

eBook  
SERIES

Just SEW It!

# Mixed Media Stitching

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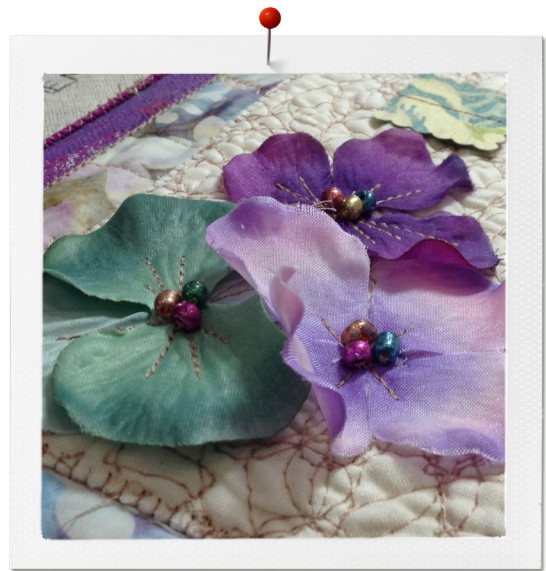


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# Mixed Media Stitching

Using machine stitching techniques when creating a mixed media project can add depth, detail, and dimension that are hard to achieve with other methods. Enhancing your work with color and texture using thread and fabric is simple to do and creates a level of complexity in the layers that make up the overall look of the art. These techniques are easy to incorporate into your work and are all simple to learn – even for beginners!

- Basic Stitching
- Paper Stitching
- Stitched Texture
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- Machine Lettering



## Mixing It Up

Mixed media work is more than sewing. All types of creative techniques are blended together to make works of art that are simple and complex at the same time. Created by using layers of paint, fabric, ink and more, these pieces of visual art often include two or more of the following:

- collage
- assemblage
- altered objects
- appliqué
- free-motion stitching
- painting
- photography
- using found objects
- journaling

When machine stitching is added to the mix, there are several presser feet that help make it simple to embellish and decorate with a variety of techniques. Shown below are a few presser feet useful in mixed media stitching.



Reverse Pattern  
Foot #1/1C/1D



Open  
Embroidery  
Foot #20/20C/20D



Clear Appliqué  
Foot #23



Freehand  
Embroidery  
Foot #24



Clear  
Embroidery  
Foot #39/39C



BERNINA Stitch  
Regulator #42



# Basic Stitching

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Machine stitching is a great way to attach elements to the background of an art piece and/or creatively incorporate stitching in a way that it becomes a part of the overall design. The most common stitches used in mixed media are also the simplest ones found on most machines: straight, zigzag, and blanket. Below are some basic ways to include stitching in almost any piece of mixed media art.

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## **Straight Stitch**

The most basic way to add stitching to art pieces is with the common straight stitch. Used for quilting, thread painting and free-motion stitching, straight stitching can hold layers in place or be a subtle way to add color and texture to a surface. Use a reverse or lock stitch to secure the stitching at the beginning and end.

## **Zigzag Stitch**

The zigzag stitch works well on both fabric and paper, adding simple pattern and texture to the surface. Use this stitch to finish edges and appliqué shapes to backgrounds. Open Embroidery Foot #20/20C/20D is a good choice for this stitch. With the needle in the far right position, it's easy to sew along the edge by aligning it with the inside right toe.

## **Blanket Stitch**

Add a more primitive look to appliqué shapes with the blanket stitch. Using a highly contrasting thread color and a wide stitch (3-4 mm) width makes the stitching more obvious, adding it to the layers of techniques that make up the art piece. A thread that blends and a narrow stitch width (1-2 mm) can hold the edges in place with stitching that is fairly inconspicuous.



# Paper Stitching

Using paper in mixed media art pieces is very common and easy to do. Stitching all types of paper from tissue paper to book pages and patterned cardstock, offers lots of options to add color, texture, and interest to your projects.

## Machine Settings

- Use the appropriate presser foot when stitching on paper; all the same rules apply: clear or open foot for the most visibility, couching foot for adding fibers, and free-motion foot for stitching in any direction.
- Use a straight, zigzag, or open decorative stitch to sew on paper.

## Tips

When sewing with a straight stitch, use a longer than normal stitch length (3mm-4mm); too short and the stitching will perforate the paper.

If the paper is fragile, place stabilizer behind it for stitching.

To hold paper to a paper or fabric background, use double-stick adhesive tape. Wonder Tape is sew-able and will not leave residue on the needle or get adhesive on the inside workings of the machine.

If using a handmade or natural paper, be careful about natural elements such as leaves, twigs, and flowers that may be in the paper. Avoid sewing through them to protect your needle.

Select the size of the needle to suit your project; a smaller needle sews finely for a delicate layout and larger needles give a bolder or more primitive look to the stitching.

Be aware that stitching through paper dulls your needle. You may need to change several times while scrap stitching and you'll definitely need a new needle when you return to fabric.





# Stitched Texture

An easy form of free-motion work, scribble stitching is a great way to add texture to fabric. With the feed dog lowered, move the fabric in any and all directions, in effect “scribbling” with thread. The threads will “pull” the fabric up and give a pebbled or textured look to the surface of the fabric. This can be stitched on fabric only or on fabric with thin batting behind it, depending on the desired finished look.

## Machine Settings

- Free-motion presser foot such as Freehand Embroidery Foot #24 or BERNINA Stitch Regulator (BSR) #42
- Straight Stitch; W = 0 mm & L = N/A (feed dog down)
- Center needle position

## Fabric Prep

Place a piece of low-loft batting behind the fabric. Use temporary spray adhesive to hold the layers together if desired.

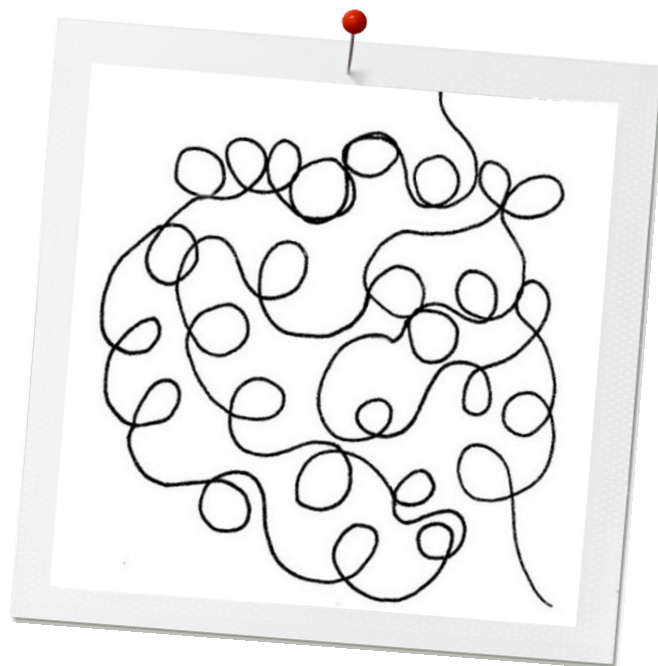
## Step 1

Pull the bobbin thread to the top of the work; stitch 3-4 tiny stitches (moving the fabric slightly) to tie off the beginning. Move the fabric back and forth and side-to-side to stitch loops, building up the thread and adding texture to the fabric. Keep the stitching as sparse or as dense as preferred.

## Tips

Stitch several sparse layers using a different thread color for each one for a blended effect.

Use a pen and paper to doodle the scribble to “train” your brain to follow a scribbling pattern before actually using a needle and thread.



# Thread Painting

Similar to scribble stitching, thread painting is more controlled and can be used to add depth and details to added elements, appliqué shapes, and fabric motifs. Threads can be “painted” directly onto background fabric or added to appliqué shapes that are stitched or fused to the background fabrics.

## Machine Settings

- Free-motion presser foot such as Freehand Embroidery Foot #24 or BERNINA Stitch Regulator (BSR) #42
- Straight Stitch; W = 0 mm & L = N/A (feed dog down)
- Center needle position

## Step 1

Place a piece of low-loft batting or stabilizer behind the fabric.

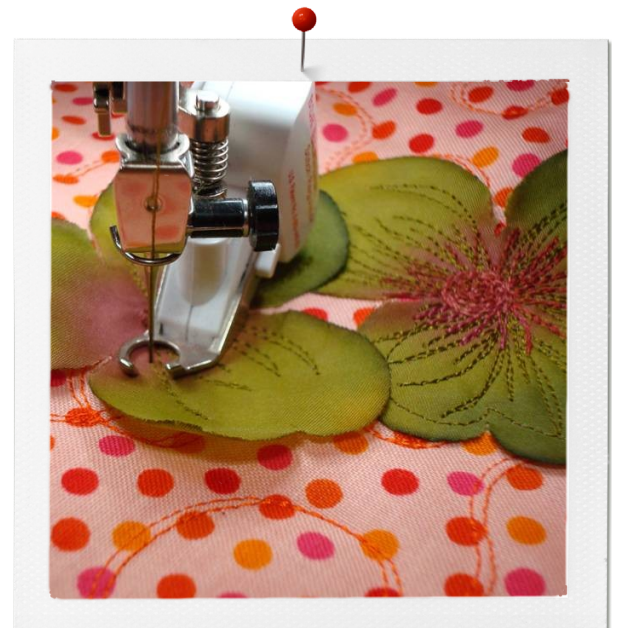
## Step 2

Pull the bobbin thread to the top of the work; stitch 3-4 tiny stitches (moving the fabric slightly) to tie off the beginning. Move the fabric back and forth and side-to-side to build up the thread where desired to add outlines and/or interior details to the design/motif.

## Tips

Use temporary spray adhesive to hold the fabric, batting, and/or stabilizer layers together for stitching if desired.

Use threads that blend for subtle details or use a highly contrasting thread for a bolder, more graphic look.



# Simple Couching

Add color and texture by stitching yarns, cords, and fibers to the surface of fabric. This technique can also be used as an edging for wall hangings and art pieces.

## Basic Couching

One cord and a simple zigzag stitch is the most basic form of couching. The narrow track on the sole of Clear Appliqué Foot #23 helps feed the cord under the needle as the machine stitches it in place.

### Step 1

Place a piece of low-loft batting or stabilizer behind the fabric.

### Step 2

Attach Clear Appliqué Foot #23 to the machine. Lay a narrow (2mm) cord on the fabric and position Foot #23 on it with the cord in the center track.

### Step 3

Select the Zigzag stitch and adjust the width to be wide enough to go into the fabric on each side of the cord. Set the length as desired. Sew along the desired path, securing the cord with the zigzag stitch.

## Couched Edging

Give a finished look to a fabric edge by stitching yarn down with a zigzag stitch.

### Step 1

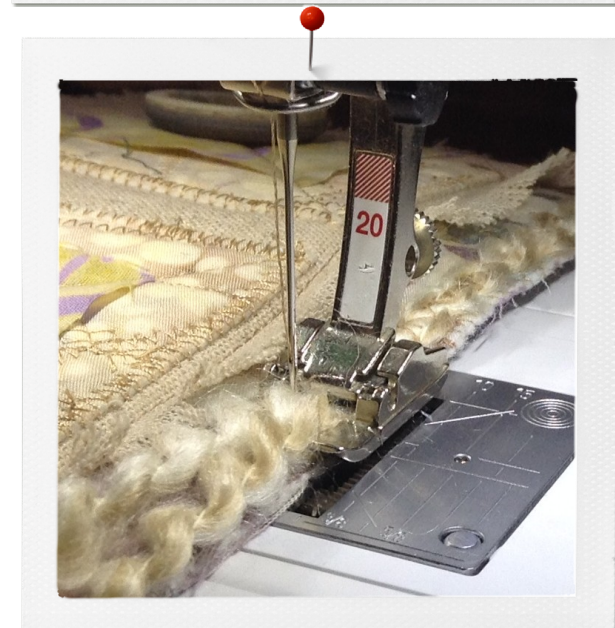
Oversew the edge of the piece with a zigzag stitch to "seal" the edges.

### Step 2

Attach Open Embroidery Foot #20/20C/20D to the machine. Place 1-2 pieces of yarn on the fabric. Select the zigzag stitch and adjust the width and length to 2-3 mm.

### Step 3

Sew along the edge, securing the yarn with the zigzag stitch. Overlap the beginning and ending with yarn and sew a few reverse stitches to secure the yarn.





# Machine Lettering

Many of today's sewing machines are equipped with one or more styles of lettering and numbers. Add titles, slogans, and sayings to mixed media pieces using the memory of the machine to combine letters into words, lending a graphic look to the piece as you express your message

## Machine Settings

- Clear Embroidery Foot #39/39C
- Cotton or polyester embroidery thread
- Needle Stop Down

## Step 1

Attach Clear Embroidery Foot #39/39C to the machine.

## Step 2

Using a fabric marker, draw a line on the fabric to use as a guideline for the words.

## Step 3

Stabilize the fabric with interfacing, batting, or embroidery stabilizer as needed for the project.

## Step 4

Position the fabric under Foot #39/39C, aligning the center red mark on the foot with the drawn line on the fabric.

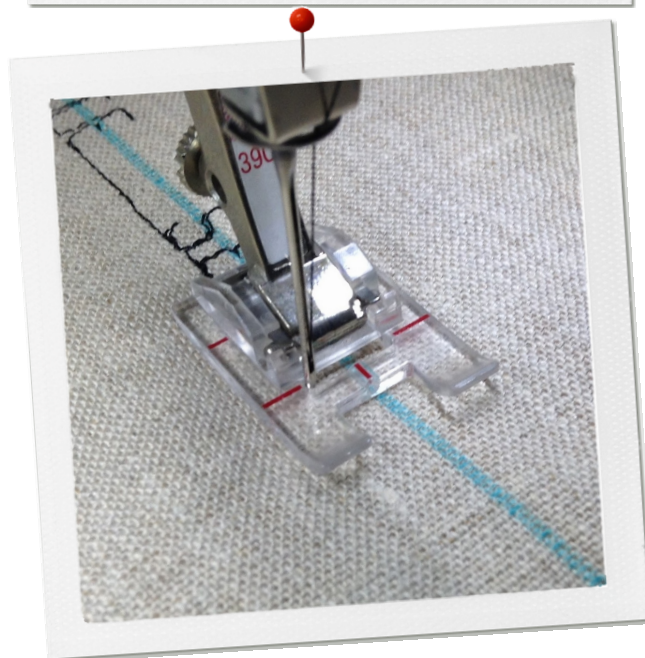
Stitch the letters along the line, keeping the red line on the foot aligned with the marked line on the fabric.

## Tips

Use a *new* sharp-pointed needle such as an embroidery needle.

Engage Pattern Repeat 1 so the machine will automatically stop at the end of the word or phrase that is programmed into memory.

Use fingertip guiding to keep the draw line aligned with the red mark on the foot as the stitching progresses. Gently place fingers on the fabric on each side of the foot. Without pushing or pulling the fabric, use your fingers to keep the fabric straight.





# No Mistakes Banner

The techniques used to make this simple banner are detailed on the pages of this eBook. Details of measurements and techniques used are shown in the diagram and text on the following page.





## Details

**1** Create background by making a quilt sandwich with two layers of fabric and low-loft batting. Stitch lines of straight, zigzag, and other open stitches, placing them randomly across the fabric. Zigzag the raw edges together along all four sides.

**2** Paint, stamp, or stencil a 9" x 4½" piece of canvas as desired. Appliqué the canvas, placing it as shown in the diagram using a narrow blanket stitch. Program the desired lettering into the memory of the machine and stitch several rows of words onto stabilized linen fabric; trim to 7½" x 3½". Center the linen on top of the canvas. Secure the edges using Clear Appliqué Foot #23, a 2 mm cord, and a zigzag stitch.

**3** Place batting behind a piece of quilting cotton. Using a free-motion presser foot, scribble stitch across the surface to create texture. Trim to 6" square. Cut eight 1" squares from scrapbook paper or cardstock (squares shown were punched). Arrange and secure by straight stitching down the center of the squares as shown. Place "silk" flowers in the upper left corner and add stitched details to hold them in place. Sew beads to the center of the flower by hand. Appliqué the entire piece to the background using a blanket stitch and Open Embroidery Foot #20/20C/20D.

**4** Using your favorite font, print the saying on scrapbook paper or cardstock and trim to 5¾" x 3¼". Cut a second piece about ⅜" larger on all sides. Stack them, matching the centers and straight stitch diagonally across each corner. Cut a third piece about ⅛" larger on all sides. Stack them, matching the centers and straight stitch together. Attach the entire stack to the background using a zigzag stitch around the edges.

**5** Cut linen 4" x 11". Place batting behind 5" x 12" batik and stitch randomly placed lines of open decorative stitches. Cut three 3" squares from the quilted batik and appliqué them to the linen in a vertical row. Place three 2" squares in the center of the appliquéd squares and straight stitch diagonally from corner to corner in both directions. Sew a button in the center of each layered square. Position the linen piece as shown and straight stitch around the layered squares. Fringe the edges of the linen.

**6** Couch yarn along all edges using Open Embroidery Foot #20/20C/20D and zigzag stitch.

