

Needlepoint stitches from Loretta Swit

Loretta Swit is an Emmy-winning actress, an ardent campaigner for animal protection and a needlepointer who invents her own designs. She's as creative in her handcrafts as in every other area of her life. In fact, she designed the sampler shown and all the flowers in it.

For 10 years, as Nurse Houlihan, she helped stitch wounds in the hit TV series, "M*A*S*H," while between takes she stitched pillows for her home, close friends and animal rights groups. Now that the show is over, she simply takes her needlepoint elsewhere.

Already fluent in French and Spanish, Loretta is learning German now.

"I can go to class and take my needlepoint with me," asserts Loretta. "You don't have to concentrate that fully on what you're

saying, so I needlepoint. I like projects when I can carry them around and work on them."

Two years ago, Loretta began a project she couldn't carry around, and it still isn't finished. The rug canvas had been a Christmas gift from Harry Morgan's wife. At the time, Morgan played her commanding officer in "M*A*S*H."

"It's an ongoing project," says Loretta. "It's complicated in that you must have a room in which to do it. You can't carry it around as conveniently as, for example, a pillow.

"You know, when you fall behind in a project, it's hard to go back. You pick up other projects, or a book you want to read or something else."

Loretta finishes pillows, however, and in quantity. In fact, her home is filled with them. In

addition, she designs pillows for friends, co-workers and charity auctions.

Animal protection is a passion with Loretta. For that reason, Actors & Others for Animals, The Amanda Foundation and The Fund for Animals have all received Swit-crafted pillows for fund-raising auctions.

While she donates her pillows freely, Loretta has no idea how much money they bring.

"I never find that out," she declares. "I just hope they get a lot of money for the cause."

Loretta's pillows deserve high prices because they're so unique. Each one is an original, the result

of experimenting with designs, colors and stitches.

"I love sculpting with wool," Loretta declares.

She uses many different stitches to give her work texture.

"The ability to do the different stitches gives you the opportunity to sculpt. You can bring things out or set things back."

The french knot is one of Loretta's favorite sculptural stitches. Some time ago, on a beach in Acapulco, she used french knots to stitch flowerettes of broccoli on canvas. The broccoli looked so real that she attracted a crowd of needlepointers.

"They said it looked edible,"

Loretta remembers.

She also uses french knots for tiny roses, other flowers and words.

"If I do words, I will sometimes dot my i's or exclamation points with french knots. If I trim with flowers, I absolutely always do daisies with a yellow french knot center," states Loretta. "They're a handy stitch."

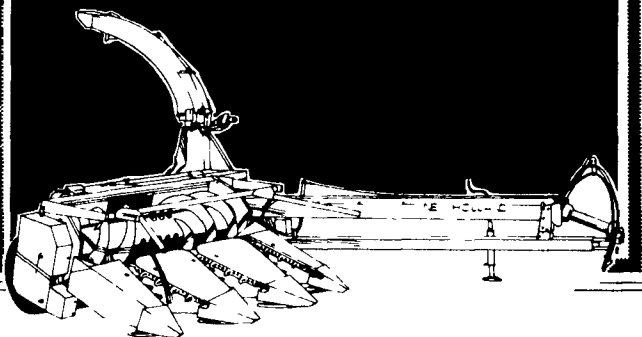
Loretta designed the flowers shown here by combining the basic continental stitch, straight stitches and french knots. The flowers all came from the original "Swit" sampler pictured.

Loretta's flowers are perfect for

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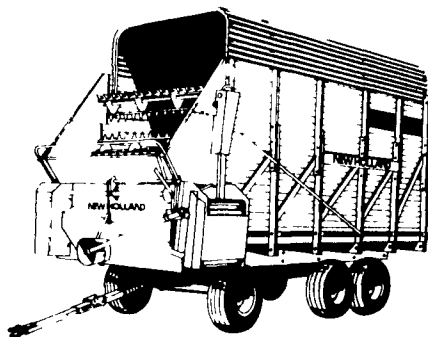


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