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# Threadwork Unraveled



## Synopsis

A compendium of everything you need to know about that most essential of quilting notions thread! Sarah Ann Smith unravels the secrets behind how it's made, how to select the right thread for the right job, and how to use it to enhance your piecing, appliqué, and quilting. And not just thread! Learn about needles, machines, fabrics, stabilizers, marking tools, and more! Interspersed with the valuable nuts and bolts are small projects to put the information to work a needlekeeper and a thread tension sampler, to name just two. Sarah Ann's insights and tips will help you understand how and why certain tools and notions work best and when another option is a better choice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sarah Ann Smith has had a very good year which included among other things winning an award at Houston and the publication of her book *Thread Work Unraveled*. Great title. But just wait until you see what's inside. Sarah has truly unraveled the mystery of thread! I've been known to skim a book, leaf through them, stop here and there and read the tips and then put it away until time permits a more thorough reading. Not so with this book. For one thing Sarah addresses an underserved niche in the fabric arts -- thread. And let's face it whatever we plan to make using fabric -- will require thread. Lots of thread in most cases. Sarah writes that the book is about: "Thread, which is as important as fabric and as much fun to collect; Understanding your tools and materials; Learning the skills one step at a time; Mastering the skills with practice; Doing what we love: quilting!" And she makes all of these aspects quite accessible and easy to follow -- as well as encouraging. This book is written with authority and sound information beginning with the chapter on thread. This author

knows of what she writes -- how thread is made, thread types, selecting threads, even a thread tension sampler which she warns readers not to attempt to do the whole sampler at one sitting. And then, as if learning which threads to use wasn't helpful enough, she moves on to needles beginning with the anatomy of a needle. Her tips are new information to me. Ways to ensure the needle is inserted all of the way into the shaft, the thread industry's new standard of measurement, which needle to use for metallic, holographic and some rayon threads, and on and on. She addresses how to applique and use thread colors to tone down, shade and highlight and thread painting and machine quilting and resources and even workspace ergonomics. If there is only one book to gift yourself, I suggest this one. It is the most informative and user friendly book I've encountered in a very long time. And the colors and photos and layout are stunning. Beautifully made book and one that I've read cover to cover. A great resource that you'll reference again and again.

Threadwork Unraveled is both an excellent reference book on how to use thread to enhance pieced and appliqued quilts, and an inspiring look at how some of today's best quilt artists are using thread in their work. Best of all, Sarah's sparkling personality and sense of humor shine through on every page. (Kudos to the AQS editor who was smart enough not to edit out Sarah's unique voice.) Threadwork Unraveled provides an amazing amount of information about: thread - weights and plies, strength, how it is made, different types of thread and their advantages and disadvantages, and how to select the right type of thread for your project. needles - sizes, structure, types, when to change needles, selecting needles for different kinds of threads, and troubleshooting tips. sewing machine basics - throat plate, feet, harp, lighting, speed control, tension, thread path, using a thread stand. Note: This section would be particularly informative for those trying to determine which features they want when purchasing a new machine. workspace and ergonomics issues - the sewing surface, chairs, and proper body positioning. foundations - stabilizers (tear-away, heat-away, wash-away, cut-away/leave in; freezer paper; coffee filters and dryer sheets; machine tape; copy paper/tracing paper), hoops and batting. marking tools - pencils, chalk, pens, scoring tools, transfer paper, how to mark a quilt and how to remove markings. applique - using thread to outline machine applique, and as a design element on its own; using thread to tone down, shade and highlight; stitching options (straight stitch, blind hem, blanket stitch, zigzag stitch, satin stitch, decorative stitches); and using thread to add visual texture, contrast and value. machine quilting - quilt top, backing, batting, basting, alternatives to pin basting, starting and stopping, stitch length, speed, getting sharp points, practice tips, stitching density, blocking, quilting designs. But this is not just an excellent reference book. There's also lots of eye candy, beautiful examples by both Sarah

and other accomplished fiber artists (Hollis Chatelain, Gloria Hansen, Joan Hawley, Jane Sassaman, Pamela Allen and more). In my mind, Sarah's information on tension (both in the top thread path and in the bobbin) and how to solve tension issues is well worth the entire price of the book. When I teach machine free-motion quilting, at least half of my students' problems are tension related. Sarah explains these issues in a straight-forward, step-by-step way that will be useful to quilters of all experience levels. The section of the book that inspired me most was the machine quilting section. Using lots of examples from her own work and that of other exceptional art quilters, Sarah ponders many issues quilters face when trying to decide on how to quilt a particular piece. I learned a lot from this part of the book. One of my favorite projects in Sarah's book is the Thread Tension Quilt Reference Sampler. Sarah gives instructions for marking a grid with thread and needle information and tension settings, and then sewing straight, zig zag, and free motion stitches while gradually changing the tension settings. This would be both an educational exercise, and (when completed), a practical tool and reference guide for any sewer. Check it out: There are also several beautiful projects (a table runner and three small art quilts) quilters can create to learn new techniques and then stitch them with thread.

First of all I should mention that Sarah is a good friend of mine - but she now lives on the other side of the country from me and I have lost touch with much of the day to day creativity. Sarah is one of those women who is constantly on the go. She is a quick study and figures out better ways to do things. I love the way she and AQS put this book together. The information in the book; what threads for what use, which needle for which purpose and thread type, what needle to use, thread tension, bobbin work, examples and more examples, is presented in such a well designed manner! This is one of those books that you will return to again and again - and find new inspiration and information each time! Buy this book!! You will not be disappointed if you do !

I was looking forward to receiving my copy, but this book far surpassed what I was expecting. If, like me, you expect only a review of Sarah's wonderful work that will sit on your shelf, you will rethink that once you look through it and discover what a great resource it is not only for threads, needles and stitching but also marking tools, stabilizers, free motion ideas and especially troubleshooting (all well organized). There are also lots of great tips throughout the book. I think it should become part of everyone's resource library if you do machine stitching. Although Sarah is primarily an art quilter, her information is valuable for any machine quilter. I highly recommend this book.

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