

A BIG THANK YOU!



Hello, and welcome to Fitz Stitch. Firstly, a big thank you for signing up to our project! We are really excited to start stitching with you, and to see all of your amazing creations inspired by the Fitzwilliam Museum's collection. In this PDF you will find basic guidelines about how to get started with your textile project, as well as information on different techniques and alternative materials that could be used. We really hope you enjoy this project, and please do share your progress with us using the hashtag #FitzStitch. Happy making!

HOW TO GET STARTED

- Firstly, choose a theme. We are looking for unique pieces that represent the museum's diverse collection. You could take inspiration from the smallest detail of a painting, to the largest objects in the museum! Each piece does not need to be representational; we want to see your own unique interpretation – that could be as abstract or as literal as you want.
- Secondly, gather materials! You do not need lots of fancy equipment in order to join in. You can use anything you like! Think thrifty – an old t shirt as a base fabric, some garden twine as embroidery thread. Use whatever works for you. All we ask is that each fabric piece measures 29 x 29 cm, with a 2 cm seam allowance around the edge – making the finished design 25 x 25 cm.
- Thirdly, get going! No prior experience needed. We have attached some basic ideas/techniques to give you a head start, but feel free to be creative with how you work! There are lots of great resources online that could help get you started, as well as videos on our website teaching different techniques. Head to www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk to take a look.

Don't have the materials? Use this handy chart to come up with a recycled piece of textile art!

| Don't Have This? | Try This Instead! |
|-------------------|--|
| Base fabric | An old t-shirt, shopping bags, tea towel |
| Embroidery thread | Garden twine, dental floss (try colouring it in with a pen!), elastic bands cut up and tied together |
| A needle | An unfolded paperclip |
| Fabric dye | Avocado skins, onion, beetroot, coffee, grass |

TECHNIQUES

EMBROIDERY

Embroidery is the art of creating decorative designs onto fabric by either machine or hand stitching. Using a variety of different stitches to create patterns and outlines, you can achieve incredible results. There is no right or wrong way to embroider onto fabric, but some stitches that may be worth knowing include: the back stitch, stem stitch, the lazy daisy stitch and the French knot. Throughout history, embroidery has been used as both a decorative and functional element to clothing, and over time has become an art form in its own right.



APPLIQUÉ

Appliqué essentially means applying one piece of fabric to another – usually shapes or designs on top of a fabric background. It can be a practical way to add some depth to your designs. Appliqué is often enhanced using different coloured or textured threads around the edges of the fabric motifs, and can even be embellished with beads, sequins and pearls.

There are a huge range of different types of appliqué; there's no right or wrong way to experiment with this fun technique, but different methods can result in very different looks. Discover different types of appliqué and choose the best style to enhance your sewing project.



BORO

Boro is the Japanese textile technique that was traditionally used to mend worn areas in peoples clothing - usually everyday work wear often in indigo dyed cotton. The 'patches' of material were reused scraps from other cloth or garments, many were patterned and over time layered up over each other to create thicker and warmer clothing! The patches are usually stitched into place with a thick cotton thread using a simple 'running stitch'.



PATCHWORK



Patchwork is a sewing technique in which different fabrics are joined together either by hand or by machine to make a larger design. The finished design is usually made up of repeat patterns using geometric shapes; however you can easily go crazy with your patchwork and create something very freeform! The earliest examples of patchwork have been found as far back as 5000 years ago, but many different cultures still use patchwork today – either to simply embellish materials or clothing, or to create a functional, warm piece of fabric. It is a great technique if you have lots of scraps of fabric, and want to create something thrifty.

DYEING

Dyeing is the process of changing a fabric's colour using either chemically produced or natural dye. You can create lots of amazing results with dye, particularly if you experiment with manipulating the fabric before the dyeing process begins. Folding, knotting or tying the base fabric are easy ways to get started - Ikat, Shibori and Tie-Dye are great examples of this. Fabric dye is generally easy to find, but if you don't have any at home, try food instead! Using natural dyes is not only better for the environment, but can create some beautiful colours too. Onion skins, tumeric, red cabbage and spinach are just a few ingredients that you could try. Just make sure that the fabric you are dyeing is made of natural fibres – such as cotton, silk or hemp.



SASHIKO

Sashiko is a Japanese stitching technique that translates as 'little stabs'. A sharper needle than our equivalent darning needle is used to go through surprisingly thick areas of layered cloth. Often simple but intricate designs are used to create a pattern. Motifs such as the wave pattern, the leaf or an animal, flower or bird. Contemporary designers have developed a freestyle of designs. Again the traditional use of blue indigo fabric contrasts with the white sashiko thread.

