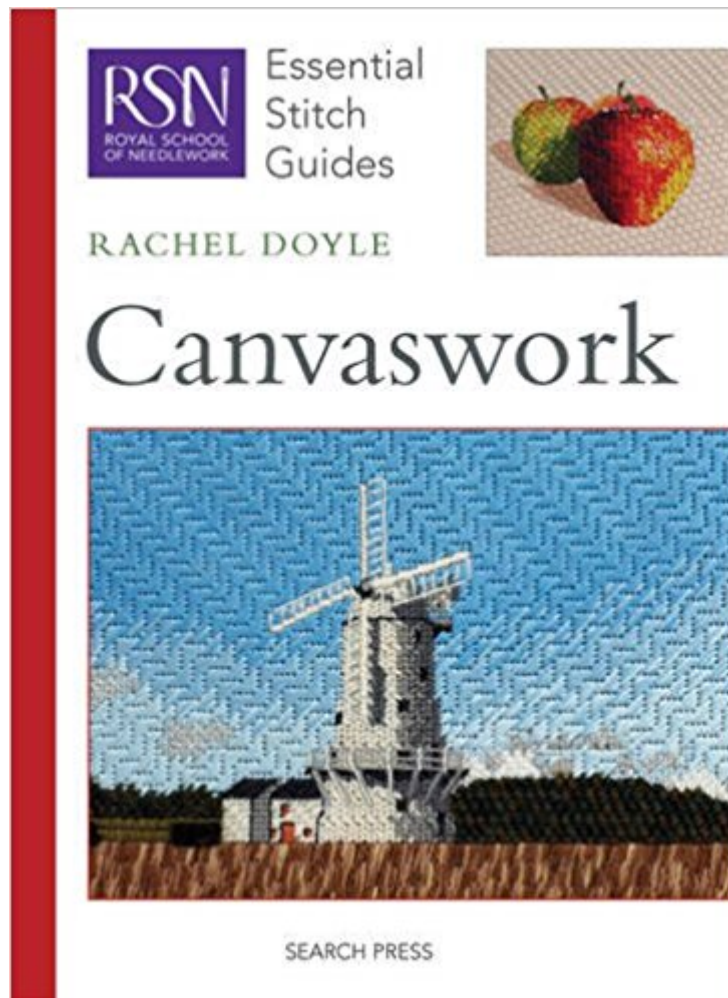




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Canvaswork (Essential Stitch Guides)



Synopsis

At head of title: Essential stitch guide.

Book Information

Series: Essential Stitch Guides

Hardcover: 96 pages

Publisher: Search Press; Spi edition (April 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1844485870

ISBN-13: 978-1844485871

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 0.6 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #548,870 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Needlecrafts & Textile Crafts > Needlepoint](#) #315 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Needlecrafts & Textile Crafts > Embroidery](#) #667 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Needlecrafts & Textile Crafts > Needlework](#)

Customer Reviews

The Royal School of Needlework and Search Press have published a series of Essential Stitch Guides for different needlework disciplines. These are very handy reference books to have in your needlework library. They cover the basics and a little beyond in each technique, giving the beginner a place to start and a direction to move in when learning various aspects of the needle arts. So far, eight Essential Stitch Guides are available on the following needlework techniques: Crewelwork, Blackwork, Whitework, Silk Shading, Stumpwork, Goldwork, Bead Embroidery, and Canvaswork. I've reviewed seven of them (the links above will take you directly to my previous reviews), and today, I'm reviewing the eighth - the RSN Essential Stitch Guide for Canvaswork, by Rachel Doyle. Canvas work and needlepoint are synonymous terms. Here in the US, needlepoint has been the more commonly used term for stitching on canvas, though more and more, the term "canvas work" is becoming more widely used here, too. Like the other books in the series, the RSN Essential Stitch Guide for Canvaswork is a compact, spiral bound book, the perfect size for tucking into a work bag, and easy to open flat on a table, for optimal learning situations. Every time I get my paws on the next Stitch Guide (I have no idea how many are planned - anyone?), I renew my appreciation for

their binding decisions on these books. It's a cased-in binding, so that the spiral is covered with a spine, making the books easy to identify on the shelf. When using an instructional book, it is so very nice to have a book that lays flat on the table before you, rather than one that constantly wants to close. The book begins with an introduction to the Royal School of Needlework, and then moves on with a brief history of canvas work. This part of the text is short, but readable. It doesn't really go into modern canvas work beyond the early 1900's, besides saying that there's a small revival of individuality in canvas work today. From there, we move into a discussion of materials used in canvas work, and there's a concise explanation of canvases in general, with photos of samples to help you discern which type is which. For the modern canvas worker, there are more colors available for needlepoint canvas these days, beyond the white and the natural (or "antique") colored canvases mentioned here. You'll also find a brief discussion on threads for canvas work. The standards are listed. Again, there are many other choices out there today as far as specialty threads go, that are used in modern canvas work techniques. As with all the RSN stitch guides, you'll find clear information on how to set up canvas on a slate frame and also in a hoop. In the UK, the slate frame is more popular than it is here in the US, and apparently much more widely used. In the US, for needlepoint especially, the stretcher bar frame is the more popular frame choice. It's less expensive, much easier to find, much more user friendly, and much easier to set up. If you're just starting out in canvas work, don't think that you can only use a slate frame or a hoop. Stretcher bars are an excellent option for canvas work, and I was a little surprised they weren't mentioned at all. Scroll frames also work well for canvas work, so that's another option available. I'm not really sold on the hoop approach, myself. I think a hoop for canvas work is probably a stretch (no pun intended!). If you use a hoop with canvas work, the design must fit inside the hoop area, which requires you to use a significantly larger piece of canvas than necessary, in order for the canvas to fit in the hoop. It works, but I wouldn't rank it as a primary choice for canvas work. All that being said, the normal approach at the RSN is the slate frame and the hoop. So that's pretty much what's addressed in every RSN stitch guide. Just so you know, though, there are other options. After materials, we move into the question of design. This is a wonderful section of the book! It greatly clarifies the process of choosing a design suitable for interpretation with thread on canvas. If you enjoy canvas work, but you've only stitched someone else's designs because you weren't sure how to go about designing your own canvas, you'll find this section very useful. After deciding on a design, there's the question of getting that design onto your canvas - and that's covered in detail, too. Selecting colors, preparing threads, threading your needle - all these essential bits of information are covered... ..along with instruction on how to start stitching on canvas. There's good

information on sampling stitches - checking to make sure that your stitch choice and your thread choice work well together to cover the canvas completely without cramming. The stitch order in canvas work is slightly different from the stitch order in most surface embroidery techniques, so there's a section devoted to explaining the order of stitching. The bulk of the book, though, is dedicated to stitches used in canvas work. There are lots of stitches that can be used on needlepoint canvas, and a good many are covered here. The stitches are arranged in alphabetical order, and they include a clear stitch diagram, along with a stitched sample in two colors so that you can see what the stitch looks like on canvas. There's also usually a photo of a larger piece incorporating the stitch, which is a very nice addition. It's great to see specific stitches used in various applications. When it comes to the arrangement of the stitches in the book, I understand the reason for an alphabetical listing, but I did pause and contemplate the arrangement from the point of view of the beginner. Through the eyes of an absolute beginner, I think I would find that launching straight into a stitch dictionary with a variety of more complex canvas stitches a little overwhelming. It doesn't really give you a starting point. This is why I hesitate here: If the book is meant to help the absolute beginner, it would make more sense in my mind to begin with the common, typical, straightforward stitches of canvas work, and then to work up to the more complex stitches and combinations. For example, I expected to see tent stitch first. Now, you might cry out, "Tent stitch? But everyone knows how to do tent stitch! Tent stitch is boring! Tent stitch is so common!" But if the point of the book is to get the beginner started, the beginner might not know tent stitch. The beginner is a beginner, after all. While I love the variety of stitches presented here, and I love the way they are presented, I was a little surprised that the beginner wasn't led into the more complex stitches from the simpler, straightforward stitches of canvas work, like tent stitch, Gobelin stitch, and the like. Still, there's a nice variety of interesting stitches here. It's not an exhaustive list, but it's a good list, and the stitches are presented very well, with a clear chart and examples. At the end of the book, there's a section titled "Moving On" that touches briefly on stitch blending (using a variety of stitches in an area, blended together to create depth or texture)... ...and a little bit on shading. There's just enough on those pages to whet the appetite and prod you to further learning and development in canvas work. Overall, I think *The RSN Essential Stitch Guide: Canvaswork* is a good addition to the needleworker's library, especially if you've dabbled a little bit with basic canvas work, and especially if you are keen to collect the complete set of RSN stitch guides. The book is reasonably priced and contains enough information and inspiration to prod the beginner to further exploration. -- Mary Corbet

Mary Corbet's Needle 'n' Thread Feb/Mar 13

Like other titles in this series, *Canvaswork*'s handsome glossy spine conceals a useful spiral binding so that embroiderers

can use the book as a hardworking reference tool when stitching. Depicting stitches in a muted palette ably illustrates the varied textural possibilities afforded by working on what can seem initially like the dauntingly 'formal grid of a canvas'. Rachel urges readers to view this 'as you would any other background fabric - a space to fill with your embroidery'. She also urges readers to break out of the habit of only using wool. 'Anything that will fit ... through the holes of the canvas can be used - ribbon, silk, stranded cotton, metallic threads'. Rachel has wisely not attempted to produce an encyclopaedic stitch guide, preferring to offer a well-judged 'broad cross-section of useful stitches to get you started'. This approach means that adequate page space is given to each stitch, with large photographs of each worked sample accompanied by step-by-step illustrations and written instructions. Additional information is also given on variations of and suggested uses for each stitch, as well as related stitches. Rachel had already gained a degree in textiles before completing her RSN Apprenticeship, and her confidently restrained use of tone and texture shines through in this refreshing take on a historic form. *Stitch Nov 12* Another in this fine series of books from RSN. These essential stitch guides really do give a thorough grounding. Rachel gives an introduction to and history of canvaswork. She takes us through the materials we need and framing up. There are design guidelines and how to start your work, and order of work. We then get into the meat of the book - the stitch directory. This is excellent and gives a description of the stitch and its uses as well as variations and related stitches. I love the very visible diagrams plus a colour example of the stitch when it is worked up. The examples of finished work throughout this book are wonderful. If you have ever thought canvaswork the poor relation of needlework - think again. In particular the work at the back of the book under the section 'Moving On' demonstrates the versatility of this form of needlecraft. Karen Platt Yarnsandfabrics.co.uk/crafts

Rachel Doyle is a teacher at the Royal School of Needlework.

Excellent teaching tool.

Great

Very clear instructions, illustrations. Good resource.

This book is easy to see and use, and I like the color pictures-It will be a welcome addition to my library

It came today! It is wonderful. more than I had hoped. Thanks both to the seller and to for having this company as part of American .Thank you thank you thank you. How the world has changed. I just became interested in the Internet in the last three months.My husband was convinced that we should have high-speed Internet. I am 75 and sewing up a storm of needlepoint so the books I have bought through have been guiding me by real experts with certificates and diplomas in these artistic areas.Never, not even with used bookstore, could we access such limitless availabilities from all over the country and even from England!Many thanks!

I purchased this book for my granddaughter who is learning to do needlepoint. After looking through the book I feel like it will be a good teaching device for her to use.

This book is one of a series of very useful books on various types of needlework. It covers not only what you need to know to do quality needlework, but gives wonderful examples of using various stitches and techniques to give your needlepoint special qualities. I keep this book near at hand when I am planning new projects. It is a great way to experiment and give your needlepoint a distinctive, original work. It has excellent photographs that let you see how to use various stitches to add texture and depth to your needlepoint and other types of stitching.. It is a fine resource.

Canvaswork Royal School of Needlework is the latest volume in the Essential Stitch Guides series and it's a serious disappointment.The stated purpose of the series is to look at the historic background of the technique, to give the basics and to show how the technique can be used in new ways. It's flawed in every area.It begins with a two-page history. This isn't much space but even so, more than 25% of it is taken up with one picture. Unhappily she basically ignores any developments in needlepoint since 1970. Considering the flowering of needlepoint and the expansion of the technique this book is supposed to encourage, this is inexcusable.The next section deals with materials and is overly UK-centric to the exclusion of materials and tools used in most other places. Doyle only shows white and ecru canvas (she calls it antique), completely ignoring the colored canvas that's been a vital part of the needlepoint industry for almost 30 years. She only talks about two kinds of frames, a slate frame and a ring frames (a kind of souped-up embroidery hoop) The slate frame is not widely available outside the UK and is a fairly expensive item, requiring a fair amount of work to use. The ring frame, which is even harder to find, requires lots of excess canvas to work. Why not stretcher bars, which aren't even mentioned?Continuing on through the materials

she mentions few threads, even though a wider use of threads is a hallmark of modern needlepoint throughout the world. And even when it comes to these few she doesn't make specific recommendations for strands or canvas. I have seen many British needlepoint books with far shorter materials sections that say much more. Her advice on transferring a design, starting and ending threads and choosing stitches is all good. The longest section of the book shows stitches. It includes a large, clear diagram of the stitch, a picture of a stitched sample and notes about uses, variations, and related stitches. Throughout pictures of stitched needlepoint pieces are included. The stitches are presented in alphabetical order. The author tried to select a broad variety of stitches and there are some unusual choices here. But also some inexplicable absences. Diagonal Cashmere is here, but not Cashmere. We see Hungarian Ground, but not Hungarian. The names of stitches follow, I assume, British names, and rarely are alternative names given. Tent is here, but buried on page 86. There is no attempt to give any help to the beginner. There is no roadmap or suggestions on how to start. Stitches aren't classified in any way, so you are left with no idea of where to begin. The final section is called "Moving On." There are two pages here, one on using more than one stitch in a piece and one on using single colors of thread for shading. Neither provides much help, but pictures one canvas each in more than one picture. I'm disappointed. The other books in this series I've seen give you something to use. You can start doing the technique, you know how to proceed and you have lovely pieces to inspire you. Here I've gotten pig in a poke. I couldn't give this to a beginner and expect anything, another book or in person lessons would be needed. I can't give it to an experienced needlepointer because although some of the pictured pieces are lovely I can find more advanced uses of canvaswork in a random search on Pinterest. For all it's modern layout this book seems mired in the 1970s as a time when using different threads was considered cutting edge and when people were just starting to use different stitches. I've seen far better books coming out of the UK. This book does little credit to the RSN or to needlepointers. Pass on it.

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