



Blackwork Journey Blog

March 2021



Blackwork Journey Memories

E-Book 19



Sashiko Quilt

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March, time to reflect!

Covid -19 has been with us for a year now and whilst we are moving forward and making progress with the roll out of the vaccines, it has been a difficult time as we learned how to cope with restrictions, lockdowns, working from home, home schooling, not seeing families and friends, on-line shopping and the challenges of new technology, Zoom and Team meetings and teaching online.



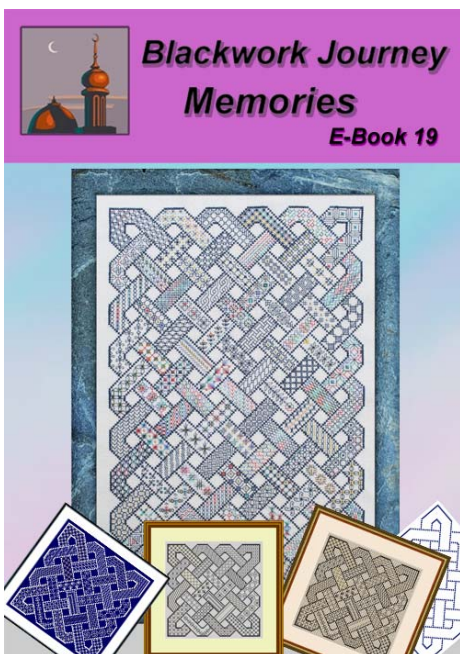
However, whilst we might be weary of it all, feeling burnt out and stressed with the new “normal” remember, this is only temporary and the end is in sight. It can also be a positive time as we take stock of our lives, readjust to the changes we have made and determine what is really important to us as individuals.

Working closely with the Facebook groups and getting to know many of the members on a different level, I have been encouraged by the love and strength that has flowed from the groups to the members who have lost loved ones, jobs and homes. People have reached out to each other and shared their embroideries and thoughts with kindness and friendship which has been very much appreciated, not least by me.

Embroidery can be a great support and a healing and joyous experience, but we need to be kinder to ourselves. Don't fret because it is not perfect, but revel in the pleasure we can gain from what we do. Look forward to the future without fear of knowing that you are not alone and part of the Blackwork Journey family.

New designs for March:

EB0019 Memories



I have been putting the finishing touches to a rather special e-book. One of our Facebook members Vicky, gave me the idea earlier in the year and after talking it through with her, we decided that the book should be in memory of her mum and to all those who have struggled this past year.

The designs are based on interwoven Celtic knots. From their ancient history to the modern day as what they represent is still relevant. These knots are complete loops that have no start or finish and represent eternity, whether this means loyalty, faith, friendship or love.

There are 94 different blackwork fillers patterns for you to choose from. The book contains several different designs, some ideas for table linen and a blank framework for you to design your own project as well.

EB0019 “Memories” can be found in e-books on the Blackwork Journey website



EB0019 "Memories"

FR0189 Family and Friends

"The love of family and friends is the glue that holds your heart together".

J. Betts

Throughout 2020 and into 2021 friends and family have never been more important. Families have been separated, elderly members of the community isolated and stressed, but throughout this difficult period many friends, neighbours, complete strangers and communities have come together to support, help and encourage others.

Stitch this as a small gift for those that you love or have made a difference to your life.



Design Area: 4.86 x 4.86 inches

Stitches: 68 x 68

Material: Zweigart 28 count evenweave, antique white or cream, inches or, Zweigart 14 count Aida, 8 x 8 inches minimum.

The design can be found in 'Freebies' on the Blackwork Journey website.

"Just Cross Stitch" Magazine April 2021

Two spring designs were created for this edition of Just Cross Stitch magazine. When the embroideries are submitted as a designer I am never certain how they are going to be used, so I was delighted to see that the larger piece of "Spring Celebration" had been made into a table topper. The fabric picks the thread colours out perfectly in a simple log cabin patchwork piece.

Another learning experience:

I was also asked to submit a video for their Facebook site which was a first for me. It is to be added later in the month to accompany the magazine.



https://www.facebook.com/JustCrossStitchMagazine/videos/?ref=page_internal

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Bordados con el Alma and Blackwork Journey

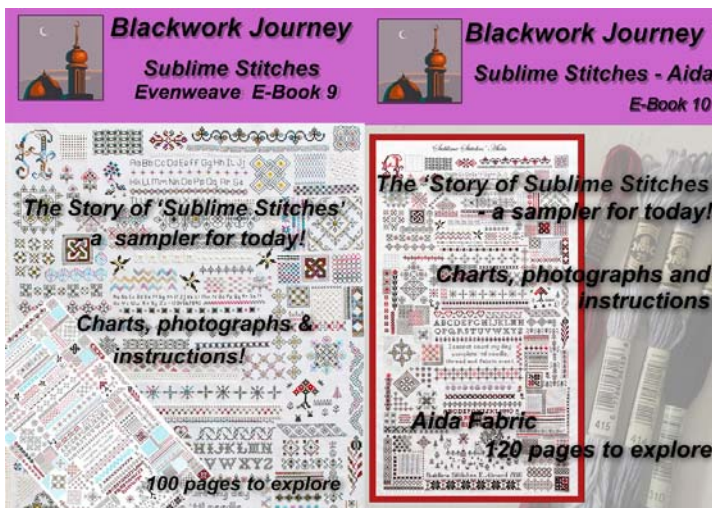
For any of my Spanish readers and other members of the group that may be interested, I am currently working with the Bordados con el Alma (Embroidered with the Soul) Facebook group through Juan based in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Elisa based in Spain. They are a group of 3,000 Spanish speaking embroiderers scattered across the world who have come together during the pandemic to support each other in the way that I am doing through the Blackwork Journey Facebook groups.

They are working the “Sublime Stitches” project over 12 months and have translated all the charts and instructions into Spanish. The SAL started in January, so if you would like to join their group and take part, I have added the Facebook details here:
Bordados con el Alma

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/394321791393667/?ref=share>

I am proud and honoured to be part of their venture and the work I have seen so far is wonderful.

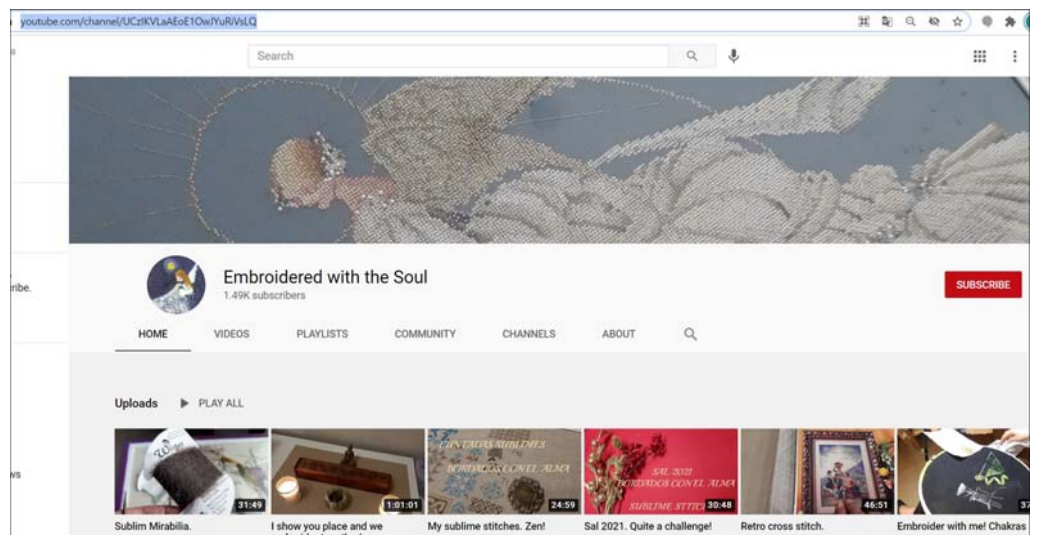
If any of you are thinking about doing “Sublime Stitches” through Blackwork Journey, either on evenweave or Aida now might be a good time to start. Many members of Bordados con el Alma have joined the “Sublime Stitches” Facebook so I can work with them and sort out any queries that arise as they work. They are posting their work on the Sublime Stitches Facebook group as they work through the project.



“Sublime Stitches” - Elizabeth Almond Design:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1695785137378480/>

The e-book with the full project is in E-books on the website:
EB0009 Sublime Stitches Evenweave and
EB0010 Sublime Stitches Aida.

Two videos in Spanish can be found on YouTube and even if you do not speak Spanish, the photography is self-explanatory.



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Parts 1 and 2 can be found on YouTube

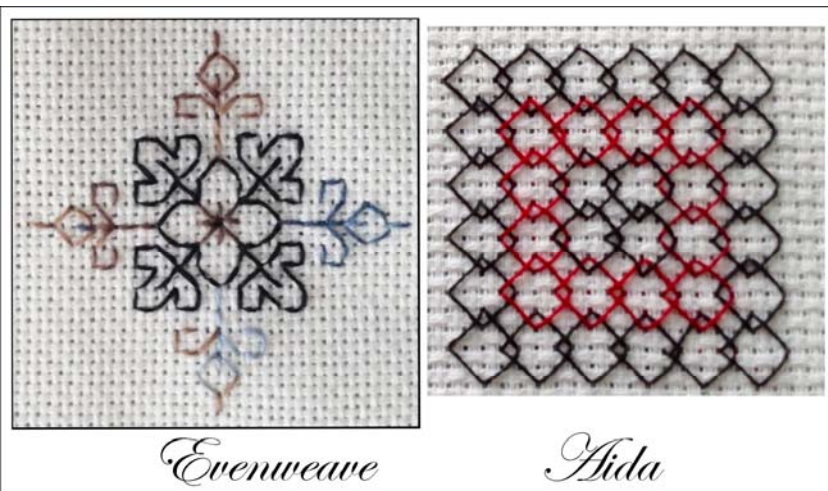
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsaDza8BYw0>

<https://youtu.be/zsY3HuStSvs>

It is important when you are working a project with a lot of small motifs and different techniques, that you finish each one off in turn and do not carry threads across open spaces. Loose ends need to be sewn in and the ends trimmed off. If the lettering is in lines, each line needs to be completed and finished off. The threads should not be taken from line to line.

Why you should look at the back of the work?

The reason is simple - if the back of the work is not kept neat, especially when working on evenweave, the threads will show through on the front as a shadow or even a line. Once the embroidery is framed it is too late to correct it and it is annoying. Hold the embroidery up to the light, take a close look and then trim off anything that shows through.



The choice of working a large design such as “Sublime Stitches” on evenweave or Aida fabric is personal. Some people are not comfortable working on an evenweave fabric and prefer the “blocks” of Aida fabric. Some of the examples below show how different the appearance is between the two fabrics.

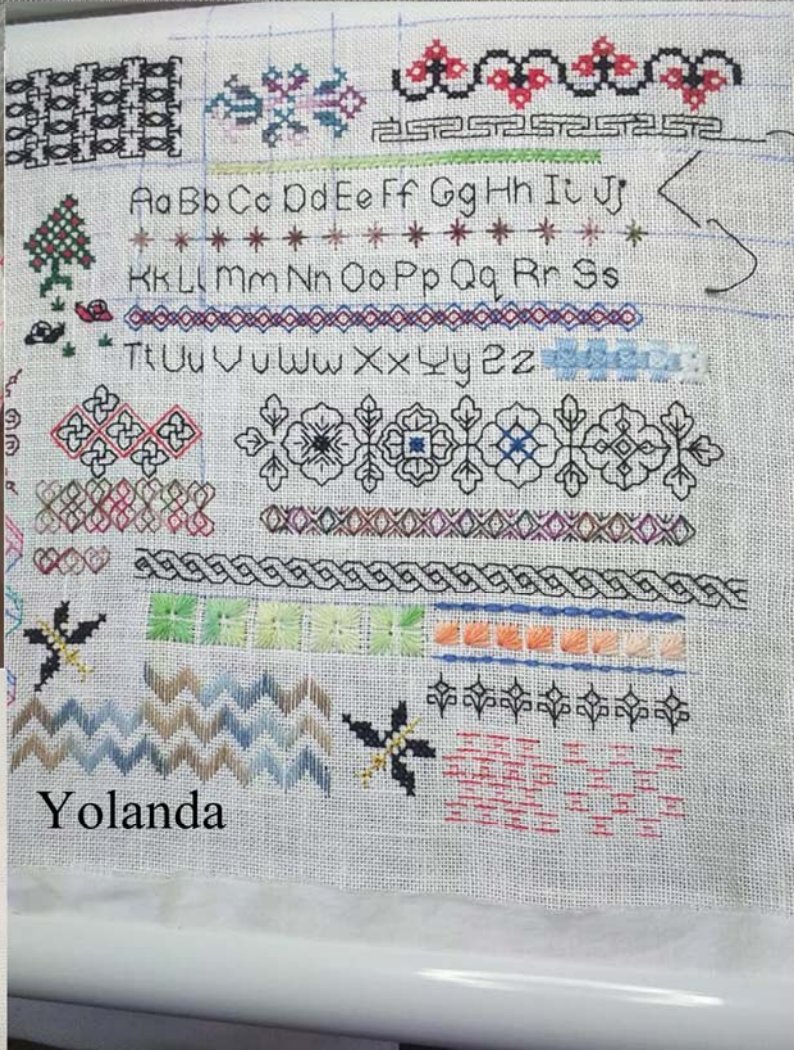
Whilst the end results will be different in appearance, Aida is easier to count and may be more suitable for a newcomer to counted thread embroidery.

Note: The only problem with working on Aida is that some of the blocks may have to be split if there are part stitches.

Elisa



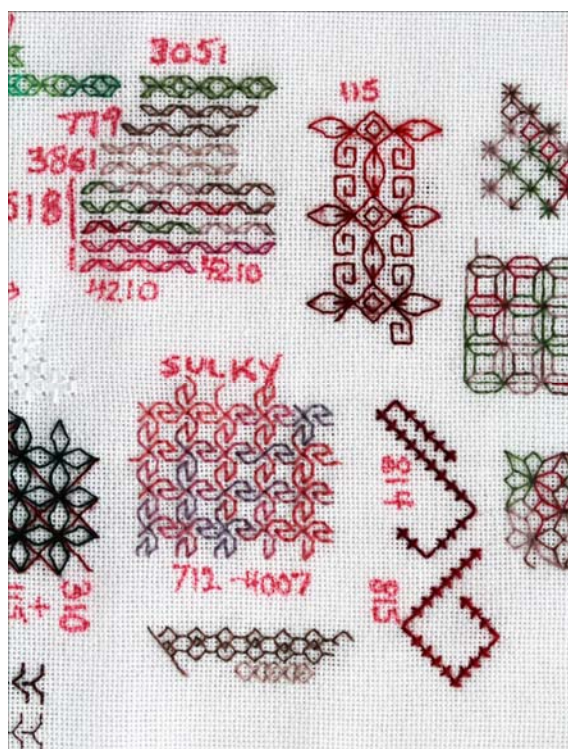
Maria Jose



Yolanda



Maria Jose



Maureen's doodle cloth

If you do not have one already, I would encourage all stitchers to keep a "Doodle" cloth. This is a section from Maureen's cloth which I always show as a perfect example. Every new stitch is tried out on her cloth, the thread colour noted and the number.

Not only does it give the opportunity to try out new patterns before they are added to the main design, but it shows how different threads appear on the fabric. The closer the stitches the heavier the pattern as shown in Maureen's Tudor Rose.

Trying them out first on a Doodle cloth can save a lot of unpicking later!



Maureen's doodle cloth and Tudor Rose

Calico Quilt – finished!

Over the last year, I have stitched a number of embroidery and quilt tops as an antidote to counted thread embroidery. I have really enjoyed working different techniques and combining them to produce practical pieces of work that can be used.

However, if you are interested in different techniques and you want to stitch something new, do a little research into the background first so that you have an understanding of the origins. It will make you more aware of the place that techniques such as Kogin and Sashiko have in Japan, their history and the role that they played in people's lives past and present. It creates a link between the needlewomen who have gone before and the present and it makes it more interesting to stitch.

Respect for the past and its heritage is an important part of my designing background and I try to keep the work accurate as well as creative.

This was demonstrated in the "Calico Quilt" I have just completed. Calico is a nice fabric to work with. Whilst it does crease, it handles well and feels warm to the touch. I worked it as a whole piece quilt rather than a patchwork and paper project.



Yes

The quilt consists of 36 different Japanese Kamon crest and Sashiko patterns with four different border patterns and four corner motifs.

The patterns were drawn onto the calico using a water-soluble pen and then embroidered in a matt maroon sashiko thread (Cotton P erle can be used) and matt cream crochet cotton.



No

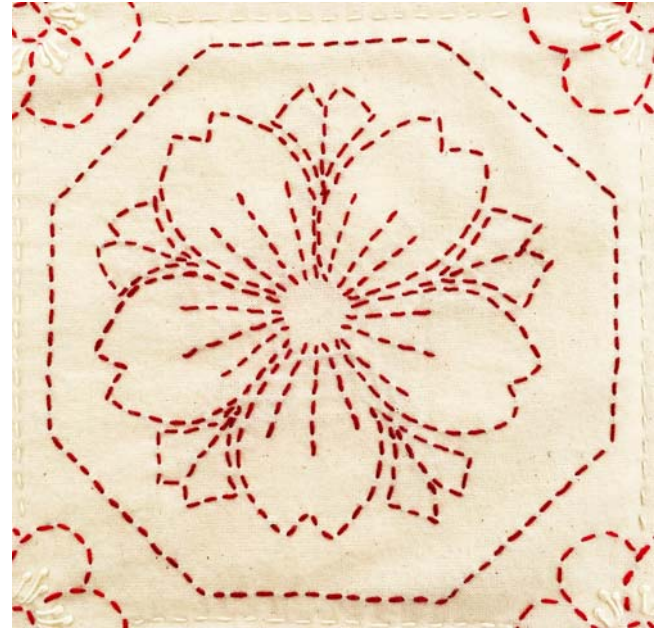
Choose a smooth medium weight pre-washed calico

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A number of stitches can be on the needle at any one time and the block grows quickly.

The quilt was much quicker to complete than the “Kamon Crest” quilt which was worked in hexagons and pieced individually.



Planning a design:

1. Once you have an idea, think it through carefully first.
 2. Consider: Size, fabric, threads. What will it be used for?
 3. Collect the materials together. Try out new stitches on a Doodle cloth. Test unusual threads – are they colourfast? Use fabric you are comfortable to work on and needles you can see to thread. Lay the threads out and walk away!
 4. Enlarge the chart if it is too small to see easily.
 5. If you are happy with the design, threads and fabric, start from the centre point and work outwards to position the design correctly.
 6. Use a good light and magnifying lens if necessary.
- Of course, this applies to any design you are planning to do.
Think before you stitch!

I hope you have enjoyed reading this month’s Blog. I would like to thank all the readers who have contributed.

Stay safe and happy stitching!

Liz