
Free-form Needlepoint Sampler with Anna Maria Parry

Chapter 1 - Needlepoint Sampler

Overview

(upbeat music) - Hi, I'm Anna Maria Horner, I am a designer and author. Tapestry is known for it's very traditional basic tenth stitch or angled stitch but there are actually so many beautiful and illustrative and very ornamental type of designs that can actually fill your canvas up fast and in fact, even though it has a very structured base for the cloth that you work the design onto, you can be as spontaneous and freeform as you like. Much like embroidery but with the security of that underlying grid work to start. We're going to cover the basic tenth stitch with three different methods of creating it. We're also going to do a diamond eyelet stitch, a leaf stitch, the Milanese pinwheel, the Byzantine stitch and the wicker stitch. I'm also gonna give you a few of my personal tips on how I built a really beautiful palette for your sampler. The beauty in learning the techniques of each of these six stitches and there are so many more, this is just the beginning, is that you can combine them any way you like to create this beautiful collage of stitches and just sort of use your own sensibilities about what kind of beauty you wanna make. (upbeat music)

Materials

- The materials for needlepoint are pretty straightforward and basic. You need to begin with a mesh or needlepoint canvas. I'm using 13 count canvas which means it has 13 stitches per inch. And we'll talk a little bit more about that once we start stitching. This is a really beautiful wool. It has a nice little fuzzy edge to it which when you're blending colors together it actually helps those colors look like they transition one to the other if you want to do some really naturalistic work. I have five different colors here of what you consider sort of a floral or blossomy kind of shades. I have two neutrals, some tonal grays that look nice to each other but one's a little deeper than the other. And then I have a high contrast pair here. I have an almost black charcoal and this nice sort of muddy white I guess you would call it, it's almost like a putty white. I also have some leaf and stem shades over here, two different colors of green and a nice bright brown for stems and really it doesn't necessarily have to be stems, it could be whatever you want, but this is sort of like a nice full floral colored palette. And I also have just a couple of other nuts and bolts to this whole the setup. I've got some masking tape to put around the edges. I have an assortment of tapestry needles, but today we're going to use a size 22 tapestry needle and a tapestry needle is different because it's blunt on the end. We'll talk more about that when we get started. I also have some simple thread snips or in this case, wool snips and a pencil.

Setting up the canvas

- There are lots a different ways that you can get started on a needlepoint canvas without designing your own. There are several kits out there on the market. I actually design a line of kits for Anchor and they come with a screen printed canvas that already has the design printed on there and you just stitch, usually it's a typical tent stitch that you would perform on this, that would be the most traditional, and you just stitch and follow the color. Now the screen printed canvas is really great because you can just follow and stitch by color as you go but the screen printing process its self doesn't pay careful attention to all the individual stitch positions that are present in the mesh, so sometimes you might come to a stitch position and there might be two or three different colors

printed right over it and you have to stop and make the decision about which color of wool you want to stitch with, and that's where comes in a much more luxurious form of needlepoint and that is a hand-painted canvas and it's actually stitch painted. So it's almost like a pixelated form of the design and the design is hand-painted on there, but all the edges are painted individually stitch per stitch so you know just exactly which color to use in that position. Pretty expensive, but you're really creating a piece of art so why not start out with a piece of art? We're just going to be building our own design, starting out with this raw piece of needlepoint mesh. The cool thing about this mesh, actually, is it has a lot of sizing in it which makes it nice and stiff, so you don't have to use a hoop or a frame. There are special needlepoint frames out there, but for the scale that we're gonna do, nice and small, we're not really gonna need it. This is actually a fat quarter yard cut of needlepoint mesh. You can buy it precut in packages and in some specialty needle workshops, you can buy it by the yard and get exactly what you need. This would do a couple different samplers or designs and I'm just gonna start off by deciding how big I want it. Our final piece is gonna be about eight by eight, so you can take a measuring guide if you want it and draw out the size perimeter that you want your design to have and then give yourself a nice one or two inch border all the way around and cut that out, 'cause you don't wanna be working with this big piece the whole time. And because the weave of this mesh is this nice, grated straight line, you don't have to necessarily use a straight edge to draw, you can sort of let your pencil nestle down into a row on the grid, and again, if you want to get out your measuring device and straight edge to make this a little easier or more precise, you can do that, but I'm just sort of eyeballing it for now. It's a little bit fun, like you're on a bumpy road. Makes a cool sound too. Alright, sort of square-ish. So now what we're gonna do, is we're gonna cut around and I'm just again, gonna give myself about one or two inch border around and again, you can follow the weave of the canvas and settle your scissors between two rows. Think I'll stop there. The reason you don't wanna cut right up against your drawn line is because we're actually gonna tape the edges of it to make it smooth and you don't wanna tape into... your design work. Set that aside. So now because this is sized, this canvas, or mesh it's pretty rough and actually a little sharp and if you were to leave that free and open there, as your wool stitches along the side and you have it laying off the side, it could get snagged and kind of roughed up, so you want to secure those edges and make 'em nice and smooth with just a bit of masking tape. Extra awesome if your masking tape is magenta. So lay the tape over so that about half the width is going off the edge. You can kinda see through the masking tape usually even this pretty color, and half of it is taping onto the edge. Just give it a nice press down and then we're gonna wrap it. I didn't do any really careful measuring of the tape 'cause I can just trim off these edges, so that we can turn and tape the next side. And we don't have to tape this edge if we don't really want to, but it is a little rough so I'm still gonna do it. I like knowing that the only edges that my wool is gonna be laid across are smooth edges and there is actually no shame to having several needleworks travel along side you in life, for weeks, for months, for years, that is the nature of needlework. It is a slower process but such an enjoyable one, that I like I having lots of mid-progress works. Okay, so all of our edges are smooth and now I'm gonna to show you how to thread a needle.

Stitches

Tent stitch variations

- As I mentioned before, this is a blunt-tip needle, it doesn't mean it's not a little pokey, but it's

certainly not sharp. And the reason for that is that, as you stitch through the canvas, each of your stitches is going to share a same hole with another stitch. And as you pierce the canvas that already has a stitch in it, you don't want to pierce the wool. And so with a more blunt tip, it's easier to avoid piercing or snagging the wool. This is our wool, and there's usually two free ends. Typically the end that seems a little bit more nestled towards the center is the more free one and you can just pull it out. Now, as with lots of needlework, there's sort of a rule of fingertips to elbows in length that you wanna cut. And people have a tendency to want to cut a much longer thread than that, but I'm here to tell you, (laughing) you definitely don't wanna do that with wool. Because this canvas is really rough, this wool is gonna take a little bit of banging up every time it passes through the canvas and so if you're doing the same length over and over and over again for a longer amount of time because you've cut a really long length, by the time it gets down to the bottom, you're gonna have what's kind of called threadbare. It's gonna have gotten so fuzzed up that the actual texture of the wool will have changed a whole lot. So short lengths, and just if you wanna go ahead and get several needles and thread a bunch of them all at once so your heart doesn't break every time you're at the end of a thread, then do that. But I promise you that once you get the hang of threading it's not gonna be that big of a deal. Even though this is a pretty large eye for a needle, you're still gonna do this one little process to sort of sharpen this fuzzy wool into a nice little point to get it in. And I do that by wrapping around the needle, pulling the wool so I've made a tight loop against the needle and then sliding it off. And then you can see in my hand, I just have the little tip of a nice, rounded fold of the wool. And you actually sort of needle the thread more than you thread the needle, if that makes sense, you take the tip of the needle down over the wool. And see, I've pressed that fold through? And now it makes it easier to pull through. You will never get a cut end of wool into a needle very easily. And now we're threaded. And there's no knot at the end, we're gonna start off just with a loose end. And speaking of starting off, let's start with the basic tent stitch. There are three different ways to do this standard angled tent stitch, and really that's sort of like a whip stitch around the canvas. And they all look basically the same from the front but looking at the back of the work is what reveals which method, which of the three methods you used to perform the stitch. In my book, Anna Maria's Needleworks Notebook, in the needlepoint chapter, I've illustrated those three methods of creating the tent stitch by showing this graph of sequence of entering the canvas here from the bottom, going down into the canvas here and then straight down on the back. These pink stitches represent what you see from the front side of the work and this sort of pale brown stitch represents what you see from the back of the work. So in the front, everything is angled and in the back, everything is vertical. And this would do your work in horizontal rows, or you could also turn the canvas in your hands and do it in vertical rows, depends on how you orient the canvas. This method uses the least amount of wool possible, it conserves the amount of wool. And it's actually referred to sometimes as the half cross stitch, and that's the one that I'm gonna show you first. I'm just gonna arbitrarily, for practice sake, pick a point to start, and we start from the back side. And again, we don't knot our tail, we just pull through and the great thing about this mesh is it's so easy to see through compared to working on fabric for embroidery. So I can see that my tail is about there. I'm gonna hold it in place with my finger underneath, and then with my row of stitches here, I'm gonna trap that tail underneath them. So I've entered here, I'm gonna go up one and over one. And pull through. That's one stitch. And then I'm going straight down below where I just exited the canvas. And coming up again. That's two. And down again. Now there are two different motions you can take when you're stitching. Right now I'm doing what's called stab stitching, which sounds horrific but kinda cool. Because I'm just poking the needle down

and then poking the needle back up. So I'm using basically two motions to perform every single stitch. And it's fine to continue that way. You see, here's a perfect example of why it's a good thing that there's tape right there, 'cause it gets caught on the corners. Doing the stab stitching is a perfectly good way to stitch. And just poking in and out prevents your canvas from getting warped as much as it could by what is known as continuous stitching, and I'm gonna show you that now. A continuous stitch would be if you enter the canvas with the needle and then come back up again, a little bit more like a whip stitch. So I've gone down and up in one motion. And you can see that I've had to kind of pull up on that canvas thread there, and possibly stretch it out a little bit. But that's actually what I do more frequently because it saves time. So it's a little bit more, it's almost like a darning stitch, the way it feels in your hand to do it. Now some folks think that that stretches the canvas out a little too much for their preference but in my personal experience, which isn't vast, if you maintain a similar pull and technique throughout your whole canvas, it's gonna sort of even itself out in the end. And there is a process for blocking, just like you would block in crochet or knitting, you can block a canvas as well to kind of stretch it back into the shape that you want. So now I'm at the bottom, sort of, of the two stitch positions on this row which has me at the top of the next row. So instead of going again here, out to the side, I'm gonna go to the angled stitch downward. And you can see already that these stitches share from one row to the next a similar hole. So the top portion of this row is going to share with the bottom of the next. And so I'm just stabbing again. But I could do this continuously, but I have to sort of shift it in my hands how I hold it. Oftentimes when I work, even on a small scale like this, I like to keep all of my work pretty compact and I'll roll it up. And this stuff is very sturdy, so don't feel like you're gonna hurt it. And you can press it out and block it when the whole work is done. I'll roll it up in my hands like this, just so I can sort of comfortably hold all of it in one hand. So now that I've kind of got my whole palm wrapped around this work, I feel like I'm a little bit more in control of it. And here's continuous, an example. Now continuous is a little bit trickier when you're occupying a stitch position that already has wool in it because what you don't want to do, you don't want split the previous stitch with the needle. So I'm just gonna do stabbing here. And the canvas itself, as it starts out really rough, this is really really firm, the longer you work with it and the more stitches you perform, it starts actually kinda softening in your hands the longer that you work with it. I actually really love when a canvas starts getting to the place where it drapes a little bit in your hands, which will happen because you'll be taking this guy all around life with you for a few days. Okay, I have two small rows done here. The more that you do, the more that you can see the texture of what's happening on the back. I've got the beginnings of another sampler that I've been working on, and in fact, you can tell how much more soft this is just by the little bit of work that I've done already. This little patch right here will show you those sort of straight little up and down stitches with the half cross method. They look a little thicker here because that's the tail that I trapped at the top and I actually passed the needle through the stitches at the end of my length of wool here, and let me show you that now on what I have started already. Even though we're not quite to the end of this wool, you can see how simple it is to finish off any length. So if you've come to where you don't need to stitch with this color any more, or you've just stopped because the kid's getting off the bus, that's it. Wool is so nice and fuzzy, it's so grippy on its texture, that it actually doesn't need a big, long security length in the back, you can just cut off a short amount after passing through about five or six stitches. Now I'm going to show you the continental stitch version of creating the tent stitch, don't get confused, this is just the second of three methods, all performing the tent stitch. This one is referred to as continental. This is the continental stitch illustration. Again, the pink stitches represent what's

happening on the front of the work and that pale brown represents what's happening on the back. And you can see, compared to the half cross, the back of the work also has an angle, but it's a deeper angle, it just across two whole stitch positions. So you start here and go up and instead of going right next to that hole, you jump all the way down to the bottom of the next stitch and up and then jump down to the bottom of the next stitch and up. In this instance, we're going to be putting a lot more wool on the back of the canvas that we did with the half cross. Remember, the half cross was a very conservative way to use your wool. By putting more wool on the back, or in other words, having about as much wool on the back as you do on the front, you're creating a more stable canvas. And that was really good back when they used to do needlepoint a lot for upholstery or whole entire couches, you wanted a really stable cloth, because that's essentially what you're doing here, you're building a cloth. And having a lot of wool on the front and a lot of wool the back is a really strong cloth. So again, we enter from the back... Then keep going until I've got about an inch, three quarters of an inch maybe, of that tail, that I'm sort of gonna hold, and I'm gonna angle up to the top right again of the stitch. You always want all your stitches to be going in the same direction with this tent stitch, regardless of the method. And instead of going straight down and heading over to the right, I'm gonna jump and work from right to left so that I can get that deeper angle, I'm hopping all the way over here to be at the bottom of the next stitch. And back up again. I like the way this method feels to do it continuously and not stab stitching, I like poking down and then coming over in there. It has like a really nice kind of whip stitch feel to it. See, I'm going down to the top of that stitch and then jumping over to start at the bottom of the next. And there is really no top, down or sides when you're working in tapestry or needlepoint because you can continue to reorient the canvas in your hands, however you're most comfortable pulling the stitches through. Like you might twist it this way and then that really means you're kind of almost working vertically, which if that's more comfortable, you can do that as well. Or if you're left handed, you might be more comfortable flipping this way and whipping the stitches. I don't always use one method to complete an entire canvas, I might switch between them and use whatever seems like it makes the most sense in any particular area. And it really all depends on sort of the shape that you're filling, because that's what you're doing when you're needlepointing, especially with a printed canvas or a painted canvas, you have this sort of defined color area that you're stitching through. And I just kind of do what makes the most sense for that shape. I'm gonna start a second row now, again using the continental stitch, which means I'm gonna go down but then I'm gonna hop over to the top now, because I'm headed now from left to right instead of right to left. So I'm working top down instead of bottom up. So down at the bottom and then hopping over to the top of the next. You might notice how nice and puffy these stitches are. This is a pretty thick wool for this canvas, and there is a correlation between just the right amount of wool thickness and the size of the holes, or the count of the canvas that you're using. If I were using a thinner wool, the stitches would be less puffy, they'd be more like lines. But with a tent stitch, if you have a nice puffy tent stitch, that means that the other more less sort of stitches are gonna fill in as well too. And again, if I wanted to do this continuously, I would sort of adjust how I'm holding this in my hand so that it would be comfortable for me to poke in and then out of the canvas again. And this canvas is pretty stiff still so that might not be as comfortable to do until a little bit later. Okay, and you can see those deep angles on the back of this, even with just two rows, you can already see how these two methods look different. And see how puffy that is on the back. There's just as much wool on the back as there is on the front. I'm gonna go ahead and finish off my tail here, even though I'm not quite out of wool yet, by just passing through carefully. You don't wanna tug too tight. Just as much tightness as you would

have with a regular stitch. Next I'm gonna show you the third version, or method, of making the tent stitch, and that's called the basket weave. And you're not gonna believe how it got its name, it's because it kinda looks like a woven basket on the back of the canvas, which is really beautiful. It tends to be sort of one of my favorite stitches and it's kind of considered a superior one because you're not always taking the stitches at one single angle or another, you're pulling up and you're pulling across and up and across. So the thought is that it's kind of pulling the stitches at some opposing angles so that the piece that you end up with hasn't all warped in one direction or another in terms of its stretching, so that's why it's considered superior. With this stitch you're working rather at an angle than in rows, so you're starting at the bottom of a stitch and going up, and instead of going at an angle or right next to it like our previous methods, you're gonna jump two whole stitches over to go the bottom of the next row and up. Jump two whole stitches over, bottom and up. So again, pink stitches represent what's happening on the front and these long brown ones represent what's happening on the back. So you might guess that this method takes the very most wool out of all of the methods but it makes a beautiful back surface, I can't wait to show you that. So you've worked up diagonally one direction and then you'll come back diagonally in the next. So after you've reached the top stitch that you wanna do and you need to fill in underneath, you jump all the way down to the bottom and up and jump down and over and down and over. Let me show you that now on canvas. So I'm entering at the bottom of a stitch. Because I'm gonna be going at an upward angle towards the left, that's where I'm gonna hold my tail underneath so that I can catch it. All right, so what happens is we enter top right as we have, but we're gonna jump across a whole stitch and come out, and I'm doing that continuously, as you can see. So doing this one, it seems a little weird at first, 'cause it seems like you're just leaving blank spaces between the stitches. But you're gonna come back as you pass back down on an angle and fill those all in. Which has this kind of weird satisfying quality to it, actually. This, to me, more than any of the stitches feels, I don't know, it feels a little bit more like knitting or it feels a little bit more like a bi-lateral motion, I think because of that big jump that you're doing. Oops. I make mistakes all the time too, by the way, and sometimes I don't notice it until later. So be patient with yourself. If you wanna see that in a more straightforward kind of stabbing method, I'll do that for you. So up, and then all the way over to the bottom of the next angle. Oops, there I go again. Okay, so we have this nice little angled row, what we're gonna do now is fill in below it and it's gonna just nest all these next little stitches in here so beautifully. So I'm not coming up here like I was before and I'm not going inside here, I'm starting at the lower side of the next stitch below and then I'm nesting in between. Once the logic of this stitch made itself known to me, I fell in love with it. And I loved just the feeling of going back and nesting all my little stitches into one another. The thing that's different about this is each time you're entering and leaving the canvas, you're not going into a stitch quite yet that's already been occupied. You're going in between. You will eventually occupy stitches as you do successive rows, but these first two sort of have their own space, which feels really nice. And once you work out quite a bit of this, you'll see that the top texture of this basket weave, I'm gonna go up the other way now, so I'm at the bottom and going in and then I'll do continuous on this row up. And you can see my needle is going this way as I go up and my needle's going this way, vertically, as I come down. You can see that, especially once you do a bit more of this basket weave, that it kind of creates a different texture of stitching on the front surface. I think that when you compare it to the half cross or the continental stitch, it's really hard, even for very experienced stitchers to not make it apparent that these others were done in rows. You can kind of see them as almost, they create lines, and when you see a lot of it together, you can kinda see it happens in rows. But you can already see

that this looks even more woven from the front, even though it's the exact same stitch, the method that's been used to create it, look at that beautiful little weaving, it might be kinda hard to see on that dark fabric, especially with that a little fuzzy right there. But it creates a very smooth look from front to back. Gonna jump all the way straight down. No angles, that's another thing to remember is there are no angles in this stitch on the back of the canvas. Gets a little knotted sometimes, so... Just gotta be patient and go backwards. This is sort of an ideal method when you're filling in sort of an irregular shape that might, itself, already be going at an angle. You can just really quickly fill this in at an angle as well because that's the way the stitch naturally works. Sometimes it's not gonna make sense, if you only have this little skinny section of color to be going at an angle, it really wouldn't work. So that's why, even though you might find a favorite method, it's really nice to understand all the methods. And I think that people shy away from needlepoint because it feels like there's rules. I definitely think of the traditions and the different methods of creating them as sort of like something to learn from. You can let it inform you but not restrict you if you decide you wanna do it a different way. So have fun with it and find your favorite tent stitch method. And now we're gonna make some beautiful illustrative stitches.

Byzantine stitch

- The next stitch that I want to show you is called the Byzantine stitch, and it's essentially this long, angled stitch and it goes in pretty stair-step fashion, and you're gonna find out something really great about these more or less stitches especially the long ones is they fill canvas really fast. That small tent stitch that I've shown you already is a great filler stitch for between these beautiful, illustrative ones, but it's a little slower cause it's just one little stitch at a time. These cover about three or four stitches at one single motion. So this is a little diagram of the Byzantine stitch here, and you see it's starting to take this stair-step motion. The method of making it is just these long, angled stitches. Instead of going to the next diagonal hole, you actually jump three up and over all at one time, enter and then exit and then enter again all the way down here. So you might imagine that each time you go across and down, you're essentially wrapping large parts of the canvas together so the back looks very similar to the front in this work. So again, you work this long stitch over, you do four of them before you drop down and start going straight down, and then once you've done four there, you drop over and start going horizontally. So it's just, you pay careful attention to how many you've done so you know if you need to drop down, but stitching it out will illustrate that really well for you. So I'm just gonna sort of again arbitrarily start here since this is just our practice canvas, and I've stopped pulling the yarn all the way through, and I have about a half-inch or three quarters of an inch and we're gonna be working down at an angle, but for a little bit just straight across, so I'm gonna hold my thread out here straight across. Now, instead of going right up to here, we're gonna be doing a longer angle, and that is over three, one, two, three, and up three, one, two, three, and that's where I'm gonna enter. Once you've done one, that angle is gonna inform where the next ones go, cause they just go right next to each other. So we have this nice, perfect, long, diagonal, 45-degree stitch, and we're gonna come down right next to where we were, and then exit right next to where we exited the first time. So in a way it's like making a giant tent stitch, but we're wrapping the canvas. So that's three of them. And this is the fourth one. Once I've done the fourth one, I'm no longer gonna go out to the side, but I'm gonna drop down, and that means that I begin the next stitch just below the previous. So it's right below. You can see where that last one started, and then it ends right below where the last one ended. So now I'm going down a step. Do I have it in the right spot? Yep. This third stitch down that I just finished marks, sort of, the turning corner, so

the next one will start going horizontally again. This will logically start, this will, sort of, actually become muscle memory after you've done it enough times. Again, that's the outer corner. This is the third one over, now I'm gonna drop down below. And this is a pretty easy stitch to also do continuously where you do your needle down and up in one single motion. But the trick with that is making sure you come up in the right spot cause you have to stop and think, I'm actually turning to the right here on a horizontal again so instead of going below I'm gonna go beside. Continuous stitching is something that might be more comfortable for you after you've been doing stab-stitching for a little while. You're already forming this nice little puffy stair-step, which I absolutely love. Now it's time to drop below again. And one more before we start turning to the right on the next step. Actually, I think it would be beautiful to fill a whole canvas with nothing but Byzantine stitch. They're so pretty in multiple stripes all worked together in different colors. You also want to make sure that you don't keep the needle on the thread in the exact same place for long because that tug on the needle can wear out the thread so you want to keep kind of sliding it every couple of stitches if you can. I sort of naturally do that in my hand but you see how there's that bend there? That's because I left the needle there for a while, so it can start kind of roughing up and wearing down your wool, so you sort of want to continuously slide the needle on the wool into a different position. But see how fast? I've already covered way more canvas with this stitch in about half the time that I did with those tent-stitches. I'm coming pretty close to the end of this length of wool, so I'm just gonna go in one more, and then flip it over and pass the needle through these big puffy stitches and trim. If you wanted to continue with that same color of brown, you can just thread your needle again and pass through those back stitches without having to hold the tail because you've already got some stitches there to secure your next length of wool and continue your Byzantine stitch.

Leaf stitch

- The next stitch that I'm gonna show you is the leaf stitch. This one nestles one to the other, really, really pretty. And, in fact, an entire canvas filled with these stitches in one or multiple colors would be beautiful. You can see here in my book the diagram of your sequence in stitching out the leaf stitch is a symmetrical one. And again, it's long angled stitches, but they work themselves up in a straight row, and then they start kind of fanning and turning over, and then work themselves back down the other side. And they nestle together so beautifully that I think you're really gonna enjoy this one. And I think is a pretty easy one to get the rhythm of the stitch rather quickly. When you begin this one, you'll be beginning either at the outer side or the inner side. I sort of like beginning at the outer side. I think it's better if you're sending your stitches into the canvas in the center of the leaf. It sort of ends up with a better texture. This angle isn't an exact 45 degree angle like the Byzantine stitch was. It's over three and down four, and once, again, you get that first one set, the others can follow it pretty easily. So one, two, three over, and one, two, three, four down. So it's almost a 45 degree angle, but it's a little steeper than that. And then you're gonna follow the angle with a duplicate stitch right above. These first three are exactly the same, one on top of the other in this little angled column. Okay, pretty easy. And then we're gonna start fanning our way in towards the center. So we're gonna go up one again, but instead we're gonna go in towards the center. And then we're gonna end it down right above, again. And then one more time we're gonna fan in. We're gonna go up one and over one. And then end right above this exit row here. And the next stitch is the top center stitch, so up one, whoops, and over one again. And we're not gonna go all the way down to the bottom. We're just gonna skip over two holes and go in. Okay, now we've got half the

leaf plus the center little sprig there. And then we're just gonna mirror image and repeat all the way around. So we're gonna go over one and down one. And what's cool about a symmetrical stitch is you can find its exact opposite across the canvas here. And you're gonna wanna kind of die this stitch or end this stitch in the same hole that the same matching angle did on the other side. So that's gonna be right there. And then, over one. Whoops, over one and down one again. And stack right below it. And see we're sharing a center row here, which is really giving that leafy shape. Over one and down one. And then these stack one, two, three on top of one another. Again, you can see how quickly these longer stitches fill up the canvas. And then you have yourself a beautiful little leaf. One of the things that's so stunning about creating these sculptural stitches with wool is that you're not just exemplifying their design or their shape with the color of wool you've chosen, but the actual dimension of the wool itself going into shadow and getting hit with light is furthering that illusion of it being a shape. This leaf really looks like a leaf because that deep shadow down the center life looks like the way the leaf shadows. A real leaf shadows in the center, and I just think it's so beautiful. The next leaf is gonna begin at this lower corner and nestle in right above it, but, instead of just jumping from where I ended down here all the way up to there, I'm actually gonna pass my needle through these stitches as if to finish, but I'm not gonna finish. It's just a little bit more desirable to tuck all your big loops underneath work on the back, so that you don't have any big open loops on the back. It keeps it looking a little prettier, and it keeps it from snagging your fingers or your needle as you work. I just came unthreaded there. Let me pop that back in. So you can continue with the same color. I might have enough wool on this needle to do one whole one. Let's see what happens. So, again, we're gonna start right here. This is exactly where we started this other leaf. And these nest in sort of in an alternate pattern. Not one above the other. They sort of zigzag a little. And then, we're gonna finish it right down here at the tip of this other one, which, again, the logic of how these work themselves out, one right up against another, is so, to me, just pleasing and enjoyable, because, once you've done a little bit, you can sort of not focus quite as hard and relax. And now we've done that three in a row. Gonna go up and over one, up and over another, and then our top center only jumping over to and entering the canvas. And it looks like I've probably run out of enough wool to finish the other side. So you know what I think would be really cool, what if we did one leaf with a light green on one side and a darker green on another? So, again, we're gonna pass the beginning tail to those existing stitches on the back. And we've already done that top center step, so we're gonna drop over on the other side, then down one and over one, and then complete the second side. The leaf stitch is really one that is very easy to customize. You could have a big tall long leaf. You can make the angle a little steeper or wider. This exact one, though, works itself out really well to fit one into the next. So if you were to change the angle, you might have to work out how they fit one to the next. But simply making it taller by having a lot more than just that three matching stacked row there, you could have ten all the way on top of each other and make a nice long, almost like a palm leaf. So, that's really cute just like that. Even though I've been doing this for a while, I still have to look back to my charts of the exact sequence of each of these stitches, cause they're all kind of unique and they all work themselves out in a different way. So don't worry about whether or not you hold all this stuff in your brain. That's exactly what the book is for and what the charts are for. So, I'm gonna go up and do another one so this sort of builds an angle going up this way. But you could go up straight out to the side of this one, straight out to the side of that one. You can really work this out any way that you want. And, again, I'm just gonna pass my loop here underneath some of the work to keep things kind of tidy on the back. And this next one's gonna begin right above the tip of the previous. Okay, that's our third. So that means

we start the fan, up and over one. Finish in the center. Up and over one again. Here's our top tip. Just jump over two there. Whoops. Come back here needle. Let's see where I ended up. Such a pretty little stitch. Okay, so that is the leaf stitch. So those are pretty just as they are, but let's say you had a little air in your canvas right next to that in some other shape you have done, and you wanna fill in. I'm gonna show you how you can just sort of keep going with that angled stitch, and really just make up any length that you want to of your leaf. So I'm gonna continue this, and let's say there's a big long palm leaf hiding behind these other smaller ones. So I'm just gonna continue that little stack of three. Remember our friends, the stack of three? I'm gonna make it maybe a stack of six or seven. I don't know. Once you know these stitches, you can take any parts of them that you like and build your design. No rules, and I think that because there's this grid and there's these traditional ways of doing it, people don't think that you can be freeform with it, but you really, really can. It's really fun, in fact, to do that. So see, it looks like this little small leaf is just sitting in front of this bigger one. Really fun little variation to the leaf stitch.

Wicker stitch

- The next stitch I'm going to show you is the wicker stitch. And this is a really beautiful stitch that covers canvas pretty quickly. It works itself out like a big basket weave, and you take kind of big long stitches again, but they go in opposing directions and fit together really beautifully. I really think that the wicker stitch is one that is beautiful as a background stitch to fill in lots of space fast and more interestingly, maybe, than just the regular tent stitch. But it's also a beautiful feature. Like this, it's all by itself, this little set of four here. Could be like a pretty little flower head if you chose maybe different colors for each little direction of it. So as you can see here, you take big, long stitches, skipping over three holes, and then again it's wrapping all the way down. This is your third position, four, five, six. And then you sort of start up here and go the other direction, and then here and go that way. But really the logic of it is really simple to figure it out. And each of these kind of tucks in underneath the bars of the other. The wicker stitch you can sort of start and continue in any direction. I'm going to start all the way at this top edge, because I'm using this light color. It might be pretty to show some light along the top edge of my work. You can start on any side of it. You're just working in sections of three stitches. Now I've entered in one position, and I'm gonna skip over three and jump down into number four here. I'm just gonna hop right back up, making sure my tail is tucked underneath. And do stitch number two, and stitch number three. Pretty simple. So then what we're gonna do next is the opposing direction stitch is sort of going to cover up where we ended all of these, so that we don't leave any loose air in between them. So we're going to start over here on this side. This is sort of like our cover up stitch. And it's a really good indicator where we're supposed to finish this one because these middle holes here are occupied. In lots of other stitches you occupy the same hole. In the wicker stitch, everybody gets their own. Since this one works itself out in groups of three, it actually is perfect to use right up against the edge of your byzantine stitch, which also works itself out in groups of three. So let's go this way. I'm gonna start up here. I'm not gonna start, you can see that I ended right here. I'm not gonna start right here. I want to show you something that happens if you start right next to it. Sort of the mechanics of how stitches work. You see that when I pull a stitch right next to it, it sort of makes this entry into the canvas here sort of angle over this way, which is not quite as desirable, because it's kind of erring it to one side. So I'm gonna back out. I'm rather gonna start farther away over here, which is gonna force more of a wrap around a few stitches. And watch what happens to this stitch that we just finished down here. When I pull and I tighten, it straightens it out in a straight line, rather than kind of going over to one side to

jump to its neighboring hole. So that's just in this particular stitch, and they're all a little different. That's something that I noticed just about the way that it works out. So again you don't have to work these out in blocks, this can take a stair step just exactly the way your byzantine stitch did. So again I don't want to start right next to here, because see what happens when I lay this this way, on the back if I lay my thread going this direction it sort of starts taking this over. So I'm rather going to jump up here. And here's a good example of dying underneath this. So all these are hiding underneath here. They're gonna finish inside there. If you read any needleworks texts, they might refer to something called a compensating stitch. A compensating stitch is nothing more than filling in space between other stitches because sometimes even if you're meant to be putting lots of different elements right up against each other without any intentional error or background in between them. The way that each of them are performed might leave a visual hole. Yes, maybe all the holes are occupied with one stitch or another, but just the way that they come together might not fill the space visually as much as you would like. So compensating stitches very often just a tent stitch or something that goes in a similar direction as a neighboring stitch to sort of fill the space. I think I'm going to continue to build this one downward in a little stair step fashion. Even if you're working from a needlepoint kit, that is either screen printed, or painted, or you're just following a chart, you can actually follow a chart for needlepoint as well. Dropped my needle there. I think that this makes such a pretty background stitch, if you have a big area of a single color. Rather than performing a lot of tent stitches to fill it up I think this would be equally pretty. And just sort of activate the surface and make it a little bit more interesting. So that's the wicker stitch. And here's another example of the wicker stitch done in a little bit more of a rectangular shape and in a much darker shade. Even in this really dark wool you can see how pretty the shadows are from sort of that woven basket look. It's really beautiful.

Floral motifs

- The next two stitches that I'm going to show you are much more, what I would consider, floral in style and that is mostly because they have a center to them, which is just a very common visual of any type of flower, not all flowers, but that radiating, sort of design, lends itself to feelings a little bit floral or maybe like a star. So, the other way that they work out is they're very symmetrical on all four sides. They nest together really beautifully. The first one that I'm going to show you is called the diamond eyelet stitch and I think this one is such a fun one to stitch out. You can see in the diagram, here, this looks pretty intense but it breaks down pretty easily. It all forms, sort of, this asterisks and this design actually has eight different stitches all landing in one center hole, which actually, sculpturally, builds itself up quite a bit. So it's a very dimensional stitch. And it starts on the outside, works in, jumps up to this cross and works in, and then keeps going in, and in, and in. The other component to this design is this backstitch, that borders around, kind of connecting all the rays of the star. And you'll see once you get a couple of these next to one another, that you would really want something to fill in that space because of the tension on the stitch doesn't really fill this area where they meet. I'm going to start at outer left corner and this first long stitch, you start with the longest stitch, in this design. You just make a cross first and you jump over, one, two, three, and land in the fourth. Again, I'm kind of just hanging on to that tail, I'll probably be hanging on to it for a little while, because it will take a while to come back around again. And then we go straight up, one, two, three, come out at the fourth. Woops, I might have cut this a little too long. And then back into the center and then out to the right bar of the cross, skipping over three, back in the center and the bottom bar of the cross. Sometimes if you go too fast it will knot up on itself. Okay, so we've got the

cross done. Now what we're going to do is start working on, like, the X. And we do that, if you kind of make a visual line, of 45 degrees between these points of going at an exact angle, so you'll want to enter into this halfway point, between the left and topside bars, and again, down in the center. That'll feel like it's getting really packed in there but it's going to end up really beautiful. And then you're going to jump over here, to this halfway point on the diagonal between the top and the right and again down in the center. And as much as it might seem like an impossibility, you really do want to try and nestle your needle, that nice, blunt tip needle in between the stitches, and not through any of those lengths, if that makes sense. It's going to end up to have a much better stitch definition if it enters on it's own, without splitting any of the other stitches. And now at the halfway point between the right and the bottom bars and pack it in. And the last halfway point here. Alright, pretty. So now we have a cross and we have an X and what we're going to do next is we're going to fill in, remember there's a visual angled line there, and there's still some in between positions that we need to fill in. So we're going to radiate around the clock again, here, and we're not going to die these into the center, we're going to actually go underneath the bars and go the next stitch out from the center. I'm on this side, so I'm going to do the next stitch out on this side, just right next to the center. And if you sort of, float your needle underneath that long bar, there, you'll be able to feel where that is. So here's another example of kind of, sneaking underneath. We can sort of feel, right there, and you can try not to split the stitch that's above it. We have this spot to fill in. This one is very satisfying, filling in all those little spaces, nesting them in neatly, or not so neatly. It's a learning process and right over here, the first few times you do this one, you'll be following the diagram, after awhile you will do it much more intuitively, just by looking at what's been done so far. And last one over here, just nestling right underneath. Pretty, okay, so now we can build out. We can keep doing more and the edges of each of these, one to the next, they share the same holes. So the top center of this one is actually the left center of the next. So we're going to jump over three and again it makes logical sense that the center of this would be right above the very far right of that one. So again, the stitch itself is going to be information for you on how to preform the next. So you can continue building out like that and just about out of thread, on this, which I think is an opportunity to show you a fun variation in color. Let's see if I can get around the X of this, with just enough wool. And then I think I'll switch to a different color for the little fill in rays. Just barely, it's tight getting into that shared space. Definitely, this canvas that I'm working on, too, I noticed, compared to other canvases that I've worked on, it's got the same number of threads per inch, as any 13 count canvas, but all the threads are a little thicker than what I've worked on before. Which is fine, it's a very stable canvas, but it's going to make some of these stitches come through a little bit more tightly. So I'm going to flip this over and pass my stitches through, and then I'm going to choose a second color to complete the rays, for the rest of that little eyelet. Okay so this pretty shade of pink, I'm going to feed up an anchor through those backstitches there. Okay, now I'm going to do my little fill-ins with this pretty color. This one matches my tape really beautifully. These were some long stitches, sometimes call for something called laying the stitches, which you can do with, woops I think I accidentally, yep, I pulled out some of my back tail. There, sometimes you get the very fuzzy end of your tail caught and you bring it forward, not hard to pull back out. But laying stitches, basically means that you take, there are special laying tools, or you can use your needle to, sort of, put underneath and you see, you can smooth out the tension of them, so that they lay more smoothly and neater. They're quite liable, in terms of how they lay on the canvas, as long as you haven't overtightened them, It's important not to over tighten or make your tension too great on these stitches, especially the more sculptural ones. And again the blocking process that you can use

at the end of your work, just like in knitting and crochet, is something that will kind of help even out all the tension of your stitches. So now I'm also going to do a backstitch all the way around, which is really just like a straight stitch, but we're going to go on the angles and on all these holes that are already occupied. So I'm starting just at this corner where these two meet and I'm just taking an angled stitch up. And I'm going to go in a straight row, but because I can't come out where I just ended I'm going to jump ahead one and stitch back one, hence the backstitch. And then you jump ahead two, now that you're already back to that position and go back. And that just finishes out this with a really pretty edge, it could be done even in another color. This one is definitely pretty intense in terms of how much stitching you are performing in a small area, but it creates a completely different texture than the other stitches that I've shown you so far, and I think that is what is really beautiful about these types of works, is the variation in texture. This one is definitely more fussy, if there is such a thing, but I think the difference in texture makes a beautiful contribution to the whole piece. I want to show you another example too, of four of these diamond eyelet stitches worked out. All the four of these, placed one next to the other, in this sort of square set on point, versus the edges of my canvas, sort of creates a whole new diamond shape made up of four little diamonds, and it was just really enjoyable to play out different colors. And again speaking of laying stitches, you could go through here and smooth out your stitches, still again. And be patient with yourself if your tension isn't exactly the same, sometimes it's all we can do just to get the mechanics of a stitch working correctly, but you can see how already puffing that up and sort of, pulling all their tension to the same place on the front is going to smooth it out. Working on the mechanics of a stitch and the sequence, and how it works, is step number one. And then your sort of, artistry with it and your tension, and doing something that you're really, really proud of is what comes next. And speaking of, my very favorite stitch of this whole lot is the Milanese pinwheel stitch, which is this beautiful, sort of fan flower, that has a whole page all of it's own in my book. So the design of the Milanese pinwheel is basically eight triangles arranged in this sort of windmill fashion, hence the name pinwheel. And one section, or one triangle, is built with diagonal stitches across the canvas. Big long ones, this is going across probably 12 maybe 10 different holes, and then the adjacent triangle that turns itself, I don't know how many degrees, whatever, 36 maybe 40 degrees, is made up of straight, up and down, lengths and there's fewer. The angled section has eight stripes across, to fill up there. The straight section has six across. So these are big, long stripes of stitches and then again we turn. We alternate between the angled stitches and the straight ones. And so once we get back to the angle, we're working in this direction, and there are eight of them, and we flip with an upside triangle and work across horizontally with six. And they all, eight, of the center points die into one single hole, there. But it's a really beautiful stitch, it fills up lots of space fast. I have a beautiful project to show you that is nothing but these stitches packed together, And if you set them together, the way that is traditionally pointed out, you can see that this beginning of this next pinwheel, down here, set off to the right, the pinwheel above it is set off to the left, and so they all sort of tilt when they're put together, as closely as possible. And then the space that is left in between, if you have nothing but pinwheels and set them as close together as possible, would be, sort of, this cross on a tilt. And that can take on it's own, sort of, floral shape, as well, depending on how you worked it out with color. Because we're doing a stitch that is, sort of, floating out in the middle of nowhere, as a lot of these have been, and there are no adjacent stitches to easily pass our work through to anchor them, I want to show you an alternate method of beginning a stitch out in the middle of nowhere, particularly when it's a design that has really big, long stitches. It is definitely harder to trap your tail very snugly in place, as soon as you get started. And this method will have

you beginning with just a simple knot at the end of your length, which I'm going to do now. And that's just going to, kind of, hold it in place. And the other difference is going to be that we're actually going to start from the top of the work so our knot is visible, instead of from the back of the work where the tail is hidden. I'm going to start this big pinwheel over to the left side of it. And I actually want the knot to be well away from any of my work, so I'm going to just bring it over here. That is going to insure that all the following stitches that I take are going to cover this up. Can you see the way that that passes through there? So I'm going to start my pinwheel way over here and the way that my book shows you beginning is, sort of, on the left corner. You could really start anywhere but I like starting with the angled stitches first, because I think those are the easiest ones to figure out that set of eight, because they all just continue to grow one stitch bigger, on an angle. And they start off with a simple tent stitch. So you can see that knot is there and just holding that tail in place for you, instead of your finger having to hold it, and you can just forget about it for awhile. And then I go right below the first entry point and I grow the stitch longer to go up and meet that top horizontal row. So our entries and our exits are going to go in a vertical line, here, and then in a horizontal line, here, and it's going to grow a triangle and there's eight. This is three, four, five, six, seven and eight. We have a pretty little triangle turned on it's side, very woolly and sweet. You can expect to use three or four lengths of wool for just this one pinwheel design. So the beginning of the next triangle is going to start on its upper top point and we're going to build out again, but with vertical up and down stitches. And off of this point, we're going to count over three, I'm going to do that from underneath with my needle, one, two, three, here, and then we're just going to go up two, one, two. And that's where we come out and then we're just going to take a straight up and down stitch, jumping only one hole, and that's right underneath, here. And we're just going to do six of these. We did eight on an angle, we're going to do six here. The next one, just drops a stitch below, and again we're kind of tucking underneath and it exits a stitch above. So they keep getting longer, just like the angled ones. And if it looks like you're bending that first triangle out of shape, don't worry, just make sure that you don't split and go through any of the wool from the first triangle. You just want to tuck it out of the way, but you can lay it down smoothly, in just a bit. So that's four, we're going to go two more. And then this last one is going to end down in the center, sharing a hole with the longest stitch of the first triangle. And that's pretty much it. You can see, I can take my needle and sort of adjust the tension of these and lay them neatly. See how pretty that is? Those two different types of triangles, they really visually look the same, but they're built one with angled stitches and one with straight stitches. Those are the only two things you need to learn how to do for the pinwheel and then you just repeat that pair of triangles all the way around, in sort of, that spinning fashion. Just two long, lovely stitches to go, and this pinwheel is complete. That last one feels so good and down. Look how pretty that is. So again I'm just going to bury my needle in all this luscious work on the back, and remember that little anchor knot on the front? All we have to do is find that little knot and clip it. Okay, and then on the back, magically it has been buried in all that other work and you can trim it just a little bit closer. So there you've got a beautiful pinwheel.

Completing the sampler

- I wanna show you a sampler that I've worked up now using just those six stitches that I've already taught to you. A lot of the variations were just sort of developed organically as I went through the process of composing what I would really consider a collage of stitches. It feels, possibly, really complex if you see this first, but you can tell that, really, all the little elements that we have already

worked on are making themselves known here in mostly their pure form. Let's start with the tent stitch. You can see that in a lot of ways the tent stitch is just used as what I would consider a background stitch, because it is simple and small. It tends to lay flatter against the canvas, where the more dimensional stitches raise up. And, it's a really beautiful, compensating stitch. We talked about a compensating stitch as filling an air between irregular shapes in your design. And in some places I use it as a design element, for instance, here. This is all tent stitch in a straight, vertical row of color to sort of create a stem. I have a bit of that happening here. Over here, it's a little bit more striped between these tonal grays to create some interest. And, as well, I flecked in a few little bits of color to create these little speckles. But this is all just tent stitch in the background here. The next stitch that we learned was the Byzantine stitch. And you can see here that I've done several rows in different colors sort of gradating down. And I've even done it in this dark color, but I immediately went from that dark, Byzantine stair step, into a wicker stitch and a tent stitch. But, even though they're all three the same color, they create this beautiful dimension and create interest in the design because they're a different style of stitching. When I got to the edges, you can see here the way that I ended the stitch. I kept going down farther than I normally would. And here I just made my diagonal stitches shorter because I was ending the canvas in the same general row. I snuck in more Byzantine stitch up here on this top edge. But you can see here how I made it wider just to fill in areas. So again, I was taking this simple technique of the angled stitches, but really building out shapes that I found interesting. Very often when you start a piece, you'll wanna work either from the center out, or grow it all from one direction so that the tension that's created and the stretching of the canvas, either on the cloth if it's embroidery, or on the canvas if it's needle point. Sort of happens in a uniform and gradual way. It didn't quite work out that way with this piece because I really wanted to compose as much as I did build the stitches. So what I did is I started more with my larger elements and then filled in space between them. But I did keep in mind that I sort of wanted to generally start towards the center and then build out, but it's such a small piece that, over the large expanse, it did not get stretched out or warped very much at all, which was nice. The next stitch that we learned was the leaf stitch, and I've built it out here in this big section, and up here in little bits. And I've even done it in some of what you would call the background color again with that dark charcoal, and here as well. And here's an example of what we did with the leaf where we built it out longer. And then still over here it's a little bit different because it was right up against an edge so you only really see half of it. And over here I turned it completely on its side, which was just a matter of turning the canvas on its side and working it the other direction. And I also take inspiration from those angled stitches to just create this angled, almost leaf-like design, underneath this pinwheel, which feels floral, and like leaves, but it has the background color, and it really just resembles the angle more than anything. The next stitch that we learned was the wicker stitch, this one that looks like a basket. I've mostly used that in background elements. I've got it here in gray. Again, I have it here in that sort of raven, charcoal color, and I've even snuck it in little bits here. And, again, the same as in this bottom corner, it fits in. Since it works in sections of three, it fits in really nicely right up against that stair step of the Byzantine, which also works in sections of three. And then for our floral designs, we have the diamond eyelet stitch. We've got it and it's pure form here, how it's all one color of eyelet, and then backstitched in a second. And then here I did that again, but sort of irregularly placed them together like little sparkles. And I played around a lot with how the color rimmed the sides of these, and then even some extra color in the center. And then here I actually did two rows of backstitch around, which I thought was kind of fun and interesting. And then it sort of climaxed in this beautiful, big center design where there's a

different color in the center. And look at all that. This one feels really like a carnation, or something very petally to me, because there's a lot of texture and depth in one small area. And you can see that, when this design element came up against the pinwheel, I didn't stress out and say, I have to cut it off right here on this line and stop doing it and fill in with tent stitch. I went ahead and continued with my style of stitches of the diamond eyelet, but just stopped them where they had to stop in order to not cover up this pinwheel. And, in fact, I show the pinwheel in only half of a wheel right here. And then those are sort of what become the main flowers in the whole design. So I wanted to equally disperse them around the design. So we've created this beautiful sampler, but what do we do with it? Well, I can't stop thinking of ideas of where I wanna put needle work, but if you just wanted to do something really simple, like frame this work, before you do that, if it's not square, or if it's skewed a little bit, you can place pins in it into a board, like a blocking board, or you could even use a bunch of old quilts all together, anything that you can pin into and straighten it out, and mist it with some warm water, and let it dry over a period of maybe a day or two until it's completely dry. But pin it into place and straighten it out. I have an example in my book of how to do that, and there's lots of great resources to block your piece. You can also get it professionally blocked. If you were just going to give this to a framer, you could take it to them just exactly like this. There are some framers that include blocking as part of their services. If you're going to make this into a pillow, you would essentially trim out, but give yourself a seam allowance. In other words, if you wanted to have a 1/2 inch seam allowance, or a 5/8 seam allowance, you would wanna trip that far away. I would never trim closer than a half an inch to the edge of this work. And, in fact, if I were going to sew this into a finished piece, like a pillow or a bag, I would do another one or two concentric rows of stitches, just simple tent stitches, all the way around in a shade that matches whatever you're gonna sew it to. And that means that you have sewn up your seam allowance. You've stitched up your seam allowance, so as you're sewing around this into a pillow or anything that you've given yourself this border in case your seam isn't exactly straight, so that you're not gonna ever show any bare canvas in your finished piece. One of the things that I love to do is find practical applications for these finished works. And I think the most favorite project that I've ever made is this little clutch bag, and all it is is this simple Milanese pinwheel. But once I learned how to do it, I thought it was so beautiful I just wanted to repeat it in beautiful colors. The interesting thing about this and something that I hope you find encouraging about these projects is that I didn't use a traditional canvas. I used, actually, a fabric called ayeta cloth that's more typical for cross stitch because I wanted it to be softer. And I didn't use a typical tapestry wool. I used a finer cruel wool that I used two or three strands of it. I also decided that the background needed a little bit of glimmer, and so I just did a simple running stitch of gold metallic thread into that black ayeta cloth. It's truly a beautiful little keepsake for me, and I love carrying that. Another project from my book is this beautiful nouveau needle cushion, and it's quite flavor intensive for something that's so simple and utilitarian, but to me it's a real heirloom actually, and something that I hope will be treasured in our family for a long time. And you can see that it actually employs a lot of the stitches that we learned today. It has the diamond eyelet in the center, and that grows out to these pretty little leaves on every corner. And, in fact, you might not recognize it, but this is actually the Byzantine stitch here, but it looks a little bit more like a zigzag than it does the stair step, just because of the way that we have it shaped. We also have the basket weave along here, and it's filled in with this gray tent stitch. And on the back it's all Byzantine all the time, but done in this really pretty, radiating warm color scheme. And these big wool stitches that you see right here end up being a design element, but what it actually is is the seams between all of the edges of this canvas. Because

this canvas was first created on point, and my book describes how you do this. But to seam it together you actually pull the points in like this, and then you seam it all together and you can create a box. So that's something that you could do with this piece. Now it's no secret that needle point is a little bit time consuming, so you don't have to needle point an entire project. It can actually be the smaller part of a larger project like this bag. This is actually one of my sewing patterns called the escape artist tote, and it's very reminiscent of a carpet bag style. But you can see that all of this beautiful velveteen simply frames out a smaller needle work that I did with one of my anchor needle point kits. I hope you feel inspired to try your own needle point sampler, and remember that, just because there are traditions and there are techniques that have stood the test of time for centuries probably, it shouldn't stop you from making something wholly unique, and completely modern with needle point.