



Design Profile

Eliza Māra is an artist based in Riga, Latvia and works with hand embroidery as her main medium. In her practice she explores complex themes related to heritage, politics and nationhood, latest being Soviet Nostalgia within current Latvian society and what circumstances propel the nostalgia in her own daily life. This has been influenced by her studies abroad in London, being distant from home and that escalated by the recent world-wide pandemic. Eliza's practice is heavily influenced by research in Soviet living and its transmission to current Latvian society and pop culture. Her practice follows belief in a strong and current concept, as well as contemporary use of traditional embroidery in fine art / holistic manner. Eliza's practice is driven by a manifesto – list of 11 commandments that represent her as a practitioner and her values. Manifesto states 11 unpopular opinions regarding embroidery education and practice.

1. Fashion devalues embroidery
2. Flowers in embroidery education are sexist and degrading
3. Pretty tools don't make ones work good
4. Under-pricing your own work is bad taste and disrespectful to industry
5. Supporting hierarchy between embroidery techniques makes you a shit teacher/maker
6. Attention to details over speed
7. Expensive materials don't give higher value to one's work
8. Decorative embroidery will never be utilitarian
9. Good stitching doesn't equal good work
10. Metal embroidery is wasteful and unsustainable
11. Embroidery must stay a slow craft

These commandments come from traditional / orthodox training in Royal School of Needlework which implied the heritage embroidery education has. The manifesto lives in Eliza's latest project *LV-1079* as her educator practice runs parallel to that embodying the 11 commandments. She is committed to stay true to the Manifesto and to pass it down to her students and customers. Her training is in textile design and dressmaking from Riga's School of Art and Design, and the most recent is in hand embroidery from Royal School of Needlework. Having worked in clothing production and in sales, her perspective on Textile industry is quite broad and is applied to her practice. Eliza is an aspiring embroidery and textile design educator as she is leading workshops and masterclasses, creates embroidery kits and latest was a guest lecturer in an Erasmus+ mobility program for Art Academy of Latvia Textile Art students.

