

# Thread Painting

With Sandra Mollon, Instructor

Thread Painting is a technique where the artist prints a photograph onto a piece of fabric, and stitches by machine using free motion (feed dogs dropped, and a darning foot on the machine) over the image so that the image is —usually— completely covered in thread. Students will have the option of using a pre-printed image provided by Sandra (\$5.00 each), or they can use their own image.



## How to Prepare:

Most of the images I have (including the little yellow bird, above), are printed on cotton fabric. It is possible to print your own image on fabric using an ink jet printer and sheets of fabric prepared for the printer. I like Jacquard products, or EQ cotton sheets. These can be ordered on Amazon or online. Additionally you will need to have a background fabric to fuse it to, about 18" square, in a color that complements your photo, and a piece of batting (cotton) and a backing fabric about 20" square. You may wish to bring several fat quarters of cotton fabrics to audition your choice during the workshop, as different background colors will change the overall look of the project.

## Your Machine:

Having a clean machine in good working order, with the right foot, needles, and thread will make or break your experience. If you have ever used your machine for free-motion quilting, and it worked well, it will be fine for thread painting. Bring the manual if the machine is newer to you.

If you are purchasing a machine, and do not want to spend a lot of money, look for a good used machine rather than buying a new machine. Believe it or not, my 14 year old Bernina is still running like a champ. I have it serviced regularly at a reputable dealer.

Here is what to pack:

**Extra Bobbins.** You may want to pre-wind several in the colors you are mostly using for the thread painting, in the same thread as listed below, or bottom line threads.

**Needles:** Size 70 and 80 Sharp (I like Microtex Sharp Needles by Schmetz), or topstitch needles. Some threads need size 90 needles, and often you can find what the thread manufacturer recommends.

**Thread:** I recommend trying to match the colors in the photograph you will use. I will also bring extra thread to share. I have used everything type of thread in my thread box, but I prefer a good quality thread like Aurifil or Superior Threads 50 weight. I also own a large amount of commercial embroidery thread, which I have also used. It tends to be shiny in the picture, whereas the cotton thread is more matte. Avoid using very cheap thread.

**Darning Foot** for your machine, please check your machine manual and find the exact foot. ***Imperative. Make sure you pack this.***

Extras: You should consider bringing a portable light to enhance the normal lighting on the machine, small scissors to clip threads. You may consider reading glasses or Mag Eyes. You need to see what you are doing. Also an extension table for your machine is very helpful to keep your work flat while sewing, if you own one, bring it.

**Fabric and Adhesive:**

I mount the picture onto another piece of fabric using Misty Fuse adhesive. You will receive a small piece of this from the instructor in class. I avoid thicker fusible webbing, as they can gum up the needle.

I choose a fabric to enhance the picture. If you need help with this step, please pack coordinating fabric (fat quarter size) and wait until you get there for more instruction.

**Cotton batting (like Warm and Natural), and backing fabric** in the same amounts (fat quarter size) as above.

**Safety pins for basting (8-10 pins).** Alternatively instructor will demonstrate using small bits of Misty Fuse in place of pins.

**Organizers:** The classroom will require a few irons at the start of the class.

