Needlework has a rich history in America. From early native Americans to the first European colonists, needlework has been used both as a record and as a means of communication. Family history and traditions are remembered in needlecraft, embroidered details communicate messages of status, wealth, and beauty.

Modern needlework may utilize the same techniques, but the message has been broadened. The Storied Stitch provides a space for that message. Here we see traditional techniques in uncommon contexts, reminding us of our past while exploring current issues. We also see the stitch pushed beyond the familiar shape, stretching and sketching and living in a new form. What begins as an intimate craft results in work that reveals a narrative both personal and universal.

This group exhibition features the work of Megan Canning, Orly Cogan, Michelle Kingdom, Katrina Majkut and Tamar Stone and is curated by Carla Bellisio. Megan Canning brings sensuality and movement to a normally staid subject matter, the anatomical illustration. Embracing and challenging traditional female roles in society, Orly Cogan stitches her dynamic tableaux on vintage printed and embroidered household linens. Cinematic, dreamlike and evocative, Michelle Kingdom’s embroideries are tiny worlds unto themselves, each composition a single frame from a narrative the viewer must create. Katrina Majkut references conventional women’s roles as mother and wife through her use of cross-stitch, a technique often associated with domestic skill and moral values. Inspired by braces worn to correct her childhood scoliosis, Tamar Stone focuses on the history of female body image and the methods used to “correct” imperfect female forms. Themes of constriction, correction and rigidity can be seen throughout her work, in reference to both the physical forms of women and their place in society.

The Storied Stitch runs from March 31 through April 19.

Receptions for the artists are scheduled for Wednesday, April 8, from 4:30 – 6:30 pm and Sunday, April 19, from 2:00-4:00. Artist talks will be given at both events. For more info go to stac.edu/amag.