



ADVANCED SILK SHADING (Animal/bird OR figure )

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. 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 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.

**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.**



ADVANCED SILK SHADING (Animal/bird OR figure )

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 full 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.
- 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.

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

**TIPS**



**ADVANCED SILK SHADING (Animal/bird OR figure )**



- 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.**
- In this technique dimension should be achieved through careful shading and stitch direction, **not** through padding.
- Avoid overworking areas as this will create an undesirable padded effect.
- 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**

**Fabric**

- Calico
- Closely woven linen or silk (approximately 30cm x 30cm). *Please consult your tutor for advice on silk and linen.*

**Threads**

- Gutermann sewing thread colour to match the background fabric.
- Anchor or DMC stranded cottons – both stocked at the RSN.
- OR pure silk threads which must be sourced and purchased independently.

A wide range of colours must be used for this technique to be effective. Cotton and silk can be combined occasionally for a highlight, but should not otherwise be combined. 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](http://www.royal-needlework.org.uk)
- The Silk Route (Silk dupion) 01252 835781 [www.thesilkroute.co.uk](http://www.thesilkroute.co.uk)
- MacCulloch & Wallis ( Silks, fabrics, threads) Dering St, (Nr Oxford St) London 020 7629 0311 [www.macculloch-wallis.co.uk](http://www.macculloch-wallis.co.uk)