

Colorful Rhapsody

By Ricky Tims

A Three-month, Summer Block of the Month Project.

Month One

Goal for the month:

- **Transfer the entire design to freezer paper**
- **Prepare all background fabrics**
- **Cut all appliqué pieces and position them in place**

Helpful Tools

A large, flat **ironing surface** is recommended – a plywood board, cut to a manageable size (36" x 36", or other size that is rectangular or square) covered with cotton batting then covered with fabric, wrapped to the back and stapled.

A **design wall** is vital. A vertical wall with flannel or batting that is at least 48" square would be very helpful as you work and assemble this project.

This project starts with the Master Pattern.

Tracing the pattern on Freezer Paper

1. Using a pencil, and being as precise as possible, trace the master pattern onto the dull side of freezer paper.
2. To accomplish this you will need freezer paper that is wider than the standard 15" or 18" widths. Tape appropriate lengths of freezer paper together by butting the factory-cut edges and ironing them shiny side down on the ironing surface so they are perfectly positioned and secure.
3. Cut a ½" strip of freezer paper as long as needed to join the two pieces of freezer paper. Place this strip on top of the join, shiny side down, and press with a hot iron. Let cool. (Figure 1)
4. Carefully pull the freezer paper from the ironing surface.
5. Position the freezer paper over a template. A window or light box might be helpful. If necessary, secure it with tape so it remains secure and does not shift while tracing. Some people will find it possible to trace without using a



Figure 1.

window or a light box, but should you find it easier to tape the project up against a window or use a light box, please do.

6. Carefully trace all markings onto the freezer paper including: the outline of the template shape, the registration tick marks along the edges of the template, the appliqué designs, and the straight, red grain line markings. (Figure 2)
7. Cut out the freezer paper template with careful precision. (Figure 3)
8. Repeat until all four templates are transferred onto freezer paper and cut out. Going forward, the Mater Pattern will only be used as a reference.



Figure 2

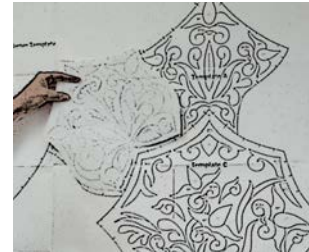


Figure 3

Preparing background fabric starting with Template C

1. Begin with freezer paper Template C, the center template.
2. On ironing surface, iron Template C shiny side down onto the right side of a bright multi-colored fabric. My hand-dyed fabrics do not have a right or wrong side, so choose either side. Position near any corner close to the edge, but at least ½" away from any edge.
3. Pay attention to the straight, red grain line. The template can be positioned straight-of-grain or cross-grain, but it is best that it is 'on-grain'.
4. Iron the template to the fabric. (Figure 4).
5. Rough cut out the fabric at least ½" (maybe slightly more), away from the template. (Figure 5)
6. With template ironed in place, and using a medium gray or contrasting thread, stay-stitch around the edge of the template. (Figure 6). Stay-stitching is a regular straight stitch (2.0mm – 2.5mm in length) that is sewn only on the fabric. It should not penetrate the



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

template nor should it touch the edge of the template. It should be about 1/16th of an inch away from the edge of the template. Stitch it *all the way around the template*. It is important that this stay stitch is consistent. Check as you go because 1/8th of an inch is too far from the paper. You should feel that there is room between the stitching and the paper for another line of stitching, but not much more than that.

7. The template does not include seam allowance. Therefore, you must cut the fabric larger than the template. (Figure 7). Using a rotary cutter, very carefully trim the fabric so that the seam allowance is **SLIGHTLY LESS** than ¼" from the paper. The standard ¼" is too big. If it looks like a quarter-inch seam allowance, it's too big. However, it is important to be careful not to trim the seam allowance so small that it is not enough to be secure. 3/16th of an inch is just about right.



Figure 7

8. Using a pencil (or other marking tool that will not rub off), transfer the registration tick marks from the template out into the seam allowance area of the fabric. (Figure 8). These marks must be clearly visible. In the seam allowance, mark the point that has the N (north) with a marker that will

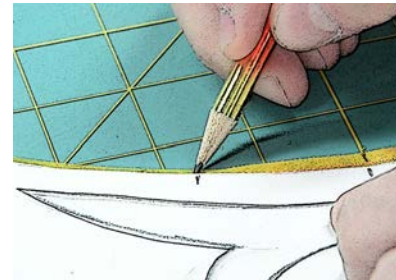


Figure 8

- not rub off.
9. Remove the freezer paper from the fabric.
10. Position the fabric on the wall with the N point pointing north. The registration marks in the seam allowance will be on the right side of the fabric facing you. The registration marks will now always be on the 'right side' of the fabric – even if you are using hand-dyed where there is no right or wrong side. Remember – once you stay-stitch and mark the registration marks you have created a 'right side' of the fabric.

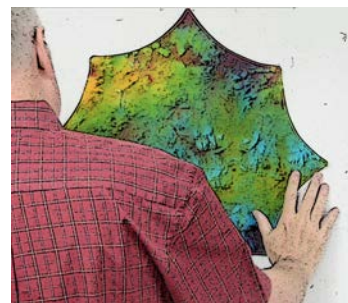


Figure 9

Preparing background fabrics from Templates A and B

1. From clear turquoise blue (Coconut Snow Cone), use template A and repeat the steps from above. Paying attention to the straight, red grain line, iron the template shiny side down to the fabric. Rough cut, stay-stitch, transfer

registration marks, and trim leaving a seam allowance that is slightly less than ¼" all the way around.

2. Remove the freezer paper and position the background fabric on the design wall in the north position, slightly overlapping the center background fabric. Note that the registration marks align.
3. Repeat using Template A for a total of four times, each time using the same fabric and each time positioning it on the design wall. These four background pieces are in the North, East, South, and West position.
4. From the sea blue fabric (Caribbean Queen), use template B and repeat the same process to prepare the background piece for positioning onto the design wall. Use this template four times and position the four background pieces from Template B in the Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, and Southwest positions on the design wall.

Preparing, cutting and placing the appliqué pieces

1. Using a Sharpie® marker, or other strong permanent marker, go over the appliqué designs darkening them. The goal is to turn the freezer paper over (shiny side up) and clearly see the appliqué patterns from the backside.
2. Use whatever fusible you prefer. I prefer *Steam-a-seam 2*®, but it is temporarily not in production due to a manufacturing situation. That situation should resolve and it will return to the marketplace. Look for it at your local quilt shop or online, but there are other acceptable lightweight fusible webbing products that will work very well.
3. Trace all appliqué shapes from the shiny side of the freezer paper – in reverse. Lay the fusible webbing (with paper attached) onto the pattern and trace the shapes onto the paper side of the fusible webbing. (Figure 10).
4. Rough cut the appliqué shape from the webbing and place on the appropriate fabric. If you are using commercial fabric, position this on the wrong side of the fabric and lightly press to secure it to the fabric. If you are using my hand-dyed fabrics, there is no right or wrong side. Just roughly cut out the shape, position it on the appropriate fabric and lightly press the fusible to the fabric. (Figure 11)
5. Many appliqué shapes are repeated four times in the quilt – since Templates A and B are each used four times. Consider drawing each appliqué shape from those templates four times in a cluster so that you can use the same fabric area and cut all four and keep them together as a set until placing them on the background fabrics.

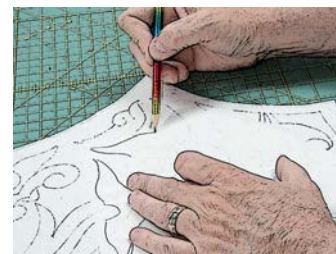


Figure 10



Figure 11

6. Once the fusible is on the fabric, and cut out roughly, accurately cut out each appliqué piece. (Figure 12).
7. Note: All appliqué shapes from Template C are only used once – so only cut them out once.



Figure 12

Positioning the appliqué on the background pieces – fusing them in place.

1. I use a window to accurately place the pieces. A light box works well too.
2. Tape the template to the window with the dull side of paper facing you.
3. Position the corresponding background fabric right side up (check registration mark, they are on the front side) in perfect alignment over the template so the drawing shows through. Tape it in place so it will not shift or move. (Figure 13).
4. Position appliqué pieces in place using the template drawing as your guide. If you are using *Steam-a-seam 2*® the product will allow the appliqué to stick in place prior to ironing without falling off. If you are using another fusible, you may need a drop or two of basting glue to hold it in place until you can move it to your ironing surface.
5. Once all the pieces for one background unit are in place, carefully transfer it to the ironing surface. Press and fuse the fabrics using the recommended temperature and time indicated on the instructions of the fusible of your choice.
6. Continue until all appliqué pieces are on the background units and fused in place. (Figure 14).
7. Please note: You are more than welcome to choose any appliqué method you wish for this project. I use a raw-edge, fused appliqué that is finished with stitching. The stitching is our project for next month and I'll present my favorite way to do it with a few options.

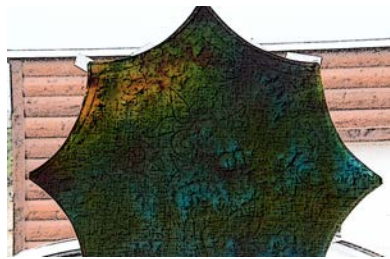


Figure 13



Figure 14