

Lucia LaVilla-Havelin

I have been working in fiber for more than 30 years, and for most of that time science has been a major source of my inspiration. I am fascinated with the inner workings of the human body and by organisms invisible without a microscope.

These life forms are a starting point for my work. I choose colors to capture their structure and their spirit. Then I add detail, depth, and texture, using beads, wire, embroidery, and crochet, striving to do justice to their visual complexity and singular beauty.

Currently, I have assembled fifteen needlepoint sculptures based on minute marine life and vegetation. These include *Chlorobionta*, based on sea lettuce, *Rhodobiota* on red algae, and *Helicatis* on an anemone. Viewed together, I envision them as a "hanging garden" of living creatures—a striking world of colors, gestures, and shapes, which I call *A Tangled Hierarchy*.

In addition to the sculptures, I am using embroidery as a drawing tool in two series—*Viral Cocktail* and *Bacteriology*. The viruses, stitched French knots on cocktail napkins, are studies in texture and form. The bacteria, embroidered on black dinner napkins, are calligraphic and gestural.

The processes of artistic and scientific thought have much in common. Vera John-Steiner says in *Notebooks of the Mind*: "...of the greatest importance in the thought activity of artists and scientists is their pulling together of ideas, images, disarranged facts and fragments... into an integrated work."*

Combining science and art provides me with an endless field for exploration. And focusing on elements of our natural world also makes a statement about our environment. With the Gulf oil disaster and global warming, we need to be aware of the interdependence of all life. The confluence of science and art in my work derives from shared focused attentions and related connection-making.

*Vera John-Steiner, *Notebooks of the Mind: Explorations of Thinking*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

—Lucia LaVilla-Havelin lives and works in Lytle, Texas. Her website is: www.lucialavillahavelin.com



LUCIA LAVILLA-HAVELIN *Chlorobionta*
Needlepoint canvas, cotton thread, glass beads, freshwater pearls, Indian Dupioni silk, wire, 13" x " x 6", 2009. Photos: Seale Studios.



LUCIA LAVILLA-HAVELIN *Rhizaria II*
Needlepoint canvas, cotton thread, glass and mother-of-pearl beads, Indian Dupioni silk, brass mesh, wire, 9" x 7" x 6", 2009.



LUCIA LAVILLA-HAVELIN *Rhodobionta*
Needlepoint canvas, cotton thread, glass beads, Indian Dupioni silk, wire, 16" x 10" x 2", 2009.
LEFT: LUCIA LAVILLA-HAVELIN *Prasinophyta*
Needlepoint canvas, cotton thread, glass beads, 9" x 5.5" x 2.25", 2009.



LUCIA LAVILLA-HAVELIN *Parabasaliid*
Needlepoint canvas, cotton thread, coral and glass beads, wire, 8" x 8" x 4", 2009.



LUCIA LAVILLA-HAVELIN *Helicatis*
Needlepoint canvas, cotton thread, glass beads, wire, 8" x 12" x 8", 2009. Photo: Seale Studios.