



Tent stitches in wool on canvas using a wide selection of colours to create natural shading and to give the design depth and movement. Traditionally used for chair covers and cushions, canvas shading can also be used to create effective conventional or abstract images for pictures or wall hangings.

AIM – To create canvaswork embroidery showing mastery of naturalistic shading to an advanced level, using multiple shades in the needle. 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

Finished size approximately A5 measurements, 21cm x 15cm (8in x 6in)

Try to think of some design ideas before you come; books, photos, magazines and postcards could be your source material. The best subjects have large areas in which to depict subtle shading. “Still Life” scenes, flowers and fruit are popular choices giving you plenty of scope for three-dimensional shading. Landscapes can also be appropriate, but make sure that there is sufficient shading from light to dark within the design. Try not to choose designs with lots of small, intricate details. **Do be flexible in your approach, listen to your tutor’s experienced advice and be prepared to alter your initial ideas if necessary.**

BACKGROUND – may be worked in stitches other than tent stitch – for example Cashmere stitch or Milanese stitch. If you choose to work a tent stitch background, work it in the basket weave style to produce a more even surface.

BORDER – this is optional.

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

TIPS

- Make sure you are using tent stitch and not half cross-stitch as this will aid even tension.
- Ensure you are stitching with even tension to produce a smooth surface. Canvas shading can appear very bumpy when not worked evenly.
- Threads should not be extensively carried across the back of the work, as this would cause unnecessary bulk.
- Threads should not be visible at the edges of the stitched area once the piece is finished.
- Do not carry dark colours into light areas unless appropriate to the design.
- Blend different colours of similar tone where appropriate to create a realistic effect – eg mixing pink and orange together will give a peach colour. This is known as “blending in the needle”.
- Prior to starting your piece, create a palette of your chosen colours, using blending in the needle where appropriate. This will aid your decision-making later on in the project.
- Short lengths of thread should be used to keep stitching smooth, to stop the threads from wearing out and losing their shine.

2024-2025
ACADEMIC YEAR

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CANVAS SHADING



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



Royal School of Needlework, Apartment 12a, Hampton Court Palace, Surrey KT8 9AU, UK
T: +44 (0)20 3166 6932, F: +44 (0)20 8943 4910, E: enquiries@royal-needlework.org.uk, W: www.royal-needlework.org.uk

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- Overworking of stitches to correct mistakes is not acceptable.
- Use sufficient number of threads in the needle to adequately cover the canvas ground, as no canvas should show at the end.
- Check your work when finished, as it is easy to miss stitches!
- To enable easier mounting, the canvas can be stretched after completion if it is misshapen. However this is not usually necessary when the canvas is worked on a tight frame throughout.
- When mounting, cut away the excess canvas from the corners and there should be an even amount of canvas rebate around the edge when mounted.

MATERIALS

- 18 TPI antique single canvas mounted onto a slate frame.
- Appleton's crewel wool
- Needles – Tapestry Nos 20, 22, 24
- A waterproof pen only should be used to draw on your design, as pencil will rub off onto your threads. **Test** the pen to ensure it is waterproof.

The Royal School of Needlework stock a wide range of Appleton's crewel wool.

BOOKS

Most books written about canvaswork include stitches that will not be used in this project. However, they contain useful information about tension etc.

For a description about the difference between tent stitch and half cross-stitch see:

- Owen Davies & Gill Holdsworth - "Embroidered Knot Gardens" ISBN 978-0713489668
- Pages 43 & 44, Jan Beaney and Jean Littlejohn "A Tale of Two Stitches" ISBN 978-0954601409

General reference books:

- Rachel Doyle "The RSN "Essential Stitch Guide: Canvaswork" ISBN 978-1844485871
- Anchor "Canvaswork Embroidery Stitches" ISBN 978-0715306314
- Mary Rhodes - "Dictionary of Canvas Work Stitches" ISBN 978-0713433012
- Betty Barnden "The Embroidery Stitch Bible" ISBN 978-0785831068
- Jo Ippolito Christensen - "The Needlepoint Book" ISBN 978-147654086

STOCKISTS

- Royal School of Needlework (Wools; canvas; books) 020 3166 6935 www.royal-needlework.org.uk