
Finishing Embroidery Projects: Three Ways with Rebecca Ringquist

Chapter 1 - Finishing Embroidery Projects: Three Ways

Overview

- If you've been embroidering for a little while, you've likely amassed a little collection of stitched fabrics, and you're probably asking yourself what the heck you're gonna do with them. Hi, my name's Rebecca Ringquist, I'm a Portland based artist and I'm also the designer behind Dropcloth Samplers. And people ask me all the time, what they're gonna do with their finish embroidered samplers or their finished small embroideries. And I'm very excited to be able to share with you in this workshop, some of my favorite easy ways of finishing your embroidery and making them into objects that are worthy of hanging on your wall. I'll show you three ways of finishing your embroideries. One uses wooden dowels to make a beautiful banner. One uses embroidery hoops as a way of finishing the embroidery. I'm also gonna show you how to use a stretched canvas from the art supply store to mount your embroidery in a couple different ways. Taking your embroidery out of a drawer and finishing it is a great way to add some intention and new life to these things that you've spent so much time making.

Dowel banner

- I'm gonna show you how to turn a simple embroidery into a cool banner like this one. You'll just need whatever embroidery you have, and then a little bit of scrap fabric on the top. I always like to add more pattern to things. And so that's what I'm using here, is a little bit of printed fabric that goes along with the embroidery. But you could use any fabric scraps that you have laying around or something really plain to really show off your embroidery. Let's go through the materials you'll need for this dowel banner version. You'll need a finished embroidery. I'm using this little starburst sampler. And you'll need some backing fabric that's at least as wide and about three inches longer on each side. I'm also gonna need some fabric strips that are the same width as your embroidery and about three inches long because I wanna be able to extend the embroidery to make room for some pockets for the dowels. So I'm using these bits of vintage quilts, but you could also just use plain cotton. You'll need a couple of dowels. These are just simple dowels from the hardware store that you can cut yourself, or many times you can have them cut for you at the hardware store. You're gonna need some pins, some thread. I like to use this little rubber finger gripper when I sew. A chopstick or the end of a paint brush to turn out the corners. I'm gonna use a rotary cutter and some scissors, and a rotary mat and a ruler to cut things. I'm using a sewing machine. You could also do this part by hand sewing. And you'll need an iron and an ironing surface. The first thing that we're gonna do is add some strips to the top and bottom of the embroidery that we're turning into this dowel banner. But before we do, I just wanna show you how it's gonna look as an end product so you know kind of where we're going. So you can see this piece has some flowered fabric on the top and bottom. And when we flip it over, there is the rest of it that got turned under and sewn into place to create a channel for the dowel. As we're sewing it, you might think that these are unusually tall and that's gonna be a lot of fabric showing, but in reality, most of it is gonna get turned under and you'll just see a little sneak peek of it. In fact, you could sew all of it under if you only wanted to see the embroidered piece. And you could also use a fabric that's the same color as your embroidery background so that you don't have that extra bit of color. I always like to have a lot of extra color, so I'm using these quilt pieces. These are some strips from a vintage quilt that I got in an

estate sale. So I've got one piece that's about three inches tall for the top and one that's three inches tall for the bottom. And I'm gonna pin them in place, right sides together. So you just need a few pins. These are all pinned together. And I'm gonna sew them with a quarter-inch seam allowance on the sewing machine. All right, I'm using a straight stitch on my machine and just using the edge of the presser foot as my guide. And I'm gonna sew, just back stitch a little bit, take the needles out as I go. Sorry, the pins. Just a little bit of back stitching. And now I'm gonna do the same thing on the other side. Oop, gotta put my presser foot down. There we go. The next thing I'm gonna do is open this up and iron it flat. So I'm just gonna press these seams open. Okay. Now we're gonna trim the edges and cut a piece of backing fabric to match. I've already got a piece of pink backing fabric that's almost the right size, I think. But first, I'm gonna trim this up. You can see that the edges are a little bit bigger than the embroidery itself. So I wanna trim it down so that they're all the same width. And I'm gonna use a rotary cutter for that. It just makes a nice neat edge. I'm gonna do the same on this side. And that's gonna take care of any extra threads from the sewing machine as well. Just a little bit. I waited a long time to get a rotary cutter. And boy, it really changes your life. It's so nice to not have to use scissors and make a wobbly line. It's just so satisfying to get a nice neat cut every time. Okay. So the next thing is I wanna have a piece of fabric that's the same size as this, and I'm gonna put right sides together. So I have this piece of flannel. It's just about the same size. I'm not gonna bother to cut it down to the exact same size until after I've sewed it together. And I'm going to lay right sides together. So the embroidery is gonna go face down on this fabric. This happens to be a bit of flannel. I'm gonna make sure there's not a lot of schmutz on it. And then I'm gonna sew all the way around the outside. Since this is flannel, the embroidery is kind of sticking to it. So I'm actually not gonna bother to use pins. But if you're using a more slippery fabric, you could pin around the edges. I'm going to only add one pin, and that's gonna be at the top as a reminder to myself to leave an open space to turn it right side out later when I'm done. I don't wanna sew all the way around 'cause then I won't be able to flip it right side out. So I'm gonna start here, sew all the way around till I get to the point of the pin, and then stop. All right, let's sew this together. I'm using a quarter of an inch seam allowance, just like I did before. I always go all the way to the edge, and then kind of go back to get around the corner. You wanna make sure, as you're sewing over these seams, that they're staying nice and flat. As I'm sewing along, I can see that this fabric that I used at the end is a bit of a vintage quilt and whoever did this piecing long ago used hand sewing. And I love these little hand-sewn marks that I can see as I'm stitching along. It's so beautiful. Okay. Now I'm gonna turn and go just a little bit in this direction, but not all the way 'cause I wanna leave an open space so I can turn it right side out. Do a back stitch there. Now, before I turn it right side out, I'm gonna trim the edges, and I'm gonna also trim the corners. So I'm gonna use the rotary cutter to trim these edges. There we go. And then I'm gonna use scissors here to just trim the corners so that I can have a nice crisp corner like that. Figure out where your opening is. It's here. And now I'm gonna turn this right side out. I love this moment of the big reveal when you can see the front side of the embroidery. However, it's also fun to look at the backside of the embroidery. So keep in mind that this is your last chance to look at the backside of the embroidery 'cause it's about to get completely enclosed. So there's one side. There's the other. Now's the time that you're gonna need your chopstick. So before I iron it, I'm gonna grab my chopstick and get into those, all four of those corners and just kind of give them a poke. Be gentle when you're doing this, especially if you have a particularly sharp chopstick because, and especially if you're using vintage fabric like I am, it's not very difficult to like accidentally poke all the way through your fabric. So just go about this step sort of gingerly. And now I'm gonna go over to the iron. And I wanna iron it flat, and I also

wanna iron this bit underneath so that it lays flat and looks as if it's completely closed. It's gonna get closed. When I turn this whole thing over and create the pockets, this opening will be closed at the same moment. So let's bring it over to our iron. I'm gonna iron it from this side. I wanna make sure that as I'm ironing it, that the background fabric stays in the back and the embroidery stays in the front. So you just wanna make sure that you're getting that seam nice and pressed and keeping everything sort of organized. You'll see a little bit on the side and that's okay. And I intentionally chose pink because it goes with this embroidery. But if you're more of a minimalist than I am, which most people are, then you might wanna have a matching color in the background. All right, now I'm gonna iron it from the other side. There's a little bit of something there. Okay. Now I'm gonna deal with this business and iron that. Just fold that in so that it looks the same as the rest of it that's sewn in place. I'm gonna iron this side of it so that's a nice crisp line. Keep in mind that this part of the sewing is gonna be on the back. So it won't show on the front. But it's still nice to have it look tidy. All right, so iron that down. There's a lot of pink going on right now. Okay. There we go. This little bit of thread that's showing from the hand sewing on this quilt square I'm just gonna snip off. The next step is to fold under the top and the bottom to create the channel where the dowel is gonna go. Here I'm gonna fold the edge over so that I retain a little bit of that vintage fabric. But you can fold over as much or as little as you want, as long as you still have enough to make a channel for the dowel. And you can fold over more or less, depending on the width of the dowel that you selected. I'm gonna fold over so I have about that much left. And once I've folded that over, I'm just gonna pin it in place there from the front. That's just a temporary pin. I'm gonna fold this one. And I'm just eyeballing it. You don't need to measure, but you can, if you want. I'm not the measuring type. Flip it over. And then I'm going to sew that seam shut with a ladder stitch or a blind stitch by hand. So let's get started on that. I'm gonna be sewing this edge down to the backing fabric, but being careful not to go through the embroidered fabric because you don't want this stitching to show on the front. And I'm gonna start here. And these stitches are on the back. I'm not gonna do a true blind stitch because the stitches are on the back and because I want you to be able to see what I'm doing. But if you wanted to do a blind stitch, that's fine. The most important thing is that you're being really careful. And it's worth the effort of doing this step a bit slowly so that you're not accidentally getting stitches showing on the front. I came up like that. I have a little knot here. And I'm just grabbing that backing fabric. And for the first few that you do, it's worth just looking on the front to say, "Did I show through? No, I didn't. Good." So I went down underneath. I'm going kind of between the two fabrics, between the pink and the embroidered fabric, and then I'm just rocking my needle back up and grabbing just the littlest part of that top. So I'm coming up again with my needle, just rocking the needle in and out. And I wanna get to, I'm gonna show you how to kind of close this gap all at the same time. So I'm just going through, making sure I'm going through the pink layer and the quilted layer to kind of kill two birds with one stone, to use a horrible aphorism. So see how my needle is going through the bottom fabric, through the other layer of pink fabric, and through the purple bit of the quilting, or the pieced square, I should say. I'm using pearl cotton here because I have lots of it and it's always around since I love to embroider, but you could use any thread here. You could use embroidery floss, regular sewing machine thread that you have. Anything will do. I'm also using a bright pink to make it easier for you to see what I'm doing. And I will probably use a bright color even if I weren't doing that 'cause I like bright colors, but any sort of thread will do. And again, this thread is not gonna show because it's on the back side. I have another one that's almost finished that I wanna show you and use to show you how to finish this whole thing off with the dowels. So I'm just tucking that little knot in with my new bit of thread. I find this type of hand

sewing really satisfying. When I'm making a quilt, my favorite part of making the quilt is always applying the hand binding at the end. This sort of reminds me of that step or the bias. I love applying bias tape on garments. Okay. So I'm going to do a little. Not here. I just sewed through down to the blue layer. And now I'm just gonna bury my threads between the two layers of fabric like that. I'm gonna give the thread a trim and flip it over. And now I have two pockets in here, one at the top and one at the bottom, and I can insert my dowels. So I'm just gonna slide that through and slide this one through. The bottom one is just for weight. The top one you can add a bit of string or ribbon to have a way to hang it. So I've got some twill tape here that I'm using. A bit of leather cord would also look really nice, I think. So I'm just gonna cut it however long you want it to be. Depending on how wide your embroidery is, you can have it wider or longer. It's totally a personal preference. These are a bit of a rough cut on these dowels. You could sand those. You could also sharpen them in a pencil sharpener if you wanted to have a sharp point. That would be sort of fun. So I'm just gonna do a double knot, and then trim that tail. I like to be able to swap things out when I'm tired of them. And so I'm not going to glue these in place. You know, I wanna have the option of taking this apart later. So I'm gonna tie that. I'm just gonna tie it tightly. But I'll know that I could slip that off at any point if I want to. So there we go. It's all ready to hang on the wall, neat and tidy. And I think that's a really great way to elevate a simple embroidery into a beautiful wall hanging.

Embroidery hoop

- The easiest way of all to finish an embroidery is to put it back in a hoop, and tuck under the edges to make it look neat and tidy. I'm gonna show you how to do that, and add a little bit of ribbon at the end, so that you could hang it up. And I also got a cool stand to show you if you wanna put it on a shelf. First, let's look at some finished examples. Here are a few. These are tiny little color burst samplers that I've stitched, and you can see that on the back, there's just a ring of stitching that cinches in the excess fabric to keep it neat. Here's another example. This example is actually from the embroidered photo ornament class that I have also on the Creativebug site. And on the back, I covered, the front stitching is covered by another piece of fabric. This one's just glued into place, and it happens to have the address of the house that's on the front. This one's hanging with a little bit of vintage ribbon. You could also use leather cording, or twill tape. Here's another example. This is the pie sampler. And in this example, instead of sewing the fabric, I cut little notches, and glued it into place. I prefer doing the sewing method, because it's reversible, if you decide you want to use this hoop again for another project. In the case of gluing, it's permanent, which is fine. But if you would like to be able to use your hoop again, I think it's better to sew it. And I'm gonna show you how to do that now. The great thing about this finishing method is you probably have all the materials if you've already done some embroidery. You need an embroidery hoop that's just about the same size as your embroidery. This assumes that your embroidery is round. This is a great choice for a round embroidery. And if you have a square or rectangular embroidery, the stretch canvas version might be a better option. So I'm using an embroidery hoop that's just about the same size as the round embroidery that I wanna hang up. You'll also need a needle and thread. I'm using pearl cotton, but you could use any type of thread. Some scissors, I'm using little snips for trimming my threads, and then you'll need some fabric shears. In a pinch, you could use the embroidery scissors for that as well. And then something to hang it with. I've got leather and twill tape, but a bit of ribbon would also work, or even a bit of yarn. The first thing to do is to put your fabric in a hoop. You could iron your fabric first, but the hoop is gonna stretch out all the wrinkles.

So I'm not gonna iron it. There's another one that I don't have hoop the right size for, so I'm gonna set that one aside. And I've got my hoop in two pieces. So the part without hardware, that's just a plain old circle, is gonna go underneath your fabric. And then now's the time that you really wanna center it, and make sure that it's exactly where you want it to be, because that's where it's gonna be. Not for perpetuity, 'cause you can take this apart if you need the hoop for another project, but for probably a long time, especially if you're giving it as a gift. It might take a couple of tries to get the fabric in the hoop just how you like it. There we go, I think that looks pretty good. It's nicely centered. So now I'm gonna tighten that bolt up on top really tightly. And if it hurts your fingers to do that, you can always use pliers. And now I'm gonna stretch it with my hands. I'm just holding down on the hoop on one side, and then stretching with my other hand to make sure that the fabric is really taut and secure in the hoop. That looks really good. And as you can see, all the wrinkles are totally gone. Just tightening that down, tightening it down, tightening it down. And now I'm ready to flip it over, and do the stitching on the back that will cinch the fabric to the inside of the hoop. So flip it over. And before I sew it, I'm going to get out my scissors, and trim it down, so it's about an inch all the way around. It doesn't have to be a perfect circle, but I'm gonna trim the fabric, so that there's about an inch on the outside of the hoop in every direction. And it's okay if this isn't completely neat and tidy. It's all gonna be on the back. Gosh, these scissors are really sharp, and make such a nice noise when they cut. (scissors snipping) Okay, toss that extra fabric. That looks pretty good. The next step is to sew it. I'm gonna start sewing, and I wanna sew on the outside edge. This one's a little tricky, because I have white fabric and pink fabric, because I had a backing fabric as I was sewing this sampler. So I wanna make sure I'm getting through both layers. I'm gonna go on the outside edge of the white fabric, and I'm just stitching along. My stitches are about a centimeter long, and about that far apart. It does not have to be perfect, 'cause it's not gonna show. And I'm just on the outside edge of that fabric. And the white fabric is the one I wanna get through. I'm not pulling it tightly as I go. I just wanna pull it all shut at that end. It's a little tricky getting around this hardware. Again, you wanna stay on the outside edge of this fabric. So I can tell I'm starting to run outta thread. So I need to cinch it a little bit to give myself a little more thread. I know I'll have enough to get around, but I might have to cinch it a little bit as I go in order to have enough thread. Here we go, I'm almost to the tail end. Here we go. I'm meeting up with the, where I started, and now I'm gonna flip it over, and cinch it shut. This is an exciting moment. You just wanna ease the tension out, so you have it cinched all the way around. There we go. To finish, I'm just gonna tie a little knot to make sure that the tension stays nice and secure. I'm just gonna go through this one spot a couple of times. Go through and make, my needle's gonna go through that loop just to secure it like that. In this example, I have this one little bit of white fabric that is, I'm worried it's gonna poke out. So I'm gonna go back through with my needle, and just bring that into the inside like that. Pull it in. The only reason I'm needing to do this is 'cause the white fabric was a little smaller than the pink. So I just needed to cinch that in, and make sure it stays where it belongs. Okay, and then you can either leave the backing like this open, and if it's gonna hang on the wall, that's what I would probably do. But if you're going to use the hoop as an ornament on a tree, or have it hanging in space, then it's a nice idea to add something to the back like I did on this embroidered hoop. And in this case, it's just a little bit of fabric that's embroidered. I cut it with pinking shears, and glued it in place. And for the details on how to do that, you can check out the embroidered photo ornament class that's on Creativebug as well. This is ready to hang on the wall. In order to do that, there's a couple ways you could put a nail right through this little spot where the bolt attaches, the hardware that the bolt goes through. So a nail could go right there really easily.

Or if you wanted to have it hang on its own little loop, you could hang it with some twill tape, or a bit of leather cording, or something like that. So I'm just gonna go through that spot, and tie a little overhand knot, give that a trim. There, then it's ready to hang on the wall like that. A couple more things. One is that these hoops are really easy to paint, and you could also stain them. Another way to think about displaying these hoops is with one of these stands from Modern Hoopla. They sort of look like a giant wooden guitar pick, but they're meant to be a perfect way to display your hoop on a shelf. So I'll show with this one that I just did, I'm just gonna tuck the twill tape under. I'm gonna put it bolt side down. That just goes in there, and then they can sit right on a shelf. I really like the way these little stands turn the embroidery into a sculptural object on the shelf. Whether you put your hoop on a shelf, or on the wall, or maybe on a Christmas tree, these hoops are a great way to finish a project, and take it from something that's just folded up in a drawer to something that you can enjoy in your home all the time.

Stretched canvas

- One of the most versatile ways to display some embroidery that works no matter what size or shape your embroidery is is stretching it on a canvas stretcher. The supplies you'll need for this technique are stretcher bars. I'm using the kind that are already assembled, but stretcher bars come in a wide variety of sizes and you can buy them already assembled like this or you can buy the edges separately and staple them together yourself. In order to get one this size, small enough to use on this little embroidery that I'm gonna show you today, I needed to get one that was already stretched. And so, I'm using a canvas that's already stretched and I'm gonna show you how to take that canvas off and apply your own backing fabric. You'll also need a hammer. I'm gonna use a flathead screwdriver to take the canvas off. I need a staple gun and staples, some fabric shears. You might like to have a sawtooth hanger for the back of your canvas. You'll also need a needle and thread and you'll need some pins. I'm gonna need an iron and an ironing surface, and a sewing machine. This technique works whether or not you have a large piece of embroidered fabric that you're gonna stretch all the way around the stretcher bars. You can see on this one that the embroidery extends all the way to the sides, all the way around, and that's a beautiful way to display a piece of embroidery. It also works if you have a piece of embroidery that's an unusual shape, like this piece which isn't quite a circle, or this one that's a circle, but I wanna display it on a square background. So, I'm using another color of fabric as the backing fabric and then applying this over the top as an applique. here's a strange example of this topsy-turvy doll outfit that I've attached to this stretched canvas that I stretched in white fabric. I'll talk you through both the all-over version and the applique version. The first thing you need to do to get ready to stretch your canvas is either put your canvas stretcher bars together if you got separate ones, or if you've got one that's already put together and it has canvas on it like mine does, I'm gonna take the canvas off. And you might be saying, "Why wouldn't I just stretch the fabric over the canvas?" And that's a good question, and if you are doing the all-over effect you might wanna just leave the canvas on because it's not really hurting anything to have it under there. But if you're doing the applique technique, you wanna take the canvas off 'cause it's really hard to stitch through. So, I'm gonna take this off. You can use this screwdriver and push into the wood because this wood is pine and it's really, really soft, and just pry up the staples. It's helpful to have pliers if you are getting, when you're getting these staples out. But I'm just gonna pry these out and you can see the canvas is not glued to the bars. It's just stapled over the top. I'm gonna set this aside because I have one that's already finished in that regard and I wanna take a look at this one together. You can see that there's a side that had a bunch of staples in

it because this one was also previously wrapped. This side is flat and there's a side over here that has a bevel. And the beveled side is what is going to face out when you hang your stretched canvas on the wall. Your fabric is going to get stretched over this side. And the reason it has a bubble is it allows the fabric to float over the top of the wood, so it's only really touching right at the very edge and the rest of it is floating. An optional addition that you can use is to use a little bit of quilt batting. And I'm using just this cotton quilt batting. 100% cotton, but you could use any kind of batting, and I've cut it so it's approximately an inch and a half bigger on all sides than my stretcher bars. It's not an exact science. And I'm going to use my scissors to cut out a little notch at the corner just to cut down on bulk. I'm just cutting a little one-inch notch in each corner. And there's still about a half an inch or so of fabric here. The notch does not go all the way into the wood. It's just a little one-inch notch. I'm gonna stretch the batting around the canvas bars first. And remember, you want the beveled side to be down and you want your square canvas stretcher bars to be centered on the fabric. And I'm gonna use a staple gun. And I find it helpful to have a hammer not only to hammer in the staples later, but I also like to have it over here so I can brace the staple gun against it so that the staple gun isn't, I'm not having to hold it up into the air, but I can press against the arm of the hammer. I like to work from the center out. I'm pulling the batting up and over the side of the stretcher bars and I'm gonna add one staple there. And now I'm gonna work in opposition and go to the other side. Just gently stretch it so you have nice tension on that side. Now I'm gonna turn the batting and do the same thing on the other sides. And now I can start to work my way out to the sides. The corners are where it gets tricky. In this case, the notch really makes a huge difference. I'm just, I'm pushing this side under and pulling that one over the top. And then I'm gonna staple that in place. I'll show you again. Here's the fabric. I've got these two flaps here. I'm pushing one flap under and pulling one flap down over the top, and I'm gonna make sure that the edge isn't showing and I'm gonna staple that in place like that. Do the next one, here. Gonna use the screwdriver to kind of, that's probably the first time a screwdriver's been used with quilt batting. Staple that into place. Got this weird lump here that I'm just gonna not worry about. That's gonna get smoothed out when I add the fabric over the top of the batting. And this one. Pull that one down. I have to stretch this around. The batting is stretchy, so you can maneuver it and get it into place and just sort of show it who's boss and wiggle the batting around until you've got it just where you want it, and then you can staple it into place. So, now my stretcher bars are covered in batting and now I'm gonna add fabric. And now is the time where if you have a piece of fabric that has an all-over embroidered pattern, it would be a good chance to stretch the canvas bars with that embroidery. Here's an example. This is the Milky Way sampler and it's bigger than my stretcher bars. And I wanna show you what it will look like if I stretched it on this canvas. I think it would look really good. We're gonna imagine that I'm stretching this Milky way sampler around these stretcher bars, and then the embroidery's going around to all the sides and it would hang on the wall like that. I love the idea of this being a three-dimensional object so when you're looking at it from the front, you see embroidery, and then you're looking at it from the side and you can see even more embroidery. And even though it's a circular design, I think it will look really beautiful stretched over these square stretcher bars. Another option when you get to this point and you have your stretcher bars covered in batting is you can cover it in a plain piece of fabric. I'm gonna do that now with this blue fabric. I'm gonna do the same thing I did with the batting in that I'm going to cut square notches in the cloth. While I'm cutting these notches, I wanna mention that your fabric should be about three inches bigger on each side than the size of your stretcher bars. So, if your stretcher bars are four inches, you need three extra inches on this side and three extra inches on this side. That's a

total of six. So, you'd need a 10-inch square piece of fabric for a four-inch stretcher bar. Now, I'm gonna stretch this the same way I did the batting. It's helpful to have a hammer around not only to brace your staple gun, but sometimes the staples don't go all the way in as you're working, so it's nice to go around and just give them a little tippity-tap before you go on to the next step. Next, I'm gonna show you how to create an applique that's gonna go over the top of your stretched canvas. And for this example, I'm gonna use this little rainbow sampler. You'll need your embroidery and you'll need a piece of fabric that's not gonna show at all for the background. It's a good chance to use a kind of fabric that you really don't care about and you don't mind never seeing again. The cool thing about embroidery is that even when it's upside-down, you can tell where it is on the fabric. You're gonna use your embroidery as your stitching guide, and you need a piece of fabric that's just a little bit bigger than the embroidery itself. You can put a piece of fabric over the top of it and you can kind of feel around with your fingers and you can tell how big it is. If that makes you nervous and you wanna make sure it's just exactly the right size, you could, of course, measure your embroidery and cut a piece of fabric that's an inch bigger on each side or something, but it doesn't need to be exact. Most of it is gonna get cut off and none of it is gonna be seen. I'm gonna take my two kinds of fabric. I've got a flannel backing. It could be any type of fabric as long as it's not stretchy. So, any type of woven fabric, I recommend cotton. And then I'm gonna place it over the top of my embroidered fabric and I'm gonna sew a line all the way around the outside. And I'm gonna sew that line up against the embroidery, almost right up against where the embroidery ends. In this case, it's gonna be right around this border. If you want to, you could sew it in a way so it's a little bit bigger than the embroidery. I have some over here that are finished that I'll show you before I start, so you can see these were stitched with a backing fabric that you can see on the back, and then I'll end up slashing the backing fabric and turning them right sides out. Here are a few. This one I stitched a little bit of a ways, like, a millimeter or two away from the last bit of stitching 'cause I wanted that red printed line to show. And this is a step that you wanna do really carefully. Don't do it when you're tired. Before I put the presser foot down, I wanna show you. I'm just using an open presser foot so that I can see where I'm going and be really specific about where I'm laying down my stitches. I'm gonna start over here and I'm just sewing all the way around. I'm going nice and slowly. This machine allows me to control the speed and I've got it set to the slowest possible speed so that I can't accidentally bump my foot and take off, because I wanna be really careful about where my stitches are going. I don't wanna accidentally sew over any embroidery and I also wanna stay really, really close to the embroidery. So, it's a fine line that we're walking. Trim my threads on the thread cutter. I've got my embroidery that's sewn wrong side up to another piece of fabric. And what I'm gonna do is cut the embroidery out. First, I'm gonna check and make sure that all my stitches are where they're supposed to be and that they're not covering any embroidery 'cause it's really hard to go back once you've cut it out. So, I'm gonna cut this out all the way around and leave about a quarter of an inch seam allowance. Put that fabric aside and I'm gonna snip every inch or so 'cause I want this to be a nice, curved edge once I turn it right sides out. Now that I've snipped all the way around the outside, I'm gonna turn it over and I'm gonna cut a slash in the back of it. But before I do that, I wanna be really careful 'cause I don't wanna cut through any embroidery. So, I'm gonna pull the sides apart like this. I sort of, with my fingernails, grab one piece of fabric and grab the other piece of fabric and pull them apart to puff it open. And then I'm gonna make one little snip in the backing fabric and then ease my scissors in there and then cut a bigger slash. I usually just cut it in a couple directions. It doesn't need to look beautiful 'cause no one's ever gonna see it. Once it's stitched down to your stretched canvas, it will forever be hidden. It's like your little

secret. This is your last chance to look at the back of your embroidery. Say goodbye, backside. And now flip it. I love this moment of the big reveal. And now I'm just going to ease it into place. I think that these little appliques are so cool. I'm gonna iron this down so that the edges are nice and smooth before I applique it onto the stretched canvas. But let's look at all these together because they're so fun. I love the way that they go from being a piece of fabric that's embroidered to a little object all on its own. I have a big collection of these at my house and I keep them pinned to the wall just with pins. I think they look so great all together. I think they would make a cool, really oversized and fun brooch, and I also think they'd be a great applique to add to a bag or a jacket or something like that. You could add a pin back to it if you want it to be temporary, but I think they look so beautiful stitched onto a bag or an item of clothing or something. But they also look really beautiful just hanging on a wall with a pin. Let's bring this over and iron it to make it look like its friends. When ironing embroidery, especially embroidery like this that has lots of beautiful French knots, two things. It's nice to iron it from the backside so the embroidery is cushioned by the ironing board, and if it's really textural, it's a good idea to iron it on a piece of terry cloth. And another thing is, even though steam makes everything go faster, be careful using steam when you iron because even though steam makes everything go a bit faster, it also can activate color in thread and not all thread is colorfast. Most of it is. DMC is colorfast, WonderFil is colorfast. But there are some that are not quite colorfast, and so, you wanna be cautious about that. And it's so disheartening if you've spent so much time embroidering and then you steam it at the very end and it kind of (mimics steam hissing) puts out a little color into the background fabric. You can see on this one that there are these little points where I didn't get quite a perfect curve when I was sewing the applique, and that's okay. I'm gonna attach this using sewing to the stretched canvas and I'll even that out in that process. Now we're ready to apply the applique to the stretched canvas. I'm gonna place this in the center and pin it into place. You can decide where you want it to go. If you want it to be, sometimes things are framed, so there's a little more weight on the bottom or a little more space on the bottom, or it can be completely centered. It's up to you. And you can use a ruler if you are the sort that likes to use a ruler. I'm gonna eyeball it. And then once I've got it where I want it to be, I'm going to use a pin or two or three to hold it into place while I stitch it. Gonna use three. I used a pink backing fabric to make the applique and not much of it is gonna show, just a tiny little bit. But I love that since it's pink, it sort of makes a glow behind the rainbow. It's kinda cool. Now I've got a needle threaded with just plain white thread because I have a white background on my sampler, and I'm gonna use this thread to tack this down into place. And I'm gonna make tiny, tiny stitches so that they don't show. However, you could make bigger stitches if you wanted them to show. I'm just gonna come up from underneath. I'm gonna try to bury my stitches in between the pink and the white. I'm gonna come up and go right back down. And you can make them a half an inch apart. You don't need to make tons and tons of little stitches. You're just tacking this down so it doesn't fall off. I wouldn't make them much farther apart than a half an inch or so, but they don't need to be extremely close together. And they're essentially invisible, so if you don't make them perfectly even, that's fine, too, 'cause no one will see them. I'm coming around to a spot where I have this little ear. The curve isn't quite as neat and tidy as I want it to be. So, I'm gonna come up with my needle or in a little more. See how my needle is coming up on the white instead of in the crack? Oops, I gotta push it through a little more. And then I'm gonna go down, wrap my thread around, and that's gonna pull it in. Do a couple of those, show that little ear who's boss and tell it to go where it belongs. There we go, I'm gonna do a couple more so that it's not obvious. And I'm moving back in space to do this, to get this little spot corrected. There, you would hardly know that it had been

there. Ta-da! Okay, I'm gonna keep going all the way around this. I've got another little spot over here that I'm gonna have to course correct to make it lie flat. I have one that's almost finished that I'm gonna switch to over here. This sampler is almost done being stitched down. This is a bubble gum sampler. And when I flip it over, you can feel that the sampler is bigger than the opening within the stretcher bars. So, it's a little more challenging, but not impossible. It's a good chance to use a longer needle. As you're stitching, you're gonna pass your needle under the wooden stretcher bars to get to the edge of the sampler and then put your needle back down and send it back out to the center of the stretcher bars. And send that back in, and I think that's the last stitch that needs to happen. I really like the way that these appliques sit on the surface of the stretcher bars. They're three-dimensional. They have a domed effect. However, if you are stitching down something and you want it to be flatter, you could use tiny little stitches within the embroidery to tack it down to the surface of the fabric, and I would recommend using stitches that are the same color as the embroidery. So, you could bury a little green stitch in there to tack that down. However, I like the domed effect. If you wanted to accentuate the domed effect, you could add another piece of batting behind just the applique. You could cut a piece of batting that's just a tiny little bit smaller than the applique and slip that in there. You could do even a few layers of batting if you really wanted it to be popping off the surface. To hang these, you can use a nail and just rest it on the stretcher bar that's at the top. You can also attach one of these sawtooth hanger kits that usually come with the stretcher bars, and those just attach with tiny little nails and a hammer. I wanted to suggest that while you're appliqueing this on, it's a nice opportunity to add even more embroidery. And one of the ways that you could do that is to make a little name badge or add a date or something like, this is a little embroidery that I stitched with a name, Jude, and it could be stitched into the corner or perhaps underneath if you were making something for a gift or to mark an event like a birth or a marriage, and it would be really lovely to add the date and that person's name. And I stitched this the same way I embroidered it and then I did right sides together to make a little applique and turn that right side out. I think that would be very sweet added to this, and you would just stitch it on the same way. Wrapping your embroidery around stretcher bars or appliqueing your embroidery onto an already wrapped stretcher bar is a great way to elevate a simple piece of stitched fabric into a beautiful artwork that's ready to hang on the wall.

Quick and easy options

- Let's look at a few more ways to present your finished embroidery. One of the easiest and most fun ways to do it is to use pant hangers. I'm always on the lookout for vintage pant hangers. Here are a couple of those. This is the Red Stripe sampler and the ABC sampler. And this is the way I actually store all my finished samplers in my closet. I have a lot of finished samplers as you can imagine. They also look really nice on the wall with just hanging from a nail. There's something about those vintage wooden hangers that looks really good. And I feel like they're sort of becoming popular and having a moment. I see a lot of those on Instagram. Ikea sells these great hangers that are two wooden bars and they have these clips at the top. And you screw them in place to keep what's between the two wooden slats in place. So this is a fun way to hang something that each pack comes with two, and you can hang one at the top and one at the bottom to weight it. Or you can just use one at the top. I have a lot of vintage embroideries hanging in my house from these bars that you can get at Ikea. And I just, it has a spot in the center for a nail, but I often, since I have picture rails in my home, I just use a bit of thread twisted around the screws to hang it. Here's another embroidery that got the dowel treatment. And for this one, I used some existing dowels

that I took out of an old knitting bag, I think. You can see, they have holes in them. They were part of a basket that I had laying around. So they're really thick. And I didn't bother to back this one at all. You can still see the backside of the embroidery, which I really appreciate. It's not gonna win any neat and tidy awards but I really like being able to see both sides of it. And I love the way these chunky dowels look with the embroidery. I also really like that they're stained, has a nice finished look. Another fun idea for your embroidery is to make it into a pouch that you can keep future embroidery projects in, or even make up or craft supplies or some like that. There's lots of great tutorials on creative bug for making zipper pouches. Lastly, I wanted to show you these cool frames that are made by Modern Hoopla, the same company that makes the little stands that hold embroidery hoops on a shelf. These are wooden frames that have a spot in the back that's routed out to hold the hoop. And then it has spots here to hang it with. And it comes with these little cardboard shims to make sure that your hoop stays in place and is secure. I really love it. I love the way that it shows off the embroidery but doesn't show any of the hoop. It makes it look very professional. And I also really appreciate that it's easy to swap out what embroidery hoop is in there. You could take them out and change it out seasonally, or as you're finishing new projects, you can swap out which embroidery you wanna show off in your wooden frame. I hope to see how everybody is finishing their embroidery. I hope that you'll add it to the student gallery and I'll be checking back there to see what everybody's working on.