

An interview with Carolina Guthmann

The art of Sicilian hand embroidery

10 JUNE 2023, NOELLE NEWELL



Sicilian hand embroidered Golden Peacock with gold threads

This past April, I traveled to meet the founders of Manima World, Carolina Guthmann, and her husband, Piero Di Pasquale, at their home in Palermo. Manima World is a digital atelier of fine-hand embroidered home linens and ready-to-wear. Their company is making a positive impact on the community. Manima World marries the best of contemporary technologies and the savoir-faire of skilled embroiderers. Recently Kazumi Yoshida joined their team as collaborating artist with their first collection titled "Afro-Retrofuturistic Odyssey" Kazumi Yoshida is well-known as the creative director of Clarence House.

Manima World was founded less than five years ago, and its start-up was formally registered in November 2019. Previously, Carolina was an executive at Merck, and Piero was a journalist with the Italian TV broadcaster RAI. About a year ago, they moved from Rome to Palermo. Carolina is originally from Brazil and Germany. In September, they will open a showroom in the Cala neighborhood of Palermo.

At their home, I was fortunate to meet the team of embroiderers, Guisi, Rosie, and Maria, and their interns, Valentina, Rafaela, and Will. I watched the process of transferring designs from paper onto fabric with a technique that Renaissance painters employed called Spolvero, which allows a mix of graphite to pass through tiny holes to transfer the design from paper onto the fabric. There are hundreds of embroidery stitches. Some of my favorite stitches are Sfilatura (Pull Threads), and among the oldest, and the overall effect reminds me of architectural latticework.

The stitch Punto Pittura (Needle Painting) is like painting with a needle instead of a brush. This technique is used with some of Kazumi's designs to fill in the patterns. Punto Erba (Stem Stitch) is a clever technique as one cannot distinguish a single stitch when these stitches fill a space. Punto Nodino (Knot Stitch) is the perfect choice for coral patterns, as little knots made with a needle give a three-dimensional quality.

During my stay, I attended a dinner party at their home with their friends, Christian, his wife Jenny, and Manlio. The following day we celebrated Liberation Day with their friends Letizia, Diego, Antonio, and Francesca in the countryside of Sambuca. We lucked out with good weather, delicious cooking, and stimulating conversation. Before I left Palermo, Carolina and I squeezed in a visit to Palazzo Butera and a light lunch with Piero and their interns.

As I reflect on this brief Sicilian séjour, I think of the beauty, the exquisite hand embroidery, the subtropical flora and fauna, the culinary delights - but most of all, it was my time with Carolina, Piero, her team and friends.

Now let's get to know more about Carolina and her journey.

Would you say your mother is your muse?

Yes, absolutely. My parents were very creative and taught us kids to do things with our hands since when we were small. But she had an incredible taste in fashion and was able to think of a most sophisticated dress, to design and to make it and have it ready the next day to go to a concert. She was also an assiduous reader and a wonderful pianist and loved sharing all of that with me and my brothers.

Tell me about your interior design style?

All our homes have always had an eclectic style, where old and new live together and where books play a central role. Each of us has some favorite pieces which we brought from places we've been in the past. Piero used to sail and loves some old nautical instruments, while I'm attached to a specific tile or vase. Our favorite piece in Palermo is our tropical garden in the living room.

Do you have a dream project?

I dream of building a beautiful beach house to become a place of reunion between Italy, Germany and Brazil.

Do you have a favorite book or books?

My favorite books keep changing with my age. When I was young, I fell in love with the poetry of Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Maybe, I could say that one of my favorite authors is Stefan Zweig, and one of my favorite books (along with many others) is his *Fantastic Night*. I always keep looking for great books, old and new. I love *Olive Kitteridge*, by Elizabeth Strout, Angela's Ashes, by Frank McCourt, and I almost forgot, one of my all time favorites is *When Nietzsche Wept*, by Irvin Yalom.

What can't you live without?

Music.

What are your favorite pieces of music?

Johann Sebastian Bach's Cantatas, and of course, *The Well Tempered Clavier* (preferably played by Glenn Gould); I also love Mozart operas in particular *Don Giovanni*.

What is your biggest challenge?

Finding the right balance between my work and spending enough time with my children and grandchildren, who I'd like to see more often.

What do you like most about living in Palermo?

The feeling to be in a lively place with a bright future, where creative people from around the world come to breathe local culture. I also love this walkable dimension of Palermo, where I can walk to the wonderful Opera House of Teatro Massimo, just as to the famous grocery markets of Ballarò and Capo, to museums and stunning Palazzi in less than 15 minutes, which is the same time we need to get to the close beach of Mondello. Last but not least, I love the many nice people who opened their homes and their hearts to us.

What was your most proud experience?

To see my kids happily married and fulfilled with their families.

What do you do for fun?

Play the piano (when I have time and am in Umbria where my piano still remains), have some time at a nice beach with a good book and invite friends for dinner.

What are three of your favorite places in Italy?

Besides Palermo, Rome, our place in Umbria, and Florence.

Do you have any advice for the budding entrepreneur?

Don't get discouraged if things don't move in a straight line, stay focused and focus on solutions, not the problems.

What's next for Manima World?

Consolidate and grow to become a true regenerative luxury brand who great artists, artisans and big players in the market desire to collaborate with.

91 Shares [Email](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Share](#) [Pin](#) [Reddit](#)



Noelle Newell

Noelle writes about art, architecture, design and culture. After years of practicing interior design, she finds writing is a more inclusive way to share her passion for the arts with a wider audience. Noelle Newell is an interior designer. She believes that Interior design is about cultivating beauty and refinement. She is a Graduate of Curry College and the Fashion Institute of Technology. She has also studied at The British Institute of Florence and The Sotheby's Institute of Art, London. Writing allows her to share her passion of the Fine Art of Living with the world at large.

[Author profile](#)



1. Sicilian hand embroidered place mat of a sea shell inspired motif
2. Sicilian hand embroidered pillows featuring designs by Kazumi
3. An example of Pull Threads stitch for a place mat
4. An upholstered vintage chair in a Kazumi pattern depicted in Sicilian hand embroidery
5. A close-up of a Kazumi design and Sicilian hand embroidery
6. Carolina Guthmann, and her husband, Piero Di Pasquale, founders of Manima World

RELATED ARTICLES



Sculptures of mercy and change
Three memories from OCAT Biennial, Shenzhen China



An interview with American sculptor Hacer
Origami, Calder, and love



Beyond vandalism: the power and significance of graffiti
An artform that has transcended cultural boundaries and brought people together



Mark Travers' "A New Land"
Post-COVID modern landscapes at St. Louis' Houska Gallery



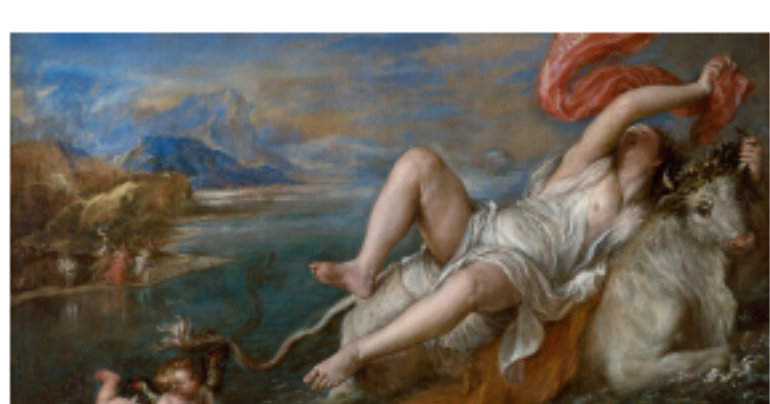
Portrait of the artist as a clown
The jester in Western art



Lost in the pixels
The realm of digital art



The discreet charm of the mundane
The joy of everyday in 17th century genre painting



Gods, Heroes and Love Stories
Mythological tales in painting

Subscribe
Get updates on the Meer