian American Women Writers on Food and Culture*. Joseph Sciorra, Brooklyn, New York, is the associate director for academic and cultural programs at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College. He is editor of the journal *Italian American* and the book *Italian Folk: Vernacular Culture in Italian-American Lives*.