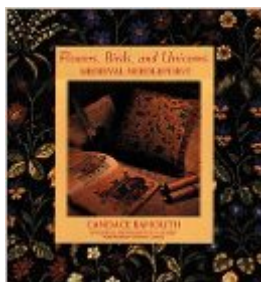


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Flowers, Birds, And Unicorns: Medieval Needlepoint



Synopsis

One of the world's most influential needlepoint and textile artists re-creates the magic of the Middle Ages with more than 20 magnificent projects, for both beginners and veteran stitchers. More than just a how-to, this book sets the designs, themes, and motifs in the context of Medieval art and life. Full-color illustrations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bahouth's sense of color and composition are outstanding, and her knowledge of the period make the designs not only beautiful but true. Charts are clear, and color numbers are given for both Appleton and Paternayan wool, depending upon what a stitcher has available. My one criticism of the book, and the only reason why I didn't give it 5 stars, is that Bahouth includes pictures of finished projects for which she does not provide the charts. This is maddening, because it seems that the one which really grabs you is the one you can't stitch. This is not the only book with this characteristic; reviews of her other books have indicated the same problem. Other than that, anyone who enjoy medieval design and would like to create rich, beautiful pieces should consider adding this book to the library.

If you love to do needlepoint, this is a wonderful book to have. I've done several projects using DMC wool, and they all turned out beautifully. I always work on 10 point penelope (double thread) brown canvas, just because I find it turns out so nicely. If you've never done needlepoint before, I think it's

one of the easiest of the needle crafts, it just takes a bit of practice to master. I find working from a book like this one much better than a kit, because you can choose your fabric and wool, and you don't have to worry about a slightly off set pattern printed on the canvas. Though if you're a beginner, you may want to start with a simple kit to get the hang of it. This book does have a how-to section that discusses technique, materials and how to finish each project. Most of the patterns in this book are based on medieval tapestries. I did the lion and the unicorn, making both into pillows that look beautiful together on my couch. They work wonders on adding a touch of elegance to any room. One issue I had about this book is that it shows a lot of projects that it doesn't have patterns for, and I haven't yet found those patterns, though I've seen kits. For instance, there are really neat little Zodiac patterns, but only four signs of the Zodiac signs are included. My only other complaint is the mottled colors used in the patterns made it hard to distinguish between two of the colors on one pattern, but the projects are beautiful, and this wasn't a general problem throughout the book. Getting supplies for needlepoint can also be difficult. There is a conversion chart in the back, however, that works well. I used DMC wool rather than the Appleton that was suggested, since it was all I could get. Though there were a few instances of colors no longer existing or being too close a match to another color in the pattern, it was easy enough to substitute. I have several books of needlepoint patterns, and this one is by far my favorite. Some other good needlepoint books with patterns are "Graham Rust's Needlepoint Designs," "The Ehrman Needlepoint Book" and "Beth Russell's William Morris Needlepoint."

There are 20 designs in this book, all in low contrast colours, which is typical of medieval tapestry, but there are 40 different designs in the book as a whole. In the appendix there is a list for how to obtain 38 of them from Ehrmann -- two, the slippers, and the grape pillow, are not even mentioned there. This gives a new whole look to "designs shown but patterns missing" particularly since in many case the best design was not chosen in the book. Worse is the thread keys, which are tiny, and since these colors are low-contrast, it is very hard to figure out which colour is which and then the finishing process is at the end in a few spare sentences; none of which give you great faith that you can replicate the design in toto. If this seems harsh look at Elizabeth Bradley's, Beth Russell's, Catherine Reuer's or even Kaffe Fassett that Bahouth often co-authors with, and you will see that Bahouth has never touched their high standards. Nor are there any colorways, the same design in different patterns, but a scant two. All in all it is rather a disappointment. Still the text is nice, but no needlepointer buys the book for the text, so that's a wash. What really is superb, and the real star of this thin volume is the 3 vests, one of a fleur de lys, two of of Jerusalem scenes for Christmasware.

Catherine Reur's volume has a nice vest but for a little bear; Bahouth shines with her sumptuous fullsize vests. They are truly beautiful. Also nice are the small designs in the back that can easily be turned into brooches and pocketbooks...but to be honest I was looking for larger scale works like rugs, like Beth Russell shares in her Victorian Needlepoint or Elizabeth Bradley give throughout. There is also another Medieval Needlepoint by Bahouth, how that differs or contrasts with this, I haven't a clue. ~Remy

This hardcover book is remarkably well put-together, looking almost like a coffee-table book and not a pattern omnibus at all. Inside there are lush patterns with flavor text about how the author thought up the project and historical notes about why she chose this or that positioning or border. The patterns are simple and easy to make, though it does make me crazy that the author doesn't include patterns for all pieces depicted -- I wonder if these were included as teasers to make readers seek and purchase additional patterns. Many of these neglected patterns were ones I'd dearly love to make, but there's lots of other stuff here for embroiderers. The lion tapestry, in particular, is graceful and looks genuine for its period, and I adore her unicorn even if what she came out with as a pattern bears next to no relation to the "inspiration" she says she used. Her fleur-de-lys pattern, as well, is magnificent and would make a splendid seat cushion (a project which she actually recommends), floor mat, or hanging -- definitely suggest to readers. Overall I'm very happy I got this book and would recommend it, especially as a gift, for any embroiderer, especially for those who enjoy fantasy or medieval-style patterns.

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