



Mounting Small Tapestries

Tommeye Scanlin

I use the method described below for small tapestries.

1. Purchase a pre-stretched gessoed canvas six to ten inches wider and taller than the tapestry. This will leave three to five inches of the frame as a border around the tapestry. The depth of the stretcher frame means that the tapestry hangs out from the wall between one and two inches.
2. Cover the stretched canvas with a single layer of polyfill quilt batting. Stretch the quilt batting around the edges of the frame and secure it with a staple gun.
3. Stretch handwoven or purchased fabric over the quilt batting, pulling it around the frame and securing with a staple gun.
4. Sew the tapestry onto the prepared frame with very large zigzag stitches. Use an unobtrusive thread color. Start the sewing from the back; sew through all of the layers, coming up between two warps. Then sew back through all of the layers on the other side of one of those two warps. Move the needle along the back in a diagonal pattern with each stitch being one to one and one half inches apart. I usually start sewing at the top of the tapestry to anchor it and then move to the middle of the piece, finishing up along the sides. Do not pull the stitches too tight or the tapestry will dimple at the point of the stitches.
5. When the tapestry is completely sewn down to the frame, add a muslin backing to the back of the frame. This hides and protects all of the stitches. Turn under the edges of the muslin backing to one eighth inch of the outside dimension of the frame and affix it by: stapling; by using brass brads or; by stitching it to the edges of the mounting cloth on the front of the frame which has been turned around to the back of the frame.
6. Hanging devices are added to the back of the frame. Sometimes I use a toothed hanger that is nailed about one half inch down from the center of the top stretcher bar. Eye screws and picture wire are another alternative.

I have used other variations for mounting small tapestries. One piece was sewn onto a painted, stretched canvas. The back of the tapestry was backed with muslin so that the surface of the fabric did not come in contact with the paint. Another piece was stitched to foam core that had been covered with quilt batting and commercial fabric. (The foam core is more difficult to stitch through than the canvas.) This unit was then slipped into a ready-made metal frame of the same dimensions. I did not cover the piece with glass.



Circle of Life
15" x 15", mounted to 24" x 24"