Shadow Applique

Shadow appliqué – also sometimes referred to as **shadow quilting** – is a technique where an appliqué design is sandwiched between a background/base layer of fabric and a top transparent fabric layer. Stitches are then worked around the applique outline through all layers. The sheer layer can either be trimmed away from the edges of the applique motif or left in place.

Shadow applique has a delicate appearance as the motifs and colours are softened by the transparent fabric.

Materials

Fabrics – always consider the function of the piece when selecting fabrics.

For the Applique

- Any type of fabric scraps can be used for the applique
  It is generally preferable to use fabrics that can be fused with fusible webbing such as cotton.
- The colours will be toned down by the sheer layer so it is best to try the effects before cutting the shapes.

For the sheer overlay

Any translucent or transparent fabric including:

- Silk or synthetic organza, chiffon , georgette or gauze
- Lightweight cottons – organdie, lawn
- Netting

Other materials

- Foundation / base fabric
- Fusible web
- Wadding and backing
- Threads
- Hand stitching needles
- Pins
- Tracing paper, pencil, scissors, basic sewing supplies, etc
- Appliqué mat or baking paper to cover the design during pressing

Process

Step 1. Decide on the size of your sample and draw the design for the applique.

Step 2. Cut equal sized pieces of the backing, wadding and background / base fabrics slightly larger than the size of your sample to allow for shrinkage when quilting. Cut your choice of sheer fabric slightly larger again.

Step 3. Trace the images of the individual applique pieces onto lightweight fusible web remembering to reverse them as necessary. If there are several pieces it may be helpful to number them both on the original design and on the fusible web.

Step 4. Cut roughly around each piece, approximately 1/8" outside the drawn lines. Then with the paper side up, fuse the sticky side of the fusible to the **wrong side** of your chosen

fabrics. **Cut** each piece along the drawn line and remove the paper backing from the fusible web.

Step 5. Position and fuse the pieces on to your background fabric.

Step 6. Make a quilt sandwich with the background / base, wadding and backing fabric.

Step 7. Overlay your sheer fabric to create the shadow effect and pin or tack securely in place.

Step 8. Stitch around the applique shapes through all layers using your preferred decorative stitch, or a simple outline stitch.

Step 9. Choose whether to leave the sheer fabric in place or to cut it away from the background. If cutting it away, use small sharp scissors and trim very carefully around the applique and leave ¼" all around to allow for fraying. Add any decorative embellishments or surface embroidery as required.