

# Cookie's Creations

THE HOME OF EMBROIDERY DESIGNS & PROJECT IDEAS

## “Painting Your Garden with Thread”

### Embroidery with Thread Painting and Applique Techniques

-Using the appliqué method



#### Objective

Using the sewing machine needle as a paint brush and a beautiful array of threads as your palette, you will enjoy creating flowers and other motifs easily. Using a basic sewing machine and a hand sewing needle, you can learn to embellish for design and function!

1. Sharing the ease of free motion “thread painting” to expand your creative horizons
2. Providing information on the selection of needles, threads, machine settings, tools and stabilizers in making your first project successful
3. Learning to transfer your drawings and ideas directly to fabric
4. Creating thread painted motifs as an appliqué, gives the freedom to add beautiful embellishments to clothing without concerns of making mistakes in the process to the actual garment
5. Discovering decorative stitches that add stability and style to any garment or accessory

#### Materials for your first time, to ensure a successful experience:

- Fusible Fleece 9 1/2” square
- 10” square of white or muted 100% cotton fabric, great fabric to learn on. Later you can move on to silk and other blends of fabrics.

- Assorted threads, polyester 40wt embroidery, rayon, blended, multi-colored, metallic, cotton quilting, etc.
- 80/12 and 90/14 sharp (Top Stitch Needles) 40 weight for size 80 but 90 for heavier threads or multi threads due to the enlarged eye of the needle. You will need to adjust settings depending on thread weights and combinations of choices paired to ensure a balanced stitch. A balance stitch is where the top and bottom threads lay evenly on both sides.
- Bobbin thread: suggested colors include gray, white and black as they blend with most top thread colors easily
- Single Stitch needle plate (optional, depending upon manufacturer's recommendations)
- Extension table, if available for your brand of machine, additional room to play
- Open toe darning foot or similar style to provide a better visual throughout the process
- 7" or 8" wooden or plastic embroidery hoop with a good super grip
- Sewing Machine manual for a reference to specific machine settings do vary

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### Steps for your first thread painting success after watching this segment on It's Sew Easy, TV.

#### 1. Drawing the desired pattern onto fabric with permanent marking pens.

- The stitches will cover the markings at the completion of the project. Alternative options include: using printable transfer fabrics found in quilting shops to transfer your image by following the manufacturer's directions. A fine mechanical pencil works on light fabric and pencil typically washes out which is also great. Testing your "pencil" on a fabric scrap first is always recommended! There is also a white pen that is wonderful on dark fabrics and disappears once ironed. Be sure to adhere any fusible first before drawing with this type of white pen on your fabric. *I made that mistake once. After spending over an hour drawing on fabric, I added the iron on fusible stabilizer without thinking and then made my drawing disappear in less than a minute!*
- Tip: Use small strokes to replicate the direction of stitches you wish to follow.
- Tip: Use color to represent the thread color where possible and use the above suggestions as guidelines and not as rules carved in granite. You can change your mind along the way. No one will know!

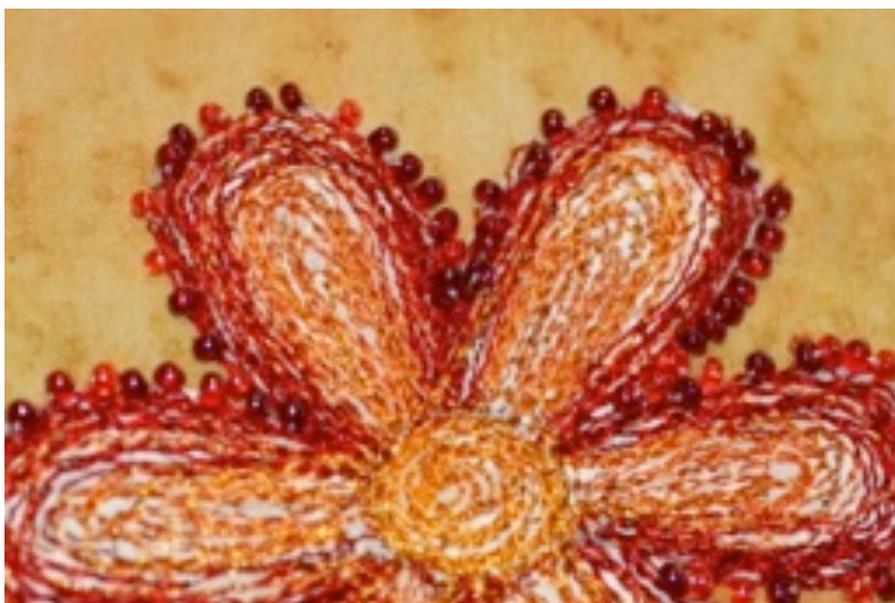


## 2. Make a Practice Piece First:

- Center fleece to wrong side of cotton fabric, fusing it in place by following the manufacturer's directions. This fleece will add stability and body to your final project.
- Draw 3 straight lines and 3 wavy lines on practice fabric for "rehearsal" tracing with needle and thread.
- Hoop practice fabric with stabilizer to get the control and feel of stitching using free motion and the open toe darning foot.
- Needle set to center of foot and select a Straight Stitch.
- Lower the feed dogs, and set the bobbin tension to keep it "free flowing." More information on your feed dogs with settings should be provided in your manual. With the feed dogs down, you will be in control of the fabric movement.
- Adjust sewing machine with the recommendations in your specific sewing machine manual to ensure a balanced stitch. If no manual is available you may try setting the stitch length to zero or 2mm and then adjust as necessary. Several other experienced thread artists like their stitch length set to 2.0 to 2.5. The goal is to have neat stitches with the tension free flowing! In theory, stitch length should not matter. Write down your settings and staple them to the inside cover of your manual. I promise you will forget them over time!
- If available, set your needle to "needle down" which is a useful optional feature during thread painting. Needle down will do precisely that whenever you stop stitching on the machine.
- Lock stitches at the beginning and ending of each section that you are working on.
- To start: Thread your upper and lower areas of the machine. Thread the bobbin leaving a long tail exposed. (\*For practice, use the 80 sharp top stitch needle with 40 weight polyester embroidery thread and similar weighted thread in the bobbin)
- Place the hooped fabric under the sewing machine needle and position the first needle penetration at the starting point of the desired area to be stitched.
- Turn the hand wheel towards you while holding the needle thread in your left hand. The needle will pierce the fabric and pick up the bobbin thread forming a loop. Keep holding the needle thread in your left hand while pulling gently to bring the loop to the surface.
- Using tweezers in your right hand, pull up on the front of the loop and bring the bobbin thread to the top. Hold both threads on the surface with your left hand and take a 3-4 stitches close together to lock them. Cut away tail threads. To end: For locking end stitches: take a few stitches close together in place and trim thread tails, as needed. If you are moving to a new area, there is no need to cut the bobbin thread - simply take a few stitches at the new location to lock on.



3. Using an open toe foot with the 40wt poly thread and 80/12 top stitch needle, the work will be clearly visible while you practice.
  - The goal is to duplicate your sewing stitches as if the machine was set to about a 2.0 to 2.5 length. You will be moving your fabric slowly while running the machine needle at a medium to higher speed.
  - As you trace the lines, remember you can turn your fabric in any direction that will enable you to have a better view of where you need to stitch. TIP: Take breaks every 10-15 minutes, sit upright while stitching and stretch in-between.
  - It's okay if the stitching is not perfect. Eventually you will find your own pace that works well. If you can adjust the overall speed on your machine, then set it to a medium speed and find your rhythm. If you set it to the slowest running speed, the machine does not give you the flow needed to keep your stitches smooth. As an instructor once told me 20 years ago, "Faster Needle & Slower Motion." She did not say FAST needle. Thread Painting is to be done at a speed that you can control. I have seen fast stitchers and slower stitchers hard at work. At the end of the day, all samples made were beautiful.
  - Once you are "semi" comfortable, use the attached template and work on the flower. The flower will make it easier! Try shading by leaving space between the threads so you can blend in other colors. Avoid thick patches of thread, this is an exercise in sketching!
4. For the flower, the outlines were traced and then filled in. During the outlining, you may need to move slower and that is perfectly acceptable. If you keep the machine set with needle down, it is easier for you to take breaks to stretch and to rotate your fabric.
  - The flower was done on white fabric, to make it easy for you to see the sketch painting style used. It is enlarged below. Now you can relax and do it, too. The flower was then cut out and stitched on to the main fabric as an appliqué. For appliqués, I would recommend stitching them on the same color fabric as the final project. No one will see that it is appliquéd on. How brave you are to thread paint your silk dupioni jacket!



Here is a pictorial review of the TV segment:



Step 1: Sketch your design on fabric, while including the directions of planned stitches. Place fabric in either a 7" or 8" hoop



Step 2: Outline leaves, and follow the sketched plan. Note the heavier curved line on the leaves and the resulting shape following the curves. The stems require longer upsweeping traveling motions with the hoop. I encourage your creativity!



Step 3: Outline petals first in dark red thread while using arc shaped movements. Blend the inner petals (orange) into the dark red petals, again using the same arc shaped motion. The center was created by "spiraling in and out with thread." The most simple designs look exciting once completed.



Step 4: Cut out the thread painted "art" on the outside edge. Pin it in the final placement area of your garment or accessory. "Tack down" the flower along the edges of the petals using a free motion straight stitch.

Step 5: With free motion: creating zig zag (or blanket style) stitches to cover the “tack down” used to anchor the design. This would be a good time to add any additional thread details you can think of. Perhaps add some beads or findings!

Bonus Tip for those who own an embroidery machine and software. Did you know that every digitizing software has a line drawing tool? Sketch as you would in thread painting!



Home of embroidery designs and project ideas:  
[CookiesCreations.com](http://CookiesCreations.com)



Template:

