
Kid's Embroidered Pillow with Rebecca Ringquist

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

(upbeat music) - Today, I'm gonna show you how even really little kids can embroider using soft flannel and dull tapestry needles with yarn. I'm gonna show three different embroidery stitches that are super kid-friendly. The back stitch, the field running stitch, and the pinwheel stitch. I'll show some kid-friendly transfer techniques, and I'll show how to stitch up the edges to make your finished product into a beautiful pillow.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- There are a lot of materials for this workshop, but I bet you already have a lot of them around your house. The first thing you'll need are some embroidery hoops, and I'm using two sizes. This one is, I think we've got an eight inch, and about a 12 inch. One that's a lot bigger than the other one. Need tapestry needles that are blunt, which means they're not sharp, and they have a big eye, which makes them easy to thread with the yarn that we'll be using. You need a sharp pair of scissors, and then it's great if you have a pair of pinking shears that make a zig zag edge. It's not essential, but it looks really nice if you have the pinking shears. Some sharp scissors for cutting threads and yarns, beeswax is helpful when you're threading your needles. I like to use these rubber paper sorters, those aren't necessary. It's a great idea to have a pincushion, especially if you're sewing with little kids. Depending on how old they are, they might have a hard time threading the needle, so you can thread the needles for them and get a bunch ready before you start, so that they can just keep embroidering and embroidering. It's great for yourself, too, but especially good for little kids. You'll need some ribbon to finish up the project, as well as some polyfill, or you could cut up scraps of fabric to fill the pillow with. Safety pins are great as you're sewing along so kids don't accidentally sew through both layers of fabric and make it permanently attached to the hoop. A needle threader is great. This one has a nice, chunky opening for threading the yarns through the tapestry needles. Then to transfer your images, we're using these Crayola fabric crayons, which make easy transfer, but if kids want to draw directly on the fabric, you could use a washable fabric marker, or you could use these pens that are made by FriXion. This is a highlighter version of the pen, and it just makes a thicker mark, which is great for kids making a thicker line quality. And lastly, you'll need some yarn. This is just inexpensive knitting yarn from the craft store. Whatever you have laying around would probably work already. Then fabric, I'm using a solid color flannel for the front side, and then to back the pillow, I'm using a plaid, which you could maybe find in a old flannel shirt. And you'll need a kid's drawing, these are space cats, and you can tell because they're wearing helmets. To transfer that, you'd need some tracing paper. You could also draw it directly on the tracing paper with the fabric crayons. To do all that transferring, you'll need a hot iron and an ironing board.

Chapter 3 - Embroidery

Transfer drawing

- First thing you gotta do for this project is pick out what drawings you're gonna use and I have a sketchbook-full of my own drawings that include some collaborative drawings that I used to make with my godsend, Henry, and here's one of them. So it will be overwhelming to embroider this

whole thing not impossible but overwhelming. So I'm gonna narrow it down to a few characters and there's this great cat that he made a drawing of that I'm gonna trace first. So gonna get a piece of tracing paper. My favorite thing. I'm gonna lay down at over the top then I'm gonna trace that cat. Remember we're using this Crayola Fabric crayons they iron right on to fabric. Really easy and non-toxic, great for kids. Since we're tracing a drawing or even if you're drawing directly on the tracing paper when you flip it over and iron it on to your fabric it's gonna make a reverse. So that's especially important if you're transferring text but it's true no matter what you're transferring. So this cat's gonna be backwards from what it appears to be here. So I'm just gonna trace it in purple. All the lines are gonna get covered up with embroidery so it's not especially important what color you transfer it in. I should say that this is a transfer technique that works really well on fabric even if you don't use embroidery. I mean, I think you should embroider it too but you could just use this as a way to transfer images on to your fabric as is. Let's add in a couple of claw marks that he drew these are so nice, good action lines. And then I'm gonna add one more drawing from another page. This is drawing of a rat. Think I'll make the rat underneath the cat like that. Use a different color maybe the red. This has all these great stripes on it that I'm not gonna include but I could embroider those on later if I decided to. If you're transferring your own image just pay attention to how you drew the lines on originally but especially if you're transferring somebody else's image try to pay attention to exactly how they drew it so you can capture some of that the spirit of that line in your embroidery later on. So now I've got a piece of paper this tracing paper that's got two images on it. Sometimes those crayons get a little flaky so before you transfer it I'm just gonna use a paintbrush just a regular old paintbrush or you could use a pastry brush if you don't have a paintbrush. Just to whisk off any little flaks of wax 'cause whatever you see in wax that's what's gonna transfer on to your fabric. You could fill this in with other colors before you transfer it do whatever you need to do and then we're gonna transfer it on to fabric. Gonna set my sketchbook aside and get out my cloth. So I'm just using a piece of flannel. This stuff will transfer really well on the cotton flannel. It transfers even better on to polyester but polyester is a little bit not as nice to work with and it's not as nice of a finish project. But if ever you wanna use these crayons for a polyester project they work really well. They're actually, it's disperse dye that's embedded in perf and wax so, they're meant to transfer to polyester but they work great on flannel as well they're not just quite as bright. So I'm just giving this fabric a little iron to get out any wrinkles and also to pre-heat it so the transfer will work better and faster. There's no steam in this iron. Steam-free. Dry iron. Hot dry iron. The steam can cause things to go kinda haywire so make sure there's no water in your iron at all. And now, get your drawing out. Make sure you can recognize which side the drawing is on. You kinda feel is barely raised surface. And you should be able to see it too. Scoop it over, center it on my fabric. It's curling up from the heat of the fabric. And then, just gonna iron it. You can see that I left the paper the same size. You wanna have some paper that you can hold on to while you're transferring. So I hold my iron stationary here on this side and lift up here I can see that my drawing has transferred. You know when I do that for too long it'll scorch your fabric which is irreversible and sad. And I lift it up from both sides just to make both make sure both are working and the iron is gonna hold the paper down while you're lifting so that your image doesn't shift. And that's a step that an adult should do. And there's our image transferred really nicely. Remember at this point you can use these highlighter markers the Frixion highlighter marker to add in any details. And if you don't have the crayons you can use these highlighter markers to draw directly on the fabric.

Hooing fabric

- Before you start embroidering, you need to get your fabric in a hoop and get everything set up. So got a hoop here that's a little bit bigger than the drawing. For a kid's project, I think it's best if the drawing is smaller than the hoop. So find an accordingly-sized hoop. And the hardware always goes on the outside, or on the top, and the part without the hardware always goes underneath. So just centering the drawing in there, and then this hoop should just get smashed down right over the top, like that. One thing that I have noticed from sewing and embroidering with kids, is that if there are these big flaps of fabric on the side, it's easy for them to get folded back there and to stitch right through them. If you do that, then it becomes impossible to remove the hoop, which is a bummer. So what I recommend doing is using some safety pins. So I'm just going to fold these edges up like that, just folded it in, and then I'm going to use a big safety pin, and this is obviously a step that you could do for your kids, unless they're older. Go through like that, and I can just do that on all four corners. Make sure you don't pin over an area that you'd like to embroider. Try not to stab yourself with the safety pin, that would be sad. Just going to do two more on these little sides so those don't get sandwiched in. When I was first teaching people how to embroider, I was doing a demo, and I was stitching along and at the end of the demo, I picked up my embroidery hoop, and I had accidentally stitched it to one of my students' shirts, who was wearing a really blousy shirt, and it was really embarrassing. So safety pins will prevent that, hopefully. And the other thing that you can do to get ready to embroider is to pre-thread your needles. I've pre-threaded a ton of these dull, tapestry needles, and again, you can see these are dull, they don't puncture your skin without a lot of force, so they're great for kids, and I've threaded a bunch of them in different colors so that ready to sew, and keep on sewing without having to stop to rethread needles. I think that's all we need to get started.

Backstitch

- First I'm gonna show you the backstitch, which is one of the easiest embroidery stitches, and it's just a way of making straight lines. I'm gonna show you, this is a slight variation on the backstitch that I showed in the original embroidery stitch sampler workshop that's also here on Creativebug, it's a little more kid-friendly, but it's friendly for adults too if you want to try it out. Let's see, I'm gonna embroider this rat in turquoise yarn. I love how this yarn is wrapped in another color. So I'm gonna start on the back of this rat to show you the backstitch. So I'm gonna push my needle up, I'm just gonna go forward a spot, and then each time I make the backstitch for this backstitch variation, I'm gonna go skip ahead one and then go back to fill it in. Go ahead again, and then come back to fill it in. Just nice and slow and gentle. As you're going around corners, it's a nice idea to make the backstitch a little shorter so it doesn't look so blocky. It'll look a little more curved and fluid if you make your stitches a little bit shorter. And this is a double-width of yarn. When you're done sewing, you can just tie it like you'd tie your shoes, so it's really important to remember not to wait too long to be done embroidering with this thread, so I've got about four inches left and that's where I'm gonna stop so I'm gonna use my scissors to cut the thread. This is an easy way to cut. I'm gonna cut the thread right by the eye of the needle, just gonna cut that loop in half like that and now I'm just gonna tie it as if I were tying my shoes, so I just tie it once, and then tie it again. And then give it a little trim, and I can keep going right where I left off with another needle. Gonna go forward ... The backstitch is perfect for drawing or text. While I'm over in this area I'm gonna do the eye, so I'm just gonna come up from underneath, make a little mark there for the eye, maybe I'll make two right next to each other, see how big that one is, yeah, make another one right next to it to make a little bit more of a buggy eye. And let's do the ear while we're in this vicinity also. This big thick yarn is

great for covering the crayon marks.

Pinwheel stitch

- Next up is the pinwheel. It's a really fun way to add dimension to your fabric. The backstitch that we just did is a nice flat line, and this one can get really textural, and three-dimensional. Here's an example of a finished pinwheel stitch. It kind of looks like a raised button. To do the pinwheel stitch, you first need to make a temporary mark on your fabric. So I have a quarter. I'm gonna lay a quarter down on my fabric and I'm using the friction highlighter pen. Again, this just irons off with a hot iron. And I'm gonna trace the quarter. You could trace a button, you could do something bigger like a tin can; a tomato paste can would be perfect for this. And now I'm gonna divide this into even segments but I wanna have an odd number of segments. I'm gonna use the number nine, so first I'm gonna divide the circle into equal thirds, and then each third gets divided into thirds so I have nine equal segments. So starting here, I have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. It won't work if you have an even number of spokes so make sure you do that double-check count to make sure that you have an odd number. I used the number nine but you could also use another odd number like seven or five or even three would work fine. Now I'm gonna make one big stitch for each of the spokes. So coming up from the outside and going to the inside, so that's one, two, three, four, eight, nine, and after the ninth one I'm gonna tie off on the back, so since this is only one strand of yarn, I'm just gonna kinda shimmy under one of those stitches, I go through once and then shimmy through again, that makes a little loop, can pull it through the loop to knot it off. Gonna trim that, and now I'm gonna come up with another color of thread. I'm gonna switch to this bright orange yarn, and I'm gonna come up as close to the center as you can get. You can see these dull needles, they really go through the flannel just fine, it's no problem. So now I'm just gonna weave, this is a weaving stitch, so I'm gonna go over one line and then I'll go under the next. Over one, under the next. So over, under, over, under, just pulling that around. And you just do that around and around until you're almost dizzy, around in circles. And that's gonna fill in the button shape of this pinwheel stitch. Oops, sometimes that happens if you go too fast and you just pull it out gently. You can see that my spokes are showing, but in a second I'm gonna show you a way to tighten it up and make it even higher and more dimensional and the spokes will disappear. Just gonna stitch around a couple more. And now I'm gonna pull the thread tightly and you can see that it gets a little tighter. Some of those spokes are still showing because it's such a high contrast. If you didn't want the spokes to show, you could use the same color of thread, for both the spokes and the fill-in. You just keep going around and around like this. So, almost finished. Just wanna keep going until most of the spokes are covered. Sometimes you might find that your spokes are a little uneven and there's one that's kinda hanging out, that's okay, don't worry about being perfect. There, that looks pretty good, give that a tug. And now, to tie off, just gonna poke my needle down through the fabric, and then flip it over, this is a double length of thread, so I'm gonna cut that off so I've got about four inches left and I just tie it, again just knot it like you're knotting your shoes, so tie it once, and then tie it again right on top, and then pull those yarns up and I can snip it right next to the knot. And that's the pinwheel stitch.

Running and filled running stitch

- You can see that I've switched fabrics. This one already has two animals embroidered on it and they were both stitched using the backstitch, which is, again, just a great stitch for translating drawings and text and things like that. And I've already started adding a border to this one, using

the running stitch, so I'm gonna show you how to finish that stitch up. I've got one line of running stitch going all the way around and now I'm doing a second one that's parallel to the first, so each stitch is right on top of the one that's underneath, so it's kinda like a long row of equal signs, if you can imagine that. So, just making one stitch for every stitch that's in the first row, using a single ply of this yarn for this stitch, make it a little thinner. This is one way to embroider the running stitch, just using the kind of stabbing method, going up and down. You can also hold the hoop a little differently, and I'll show you how to do that. If you hold it more like this, kind of bracing it, you can see how I'm bracing it against my body, and then I can run the needle up and down, sort of skimming along the top instead of going up and down through the surface. Do whichever one is easier for you. I think, for kids the stabbing method might be easier, but for older kids they might be able to do this method, which is a little faster. You can see how I'm kind of rocking my needle in and out of the fabric, so I go down and then rock the needle right back up and my finger underneath is helping to guide the needle exactly where it should go. So this is my last bit of running stitch, we go down underneath and tie off, and then I'm gonna show you how to fill it in. This is just the plain old running stitch, but you can turn it into something much fancier called the filled running stitch. I'm just gonna tie this one off on the back. This is a single ply of thread, so I'm gonna go through once and then twice and go through that loop. We'll do that twice to make sure it's super secure. Just cut that off. And now, I'm gonna switch to another color of thread. Let's use this orange. And I'm gonna fill in the running stitch. I'm gonna use both of these stitches. There's some variations on the filled running stitch that I'll show you at the end. So to do this, I'm gonna come up from underneath, kind of in the middle, on top in the middle of one of these first stitches and I'm gonna go under both of them, so I'm not through the fabric, I'm just kinda skimming under those two stitches, almost like your needle's just going right under the bridge. It's not going through the fabric, it's just going under the stitches. And then for the next set of stitches, I'm gonna go under from the other direction, so starting out you're making kind of a zigzag shape. This is the fun part. I love that the filled running stitch is easy. It's one of the easiest stitches to do, but it's fancy and it looks like it's difficult, so for someone who doesn't know how to embroider, they might stare at it forever thinking "how in the world did they do that?" But you know that it was really easy. So I'm just about out of thread here, but I'm not done yet. That's okay, I'm just gonna go down here, and I'm gonna tie off, just like I did before, and then I'll come up, I have another needle here, all ready to go with more orange. I'll just come up there right where I left off. It's a slightly different color of orange, but that's okay with me. And now I'm getting to the end, so I can stop here and just go down and I'll have a zigzag, but you can also turn this into more of a chain stitch like you can see on this variation by going back in the other direction. So I'm gonna come up here and then to fill it in, I'm just gonna go back, start again going in the other way, so it's the same idea, you're just backtracking what you already did, going back through it. I ran out of thread again, so I'm gonna slip down underneath here. I'm changing colors because I'm running out of thread, but you could change colors whenever you want. If you're sick of red and you want to switch to hot pink, just dip down underneath, tie your thread off, and then come back with another color. Gonna snip these ends while I'm back here, I didn't do the other one before I snipped that as well. Come up again here where I left off. And this is the final stretch of the filled running stitch. I like the way those two colors of orange blend together. It's a good idea to pick colors that contrast each other. So blue and orange are directly across from each other on the color wheel, and that usually means that they look really good together, like red and green, and purple and gold. Alright, that's it for the filled running stitch.

Make pillow

- Now let's turn this into a pillow. Take the hoop out, Set that aside. And you need to pick out a backing fabric. So, I've already picked out this blue flannel. We're gonna cut out a piece of backing fabric, using the embroidery that we just did as a template. So, the backing fabric should be the same size, or even a little bigger than the front fabric. I'm using really sharp scissors. This isn't a job for kid scissors. It should be sharp, adult fabric scissors. Just trim that a little bit. Okay, now I'm gonna draw an outline of the size that I want my pillow to be. So, I'm gonna use this original hoop that I was using earlier, and I'm just gonna trace around the inside of that, and I'm gonna use this pink friction highlighter marker. And again, this irons off with a hot iron. It works really well for this project. So, I'm just gonna hold this down, and draw a line on the inside, using this marker, and that's gonna be my stitch guide, so that I have a nice, even circle. Let's see, hold this down on this side. There we go, lift that off, and I can see that I've got a nice circle that's going all the way around. Before I start to sew this together, I'm gonna make a little mark with my highlighter, so that I can see where not to sew. It would be easy to sew this thing all the way closed, and not have a spot to be able to put the stuffing in, so I'm gonna just make a mark like this, about two inches, a heavy line that'll iron off later, to remind myself, hey, don't sew there. Okay, now I'm gonna switch to an even bigger hoop. I'm gonna smack that down over the top. This is just gonna hold the fabric together while I'm sewing everything in place. So, it makes it, it's not essential, but especially if you're doing this with kids, makes it easier. You don't have to hold everything together with pins, which can be sharp, or your hands, which can cause hand strain. Just use an embroidery hoop for this part as well. And it's just the same running stitch as we did before, only in this case, it's not only decorative, but also functional in that it's gonna hold the fabrics all together. Oops, I'm just gonna flip this around. Loosen the bolt a little bit. And smack that down on top. So, before you start to sew, I'm just gonna tighten it up, in the hoop, going all the way around. Make sure the fabric's really tight. And if you're doing this with kids, you could trim these edges off now. This is gonna get cut, just on the outside of this circle. So, to avoid sewing through these parts, you could trim those off. I feel confident that I can sew this, without stitching through those lines, so I'm gonna leave them. But you could take them out if you wanted to. I'm gonna start sewing this line, that holds the thing together at one of these bars. So, start at this one. And these running stitch lines should be a little shorter than the ones that you did before. Shorter and closer together. Because this is gonna hold the pillow together. So if they're too long and far apart, the filling's gonna be coming out through the edges, and you don't want that. So you're gonna do this all the way around the edges, until you get all the way to this side, and then you're gonna tie a knot, and then we'll fill this. I love the sound the needle makes when it pops up and down through the fabric. Just about finished with the running stitch. I'm just gonna stitch right up to this line so I have a spot to put the stuffing in. Okay, right up to that line. And I'm gonna go through to the backside. So I'm gonna go all the way through, just under the bridge, so to speak. Makes a little loop, you go through the loop, pull it tight. Then I'm gonna trim that knot. Like that... Now I can take this whole thing out of the hoop. And set this hoop aside, you don't need that anymore. And before I go any further, I'm gonna iron off this marker. Just lightly, this is acrylic yarn, so you wanna move over it kinda gingerly. Unless you're using wool, and then, take your time. I'm just gonna skim over to get that pink marker off, and you can see it disappears instantly. Isn't that amazing? There we go, I think that's it. Yep. Okay. Now I'm gonna cut this out using pinking shears to make a nice edge, unlike some things that might get flipped inside out for a pillow, we're gonna use the raw edges, so to keep them from fraying, and to add a nice decorative edge, I'm using sharp pinking shears. These aren't the kind that you use for paper, they're fabric

pinking shears, adult only tool. Just gonna cut in, and I'm gonna cut this just slowly, making short marks so to follow the curve. I would say about a half an inch out from the edge. I need to flip this around since my hand only bends a certain angle. Here we go. So now you've got this shape, and a bunch of fabric. I'm gonna use the fabric as part of the stuffing, so I'm just gonna cut this into some more manageable pieces, and this could be, your stuffing could be entirely composed of fabric, things that are in your donation pile that you can cut up, and make into stuffing, it's perhaps more eco friendly than the poly fill, it's definitely more eco friendly. But the poly fill works really well. So then I'm just gonna start putting this stuff inside. So we've got this opening that hasn't been stitched shut, and everything just goes right in. You're just gonna throw those fabric scraps out anyways, so you may as well use them as part of the stuffing. I'm gonna need more stuffing than just that, so I'm gonna start to use part of this poly fill. Here it is, it's like a Santa's beard. And you can use a chopstick, or another, you know, the pointy end of a wooden spoon to get this into the far side where your finger can't reach. Got a paint brush here, so I'm gonna use the end of this to kinda get that down. You can fill this with as much stuffing as you like, you could use a little, or overfill it to make it more of a round globe shape. I used a circle for that form of this pillow, just 'cause it's easy to trace the embroidery hoop, but you could use any shape you want, it could be a square, be more of an abstract shape. I'm just gonna put in the rest of this stuffing, and then we'll sew it closed, okay. That looks pretty good, it's a little uneven here, so I'm just using the pointy end of this paint brush, to kinda distribute that fill. I think that looks good, now I've got my thread here, I think I've got just enough to finish it, I'm gonna re knot it. And pick out a ribbon to add in. I've got this black ribbon that has blue running stitch in it already, that I quite like, it came like this, you can find some really great ribbons at the store. And I'm just gonna stick that ribbon inside, so that this pillow has something to hang from, if you wanna hang it on a tree, or from your door knob. And I'm just gonna come up here, right where I left off, and continue the running stitch, and you're gonna get that ribbon stuck in there in the process. Want the ribbon to be centered. Kinda hard to pull the yarn through that ribbon, just gotta give it an extra little tug and it should come through. Here we go, just gonna flip this over to the backside so I can hide my knot. Gonna shimmy through there, once, twice, make that little loop. Little bit of schmutzy yarn there. There, ta da. These stitches work really well for translating kids drawings, they're just a few introductory stitches though, so if you wanna learn more on your own, or with your kids you can check out the stitch sampler workshop that's here on Creativebug. Before we end I wanna show you some other variations on these very simple stitches that we already did. This bird was transferred the same way, and then embroidered with a back stitch just using a thinner line, and it has kind of a halo effect from the crayon transfer that's behind it that I kinda like. It's got a nice really thick pinwheel in the center, and it's high up, you can make this pinwheel as nice and textured and three dimensional by pulling tightly as you're weaving around and around. I also used a running stitch in this one as a background, in the first example I did, I used the running stitch kind of as a border, but here you can use it in parallel rows to start to create some kind of background texture. This is a cat that's just all made with the running stitch, just one color, I think sometimes once color and one stitch can be the best thing, something simple. And then, last but not least I wanted to show you this piece of fabric, which has these super highly dimensional pinwheels over the top of this oak leaf. And I love the way these become sort of like, topographical landscape quality. I hope you'll give these embroidery techniques a try with your kids, they're a great way to capture kids drawings, and to translate drawings that your kids have already made onto fabric.