

LAND, SEA & SKY

Rag Rug

by Jodie Davis



Land, Sea & Sky, 36" x 24", by Jayne Davis

One-hundred percent cotton is the raw ingredient of what we quilters cherish most—quilting fabric! After spending time in the South, I was inspired by the simple but satisfying life on Southern cotton farms to create this needlepoint-style fabric rug. Farmers' daughters and wives would have made this rug from rags, but I used new yardage. The needlepoint technique couldn't be simpler, and with a large

mesh canvas, the rug works up quickly. Enjoy this tribute to the hardworking cotton farmers of yesterday—and to cotton.

In the sample shown, the blend of aquas, greens, browns, and blues reflect nature's lovely seaside colors. Cut and stitch one block at a time, and you'll have a sturdy needlepoint rug in short order!

Getting started

Follow the design and color placement in LAND, SEA & SKY, or choose a color palette that pleases you and complements your decorating style. You will need a light, medium, and dark fabric for each block. Make each block a little different to get a scrappy look.

You may want to create an assembly diagram on paper, using colored pencils to color in each block as a stitching guide. Make sure that the colors you choose for the outer square of each block contrast with those in adjoining blocks.

Assembling the rug

To prevent raveling, wrap all the raw edges of the canvas with masking tape. Fold the canvas in half and then in half the opposite direction. Mark the point with a thread loop. This is the center of the canvas and the starting point for the first block (fig. 1). Unfold the canvas.

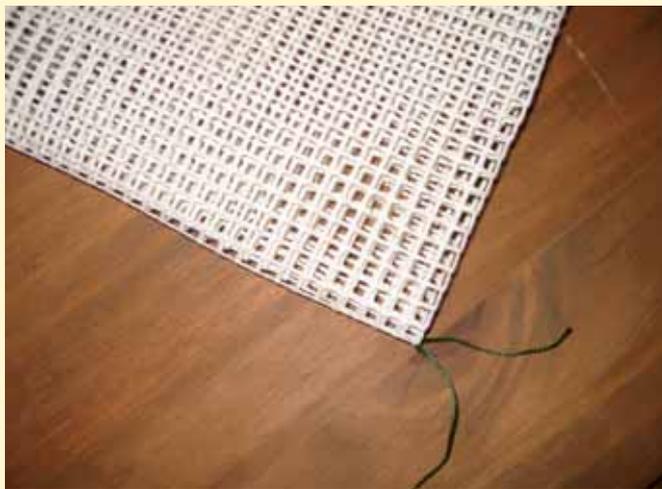


Fig. 1

After cutting the strips for the first block, fold each one in half with wrong sides together and finger press.

Thread the yarn needle with the fabric strip chosen for the first square. Begin at the point you marked with thread. This mesh hole is the upper right corner of the first block. To start stitching, bring the fabric strip up from the back of the canvas to the front through the corner hole that you marked; leave a 1" tail of the fabric strip on the back side. Complete a stab stitch across the threads of the adjoining hole, creating a diagonal stitch (Fig. 2). To avoid distorting the canvas as you work, take care not to pull the strip too tight. (Some distortion is normal but will be corrected with blocking when you have completed all of the blocks in the rug.)

FABRIC & CUTTING REQUIREMENTS

Skill level: Easy

Quilt size: 36" x 24"

• Requirements are based on 40" fabric width, but strips may be cut from scraps or fat quarters.

*Assorted fabrics – 10½ yards total

- strips for one inner square/block, 1 strip 1¼" x 20"
- strips for one middle square/block, 6 strips 1¼" x 20"
- strips for one outer square/block, 16 strips 1¼" x 20"

36" wide latch hook canvas – 1¼ yards (¾ holes to the inch)

- rug foundation, 40" x 28"

1½" or 2" wide twill rug binding tape

- 3¾ yards

* Cut strips for the rug, one block at a time. If cutting from ¼-yard pieces, cut across the width and cut each strip in half; if cutting from fat quarters, cut across the width (20" x 22", depending on usable fabric width; may vary from fabric to fabric). Choose three colors for each block and cut the required strips, one block at a time, so strips are easier to handle.

SUPPLIES: Basic rotary-cutting tools, masking tape; permanent marker; size large yarn needle (from a knitting shop); 42" x 30" (or larger) piece of plywood; heavy-duty staple gun or rustproof push pins; water spray bottle; neutral-colored sewing thread.

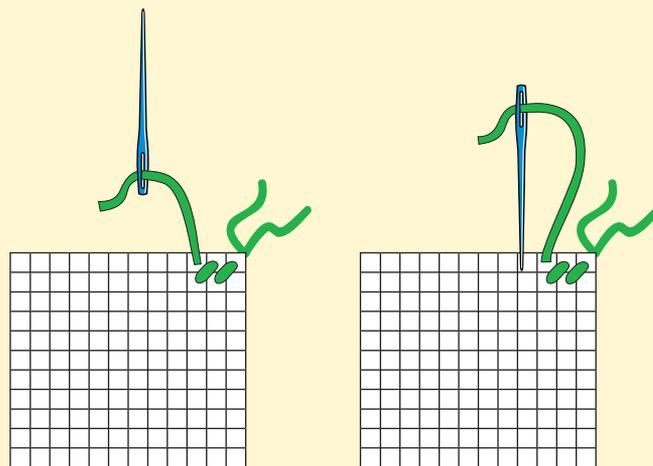


Fig. 2

Stitch the first row, making a total of 22 stitches across. As you stitch, catch the tail of fabric under the stitches on the back side of the canvas. Continue stitching to complete 4 additional rows for a total of 5 rows of 22 stitches each for the upper section of the outer square. When the strip becomes too short to take additional stitches, slide the needle under a few of the stitches on the back side of the work, pull the strip tight and cut off the excess, leaving a 1" tail. Thread the needle and begin where you left off, catching the new fabric tail in the stitches.

Note that you will stitch across the square in one direction (fig. 3) and in the reverse direction for the next row, alternating direction in this fashion until you have completed the required number of stitches in each row or section of the block.

For the sides of the outer square, take only 5 stitches across each end of each row, ending with row 17. Follow this

with 5 additional rows of 22 stitches each for a finished outer block that has 22 stitches across and 22 stitches down. For the middle square, stitch 4 rows on each side as shown in Fig. 4. For the inner square, take four stitches across and four rows down.

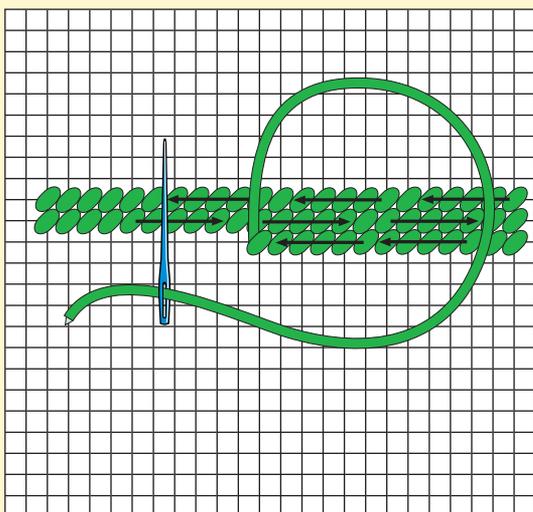


Fig. 3

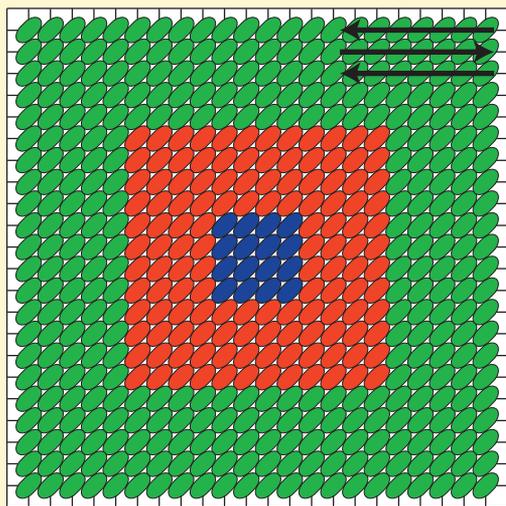


Fig. 4

Complete the remaining blocks in the same manner, making a total of 24 stitched blocks on the rug canvas (6 blocks x 4 blocks). Note: Your stitching may cause a degree of distortion in your canvas but blocking will remedy this.

Blocking and finishing

Use a permanent marker to mark the dimensions of the finished rug (36" x 24") on the plywood.

Staple the canvas to the plywood (or use push pins), placing staples at even intervals around the rug perimeter (fig. 5). Begin by positioning the corners first to pull the rug into alignment and then staple the sides, aligning them with the lines on the plywood. Use a water spray bottle to thoroughly dampen the rug. Allow the rug to dry.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Remove the rug from the board and trim the excess canvas to 1½" or 2" all around (fig. 6), depending on the width of your rug binding tape.

With the right side of the rug facing you, sew the binding tape on by machine (using a zipper foot) or by hand, as close as possible to the completed stitches (fig. 7). The binding tape may be applied with separate strips for each



Fig. 7

side or in one continuous piece, similar to a bound quilt edge. Fold the binding tape to the back of the rug and hand stitch in place, mitering the corners neatly (fig. 8). Be sure to catch some of your tacking stitches in the canvas and not just in the fabric loops.

An alternative finishing method is backing the entire rug with fabric. Cut a piece of sturdy fabric, such as upholstery linen or twill, about $\frac{3}{4}$ " larger all around than the size of the completed blocked rug. Turn the edges of the cut fabric under $\frac{3}{4}$ " and press. Hand stitch the fabric to the back of the rug, wrong sides together. 

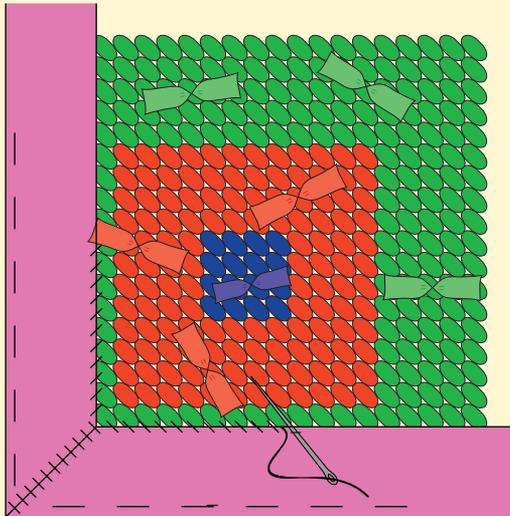


Fig. 8. Back of rug

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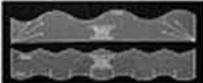
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