

TECHNIQUES

The Working Environment by Liz Almond

Part 9 Transferring a Design Part 2



This series of pdfs will consider different aspects of equipment available with tips and ideas to make stitching easier!

Happy stitching,

Liz

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Transferring Designs - Section 2

Following on from my article last month, I now want to look at transferring designs using methods that avoid marking delicate fabrics such as silk or heavy materials such as velvet, where watermarking could be a problem.

Three of the methods include:

- *Tacking stitches and tissue paper*
- *Prick and pounce*
- *Tacking from the back of the work*

I will also discuss using printers and their advantages and disadvantages.

Tacking stitches and tissue paper

Whilst this method takes time, it has the advantage of not actually marking the fabric.

Start by tracing the design on to tissue paper. Tack the two pieces together so that they do not move and then work small running stitches over the drawn lines in pale blue thread to recreate the design. Once you are satisfied that all the main lines have been stitched, carefully pull the tissue paper away, leaving the outline. If necessary, use a small pair of tweezers to remove the final pieces of tissue. Never use dark tacking thread because it will leave traces on the light fabric when the tacking threads are removed.



Fig.1 Different stages of working from the front of the design:-

Top left - original picture

Top right - Outline on tissue paper tacked to the material using pale blue thread

Bottom centre - Blackwork embroidery in progress

This method is especially effective with dark coloured fabrics or heavy materials, such as velvet where it is difficult to see a clear line unless you are using light colour markers.

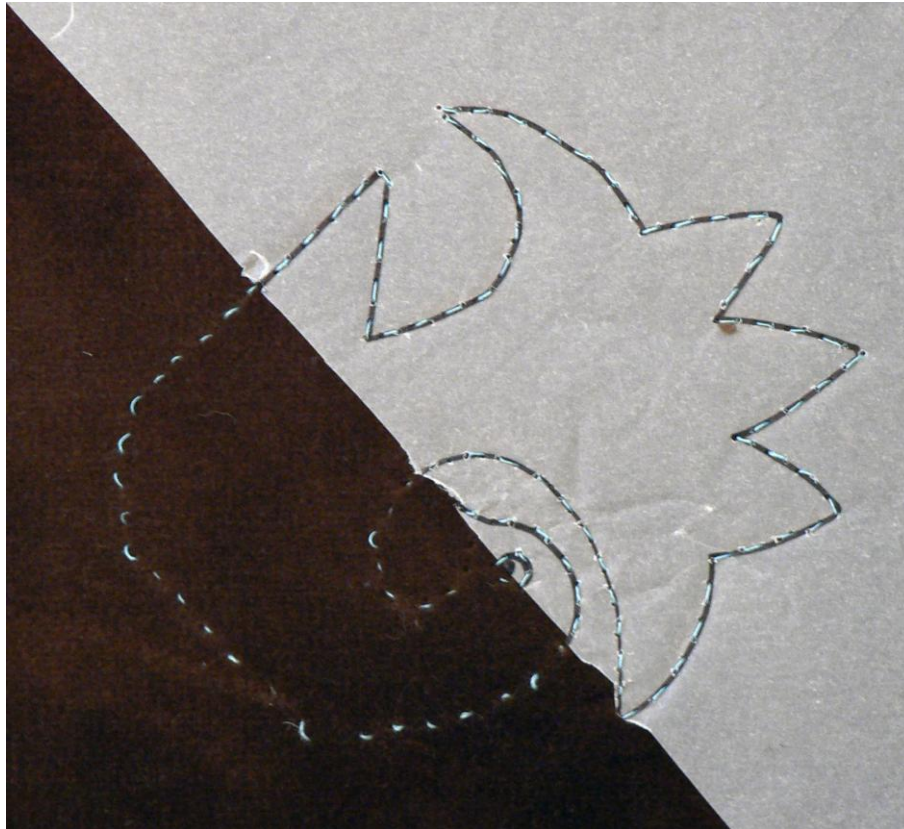


Fig 2 Tacking stitches on tissue paper produces a clear outline on pile fabrics such as velvet.

Prick and pounce

This is a simple and effective way of transferring a design on to fabric. You will need a design, fine powder or “pounce”, pins to anchor your fabric and design together whilst working, water colour paint and a fine brush.

Start by tracing the design onto velum, tracing or freezer paper. Then place the design on a cutting mat, card or soft towel and prick regular

spaced holes close together using a lace making pricker or a retractable 'Pergamano' perforating tool.



Fig. 3 Design on tracing paper, pricking tools and Pergamano perforating mat.

If you do not have a perforating tool, the fine point of a drawing compass or a needle pushed into a cork will suffice. However, it is essential that the tool is large enough to grip comfortably to ensure the pricked holes are even. If the shape is regular, a sewing machine could possibly be used to perforate the paper!

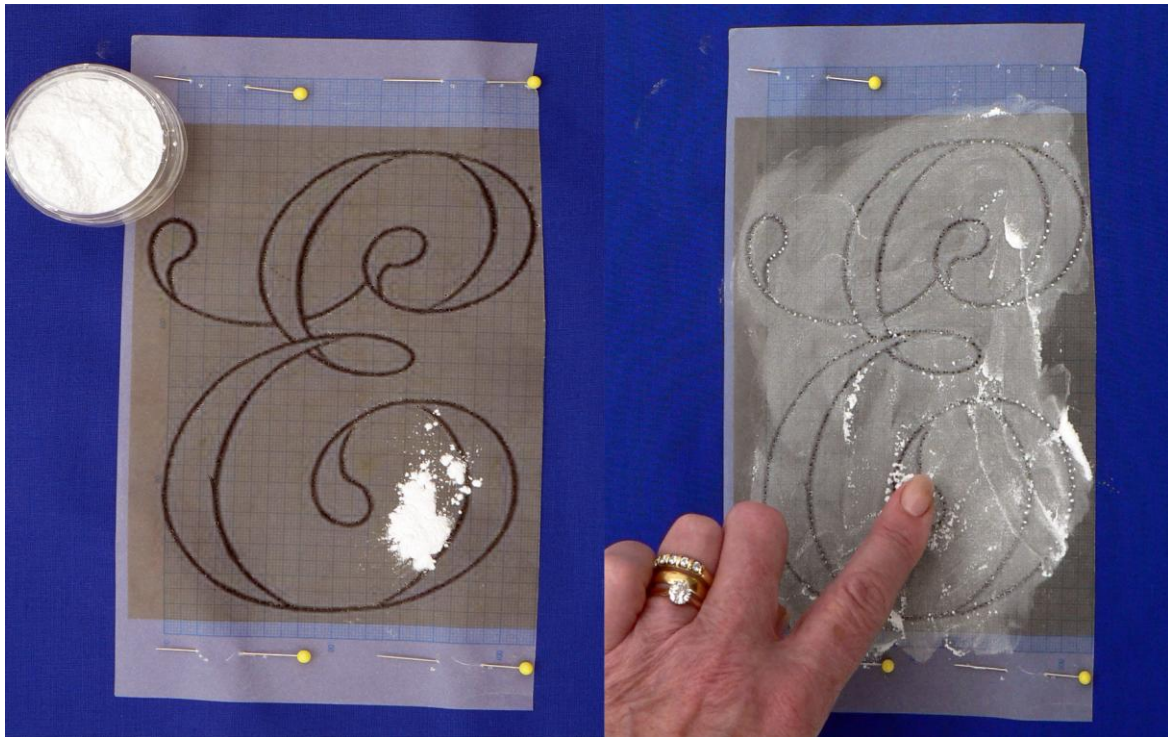


Fig.4 Pricked design is covered with talcum powder - a little messy, but effective!

Place and pin the design to the fabric and rub pounce over the holes to create the design as tiny dots. The colour of the fabric determines the colour of the pounce powder used. This will normally be talcum powder or white powdered chalk, although blue, black or grey pounce powders can be purchased if necessary.

Then use either your fingers, or take a piece of felt and roll it up tightly to make a “dabber” to fill the holes with the pounce.



Fig.5 Finished design outlined in water colour paint.

Lift the design carefully and blow away the surplus powder. With a fine brush, connect the dots together with watered down watercolour paint in a colour to suit the fabric e.g. white on dark fabric, pale grey or gold on white fabric.

It is an effective, but slow method that produces excellent results for the most complicated designs.

Tacking from the back of the fabric

If it is essential that permanent marks do not appear on the front of the material, an alternative to the *tacking stitches and tissue paper* method is to tack from the back of the work.

Always check that the design is facing the right way on the front of the work if you have reversed the design. This is vital when drawing letters of monograms.

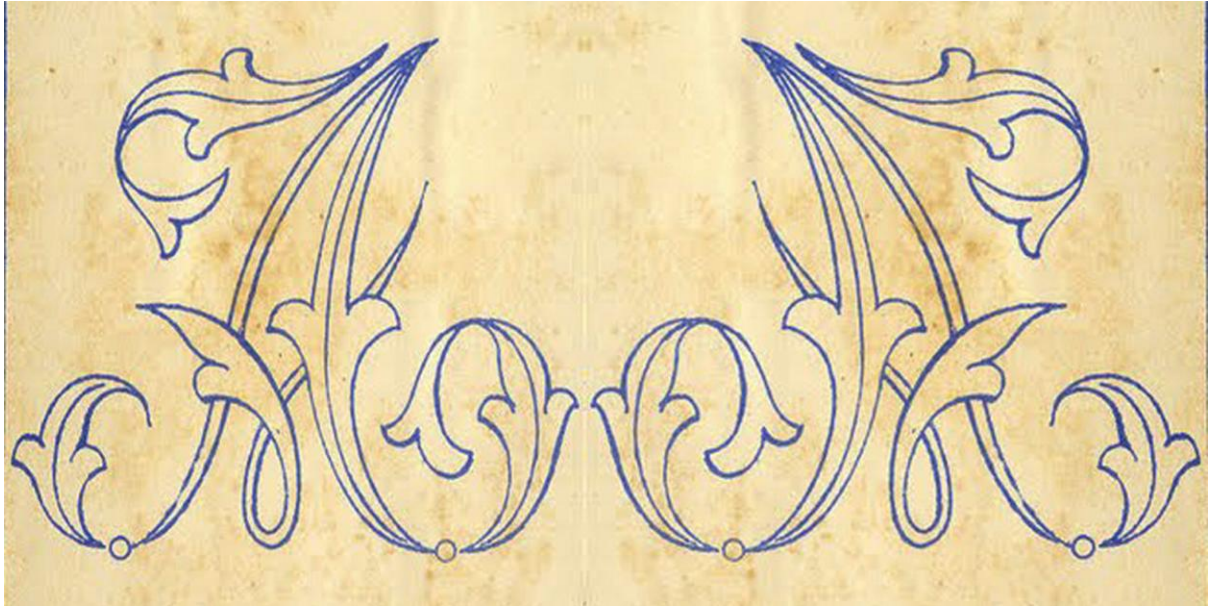


Fig.6 The letter 'A' is reversed for transfer to the muslin backing.

The design is transferred to a thin backing fabric such as muslin using a water soluble pen or an HB pencil. Tack the two fabrics together with the design positioned on the lining fabric at the back.



Fig.7 Traced outline, hooped and ready for tacking.

The fabric should always be mounted firmly in a hoop. Small running stitches are worked through both layers of fabric.



Fig.8 A clear outline of the design emerges, ready for the embroidery to be added.

A tacked outline of the design will then be visible on the front of the work. The final embroidery is worked through both layers of fabric using an appropriate stitch. Knotted stitches and couching make effective alternatives to satin stitch when working line designs such as monograms.

Using Printers to produce designs.

Whilst I am aware of the techniques involved in transferring images onto fabric via a computer, it does require some specialist materials and a degree of confidence with computers and printers.

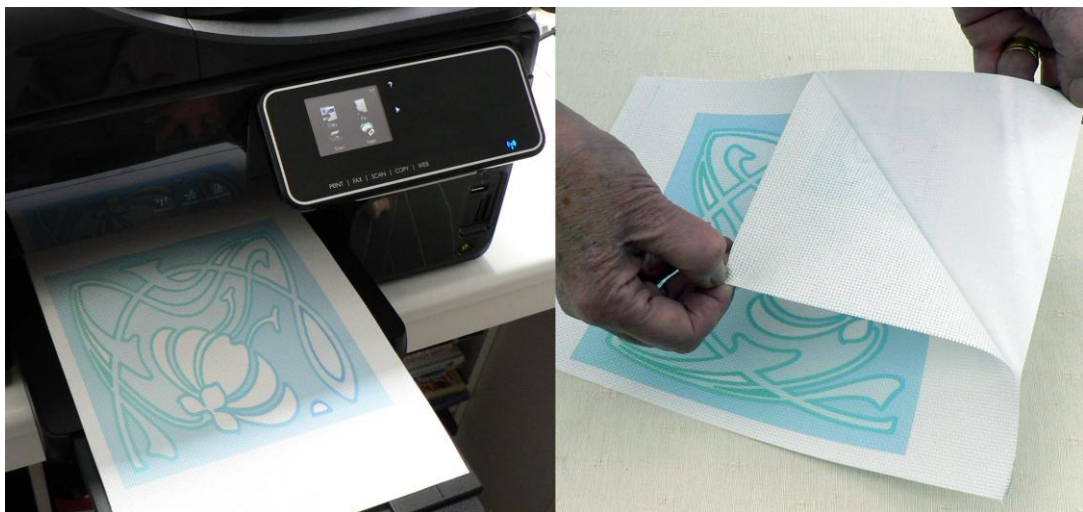
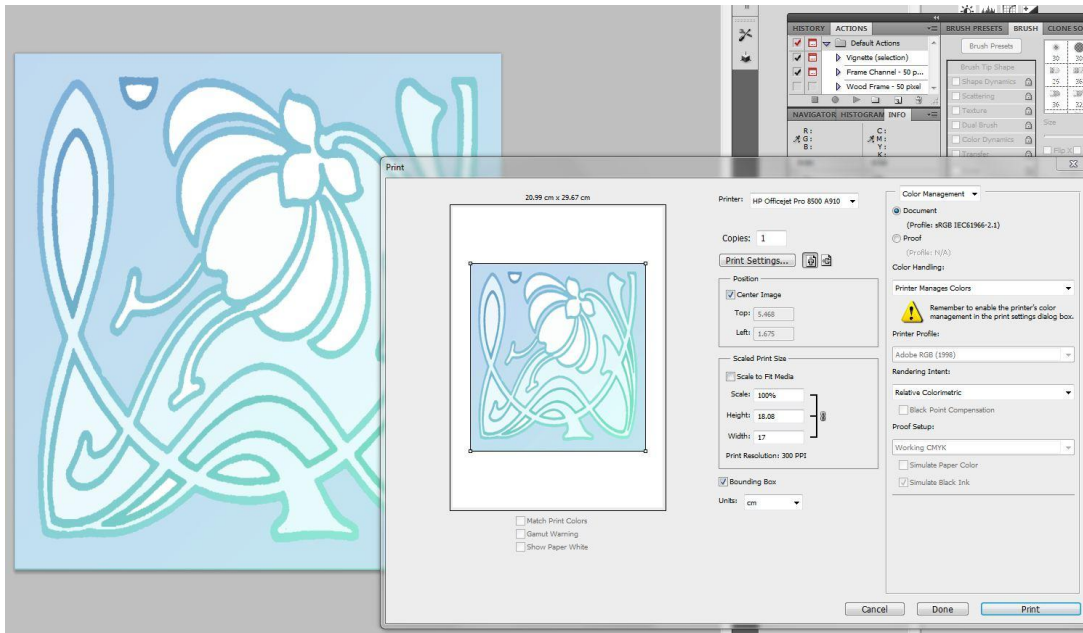


Fig 9 The design was created in Adobe Photoshop, sent to the printer and transferred to the fabric. The self adhesive label is removed after printing.

However, printing a photograph on to fabric can be as simple as printing a normal photograph. I have experimented using self adhesive labels and freezer paper ironed on to fabric to stabilise the fabric before passing it through the printer to create backgrounds and designs.

Whilst the majority of needlewomen will continue to produce their designs in ways they are comfortable with, this is a new and exciting development well worth investigating. My main concern would be how long the inks retain their colour on the fabric, whether it would be washable and any long term effect the chemicals may have on the threads and fabric, so at this stage, I would only use this technique for small projects for fun rather than the family heirloom.

However, if you would like to explore this area further, you can read more about the subject in the book by Ruth Brown entitled “Digital Imagery on Fabric” by SC Publications.

Tissue paper, tracing paper, greaseproof paper, freezer paper and fine typing paper have all been used successfully to transfer designs to fabric and chalk or talcum powder can be used for “pounce” on dark fabrics, so experiment with what you already have before purchasing extra items.

Finally, a word of caution, do test all methods mentioned in this article on a piece of spare material before starting a major project as time spent on experimentation can often save costly mistakes later.

I hope you have enjoyed these two articles on transferring designs and will find a method to suit your needs.

The next column will be about choosing the most suitable fabrics for different aspects of embroidery with their advantages and disadvantages, what the “thread count” means and how to use a stitch calculator successfully.

Happy stitching!

Liz