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# Tassels: The Fanciful Embellishment



## Synopsis

Tassels can be anywhere from clothes to menus to curtains to costumes. This book shows the reader how to create and use tassels in an abundance of ways. Photographs from Nancy Welch's collection accompany her step-by-step instructions and drawings.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Decorative tassels are one of the elements of the Renaissance craft of passementerie, developed in Italy and France to embellish furniture and interior hangings. Until recently, very few were made outside the drapery and upholstery trade. Tassels have now become art objects. Using techniques similar to macrame, tassel-makers fashion simple ornaments of colored cord or elaborate creations shaped around a molded core. An author of cookbooks and garden books, Welch here provides an interesting summary of the uses of tassels around the world and a gallery of tassels by contemporary artists, as well as a section of step-by-step projects for making a variety of simple tassels. For elaborate, complex tassels crafters may want to consult Susan Dickens's *The Art of Tassel Making* (Allen & Unwin, 1994), which has more advanced projects. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The subject of Passementerie (pronounced: pahs-mahn-TREE) is little known in the U.S. and nothing of significance has been written on the subject in English until some recent efforts. Tassels are the major expression of this art form and this book takes up where the historic trade catalogs of

the "Trimmings Makers" at the Library of Congress and the Winterthur leave off. It reflects the resurgence beginning in the early 1980s of the taste for things ornamental, and tassels and their kin (fringes, galloons, pompons, ornamental cords [but not "gimps" for these are actually components of other trims]) are on a great upswing in popularity--if one can meet the stiff prices. Mr. Welch's book was originally to be a total survey of global passementeries (fiber trimmings), as opposed to mere casual tassels found everywhere, but her publisher constrained her to a virtual global tour for these fiber (and non-fiber!) delights. The commercial photos from the professional passementiers (trimmings makers) provide glorious views of some of the acme of this art form, but others are merely color shots of the more idiosyncratic forms found in far off corners of the earth. Whether these constitute art is up to the reader, but the author certainly tries to make you feel so. Therefore, in this book one must take the term 'tassel' to its very broadest interpretation, and see the book as an international junket, not a craftsman's manual. While it may not be a manual, the volume does feature four chapters devoted to more modest creations possible at home by means of extensive line drawings and photo examples. They will not enable you to duplicate the exquisite creations of the 'fabric houses' such as Scalmandre, Merwitz, and especially the French masters such as Houles, but you will be able to copy a few casual tassels to answer that creative call. The target market for the book is women in fiber arts, and for them its somewhat superficial treatment of the historical aspects is probably sufficient, and one could not rightly expect a full thesis within the allotted 160 pages. The book is lavishly illustrated with over half of its photos in color. It does have an Index, a Bibliography (the reference there to "Once A Week" magazine refers to the London edition and to its March 1861 article: "Trimmings and Trimmers", a rare insight indeed!) and a Resources section which will appeal to those of international tastes. Mrs. Welch may be more of a travel writer than a 'passementier', but she did develop one of the first books on this neglected subject within its broadest definition, and if one is content with unusual and casual tassels, it is worth the price. She hoped to issue a sequel entitled: 'Tasselmania' to cover fine tassels in passementerie. We can only hope she will succeed with a more willing publisher. A previous reviewer wanted to know about "the neck wraps on the cover": those on the green and the red tassels are actually "lashings" over "wrapings" of true gimp, the wider ones being leather strips wrapped with silk and the tiny round ones below them being silk or cotton cores also wrapped with flat silk trame. The only book to cover such passementerie technique is entirely in French, but maybe can locate it for you: "La Passementerie" by Pierre Boudet and Bernard Gomond, Paris, 1981; its 416 illustrations will act as a manual even if you don't speak French!

Tassels - The Fanciful Embellishment by Nancy Welch "A coffee table picture book, a reference book for handwork historians, and an inspirational how-to book for those who love the art of embellishment."--The Creative Machine Newsletter. Simple projects inspire limitless possibilities for making decorative knots, cords, and braids.

Very nice photos and many interesting ideas. Inspired from tassels and trim from clothing around the world. FYI, it doesn't give detailed instructions on making tassels for decorating your home.

Tassels Doris Hoover ~ Nancy Welch Numbered Limited Edition 1978 Contents About Tassels Tassels with a past The basic Tassel ~ choosing materials, how to wind a tassel, wrapping techniques, other ways to construct a tassel, pompoms and how to wind them, how to twist a cord, how to tie one on, miscellaneous hints and ideas embellishments and enrichments ~ using a mold, wrapping: color changes, yarn beads, surface yarn work, buttons, braids, trim tasseling ~ home furnishings, clothing and accessories, where else? tassels alone photographs

While the book is historically interesting and beautiful to look at, I was frustrated by the lack of instructions on details illustrated in the book, i.e. the neck wraps on the cover.

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