

Royal School of Needlework

Appliqué - Diploma

Academic year 2025/26

Appliqué is predominantly concerned with the application of fabrics to create the chosen design. The piece is enhanced through the careful choice of fabric to represent the design's textures, colours, patterns etc. A pleasing piece of embroidery can be created by the addition of padding (for dimension), various edging techniques and surface embellishment. The focus is on the choice and application of the fabrics and this is what distinguishes the technique from Stumpwork.

Aim

To design and work a piece of Appliqué which shows appropriate design choices and skill in the interpretation of the design; through the selection of fabrics and the treatment of their edges, padding and embellishment.

Materials and equipment

There is no starter kit for this module. Calico, needles, Bondaweb, Vilene, and stranded cottons can be purchased from the RSN.

Fabric: Calico (medium weight) as a base fabric or medium weight cotton.
A selection of fabrics and padding as appropriate to the design.

Threads: As appropriate to the design and including Gutermann sewing thread and embroidery threads.

Needles: Embroidery 10 and 12. Others as required.

Padding: As appropriate to the design and can include; craft felt, wadding, carpet felt, string etc.

Other: Bondaweb, Vilene

Reasonable adjustments

If there is a reason you may have difficulty completing the module e.g. visual impairment, allergy to some materials, please discuss this with the tutor and the C and D team before starting. Adjustments are possible.

Essential requirements

Design area

- The finished size must be no larger than 40 x 30 cm (16 x 11 ½ inches). It may be smaller but no larger in either dimension. It can be portrait or landscape.

Elements which must be included

Fabric

- A minimum of **four** different fabric types to be applied e.g. cotton, silk, linen, corduroy, leather, hessian, scrim, wool, sheers, velvet, lace etc... Fabrics may be plain or patterned. Think creatively about your fabric choices, uses and possible manipulations.
- At least **one** fabric should be creatively manipulated either before or when applying e.g. fabric that has been painted, dyed, distressed, hand embroidered, machine embroidered, pleated, smocked, scrunched etc. as required by the design.

Padding

- A minimum of **three** types of padding e.g. wadding; trapunto which must be worked directly on to the piece, not as a slip; felt; pelmet Vilene; carpet felt etc.

Edges

- A minimum of **four** types of edges must be chosen from the following categories:
 - Turned
 - Bound
 - Frayed
 - Corded
 - Couched
 - Embroidered:
Any embroidery stitch can be used if it can be made to work. Satin, Long and Short, Buttonhole and Heavy Chain all work well. There must be a minimum of 5cm (2 in) continuous length of the chosen stitch. Machine embroidery can also be used.

The choice of edging treatment must be clear and obvious.

Finishing

- The final piece may be mounted on card, with wadding if needed, and backed with a suitable fabric, or made into a soft hanging. Discuss the soft hanging option with the tutor before starting your piece. There is a downloadable leaflet on Making a Soft Hanging.

Other ways of working with fabric may be included but will not be assessed.

Getting started – before class

It is not necessary to arrive at the first class with a finalised design, but you should come with some ideas. For examples of work by other C and D students look at the C and D gallery on the website. <https://royal-needlework.org.uk/courses/certificate-diploma/canddgallery/>.

Getting started – in class

Preparatory work

Preparation prior to stitching is an important part of the learning process. Your tutor will give guidance on how to prepare the following:

- A line drawing on tracing paper. The tracing will be photocopied several times and used to create:
- Piece templates
- A padding plan to assist in deciding the choice and positioning of padding types, as well as relative heights of areas.
- A stitch plan which covers choices and position of fabrics and their edge treatments. This will help to ensure the mandatory elements are included.
- A detailed order of work to plan the layering sequence before starting to stitch is essential.

Initial plans can be amended as the embroidery progresses. If you choose to have your work formally assessed, you should submit the preparatory work listed above together with your source material, which will form part of the assessment.

Things to think about when planning the embroidery

- Many sources will work for Appliqué – photographs, posters, paintings, adverts etc.
- Both realistic and abstract designs can work.
- Consider different compositions and weights of fabric to recreate the design.
- Consider ways in which a fabric might be changed e.g. distressed, embroidered, pleated etc. to create what is needed.
- Think about how the piece is to be finished. Does that affect design decisions e.g. padding choices?
- Avoid using techniques more appropriate to Stumpwork.

Intellectual property

The final design must be original to you. Use of your own visual media (photographs, drawings) is encouraged. Referencing and interpreting other visual media is acceptable. Copying is not. The intellectual property of others must be respected.

Additional information

Additional information can be downloaded from the website <https://royal-needlework.org.uk/courses/certificate-diploma/book/cd-essential-information/>

- Resources - Websites, Books, Suppliers for C&D
- Making a Soft Hanging