

New England Quilt Seminars  
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Thread Painting!

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**Supply list:**

- **Two pre-approved photos** to work on during class. You will most likely be able to complete one thread painting and start on a second. Please read “Choosing a Photo: what to look for” , which follows the supply list.

Send photos you are considering to me ([betsy@betsyhabich.com](mailto:betsy@betsyhabich.com)) for review, possible editing, and approval no later than a week before the workshop. I will print your two photos on prepared cotton and bring them to class for you to use.

- **Sewing machine in good working order**, capable of free-motion stitching. We will be doing a LOT of stitching in the class. A high-end machine is NOT needed for this technique, but you DO need a machine capable of free-motion stitching, both zig zag and straight stitching, and a machine that will be reliable. Please note that if your own BOTH a straight-stitch throat plate and regular throat plate, you’ll need the regular throat plate to do zig-zag free-motion stitching. (A straight-stitch throat plate has a single round hole under the needle, and a general-purpose throat plate will have an oval hole under the needle (the oval hole extend left and right to accommodate the left-right throw of the needle for decorative and utility stitches).

***Students sometimes ask whether they should bring their “good” sewing machine or if a more portable, lighter weight machine is ok. I recommend bringing the machine you are most certain is in good working order and will stand up to being run at high speed for extended periods of time. This is usually your “good” machine.***

***Whatever machine you plan to bring, I strongly recommend having it serviced in the 3-6 months before the workshop, to reduce the possibility of it having hiccups during the workshop. If your machine DOES have a problem, and I can help without taking too much time from other students, I will try, but my sewing machine repair skills are limited, and Waterville Valley is about an hour away from a sewing machine repair shop. Bring the sewing machine owner’s manual and any repair tools you have for your machine just in case.***

***If you are coming from a distance, and bringing your sewing machine is not possible, please contact me. My (recently serviced...) Bernina 160 may be available to rent for a fee of \$50 for the week, and I am looking for a second similar machine to acquire before the workshop.***

- **Free-motion embroidery foot.** I sew on Bernina machines and use their #24 foot (on the left in the photo below). The “C” shaped foot lets you see exactly where your needle is going to land. A clear quilting foot is ok (on the right in photo), but not ideal, because the front part of the “O” gets in the way of seeing the needle clearly.



- **Two packages size 14 Topstitch needles** for your sewing machine
- **6-10 bobbins**
- **Cleaning tools** for your sewing machine.
- **The owner's manual** for your sewing machine and any **sewing machine tools** you use on it

**Thread:** I use and recommend 50 weight/2 ply Aurifil thread. It has a lovely low-gloss sheen, and is minimally linty. For this technique, you will need lots of different colors of thread, though, and the cost can mount up fast, so it is fine to use Mettler, Gutermann, or Metrosene cotton/poly thread.

**Thread colors:** Look very carefully at your approved photo. For every color you see, bring several adjacent shades. For instance, if you see blue sky, bring several shades of that blue. If you see white, bring several pure white AND very very light shades of gray, cream, and perhaps lavender, pink, blue or green. For black, bring pure black AND very dark shades of gray, brown, blue, purple, and green. If you have a subject that shades from one color to another (ex. The Hibiscus pictured in the workshop description) bring thread in enough thread colors that you can arrange the spools to transition smoothly from one color to the other.

## **Iron (if you are driving)**

### \$50 kit fee includes (in addition to handouts):

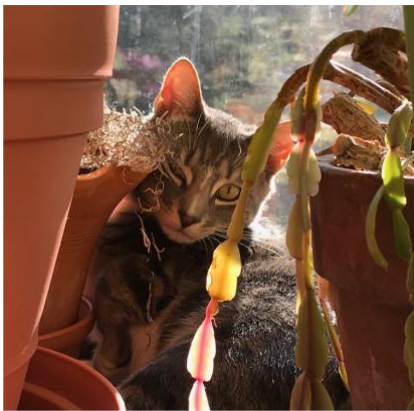
- Pre-class review of your two photos, edited as necessary, and printed on prepared cotton
- 6 sheets 8 1/2 " x 11" Steam-a-Seam 2 Lite
- 3 pieces 8 1/2" x 11" Light-weight cotton batting with no scrim,
- 4 pieces cotton fabric, 8 1/2" x 11" (front of your exercise sandwich, and three backs)
- Parchment paper to use in ironing fusibles
- 2 8 1/2" x 11" color copies of one of your project photos to use for exercises
- Use of my stash of Mettler, Metrosene, and Gutermann thread to fill in gaps in what you bring (but please do not plan to use ONLY my thread 😊)

## Choosing a Photo: what should I look for?

1. Is it entirely in focus, with very clear, crisp edges and details? Typically, enlarging a small part of a photo results in a grainy, fuzzy image which does not provide the detail you need to make a clear thread painting.
2. Is the color accurate? Is the composition pleasing? In the left-hand photo of my cat Sam, the color is not realistic, and Sam is partly hidden by potted plants. The right-hand photo would be easier to work with and make a better finished piece: Sam's fur color is accurate and his head and front paws are visible. He also has a sweet cat smile!

## Accurate Color, Composition

**Color is off, Sam partly hidden**



**Accurate color, sweet smile**



3. Does it have enough detail to make a satisfying image, but not so much detail it will be frustrating to work with? The dramatic flowers in the left-hand photo are composed of many small florets. I don't know about you, but I would not want to tackle it! The right-hand photo, of a hydrangea blossom, is at the limit of what I would thread-paint, and I would eliminate all of the background leaves (with the exception of the two hydrangea leaves in the lower left corner) and instead make a color-wash background ( I will explain how to do this in the workshop!)

# Choosing a photo: is it do-able?

**Too much detail!**



**Challenging, but possible**



Another example follows: My photo of Motif #1 in Rockport, MA has lot detail, but makes (I think) a compelling composition. However, to do it well, I would have to include the lobster buoys hanging on the wall, the detail of the rock pier, and wood lathe siding and the clouds. It's a lot! To get all that detail in, if I do someday thread paint it, I would probably make it a double- size (11" x 17") or possibly larger.

On the other hand, the photo of sunset from my local beach depends on seeing the subtle details: the moon and its reflection on the water, the color changes in the sky, the islands on the horizon, and the seaweed on the beach in the foreground. I would not want to edit the photo to enhance the colors, because their delicacy is what appeals to me. But is it enough to make a compelling thread-painting?

**Great detail, but complex**



**Subtle: .... Too subtle?**

