

## “Themes & Variations in Hand Stitching”

by Lisa Binkley • [www.lisabinkley.com](http://www.lisabinkley.com)

Class Description: Artistic themes can be both technical and conceptual. They can be found in the consistent use of particular techniques, shapes, images, palettes, or concepts. Hand stitching lends itself beautifully to both technical and conceptual theme development. Bead and thread embroidery can be used to boldly define solid shapes, subtly suggest translucent shapes, and everything in between. Hand stitching with beads and thread can be used to create powerful line work, visual movement, and expressive, engaging textures. It can also be used to highlight both positive and negative space in works of art.

In this five-day workshop students explore ways to develop personal themes and variations on those themes in order to create a small series of related mini works in fiber art (art quilts, embroideries, etc.) each of which features hand stitching with beads and threads. Each day will be a combination of bead embroidery and thread embroidery technique demonstrations, viewing examples of technique applications, group discussion, and individual sketch and stitch explorations of ways to use and build on the techniques introduced. Time will also be dedicated to group discussion of works in progress and individual feedback by the teacher that is both supportive and idea-stimulating.

This class is suitable for all levels of fiber artists. The \$15 class fee covers the detailed color booklet that will be provided to students on the first day of class as well as other class supplies.

Students should bring the following items with them to class:

- 3-5 Small Quilt Sandwiches: Three to five simple, one-fabric-top, unembellished quilt sandwiches made at home (three-layered sandwich of a top fabric, thin batting, and a back fabric, all **pin basted together**). These should be no larger than 15” x 15” each and can be as small as about 6” x 6” each, in a length : width ratio of your choosing. They should all be the same size. Each should be made using a hand-dye, batik, solid, or very subtle print cotton fabric on the top and a similar weight fabric on the back. Use a thin, all-natural-fiber batting such as cotton or wool or a natural blend. All quilt sandwiches should have tops either be made of the same fabric or made in fabrics that work together as a set.
- Additional Fabrics: You may choose to create your theme and variations using only beads and embroidery thread. Or you may opt to use extra fabrics in addition to beads and threads. To give yourself the broadest range of options, bring a mix of fabrics (3-5 or more) that appeal to you and that work with one another and with the fabric(s) used for the tops of your quilt sandwiches. You’ll need no more than ½ yard of each and may use substantially less than that, so feel free to bring some beloved scraps. They can be of different weights, and can be prints, solids, hand-dyes, batiks, and other novelty fabrics. You just need to be able to hand stitch through them and the sandwich that will be beneath them.

- Fusible Web: 1+ yard of a light weight fusible web such as Wonder Under or Misty Fuse.
- Embroidery threads in colors that harmonize with your fabrics. They may be solid or variegated:
  - Required: 1-3 colors pearl cotton in sizes 8 and 12
  - Required: At least 1 color of stranded cotton embroidery floss
  - Required: Embroidery needles in a few sizes to accommodate thicknesses from a single strand of DMC floss to the size 8 pearl cotton.
  - Optional: 1-2+ colors of silk embroidery floss/thread, Size 5 pearl cotton, novelty threads
- Beads and beading supplies that harmonize with your quilts:
  - 3-5+ colors of size 11 seed beads in a variety of finishes (matte, shiny, pearly, iridescent, etc.) and values (light, medium, dark). One hank, tube, or 1 oz. box of each color is adequate.
  - 1-3 colors of bugle beads in a variety of lengths from size 1 through size 3 or longer. One hank, tube, or 1 oz. box of each should be adequate.
  - 2-3+ colors of larger seed beads (e.g., sizes 6 and 8); one hank/container of each
  - At least 1 color size 15 seed beads; one hank/container
  - A few novelty beads in shapes and colors that appeal to you and harmonize with your quilts (e.g., pressed-glass beads, fresh water pearls, wood beads, stone beads, etc.)
  - A few buttons or larger novelty items or cabochons to embellish on your quilt(s)
  - At least 1 spool beading thread in a color that harmonizes with your quilts
  - Size #10 and #12 beading needles (several of each)
  - A bead cloth or dish for holding loose beads
- Additional Supplies
  - Embroidery hoop that can hold your quilts (optional)
  - Scissors for cutting fabric
  - Scissors for cutting paper or template material
  - Straight pins (a small container of these)
  - Sketch pad (any size you like to use, at least 6" x 6")
  - Fabric marking tool such as a chalk pencil or quilter's pencil
  - Transparent quilters ruler 16" – 24+" long and 6" – 6.5" wide
  - A few drawing materials (e.g., pencil, pen, fine-point markers, a few colored pencils)
- A few shapes that appeal to you Sketch and/or collect images in your sketch book of a few simple shapes that speak to you. Examples include a circle, square, heart, paisley, leaf, human or animal form, graphic or language symbol, or any other shape that you would like to work with extensively throughout the week. Don't narrow it down to just one before class.