

Strite-Kurz, Ann. *Creative Canvas Couching*. Self Published: 2005

Creative Canvas Couching is geared toward the experienced stitcher and includes an accompanying and integral cd-rom.

The book begins with an interesting essay on the historical background of laid threads using couching techniques. From early crewel embroidery and silk and metal embroideries from Western European and Asian countries, to current techniques and materials, couching techniques have been included in embroideries throughout time..

The second section of the book, Contemporary Examples of Couching Treatments, covers ten distinct areas of couching. Topics include: Laid Fillings in Crewel Embroidery, Shading with Couching, Horizontal Couched Gold, Couched Outlines, Trailing Technique, Couched Metal Plate, Metallicized Kid and Ultrasuede Appliqué, Couched Found Objects and Other Three-Dimensional Effects, Laid Fillings on Canvas, and Simulated Couching Patterns.

The third section of the book is Techniques for Laying and Securing Threads. This section covers five areas of technique: Laid Foundations, Handling Color in Couching Patterns, Other Layering Concepts, Couching Stitches, and Filling Stitches.

The fourth section of the book contains four chapters on Patterns: One-way Patterns with Horizontal or Vertical Laid Rows, One-way Patterns with Diagonal Laid Rows, Two-way Patterns with Vertical and Horizontal Laid Rows, and Two-way Patterns with Diagonal Laid Rows.

The final section provides complete instructions for the project, Star Light, Star Bright, a lovely piece designed by the author and shown on the back cover of the book.

For anyone who loves to drool and admire the works of excellent (and humbling!) canvas artists, the cd-rom accompanying this book is a must. The author has compiled an enormous collection of very high quality photographs of excellent canvas work, specifically those that have incorporated couching into the piece. The information presented in the text is interesting and complete. I found that while the diagrams in the pattern and techniques sections were excellent and very readable, the examples (over 400 of them) could only be really useful when looking at the images on the cd. This is also the case for seeing stitched examples of the patterns and techniques. I would have preferred a detail photograph in the text really showing the examples being discussed, along with a reference to the page number the example appears on. The cd would still contain both the larger picture and the details for further reference.

This is not a quick-look book, but is much more like a text book where the jewels of information must be discovered in the details. Spending the time, researching and reviewing carefully, each example and image, with the book alongside of the cd is a very worthwhile endeavor.