

Contemporary lacemakers

Three case studies

Silvia Fedorova

Silvia Fedorova is well known in Europe for her innovative three-dimensional bobbin lace and for her weaving. Her work is represented in a number of public and private collections. Fedorova's *Crown* headpiece was a finalist and runner-up in the 1998 Powerhouse Museum International Lace for Fashion Award.

Crown is made from synthetic raffia and copper wire, with a solid cloth-work headband and openwork top section which fans out slightly from the band. Twists in the copper wire hold the form in the crown shape and the synthetic raffia passive threads provide the textural interest. Fedorova explains: 'I have been working with three-dimensional bobbin lace for about five years. With *Crown* I wanted to create lace which would be very stiff but subtle without using any starch medium.'

Fedorova is from Bratislava, Slovakia — a part of Europe which has actively encouraged contemporary lace practice. Early last century in Eastern European countries, particularly Czechoslovakia, traditional bobbin lacemakers were encouraged to redevelop their skills as a means of self-expression. They began with wall panels which drew on folk legends and pictorial subjects and progressed to abstract wall panels and three-dimensional sculptural pieces. By degrees their work transcended traditional techniques to become a recognised form of artistic expression.



Detail of *Crown* by Silvia Fedorova.



Crown headpiece by Silvia Fedorova, bobbin lace, copper wire, synthetic raffia, 1997–98.

Did you know?

Lace was not particularly fashionable after World War II, but this changed in 1970 when Yves Saint Laurent created a stunning backless gown featuring black Chantilly lace. His celebrated design inspired other couturiers and fashion designers and sparked a revival of lace in contemporary fashion. In 1988 nearly all the collections showed lace. Today, designers often use lace in innovative and surprising ways – in combination with fabrics such as tweed, wool, denim and in a range of accessories from handbags to jewellery.

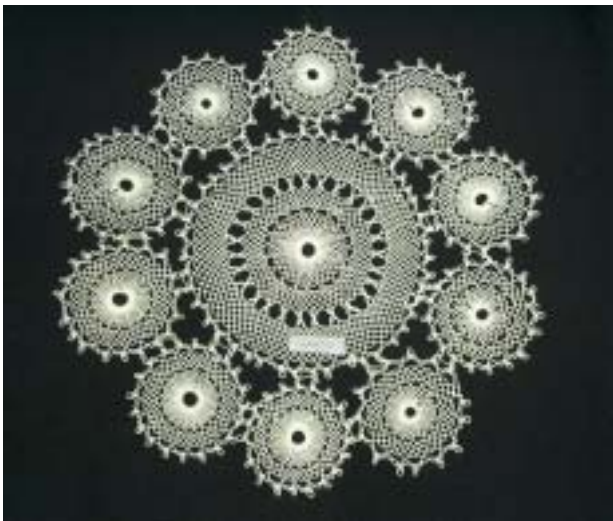
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Matina Pavlakis

Greek-born, Sydney-based lacemaker Matina Pavlakis has an exceptional range of needlework skills. She works enthusiastically and consistently on a variety of projects, although crochet and knotted lace are her favourites.

Pavlakis was taught crochet, tatting, knotted lace, weaving and embroidery at the Home Science College for Girls on the island of Kythera. Historically, Kythera's important strategic position — described as the 'eye of the Mediterranean' — exposed its people and culture to influences from many nations. Phoenician, Venetian, English and French influences are all evident in the needlework, crochet and tapestry produced on the island.

Pavlakis migrated to Australia in 1960, bringing with her the knowledge and skills of her homeland. Although she describes herself as 'an unassuming housewife', since 1975 Pavlakis has won countless prizes in district shows. In one year alone she was awarded 16 first prizes.



Knotted needle lace doily by Matina Pavlakis, synthetic thread, 1990–94.



Small theatre by Milča Eremiášová, bobbin lace, 1987.

Milča Eremiášová

Czech lacemaker Milča Eremiášová studied with Professor Emilie Paličková who led the contemporary lace movement in Eastern Europe. Like her teacher, Eremiášová has created some of the most outstanding and innovative work in her field and she continues to search for new creative processes and techniques.

In Eremiášová's thematic series she uses a range of miniature motifs with a lightness of touch that belies the intricacy of the technique. Her lace pictures of Prague architecture, house signs, music, theatre, pantomime, the sea and flora resemble a writer's diary or a painter's sketchbook. Eremiášová often incorporates a musical or theatrical theme into her work, inspired by artists such as Mozart and Beckett.

Lace Study Centre

Open 10.30 am – 1.30 pm weekdays

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