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Austen Material Project

For my final project, I chose the material cultural project. I decided on making a cross-stitch that I thought would accurately represent Austen, as well as the time period of Austen, the 19th century. After doing some research, I found that most cross-stitching from the 19th century was very detailed. Rather than making simplistic, spread out patterns, many opted for a more intricate design that incorporated a large number of elements. Most designs also included borders that lined the whole piece, usually as vines and flowers. A lot of pieces also included depictions of family, nature, and houses. Large works were more preferred than smaller pieces, most likely because larger works took longer to make. During a time when time seemed at an abundance, longer projects helped pass the time. This is still true to this day, as this larger piece, of which I have only completed one and a half blocks, has taken me almost two months. However, I enjoyed making this cross-stitch and it helped me pass some extra time I had.

I started by looking on Etsy to find patterns that I liked and that were also reminiscent of a 19th century piece. There were several to choose from that met this criteria, and even more that did not. I finally came across (no pun intended) a pattern that incorporated several of the novels and showed them off through various key pieces of each story. For example, the first block introduces that this cross-stitch will be a collection of Jane Austen novels, and introduces the first novel, *Sense and Sensibility*. The block pays tribute to *Sense and Sensibility* by

incorporating elements like Edward Ferrars' ring, which is meant to include a lock of hair, rain clouds that are meant to remind us of how Marianne became ill after walking in the rain, Barton Cottage, and more. In the *Pride and Prejudice* block, the one following *Sense and Sensibility*, depictions of Pemberley are included, as well as books to show that Elizabeth likes to read, letters since they play a key role in communicating throughout the books, and of course the famous Bennet bonnets. Each block also contains the title of each novel and the date it was published. It is unclear exactly which novels will be portrayed in future blocks, aside from the ones that have recently been released, which are *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*. My guess is that the last two will be *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* based on the teasers the artists has provided on her Etsy listing. Overall, I felt that this piece accurately represented elements from each novel it portrays, as well as a classic 19th century cross-stitch pattern. I enjoyed this project and look forward to continuing the piece as more blocks are released.

Works Cited

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