

Long & Short Stitch Shading Lesson 8: A Simple Flower

Objectives:

- To practice long and short stitch shading by stitching a simple flower

Materials:

- Project in hoop or frame
- #9 or #10 crewel needles
- Small, sharp embroidery scissors
- DMC stranded cotton in the following colors: 471 (med. green); 469 (dk green); Ecru; 225 (light pink); 223 (dark rose); and 814 (dark burgundy)

NOTE: Refer to the long and short stitch videos included in Lesson Two on Needle 'n Thread (www.needlenthread.com) for basic technique. All stitching is done with one strand (from the six) of regular DMC 6-stranded embroidery floss.

For Lesson 8, we'll be working on the small flower located in the center of the base of the sampler. Note that the point is not necessarily to achieve a "dimensional" effect - this is a simple, flat flower - but once you've stitched it, you should have no trouble translating the lesson into more challenging flowers. Most of the procedures in this lesson do not need to be explained in thorough detail, as you have already experienced them in the previous lessons. Also, the flower is a series of five repeats, so the lesson will only focus in detail on creating one petal and one leaf, although you will see photos of the flower develop.

There are different ways to approach stitching something like this. I worked one petal at a time, in order to show you a complete petal. You can also stitch each layer of the all the petals at one time, progressing from the outside of all the petals, to the middle layer of color in all the petals, and finally to the inside tip of all the petals. Following such an approach may help you on two accounts: 1. it may save you time by not having to change back and forth to different colors of threads; 2. it may help you keep your layers of color shading uniform as you move from one petal to the next.

Procedure:



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The first parts of the flower that will be stitched are the little leaves that jut out between the petals. Feel free to draw your stitch directions inside these little leaves. Your stitches should point towards the "growth point" of the little leaves, which will be the center point where the flower petal lines merge together.



Using one strand of 471 (medium green), split stitch around the outside of the leaf.



Beginning in the middle of the leaf (the tip), over the split stitch line, fill the leaf in color 471, stitching long and short stitches from the center to one edge, then from the center to the opposite edge of the leaf. This is the same long and short stitch technique we have been using all along.

Your stitches should fill most of the leaf, leaving only a bit in the center and down at the tip empty.



Switch to 469 (dark green), and, coming up into the first layer of medium green, fill the rest of the leaf with the dark green.



The first leaf will look something like this. Following the same procedure, finish all five leaves.



The leaves are relatively tiny, so it won't take too long to stitch them all.

A note here about beginning with the leaves: In this type of needlepointing, it is common to begin with the part of the design that is farthest away from you or that is tucked behind other parts of the design. While some books and some designers don't always insist on this point, I think it does help to achieve a more dimensional and realistic effect in needlepointing, to start with the parts of the design that are farther away and behind other parts of the design. In this way, the "painting" seems to build up, one layer on the next.

In this little design of this flat and simple flower, it probably does not make that much of a difference, but as you progress to more complex designs, it will make a difference! Especially with elements like hair, feathers, animal fur, etc., it is important to work the layers from the farthest layer to the closest layer, in relation to viewer.



For the petals, begin with Ecu and split stitch a line from the inside tip of the green leaf, around the top of the petal, to the inside tip of the next green leaf. Essentially, you are stitching only the arch of the petal, not the area where the petals are touching.

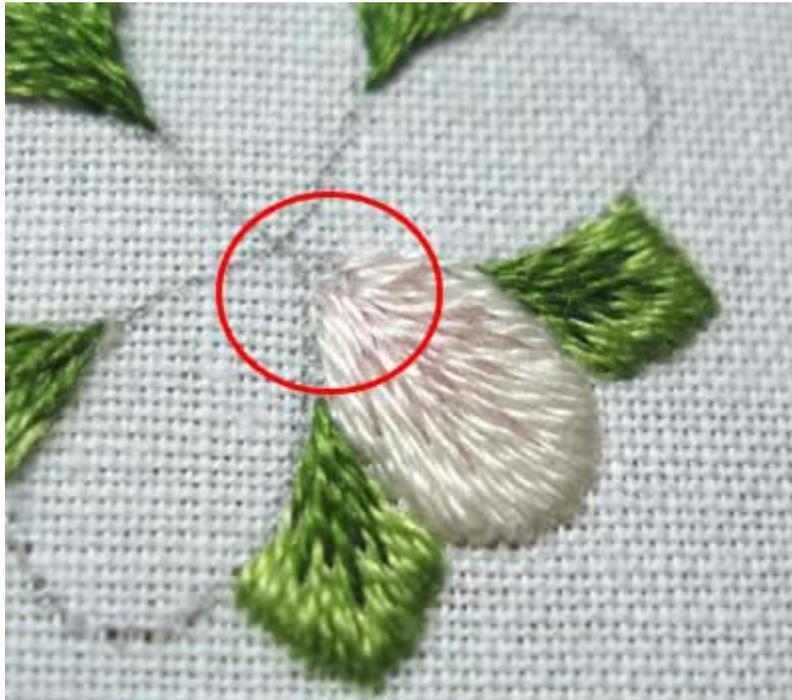
Draw in your stitch direction as shown above. Your stitches will slant towards the inside tip of the petal.



Following the same techniques learned before and still using Ecrú, begin in the middle of the arch of the petal, and work the long and short stitch from the middle to one side, then from the middle to the other side of the petal. You will fill up most of the petal - about two-thirds the length of the petal, leaving only about a one-third arch area empty.



Switch to the light pink thread (225), and fill in practically all of the remaining petal, fanning your stitches out in the same fashion you learned in previous lessons.



Leave a tiny bit of space just at the tip of the petal.



Switching now to the dark rose (223), work in a few small fanned stitches right at the tip of the petal. It's easy to work one in the center and one at each side, then to add a tiny stitch in the spaces between - five stitches in all.



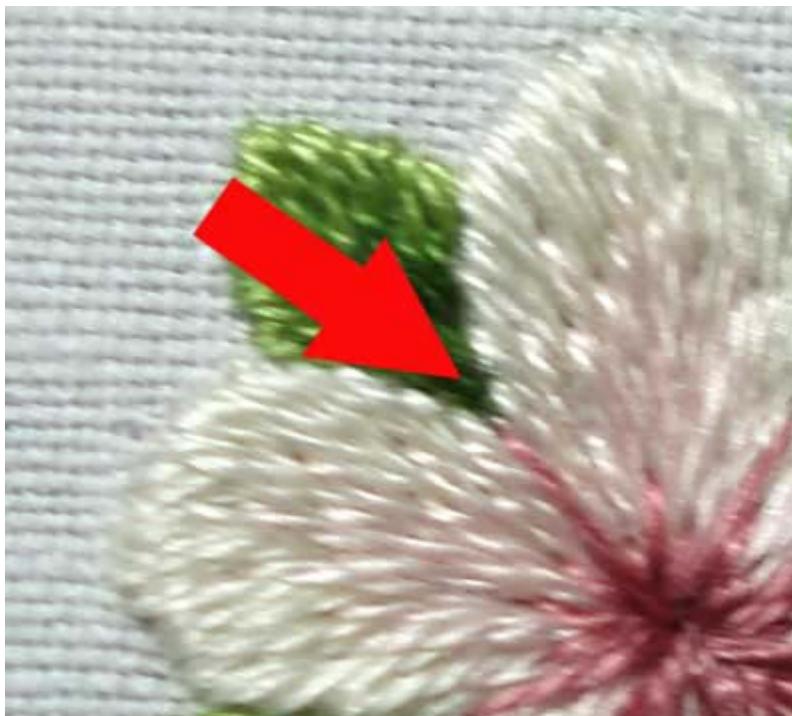
Continue to fill the petals in the same manner. Remember that you do not have to end every thread. When you're finished with a color but still have plenty of thread left, bring your threaded needle to the front of the fabric, away from your stitching area. You can then pick up the color on the next part of the design, when needed.



Continue working your way around the little flower...



... until all the petals are filled.



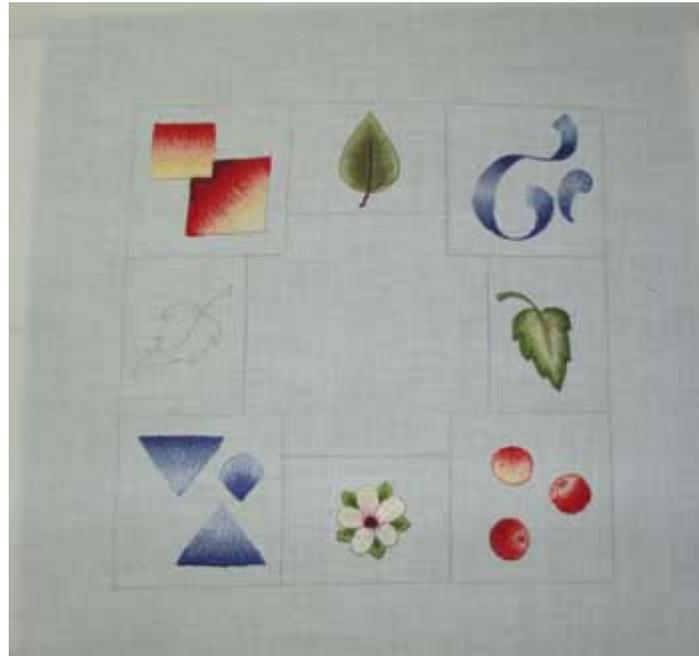
Now, using dark rose (223), stitch one long stitch, bringing your needle up at the inside tip of each green leaf, and taking it down in the center of the flower. The stitch should lie in between each petal. This will help distinguish the individual petals.



Now, you can switch to dark burgundy (814) and work a few random French knots in the center of the flower. If you want to use a different color - like yellow - feel free to do so! The darker yellow (3855) might look better than this dark burgundy.



It was hard to get a good shot of the flower with the French knots.



Here's a shot of the sampler up to this point. And only one more lesson to go!

Enjoy stitching your little flower, and next week, we'll tackle the final leaf.