



BarbaraBrabecProductions.com

Barbara's Bengal Tiger Cross-Stitch "Tiger Wall"

2013: THE PICTURE BELOW is what I call the "Tiger Wall" of my office, the one I look at every day as I work. It features seven of my cross-stitch tiger embroideries representing thousands of hours of time spent stitching in the evening over a period of several years. Of course I didn't design these myself, so much of the credit for their beauty must go to the individual designers who so carefully figured out the colors for every little square of every inch of fabric to make the tigers look as real as photographs.

The art in my office has changed periodically over the years, but I won't be changing this wall again unless I decide to repaint it, because it's finally just the way I want it. I believe it's important to make our workplace as aesthetically pleasing as possible, and much can be done with the simple addition of plants, decorative accessories, and artwork that gives us a feeling of luxury. I've found that the nicer my office has become, the more productive I've become. I'm also less stressed because I'm so satisfied with my surroundings. I not only reduced my stress by the actual stitching of these pieces, but I feel a sense of peace every time I look into the eyes of these beautiful animals.



NOTE: On the adjacent wall to the right of my stitcheries is an autographed print titled "White Tiger Head" by [Guy Coheleach](#), a famous wildlife artist I was privileged to spend an afternoon with back in the seventies when my husband was producing the International Crafts Exposition at Busch Gardens.



MY OWN "LITTLE TIGER," Charlee, is shown in her basket above. But for a long time she preferred to nap atop my old laser printer. She happened to yawn while I was snapping this particular picture of my tiger wall and later I thought it looked like she was giving out her own little tiger roar.

Even though the printer died many years ago, I kept it for a long time because this was one of the highest places in the house for Charlee to nap, and she obviously liked it a lot. I finally threw out the printer to make room for a small Christmas tree in that corner, which Charlee had no interest in, just as she lacked interest in pawing my embroidery threads when I was stitching.

Until her death in 2019, Charlee was the delight of my life and a sweet companion who spent most of her day in my office, where she had five beds to choose from. I now have another cat that uses the same "cat basket" on top of this filing cabinet.

OF INTEREST TO OTHER NEEDLEWORKERS: I work with 14ct. canvas (14 squares in a one-inch row), so the work is very detailed, and I do need the aid of magnification and very good lighting. Although you can't see this detail in the above photograph, most of these pieces have thirty or more colors or shades of colors. *(See below for a detail shot, and in that same area, notes on how I store my threaded needles and threads.)*

THIS IS A VERY NOSTALGIC PIECE for me because it's the one I worked on almost every evening as I kept my husband company in the bedroom during the last year of his life. Doing needlework helped a great deal in easing my stress during that difficult period of time. I had only a couple square inches to go at the bottom when he died in early 2005, but I had no heart to finish it. I just put the piece in a drawer and never picked up a needle again until the middle of 2012, That's when I decided I really needed to finish this piece and frame it, because it spoke to me of the deep and abiding friendship that began the day Harry and I met. It now hangs over my bed and gives me great satisfaction every time I look at it.

If not for my sister Mollie's encouragement and help during her 2012 Christmas visit with me, I might never have gotten all of these pieces so perfectly framed and hung. Once I



saw all these pictures on my wall, I was inspired to once again start stitching, and figure I'll be stitching now as long as my hands and eyes hold out.



IN CASE ANYONE WANTS a close-up look at what cross-stitch embroidery looks like, this little detail from the picture above shows you what I see as I work under magnification. Very tedious work, and even with magnification it's not always easy to hit the corner holes of each little square right on the mark. Note the many different shades of color in each square inch. *(In one square inch, there can sometimes be a dozen or more different shades of colors, which greatly adds to the time it takes to stitch a large canvas.)*

My Originally Designed Case for Threaded Needles and Extra Threads

I'VE OFTEN WONDERED how other needleworkers store their threaded needles because I've never found anything that comes close to matching my own originally designed needle case for practicality. Because I wanted something to hold up to 36 threaded needles, along with an extra strand of thread, I designed a special velveteen-covered case for myself. It measures 12x18 inches, opens like a book, and stands by itself on any surface. Inside, it has a sturdy fabric section on each side that has two rows of little fabric pockets and a flap below to hold the needle, with a grommet hole beneath that to hold a strand of thread. I spend several hours at the start of every needlework project setting up my thread case by first pulling out colors already in my inventory and then winding all the new ones to cardboard holders that are interfiled by number in that project's thread case.

Once all threads are organized, I thread all the needles in one sitting and run the rest of the strand through its corresponding hole. Thus I always start every project with a threaded needle for every color and can quickly change colors and needles

without the frustration of constantly having to stop to thread a needle or get another strand from the box.

P.S. I'm not showing a picture of my case because I think I have a marketable idea here; not that I'll ever find the time to try to sell it, but I want to protect it just the same.

Related Articles: In the "[Creative Endeavors](#)" articles T/C, you'll find more examples of my "arts 'n crafts" projects, and in the "Cat and Dog Tales" category, you'll find articles about both of my cats, Charlee and Liza (both rescue cats, by the way).

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IF YOU'D LIKE TO comment on this writing or share your own needlework experience with me, I would love to hear from you.
[Email me here.](#)



BARBARA LAUNCHED BarbaraBrabec.com in 2000 and quickly began to populate it with home-business articles and resources. Over the years she added hundreds of articles on several other topics related in one way or another to the larger topic of LIFE.

Now, LIFE itself is Barbara's focus. Unlike her original website, her new domain launched in 2021 features only her own writing—new content and an archive of timeless and relevant articles in fourteen life-related categories, all updated and reformatted for republication on the all-new "Barbara Brabec's World." It reflects Barbara's current writing interests, latest books, and professional services.

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