



Above: French knot stars in the sky. Right: The Olympic National Park. Far right top: Arizona. Far right bottom: Mount Taranaki.



Brittney loves stitching mountain views, including Mount Baldy (below).



An interview with...

# Brittney Muns

Brittney Muns combines her love of hiking and for stitching by creating beautiful embroidered representations of the views she sees

Interview by **Judy Darley**

**A**fter taking countless photos of the scenery she loves to hike through, Brittney Muns discovered the perfect way to capture the atmosphere – through stitching. These days she never sets out without a selection of carefully sorted threads, ready to start embroidering as soon as she stops to camp for the night. She tells us the delights and challenges of blending her favourite pastimes...

**How did you first discover stitching?**  
I've always loved painting and drawing but I'm always looking for new creative outlets. I loved the idea of giving my paintings more texture and dimension so decided to give embroidery a whirl. I taught myself through trial and error and a year later it's become my number one form of art. I absolutely love it.

It's therapeutic and forces my mind to focus on the needle and



thread. It takes me away from the daily stresses of life, and there are so many different types of stitches that it's easy to get wrapped up in the desire to keep learning.

**What do you love so much about travel and hiking?**  
Everything! I love to learn and feel it's important to travel to at least one

place I've never been to every year. I also try to immerse myself in nature all year round as much as possible. There's nowhere I'd rather be than on top of a mountain or alongside the ocean. Hiking challenges the body and clears the mind.

**How did this lead you to developing your stitched art?**

I can't count how many times I've shown someone a photo of a mountain or a sunset and told them, 'The photo doesn't do it justice.' Mixing paint with embroidery helps put me back on top of those mountains and among the forests. I want people to feel that they're really there when they look at my art.

**What kinds of views move you to embark on a new project?**

Everything in nature inspires me, whether it's a mountain range or a

“There's nowhere I'd rather be than on top of a mountain or alongside the ocean”

small pond in a backyard, I think it's important to appreciate all aspects of the outdoors. That said, I typically embark on embroideries that have a little bit of everything mixed in – mountains, trees and water.

**How does your creative process work?**

I take photos while I'm out hiking and have a separate folder for the ones that I feel would be great for my next hoop. I also get inspired by fellow travellers online and, with their permission, stitch their photos, giving them credit, of course.

**Are there any particular stitches that you enjoy using?**

I'm a French knot girl – I love them! Anytime I feel myself getting frustrated or uninspired I just add another one. I also love stem stitch. I freehand stitch because I use a lot of different colours in my pieces and don't like them to look too polished. When I'm standing in a field, for example, the flowers and grasses aren't all level and clean and concise – they're chaotic and unique. I also

add gouache and acrylic paints, usually for the water and mountains, for a smooth and flowing feel.

**What's your ideal setting for starting work on a new work of art?**

In the middle of nowhere, camping with my boyfriend Matt. While he builds our campfire for the night I go through my photos from the day and set up my sandwich bags full of thread, paintbrushes, a water bottle freshly filtered from a nearby lake, and my little gouache paint set. It all fits easily in the front pocket of my daypack.

**What are the challenges of taking your embroidery on the road?**

I tried to embroider in Utah once in the middle of winter and my fingers almost froze stiff. Working with a tiny needle in the cold is pretty much impossible.

**What's a typical day of hiking and stitching like for you?**

It involves waking up at 6am, chugging a pot of coffee, whipping

up some sandwiches, printing out maps in case our phones go out of service, and sorting thread colours. When I'm hiking, I focus on the hike, when we reach the summit, I enjoy the view, and when we sit down and finish our sandwiches, I concentrate on the art. I strive to stay present.

**What do you enjoy about having an online presence?**

People have been so kind and encouraging that I just decided to go for it and launch my Etsy shop and Hikeandstitch Instagram feed. I love connecting with fellow stitchers.

**What are you working on right now?**

I'm stitching a commission of Sharkfin Cove in California. It's been a particularly challenging piece because I'm working from a photo of a cloudy day, with lots of greys, dark blues, and dark greens. It's definitely been a process but I absolutely love it so far.

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