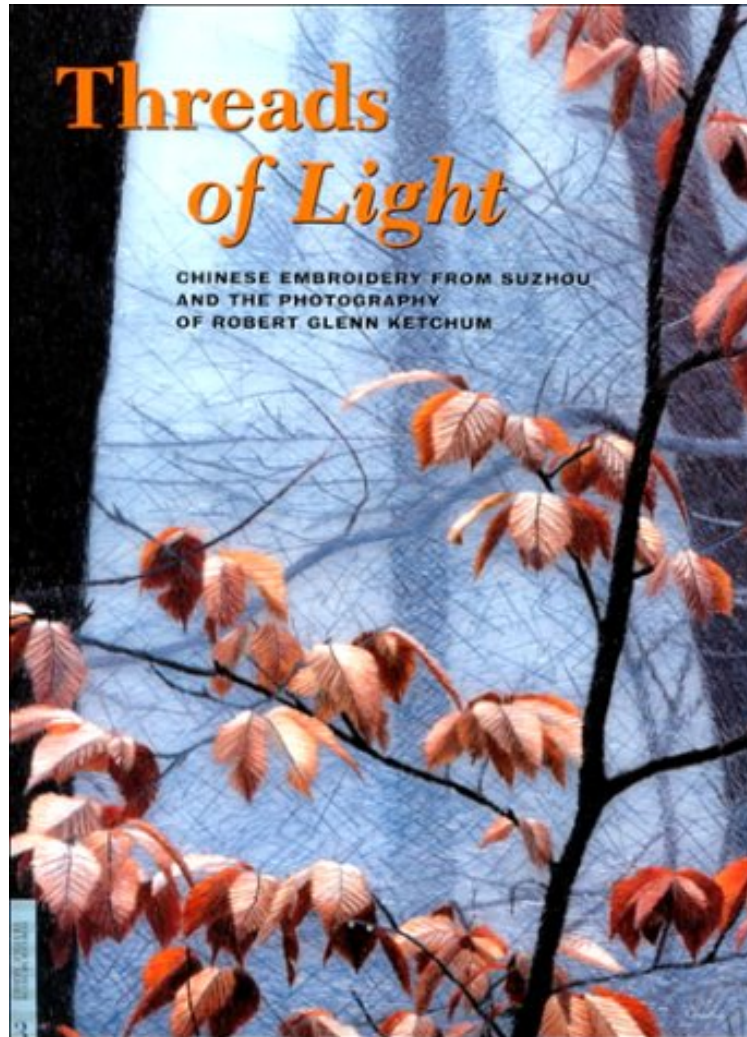


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## Threads of Light: Chinese Embroidery from Suzhou and the Photography of Robert Glenn Ketchum (UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History Textile Series)

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**From Brand: UCLA : Threads of Light: Chinese Embroidery from Suzhou and the Photography of Robert Glenn Ketchum (UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History Textile Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Threads of Light: Chinese Embroidery from Suzhou and the Photography of Robert Glenn Ketchum (UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History Textile Series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. What is all the hullabaloo about? Well...FANTASTIC book!!!By

Jane in Milwaukee I don't know why all the reviews here have at least 1 unhelpful vote (well, except the misguided negative review) because the praise is all well-deserved. Just in gorgeous illustration, this book is worth it. But with the accompanying text...man...this is a stunner. Editor Patrick Dowdey interrupted his work on his doctorate to research this marriage between photographer Robert Glenn Ketchum's glorious paintings and the embroideries copying same by the Suzhou Embroidery Research Institute (SERI). Dr. Dowdey edits the book whose Table of Contents is as follows: Forewords, Acknowledgments, Notes to the Reader "Introduction" by Zhang Meifang (the head of SERI) "But Will It Still Be Beautiful?" by Patrick Dowdey "In Pursuit of Texture" by Robert Glenn Ketchum (the photographer) "Technical Aspects of Suzhou Embroidery" by Jo Q. Hill (the museum's director of conservation) Catalog Notes to the Text, Glossary, References Cited. This book is not the ordinary museum catalog. The first thing you read in Doran H. Ross's Foreword is the bizarre way in which this collection was created. Ross is the Director of the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History which houses the embroideries--truly "threads of light." Ross points out that we all know the great works of art in the world mostly from photography: who gets to visit the Smithsonian, the Metropolitan, France's Louvre, Greece, Russia's Hermitage, the Vatican, Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum...and every other great museum in the world? No, I know what the Mona Lisa looks like from photos of it. So photography is often the exclusive vehicle to view art. Certainly, photography is art in its own right. But Ketchum turned art on its head when he directed that his masterful nature photos be reproduced in Chinese embroidery!! Beginning in 1985, Ketchum embarked on this enormous project literally to make his legacy. His body of photography was already highly regarded in the art world...but to recreate so much of it in glorious embroidery puts it over the top. After reading a detailed history of early Chinese embroidery by expert Meifang, Dowdey takes over with more recent embroidery and the importance of SERI. Suzhou is an ancient Chinese city renowned for its beautiful traditions in art. It's charming to read of how the Random Stitch Embroidery Research Studio in SERI was developed to teach the embroiderers about Western art, photography and how to design the embroideries based on the photographs. Photos of Suzhou, of SERI, of the studio, of the embroiderers and of the process let you feel you really understand the works themselves. On page 84, you see Ketchum's photo, "The Coat of Many Colors" which is a beautiful landscape, a steep hillside with lovely foliage and dramatic color and shadows. On page 85, you're treated with the exact image done in embroidery. Truly remarkable. As you pore through the Catalog beginning on page 106, you have to pay careful attention to which illustrations are photos and which are embroideries. And--how weird: there is a beautiful drawing of an emperor's progress made in 1689. In 1990, SERI reproduced it with "Suzhou fine embroidery. Human hair and paint on silk." The 5 embroiderers are listed. In the catalog, 7 of the right-hand pages are foldouts: usually a detailed close-up of the embroidery is on the page and then you unfold it to see the entire work over two pages. Just marvelous. I hope I have given you some extra detail as to what this book is all about and why you want to buy it...you really want to buy it. I have some of the References cited and they might interest you as well: The Art of Oriental Embroidery: History, Aesthetics, and Techniques Embroidery of Imperial China: [exhibition] March 17-May 28, 1978, China House Gallery, China Institute in America The Bantam Step-By-Step Needle Craft ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NEEDLEWORK (amazing mistake of name: "Theodore" instead of "Threse" de Dillmont...although her name is often abbreviated: "Th.") The Encyclopedia of Embroidery Techniques: A Comprehensive Visual Guide to Traditional and Contemporary Techniques Embroidered Textiles: A World Guide to Traditional Patterns Art of the Embroiderer Chinese Embroidery Chinese Dress (Far Eastern Series) 15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Most embroidery doesn't impress me, but.....By Gadget Fan I'm not all that interested in embroidery, but I enjoy visual excitement. One day while gallery hopping, we came upon a small portion of the work depicted in this book. We were both blown away by the work! Absolutely amazing. I would really like some posters of this work. For those interested in the embroidery details, it is done with fine silk threads, hand dyed, on various fine fabrics, some of which are so fine you can see through them. Much of the interesting texture and effect is from what they call random stitch embroidery, in which the scenes are depicted by various colored stitches .5 cm (1/4 inch) long running in various random directions, yet they all come together to make the image. Other parts of the images are done by carefully controlled stitch direction to give crisp images. They pick up the light and are quite luminous, some are displayed as screens with light coming from behind. Only the enlargements in the book give a sense of the beauty and amazing technique of the actual pieces. Oh, and the book is good too. Definitely a 5 star quality coverage of the work, with background information, as described in other reviews. But the work itself is beyond 5 stars. (In the gallery they were priced around the \$10,000-\$150,000 range, some took several years to complete.) 10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Gorgeous Book of Amazing Handwork By MaHoney Bee A beautifully photographed book full of information and amazing skill in this art. The artwork is just beautiful and the photographer has brought it to life in a breath-taking manner. Delightful!

Intrigued with the possibility of integrating texture in his work, American landscape photographer Robert Glenn Ketchum has a long-standing collaboration with the Suzhou Embroidery Research Institute (SERI) in China. This splendidly designed volume describes the history of SERI with illustrations of its traditional embroidery and then proceeds to pair Ketchum's photographic images with their exquisite embroidered counterparts. Essays locate the

achievement of the Suzhou Embroidery Research Institute within the context of traditional Chinese embroidery and trace the willingness to innovate that has long characterized this remarkable institution.

About the Author Patrick Dowdy is curator for the Freeman East Asian Studies Center at Wesleyan University. Other contributors include Zhang Meifang, Robert Glenn Ketchum, and Jo Q. Hill.