



# May Morris

## The Essence and Soul of Beautiful Embroidery

Lynn Hulse

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- A practical guide for readers keen to learn more about May Morris's approach to creating decorative needlework with a selection of designs to embroider
- Contains not only a selection of Morris's designs but also a detailed analysis of her working method in light of the artistic developments of the 19th century, alongside instructions on how readers might apply this to their own stitch projects
- Also includes a digital element to facilitate with up-scaling patterns and to provide easy access to the instruction booklets

May Morris (1862–1938) was a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement and a key exponent of decorative needlework (or art embroidery). Following the critically acclaimed exhibition at the William Morris Gallery in 2017, research into her life and work has mushroomed, bringing her out of her father's shadow. Inspiring designers and practitioners today, May Morris's work is much sought after by those keen to acquire a deeper understanding of her creative process and that of her contemporaries. May Morris described design as '*the very essence and soul of beautiful embroidery*', and ranked it chief among the four elements that make a work truly 'artistic'. The Ashmolean holds one of the largest repositories of her designs, though few of these have appeared in print or been added to the Museum's online collections. Drawing on the Ashmolean archive, this book aims to make the designs more widely accessible to embroiderers, not only equipping them with the tools to create their own projects based on May Morris's working methods, but also providing them with the historical context to place their work and practice in the continuum of decorative needlework.

**Lynn Hulse** is an independent textile historian and practitioner specializing in needlework from the 16th to the early 20th centuries, and her primary area of research is art embroidery for the domestic interior, c. 1860–1914. She is regularly invited to give lectures to museums, historic houses, tour groups and societies connected with textiles and the decorative arts in the UK, Ireland and North America, and has organized textile conferences and symposia on behalf of the Textile Society, Ashmolean Museum, and other bodies.

