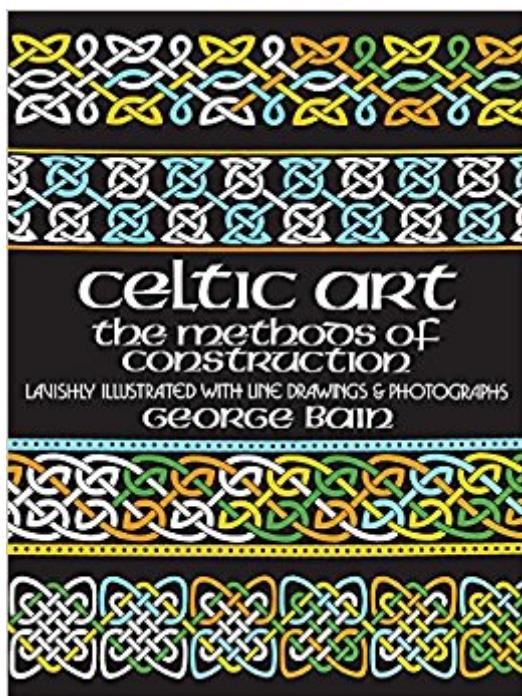


The book was found

Celtic Art: The Methods Of Construction (Dover Art Instruction)



Synopsis

The construction principles of Celtic art were re-discovered in the middle of the 20th century by George Bain. Until his writing, the intricate knots, interlacings, and spirals used in illuminating The Book of Kells and in decorating craftwork and jewelry seemed almost impossible, "the work of angels." In this pioneering work, George Bain shows how simple principles, no more difficult than those used in needlecraft, were used to create some of the finest artistic works ever seen. He also explains how you can use these principles in re-creating artifacts and in creating your own Celtic designs for art and craft work or even for recreational use. Step-by-step procedures carefully introduce the simple rules and methods of Celtic knot work and the well-known designs from the great manuscripts and stone work. Later chapters build up to complex knot work, spiral work, and key pattern designs, with special coverage of alphabets and the stylized use of animals, humans, and plants. Altogether over 225 different patterns are presented for your use, with hundreds of modification suggestions, 110 historical and modern artifacts showing designs in use, a great number of letters including six complete alphabets and 25 decorative initials, and a number of animal and human figures used in the original Celtic works. Artists, students, craftspeople, even children can work with these patterns and instructions for creating dynamic designs for use in leather work, in embroidery and other needle work, in metalwork, jewelry making, card design, borders, panels, illuminations, and in countless other ways. Mathematicians will find a great deal of pleasure in the geometric principles on which the patterns are based. Art historians and others interested in studying Celtic art will find a great number of outstanding art works and the best presentation in English for understanding Celtic design.

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Customer Reviews

Among those in my acquaintance who are fond of Celtic art, George Bain's *Celtic Art* is the one which most buy first. I did. Then I read it and found that some of his instructions (particularly for creating knotwork) seem totally off-the-wall and totally indecipherable. However, for some reason, he seemed to be the only one who has ever come up with a way to recreate impossibly complex knotwork panels, and do more than just plain fretted knotwork. Fear not, Dear Reader! If you follow his instructions, practice the designs as he shows them, you will ultimately discover what he is trying to say. And when you do, the entire world of complex, bewildering and magical knotwork will open up to you. However, knotwork is not the only type of art that Bain covers in this book. He also analyzes fretwork (mazes), spirals and zoomorphic forms (animal and human forms which can sometimes even be interlaced), as well. These, comprise the entire corpus of form used in the great books of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon art which were created in the 6th through 8th centuries. Let me also put a good word in for Bain's survey of Hiberno/Anglo-Saxon calligraphy as well, in which he assembles many of the fanciful letter forms for which this form of writing is known. I do own all of Aidan Meehan's books (and also recommend them), but if you can only afford to buy one book, buy this one. Then, as you can afford others, branch out into Meehan (and even Bain's son, Iain has written a book on knotwork!), and begin purchasing surveys of the Books of Kells and Lindisfarne so that you can study from the true masters. Enjoy!

Not too long ago I got the idea for a series of paintings with a celtic-medieval themed look. This book was one of the two books on celtic designs I bought. The type of patterns shown are very diverse and range from simple borders, to spirals, zoomorphs (animal-designs), calligraphy to examination of designs from Lindisfarne and the Book of Kells. It is also the most extensive of any of the books on this subject that I've seen. The only drawback is that the method for constructing these designs is not easy. As one earlier reviewer stated, the main method is to set up a grid pattern, draw out every line then erase the ones not needed. There are other books with simpler, better step-by-step details for constructing celtic designs. However, no other single book covers such a wide range as this one. It also covers a lot of complex designs and shows how to recreate them that no other celtic pattern books demonstrate. Quite a lot of the history of these designs is covered too. For anyone who can only afford one book on this subject this one will be all they'll ever

need.

This seems to be a classic in the field, and with good reason. It's dense and thorough with a ridiculously large number of examples from real sources. Many other reviewers claim it's inscrutable, or that the instructions aren't clear, but I promise you if you study them closely this is an excellent beginning primer on Celtic artwork. The problem is that there are few written instructions, but he does absolutely break down every step, at least in the beginning. The first exercise begins with a series of dots, which are then linked with arcs, the arcs then are elaborated to have breaks and joins, then the lozenge-shaped spaces are added, then the exterior lines, which are then cleaned up with the interlacing, and if you feel really cheeky you can do a double line. This 9 step process is one line of images on page 28; the only text is "Commence with a row of equidistant points, then arch over and under in 2 spaces." After a few false starts I was able to reproduce this knot. I'm not an artist, and despite several attempts over my life never figured out how to draw knotwork prior to this book. I've been working on it off and on for a few months and just tonight was able to draw a 3 paneled continuous line knot that Bain had copied from the Book of Kells (page 43, if you care). Yes, this book is dense, but with a close reading and a bit of practice it absolutely teaches the beginner how to draw knotwork. I haven't yet tried the zoomorphics, spirals, etc. but I expect they'll be just as accessible.

I can't add much more than the last reviewer. But it is a good introduction to Celtic Art and patterns, plus he covers its history and shows you how to even difficult patterns. Drawing Celtic Artwork is not easy, a gifted artist and craftsman Bain makes it look easy but it's not. However if you practice the basic patterns you can get pretty good at it in a reasonable period of time. I have several of Aidan Meehan's books and this one is by far the best for beginners imho. Use Meehan's works when you can replicate a good many of the patterns found here. It is also a fine resource for the more elaborate patterns which are not covered very well in other works. Many of these patterns can be transferred to leather, clay etc, you name it. Overall if you only get one book on Celtic Art get this one and with a bit of practice your effort will be rewarded.

The author of this book was not well served by the publisher. Mr. Bain has done an enormous amount of research and invested a great amount of time in packaging and breaking down these complex designs, but the paper seems cheap and the designs beg for color, which would have required better paper. I am giving the author five stars but the publisher perhaps two. The cover

exemplifies what the inside should look like.

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