How To Embroider The Feather Stitch with Rebecca Ringquist

Chapter 1 - How To Embroider The Feather Stitch

How to embroider the feather stitch

- Hi, I am Rebecca Ringquist. I live in Portland, Oregon. In a little log cabin. I'm an artist, and I'm also the owner and the designer of Drop Cloth Embroidery Samplers. There's so much to learn in the world of embroidery. This technique is gonna help you along the way. Let's discuss the intricacies of the feather stitch. The feather stitch is most commonly associated with crazy quilts. It's the stitch that's used here on this little scrap of crazy quilt over all the seams, right? So these are all stitched together, and then over the top, a decorative feather stitch. There are tons of variations on the feather stitch. Let's start with the most basic. I've got a hoop here that already has some feather stitches in it. I'm gonna start over here and come up right next to this one. So my needle comes from underneath. I'm using a size eight pearl cotton. I'm gonna hold my thread straight up and down with my thumb, and then my needle is gonna go down, rock down, and rock back up. See how the needle is just taking up a little bit of space there. I'm not pushing the needle all the way through. I'm bringing the thread from behind the needle and tucking it there behind the needle. I pull it up and that creates a little chevron. Now I'm gonna go over to this side and do the same thing, and the thread is gonna go behind the needle from the right to the left this time, and I'm just working my way forward, back and forth like that. So I'm going to the right to the left. As I come up, I'm either laying my thread down in this kind of upside down U shape towards the right, if my needle's gonna come up on the right like this, or on the left, if it's gonna go to the left. And you can do this as far apart as you like. So I could do some teeny, teeny little feather stitches really close to each other, or you can make them really far apart. In the original sampler class, there's a feather stitch that looks like this. So there are three or four or five or six to the left, and then three or four or five or six to the right, and it goes on like that. Let me show you how to do that variation. So you're here, and instead of going back and forth, I'm gonna do one to the right, and then I'll just do a few more. And I'm working my way uphill. So I've got three going this way. Another way to think about this version of the feather stitch is it is a diagonal version of the blanket stitch. So I did those three to the right. Now I'm gonna do, or that was more like five, wasn't it? I'm gonna do a couple to the left. I'm outta thread, so I'm gonna lower my needle down over the top of that last loop. If I let go with my needle, that little loop would come right out and so would the ones before. So I just give a little tug upwards, and then I go up and over that last little spot, come down with my thread, and then I can weave my needle and my threads back in on the backside. If you're struggling to keep these neat and organized and you want them to be neater and organized, one little tip that you can do is you can draw three parallel lines like I've done here with a removable marker. This is a Mark-B-Gone pen. You could also use a Frixion pen. I've drawn three parallel lines here and now with my needle. I'm gonna come up in the center on the bottom here, and then when I come up on the right, I'm gonna come up on this right line. I'm gonna go down and up, right on that right line, and I can do the same thing over here on the left line. So then I'm going side to side, but it's always the same distance. This is a wider version of this same stitch over here. If you wanted a skinnier version, we'll do that next. So there's a nice wide version of the feather stitch. If you wanted a skinnier version, let's say we continue these two lines, but not the third. So then we're gonna work using just those two lines, and our thread will come up in the center, and I'm gonna go to the right and then to the left. And I'm moving up just a little bit each time like that. Again, when you're

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finished, you need to go up and over this corner here. If I let go, that is gonna be really floppy, so I'm always pulling towards the top with a gentle tug, and then go up and over the top and pull the thread down. And that completes your feather stitch. The feather stitch is a great one for crazy quilts, but it's also a great kind of viney texture that looks really great as a base for flowers or as a vine in a landscape scene that you're working on. It's a really fun one to experiment with. I hope you'll give it a try.

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