

FINISHING MAKES THE RUG: The Gallery Finish

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The success of any finishing technique lies in three things: its discretion, its purpose, and its quality. In the competitive world where hand-hooked art is finding its way into Museums collections and Art Galleries exhibitions, it is essential to have high-quality workmanship on the rug's surface and its finishing. Unhappy with the general techniques used on many of my early rug hooking projects, I set out to find a simple yet effective finish that would not only look great in an exhibition but give my work a clean edge and protect it from wear. The "Gallery Finish" is the result of those experiments.

You will need:

- 100% white cotton towel or sheet
- Clothing iron
- 1 1/4" binding
- Upholstery or buttonhole thread
- Pins
- Latch Hook
- Knitting wool (2 ply Briggs and Little)
- Wooden dowel (for hanging rugs only)

1st Step: Once your hooking is complete, trim the excess backing leaving 2".

2nd Step: Place your rug upside down on a hard, clean surface that won't be affected by heat.

3rd Step: Cover the back of your rug with a humid 100% cotton (not wet) white towel or sheet, making sure to wring out any excess water.

4th Step: Set your iron on its cotton setting; once hot, place it on the wet towel, pressing down on the backside of your rug. Continue to press and lift your iron until the steam stops or your rug is flat. Fold and press the trimmed backing, making sure to miter the corners. Do not lift or move the rug until it has completely dried through.

5th Step: Once completely dried, place the binding on the backside of the pressed edge and pin it in place, leaving one thread of backing between the binding and the last row of loops.

6th Step: Hand stitches your binding using an upholstery or buttonhole threaded needle. Once you get to the end of your binding, overlap it by 1 1/2". Fold your binding end and stitch it down onto the overlapping binding making sure not to catch the rug underneath.



7th Step: With one hand on top holding the latch hook and the other hand underneath holding the knitting wool in the shape of a loop, place your latch hook between the binding and the last hooked row. Push both the hook and latch through the backing creating a hole along the folded edge.

With the hand that is holding the knitting wool, place the loop onto the hook and close the latch using your thumb. Once the latch hook is closed, bring the wool through the hole creating a loop. Make sure that the wool end that remains underneath is at least 6" long.



8th Step: To continue the chain stitch, push the latch hook through the backing edge approximately 1/4" to 3/8" distance from your last hole. For the first three chain stitches, use both strands of wool creating a double loop. After the third double loop, take the wool strand that has a cut end and pull it through the next hole. The cut end will be secured once the chain stitch has been completed.



