



Easter Shadow Work Freebie

This design mimics the gently colored heirloom look of hand embroidered, shadow work. Done by hand, shadow work utilizes embroidery floss, drawn across the back of the fabric to “fill in” an area outlined with simple straight stitches. A type of reverse appliqué (applying the fabric to the wrong side of the project fabric) and tiny satin stitch edging creates the same delicate look when done with an embroidery machine.

Machine shadow work requires the use of white, sheer or semi-sheer project fabric. Organdy, silk organza, handkerchief linen, voile and very fine batiste work well. The shadow appliqué fabric that will be applied to the wrong side of the project fabric to provide the colored shadow works best if it is crisp and lightweight. Fine cotton fabrics or sheer fabrics such as silk organza and cotton organdy work best. Because the color will be subdued when placed behind the project fabric, choose shadow fabric colors that are slightly brighter or darker than the desired shade.

Use only wash-away stabilizers, if any.

To achieve a very delicate look, stitch this design using only white thread in the top and a white bobbin. The only color that will then show will be the pale shadow of the shadow appliqué fabric gleaming through the project fabric.

For a more defined look, use top thread that is a shade or two lighter than the shadow appliqué fabric, and a white bobbin.

Tools:

Use scissors with small curved, very sharp blades for trimming. The best scissors for this project and also for other appliqué projects are from the Scissor Man. (Write to Evy at abitofstitch@earthlink.net to request ordering information.)

Instructions

Hoop the project fabric. (When using stabilizer, adhere to the back of the project fabric using temporary spray adhesive.)

Lay a piece of shadow appliqué fabric over the back of the hoop, covering the area of the design. When necessary, hold the shadow fabric in place either by pinning (from the top) through all layers, keeping the pins WELL away from the needles path, or using temporary spray adhesive. **Turn off the automatic jump thread cutter**, if your machine is equipped with one. You do not want unsightly knots when working with sheer fabrics!

Put the hoop into the machine. Advance one stitch. This will bring the needle to the beginning stitch of the first portion of the design. Drop the needle into the fabric and pull the bobbin thread to the top. Pull long tails of both top and bobbin thread. Hold gently and begin stitching the design.

Stitch a few stitches and stop the machine. Clip off the excess tails. Finish stitching the design.

Remove the hoop from the machine and trim away the excess shadow appliqué fabric while the project is still in the hoop. Trim as close as possible to the stitching. It is helpful to hold the excess fabric up with one hand while trimming with the other.

I hope you enjoy this design!

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