

I am so glad that you are curious about Oya needle lace and that you will be doing this workshop with me. Let me introduce you to this beautiful lace art and tell you a bit about my own take on it.

- Traditional Oya Needle Lace

Traditional Oya Needle Lace can be worked in the round, as a decorative border or in 3D. Unless it is used to decorate a border, it is made only with a needle and some thread. Made of knots and different sized loops, it is mostly famous for its traditional colourful non-verbal language using 3D lace flowers or decorative borders. Despite accepted designs and design names that have been handed down generation after generation, the makers – mostly women - can add her own thoughts and wishes into her work and name it differently if she so wishes. Sometimes, the names are very poetic: “the nightingale has landed on the branch” means that the lover’s letter has arrived (Gérard J. Maizou & Kathrin Müller (2020): *Passion Flower and Wheel of Fortune: An Oya Motif as an Example of Textile Form and Color Design*). Other interesting names are listed in books about Oya needle lace.

Although that language is less and less used, the lace itself has trickled into fashion as accessory decoration.

Oya is its Turkish appellation. It is also practised in Bulgaria, Greece and Armenia under other names but like many traditional practices, the variations in style tend to be highly localised rather than national. For example, the Turkish Aegean developed a specific place for an Oya shape called Efe and which was worn by men. Nowadays, it is a highly appreciated pattern for accessories.

It is one of my dearest wishes that Oya becomes a recognized, shared, transnational immaterial cultural heritage.



Oya doilies worked in the round are usually white.



3D flowers can be used for jewellery or as repeated decorative borders for scarves.



Oya sampler with typical triangular (mountain) motifs.

- Meditative needle lace

My personal practice of Oya Needle Lace is one of enjoying the repetitive process of the simplest knot and loop combinations. Layer upon layer, colour upon colour, my scrolls slowly build up. Folded, they are my very own wishing, thinking and prayer wheels. Slowly unfolding them, I can “re-read” them and re-watch the colour construction in rewind mode before I fold

them again. They are containers of memories, thoughts and wishes; they are connectors with nature and handmade endeavours: folded, they remind me of tree rings, with a central core that radiates slowly as the piece grows.



- Oya as fabric?

Here I have started making my own Oya “fabric”: as opposed to the small-scale work, I usually favour for Oya work, I wanted to try my hand at something much larger. The open work loop here is called K-trabzan. Let me clear: this piece will take some time to finish...



- Oya in mixed media work

I sometimes use Oya in my mixed media textile work. In the image above, I added Oya triangular motifs to the embroidered paper. They are my mountains, my waves, my way of lifting the thread off the surface. Oya needle lace can take the embroiderer beyond the surface: it is a bridge between flat 2D work and 3D work.



- Big Experiments!

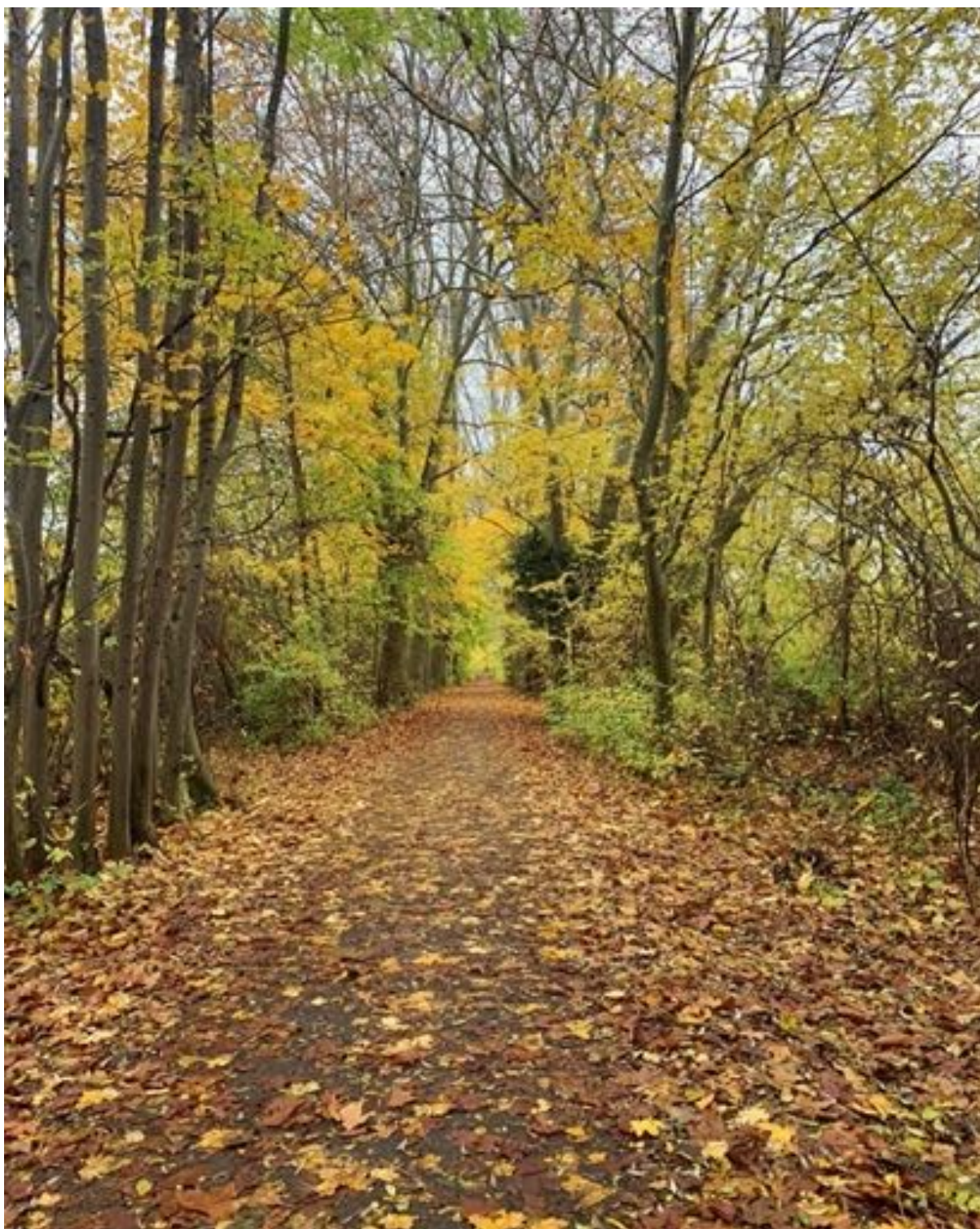
Oya in thick yarn is an interesting way to explore its links with nets and to experiment with a traditional technique in a different way. I found it less interesting at the time, because I was, and still am, focused on finer time-consuming gestures.



- Small yet powerful

This was my favourite and smallest scroll in the making. It is now part of the Barbara Wartenberg Gallery Collection. To me, small scale doesn't negate strong statements. In fact, such small-scale works remind me of the infinite power included in atoms. If my eyes and hands allowed, I would probably try to make smaller and smaller pieces.

On the handkerchief next to it, you can see the basic Oya loop and knot border: as you will see when you start making Oya lace, it is not a blanket/button hole stitch!



And finally, I wanted to share with you an image from my local forest, where I pick up my sticks... They are such an important part of the process.

Follow the workshop with me and you will discover all you need to make your own meditative Oya scroll!