

Surface Stitches to Embroider a Bag

With THL Amelye Merriman (pronounced "Amelia")



Thank you for signing up for *Three (plus one) Surface Stitches to Embroider a Bag*. In this class, we will learn four stitches to complete a sample of embroidery typical to the 16th and 17th century, which can then be made into a bag or purse. Our stitches for this project are **Chain Stitch** (or Reverse Chain Stitch, also known as Lazy Daisy) for lines, **Corded Detached Buttonhole** (which I tend to call Detached Buttonhole throughout instruction videos) for filling, **Double Ladder Stitch** for vines, and **Spiderweb Rose** (also known as Woven Rose) for centres of certain flowers. (I'm calling the spiderweb rose a bonus stitch because it is not used in all elements and was not part of my original class concept, but I wanted to include it.)

Patterns for this class have been derived from a woman's coif in the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, accession number 34.226, dated to the late 16th or early 17th century, worked in silk and metallic (silver and gold) threads on linen. You will find a picture at the end of this document for colour reference, or you may check <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/66155/womans-coif> for the museum entry. Patterns have been drawn by the instructor and edited by the generous Amber Cantell of Trinovantia Nova, and may be used freely with credit, but may not be sold.

The patterns for this class are designed to be interchangeable. You may follow any of the three patterns provided (honeysuckle and rose are traditional, Ontario native flora is designed by me), swap out elements using the set provided, or design your own. Shrink or enlarge your selected pattern to the size desired (mine fits within a 6" frame), then transfer onto your fabric using your preferred method (light table and pen or pencil is mine). Set your fabric in a hoop or frame, and you're ready to stitch.

Materials needed are:

- woven cloth, not too tight nor too loose (linen is traditional, but cotton will do nicely)
- embroidery floss (silk is traditional, but for this class I am using 2 strands of DMC cotton floss)
- metallic threads, if desired (I am using DMC – not necessary but looks very nice)
- embroidery needle of choice (I use #28 tapestry, which is blunt with a long eye)
- sharp scissors or snips (if using metallic, consider devoting a pair just to that)
- appropriately sized hoop or frame
- sewing thread and lining material for bag

For stitch instructions, please see the playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYJNXWiCjkXBE63iTbg9fDjcB76Lm-z7E> **prior to class**. Only the second video **"Stitch Instructions"** is required viewing, but the other videos show the stitches in context rather than only in practice, and may be helpful. For new embroiderers or those who might like a refresher, I have a playlist on techniques before you stitch as well:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYJNXWiCjkXADuILSbOGJlaxWCdrAX2jx>

I highly recommend practising the stitches on scrap fabric first.

Begin by outlining elements in chain stitch or reverse chain stitch, then filling with corded detached buttonhole. As you can see in the extant example, stitch direction and colour choice are not based strictly in realism, so do not feel constrained to do so either. Add chain stitch veins and spiderweb rose centres as desired over filled elements for detail. Follow vines with double ladder stitch.

Once you have completed your embroidery, remove it from the frame, hand wash gently (if able, given relative colour fastness of materials), dry, and press. With right sides together, stitch sides (and bottom, if pieces are separate), doing the same with the lining. Turn piece right side out, place lining inside, then stitch outside and lining together at top, adding drawstring casing if desired.

Questions? Comments? Want to show off your beautiful work? Email me at Amelye.Merriman@gmail.com, or message me on FB. Happy stitching!









