

Sew a Vessel

A workshop by Kathryn Harmer Fox



Sculpting a vessel like a bowl or a platter is a simple process on the sewing machine and is a quirky and different format for any artwork. It can be hung on the wall or placed on a flat surface. I have made several vessels using different processes and in this workshop I shall teach you how to make them from ragged cord (which you shall stitch on your domestic sewing machine).

The entire vessel is made from fabric and threads using only 3 techniques, namely, ragged cord, fibre embedment using scribble stitch, and free motion machine embroidery.

One of the most delightful aspects of form shaping is that it is ever so slightly unpredictable and very easily manipulated, similar to building a clay pot on the wheel.

This workshop has a kit and I hope to have a number of different images that you can choose from. At the time of going to press, I only had the bird series pictured above but more images of different sets will be added to this workshop. The kit contains a set of instructions, colour images, and black and white templates (1 kit will make the whole set).

Equipment

- A sewing machine (must be able to disengage the feed dogs – sew in darning mode)
- An extension table (Google how to make one out of cardboard/wood/Perspex if you don't have one)
- An extension cord (check with venue)
- An iron and ironing board (check with venue)

Tools

- A darning or embroidery foot (wide enough to accommodate a full zigzag stitch)
- Ordinary sewing foot
- An embroidery ring
- A cord making foot is an advantage but not a necessity (I don't have one)
- A pair of sharp scissors (I find an intermediate size (16 – 18) cm in length to be the most useful but it is the sharpness that really counts)
- Extra bobbins
- A pack of jeans needles
- Sewing paraphernalia (like pins, tape measure, sewing oil, etc)

Materials

- Half a metre of light-weight white cotton fabric on which to stitch your image
- 1 to 2 meters of light-weight coloured (can be patterned) fabric from which to make the vessels
- A collection of scraps of materials and fibres (relevant to your reference image)
- A collection of sewing threads (relevant to your reference image)
- A collection of see-through fabrics like tulle or netting (very useful for tone and value)
- 1 reel of thread to match the fabric chosen for your vessels
- Tracing paper (I use A4 with a weight of about 60gsm)

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