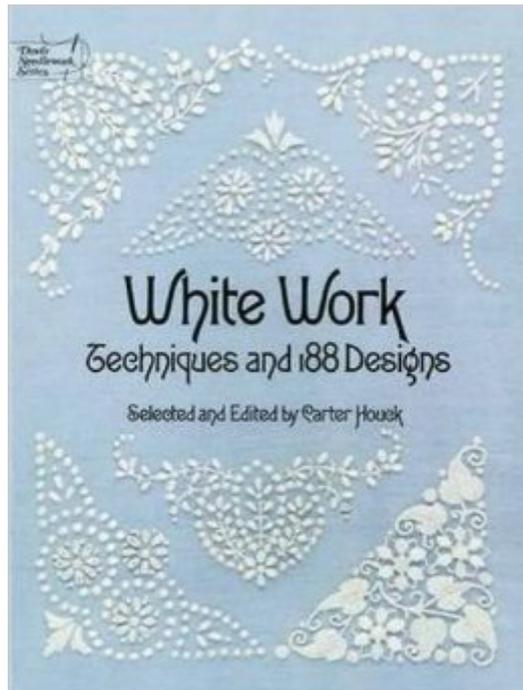


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# White Work: Techniques And 188 Designs (Dover Embroidery, Needlepoint)



## Synopsis

In dozens of countries and in hundreds of varieties, the venerable craft of white work has become a byword for the ultimate form of needlework elegance. Its 3,000-year history encompasses every conceivable form of garment and decorative linen, from peasant blouses to papal vestments and the bridal gowns of queens; it appears in many guises as the favored embroidery of needleworkers from Denmark to South Africa, from England to the Philippines. Unfortunately, white work has frequently been neglected in the United States because of its underserved reputation as a difficult form of embroidery — the type of work that, as author Carter Houck states, is never seen "beyond the glass cases of a museum." In reality white work can be performed at all levels of expertise; even more important, Ms. Houck shows that superb results can be achieved without laborious practice and prodigious technique. From these pages white work emerges as a vibrant and continually evolving form of contemporary embroidery that is both beautiful in itself and valuable for its myriad uses. Ms. Houck assumes no previous knowledge of white work and provides complete information on materials, pattern-transferring techniques, and instructions and diagrams for over 20 stitches: the simple chain stitch and running stitch; satin stitches and French knots; and more difficult "virtuoso" techniques like the Star and Shadow. Following the instructions are 40 pages of magnificent patterns, including florals, repeats, abstract designs, spot and corner decorations in a wide variety of sizes and moods, and two complete sets of alphabets for use as monograms. For each design Ms. Houck has suggested a stitch or stitches that produce optimal effects. As a result, the book acts as a self-contained guide to white work that can transform blouses, cuffs, collars, scarves, place settings, curtains, or any embroidery medium into treasures of heirloom quality.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book, a great disappointment, is part of the Dover "reproduction" series (ca. 1978). It would be of interest to the needleworker who is interested in late Victorian designs, as they come from a collection published ca. 1900 ("The Chief Pattern Book of Embroidery Patterns for the Improvement of Artistic Embroidery on Linens and the Promotion of Good Handicrafts," Nuremberg, Germany: Johann Merkenthaler). As such, there is little instructional material for those who wish to learn these techniques (principally cutwork with satin stitch and "bridges" & line work with stem/backstitch). There are diagrams, perhaps from the first edition, but they have no numbers to indicate where component stitches begin and end, although with the basic nature of them, the needleworker with a little experience will be able to figure them out. Stitches include stem stitch, backstitch, straight stitch (i.e., satin stitch), lazy daisy, running, long & short (long & short satin), seed (short satin), padded satin (guess what?), buttonhole/overcast, feather, star (Smyrna cross with arms of different lengths), herringbone, couching, and a few others. Instruction pages include a brief history, how to transfer the patterns (air- and water-disappearing markers; tailor's chalk; embossing; BUT pouncing - the historical technique - is not mentioned!), and thread/fabric/hoops. Not a lot, folks, and certainly no step-by-step or how to incorporate the designs into modern work (such as table or bed linen). The "188 designs" are there but no "techniques". If you are looking for instruction in whitework/cutwork techniques, this book is useless. In place of this book, I recommend Thérèse de Dillmont's "Encyclopedia of Needlework" (ca. 1884).

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