
Drawing with Thread with Improv Sewing

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- One of the ways we really enjoy using our machines is doodling and drawing with thread. It's quick, it's easy, and it's a really great way for a beginner to get comfortable with their machine. - You basically are using your machine like a pencil. You can take something that you've made, or something that's readymade and add your mark, and so you can make stuff on clothes, or you can take some housewares and decorate them. - So we're gonna start with some practice doodling just to get comfortable with it, then we'll move on to a little bit more controlled doodling and finally we'll show you how to turn a sketch design into a really beautiful piece of machine embroidery. (gentle music)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- [Blonde Woman] To doodle and draw with thread, you need some really basic materials. To start you need a sewing machine. Both Debra and I use this machine right here and it is really a basic machine. Totally mechanical, no real bells and whistles. You just need to make sure you can change the pressure of the foot really easily which is going to help you move the fabric around when you're doodling and drawing. - [Debra] And you're also gonna need some thread for your drawing with thread. If you have a bunch of bobbins on hand, it's a great thing to load them up so that you don't break your flow of inspiration as you're doodling along. For thread we really like to use poly cotton blend or polyester because it's nice and strong. Fabric you can doodle or draw on really any kind of fabric. It's great to start out with some practicing. And for practicing here we're gonna use this canvas which is inexpensive and easy to find. And then we've made some tea towels out of linen that we're gonna do our drawings on. You'll also just need a little pair of scissors for snipping thread and some chalk for drawing your design. - [Blonde] I think we're ready. Lets go get doodling and drawing.

Chapter 3 - Thread Drawing

Changing machine pressure

- I'm gonna show you how to set up your machine now so you can get doodling and drawing. You might have to take out your manual cause we're going to teach you how to set it so you change the pressure of the foot and you can manipulate the fabric. On this machine, there's a little dial on the side. It says 3, 2, 1, 0. 3 is full pressure and I'm gonna to show you what happens with full pressure. It's on 3 now and it is very difficult to move that fabric around. If I give it a good pull, I can slide it but otherwise, it's really hard to move. But if I decrease that pressure down to 0, you can really slide it around quite freely, but there's still these little feed dogs underneath the fabric and there's still slight pressure on the foot. So, if you put the machine on and start sewing it will still pull the fabric along, but you can hold that fabric in place and lay the stitches down anywhere you want. So, learning this one technique is gonna open up a whole world of possibilities for you to be super creative and really use your machine to its fullest potential.

Scribbling with thread

- To jump into this technique, it's great to start with scribbling because there's no way to do it wrong. It was just kind of a magical thing for me when I learned how to do this. I couldn't believe what the results were. They were so cool and it was so easy and it's really fun too. I've got my presser foot set on zero so I'm ready to go. I'm going to lower my needle, lower the foot, and start scribbling. So to do this technique, it's kind of all about your hand position. You can see with a nice sturdy piece of canvas like this. It is super easy to move this around. I like to keep my hands flat on either side of the foot. Gotta be careful not to get your fingers under that little moving needle hinge there which can hurt. I've done it so just keep an eye out for that. And I like to think of this motion as sort of petting in a little bit of a firm way at the top of the machine there. So I got my hands flat and I'm just kind of petting it in a circular motion. And that's making my needle and my fabric work together to create this scribbles. Really fun, really easy. You can cover a lot of surface this way. It's a little bit of a push and pull between you and the machine. The machine is trying to move the fabric and I'm sort of guiding it the way I want it to go and you're really kind of just working together with your machine. One thing that's important to keep in mind in scribbling and also in drawing with thread is to keep your needle moving as fast as you can but move the fabric slowly. So when I'm doing this, I think needle fast, fabric slow. It helps me. That's prevents your stitches from getting too long and it's kind of keeps the flow going. So again, it's needle fast, fabric slow. So just keep practicing until you feel comfortable with this. You're probably gonna wanna do it all day long once you get started. 'Cause it really is kind of a blast. I did want to show you what it looks like on Jersey because this is such a versatile technique and in our book, we do this a lot on Jersey and it gives you a really interesting effect. A couple of slight differences when you're working on Jersey, it's really better to grab than to pet. So you'll see what I mean. Get going here. Again, needle fast, fabric slow. The Jersey does wanna tug a little bit so you just keep it moving. And again, get yourself some scrap and practice before you start doing this on your favorite t-shirt. It takes a little bit of a feel for it but it's really, really fun once you get going. Remember there's no way to do it wrong. So some irregular stitching and some lumps, lumpy bits. It's totally fine. Try some bigger circles here. So there's our scribbling and as you can see on Jersey, it really does pucker up when you scribble which we actually think looks really cool and really beautiful. If you want it to stay flat though, you can use some stabilizer and kind of experiment with it. It goes behind the fabric and will keep your Jersey flat if that's what you're going for. And here, I wanna show a t-shirt that has the scribbles on it and it just looks really cool. And again, the best thing is there is no wrong way to do it. So no matter how you do it, it's going to end up looking great. So once you've got scribbling down, then you're gonna wanna sort of experiment with it and one place you can go with it is try what we called a controlled scribble or a controlled doodle. And I'm gonna try that on this linen tea towel here that we've made up. I've changed over to some white thread. You really want a high contrast between your thread and your fabric color. It's just always easier with doodling to have enough fabric to grab on either side. So I'm gonna position my line a few inches from the end of the tea towel. I'm gonna start just a few stitches in to do some back stitching so we can lock our doodle in. And then forward. And away we go. And I'm doing that manipulating thing again where I'm moving my fabric. And because this is not Jersey but linen, I'm kind of back to petting the machine which is just keeping your hands kind of flat on either side of the foot. And we're moving along. All right, I've come to the end. I'm gonna do a couple of stitches back to lock it in. And here we have a more controlled doodle. Looks pretty cute. And you can use this technique to make things that look like vines or you could even do a little scribble flowers instead of just circles. You can kind of make it up as you go along and I'm liking the way this is looking so I think I'm gonna add another line of my

controlled doodle, just a few inches over. I start with the little forward and a little backward. And then put my hands in position. And I go. You actually kind of get into a rhythm when you do that, when you do this doodling. Makes it fun. Okay, I'm at the end of my line. I'm gonna one more stitch forward manually and then a little back. And there's my second line. I've done three rows of controlled doodling and I have to say I think it looks pretty cute. Once you've mastered scribbling and this kind of controlled doodling, you're definitely ready to start drawing with thread.

Drawing with thread

- Alright, so Deborah showed you how to lay down your stitches in a doodle and sort of organic designs that she's planned out and now I'm gonna show you how to put down a little drawing on some fabric and then go over it with your machine and then pretty much embroider on to your fabric. Today, I'm gonna show you how to transfer an image that I've drawn onto a piece of paper onto this piece of fabric but if you feel comfortable you should just go right onto the fabric, just draw right there and then go over it with your machine so I've chosen a mason jar which I think is the icon of all good things like jam and little posies of flowers and glasses of hard cider. So we're gonna go to the window and I'm gonna tape up my piece of paper and then the sun will shine through it and I'll be able to really see the image and be able to trace over it with chalk, super easily. To lay down our stitches for this drawing, we're gonna use a straight stretch stitch. It's one of the utility stitches on your machine so take out your manual again if you don't know where it is on your machine or how to get there. Look in your manual, tell you how to do it. On this machine, it's just turning a knob so I'm gonna turn my knob to stretch stitch and I'm gonna make it the tightest, stretch stitch I have so I turn my knob all the way then you need to change the pressure of your foot, again. So we're going to be increasing the pressure slightly for this so we have kinda nice solid line that you can control but we're not gonna do full pressure. So we're gonna come back over to our knob and we're going to set it, I think two would be, good pressure for this. (sewing machine whines) When we come to the corner here, just, gently pull the fabric. Push it as you need to to make that turn. Keep a nice fluid motion so I'm just following along my line. Taking turns fluidly. Now when I get to the top of my jar, slow down here. This is a part I wanna be careful because I want my lines to match up so I'm gonna lift my foot and I'm gonna turn the fabric and I'm going to do this top line of the jar. (sewing machine whines) and then when I get to the other side over here I'm gonna stop too. I'm gonna make sure that my line meets even if I need to do it manually. I'm gonna lift with my needle in the fabric. I'm gonna lift the foot up, turn the fabric. I'm going to start going again. Nice, gentle, fluid turn until I get to the other side. As you're going along, you're gonna get to places where you need to stop and turn your fabric. So, the thing about a straight stretch stitch is it's two stitches forward and one stitch back so when you stop and you make a turn, you really want to make sure, if you're wanting to stay on your design, that your next stitch isn't going backwards because if it does then you're gonna take a stitch off your design and you're gonna have a little jag and maybe that's really cool and it's gonna look great but maybe you don't want that to happen so I wanna show you how to avoid that so take a look here. Alright, so we're good to go. (sewing machine whines) I'm following my line and I'm gonna do the same thing. I'm gonna turn it around. I'm gonna add another line here to make it nice and thick and I want to make sure it's not going backward. It is, so I want to lift my foot, I'm just gonna push it forward slightly, put the foot back down and now when it goes in, it goes in right on top of the other stitching that I've done and I'm read to go again. (sewing machine whines) I'm just gonna follow along that line. I'm gonna make it double-thick. (sewing machine whines) Alright, so I'm ready to take it off and go to the middle of

my jar to do my little star design. So before I head on to my star, I'm just gonna trim off my threads so they don't get in my way and get tangled. Gonna do the same on the back then get ready to go again. Now, because I'm gonna be doing these straight lines for the star, I'm gonna set my knob to three so my foot's gonna be on full pressure and it's gonna make a really nice clean line so I'm gonna enter in right at the tip of my star and start going again. (sewing machine whines) Remembering the same thing as before when I get to a place where I need to turn. Am I going backwards? I am so I'm gonna nudge it forward. (sewing machine whines) Follow my line. Turn. No. Nudge it forward. (sewing machine whines) There you go. Cut your threads. And here you have your finished drawing, a little mason jar. You just need to wash it. Stick in the wash to get all the chalk out. Hang it up in your kitchen then go and gather things around your house and start decorating them, with drawings. That's it.

Chapter 4 - Finish

Other examples

- Now who wouldn't want this in their kitchen? - I know I would. - Good. - So there's just so many ways that you can embellish everything in your house with these techniques of doodling and drawing with thread. Here Nicole found some really cheap glasses and vases from a thrift store and added a little strip of fabric and a little drawn sketch on there. And they're really cute as votives or vases in your house. And I just really love the way you sewed over your son, Harry's drawing here to make him a lunch box napkin. - Yeah, I had him just draw the shape he wanted onto the napkin and then I stitched right over it. - Really, really sweet. And you have to talk about this. - Okay so this is a pillowcase for a bed pillow and I whipped up this little bed pillow but if you have a pillowcase at home that you wanna just kinda freshen up and make more fun, you can draw or doodle or whatever along the strip that's open where you stuff the pillow in. It's not a place where you put your head so the stitching won't bother you while you're sleeping. But it'll add a really nice touch. - And this here is a really cool application of the doodling technique, we just did it on wool jersey and it makes a great, great scarf. And finally we have some thread drawing on a basic jersey dress that you can learn how to do in our dressmaking workshop. So as we said the possibilities really are endless with this doodling and drawing technique. - Yeah I think you'll probably end up wanting to doodle everything that you see or draw on something so be forewarned, it's quite addictive and super fun.