

Embroidery / Drawing Workshops – Louise Gardiner 2009

'In Stitches.'

A talk about my work, 'In Stitches' covers everything from my inspiration and techniques to my life/experience as a full time modern 'embroideress'. I share my experiences of projects I have completed, including an illustrated book called 'Saggy Boobs and other breast feeding Myths,' my work in a women's secure mental health unit, work as a studio manager and as a commissioned artist and book illustrator. It is a light hearted but heart felt talk which I hope is both uplifting and humorous.

1 Drawing Workshop – Figurative/ Still Life

My workshop begins with mark making with the help of music. Starting with simple group exercises to warm up the body and the mind to blow away cobwebs and reduce the fear of the blank white page. We will concentrate on drawing with a continuous line, 'drawing blind' and with rhythm to build up individual creative confidence and produce you work you didn't think you were capable of. Drawing exercises can last anything from two hours to a whole day. It is a great way to promote self-confident mark making and to support original work to be taken into embroidery.

Everybody MUST come equipped with a sewing machine which has a MACHINE EMBROIDERY FOOT OR DARNING foot. It is very advisable that students have already whizzed around on their machines in free motion to make sure that their machine functions without any problems.

2 Drawing with the sewing machine

Time to develop the techniques and the drawings into free machine embroidery.

I encourage students to use one colour and think of thread like ink. The challenge is to remember and apply the techniques of creative mark making but now with a sewing machine. In a nutshell – drawing with rhythm and interesting line. Again – we can use music to help us and sometimes I have a whole group sewing to Mozart!

3 Applying Colour with Stitch and paints

Now that we have some fantastic line based drawings in stitch we can experiment with colour through free machine embroidery and by applying paints. I encourage students to choose carefully and to mix their palette so producing rich and powerful colour schemes which enhance their embroideries. Also to develop rich textures within their work by inventing their own repeat patterns and by drawing with coloured stitch within existing shapes.

4 Applique and creating different surfaces to work on.

This is for longer workshops where we have time to experiment and students can go home at night to collect materials together which are unusual to work with. We experiment together in creating fun surfaces to work over and also experiment in using appliqué within designs and embroidered drawings.

At the end of the work shop students will have a completely original, often light hearted but clever piece of original work which can be ironed and framed.

I have always had extremely positive feedback from my workshops and am often invited back.

I have taught at many Guilds and Universities in the UK, recently at the RWA in Bristol for the Embroiderer's Guild Art of the Stitch exhibition and also at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The ideal workshop length is 3 days but I can also do a 1 day and a two day workshop.

Ideally I suggest I do a talk the evening or day before and would like a maximum of 15 people in my workshop the next day.

I hope this is all you need to know but please feel free to contact me to ask any questions.

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'IN STITCHES'

Drawing with Machine Embroidery by Louise Gardiner.

Materials List.

For Sewing –

Sewing machine that works well with free machine stitching
with free motion foot for embroidery.

Spare needles

Extension Cable?

Black Thread and Mix of coloured threads – Metallic optional.

Spare bobbins

Scissors

Pieces of canvas / cotton / calico / plain fabric - minimum 3 (for a one day workshop) A3 size or larger. Heavier canvas is ideal as then no hoop needed.

Other scraps of fabric – for appliqué – Two Day workshop.

OPTIONAL (2 day workshop)- feathers, sequins, glitter glue, bits and bobs

For Drawing –

A small selection of pens, fine liners, biro's or pencils for drawing

Masking Tape or similar.

Some drawing paper or sketch book – approx A2 size or larger.

OPTIONAL -

Tracing paper.

Acrylic/ craft paint and fine paint brush.