How To Embroider The Bullion Stitch with Rebecca Ringquist

Chapter 1 - How To Embroider The Bullion Stitch

How to embroider the bullion 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. Bullion knots are sometimes a little bit tricky, but with the right needle and nice even tension, they are so cool looking. They look like little inchworms going across your fabric. The most important thing to know about bullion knots is that you'll have the most success and the least amount of headaches if you come to the project with a milliners needle. Don't come around to the bullion knot thinking you're gonna have success with the tapestry needle. It won't work. You need to have a needle that has a straight shank and not a big bulging eye where the thread comes out like a tapestry needle does. A millners needle has a completely straight shank and a small eye and makes for a much easier bullion knot. This is what I'm talking about. Here's the millners needle and here's the tapestry needle that has a giant eye, which is very useful for lots of stitches, but not for the bullion knots. I could probably fit this whole needle through the eye of this tapestry needle. Don't, don't use it. Bye-bye tapestry needle. Alright, now I've got my milliners needle, which are also sometimes called straw needles. And to make one bullion knot, I'm gonna bring my thread up through my fabric. It's got a knot at the end. I wanna make sure that it's all the way at the back of the fabric. And now I'm going to control the thread with my left hand and use the needle with my right hand. Here's where my needle first came out. I'm gonna go down with my needle, poke my needle back up again right next to where I initially came out. So now you can see in the long view there's a big loop like this, and I'm gonna push my needle almost all the way through, leaving about a half an inch at the end. So my needle is not going all the way through the fabric and leaving about a half an inch down here where the thread comes out on the eye end of the needle. And now what I like to do is use my pointer finger and my thumb to hold the needle. So my thumb goes on the eye of the needle and my pointer finger goes behind and kind of props up the pointy end of the needle. So now you've got the pointy end sticking up at about a 45 degree angle from your fabric. And you can start to wrap the thread around the needle. I've taken up about a quarter of an inch here with the fabric, and I'm gonna wrap it until it's about a quarter of an inch wrapped on the needle. I'm not wrapping the thread around itself. I'm stacking the wraps up. So the, the thread's not going like this. It's going along like this. So there's gonna be even rows of thread along the needle. Now I've done all these wraps. I'm gonna bring my left hand behind the needle and put my finger behind those stitches and grab the front with my thumb. So now all those wrapped threads are between my pointer finger and my thumb. And I just like to give it a little wiggle like this and kind of twist it back and forth. And now gently with my right hand, I'm gonna pull that through, thread through the wrapped bits. And now if I let go, I can see all those wrapped bits attached to this thread. And there's this little leg here. So now I have to kind of manipulate it over and pull the thread. And now it's back down on the cloth. And I can push the needle through to finish that first bullion knot. Let's do another one together. Depending on where you put your needle down, that'll determine how long your bullion stitch was. So this one's about a quarter of an inch long. I could do a longer one by coming out here a little bit farther. And then you just wrap your thread accordingly. So this one's maybe more towards a full centimeter. So I'm gonna wrap, wrap, wrap, wrap, wrap. You can also wrap your threads so that it gets longer than this

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spot. You can see this spot's about the same width as my pinky fingernail and so are the threads. However, I could keep going and make an even bigger wrap on my needle. That's about a half an inch. It's much longer than this. So now when I pull my threads through the bullion knot instead of laying flat is gonna lay like this, like an little inchworm. It can't flatten out because there's not enough space for it to, so can you see that little inchworm effect? It's quite fun. And this brings me to the next very cool thing that you can do with bullion knots. And that is that you can stack them all up to make little bullion roses. I'm gonna switch colors of thread and we'll make a bullion rose together. It's really important that you knot your thread off in the back of your fabric when you're done with the bullion knot so that they don't fall off. So I've gone through this little loop that's in the back of my fabric and I'm gonna pull it all the way through until there's just a little bit left and that loop and I go through the loop and that creates a knot. Alright, I'm gonna bring in a different color of thread. I have another needle threaded with this tan color. And I'm gonna come up over here and I'm gonna first start by making three bullion knots in a triangle formation. So I'm gonna go here first, pull this one through. Now come up from the top where I started and make another line going back towards it to create that first angle in the triangle. This next knot. Similarly to the first one, I am always wrapping the thread clockwise around the needle. Now we're gonna make another one to close this triangle up. Alright, I'm gonna go down over here. So this doesn't look like much now, but we're gonna keep adding to it. And we're gonna start to make some bullion knots that are more in the inchworm category. So they're gonna go up and over this original set. Say, say this is the triangle. I'm gonna make a line that goes over that first point. So it's coming up like this. You can see the needle is behind here and it's going to go the the needle goes behind, but the bullion knot is gonna go up and over that first set of knots. And I'm making it longer so that it can make the jump over those knots. Here we go. Make another one going this way. These knotted bullion roses are so three-dimensional and cool. I think they would look so great in a landscape depending on what color thread you use. They might not read as a rose, but they might read as like some wild succulent that's growing somewhere. One of my favorite things about coming to California to shoot Creativebug videos is that all the plants are so different from where I live. And definitely so different from where I grew up in Michigan. I feel like I'm living in like a Dr. Seuss wonderland out here. All right, so now there's two going that way. And I'm gonna finish this particular triangle and go back here and make a third. This is the last stitch that I'm gonna get out of this thread. And then I need to rethread. This is a stitch that really goes through a lot of embroidery thread. I'm using pearl cotton, but you could definitely use embroidery floss. All right, I'm gonna knot this off on the back and then I'm gonna come back and do another set of three to make the bullion rose even bigger and more three dimensional. I'm using the same color thread. I think it would be really fun to start in the middle with a light color and then go out to a darker color. Do one more row over here. And as I go, I keep having to make the bullion stitches longer and longer, not only for length, but also for height, so they can get up and over the edges of the part of the rose that already exists. And by that I mean that you're wrapping much more than you would've in the beginning because you want these to be three dimensional and not just flat. 'cause if they were just flat, they wouldn't fit over the last stitches that you did. Oh, this is a nice yellow part of this variated thread. So it's gonna be a different color after all. Woo-hoo. See how it wraps around like that? This is such a cool stitch. I do this one next. Come up over there. You could keep doing these forever and ever and make a huge, huge flower or a sculptural element on your embroidery. This is the last one I'm gonna be able to do with this thread before I have to rethread my needle. And I've only made three bullion knots, but they really chew through the thread. It is worth it 'cause look how cool it looks. And go back under,

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and I'll need to tie that thread off. But let's just look at this amazing little tan bullion rose. Doesn't that look cool? And it's almost a quarter of an inch tall. I love bullion knots.

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