

ADVANCED SILK SHADING



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
President: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester



Traditionally worked with silk thread on silk or linen fabric, but now more usually worked in stranded cotton thread. Silk is still the most usual background fabric but a variety of other fabrics may be used. For Advanced Silk Shading you may work EITHER an animal, bird, fish or reptile; OR a tapestry shaded human figure.

SILK SHADED ANIMAL OR BIRD

AIM – To demonstrate an advanced level of technical skill by working a realistic and naturally shaded embroidery of an animal, fish, reptile or bird using Long and Short Stitch with one strand of stranded cotton (or fine silk thread). To utilise shading and stitch direction to accurately depict musculature, fur, scales and clearly defined feathers as appropriate.

Please note: All preparatory work (e.g. outlines, drawings, stitch plans, original source material) **MUST** be handed in for assessment or the work will not be marked.

DESIGN

Try to come with some ideas for a design and bring along some photographs. The photograph must be printed a similar size to the embroidery size otherwise it is very difficult to work.

It is essential to work from a crisp, clear, well-focused photograph where you can see the individual colours and changes from dark to light. Illustrations can sometimes be harder to follow, and you should be wary of images from the Internet, which are often poor quality and may not print sufficiently well. However there are many places online from which you can purchase high quality images.

The tutor will be able to make suggestions and help you bring your ideas together. **Do be flexible in your approach, listen to your tutor's experienced advice and be prepared to alter your initial ideas if necessary.**

- The subject should fit within a 10cm square.
- The subject can be still or caught in movement.
- A clear good quality photograph or realistic painting is the best source.
- Try to choose an image with a **good balance of shadow and highlights**; dark images make it difficult to get a good representation of the subject.
- It is possible to use more than one source image, but take care to unify the direction of the light source when bringing elements together from different sources.
- **Please be realistic about your choice of design as this will be your first piece of natural silk shading.** Be careful not to make the design too complex as the emphasis of this technique is on natural shading - too many colours and awkward angles cause confusion.

If you are using images from the Internet please be aware of any copyright restrictions and make sure the image is clear and crisp to use.



TAPESTRY SHADING

Traditionally used for figures in Churchwork but can be used to depict a human figure from any background or era.

AIM – To demonstrate an advanced level of technical skill by working a realistic embroidery in vertical Long and Short Stitch to depict one or more human figure using one strand of stranded cotton or silk thread. To create realistically stitched hands, feet, face and hair. To create realistic folds, creases and drapes of garments with the use of shading.

Please note: All preparatory work (e.g. outlines, drawings, stitch plans, original source material) MUST be handed in for assessment or the work will not be marked.

DESIGN

Try to come with some ideas for a design and bring along some photographs. The photograph must be printed a similar size to the embroidery size otherwise it is very difficult to work.

It is essential to work from a crisp, clear, well-focused photograph where you can see the individual colours and changes from dark to light. Illustrations can sometimes be harder to follow, and you should be wary of images from the Internet, which are often poor quality and may not print sufficiently well. However there are many places online from which you can purchase high quality images.

The tutor will be able to make suggestions and help you bring your ideas together. **Do be flexible in your approach, listen to your tutor's experienced advice and be prepared to alter your initial ideas if necessary.**

- The figure should measure no more than 12cm tall.
- The figure can be in any position - standing, sitting or in movement - as long as it has a head with facial features and hair, and arms with hands. Feet may be in shoes.
- The figure may be naked in which case muscle tone must be demonstrated and some kind of draped garment with folds and creases must be included in the design.
- Try to choose an image with a **good balance of shadow and highlights**; dark images make it difficult to get a good representation of the subject.
- It is possible to use more than one source image, but take care to unify the direction of the light source when bringing elements together from different sources.
- **Please be realistic about your choice of design as this will be your first piece of natural silk shading.** Be careful not to make the design too complex as the emphasis of this technique is on natural shading - too many colours and awkward angles cause confusion.
- Metal threads can be added if suitable, for example if the figure is holding a sceptre that lends itself to metal, or has gold braid on a garment. These should be small and used as a highlight rather than a main part of the design.
- Backgrounds can be painted and surface embroidery stitches added as appropriate, but bear in mind it is the tapestry shading that is of most importance.

If you are using images from the Internet please be aware of any copyright restrictions and make sure the image is clear and crisp to use.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: Please see *Project Evaluation* sheet for details

TIPS

- It is essential to do a shaded black and white pencil drawing and a colour drawing (or painting if preferred) of the subject before you start. This will help identify dark and light tones and also fur/feather direction in animals; and how the fabric of garments hangs in tapestry shading. **These drawings must be handed in for assessment.**
- Make sure you frame up correctly and that the fabric is taut to avoid puckering while you work. Stab stitching will help to avoid this.
- Keep tightening your frame as you work this project to prevent wrinkles.
- Use tissue paper while you work to keep the background clean at all times.
- For tapestry shading:
 - Keep stitches smooth without any visible ridges.
 - Be aware of edges, both outside edges and those that separate layers of fabric on the garments. Edges should be smooth and even.

MATERIALS

- Calico
- Closely woven linen or silk (approximately 30cm x 30cm). *Please consult your tutor for advice on silk and linen.*
- Gutermann thread colour to match your background fabric.
- Anchor or DMC stranded cottons – both stocked at the RSN.
- OR Students may use pure silk threads that must be sourced and purchased independently. A wide range of colours must be used for this technique to be effective. At present we cannot recommend a brand. *Please note that cotton and silk cannot be mixed so be sure of your colour choice before starting with silk.* **Please check with your tutor before purchasing your threads.**
- Needles – Embroidery No.12, 11 and 10.

BOOKS-

- "Royal School of Needlework Embroidery Techniques" ISBN: 0-71348817-4
- "English Church Embroidery.1833-1953" (The Watts Book of Embroidery) ISBN 978-0953326501
- Beryl Dean "Ecclesiastical Embroidery" ISBN-13: 978-0713462524
- Sarah Homfray "RSN Essential Stitch Guide – Silk Shading" ISBN: 978-1-84448-585-7

There may be other books available, but be aware that often long & short stitch is not described in the same way that we teach it at the RSN; if in doubt check with your tutors.

STOCKISTS:

- Royal School of Needlework 020 3166 6935 www.royal-needlework.org.uk
- The Silk Route (Silk dupion) 01252 835781 www.thesilkroute.co.uk
- MacCulloch & Wallis (Silks, fabrics, threads) Dering St, (Nr Oxford St) London 020 7629 0311 www.macculloch-wallis.co.uk



NAME.....

DATE.....

As you work your embroidery, please think about and record how you achieved the various assessment criteria listed below, and record why you made various decisions affecting your embroidery. These questions ask you to reflect on your embroidery work, which helps you gain a deeper understanding of what you have learned in class.

Please sign and date the form and hand it in with your work for assessment.

Assessment Criteria:

1. First Impressions

- The work is well presented and clean with no alien fibres /10
- The paint lines and stab stitches are not visible /10
- The thread condition is good. The thread is not fluffy or thin and retains its sheen and twist /10
- There are no dirty marks, fluffy or worn areas /10

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2. Design

- The background fabric is appropriate to the design /20
- The shades chosen are appropriate to the design /20
- The design has been translated into silk shading successfully /20
- There is evidence of understanding of directional lines and/or shading in preparatory drawings /20

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3. Stitch Technique

- The scale of the stitches is appropriate to the design /15
- The stitch direction is at the correct angle in all areas of the design /20
- The rows of long & short blend naturally into one another without appearing as blocked rows or with obvious angle changes (except where used deliberately to depict fur or feather texture) /20
- The stitches are an even and consistent tension /10
- The density of stitching is sufficient to cover all the silk /10
- There are no open gaps showing fabric between overlapping areas /10
- The long & short stitch is smooth without overworked areas /10

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4. Shading & Realism

- The colours are smoothly and appropriately blended throughout /20
- The light source is consistent within the design /25
- The shading has been explored to achieve a three dimensional perspective /30

Animal - Naturally Shaded

- Fur, feathers and scales have been appropriately depicted with the use of stitch and colour /20
- Physical shaping has been achieved with the use of stitch direction and colour /20

Human Figure - Tapestry Shaded

- Realistic facial features, hands and feet have been depicted with the use of stitch and colour /20
- Garment drapery has been successfully depicted with the use of stitch and colour /20

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5. Edges

- The edges are worked neatly and are appropriate for the design (in general smooth and defined, but sometimes fluffy and uneven e.g. in the case of an animal) /20
- The split stitch is not visible /10
- There are no long & short stitches overlapping each other at the edges (unless required for the design e.g. a fluffy animal) /15
- The edges of the long & short stitch are defined against the colour of the chosen background fabric /5

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6. Mounting

- The board has been cut with 90 degree corners and straight edges /5
- The design is placed straight on the board with an even rebate on the front; the fabric grain is straight to the edges of the board /5
- The fabric is pulled tautly across the board to remove creases, bubbles and puckering /5
- There are no pinpricks visible along the edges of the board /5
- The corners of the fabric have been folded neatly and are square and flat /5
- The sateen is on the grain, taut and clean with square corners and even rebate /5
- The slip stitches are consistently of even size with no slip stitches or pinpricks visible /5

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DIPLOMA

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The following questions encourage you to reflect on your embroidery work and your experience at the RSN. They provide helpful feedback so that we may continuously improve what we do. In order to provide anonymity, the following page is separate. Please sign and date the bottom of this page and hand in with your work.

Embroidery

What did you enjoy most in stitching this piece? Why?

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Did your decisions work well and are you satisfied with the results?

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What did you find most challenging in working this piece? Why?

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What, if anything, would you do differently in the future?

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Did the design evolve over time and were you influenced by your tutor, fellow-students or other source to develop your original ideas?

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The next time you employ this technique, what aspects of the design and/or embroidery will do you differently?

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Signed.....Date.....

Teaching & Environment

Which aspects of the teaching were particularly helpful to you in working this piece?

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Was any part of the teaching advice confusing or unhelpful in any way?

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Is there any advice or instruction that would have been helpful to you if it had been given during your classes?

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What is your opinion of the materials provided by the RSN for this project?

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Do you know of any additional resources (books, textiles collections, websites etc.) that will help future students in this technique?

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2019-2020
ACADEMIC YEAR

ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLEWORK

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Did you enjoy the learning environment at the RSN? Is there anything we could improve?



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