Di van Niekerk is a professional fibre arts teacher and designer and has her own range of silk and organza ribbon and printed panels for embroidery that are exported world-wide. Her best-selling books have been translated into many languages. Her mission is to teach silk ribbon embroidery, integrating it with other crafts such as card making, jewellery making, knitting, crazy quilting, fibre art and dress design to show just how easy, enjoyable and rewarding this hobby is. This is her thirteenth book.

One of the founder members of the Cape Embroiderers' Guild, **Toody Cassidy** is an avid felter and creative embroiderer who loves to share her passion for fabric, fibre and thread, patterns, colours and design with others. She has hand-dyed and sold different types of threads and fibres, including cotton, silk and wool, and mastered the art of silk paper making. Toody and Di have worked together over more than 15 years.

A passion to work with natural fibres and fabrics led **Razaan Jakoet**, founder of Chic Fusion (www.chicfusion.co.za), to explore feltmaking techniques. By training and employing women from disadvantaged communities at her studio in Woodstock, Cape Town, she helps alleviate unemployment. She designs the products in the Chic Fusion range before handing over the felting to these women.

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Internationally renowned ribbon artist, Di van Niekerk, joins forces with felter Toody Cassidy, incorporating designs of Razaan Jakoet of Chic Fusion, to bring the textile and embroidery world a unique combination of mediums with fabulous results. They have produced a book that will delight and inspire. Learn to make flat nuno felting and felt surfaces, using wool, wool and silk and silk paper, and adorn these with exquisite silk ribbon designs.

The book has four sections:

- Felted backgrounds explained step-by-step with detailed instructions and photographs
- Making the different flowers and creatures explained step-by-step with detailed instructions and photographs
- 15 complete projects with step-by-step instructions and gorgeous photographs of the completed articles with their list requirements
- An illustrated gallery of stitches used in the projects.

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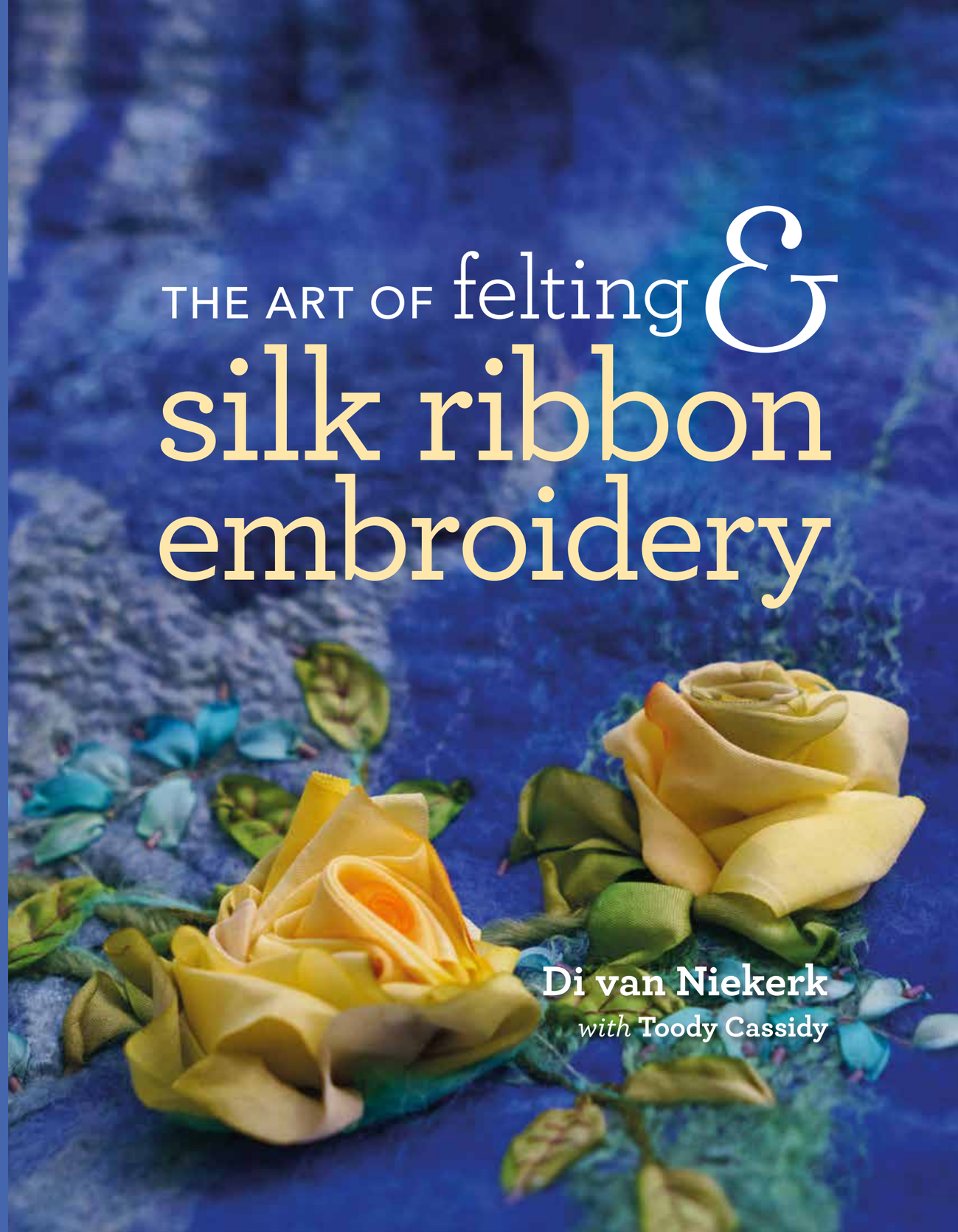
THE ART OF felting & silk ribbon embroidery



Di van Niekerk
with **Toody Cassidy**

Felted backgrounds

Before you start

- Spread out the plastic on your uncluttered work surface, protected with an old towel.
- Place a piece of bubble wrap, about 5–7 cm (2–2½ in.) bigger than the intended piece of felt, on the plastic. The smooth side of the bubble wrap must be facing upwards and the bubbles facing downwards. Later on in the felting process, you will turn the bubble wrap over so that the bubbles are facing upwards.
- Place the size-template underneath the bubble wrap.
- Have your suitably-sized net or tulle at hand, measuring a few centimetres all round beyond the edges of the wool base you are about to lay out.

Rectangular wool background with silk embellishments

You will need

- Basic equipment
- 3.5 m (3½ yd) undyed Merino wool roving
- Wool and silk for embellishment (use colours that will suit your project)

Laying down the fibres

Split the wool by gently easing it apart into two fairly even strands, or you can use it as is. You can also split it lengthways to reduce the bulk. Do not cut the wool – cut edges will not felt as well as wispy, tufted edges.

Start tufting smallish pieces of wool off the length of undyed wool. With the wool held firmly between closed fingers and resting on the fleshy base of the thumb and palm, pull tufts away from the length, and place on the template.

Alternatively, hold the wool roving down firmly on the work surface with one hand and pull the tufts away with the other. Do not twist the wool fibres but keep them as straight as possible. Each tuft should be about 10–12 cm (4–4¾ in.) long.

As you pull the wool apart, set it down piece by piece on top of the smooth side of the bubble wrap, following the template, thereby building up the first layer of wool tufts. You tile the tufts of wool, slightly overlapping each other, like roof tiles.

Once you have laid down one layer, covering the template, repeat with the tufts running in the opposite direction. This layout can be repeated a

Repeat for all the nasturtiums. There are eight nasturtiums and one bud; three are yellow, two orange and three scarlet. See how the one yellow nasturtium is stitched through the leaf? Stitch over the green wool stem where necessary. The stamens in the next step will hide everything. To make the stripes on the orange petals, use the 264 yellow thread for the two upper petals and the 144 orange thread for the three lower petals. For the yellow 53 ribbon, we did not make any stripes.

Make the bud

Cut a 7 cm (2¾ in.) piece of the green wool and make a short stem alongside the circle for the orange bud. Slip the one raw end under the nasturtium, work over the leaf and leave the other raw end in place for the bud.

The bud is made in the same way as the pansy bud on p. 86. Use the 51 silk ribbon. Take the fully-formed flower (with both petals in place) and fold inwards. With the orange thread, secure along the gathered part, with tiny stab stitches, working through all the layers. Use the 34 silk ribbon and make ribbon stitches on top and alongside the bud to form the sepals and the nectar spur.

Make the stamens

With an awl or stiletto, make a hole in the centre of the flower. Or, use a size 18 chenille needle and pull it all the way through the felt to make a hole. Be careful not to touch the petals.

Take the 25 mm organza ribbon 53 and cut eight 3,5 cm (1½ in.) lengths. Remove the one selvedge. Take one piece and cut notches into the ribbon, about 3 or 4 mm (⅛ in.) wide, leaving a space from the other selvedge, about 8 mm (⅜ in.). Repeat for the seven other pieces.

Hold the ribbon, with tweezers, near a lit flame. Organza burns very quickly, so hold it a distance away from the flame. Be careful not to burn yourself! Have a glass of water nearby to dip the ribbon into, if necessary.

Roll the piece up and thread it into a size 18 chenille needle. Insert the needle into the hole in the centre and take a small tail to the back. Position the stamen to your liking and secure at the back with matching yellow thread. Be careful not to pull the petals out of shape. Repeat for the other nasturtiums.

Make the seeds

Make three seeds by covering wooden beads. Use the 8 mm (⅜ in.) wooden necklace bead and the 7 mm ribbon 34 on a size 20 chenille needle. Cover as you would for the fuchsia bud on p. 112. Secure the same way, so that the three beads lie close together, as shown in the main picture on p. 97.

Complete the design

Use a cotton bud and dip it in a glass of water. Dampen the blue marks to remove them. Do this in the centre of the flowers, along the edge of the leaves and the stem, and anywhere else you have used the blue pen on the design. Remove the tacking stitches and use the circle as a piece of art on your wall or mantelpiece. Or, you could use it on the lid of a hat or trinket box, whatever takes your fancy!

Make the stems

Refer to the main picture on the opposite page and to the pattern on p. 155. Enlarge it to fit on the felted background and work with the pattern alongside you to refer to as a guide. Make the stems. Use the green bamboo yarn and cut it into 1 m/yd lengths. Fold the length in half and in half again and twirl it to form a rounded stem. Place the stem on your felted background and use one strand of green thread 804 to secure it in place with tiny stab stitches. Space the stitches about 2½ cm (1 in.) apart and work along the edges of the stem so that the stitches are almost invisible. Make three green stems.

Hint: It is easier to take the needle and thread all the way to the back before coming up to form the next stitch.

Make the grey stems. Use one strand of thread 675 and couch pieces of the grey wool to form the grey stems.

Hint: Use a gentle tension so as not to flatten the wool.

The tails near the edge of the hoop: insert the tail of yarn into a large tapestry needle, take it to the back and secure it to the organza backing with green thread. The other end of the stems on your design will be covered by leaves and roses a little later.

Make the folded ribbon rose centres

The centres of all three roses are made by using the folded ribbon rose method. Start with rose 1. Thread up with one strand of yellow 141 thread and make a knot at the long end. Cut a 45 cm (just under 18 in.) length of 32 mm 139 ribbon. Refer to the blue hold-all on pp. 115–116 and follow the same method.

Secure the rose onto your felt with the yellow thread. Stitch only along the base, as you will need to lift the rose in the next step to make the petals.

Make the band

Crochet a band as follows, or skip this step and embroider directly onto the green felt. With the #8 mercerised cotton, crochet five circles that are 4 cm (1½ in.) in diameter and join together. Add another smaller 2 cm (⅜ in.) circle at one end for the button to fit onto. If embroidering directly onto the felt, make a green band of felt that is approximately 22 x 4,5 cm (8⅝ x 1¾ in.) in size. This is to have the space to add the button onto the felt, alongside the rose.

With the mercerised cotton, crochet the loop to fit the button or use detached buttonhole stitch – see p. 54. Secure the crochet band of circles onto the felt with the 155 yellow thread and use small running or back stitches.

Make the roses: A rose will be formed on each crochet circle. If you are working directly on the felt, mark the position of the roses first. The roses are the same size as the crochet circles, which are 4 cm (1½ in.) in diameter. Fold the band in half and, with a blue water-soluble pen, make a mark for the rose centre. Measure again and make a mark for the two other rose centres, on either side of the centre rose. There are five roses in total. Using the dots as a guide, follow the wild rose technique shown on p. 104 with the clutch bag. Secure the yellow organza circle first and then, with the 155 yellow thread (all six strands) make nine spokes for these roses. There are four shades of ribbon to choose from. For the centre rose, use the 91 ribbon. Use the 86 ribbon for the two roses alongside the centre rose, 90 for the rose on the one end and 87 for the rose on the other end. Weave the ribbon under and over the spokes, as shown on p. 104. You may need extra ribbon to complete some of the roses and in this case, use the 90 to do so. Secure tiny yellow beads in the centre of each rose with the yellow thread and the finest embroidery needle (size 10).

Complete the bracelet

With three strands of the Chameleon thread, make blanket stitches around the edge of the green felt. Choose a lining that will suit your creation and leave enough for a good-sized seam. Turn in the seams and press flat. With the same shade of thread, make tiny back or running stitches along the edge. Remove the blue pen marks by wetting a cotton bud and moistening the blue lines. Add a button using the mercerised cotton and close the loop.