



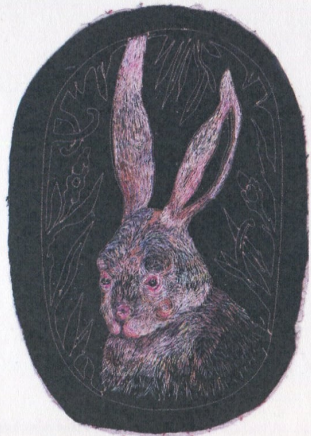
Lisa Smirnova

AN EXPRESSIVE
AND TACTILE TOOL

Lisa Smirnova's Moscow studio—a pavilion that was formerly a pig-breeding barn—is a brightly lit space with windows facing a racetrack. “It’s one of many pavilions located in a huge space called the VDNH, which in English can be translated as the Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy,” she explains. “This place started its rise in the USSR. There are a lot of buildings with beautiful architecture, there is an interesting atmosphere and you can feel the spirit of the past epoch. In the pavilion there are other workshops, located side by side. It gives us the chance to communicate with other creative professions, and sometimes it creates an interesting result in the work.”

“Embroidery works for me as a tool to express my emotions,” Lisa says. “Embroidery is a long and complex process. For me it’s a form of meditation that helps me quiet down my inner dialogue and regain peace.” Her contemporary approach takes the form of thread paintings or decorative elements, often on clothing. Textural and tactile, it involves layers of textiles, cotton and wool threads, and beadwork.





"Ever since I was a kid, I've tended to decorate my clothes and other things with threads, beads and paint," she says. "With time it became my life's work, and all of the stories that I create with embroidery reflect my experience and the images that have inspired me." In art college, she sewed theatre costumes and made set decorations. This exploration led her to making clothes and decorating them.

Her work is rooted in traditional embroidery, and yet she sees it as an important and powerful means of modern expression. "I'm delighted by traditional Russian folk





embroidery and all of the aesthetics around this theme," Lisa says. "For our ancestors, decorating clothes was a sort of ritual that protected them from the influence of negative energy. Using traditional techniques, I work with non-traditional stories. In my works I try to show that embroidery is a wonderful tool for self-expression, and it can be different."

"Embroidery has always been a symbol of femininity. I like seeing a protest against this established opinion in the works of contemporary artists. Nowadays most of the compositions embroiderers—or textile artists—make are dedicated to topics such as social inequality and women's role in society, but at the same time they are not losing their value as artists."

"ARTIST AT HOME" COLLECTION FROM
OLYA GLAGOLEVA'S ECO-FRIENDLY BRAND GO,
IN COLLABORATION WITH LISA SMIRNOVA.
PHOTOGRAPHER: IRINA BORDO
MODEL: BARBARA SHILOVA





Lisa is adamant that she claim the term *artist*. “I consider myself an artist, because everything I do with my hands—embroidery, drawing or sewing—is my way of communicating with the world around me.” Thus, through her craft and technique, she pushes her work as an artistic, illustrative practice.

Her embroideries begin as drawings on paper, which she transfers to fabric. “My works show that I really love spending a lot of time on creating an image, thinking through every step. It’s also about patience and concentration.”

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