

CARDING FOR COLOR PART III: EMBROIDERY

By Stephanie Flynn Sokolov

I have been smitten with color since preschool. I remember my teacher adding red food coloring to a large glass pitcher of water, then making a pitcher of blue and a pitcher of yellow. From these primary colors they mixed secondary colors; purple, orange and green. They had me at purple.

These principles of mixing color have served me to this day. For this project we'll be looking at a picture, choosing a section we find visually pleasing, and breaking down the colors so we can spin them and recreate that portion of the picture in yarn using embroidery.



MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

Colors from your stash; I used mostly CVM/Corriedale cross

Hand cards suited to your fiber (I used Schacht Mini Cards in 72 psi)

Drop spindle or spinning wheel (I used my Schacht Hi-Lo Spindle)

Embroidery hoop for stitching and display. I recommend a small hoop in the 4" to 6" range

Base fabric for embroidery: light-colored, tightly woven cloth large enough to fit in the embroidery hoop

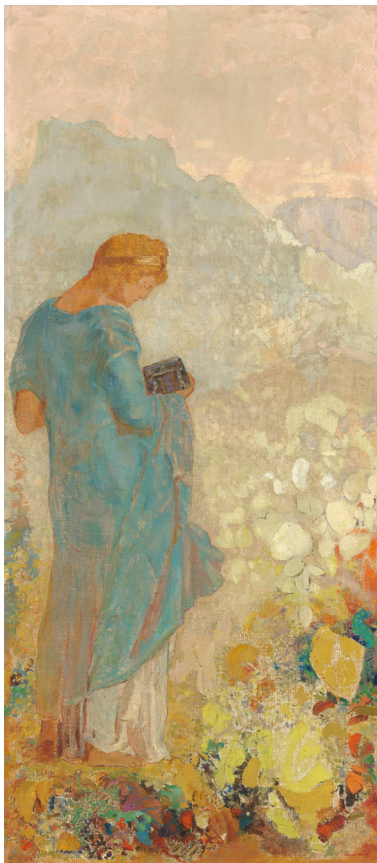
Inspiration photo (painting, ad from a magazine, personal photo, etc.)

Pencil or fine-tipped water-soluble marker

Sharp needle with eye large enough for your handspun

Needle threader

Scissors



CHOOSING AN INSPIRATION PHOTO

To start, find a picture that speaks to you—maybe a photo in your album or phone, an ad from a magazine, or a painting. I “visited” the [National Gallery of Art](#) and chose [Pandora](#), painted by Odilon Redon around 1910. I chose this piece for a few reasons: It's pastel colors are outside of my comfort zone, which was a welcome challenge. The broad, broken up brush strokes of color will make them easier to embroider. Also, I could download a jpg for free from the gallery website.

Next, choose a focus section. Since I had the artwork in an image file, I used my computer to select an area and magnify it. If you're working with a hard copy or don't want to wrestle with software, use a piece of blank paper for this step. Cut out a square or circle in the middle of the paper. Move the cut-out over your image until you find a good spot.



Find out more at [schachtspindle.com](#)
Schacht Spindle Company 6101 Ben Place Boulder, CO 80301
p. 303.442.3212

© 2022 Schacht Spindle Company, Inc.

FIND YOUR COLORS TO SPIN AND SPIN THEM:

Break down the colors in your focus section. Print out or photocopy this section, increasing or decreasing the size so it fits your embroidery hoop. Identify 5 or 6 colors that you will spin. I chose tan, green, ivory, orange, and yellow and wrote the color names on my printout in their corresponding colors.

With these colors in mind, I began carding. I picked colors from my stash that were good bases for the colors in my image. Since I was working with pastels, I needed to mix colors that were light and pale. I like to think of this process as similar to Bob Ross' painting style. He only uses a couple colors per project and mixes them to achieve the colors he wants.

Using my Schacht Mini Cards in a 72 psi, I charged the cards with approximately 75% by volume of my natural white and 25% of camel colored fiber. Thoroughly blending the colors resulted in a very pale tan. Remember that spinning the fiber can condense the color, so what looks good on the cards might not be what you are aiming for. Spin a couple feet on your spindle or wheel and confirm it is the color you are wanting. If adjustment is needed, ask yourself which direction you should shift and don't be afraid to experiment.

Color tip: If you use only a couple basic colors and mix them in different proportions to create the color you are looking for, they will usually look pretty good together.

Ply the yarn in your preferred method for a two ply finish. Two plies hold up better than singles for embroidery.

Repeat these steps as many times as needed to spin the number of colors you have chosen for your piece.

EMBROIDER THE PIECE:

Transfer the design onto your embroidery fabric. On the printout, I traced around the embroidery hoop and drew dark lines between different patches of color. Then I grabbed plain white material from my stash of quilt cottons, making sure it was large enough to fit in the hoop. A window or light board makes tracing easy: place fabric over the printout and tape everything so you can see the printout through the fabric. Use a pencil or fine-tipped marker to trace the design; your embroidery will cover up these lines. Then center your fabric in the embroidery hoop and tighten it to secure.

I used a simple satin stitch to fill in the outlined sections of the pattern I created from the painting. Alternating the direction you start the satin stitch will give a similar effect to the movement of a paint brush. Remember, you are the artist. Interpret your picture however you'd like.

