
Design Your Own Needlepoint Canvas with Anna Maria Horner

Chapter 1 - Design Your Own Needlepoint Canvas

Overview

(cheerful music) - I'm Anna Maria Horner. I am a textile designer and book author. And I have loved doing needlepoint since I was a young girl. It was a favorite craft for my mom to put in front of us and keep it busy. And it's a very simple craft to approach at any age, but the materials for it can be a little expensive. Creating your own needlepoint kit is a great way to save a little money and also create something completely original. In this class, I'm gonna give you some tips on translating a chosen design motif into a hand-painted needlepoint canvas. We'll begin by tracing your design onto the needlepoint canvas. And I'll show you my techniques for painting the canvas. And finally I'll give you some extra tips about creating a kit that's ready to stitch.

Materials

- To create your own needlepoint canvas, you'll begin with your design. This one that I have is inspired by a fabric print that I designed, but I have it printed out at the exact scale that I want my final piece to be. You'll also need some blank needlepoint canvas or a needlepoint mesh. This is a 12-count mesh and you can find it at your art supply store. I also have some wax paper to protect my artwork during the painting process. I also have paints that correspond to all the colors of wool that I'll be using in my final kit. I have some pencils for tracing and then basic painting tools. I've got various sizes of paintbrushes, just a paper plate for a palette, paper towels, some water for washing out my brushes, and masking tape for creating the final kit.

Designing your canvas

- I'm going to talk to you a little bit about how I developed the artwork for this design. I had the benefit of already having the art for this floral in my computer because it's a fabric that I designed and I simply isolated an image that I felt would make a really pretty vignette and I enlarged it and then printed it out at the scale that I want to create the tapestry. You can even use a small art print that you already have that you want to trace and turn into a tapestry. The first step is simply to just secure your print to your tabletop, I'm going to use a small piece of tape here to make sure my print doesn't hop around. And this first step is just going to be tracing with a pencil and the cool thing about this mesh is you can actually see through it just about as easily as you can see through tracing paper. I'm actually going to tape this at the top and the bottom so it doesn't shift. So you can see that what made this design pretty good for a needlepoint canvas was that they're really clear sections of color and those are the shapes that we're going to be tracing around. I like to start, because I'm right handed, start at the left and move over to the right, so that I'm not dragging my hand across a lot of graphite and smudging and making a mess. You don't have to bear down very hard at all to get the pencil to show up on the canvas. And in fact if you do bear down hard you're going to be poking the pencil through those holes a lot, so kind of softly is a good method I have found for this. And this tracing doesn't have to be absolutely perfect because the process that I use to do this with even once I move on to the painting, is I leave the artwork in place underneath the painting process so that I can continue to see where I'm headed and with which colors. If you're not a fan of doing this tracing you could move right into painting, but just in case you have to stop midway I like knowing I've got the whole design done with the tracing first in case you have to

move your materials if you happen to be working at the dining room table or something. You see I've got my pencil kind of slanted to the side as I'm drawing because straight up and down again the point of it is going to get caught in those holes more. This canvas is actually pretty coarse too so you might find you need to sharpen your pencil a few times to continue. Just keep tracing around each shape until the whole thing is all drawn out and then we'll move on to painting. Once you've completed the line drawing you can move right into painting, but first you want to protect your artwork with a layer of wax paper between the mesh and the art then lay the mesh back down over the artwork and you don't have to line up those lines exactly in place because you already have your line work and each of those shapes described really well and now you can just use the artwork underneath to reference what paint color to go to next. And speaking of paint, I want to point out that the most important part of your material choosing process is that you're selecting colors of wool that correspond really beautifully to your inspiration or your art piece. I've got this fabric in matching wool colors and so for every shape of color on here that is also in my artwork I've got a wool that matches it beautifully. And then the paints that I have chosen to create the painted needlepoint correspond to the wool pretty well but they don't have to be exact, because in the end the final piece is going to be a stitched artwork where all of this painting is going to get covered up with wool. These craft paints as they come in the bottle are actually a perfect consistency for painting this canvas. I would describe this consistency basically like creamy salad dressing. You don't want it too thick to clog the holes and you don't want it too runny to bleed around. So again just like I start from the left and go right, I'm going to do that with my painting. Starting with this lavender, I like to work one color at a time as well it doesn't have to be strictly from left to right, you can sort of see as you go too whether or not you're clogging up the hole so you can use the brush to clear that out. Painting the canvas is really just as simple as it looks and really pretty cool. As you continue to work more colors across the canvas, the earlier ones that you started are going to start getting a little gummy and tackier and that's when you can pick up the canvas lift it off to release it as it dries so it doesn't stick too much to the wax paper. Okay I think that's all I need for the purple shade. Next I'll go right next to it. As the canvas gets wet in little bits at a time, you might notice it ripple just ever so slightly from being completely flat to a little bit wavy. But once it's completely painted, you can take a light steam iron to it to flatten it out again really easily without affecting the paint at all. This is such a simple craft actually that I think it's a pretty great one for kids to try as well, easy to clean up easy to start and finish. Going to add some blue now, I've worked through a lot of my pretty pink floral colors, time to work on some blue leaves. I've found that this small flat brush works really well because it can fill in large areas pretty quickly as well as you can angle it down and get a sharp edge, it's pretty important as you go around the outside of these color shapes to get a pretty defined edge so that as you're stitching later you know where to start and stop different colors of wool. Okay there's more blue down here. In my final needlepoint I'm going to use the same background color that the fabric inspiration has, a pretty wine burgundy color, but since I know that that's the color I'm using I've decided just to leave the background of the painted canvas completely blank. Once your painting is complete before it completely dries onto the wax paper you want to lift it off carefully and if you see any of the holes in the needlepoint that are clogged with paint, you can gently blow through them to unclog them, that is if they're still a little bit wet. If they've dried up, later once it's completely dry you can use a needle to poke through those holes. Once you've cleared all those holes of any clogged paint you can tape it up somewhere where it can dry easily for both sides, usually the top of a window frame works pretty well and then once it's completely dry we can move on to turning this into a fun needlepoint kit that you're going to stitch

out. Let me show you how I've turned this simple painting into a needlepoint kit. Going from artwork to drawing to painting is a really satisfying process and when you can create this beautiful needlepoint kit, in the end it's extra fun and it's a completely original work which is amazing. Kitting it up is as simple as taping off the edges to make it nice and smooth for your stitching, gathering your needle and your wool, I even did some color coding here in the side and put little pieces of wool as a reference in case I need to replace a color if I go all the way through it and then you can slip all these materials into its own zipper pouch or even just a plastic ziploc bag so that you have a portable project to take around with you. I think it's pretty satisfying to have absolutely everything to do with this from raw materials all the way through to a finished stitched needlepoint.