

# WORKSHOP NOTES

## PAINT & STITCH



Project 4  
a shared vision 2025

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[www.untangledthreads.co.uk](http://www.untangledthreads.co.uk)

## WORKSHOP VIDEO

You can find the video which accompanies this project on [www.untangledthreads.co.uk](http://www.untangledthreads.co.uk) The password to this section of the website is *thecollective* (in lowercase).



Forget any preconceived ideas you may have about 'embroidery' and what you 'can' or 'can't' do .. let's look at Mixed Media & Textiles!

This workshop will show you how to combine paint and stitch in lots of different ways - some of which you may or may not have come across before. Relax! It doesn't have to be messy or uncontrolled (but equally it can be if that's your preferred way of working!)

This may well be the first time you really let go and 'play' (combining surfaces, textures and media), but if you can open up and embrace the possibilities, I bet, it won't be the last!

Once you fully accept the fact that you can use stitching exactly how you like, be that decoratively and/or functionally, and that the surface you paint onto doesn't have to be paper or canvas, or even flat .. a whole new world of experimenting, recording and unexpected combinations will open up to you.

Have fun!

## WORKSHOP KITS

### For the GROUP PROJECT

Set of watercolour paints  
3" embroidery hoop  
DMC stranded cotton (Mixed)  
Muslin square  
Bondaweb  
Vlieseline G700



### For your own PROJECT

2 x A5 watercolour paper  
1/8" tape  
Bondaweb

ANYTHING from your own stash!



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# INTRODUCTION

In this workshop I want us to look specifically at Mixed Media, which, put simply, is about creating a single artwork by combining two or more materials or techniques. This can involve mixing paints, paper, and fabric with found objects, photographs, or natural elements.

To be honest, most of the work which we have undertaken together already has elements of mixing media: traditional stitching combined with needle-felting, fabric collage, inclusion of objects and the introduction of 3D elements, for example. But, this workshop will look specifically at combining painting with stitching in an almost counter intuitive way namely: stitching into paper, and applying watercolour paint to fabric.

To start us off, with the group piece, I'd like us to take a look at some very recognisable images: the series of interpretations of waterlilies painted by Claude Monet. Let's see how, as a group, we might be able to express the feeling of the subject by using watercolour, collage techniques and simple stitches.

I am hoping that making your contribution to the group piece and watching the video will lead you in a myriad of directions. The techniques shown in the remainder of the workshop are simply meant to act as examples. You don't have to try each one!

It might be worth pointing out that the specific term 'Multimedia' in reference to art work is that which includes digital technology in the form of sound or film recording.

## The Impressionists

The Impressionists were a group of French painters, active in the 1870s and 1880s, and were known for their focus on capturing fleeting moments with bright colours and visible brushstrokes. Their work was revolutionary at the time and the name "Impressionist" was initially used as a derogatory term. Most critics found fault with the obvious brushwork, taking this as a sign of hurried and unfinished work. They disliked the lack of draughtsmanship and vague forms.



Claude Monet  
'Impression, Sunrise' 1873

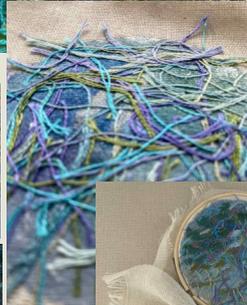
The Impressionists believed that art was subjective, and each artwork reflected the artist's unique perception of the world. Sounds familiar?



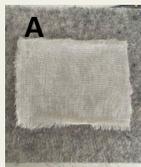
# GROUP PROJECT

We are going to make a piece of artwork called 'Impression, Waterlilies' based loosely on images of Monet's wonderful garden at Giverny (of which there are over 250 different versions). We will each make a small mixed media interpretation set within a 3" embroidery hoop (the hoops will form part of the artwork). Each section will be made with painted muslin, cut threads embedded and couched into bondaweb and finished with simple hand stitching. The hoops will be set against a canvas, with the soft muslin 'flowing' around each one.

If you look at a selection of Monet's waterlily paintings you can see that the majority of the visible brushstrokes are either horizontal or vertical. We will use the 'woven' quality to the marks as our starting point ...

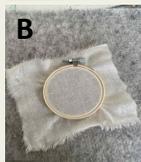


## Group Project



**A**

Start with a square of muslin measuring at least 140mm x 140mm



**B**

Set the embroidery hoop in the centre of the muslin.



For the group project only use a combination of GREEN, BLUE & PURPLE from your paint set.



**C**

Add random patches of paint to the surface of the muslin. Do not wet the muslin first!



**D**

Using a clean wet brush, with no more paint, saturate the muslin and watch as the colours run into one another. It's OK to leave some dry areas too.



**E**

Leave the paint to dry (or use a hairdryer to dry it quickly) Remove the embroidery hoop when DRY.



**F**

Cut a piece of bondaweb the same size as your painted area. Lay it glue (rough) side down onto the painted area.



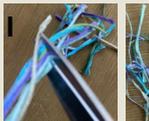
**G**

Iron the bondaweb onto the muslin, covering the painted area.



**H**

When cool, peel off the backing paper. (Keep the backing paper to one side, you'll need it again!)



**I**



Cut short lengths of thread from the bundle. Use as many colours as you like. Separate into single strands



**J**

Lay the strands of thread onto the bondaweb in roughly two layers .. one vertically and one horizontally. Precision is NOT vital!



**K**

Place the circle of backing paper over the threads and iron. Tuck any stray threads in, and repeat.



**L**

Cut a circle of G700 to fit the outside ring of the embroidery hoop. You will use this to stabilise the muslin layer and make it easier to stitch.



**M**

Place the G700 onto the back of your work (glue side down) and iron.



**N**

You will stitch through all layers. It is up to you whether you stitch with or without the embroidery hoop back in place.

# Stitching



How, where and how much you stitch is up to you. You can couch down the threads on the surface either as a consequence of your stitching or as a deliberate act. Don't be worried that some of the 'loose ends' of thread will inevitably poke up as you stitch. It's OK. It gives character. Keep stitching, layer upon layer, until you think it is finished. Leave it for a while, and go back and look again. It will tell you when it is finished. Remember that we are trying to give an 'impression' of the colours and marks made by Monet in his paintings. We are not trying to make a photographic replica (neither of the painting nor real waterlilies).



Think instead about the tonal differences in areas of your composition and the direction and thickness of your stitches. The most basic of stitches will be all you need. Don't forget some of the first samples we did were looking at how different the same stitch can look depending on how many strands from a 6-stranded thread you use at a time. Satin stitch and French Knots will be your friends!



Personally, I find it much easier to stitch without an embroidery hoop, but whether you use it or not is up to you. If you work without one, remember that ALL of your stitches must be contained within the painted area, and please remember to put your work back into the hoop before submitting it to me! If you work with the hoop, be careful not to catch the edges of your fabric into the stitching.



*The deadline for the Group piece, and your individual piece is 6th December 2025, but since we have Harrogate K&S before that, there really is no rush. Please DON'T SEND your work until at least the beginning of December. I would hate for it to get lost in any mayhem and confusion which might be happening!*

Trust yourself and have fun!

# INDIVIDUAL PROJECT

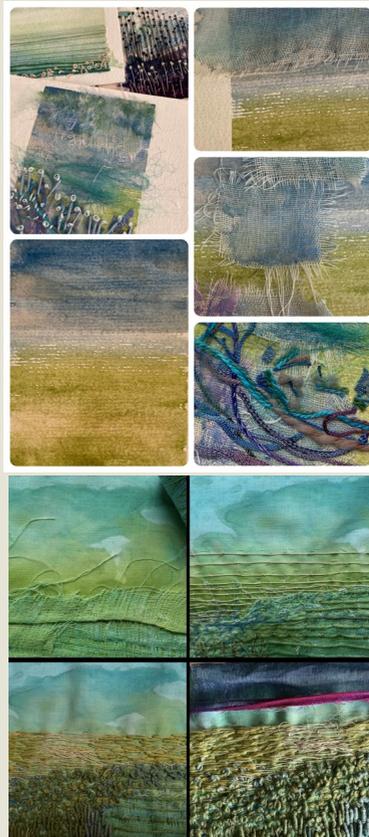
As I said in the introduction, I think that the combination of painting and stitching should give us the widest response to date, both in terms of techniques used and in the form your finished piece takes. Try the Group Project first and see if that inspires anything in you. I am particularly drawn to simple landscapes, but also love using stitch and layering as a means of combining pieces of painted collage.

I'd quite like you to try out a couple of samples before you embark on your main piece of work, but of course that's up to you. My hope is that you might like to watch the video (maybe a couple of times), jotting down any techniques or ideas which particularly appeal to you and maybe trying your own version of some of the following techniques:

1. Watercolour on paper, with the addition of a pricked and stitched motif.
2. Watercolour onto a wet and/or dry background, seeing what a huge difference this makes to the outcome.
3. Using different types of paint/pigment and how you might apply them.
4. Using painted bondaweb.
5. Taping and masking areas, and drying between layers.

All of these techniques are shown briefly on the next couple of pages, on the accompanying video, and you can also find loads of useful inspiration in the Stitchbook Magazines, as well as other videos via the Untangled Threads website, on YouTube, Vimeo and Pinterest.

**So, your task is to make a piece of artwork which combines paint (on fabric or paper) with decorative or functional stitching.**



## Sewing into paper

Stitched details can easily be added to watercolour painting on paper by machine or by hand.

The biggest problem with machine stitching is that if your stitches are too close together, it is easy to make a perforated line and the work becomes very unstable.

The advantage of hand stitching is that you can trace off a design by pre-pricking into the paper before stitching.

You can use bondaweb on paper to attach threads, yarn or sheer fabrics prior to hand of machine stitching. But be aware that the glue and the paper is very hard on a machine and will blunt needles very quickly. Having an old second-hand machine which you use just for mixed media is ideal.



## Wet or Dry Background

Issue No 10 of The Stitchbook Magazine (Handpainted Fabric) has an article dedicated to the difference between treated and non treated surfaces on fabric and the effect that adding water has. You may choose to wash your fabric before painting if you want the paint to soak in evenly, but to be honest, the delight of being able to replicate watercolour techniques like wet on wet is wonderful. I find that calico and muslin are brilliant surfaces to paint onto, and with practice you can create some really sophisticated effects.



## Different Types of Paint/Pigment

I am going to say here that as long as you don't want to wash your work, you don't mind if it fades over time and you don't intend selling it through a commercial gallery, how you add colour to your paper or fabric is completely up to you. My feeling is, if it works and gives the effect you were looking for, great. If it doesn't, try something else!

Look in Issue 10 of The Stitchbook Magazine for a very quick guide to the different paints and pigments which you are most likely to come across. You need to be aware that acrylic paint will alter the 'feel' and 'drape' of the fabric because it is effectively adding a layer of plastic. Water based pigments are probably of more use in most circumstances but there are exceptions.\* My favourite products are Brusho and Inktense.



The watercolour set in your workshop kit is actually quite thick (more like a Gouache than a traditional watercolour) and it may make the surface of your fabric stiff if used heavily. I like the effect though - it makes calico feel a little like African Bark Cloth!



## Painted Bondaweb \*

This is one of the few exceptions where water colour just won't work!

If you want to transfer paint via Bondaweb it has to be acrylic paint. You can get some amazing results using this technique, but be aware that you are creating a textured 'plastic layer' which fuses with the bondaweb and transfers with heat onto the fabric. (You can still reheat it and use it to attach fibres or sheer fabric layers.)

You can create very interesting textures on the bondaweb backing paper itself if you use watercolour - it just won't transfer onto the fabric.

See the video for a demonstration of this unusual technique.



## Taping & Masking

It is amazing how well tape will mask off areas on dry calico fabric which you want to remain free of paint. I've put a roll of 1/8" wide tape in your kit which is great for making curves or thin divisions between regular spaces.

Watch the video for a handy hint on how to make regular masking tape into low tack masking tape for use on paper.



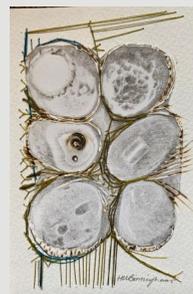
## FREEDOM

I think that for me freedom in my work came from the understanding that there are no rules. You can't do anything wrong.

The surface you work on can be whatever you choose it to be.

A mark can be made with paint, pencil, a stick, a hand or a thread.

If you can make a hole in 'it', you can stitch it or connect it to something else.





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