

Working with Neon Rays (without loosing your mind!)

Rainbow Gallery makes Neon Rays, a 100% Rayon ribbon, in 10-yard lengths wrapped around a card. The beautiful sheen and smooth appearance of this thread creates a finished effect that is well worth some extra time and effort! Here are a few tips.

Rayon benefits from steaming or ironing. Use a wet paper towel or sponge and draw the thread across it. Prepare a number of thread lengths ahead of time so that they can dry before use. If time is an issue, try running the thread through a mini flatiron. These preparation techniques also help remove the kinks in the thread that are formed from being wrapped around the card.



After threading the needle, pierce the ribbon near the eye to lock it into place and avoid slipping. Begin and end threads by using a Bargello tuck; leave a long enough tail when starting so that you can rethread the needle with enough thread to work the tuck after you've finished stitching the area. Pierce through the stitches on the back to lock the beginning and ends tails in place.

Use a laying tool to keep the stitches flat. Lay your stitches on both the front side and the back side of the canvas. This extra step eliminates the little twist that appears when bringing the thread to the front of the canvas. Be careful of knots and loops forming. A knotted loop on the back of the stitching is guaranteed to work loose and appear on the front at some point. You definitely don't want this to happen after your completed piece is framed! Watch your tension as well; a too-tight tension will stretch and thin out the stitch while a too-loose tension will expand and sag on the canvas.

Rayon is prone to snagging, so be sure to keep your canvas edges taped. Watch for any rough edges on your stretcher bars or frame. It is also a good idea to make sure your fingernails and hands are smooth - what a great excuse for a manicure!