



Get stitching! This rigid spindle bag is created with hand-stitched bargello—perfect for a spinner on the go.

Bargello Spindle Bag

LINDA M. PERRY

There are many fun and practical end products one can make with bargello needlepoint—pillows, chair seats, purses, book covers, pincushions—but the perfect project for the handspinner is a tote for a drop spindle. I also use it as a knitting bag; it stands upright and corals my ball of yarn as I knit.

This project gives you the opportunity to play with color and pattern using a small amount of precious handspun. Spin new yarns and carefully plan your palette or let loose using a pile of leftover yarns. Sampling can be great fun using small swatches of mesh canvas, and the stitching doesn't take up much time or precious yarn. You can get quick results to judge the efficacy of your design and the appropriateness of the yarn.

For this project, the needlepoint area to be worked is a simple rectangle, approximately 9 by 16 inches. I have chosen the flame stitch bargello pattern, but any pattern of your choice is fine. The flame stitch is easy and versatile, allowing for variations in the number of rows per color.

SPINNING NOTES

I worked with handspun yarn created by C. S. Peterson for her Maine-based studio, Woolscapes. This beautiful two-ply worsted-spun yarn is a sturdy worsted weight. The moderate to high singles and ply twist spun from Targhee wool is a great fit for bargello. The color variations run randomly throughout the skein, from light to dark with hues of aqua and gray. I chose a solid-color millspun yarn as my contrasting yarn. Experimenting with all handspun yarns or a combination of handspun and millspun can offer even more color and texture opportunities. Assembly is straightforward and is presented here assuming the sewing will be done with a machine.

MATERIALS

Fiber Targhee wool, 3 oz (85 g).

Yarn MC: 2-ply; about 120 yd; 800 ypp; 10 wpi; worsted

weight; handspun by C. S. Peterson of Woolscapes; "Sailing, Sailing," random color variations.

CC: Maine Line DK 3/8, 100% wool, worsted spun; 120 yd; 1,490 ypp; Jagger Spun; Willow.

Notions Cotton mesh canvas #12, 19" × 12" rectangle (includes 1½" margin of mesh around the bargello stitching area which is 16" × 9"); tapestry needle (blunt end, elongated eye), size 18; small scissors; soft, pliable thin leather, easy to stitch through: 8" × 8" square for the bottom, 1¼" × 17" for the handle, and ¾" × 17" strip for the trim band. For the optional lining: stiff interfacing (I used Peltex Firm, nonfusible), 16" × 9"; linen fabric, 18" × 11"; needle and thread for handsewing. **Finished Size** 9" high, 5" diameter, 16" circumference.

SPINDLE BAG

Needlework

Using masking tape, tape around all sides of the 19" × 12" rectangle of cotton mesh canvas, folding the tape in half over the raw edges.

Refer to the flame stitch chart, Figure 1. You will see that it is a 4:2 pattern (includes 4 holes with a 2-hole step). The first row is the foundation row. It is the most important and will take accuracy and patience! Once you have this row set, the rest will fall into place easily. Just in case, bargello stitches can be undone by picking out individual stitches with your needle.

Start about 1½" above the longer bottom edge and 1½" in from the right edge (the bottom right corner of the stitching area). Cut an 18"–24" length of MC and thread your tapestry needle. To begin your first vertical stitch (A on the chart), insert the needle from under the canvas and bring the needle up toward you. Draw the yarn up, leaving a tail about 1" long. Press this tail against the back of the canvas toward the left while you take the next few stitches so that the tail will be caught and secured as you stitch. Pay close attention to the chart on this first row as you work from right



to left, following the chart blocks (using 4 holes for the vertical stitch, then up or down 2 holes for the step as the chart indicates) working from A to B on Figure 1. Repeat across the canvas until you are $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the left edge. Secure the yarn on the back by weaving it under a few stitches on the back. The next row (CC) begins in the top mesh hole of the first stitch where you began at A, then continues in the same pattern as the foundation row. Fill the entire canvas in this manner, alternating colors for each row. Stay in pattern as you stitch at the top and fill in at the bottom, keeping edges straight.

To block, steam lightly to maintain a rectangular shape. Dry thoroughly.

Tote Assembly

Trim the canvas mesh so there is a $\frac{3}{4}$ " seam allowance around the bargello stitching.

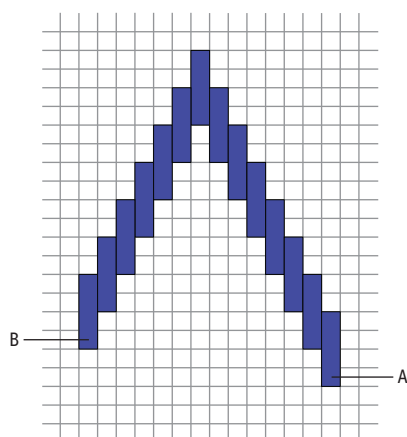
To form the cylinder, with right sides facing, machine stitch the shorter sides together, catching the end rows of bargello stitches. Continue assembly with the right sides to the inside.

From the 8" square of leather, cut a circle 7" in diameter, about 1" wider all around than the bargello cylinder circumference.

Center the cylinder on the leather circle with the leather right side up. Clip small slits 1" apart into the mesh perpendicular to the bargello stitching but do not cut as far as the stitching. This will allow the cylinder edge to lie flat. Fold the mesh tabs outward, so the bargello stitching is next to the leather.

With the mesh side up and the leather facing up underneath, stitch the leather and cylinder together as close to the bargello stitching as possible. You may need to stitch around a couple of times so that your stitches

Figure 1. Flame Stitch Chart



are at the very edge of the bargello stitches.

For the leather handle, draw two straight lines equidistant along the length of the 1¼" × 17" leather piece. Cut along the lines to within 1" from one end. You will have three equal widths of leather attached at one end. Braid, then sew across at the end to secure.

Turn down the top mesh of the cylinder toward the wrong side so there is a smooth edge where the bargello stitching starts. Center the handle ends so they are directly across the rim from each other and pin 1" of leather handle end on top of the bargello stitching. Sew to secure.

Position the ¾" leather trim band close to the upper edge of the cylinder, covering the handle ends, and topstitch in place along the upper and lower edges.

Turn right side out.

Optional Lining

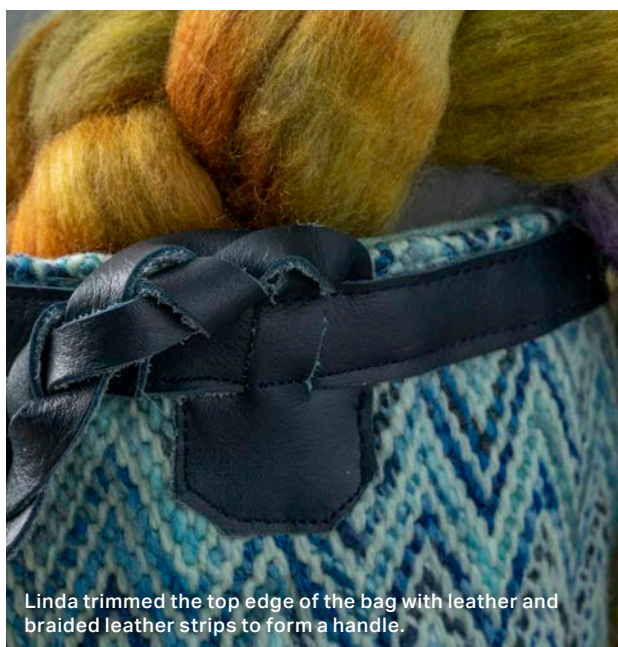
Center the interfacing on the wrong side of the lining material. Press the two long edges of lining material over the interfacing so there is a crisp fold. Topstitch the long edges. With right sides together, sew the short edges together with a 1" seam. Press the seam open. Insert the lining into the bargello cylinder (wrong side of cylinder to wrong side of lining) so it fits snugly to the bottom and just barely reaches the top inside edge. Handstitch the lining to the inside edge of the top of the bargello cylinder. ●

Resources

Perry, Linda M. *Back to Bargello: A Collection of Colorful Techniques and Patterns*. Self-published, 2014.

Woolscapes, woolscapesme.com.

A lifelong lover of all things fiber, **Linda M. Perry** now lives and creates on an island on the Maine coast. Several years ago, with the hope of reigniting the art and craft of bargello needlepoint, she wrote a primer book, *Back to Bargello*.



Rounded Arches Spindle Bag

LINDA M. PERRY



Photos by Matt Graves

Use handspun yarn to stitch a swath of your favorite bargello pattern to accent a soft-sided spindle bag made from cotton velveteen.

Spin Off
ePATTERNS

Rounded Arches Spindle Bag

LINDA M. PERRY

There are many fun and useful projects to make with bargello needlepoint—pillows, chair seats, purses, book covers, pincushions—but the perfect project for a handspinner is a spindle bag.

Bargello stitching offers endless opportunities for experimenting with color, yarns, and patterns. I have chosen the traditional Rounded Arches pattern, but any pattern of your choice is fine. The needlepoint area to be worked is a rectangle, approximately 8 by 11 inches. Simple repeating shapes allow you to repeat contrasting colors for a more modern look, work in a gradient of colors (which spinners love), or work in a more monochromatic palette and explore different fibers.

Editor's note: Linda's article, "Bargello: A Renaissance Art with a Twist," in Spin Off Spring 2022 includes loads of pattern and color ideas.

SPINNING NOTES

Modern millspun needlepoint yarns (100% wool and often referred to as Persian yarn) are used for bargello because they provide good coverage, preventing the mesh canvas from showing through the work. These yarns have a firm twist, so they are durable. Typically, several plied yarns are loosely twisted, with each plied yarn referred to as a "ply" by many needleworkers. Two "plies" are ideal for normal mesh ranges.

For handspinners, the norms can go out the window. We can get creative with ply structure, gauge, and fiber choices. Coarse fibers and firm twist create a durable textile, while finer fibers and nontraditional yarn structures might feed your creative explorations. Creating small, stitched swatches on mesh will help you quickly judge yarn, color, and pattern choices.

For my bag, I used handspun two-ply Merino wool in sunflower yellow. The worsted-weight handspun yarn has a firm twist in both singles and ply. I chose to pair this with a navy millspun yarn from my stash.

MATERIALS

Fiber 100% Merino wool, 2 oz (57 g).

Yarn 2-ply; 75 yd MC; 1,000 ypp; 12 wpi; worsted weight; handspun by Kelly McKenzie of Cedar Valley Fibers. Maine Line DK 3/8 (100% wool; 1,490 yd/lb; Jagger Spun; worsted spun), 75 yd CC, Navy.

Notions 11" × 14" piece of cotton mesh canvas #12; 12" × 24" piece of cotton velveteen (other fabric with a firm weave can be used, such as Ultrasuede, corduroy, etc.); 14" zipper, color to match fabric; 1½ yd sturdy ¼" cording; cord stopper to fit cord; tapestry needle (round blunt end, elongated eye), size 22; small scissors; straight pins; zipper foot (optional); sewing needle and thread.

Finished Size 10" circumference × 21".

Handspun Tips

Here are some guidelines that will help you avoid disappointment and stressed hands as you explore:

- The yarn must flow through the holes in the mesh canvas easily, otherwise, it will wear out your fingers and the yarn, not to mention your patience. There are different sizes of mesh, so you can adjust the yarn weight and surface texture accordingly.
- The yarn must be thin enough to thread on a tapestry or yarn needle. I've done some makeshift "needles" to accommodate thicker yarns—bobby pins and even a turkey lacer.
- Choose yarns that don't kink or have a predisposition for knotting. Yarns that fray easily when cut into short lengths can also be challenging.
- Yarns with some variation in gauge (thick and thin) are fine, but extreme variations in gauge might lead to the canvas showing through the work.

INSTRUCTIONS

Using masking tape, tape around all sides of the cotton mesh canvas, folding the tape in half over the raw edges.

Refer to the Rounded Arches stitch chart on page 4. You will see that it is a 4:2 pattern (covers 4 holes with a 2-hole step). The first row is the foundation row. It is the most important and will take accuracy and patience! Once you have this row set, the rest will fall into place easily. Just in case, bargello stitches can be undone by picking out individual stitches with your needle.

Start approximately 1½" above the longer bottom edge and 1½" in from the right edge (the bottom right corner of the stitching area). Cut an 18–24" length of MC and thread your tapestry needle. To begin your first vertical stitch (A on the chart), insert the needle from under the canvas and bring the needle up toward you. Draw the yarn up, leaving a tail of about 1". Press this tail against the back of the canvas in the direction of the

few stitches so that the tail will be caught and secured as you stitch. Pay close attention to the chart on this first row as you work from right to left, following the chart blocks (over 4 meshes for the vertical stitch, then up [or down] 2 meshes for the step as the chart indicates).

Continue until you are 1½" from the left edge. Secure the yarn on the back by weaving it under a few stitches. The next row (CC) begins in the top mesh hole of the first stitch where you began at A, then continues in the same pattern as the foundation row. Fill the entire canvas in this manner, alternating colors for each row. Stay in pattern as you stitch at the top and fill in at the bottom, keeping edges straight.

To block, steam lightly to maintain a rectangular shape. Dry thoroughly.

BAG ASSEMBLY

Trim the canvas mesh so there is a ¾" seam allowance around the bargello stitching.





A zipper keeps your spinning gear in place.

Steam-press the seam allowances toward the wrong side so there is a smooth and straight rectangle (8" x 11") of only the bargello stitching showing.

Place the bargello on top of the right side of the velveteen fabric. It can be centered (6½" from top and bottom and 2" from long edges) or offset vertically as shown. Secure with pins. Topstitch close to the edges all around.

Fold lengthwise with right sides together. Beginning 6½" from one end, baste a ⅝" seam down the center for 14", leaving 6½" on either end unstitched. Press the seam open. Center the closed zipper, face down, on the wrong side over the seam allowances. Stitch down the zipper tape approximately ⅜" from the

teeth. Turn right side out, slit the basting stitches, and test the zipper.

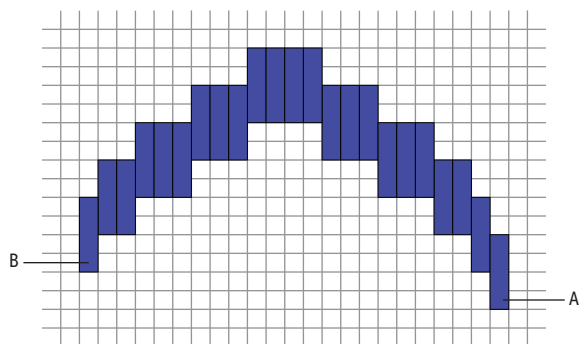
Turn the bag wrong side out again. Sew the remaining above and below the zipper using ⅝" seams, stopping 2" from each end. Press the seams open, including the 2" left unsewn. Turn the bag right side out.

To form a channel for the cording, turn ¼" of the raw top edge of the velveteen inward, then turn in again 1". Pin. Stitch close to the folded bottom edge to form the channel. Do the same for the opposite end.

Top cord: Thread 1 yd of the cording through the top channel. Thread the cord through the stopper. Make secure knots at the ends of the cord.

Bottom cord: Thread ½ yd of the cording through the lower channel. Pull tight, make a secure knot, and cut off remaining cording (or make it into a tassel, if desired). ●

Figure 1. Rounded Arches Chart



Resources

Perry, Linda M. *Back to Bargello: A Collection of Colorful Techniques and Patterns*. Self-published, 2014, 23.

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