



Creating Pictures in Felt and Embroidery Video Series

Session 1: Developing the Idea

This accompanies the video series that I did in April/May 2020 looking at the process of creating a picture in felt and embroidery. The video can be found on my website at: www.threadsofstillness.co.uk/resources/creating-pictures-video-series/

Selecting a photograph

I was looking for a photograph to use as the inspiration for a small piece (planned size 5x5 inches) made using wet felting and embroidery.

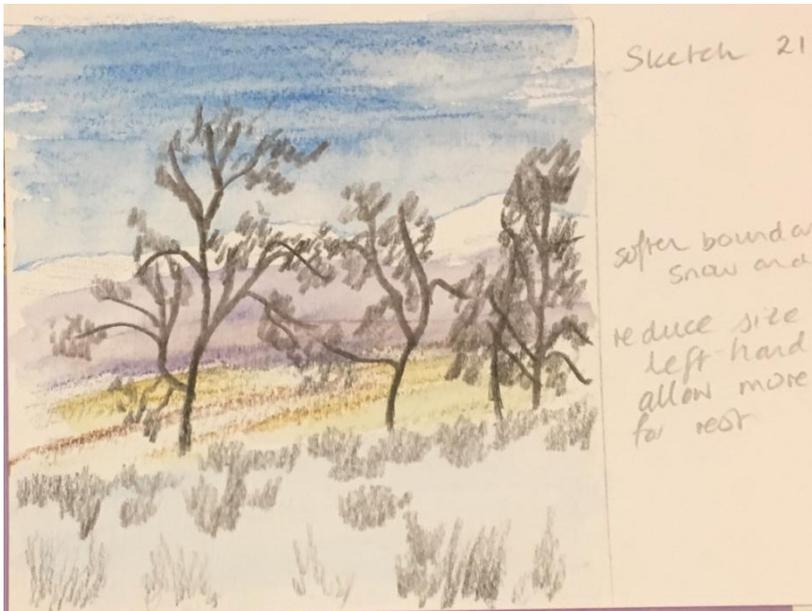
Some of the things I was looking for

- Not too complicated (given the small size, too many elements would make the picture cluttered)
- Tonal contrast – i.e. plenty of lights and darks (it can help to copy the photograph and convert the copy to black and white to see whether it still looks interesting)
- Contains interesting lines for embroidery

A few years ago I created a scrapbook full of lots of photographs of trees – I find the structure and lines of trees interesting so it's a common theme for me. I returned to that scrapbook to look for ideas, and this photograph that I found came from that scrapbook.



1: Photograph taken in the Scottish Borders in November 2015 while on holiday



Development process

I created a sketch to think about colours, composition etc. The time I spend on this depends on how large and complicated the final piece is – for larger pieces I will probably do more sketches.

I often use Derwent Inktense pencils to create sketches – quick and easy (useful when there's a small child in the house!) and can be used with water so I can create washes of colour (representing wet felted areas) and as normal colouring pencils to create the lines (represented embroidered features).

I am not aiming for an exact copy of the photograph, I may adjust composition and colour to make the final picture work better.

Selecting colours

Initially I am looking for a small range of key colours, with a range of tones (lights and darks). As I go through the felting process I will add more shades of colours.

For this piece I am using Merino wool to get the range of colours. Long term I want to shift towards native breeds, e.g. Shetland and use plant dyes, but this will be a long term project to build up a colour range with adequate lightfastness.

- Base colour – cool white (the base colour is roughly equivalent to the paper or canvas colour when painting)
- Sky – bright day, vivid blue, will mix with white of base layer
- Hills – hints of pink/purple, browns, greens (a bit less muted than photo, may tone down later)
- Snow foreground – not pure white, a hint of blue (I won't exactly match the photograph as this area in the photograph is too dark)