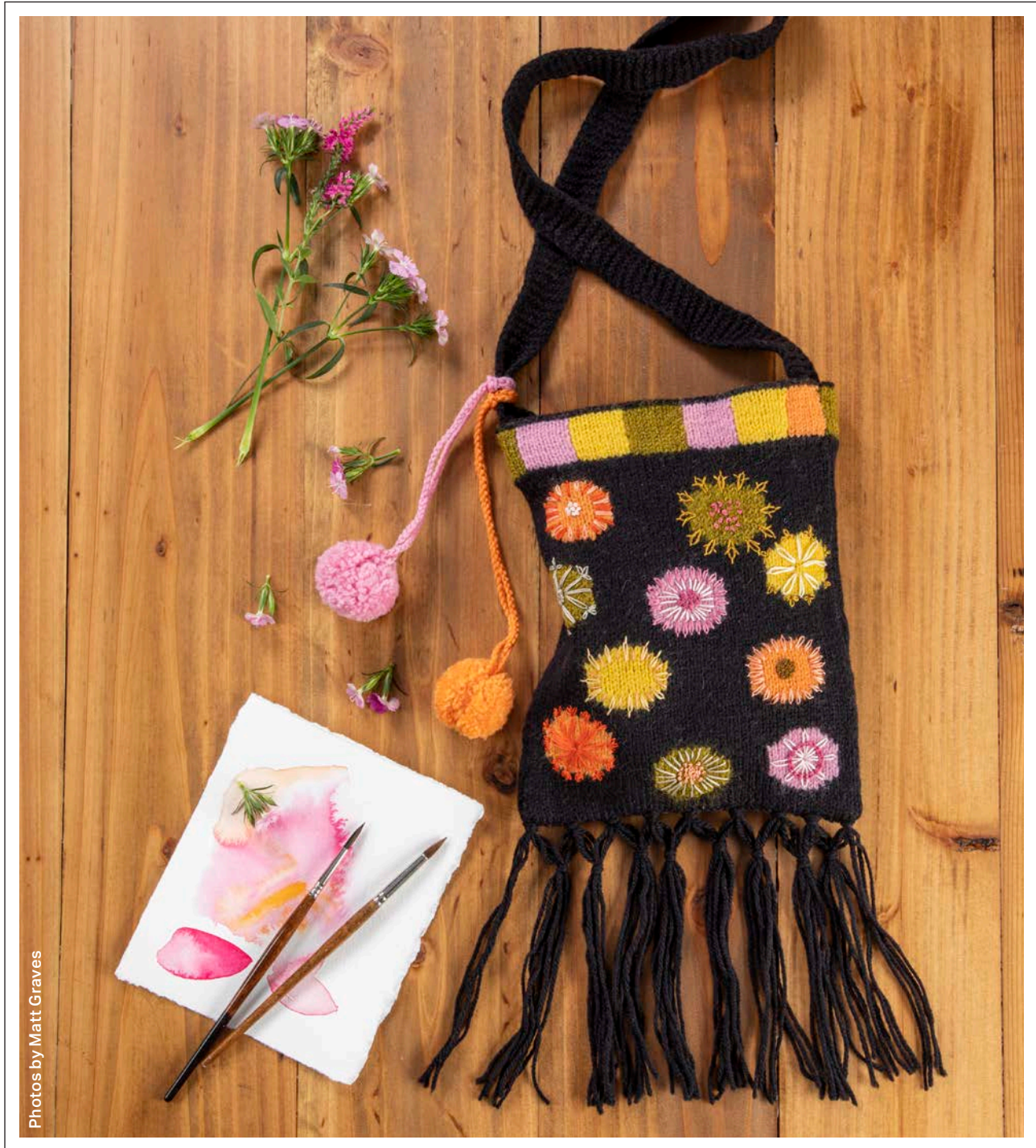


Karin's Swedish Circles

PAT OLSKI



Photos by Matt Graves

PIECEWORK.

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Karin Bergöö Larsson (1859–1928) was an exuberant and intrepid fiber artist who knit, spun, sewed, wove, and embroidered, most often in her singular, nontraditional manner. Her vision as a trained painter translated into the composition of extraordinary embroidered pieces that featured uncomplicated stitches elevated by her keen sense of color. Her needle art was a focal point in many of the famous paintings by her husband, Carl Larsson (1853–1919).

This knitted bag is a tribute to Karin Larsson's timeless aesthetic. It is based upon an embroidered length of black linen strewn with appliquéd vibrant linen circles. She embroidered the linen in unique combinations of only four stitches used to great effect: chain stitch, lazy daisy, French knots, and straight stitch. The unfinished piece is still on display at the Larsson home in Sundborn, Sweden.

This knitted version sports pom-poms and knotted fringe, which were clearly favorites of Karin Larsson because she used them to embellish many of the textiles and walls in her home. Credited with being a prime source of inspiration for what we perceive of as quintessential Swedish cottage decor, her sense of style and her approachable needlework designs, constructed simply and with love, still resonate with stitchers and artists alike. I like to think that she would be pleased with this bag because she didn't believe in exact replicas but preferred originality of thought.

MATERIALS

- ◆ Brown Sheep Company Nature Spun Sport, 100% wool, sportweight, 184 yard (168 m)/1.75 oz (50 gram) skein, 2 skeins of #NS601 Pepper (MC); 1 skein each of #NS148 Autumn Leaves (A), #NS87 Victorian Pink (B), #NS409 Nectarine (C), and #NS305 Impasse Yellow (D)
- ◆ DMC embroidery floss, 6-strand, 100% cotton thread, 8.7 yard (8 m)/skein, 1 skein each of #0352 Lt. Coral, #0900 Dk. Burnt Orange, #3023 Lt. Brown Gray, #0832 Golden Olive, #0830 Dk. Golden Olive, #0818 Baby Pink, #3688 Med. Mauve, #3687 Mauve, #0677 Very Lt. Old Gold, #0676 Lt. Old Gold, #0680 Dk. Old Gold
- ◆ Needles, size 3 (3.25 mm) or size needed to obtain gauge
- ◆ Crochet hook, size E/4 (3.5 mm)



A sprinkling of French knots, lazy daisy, and straight stitches add an abstract floral look to the circles.

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- ◆ Tapestry needles, size 16 for seaming and size 20 for embroidery
- ◆ Yarn bobbins for intarsia (optional)
- ◆ Large bowl or basin for fulling fabric
- ◆ Towels
- ◆ Square of cardboard 4" × 4" (10.2 cm × 10.2 cm) for winding pom-poms
- ◆ Sharp pointed scissors

Finished measurements: 8" (20.3 cm) wide and 9½" (24.1 cm) tall after fulling, not including strap or fringe

Gauge: 24 sts and 40 rows = 4" (10.2 cm) in St st

Note: The gauge before and after the fulling process was roughly the same; while fulling made the fabric "bloom," it did not change the gauge or size of the knitted piece significantly.

SPECIAL NOTES

When working the intarsia section, twist the yarns when changing colors to avoid leaving holes.



Pat's knitted and embroidered bag is based on an unfinished embroidery by Karin Larsson. Playful stitches and pom-poms punctuate the colorful intarsia circles.

Visit pieceworkmagazine.com/abbreviations/ for terms you don't know.

INSTRUCTIONS

Bag

Bag Front

In preparation for the start of the first two circles in Rows 7–14 of the Front chart, wind 5 bobbins or yarn butterflies of about 8 yards (7.3 m) each: 3 of MC, and 1 each of A and B. Wind additional bobbins as needed for color changes, using a separate bobbin of MC for each background section between circles.

With MC, CO 52 sts. Work Rows 1–6 of Front chart, ending with a WS row.

Change to using yarn bobbins for each color section and work the chart in St st intarsia until Row 77 has been completed.

With MC only, work Rows 78–82 of chart.

Using separate bobbins of A, B, C, and D as needed, work Rows 83–94 of chart, ending with a WS row.

With MC only, knit 1 RS row, then knit 1 WS row for facing fold line. Work in St st for 14 more rows for upper edge facing, ending with a WS row. BO all sts.

Bag Back

With MC, CO 52 sts. Knit 1 RS row, knit 1 WS row, then work in St st for 80 rows, ending with a WS row—82 rows total.

Using separate bobbins of A, B, C, and D as needed, work Rows 83–94 of Front chart, ending with a WS row.

With MC only, knit 1 RS row, then knit 1 WS row for facing fold line. Work in St st for 14 more rows for upper edge facing, ending with a WS row. BO all sts.

Strap

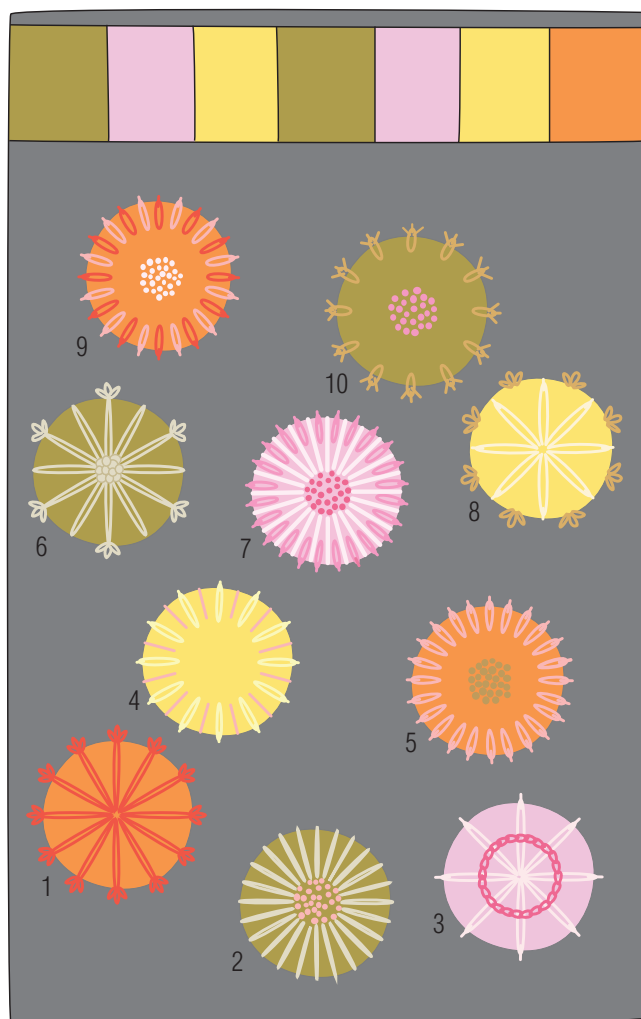
With MC, CO 9 sts. Work in garter st (knit all sts every row), slipping the first st of every row as if to purl to create chain-stitch selvages. Work in garter st until there are 156 garter ridges (312 rows), or until strap measures about 39" (1 m), or desired length, when slightly stretched. BO all sts.

Finishing

Weave in ends.

Fulling

Place knitted pieces in a bowl with very hot water and agitate slightly, then rinse in very cold water. Repeat as necessary until the fibers “bloom” to fill in the spaces of the knitting. Do not felt the fabric completely; you should still be able to see individual

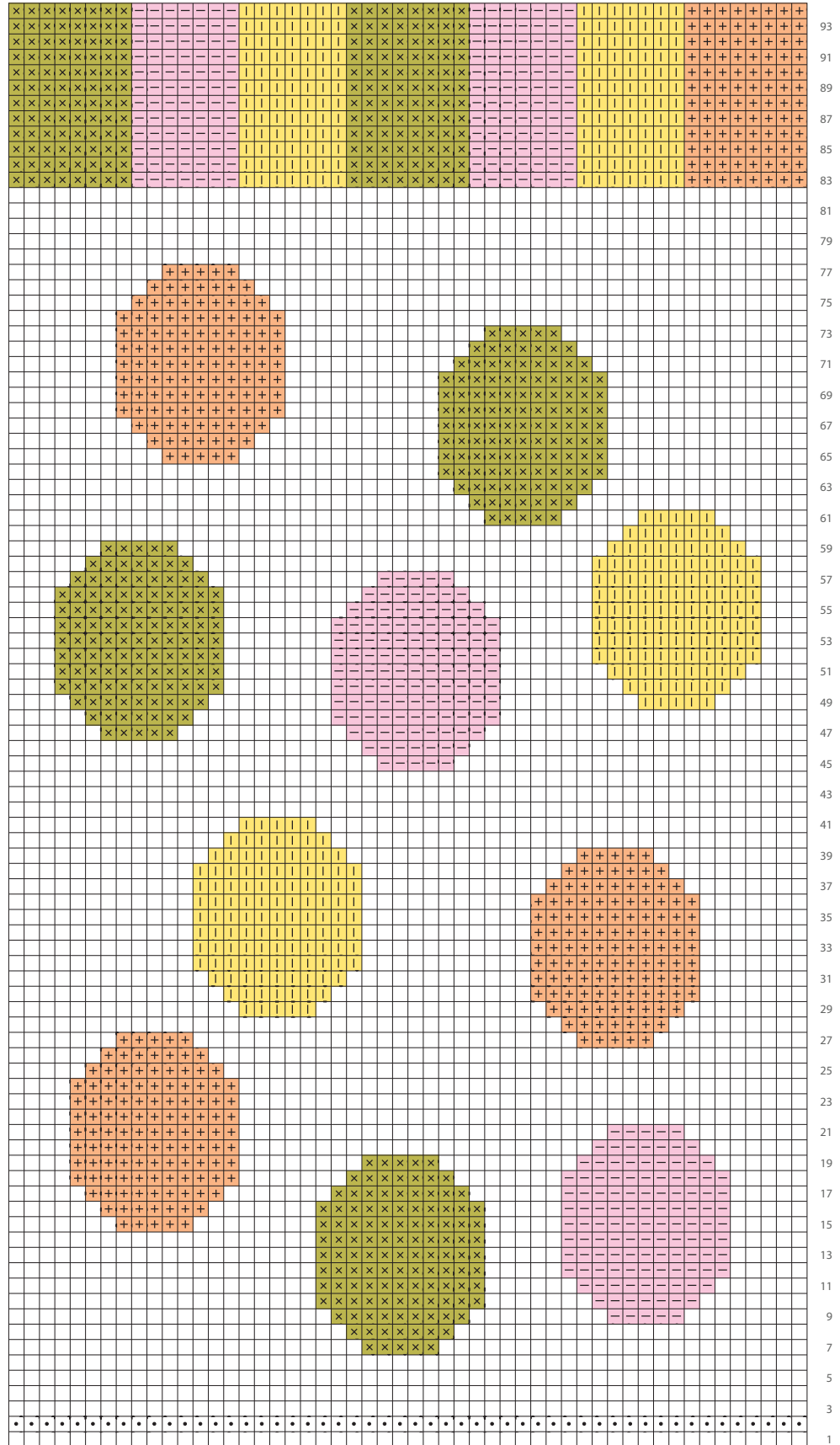


Circle	Embroidery Stitches <i>(in stitching order)</i>	Embroidery Floss Color(s) <i>(corresponding to the embroidery stitch to the left)</i>
1	Lazy daisy <i>(large and small)</i>	● Dk. Burnt Orange
2	Straight stitch French knots	● Lt. Brown Gray ● Lt. Coral
3	Lazy daisy Chain stitch	● Baby Pink ● Mauve
4	Lazy daisy Straight stitch	● Lt. Old Gold ● Lt. Coral
5	Lazy daisy French knots	● Lt. Coral ● Dk. Golden Olive
6	Lazy daisy <i>(large and small)</i> French knots	● Lt. Brown Gray
7	French knots Lazy daisy Straight stitch	● Mauve ● Med. Mauve ● Baby Pink
8	Lazy daisy <i>(large)</i> Lazy daisy <i>(small)</i>	● Very Lt. Old Gold ● Dk. Old Gold
9	French knots Lazy daisy Lazy daisy	● Baby Pink ● Lt. Coral ● Dk. Burnt Orange
10	French knots Lazy daisy Straight stitch	● Med. Mauve ● Golden Olive ● Golden Olive

Key

- MC: knit on RS, purl on WS
- MC: knit on WS
- x A: knit on RS, purl on WS
- B: knit on RS, purl on WS
- + C: knit on RS, purl on WS
- | D: knit on RS, purl on WS

Bag Front



stitches even though they will become less distinct. If the darker MC runs, rinse until the water runs clear before continuing the fulling process. Roll the pieces in towels to absorb excess moisture, then lay them flat on a clean towel until thoroughly dry.

Embroidery

All embroidery is done with 3 strands of embroidery floss using the smaller tapestry needle. Using the illustration to identify the intarsia circles on the front of the bag, embroider each circle with the stitches and colors listed in the table. Weave in the ends of the floss.

Assembly

Fold the upper edge facing of the bag front to the WS, then use MC threaded on the larger tapestry needle to sew the facing invisibly in place. Repeat for the upper edge facing of the bag back. Using MC threaded on the larger tapestry needle, seam the front and back together down one side, across the bottom, then up the other side using mattress stitch. Center one end of the strap on a side seam with the short end of the strap even with the BO edge of the facing. Sew the strap firmly in place across the top edge of the bag, down the side of the strap, across its short end, then up the other side. Repeat for the other end of the strap, making sure the strap is not twisted.

Fringe

Cut 36 pieces of MC each 24" (61 cm) long. With the back of the bag facing, mark points along the bottom edge of the bag, with the first and last points each at the bottom of a side seam, and the remaining 7 points equally spaced in between. With the back of the bag still facing, take 4 strands of yarn, fold them in half, insert the crochet hook into the bag from back to front at one marked point; this is easier if you go through the loops from the garter ridge at the lower edge of the bag. Hook the center fold of the 4-strand bundle, pull fold through to the back of the bag, stopping when you have pulled a loop about 2" (5 cm) long. Using the crochet hook, draw each of the 8 loose strands through the loop, then pull the strands gently and smoothly to snug the knot against the bottom of the bag. Attach 8 more 4-strand bundles in the same manner to the remaining 8 marked points—9 fringe bundles with 8 loose strands each. Separate each bundle into two 4-strand groups. Skip the first 4-strand group at one side, *knot the next pair of groups together using an overhand knot about 1" (2.5 cm) down from the bottom of the bag. Repeat from * across, leaving



Pat pays homage to Karin Larsson who used pom-poms as embellishments on several of her textile creations.

the last 4-strand group unknotted—8 knots total. Trim the fringe evenly.

Pom-poms

Make one pom-pom each with colors B and C in the following manner. Cut a 12" (30.5 cm) length of yarn and set it aside. Wind the same color around the cardboard square about 120 times. Slide the length of yarn between the wrappings and the cardboard at the top, remove the cardboard, and tie the strand firmly to cinch the wound yarn. Using sharp scissors, cut the across the bottom of the wrappings to open the pom-pom. Fluff the strands, and trim into a round shape. Using B, work a crochet chain about 100 sts long, slip-stitch into the first chain to make a loop, then fasten off, leaving a 12" (30.5 cm) tail. Tie the tail firmly around the color B pom-pom, and trim the ends to blend in. Using C, work a crochet chain about 120 sts long, slip-stitch into the first chain to make a loop, then fasten off, leaving a 12" (30.5 cm) tail. Tie the tail firmly around the color C pom-pom, and trim the ends to blend in. Attach the pom-pom chain loops to the bag strap at one side as shown by laying the end of each crocheted loop on top of the strap, bringing the pom-pom under the strap and up through the loop, then pulling the pom-pom gently to tighten the knot.

PAT OLSKI is a professional needlecraft designer and lecturer. Her designs and articles, which span an array of topics from traditional needlework techniques to current knitwear trends, have appeared in many books and magazines. She is the author of eight yarn and craft books, and her newest book, a history and project-based title, *The Dorset Button Book*, will be published in 2021.