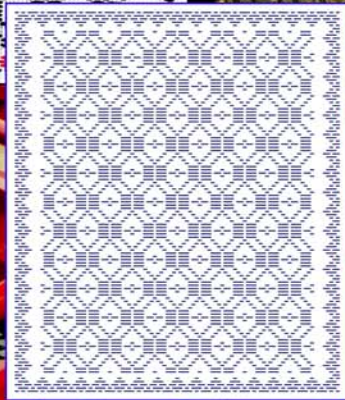
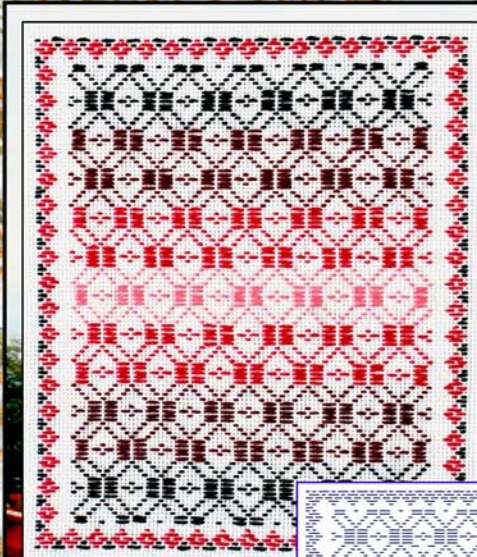




# *Blackwork* *Journey Blog*

January 2023





*To all members of the Blackwork Journey family  
I wish you a happy, peaceful and creative 2023.*

*EB0023 Diagonal Dance was used as the background for the card  
Image by hannazasimova on Freepik*

### **Looking to the future – 2023!**

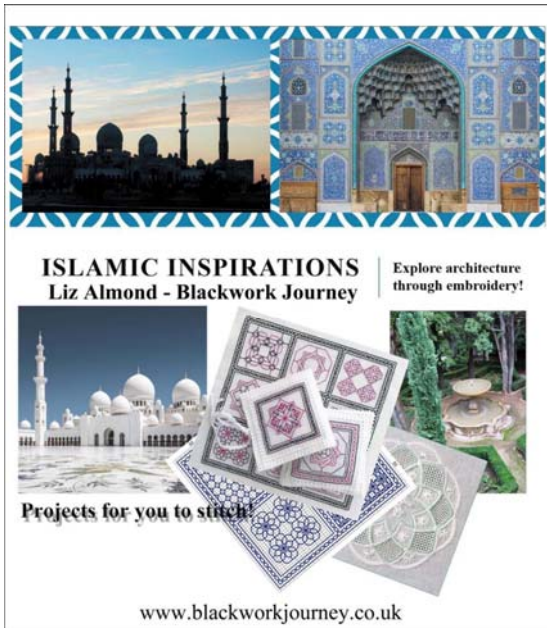
Whilst 2022 proved to be a very difficult year for many, there were some positive outcomes! Travel restrictions were eased and many families were reunited after long absences including our family. We travelled to San Francisco in April and visited France, Portugal and Uzbekistan. Friendships were renewed and memories shared.

On a practical note, I was able to resume teaching at day schools, workshops and talks across the UK after an absence of two years. I visited new groups and renewed contact with groups that I have been associated with for a long time. It was a pleasure to meet and share ideas again in person and I am pleased to say that many of the groups, having survived the pandemic, have come together with renewed enthusiasm and are gaining new members.

2023 will be a very busy year for me and the next few weeks will be spent printing charts and preparing kits for future classes. It takes a long time to prepare the kits, but with the demise of local needlework shops it is

## Blackwork Journey Blog, January 2023

much easier to prepare the kits then I know everyone will have the right, threads, materials and information for the day.



One of the many groups I visited in 2022 was Basingstoke Creative Stitchers in the UK talking about Islamic architecture and blackwork and then leading a workshop with a very enthusiastic group of embroiderers.

I look forward to working with them again.



*Some of my finished embroideries and work in progress.*

Not only am I preparing workshops for 2023, but I am designing and working patterns for various magazines. Whilst this is great fun and a real buzz to see articles in print, the actual posting can be fraught especially when we have been subject to a number of postal strikes before Christmas which have delayed international deliveries. I sent one design to the USA on 19<sup>th</sup> December and it will be very interesting to see when it actually arrives at its destination.

### **New designs for 2023 - Start the New Year with something different!**

It is very easy to get stuck in a rut with embroidery doing the same thing year after year and using the same colour palette and I am no exception, especially where colour is concerned. I have certain colours that I return to again and again and it does me good to work with something I am not comfortable with. It can produce some surprising results.

To start 2023, I have added two new Japanese Kogin designs. One for readers new to Japanese pattern darning (Kogin) CH0430 "Taste of Kogin" that introduces different colours in a way that can be easily managed with a repeat design that helps the reader grow in confidence, both reading the pattern and working the different length running stitches. It is easy to count and mistakes can be easily recognised and corrected.

For the embroiderer who wants a challenge, I have added CH0431 "Kogin Pattern Sampler" with 30 different Kogin patterns. I have made my sampler into a wall hanging, but it can be used for a table centre, large cushion or different sections can be developed into different projects. The scope is endless!



## CH0430 Taste of Kogin

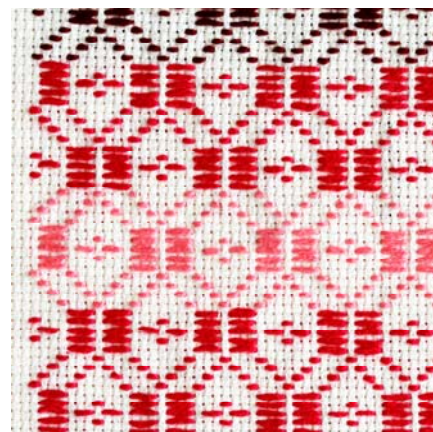
“Taste of Kogin” is a good introduction to the Japanese art of Kogin embroidery which is a form of counted pattern darning, which originated in Northern Japan.

“Taste of Kogin Blue” has also been included if you wish to work the pattern in one colour

**Design Area:** 6.31 x 7.38 inches

**Stitches:** 101 x 118

*Extract worked on  
Zweigart 16 count  
Aida in DMC stranded  
floss*



## CH0431 “Kogin Pattern Sampler”

**Design Area:** 16.63 x 16.63 inches

**Stitches:** 266 x 266

**Fabric:**

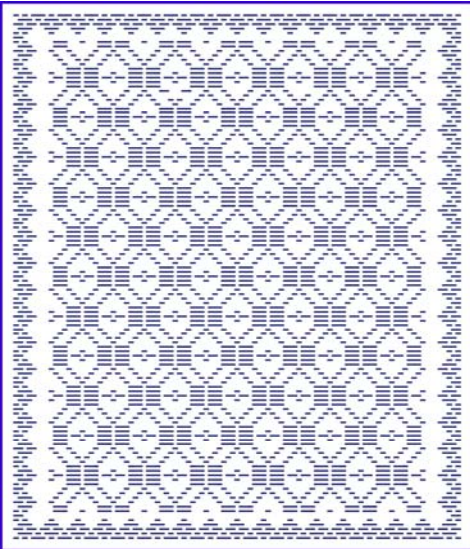
Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 16 count Aida, 22 x 22 inches minimum.

**Note:** On evenweave fabric one stitch is worked over 2 threads with two threads between each row. On Aida 1 stitch = 1 block with one row of blocks between each row. The embroidery was worked on Zweigart 16 count Aida.

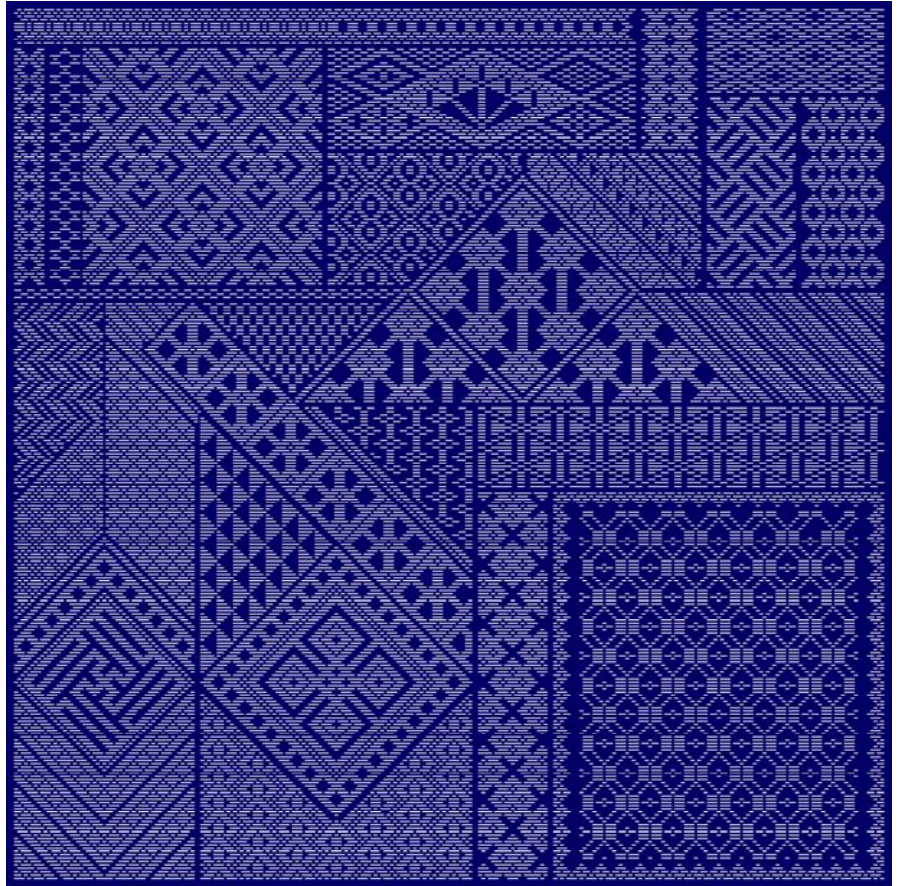
Zweigart 25 count Lugana, Zweigart 18 count Davosa 52% cotton / 48% modal blended evenweave and Zweigart 20 count Bellana 55% cotton / 45% viscose blended evenweave are suitable fabrics to work with.

Both patterns can be worked in





just one colour. Traditionally, Kogin was worked in white thread on an indigo blue background. This combination can be very hard on the eyes so an alternative is to work blue floss on white fabric.



*Extract from Kogin Pattern Sampler worked on Zweigart 16 count Aida*

## Part 3 Uzbekistan

### Patterns cross countries – Japan to Uzbekistan

Following on from Part 2 of my “Journey through Uzbekistan” I came across an interesting development when I visited the Sitorai Mokhi Khosa Palace which was the summer residence of the last Emir of Bukhara. Built by the Russians in 1911, this is now a Unesco World Heritage site. The palace decorated in blue and white is set within beautiful waters and is known as the Palace of the Moon like Stars.



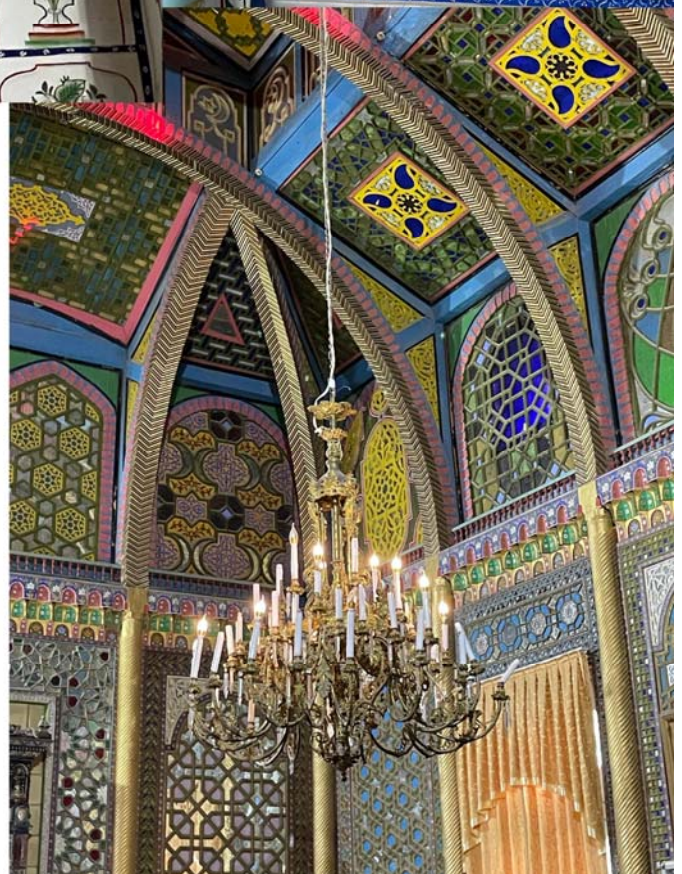
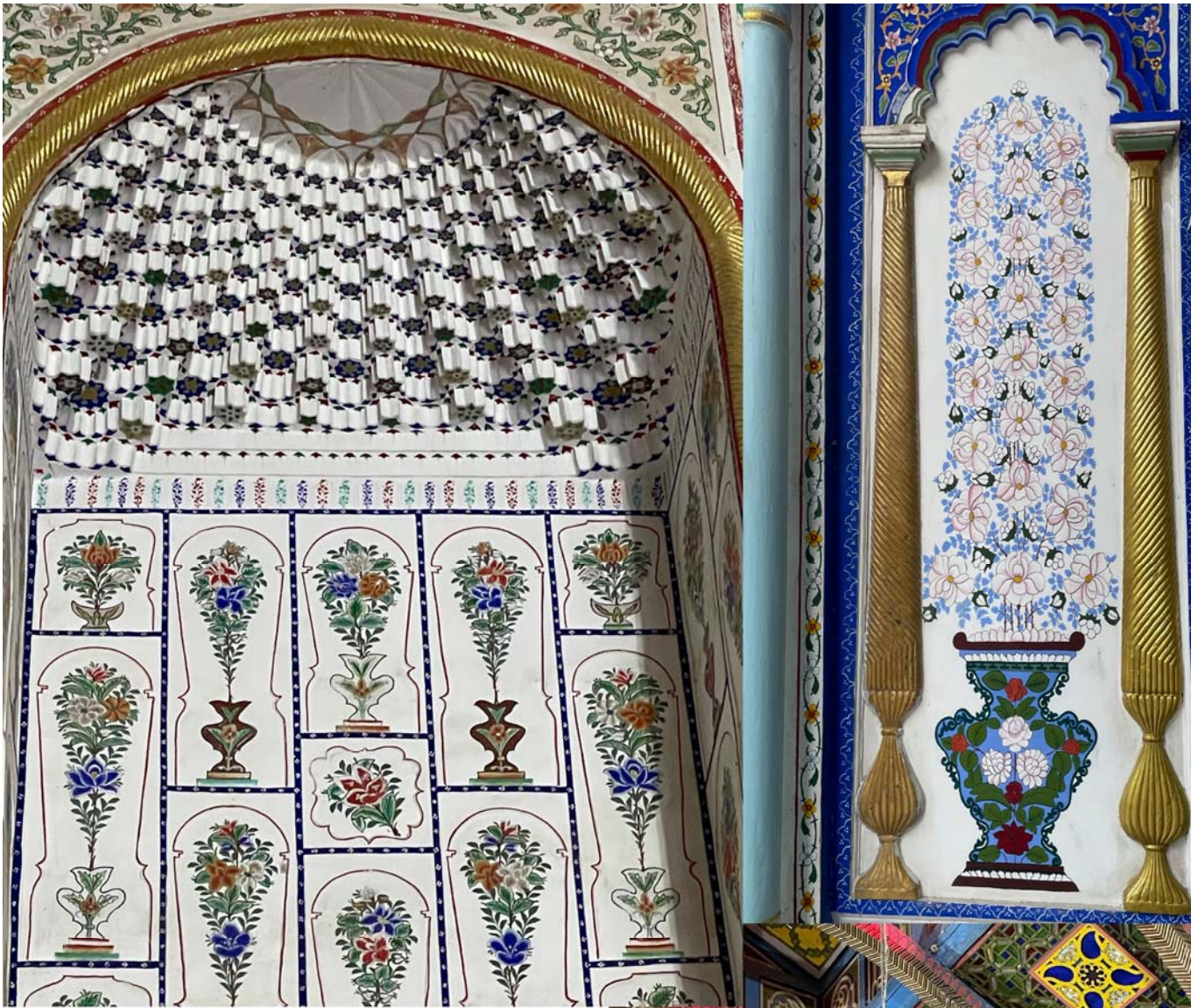
*Alim Khan, the last emir of Bukhara*

Like so many buildings in Uzbekistan, the plain outside hides the treasures within. The decoration is spectacular and covers every surface whether it is the outside courtyards to the rooms within.

Pattern is everywhere and as a potential source of embroidery designs the scope was endless. It was only on my return to the UK that I realised just how much I had seen and how many future projects could be created.



*The entrance to the Summer Palace and the courtyard within decorated with Islamic designs gave little indication of the decoration within.*



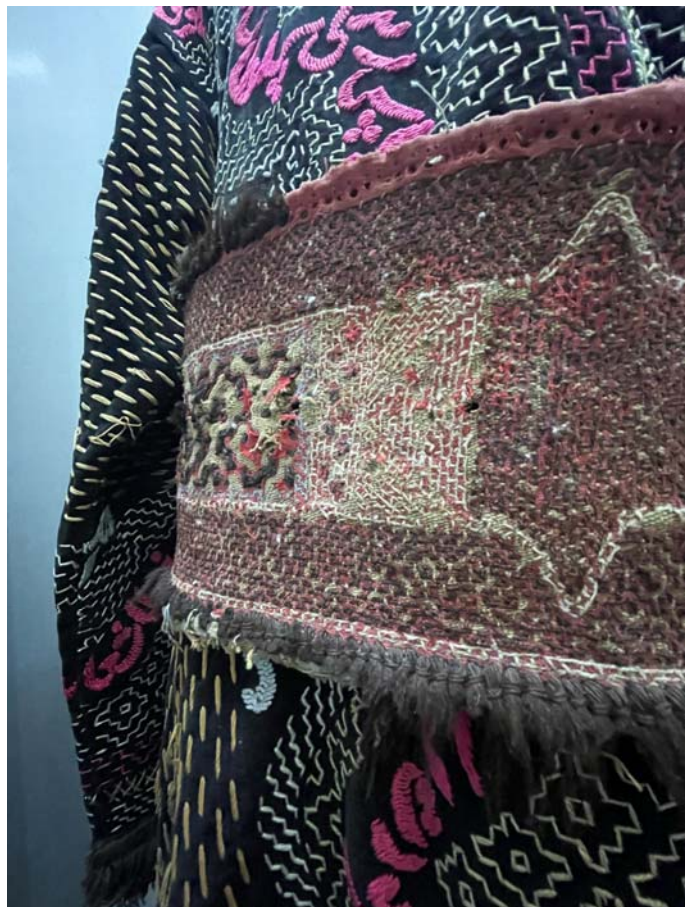


*Superb metallic embroidery in gold and silver*



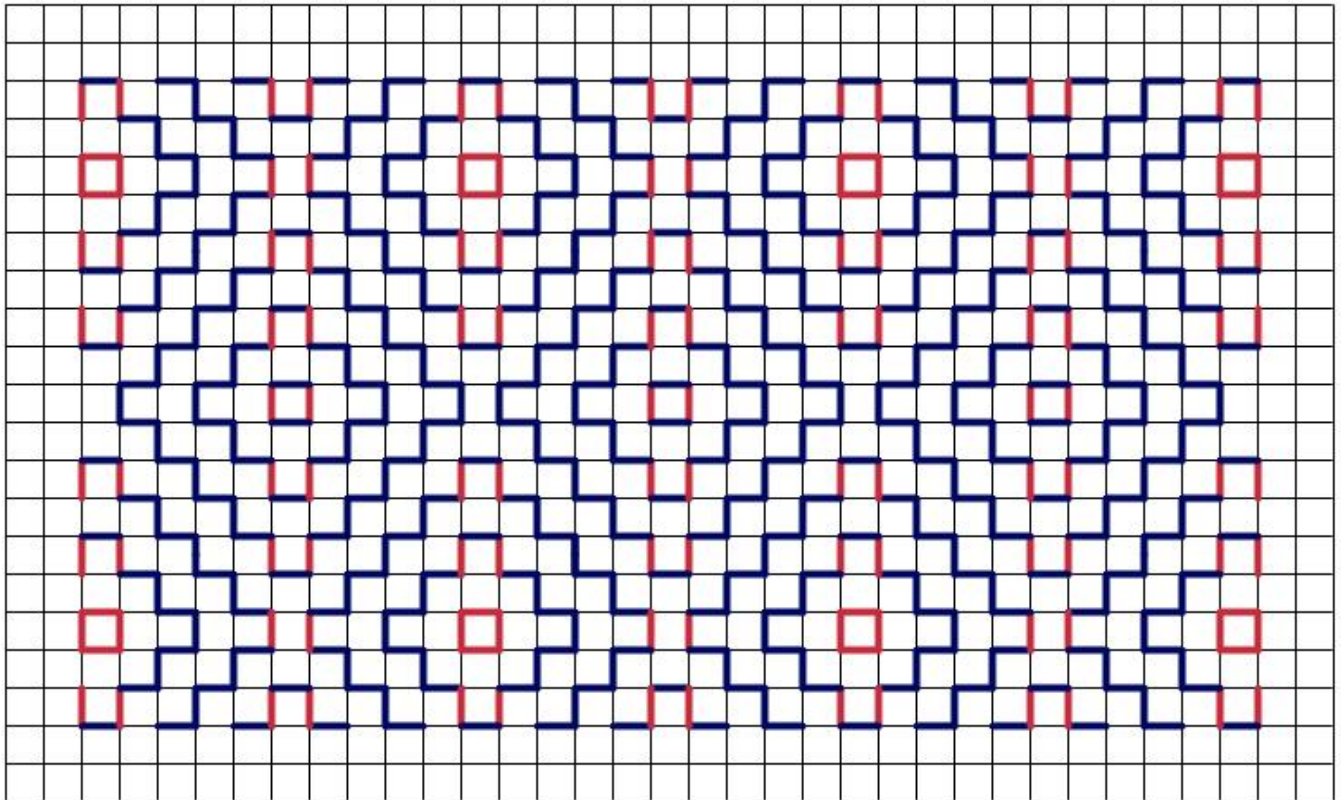
## Blackwork Journey Blog, January 2023

Whilst this was a feast for the eyes, a small costume museum within the palace revealed some interesting items. The heavily gold embroidered robes were interesting to look at but there was one garment that really drew my attention. The costume was heavily embroidered in coarse threads on a heavy fabric, but the patterns were ones I have seen previously in Japan and stitched frequently when working sashiko embroidery.



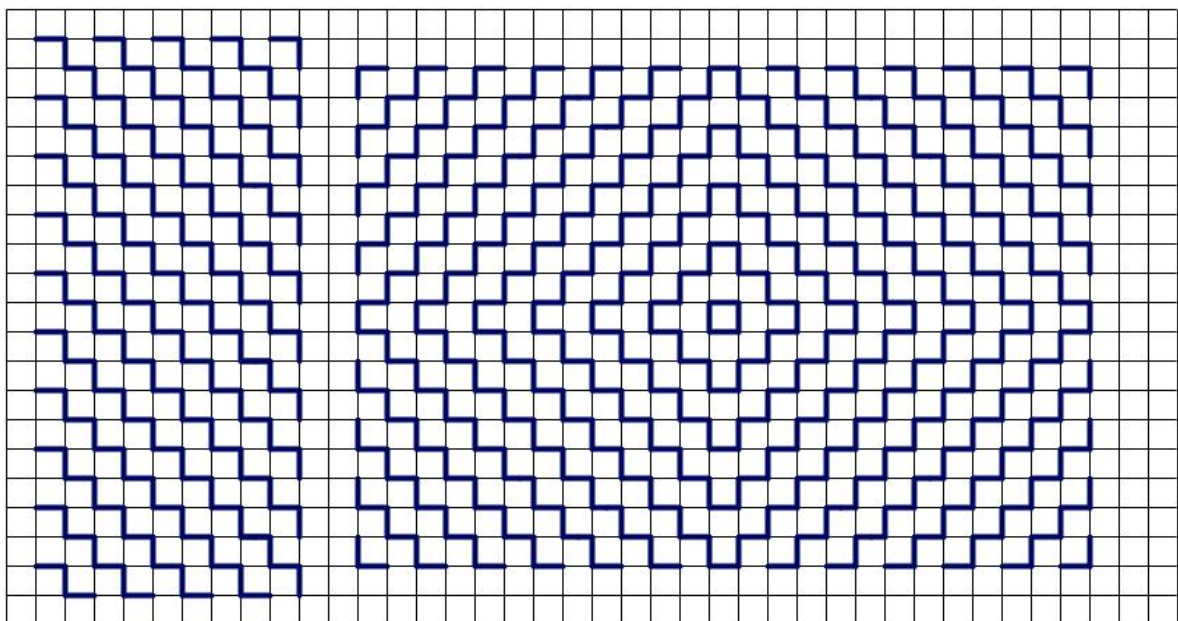
## Pattern 1

In Japanese the pattern is called **Sanjū kakinohanazashi** or triple persimmon flower stitch.



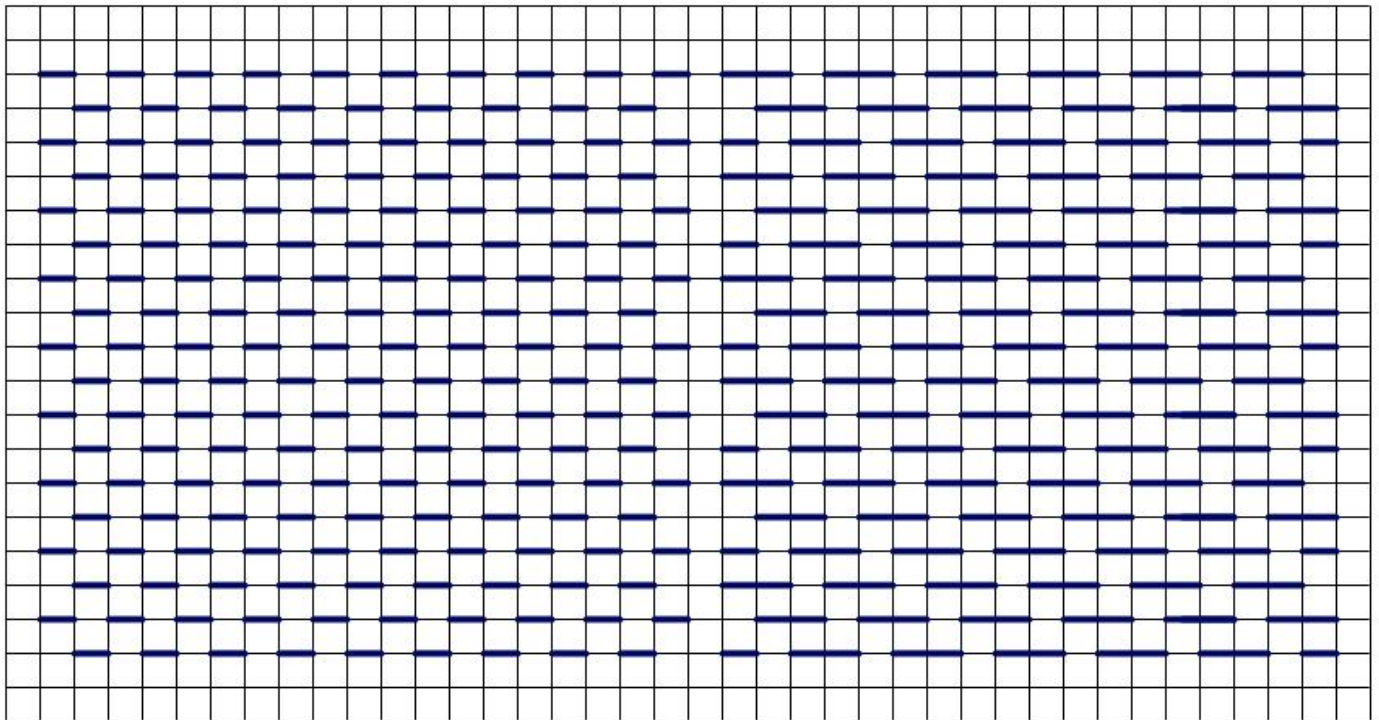
Sanjū kakinohanazashi or triple persimmon pattern is easy to recreate as a counted thread pattern and a sashiko pattern. Two other sashiko patterns can be found in the robe:

**Pattern 2. Yamagata** which is stitched as stepped rows. I have combined it with a persimmon pattern to create a variation.



### Pattern 3 Yokogushi or horizontal rows

This is a very old, traditional sashiko stitch worked across a grid in rows. Change the size and spacing of the stitches to create a variation.



### Future travel plans for 2023

Later in the year we hope to visit Hawaii and then travel on to San Francisco to see our son and his family. I am already researching Hawaiian embroidery and am familiar with the quilt patterns from the islands.

Hawaiian quilting derives from the kapa moe, an indigenous bed cover textile. Kapa was constructed from the inner bark of local trees. Traditional kapa was beaten and felted, then dyed in geometric patterns.

Quilting may have begun in the Hawaiian Islands with the arrival of missionaries and Western fabrics in the 1820's. The climate of Hawaii is unsuitable for cotton cultivation and kapa is unsuitable for quilting, so all Hawaiian quilts are constructed from imported material.

A Hawaiian quilt is a distinctive quilting style of the Hawaiian Islands that uses large radially symmetric applique patterns. Motifs often work stylised botanical designs in bold colours on a white background. Hawaiian quilt applique patterns can easily be cut out on folded paper and traced onto fabric which is then cut out and applied to a background fabric.

I am thinking about developing the technique as a “mindfulness” project using recycled fabrics.



### Slow stitching continued .....

Along with all the other projects I am working for Blackwork Journey, I continue to work slow stitching projects. I find it a good way of relaxing at the end of a busy day and clearing my head before I go to sleep. It is a creative way of using scraps of fabric and can be as simple or as complicated as the needlewoman decides to make it.



One of the pieces I am working on at the moment consists of five two inch squares tacked down onto a piece of apple green cotton. I drew a quarter of a chrysanthemum pattern and worked it in two rows of running stitch in a variegated crochet cotton. Running stitch lines, fly stitch embroidery and bugle beads have been added so far.

How much more I will add or what I will do with it I do not know at this stage, but I am enjoying the stitching!



### **Diagonal strips – a table centre using nine different fabric patterns**

I had a number of fabric strips in different widths which I really didn't know what to do with so I applied them on the diagonal to an 18 inch square of cotton. The nine fabrics ranged from light to very dark.

I laid them out until I was satisfied with the arrangement and then tacked them down thoroughly.

I drew a Japanese asanoha hemp leaf pattern in the centre using a water-soluble pen and stitching the design in two shades of cotton P rle No 8.

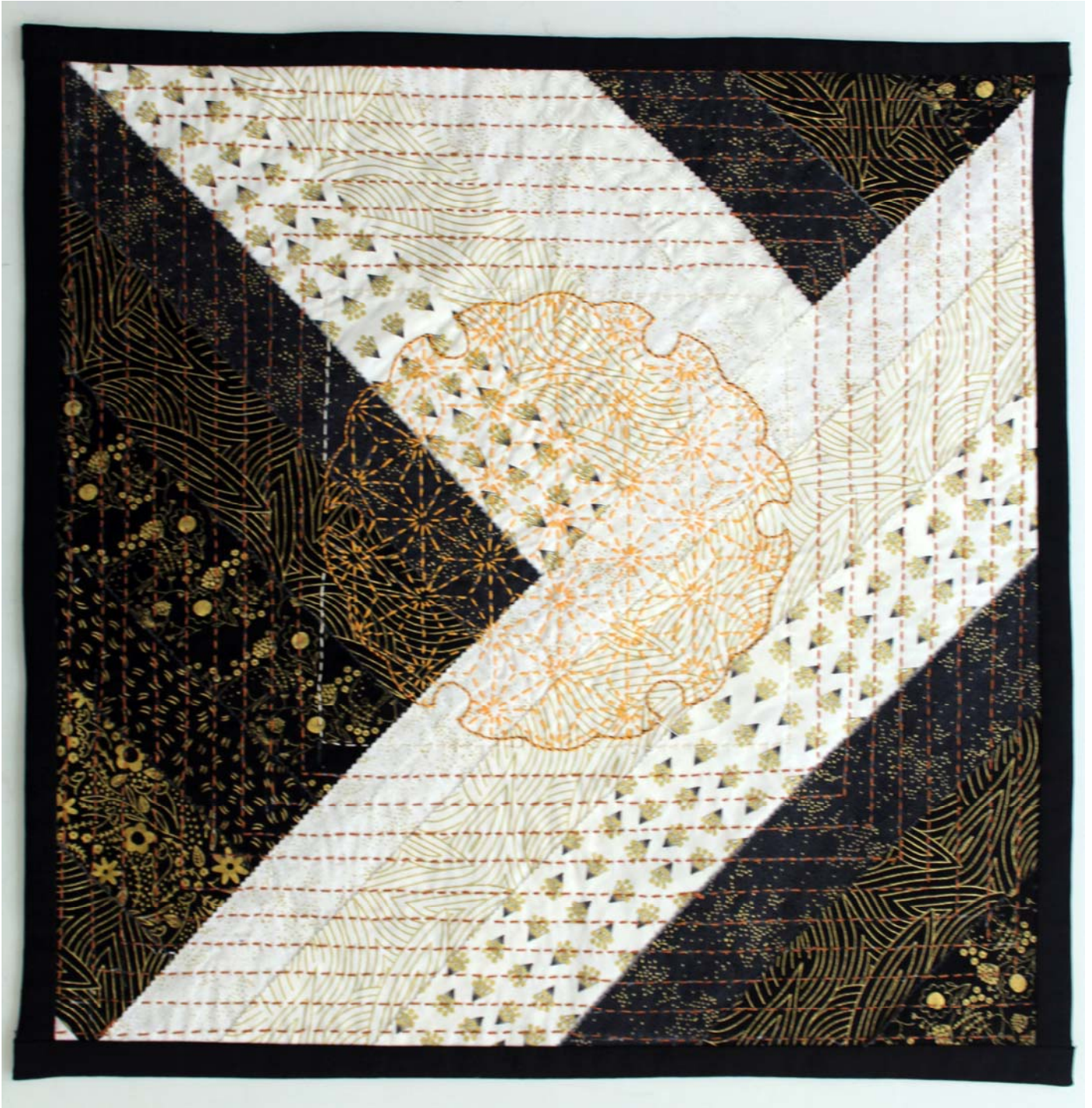
The motif is surrounded by running stitch lines half an inch apart to frame the design and anchor all the strips together.

Once the front was finished and all the fabrics were held firmly in place I dipped the fabric in cold water to remove the water-soluble pen. Once the fabric was dry, I ironed it face down on a soft towel.

## Blackwork Journey Blog, January 2023

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I chose a black cotton for the backing and the bound the edges with the same fabric. Whilst it isn't perfect, I enjoyed the planning and the stitching and it cost me nothing but time to make.



*Table centre made from diagonal strips of fabric.*

I hope you have enjoyed the first Blog of 2023 and it has given you some ideas to consider. If you have any queries please contact: [lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Happy stitching,

*Liz*