

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MACHINE QUILTERS ASSOCIATION

ON TRACK!



WINTER 2014 PASSION ~ ARTISTRY ~ BUSINESS

**How Do I Quilt that
Modern Quilt?**

**The Partnership
Between
the Piecer & the Longarmer**

**Stitch & Snip
Appliqué**

By Marilyn Badger

Eureka

Solitaire Award at MQS® 2013



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Editorial

Starting Fresh

Starting fresh has taken on a new meaning for my husband and me. We have decided to move into a townhome and to a different part of Minnesota. After living in the same home for 30+ years you can image what we have accumulated, not to mention my fabric stash! We have started the process of purging to make the move more manageable. We are excited about all of the new opportunities ahead of us...like meeting new neighbors, finding our new favorite restaurant, not having yard work to do or snow to remove, and finding new places for all of our quilts!



Our quilting businesses can benefit from a fresh start too. Offer a new product or quilting technique. Give your customers a handout on 'how to prepare their top for the longarm quilter.' Take steps to organize your expenses for your business. Join a machine quilting guild. Organize your studio! Take classes at MQS® to jump start your creativity. Step back and take a look at **your** business and then decide what **you** need to do to freshen it up.

In this issue you will find a new segment on Modern Quilting, interesting articles on award winning quilts, Fresh Ideas and much more.

Wishing you a prosperous New Year in 2014.



Linda Hamson



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Stitch & Snip **APPLIQUÉ**

By Ellen Munnich

An Exclusive, Fast and Easy Project for *On Track! Magazine* Readers



Appiqué is one of the most striking and popular techniques for creating quilt tops. “Raw edge” appliqué is preferred by many because it requires very little fussy hand work and allows a user to create a stunning quilt in much less time. “Stitch and Snip” is the term I use for raw edge appliqué that is quilted first, and then the background or foreground is removed to create the pattern.

This article features a specific project for a two-color table runner that is an introduction to Stitch and Snip appliqué. The pattern is provided for free at www.quiltrecipes.com/free/ontrackprojects.php. The files available there include documentation, a zip file containing all the major robot formats, and a PDF and Pro-Q Panto Lite format for handguided quilting (provided separately). The project is not only well suited to

robotic quilting systems, but can also be done on any longarm or even a domestic sewing head. The pattern is a continuous line design that was created specifically for Stitch and Snip appliqué projects and has features that make it ideal for this application.

USES

Many people think of appliqué only as it relates to quilt blocks, but that is only the tip of the iceberg. Pillow covers, table runners/toppers, placemats, purses and garments are just a few quilted items that can benefit from this decorative technique. On quilts, think about adding raw edge appliqué to sashing or borders in addition to blocks. In fact, you can even create a row quilt using simple edge to edge patterns and creating bold “stripes” of fabric you can trim away to the shape of the pattern.

TERMS

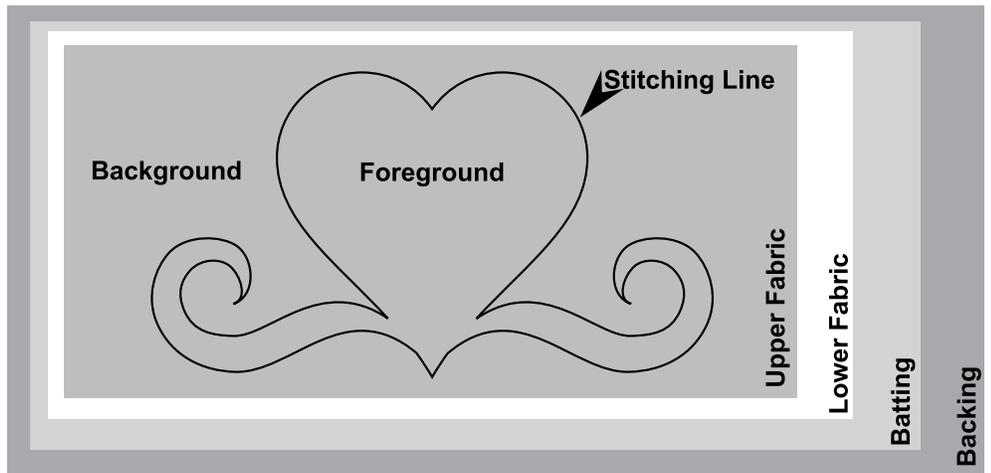
When you are dealing with TWO pieces of fabric that comprise the top of the quilt, it can get confusing! We refer to the two fabrics that comprise the top as UPPER or LOWER. The actual appliqué pattern is referred to as the FOREGROUND, and the area surrounding it is typically called the BACKGROUND. The confusion occurs because in reverse appliqué, the foreground (appliqué area) is removed, and the background is the upper fabric.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

To create our Stitch and Snip appliqué table runner, you will want to pick cotton quilting fabrics that are a good quality, and smooth with a firm weave. While you can use almost any batting (a great use of scraps), we found that using a siliconized polyester batting gave particularly good results. It is smooth and has no voids, and trimming away the upper fabric seemed easier.

Very sharp, curved scissors, such as the Kai 5100C, are a must to do this type of raw edge appliqué. Curved scissors are superior to straight scissors, in this case, as your hand is going to be above the fabric when you are snipping away the upper layer. If the scissors were straight, the sharp tips would be pointing down, making it easier to accidentally poke through the lower layer. Curved scissors help keep the point away from the lower level as the tips will be curved upwards. If you prefer a slightly larger pair of scissors, consider something like the Kai 5135C. However, while much more comfortable to use, these might not allow as much flexibility when trying for fine detail and snipping narrow channels.

Steam-a-Seam II is recommended for fusing this project. If used according to manufacturer's directions, it not only adheres the appliqué firmly, but also stops any frayed edges when you are clipping the upper layer. Of course, it is also indispensable for making repairs.



You will need a good iron, ironing board and a pressing cloth.

CHOOSING YOUR FABRIC AND TECHNIQUE

The design area on this table runner is 12" x 32" and the finished size is 14" x 34". Your fabric should be at least 16" x 36" to accommodate the design and allow for pinning and then final trimming. Having the lower fabric slightly larger may make it easier to place and pin your upper fabric. The amount of narrow channels or detail in a pattern can frequently dictate whether we do reverse or standard appliqué. Fabric also plays a huge role as the darker fabric must (almost) always be the upper fabric. As a general rule, if you want the background to be darker, you will be doing reverse appliqué, and if you want the background to be a lighter color, you will be snipping it away to create a standard look.

PREPARATION

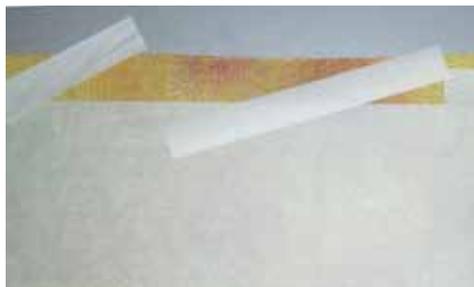
Typically it is a good idea to plan to do several pieces at the same time. However, if you have a rather large piece of backing fabric left on your quilt frame, there is nothing wrong with making use of it. Choosing a neutral backing fabric is best, but if you are trying to coordinate the backing with the top, you might want to plan ahead and piece your backing. We put a neutral backing on the frame and used batting scraps that were slightly bigger than the

top fabric pieces. Unless you are doing a very specific type of project, almost any smooth, stable batting will do.

Steam-a-Seam II comes 12" wide, so, for our table runner we will need a piece 12"x35" plus 3 strips that are 3" x 12". This will give us a fused area ½" smaller than the upper fabric all the way around. Before you start fusing the Steam-a-Seam II, it is important that you remove the correct side of the carrier paper. The product comes on a roll, and the easiest side to remove is the outside. The problem is that the inside paper is typically creased or "lumpy" and can often create tiny folds in the adhesive when applying it. The BEST paper to remove is the one that was on the INSIDE of the roll. This insures that the adhesive will be applied more evenly. Save the carrier paper when removing it as we will use it in the next step. ►



A large piece of Steam-a-Seam II can be difficult to manage, so don't worry if you have to apply it in several pieces. A miniscule overlap will not be noticeable in the finished product, and is far better than a gap. Gaps can cause problems with the upper fabric fraying so it is best to have every tiny bit of the upper fabric adhered. See our diagram for how to fuse this project.



Place your Steam A Seam II away from the edges of the fabric. This photo shows basic placement of the small strips so that the back of your upper fabric is fully covered in Steam A Seam II.

When fusing, it is important to make sure that you press every area for a full 10 seconds with a dry, hot iron. This will make sure that the adhesive is melted and stuck firmly to the back of the upper fabric. Use the paper you removed as a pressing cloth to cover the edges of the Steam-a-Seam II as you iron. This will stop any of the adhesive from creeping out and sticking to your iron. If you end up with a slight gap when piecing the adhesive, cut a small sliver of Steam-a-Seam II, peel back the paper from the "seam" and place the sliver over the gap. Put the backing paper back in position and press. There will not be a noticeable bulk in the finished product and the gap will disappear.

Wait to remove the backing paper until the piece has cooled off. Peel back one side, inspect the adhesive, replace it, then peel back the other side to inspect it. If there is an area that is lighter colored, replace the paper and re-fuse. An area with a different color than the rest means that the adhesive wasn't fully melted and will likely delaminate from the upper fabric. Having the adhesive perfectly bonded to the

upper fabric not only prevents it from fraying when you trim, it also stiffens the upper fabric and makes it easier to snip away. If the adhesive de-laminates after stitching there is no way to fix it. It will become very difficult to insert your scissors to snip, the edges of the upper fabric will fray and not be smooth, you will need to manually remove bits of adhesive, and it will become too easy to accidentally snip through to the batting.

GETTING READY TO SEW

On your cutting board or other place where you can lay out the project flat, place the lower fabric face up. Temporarily putting a small piece of masking tape (or pin) on each corner will help stop it from moving around during this step. Peel off the backing paper and position the upper fabric on top of the lower. Steam-a-Seam II has a light tack that will help hold the upper fabric in place.

Place the two layers on top of the backing and batting on your quilt frame and carefully pin every 6 inches about 1/4" from the edge of the upper fabric. Pin through all the layers so that the project doesn't shift too much during quilting. Your sewing head should be nowhere near the pins, but if you are uncomfortable with this, you can always tack around the edges using whatever technique you do on your quilt tops.

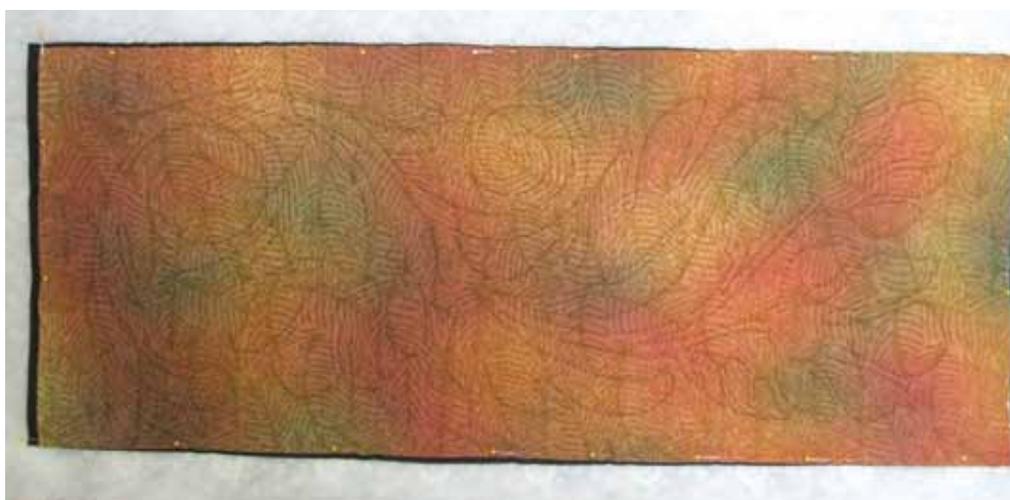
THREAD CHOICES

Thread choice can greatly impact the look of your appliqué piece. If you want the thread to disappear you will want to match the upper fabric. However, using the thread as embellishment can open up a whole new world. If your machine is equipped with extra thread holders, you might wish to use double or even triple threads. For those who want to experiment, the pattern in this project is also available in TRIPLE STITCH (aka Redwork) mode that simulates machine embroidery on a robotic quilting system.

SEWING THE PATTERN

For robotic systems, the pattern is considered a closed motif and on most systems you can choose how to line it up on the fabric. Notes for specific systems will be provided with the pattern on the website!

For handguided execution on a longarm, one choice is to print out the PDF and assemble it. This will let you use a laser pointer from the rear of the machine; place the paper on the upper fabric, and stitch through it. This is also a good alternative for those who do sit-down quilting. Regardless, if you wish to resize the pattern, we recommend that you download the FREE Pro-Q Panto Lite software from the handguided section of Quiltrecipes.com. This will let you easily print out the pattern whatever size you wish. You can also mark the upper fabric



An appliqué project that is sewn out on excess backing using a batting scrap. Notice the pin placement.

using your favorite method providing that it doesn't involve heat!

CLIPPING THE PROJECT

After you have removed the project from your frame, rough-trim the extra fabric so the piece is easier to manage. If you have decided to do REVERSE appliqué and are snipping away the foreground, you will need to carefully insert the point of your scissors into the UPPER fabric in one of the larger, more open areas. Lift up and cut a small slit, then cut toward one of the sewn lines stopping about 1/16th inch away. If you are doing standard appliqué, you need only to cut from any edge, toward the center, stopping about 1/16th inch from the first stitching line you encounter.

Now comes the easy (and portable) part. You can now follow the line all the way around, trimming away the fabric! You can't make a mistake clipping the wrong part of the pattern as long as you continue to follow the line and don't start somewhere new.



A detail from a reverse appliqué project shows the small slit cut to start the project. The stitching is a triple-stitched pattern, but a similar effect can be gained by using multiple threads.

To maintain a good, even cut, try to follow these simple rules:

- Always put the same scissor blade under the upper fabric layer – either the lower blade or the upper one (we prefer the lower).
- Insert the blade 1/2 to 3/4 of the way. Don't force it further as that makes it harder to get an even cut.
- Don't cut all the way to the very tip of the scissors. Stop just short of it, and slide the scissors forward



Reverse appliqué where the foreground of the upper fabric is removed to reveal the lower fabric as the actual motif.

to continue cutting. This helps eliminate jagged cuts.

- Stop if the fabric "feels" different. Once you start cutting, you can often feel if there is a problem. For example, when you are about to cut through threads, etc.
- Take your time – especially on small, complicated areas – and you will likely not have any mistakes!

DON'T WORRY – FINISHING THINGS OFF!

Small mistakes happen. Cutting a thread or a small slit in the lower fabric is not the end of the world. We discuss ways of quickly fixing mistakes on our website. For example, if you cut threads, it usually means the cut is also uneven. Gently taper the cut, even if you remove more thread. After final fusing, use your home sewing machine with the same thread and touch up the quilting by top stitching along the new edge.

Now that the cutting is done, place your piece on the ironing board, and using a pressing cloth, fuse the upper fabric to the lower according to manufacturer's directions. This will make the piece durable and washable! Take the piece to your cutting board and square it up to finished

size of approximately 14" x 34" and finish with your favorite method of binding.

IN CLOSING

This technique opens up a whole new array of possibilities – and the wonderful, varied results are only limited by your imagination!

We hope you've enjoyed this special project designed to celebrate our many years of writing for *On Track! Magazine*. Please let us know if you have enjoyed it and we will be sure to consider more projects in the future. As always, please feel free to contact us through www.quiltrecipes.com with any questions you have. ■

Ellen Munnich has been involved in the fabric arts for almost all of her life; including sewing, knitting, embroidery, weaving, spinning and dyeing. She has spent over 12 years devoted to the new frontier of robotic quilting, establishing herself as a popular digital pattern designer with www.quiltrecipes.com and providing tech support for various computerized quilting software and systems. Her company, Munnich Design LLC's MQR Machine Quilting Robot system continues to be an innovative, reliable, and cost-effective high-performance solution for robotic quilting. Ellen can be reached at ellen@munnichdesign.com or by phone at 254/771-0334 Noon-10 p.m. Central Time.