little pillow
sewing tutorial

kata golda handmade

What to do with a favorite small square of fabric or a block printed patch? Some of you have asked for a little more direction on what to do with the DIY stitched block prints. Although this idea is simple and perhaps obvious, it is hard to think of an idea sometimes, especially when you are sitting down to actually work on a project. I have great ideas in the middle of the night, but when I am at my studio table I don't seem to be able to recall those ideas, especially the simple ones. There are many possibilities for filling your pillow, just make sure that the filling is dry. I like to stuff this with something other than poly fiberfill, wool, or cotton. I like a texture, a weight, and/or a smell. Place a pillow with scented herbs by your bedside or in your sweaters, use a weighted pillow full of flax seeds or rice as a paper weight or an eye pillow. A little pillow is a lovely gift.

MATERIALS & TOOLS:
- two pieces of cotton fabric that are the same size (I used 9 ounce cotton hemp muslin)
- very thin tracing paper & pencil (optional)
- cotton embroidery floss
- sharp scissors
- filling: dry lavender buds, buckwheat hulls, flax seeds, rice, little beans, dry herbs & flowers, a few drops of essential oil…
- sewing needle & straight pins
- sewing machine (though you could hand sew the perimeter)

1. Prepare your fabric by tearing it into two pieces of the same size. I prefer the imperfect look of the torn/raw edges. I used a neutral color on top and chose a backing color that complemented my stitched design. Note that the block printed stitching is torn down to a square in this project. The plant-dyed organic cotton/hemp that I used is available on katagolda.com. **(photo a)**

2. Refer to the notes and guide to stitches on page 2. Decide how you would like to embellish your pillow. **(photo b)** I have provided an assortment of botanical line drawings on the following page for some inspiration. If you would like to trace an image and transfer it to your fabric, I recommend using VERY thin tracing paper (I use a dressmaker's tracing paper). Trace the image and pin the paper to your fabric. Stitch just a few essential stitches to capture the general shape with a single ply of cotton embroidery floss using the running stitch. Carefully and gently tear the paper away. The stitches will pull up a little when you do this, but they can be pulled taut again from the back side. Complete the outline of your drawing with the double running stitch, referring to the original drawing, and add color as desired. I tend to "draw" my outlines in black thread and use 2 or 3 colors of 2-ply embroidery floss to "color in." This is also a lovely way to use the DIY block printed stitchings (available on katagolda.com).

3. With right sides facing out, use your sewing machine to sew a double line of stitching with a 1/4"-1/2" seam allowance on three sides of your pillow. **(photo c)** Be sure to back stitch at the beginning and at the end of your stitching for reinforcement. You can also hand-sew the edges with a closely spaced stitch and a single ply of cotton embroidery floss.

4. Fill your pillow with the dry material of your choice. **(photo d)** If you are adding a few drops of essential oil, be sure to add it to your material and mix it in before you add it to the pillow so you don't risk getting oil drips on your fabric. Do not overfill your pocket or it will be hard to sew closed. I fill mine about 2/3 full. If your material is trying to escape, you can place a few straight pins along the to edge of the compressed stuffing, just make sure the top edges of your pillow still align.

5. Machine stitch (or hand sew) your final lines of stitching using the same seam allowance as your first three edges, connecting at the corners and back stitching at the beginning and end.

BOTANICAL STITCHING INSPIRATION:
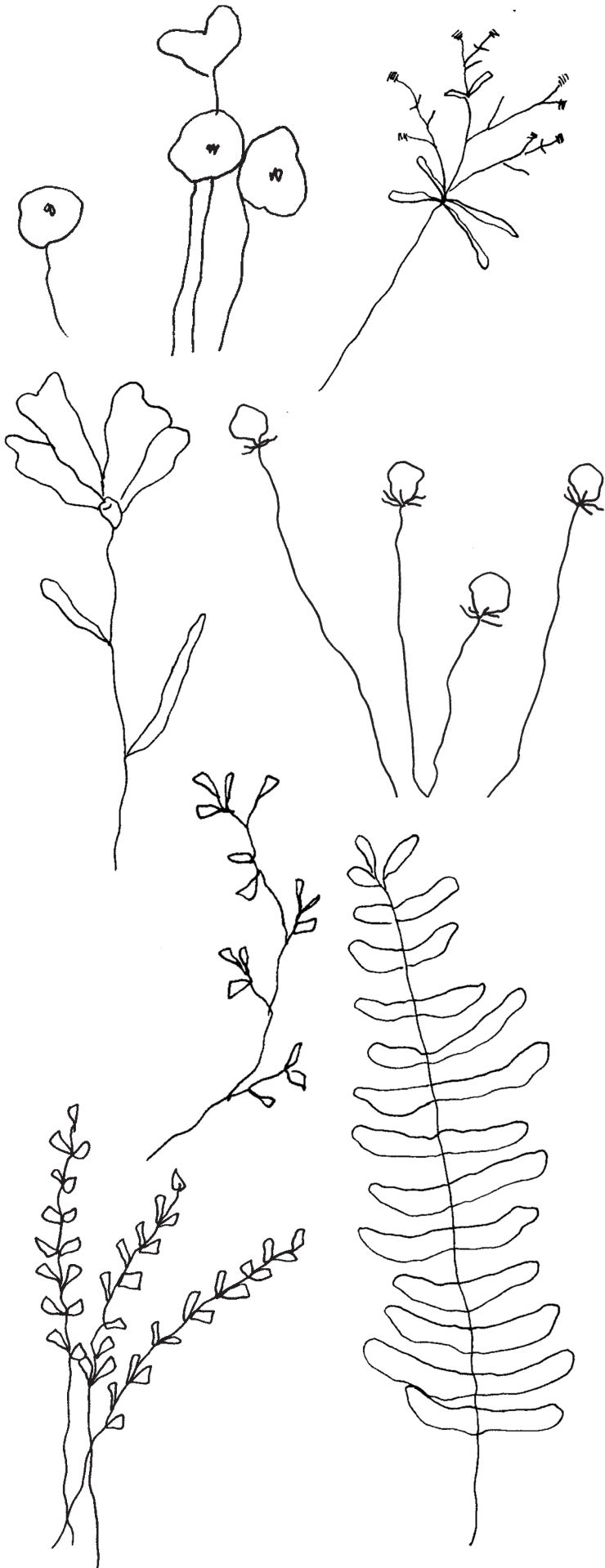
NOTES & BASIC STITCHES:

- Embroidery floss has 6 plies (threads) and the plies are easily separated. Most embroidery patterns use 1 to 3 plies. Long strands can get easily tangled, cutting them to 18-inch strands helps prevent this. It also helps to very gently separate the pieces from the center of the strand instead of starting at one end.

- If your thread becomes too short while you are sewing, attach a new piece of thread to the end with a knot. Tie it close to the felt and hide the knot.

- Keep stitches even and hide knots.

- Felt is very flexible to work with; it can be pulled and stretched as needed, and because it doesn't fray you can trim as you work if your pieces are not lining up.

RUNNING & DOUBLE RUNNING STITCH

- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your felt and bring it up through the felt (A) and back down into the front side (B).

- Pull it the whole way through, then bring the threaded needle back up through the felt from the back side (C).

- Try to keep the size of the stitches and the space between them consistent.

- A double running stitch is used to make a solid line.

- Start with a running stitch. When you reach the end, reverse your direction and fill in the space between the stitches with another running stitch so you have a solid line.
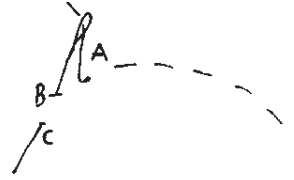
SATIN STITCH
This stitch is used to fill in a space.
- Begin by stitching the perimeter of the space you plan to fill.

- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your felt and bring it up through the felt (A) and back down into the front side (B).

- Place the stitches close together so that they create a solid shape.
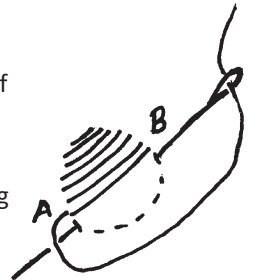
ABOUT KATA GOLDA:
Alison Kaplan is the creative force behind Kata Golda, a craft studio in the mossy seaside town of Port Townsend, WA.
Kata Golda is a flourishing business that explores crafts such as needlework, letterpress printing, bookbinding, block printing, hand-thrown pottery, hand-dyed textiles, and jewelry making. Alison finds inspiration in the woods, farmlands, and beaches of her Pacific Northwest wonderland.
See her work at www.katagolda.com.

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