


Lesson Overview

- The video will give you some pointers on how to figure out how to make your freehand feathers look beautiful.
- In the second video, I will be drawing on a whiteboard, and I'll be working on feathers that are on curved spines. I'll also discuss and demonstrate the guidelines for shapely feathers.



Shapely feathers

- The real meat of the issue of making beautiful feathers is to figure out what makes a so-called bad feather, so we can try to avoid those at all costs.
- Having spent lots of time drawing and quilting feathers, and teaching numerous feather classes, I've analyzed the issues.
- What follows are my general guidelines that will help you figure out how to troubleshoot your own feathers.



Shapely feathers, cont'd

- Remember that these are FREEHAND feathers. The only marking that might be done is a spine.
- By their very nature, FREEHAND feathers are going to have variations.
- In addition, as you begin to quilt unique shapes, your feathers will have to stretch or shrink to fill the space available – making complete uniformity impossible.

The Rule, revisited

- I mentioned this rule a number of times last week: feathers are stitched (or drawn) from the bottom to the top of a plume.
- If you try to do quilt these freehand in the other direction, you will end up with something beautiful, but not what we are looking for:

Look for a bonus video in the classroom forum that shows me drawing this design.




Or is it a rule?

- After some discussion in the forum, it sounds like some of you might be able to go the other way. And it might be easier for you that way.
- If that's the case? You can ignore my rule, and do what is best for you.
- Actually, I think you are pretty lucky, and hope that you'll take the opportunity to perfect both directions – there are often times when I wish I could feather up one side and down the other!!





Three goals to aim for

- Round Tops
- Skinny Bottoms
- Backtrack the spine



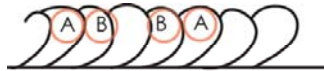
Round Tops

- When hand quilters draw feathers, they often start by drawing circles for the tops of the feathers and then filling in the lines of the feathers to connect them to the spine.
- You can use this idea as a guide to check the shape of your feathers. As you look at your feathers, check the tops by drawing in circles. Does the circle fill the space with no leftovers outside the circle? Does a circle even fit at all?



Potato Chips

- Think about the red circles I have added to these feathers as a clock. You will notice that in the feathers marked with an A, there is a lot of leftover space outside feathers at the 10/11 o'clock area.
- The feathers marked with a B are what I call Potato Chips. In addition to too much space at the 10/11 o'clock area, the feathers swing out too far away from the out feather, resulting in a feather that is a C curve, rather than the more elegant hook shape that we prefer.
- Once you have one potato chip, it's easy to start echoing that, and adding to the pile of Pringles.



Skinny Bottoms


- In addition to making feathers with nice round tops, you want to make sure that the bottoms stay skinny.
- In order to keep the bottoms skinny, you need to make sure that the angle of the feather in relation to the spine is 45° or less. When you go around an outside curve, the angle of some of the feathers might be more than 45°, but in general, keep your feather angle to 45° or less.
- Another way to think about this is to think of making your feathers so that they almost lay down on the spine. They will not be laying down completely, but they definitely should not be standing up.






Hot Dogs

- Feathers that have angles greater than 45° start to look like Hot Dogs. Or bananas. Or fingers.
- Yuck.



Backtrack the spine

- Do not be tempted to touch the spine and then branch out immediately.
- Backtrack along the spine until you meet the stitching from a previous feather.
 - Try to avoid backtracking too much further, though, as you want to minimize the build-up of thread.
- At that point, you can change direction and make the next feather pair.



Touch-n-gos

- If you do not backtrack far enough, you will wind up with what I call Touch-and-Gos. (I couldn't think of a food name for these...)
- These are not quite as unshapely as the other issues, but the unevenness of quilting along the spine can become quite noticeable. In addition, the angle of the feathers is not quite right.
- If you alternate from side to side along the spine, it is harder to fall prey to this pitfall.



Summary

- Round Tops
- Skinny Bottoms
- Backtrack the spine



Today's Tasks

- There is a second video for you to watch – another virtual whiteboard session. I draw and talk more about the different issues that you might encounter.
- You'll find a new PDF to download that steps you through your own drawing practice.
- I'll have some more notes and thoughts about analyzing your feathers tomorrow.