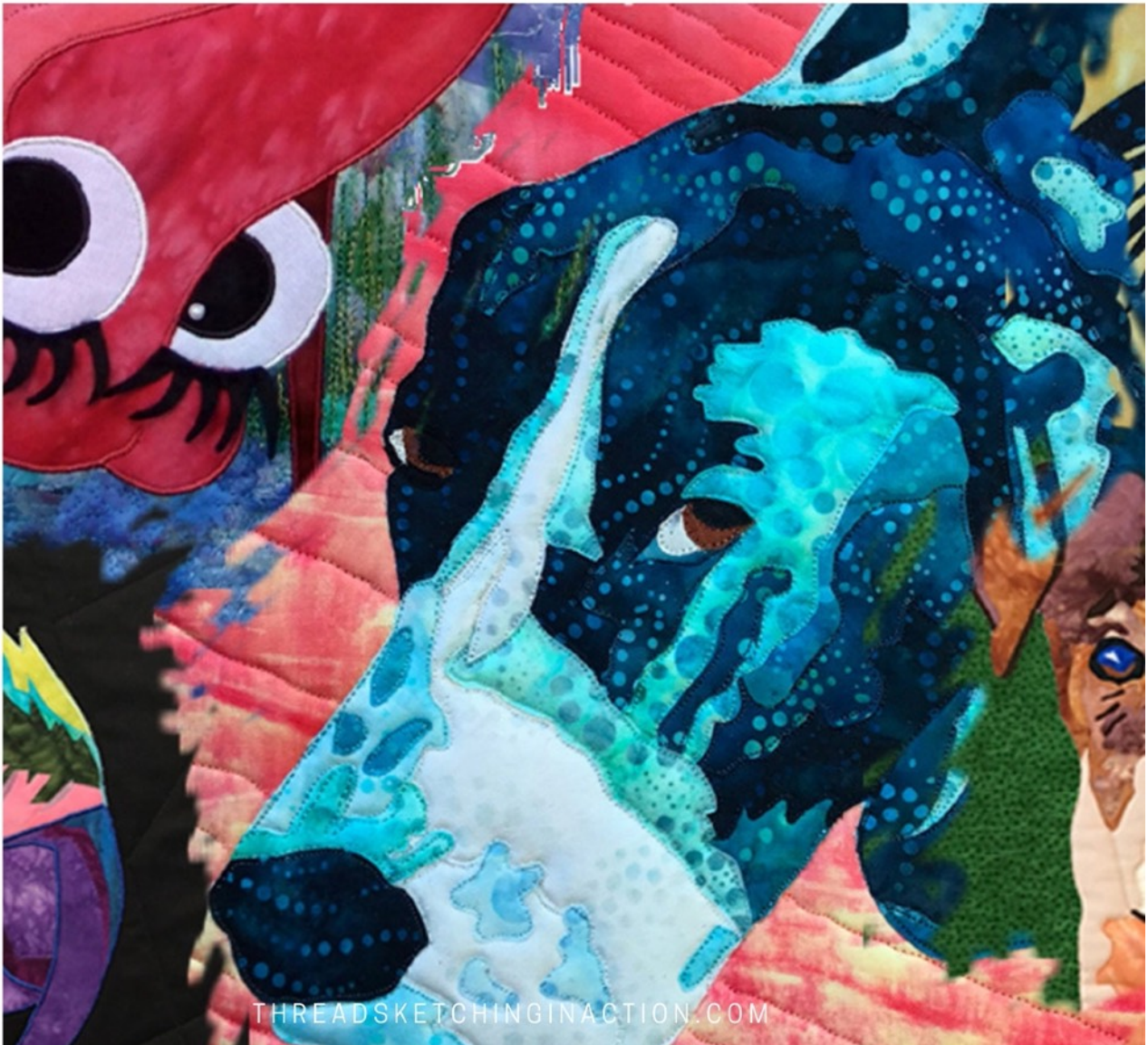


TSIA RESOURCES

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# PET PORTRAIT FABRIC COLLAGE

COURSE NOTES



# PET PORTRAIT FABRIC COLLAGE

Complete Course Notes



# DEBORAH WIRSU

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Wirsu, Deborah

Pet Portrait Fabric Collage [Complete Course Notes]

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# MODULE ONE

## Introduction to Pet Portrait Fabric Collage

# Introduction

Capture the spirit and personality of your pet or animal friend by transforming your photos into a fabulous fabric collage that is easy to make, regardless of experience in photography, art quilting, or free motion stitching.

These course notes give you an overview, lesson by lesson, of:

- ◆ Key points and checklists from each lesson.
- ◆ Essential information for creating your pet collage.
- ◆ Step-by-step instructions.

There is room for you to make additional notes as you progress through the course.

## DOWNLOAD AND PRINT THESE COMPREHENSIVE LESSON NOTES

These notes cover the essentials of each module, so I recommend you download them before beginning the course.

*Enjoy!*

# MODULE TWO

## Tools and Supplies

# Tools and Supplies

## PHOTOGRAPHY, PRINTING, AND PATTERN MAKING SUPPLIES

- ◆ A digital camera or smartphone – or a photo of your chosen subject that you already have.
- ◆ Home computer and printer (able to print in colour and greyscale).
- ◆ Regular printer paper (US Letter or A4 size).
- ◆ Tracing paper.
- ◆ Transparent adhesive tape.
- ◆ Pencil and pen (e.g. Fine Sharpie® pen).
- ◆ Scissors for cutting paper.

## FABRIC SUPPLIES

- ◆ Cotton fabric for collage – scraps, jelly rolls, batiks, prints, or hand-dyes.  
Anything goes!
- ◆ Plain quilting muslin or cotton fabric for the collage foundation.
- ◆ Fabric for the background, which may be layered, pieced, or whole-cloth.
- ◆ Low loft batting (optional).
- ◆ Fabric for backing and binding (if making an art quilt).

*[Tools and Supplies continued on next page...]*

# Tools and Supplies (cont.)

## SEWING AND MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES

- ◆ Sewing machine with free motion foot and embroidery (zigzag) foot.
- ◆ Sewing shears, and scissors for fussy cutting, e.g. Micro-tip scissors.
- ◆ Thread in colours to suit your project. Rayon, polyester, or cotton threads in 40-gauge are suitable.
- ◆ Machine needles for free motion stitching or machine embroidery. Recommended size range: 75/11 – 90/14 Embroidery needles.
- ◆ Fabric or quilt markers (e.g. Pilot FriXion® pens, chalk quilt markers, or other erasable fabric markers).
- ◆ Rotary cutter, self-healing cutting mat, and quilt ruler.
- ◆ Paper-backed fusible web (e.g. Vliesofix, Wonder Under).
- ◆ Fabric glue (optional), e.g. Roxanne's Glue-Baste-It or Sewline Fabric Glue.
- ◆ Colour wheel (optional but useful).
- ◆ Value scale (optional but useful – included in course notes).

## NOTES:

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# MODULE THREE

## Style and Design Elements

# Discover your style preferences

What sort of pet portrait do you want to create?

## STYLE PREFERENCES:

Select a style that reflects your preferences:

- ◆ Personality and mood.
- ◆ Colour and size.
- ◆ Objectives.
- ◆ Format.
- ◆ Size.

## OBJECTIVES:

***Realistic***



***Abstract***



***Comical or Whimsical***



***Colourful***



***Monochrome***



***Natural Colours***



**NOTES:**

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# The Key to Great Fabric Collage Portraits

## UNDERSTAND LIGHT, DARK, VALUE, AND COLOUR

### Start with a photo

A photo gives you:

- ◆ Shape and proportion.
- ◆ Perspective.
- ◆ Light, shadow, and value.
- ◆ Colour (if you choose to use it).

### Light intensity and source

Light illuminates your subject and creates contrast between light and dark (shadow).

Look at your photo...is the light source:

- ◆ From the side? .....
- ◆ From above? .....
- ◆ From the front? .....
- ◆ From behind? .....

*Which looks best?*

### NOTES:

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## PHOTOGRAPHING BLACK AND WHITE ANIMALS.

**Black animals:** Photograph a black animal with good light source.

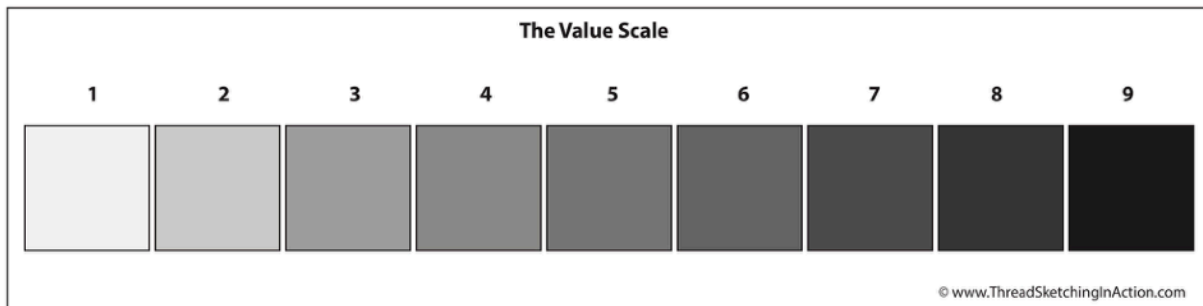


**White animals:** Avoid photographing a white animal in very bright light.



# Understanding Value

- ◆ Examine a photo in greyscale to identify varying degrees of light and shadow (Value).
- ◆ ‘Seeing’ the different values will help you create your tracing for a pattern.
- ◆ Viewing a photo as Value rather than Colour allows you to choose any colour scheme you like.
- ◆ A Value Scale assists with this process.
- ◆ A Value Scale consists of degrees of light, from white to black, with a range of grey levels in between.



## NOTES:

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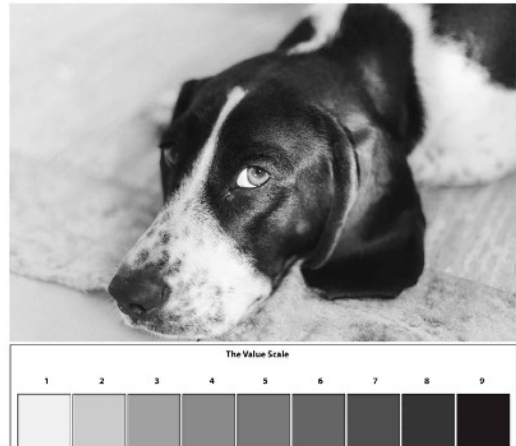
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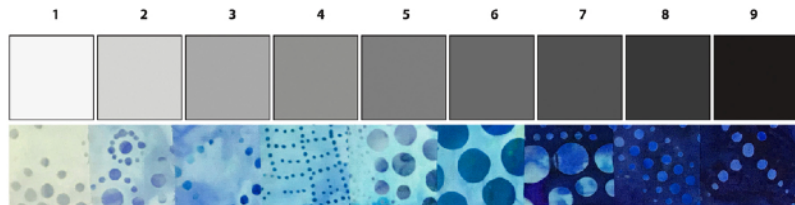
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Altering a photo from colour to greyscale makes it easier to see the different values.



When you are ready to select fabric, sorting it according to Value helps with the collage creation.



USE YOUR INSTINCT.

Don't become obsessed by this process. Use your instinct. If a colour in your collage doesn't look 'right', then change it! You will know when your collage looks right.

NOTES:

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# MODULE FOUR

## Easy Pattern Creation

# Easy Pattern Creation: Step 1

## SELECT A PHOTO

### Choosing a photo: What to look for

Begin with an assessment of your experience.

#### ***Beginners:***

- Single animal – avoid large groups of animals.
- Close up – zoom and crop.
- Bigger is easier – enlarge your design.
- Avoid detail.
- Simplify.

#### ***Intermediate ++***

- More complex designs.
- Groups of animals.
- Animals in a landscape setting.

#### ***Consider the detail***

Complex photos can be simplified.

Simple designs are easier to collage and stitch.



# © Observe Copyright regulations



Make sure you have the legal right to use a photo.

- ◆ The Copyright symbol protects the rights of the legal owner of a piece of work, including *your* original work.
- ◆ There are many different types of Copyright. If you are granted the right to copy or use someone else's work, you are given permission either for a period of time, or indefinitely, depending on the terms of the agreement.
- ◆ Always assume that any original work is copyrighted, even if it does not have the Copyright symbol attached.
- ◆ Images posted on the internet for public viewing are, in most cases, copyright, and should **not** be used without permission.
- ◆ Ensure you have the right to use someone's work by:
  - ◆ Reaching out to the creator to ask for their permission in writing.
  - ◆ See if the work is listed in the Public Domain or has a Creative Commons licence.
  - ◆ Purchase the right to use the work.
- ◆ Use your own ideas or photos, or find 'royalty-free' images online. 'Royalty-free' may still require purchasing, and often have 'conditions' attached. Always check! (*It's preferable to being sued!*).
- ◆ If in doubt, don't use it!

# Easy Pattern Creation: Step 2

## PREPARE YOUR PHOTO

Major editing is not usually necessary, so no special photo editing software is required (though it can be useful if you have it).

In most cases, it's sufficient to:

- ◆ Zoom in to close-up.
- ◆ Crop.
- ◆ Eliminate unnecessary detail.

## CONVERT YOUR PHOTO TO GREYSCALE (BLACK AND WHITE)

Use any built-in photo software on your computer or device, e.g. Apple Photos or Google Photos.

Or simply select 'Greyscale' at the point of printing.

## RESIZE YOUR PHOTO

Resize your photo to fit a standard sheet of printer page (usually 8.5" x 11" approximately).

## PRINT:

- ◆ One copy in colour.
- ◆ One copy in greyscale.

## NOTES:

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# Easy Pattern Creation: Step 3

## CREATE A TRACING

When creating your tracing it's usually (but not always) easier to trace from the greyscale photo.

- ◆ Cover the photo with a sheet of tracing paper.
- ◆ Use a pencil or black Sharpie® (fine), trace around each value.
- ◆ If your first tracing is still too complex, repeat the process until the design is simplified to suit.



## NOTES:

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# Easy Pattern Creation: Step 4

## Create your master pattern

### SCAN YOUR OUTLINE DESIGN

Use your home printer/flat-bed scanner, or take the image to a printing shop.

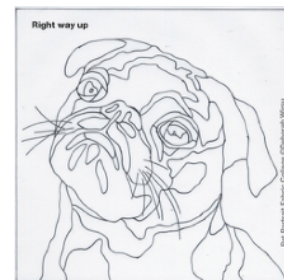
Crop and resize the photo, if necessary.



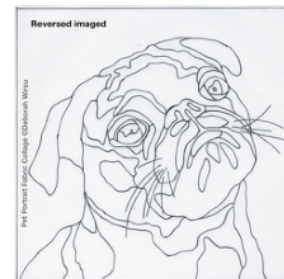
### DUPLICATE AND FLIP

Duplicate your photo and flip one over so that you have a 'Right way up' design and a 'Reverse' design.

The 'Right way up' image will be used for laying out your design.



The 'Reverse' image will be used for preparing your appliqué segments.



### CREATE YOUR MASTER PATTERNS

- ◆ Convert both images to PDF format.
- ◆ Do-it-yourself at home using Adobe Acrobat Reader.
- ◆ Print as a 'poster', over several sheets of paper, at your desired size.

# Easy Pattern Creation: Step 5

## Assemble your pattern

If you took your designs to a printing store, then they are, most likely, at the correct size, and will not require assembling.

If you elected for the DIY method, you need to assemble the patterns.

This is easy!

- ◆ Arrange the sheets in the correct order.
- ◆ Trim the sheets where necessary to achieve a seamless flow of the design from one sheet to the next.
- ◆ Align the pages and secure with transparent adhesive tape.
- ◆ Repeat the process with the *'Reverse'* image.



You now have 2 master patterns – one the *'Right way up'* and one in *'Reverse'*.

### NOTES:

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# MODULE FIVE

## Create the Collage

# Create the Collage: Step 1

## Trace onto foundation fabric

Trace your design onto foundation fabric that will be used to build the collage.

What you need:

- The *'Right way up'* master pattern.
- A piece of quilter's muslin, cut a little larger than your design.
- A sharp pencil.

Process:

- Place the muslin over the *'Right way up'* pattern.
- Pin or clip them together to prevent movement.
- Use a pencil to carefully trace the design onto the muslin.

You're done! That was easy, wasn't it?



### NOTES:

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# Create the Collage: Step 2

## Choose fabric and build the collage

### DESIGN BOARD

Creating a design board is *optional*, but can be a useful reference.

What you need:

- ◆ A large sheet of card.
- ◆ The '*Right way up*' design tracing (printer paper size).
- ◆ The greyscale photo.
- ◆ The colour photo.
- ◆ A value scale.
- ◆ Your selection of fabric.

### FUSED APPLIQUÉ CONSTRUCTION METHOD

What you need:

- ◆ The '*Reverse*' pattern template.
- ◆ Foundation fabric with the '*Right way up*' tracing.
- ◆ Paper-backed fusible web.
- ◆ Fabric in your selected colours.
- ◆ Your reference images.
- ◆ A design wall or padded mat, and pins.
- ◆ Sharp scissors for fussy cutting.
- ◆ Appliqué mat.
- ◆ Iron and ironing board.

## PAPER-BACKED FUSIBLE WEB

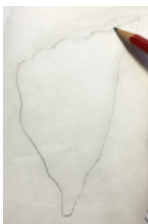
- ◆ The **'paper' side**, or **smooth** side, is the side you use to trace the appliqué shapes.
- ◆ The **'rough' or 'sticky'** side has the glue that will fuse two layers of fabric together.

**Remember!** Trace a reverse image onto the fusible web!

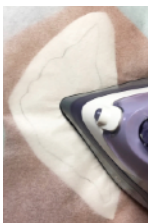
## BEGIN BUILDING THE COLLAGE

Work from background to foreground of the animal, so begin with appliqué pieces that lie behind other elements.

Consider whether pieces need to 'overlap' or 'underlap' and adjoining section.



- ◆ Using the **'Reverse'** design template and a pencil, trace each section onto the **paper side** of your fusible web.
- ◆ When you turn it over to position on your foundation, it will be the right way up.



- ◆ Rough-cut individual sections from the fusible web.
- ◆ Using a hot iron and an appliqué mat, fuse each section to the **wrong** side of your chosen fabric.



- ◆ Cut each shape from the fabric, cutting a little **outside** the drawn line.

### CREATE THE COLLAGE

Position each piece on the foundation fabric, according to the design.

- ◆ Do not remove the paper backing (yet).
- ◆ Do not fuse to the foundation (yet).
- ◆ As you build the collage, remember to check for ‘overlaps’ and ‘underlaps’.
- ◆ Trim any pieces that require trimming to fit.



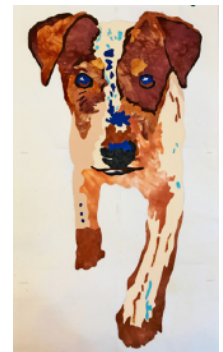
### ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

Before fusing to the foundation, stand back and assess whether you are happy with the design.

Now is the time to change anything that looks ‘wrong’!

### FUSING TO THE FOUNDATION FABRIC

- ◆ Remove the pins and the paper backing.
- ◆ Do this piece by piece.
- ◆ Reposition the pieces (minus the paper backing) and pin in position if necessary.
- ◆ Use a hot, dry iron to fuse the design onto the foundation fabric.



### NOTES:

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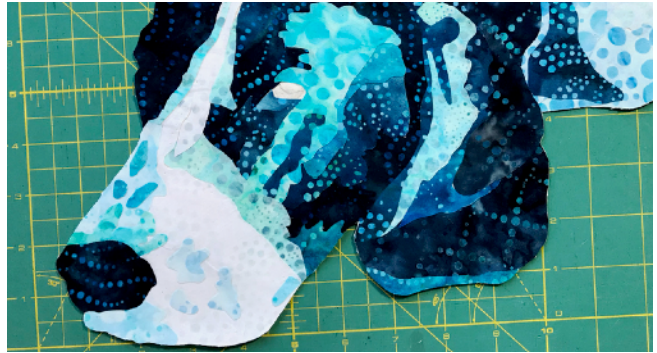
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# Create the Collage: Step 3

## Create the Background

### RELEASE THE APPLIQUÉ FROM THE FOUNDATION FABRIC

Using your scissors for fussy cutting, carefully cut around the edge of the appliqué design to release it from the foundation fabric.



### DECIDE ON YOUR PREFERRED BACKGROUND STYLE

- ◆ Simple, one-pieced backgrounds enhanced with free motion stitching.
- ◆ Backgrounds with added elements to create a setting.
- ◆ More complex backgrounds using layers of fabric, or further appliqué to create a landscape setting.
- ◆ Audition various backgrounds.
- ◆ Take your time!

### NOTES:

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## PUTTING TOGETHER THE BACKGROUND AND YOUR CUT-OUT COLLAGE

- ◆ Add any further layers, e.g. batting and backing, if planning an art quilt; or firm stabiliser.
- ◆ Use low-loft batting and cotton backing fabric to create a quilt sandwich.
- ◆ Pin or tack the layers together in preparation for stitching.
- ◆ Position the animal collage on the background.
- ◆ Hold it in place with a dab of fabric glue or pins.



### NOTES:

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# MODULE SIX

## Stitching Options

# Stitching Options

## STITCH THE COLLAGE

Before stitching, make an assessment:

- ◆ What 'interest' does the fabric add?
- ◆ Is there any benefit in covering all the fabric with stitch?
- ◆ Would edge-stitching be sufficient?
- ◆ Would you like to add more detailed thread painting?

SEE STITCHING OPTIONS SUMMARY ON NEXT PAGE...

*Edge stitching – Free motion*



- Set your machine to free motion straight stitch.
- Use a free motion foot.
- Drop the feed dogs.
- Set stitch length to zero.
- Use thread that tones with each piece of fabric.

- Set your machine to free motion zigzag stitch.
- Use an open toe free motion foot.
- Select your desired stitch width and length.
- Drop the feed dogs.
- Use toning or contrasting thread.

*Satin stitching – Free motion*



*Satin stitching – Regular*



- Set your machine to regular zigzag stitch.
- Use a zigzag or embroidery foot.
- Select your desired stitch width and length.
- Keep the feed dogs UP.
- Use toning or contrasting thread.

- Set your machine to free motion zigzag stitch.
- Use an open toe free motion foot.
- Select width and length, if you like. However, because you are working free motion, YOU are in control of stitch width, length, and direction.
- Drop the feed dogs.
- Use matching or toning thread.
- Free motion zigzag stitch is useful when blending thread colours.

*Zigzag stitch – free motion*



*Simple Thread painting*



- Set your machine to free motion straight stitch.
- Use a free motion foot.
- Drop the feed dogs.
- Set stitch length to zero.
- Use thread that tones with each piece of fabric.
- Use the thread to partially (or fully) cover the fabric to enhance the design.

## STITCH THE BACKGROUND

When the stitching of your collage is complete, move on to stitching the background.

If you're not sure what will look best, overlay with a piece of tracing paper or clear plastic and experiment with different designs before making a commitment.

Then practise on sample fabric before you begin.

### NOTES:

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## FINISHING YOUR PET PORTRAIT FABRIC COLLAGE

When all the stitching is complete, finish the edges of your work in your preferred style:

- ◆ A traditional quilt border.
- ◆ Blind facing.
- ◆ Simple zigzag or satin stitch edging.
- ◆ Decorative edge stitching.
- ◆ Traditional framing.

### NOTES:

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# Conclusion

Thank you for joining me in this class! You now have a complete set of fundamental skills to create a Pet Portrait Fabric Collage to treasure and keep.

You also have the skills required to further develop this technique into gradually more complex designs.

The strategy does not change, only the complexity.

You've learned a lot in this course:

- ◆ Style and what makes a great fabric collage portrait.
- ◆ Understanding value and the Value Scale.
- ◆ Easy pattern creation.
- ◆ How to build your collage, step-by-step.
- ◆ Stitching and finishing options.

The skills you've learned have set you on the path to creating your own unique Pet Portrait Fabric Collages!



# Additional Resources

## Books

I have a selection of books available for anyone interested in thread sketching, thread painting, art quilting, or even writing your own arts and crafts books.

Find out more at:

<https://www.threadsketchinginaction.com/books-catalogue/>



## Courses and Resources

Explore the range of resources and online courses available from TSIA (Thread Sketching in Action).

For more information, visit:

<https://www.threadsketchinginaction.com/>

# About the Author

**Deborah Wirsu** is an Australian author, artist, musician, and business owner with over 30 years experience in the arts and crafts world, and 15 years of running online businesses, including the highly successful Thread Sketching In Action.

She is a 4 x Amazon Best Seller and has written and self-published eight non-fiction books in the arts, crafts, and online business fields.

Deborah's strong background in creative arts and business, combined with her teaching experience, authorship, positivity, and *'leave no person behind'* attitude have earned her a dedicated following among her fans.

Deborah has qualifications in Creative Textiles, Freelance Journalism, Editing and Proofreading, Music, and (curiously) Medical Administration. She is also a Certified Business and Entrepreneurship Coach.

[ThreadSketchingInAction.com](http://ThreadSketchingInAction.com)

[DeborahWirsu.com](http://DeborahWirsu.com)