

2024-2025
ACADEMIC YEAR

ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLEWORK

CERTIFICATE

BASIC GOLDWORK



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



Goldwork means the embroidery of metal threads onto a variety of fabrics, but usually cotton velvet, silk or linen. Frequently used for ecclesiastical and ceremonial embroidery.

AIM - To design and work Goldwork embroidery that demonstrates technical competence. To achieve a harmonious design with a balance of solid and open areas of Goldwork embroidery, making good use of the metal threads provided within the design, and to demonstrate proficient handling of threads and technical expertise in applying the threads.

Your own design will be worked on silk dupion or linen using the threads provided and including the techniques specified in the brief. Designs should not be directly copied from other sources; referencing, interpreting or stylising shapes or designs is acceptable however designs should be original you, which your tutor will encourage you to do.

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 your design. The tutor will have source material for you to look at and will make suggestions and help you bring your ideas together to create your own image.

Do be flexible in your approach, listen to your tutors' experienced advice and be prepared to alter your initial ideas if necessary.

- **The design should not exceed 15cm x 21cm (approximately 6in x 8.5in)**
- The design needs to be bold, with clear defined areas to work the different Goldwork techniques.
- Try not to have too many small, intricate details.
- Designs with open and closed spaces often work better than designs with lots of solid areas.
- The areas of couching must be sufficient in size (minimum of 5cm square across the design) to show an understanding of the technique and show improvement.
- We suggest you avoid symmetrical design and perfect circles until you are more experienced.
- Your design should have a good balance of techniques and not have one dominant type e.g. couching.

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.



TECHNIQUES

You **MUST** include the following:

- An area of brick stitched Japanese thread over felt padding and directly onto the fabric.
- A *sharp* turn (less than 90 degrees) and/or corner using the couched Japanese thread. This should be turned and not plunged to achieve the shape.
- An area with a combination of couched threads over felt padding.
- An area of couched threads with no extra outline, where the plunging is visible.
- Some Pearl Purl outlines.
- An area of solid chip work, over felt padding inside a Pearl Purl outline.
- Smooth Purl cutwork over soft string padding. (Bright Check cutwork can also be used, but cutwork must include a continuous 5cm (2in) minimum length of Smooth Purl).
- Cutwork must be at a 45 degree angle (it may flow around a curve and still be at 45 degrees).
- Cutwork sections should not be adjacent to one another.
- An area of felt padding no higher than 3 layers.
- A section of soft string which is tapered.
- The maximum number of strings in soft string padding should be 20 strands of the thread supplied by the RSN, other threads may differ in thickness.

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

PREPARATION

- Silk/linen is placed on the slack calico on the slate frame then secured using herringbone stitch.
- The silk or linen should then be further secured to the calico with small stab stitches along the inside of the paint line.

PADDING



- **Soft string** – waxed strands of soft string are bundled together and stitched down using a double waxed Gütermann thread. This is started at the widest part of the area to be padded; it is reduced in size by cutting away strands from the underside.



- **Felt Padding** – To transfer your padding shapes use the pricking to pounce then pencil the shape required onto the yellow craft felt. When using more than one layer, cut out the original size, and then cut each layer smaller by approximately 2mm than the one before. The smallest piece is sewn on first and the largest piece last. To apply the felt, use Gütermann polyester thread and take small stab stitches from the background fabric in an inwards direction over the edge of the felt. Use pins to keep the felt in place while sewing.

It is highly recommended that you practice soft string padding on a separate piece of fabric.

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MATERIALS

- Calico mounted onto a slate frame
- Silk dupion (slub free is preferable, such as a power woven silk) or linen no smaller than 40cm square or equivalent area. It is essential to check your fabric with your tutors before applying it to the calico. Velvet is **not** used for basic Goldwork
- Needles: Embroidery No.10, No.11, No.12 and Chenille No. 24.
- Gütermann polyester thread No.488
- Beeswax
- A mellor or laying tool
- Gold threads
- Yellow felt and soft string

You will be provided with a 'starter kit' for this project which contains all of the threads in sufficient quantities for the project. Additional threads should be unnecessary. You will need to purchase the silk or linen yourself however we keep a limited range of these fabrics at the RSN. Mellors can be purchased from the RSN shop.

THREADS

The following are the only gold threads that will be used in this basic Goldwork project.
This is to ensure you understand the principles thoroughly. You will have an opportunity to explore other padding and metallic thread techniques in Advanced and Creative Metalwork.

Japanese thread No.8 – this is a metallic foil strip wrapped around a cotton core. It is couched down in pairs with a waxed single thread, taking care to twist the Japanese thread slightly to stop the central core from showing. The ends are plunged to the back.

Twist No.1 ½ – a 3 ply metallic cord. It can be couched over or using single waxed Gütermann No.488 thread stitches can be hidden between the twists. The ends are plunged to the back.

Rococco – a metallic foil wrapped around a cotton core that has then been crinkled. It is couched down using a single waxed Gütermann No.488 thread. The ends are plunged to the back.

Pearl Purl No.1 and Super Pearl Purl – this thread looks like a string of beads and needs to be expanded by stretching *very gently* - please make sure you have had tuition before attempting to expand this thread! A single waxed Gütermann No.488 thread is used to stitch down in the grooves every few purls. Pearl Purl is often used as an outline and to contain chipping. Pearl Purl is not plunged, but cut to size.

Bright check No.6 – this is a metallic spring with a zig-zag pattern. This is used for chipwork and cutwork. The thread is cut to the size you need and threaded (like a bead) onto a double waxed Gütermann No.488 thread.

Smooth Purl No.6 – this is a shiny metallic spring with no pattern. It is used for cutwork and cut to size, then threaded (like a bead) onto a double waxed Gütermann No.488 thread.

Optional: *Spangles*– similar to a sequin. It is stitched down using one chip or bead. *Spangles are not supplied in starter pack.*

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TIPS

- Make sure you frame up correctly and that the applied silk/linen background is taut to avoid puckering while you work. Stab stitching within the design is essential to help to avoid this.
- Make sure there is no padding or paint lines showing.
- Use acid-free tissue paper while you work to keep the background clean at all times.
- The rows of couched thread should lie flat with no spaces between or overlapping rows.
- Be careful to get an even tension, particularly when plunging threads.
- Be careful not to overstretch your pearl purl to prevent the couching thread being visible between the purls.
- Be sure to cut the Bright Check and Smooth Purl to the correct length, otherwise it is prone to cracking or will not cover the padding.
- Cutwork is very delicate so this is the final technique in this project; always use lots of tissue, bubble wrap, domette, etc. to protect your embroidery.
- Always use your mellor with the cut gold.
- When mounting, a small layer of wadding is needed between the board and the work due to the plunged ends on the back of the embroidery.
- Protect your embroidery with a bubble wrap window frame during the mounting process.

BOOKS

- Helen McCook "The Royal School of Needlework Essential Stitch Guides – Goldwork " ISBN 978-1844487028
- Jane Lemon "Metal Thread Embroidery" ISBN: 0-7134-5577-2
- Tracy Franklin "New Ideas in Goldwork" ISBN: 0-7134-8780-1
- "Royal School of Needlework Embroidery Techniques" ISBN: 0-71348817-4
- Mary Brown "Goldwork Embroidery" ISBN: 978-1-86351-366-1

STOCKISTS

- The Royal School of Needlework 020 3166 6935
- Benton and Johnson (gold threads) www.bentonandjohnson.com
- Golden Threads www.goldenthreads.co.uk
- The Silk Route (Silk dupion) www.thesilkroute.co.uk
- Mace & Nairn (fabrics) www.maceandnairn.com
- MacCulloch & Wallis (Silk dupion) Dering St, (Nr Oxford St) London 020 7629 0311 www.macculloch-wallis.co.uk