

EYE ON DESIGN

Sparkling joy with a stitch or two

An online project to sew your emotions and embroider thoughts onto a 'stitch journal' has caught on big time. **Savera Zachariah** has the details

How about creating a stitch journal today? Capture an emotion, record a birthday, or cherish your daughter's first word, as a tiny embroidered motif on a piece of fabric. If you had an uneventful day—sew a little flower, or an emoji, or embroider the dreaded virus as an icon. At the end of the year, you have your own embroidered journal scattered with tiny memory icons and motifs; a precious keepsake.

Jennifer Kennedy Tidd's exquisite sampler of perfectly embroidered icons went viral on social media late last year. What was astonishing was, Jennifer, a cross-stitcher and master crafter, was new to embroidery when she started her journal in January. She says, "...it was mainly just for me, just as a tool to learn embroidery." Over the course of the year, she mastered new stitches and learnt new techniques, and completed her keepsake of tiny memories, that was pure poetry in thread.

She started a Facebook group in November last year, to generously share tips and techniques that she learnt along the way. The group—Stitching A Round, exploded in numbers, and now has over 9,000 stitchers, ranging from beginners to professional crafters. This wonderful community is the place to bounce off ideas, share tips and receive feedback; the best part is, the members are non-judgmental, encouraging, and respectful of each other's work.

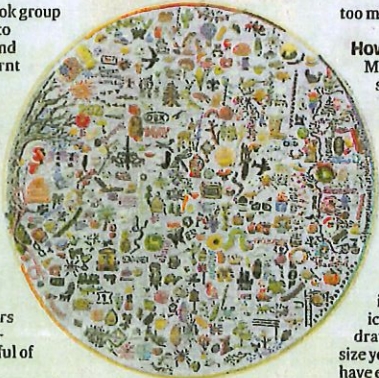
The mindfulness of the creative process sparks joy when you see a tiny icon emerge on your fabric. Jennifer says of the emotional connection that her piece evoked: "...

we get to share a little bit of our personal lives with each other, at the same time keeping it almost private. It is a journal, something that is personal, but by stitching and learning, you want to share your work with others. It's like we can "talk" to each other...that's therapy. Stitch therapy."

The best part of this project is that there are no rules. You own your piece and you set the



A 2022 stitch journal – a work in progress PICS COURTESY: JENNIFER KENNEDY



(Left) 365 M&M's within a hoop. (Top) Jennifer's 2021 Journal

pace. You can embroider big or small, outline stitch or fill in, try new stitches, or go with what you know; you can freehand draw or trace icons, sew on odd days, once a week, or even once in a month. It all works! The hoop is your canvas and the craft is only limited by your imagination. The added bonus: you hardly need to devote

too much time in a day to it.

How to create

Mark your fabric into 12 equal sections for the 12 months of the year. Baste the divisions with running stitches to keep you in line when stitching. Mount the fabric in a hoop. Embroider the journaling hoop wherever you think it looks aesthetically pleasing.

Stitch your month name. Trace/draw your icon for the day. Since the icons are tiny, it is easier to draw freehand. Make sure you size your icons correctly, so you have enough space to embroider all days of the month. A rule of thumb is, it should be the size of an M&M candy button, approximately 1.04 cm in diameter.

Scour the internet for icon ideas. Search for keywords with icons, Clipart, I Spy sheets, doodle drawings...

Make the project your own and direct its course your way. Don't stress if you don't work on it every day. You can catch up when you have the time. The whole purpose is to enjoy the process.



THE HOOP IS YOUR CANVAS AND THE CRAFT IS ONLY LIMITED BY YOUR IMAGINATION. THERE ARE NO RULES; YOU OWN YOUR PIECE AND YOU SET THE PACE AND THE BOUNDARIES AND YOU DECIDE HOW MUCH YOU SHARE WITH THE WORLD.

