

107S Stitch Like an Egyptian

Tent Makers of Cairo

Session: 2 x 3hr

Level: All Levels

Workshop Type: Hand Sewing



The work of the “Tentmakers of Cairo” (which is also the word for tents) has a lot in common with quilts. It is needle-turned appliqué, where the cotton canvas takes the place of batting and there is a background fabric tacked onto it, then sometimes several other background colours, and finally the wonderful patterns. Technically it is three or more layers joined together by stitch.



DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Tentmakers of Cairo have become a worldwide phenomenon for their spectacular hand-appliquéd designs based on their rich cultural heritage. In this class you will go through all the steps you need to follow to create a design like theirs, from making and marking the pattern to starting to stitch your own beautiful creation. Come to this class to learn just how to Stitch Like an Egyptian.

Cost of Kit (if required): R200

Detailed Contents of Kit:

Patterns

Student Requirements:

Firm Brown Paper:

1 square 18 inches x 18 inches.

1 square of 36 inches x 36 inches. Available at print shops. IF you fold your piece to carry it, try to fold very accurately on the half-way points so it is a square measuring half a yard

This paper is available at print shops and is a thick paper which is firm, not flimsy. It must be strong enough to fold accurately without it ripping. The Tentmakers draw on it with chalk as they create their design, so the brown colour is necessary. The chalk rubs off easily until they are happy with it – and when they are happy, they outline it in pencil:

100% Cotton Canvas – 10 oz weight textile (weight 295grams per square metre). This should be available as a 160cm wide fabric. Cream or natural colour is best.

1 square cotton canvas 18 inches x 18 inches.

1 square cotton canvas 1¼ yards on each side.

A small container of talcum powder (like baby powder). We will use only a little – a filled salt shaker would be adequate if you are travelling.

Scissors for fabric and scissors for paper.

Notebook for taking notes.

Pens and graphite pencils (lead pencils).

White chalk like school chalk.

Awl or a seam ripper with a sharp point and firm handle. This will be used to prick holes through multiple layers of paper to make your pattern.

Your usual hand sewing kit with needles (the men use big heavy needles like Milliners or Straw needles), pins and thread snips.

A thimble – the men use a topless tailor's thimble.

A white wax pencil or white Clover marker for marking your design.

Cotton threads to match your fabrics.

A cushion for your chair, if you wish, as you will spend a lot of time sitting and sewing.

You will do a lot of handwork in this class – so if you have aids like lights or magnifiers to help your eyesight, bring them.

Fabric

All fabric colours are solid colours – Kona cotton or homespuns – in keeping with the Egyptian style. The Michael Miller Cotton Couture Range probably is the closest to the Egyptian Cotton the men use in softness and drape.

For ease of transfer of the design in class we use baby powder which is sprinkled through the holes in the paper design in class rather than the messy bag of loose charcoal which the Egyptians use in Cairo. This means your background colour needs to be dark enough to show a dot of baby powder or talc. Mediums or dark values might be best.

A selection of contrasting plain colours to appliqué down as your design. You might want up to twelve colours but the complexity of your design is up to you, so bring a good selection of yard, half yard, and smaller pieces