

2015-2016 GLHQ Block of the Month Challenge

November 2015 Block of the Month Challenge Autumn Flag & BIG Stitch technique

Tim Latimer, our October speaker, is known for his hand stitching which is the inspiration for the November Block of the Month Challenge. We are going to use the BIG stitch or more commonly known as the utility stitch. If you are an experienced hand quilter, it may have been awhile since you've used this stitch. For non-hand quilters, this is a great way to get acquainted with hand stitching.

What is Big Stitching?

This is a simple and fast way to quilt with a big needle and thick(er) thread.



This is no hard and fast rule (or so I've been told) on the number of stitches per inch. Tim mentions in his blog that he has done this technique with 8-9 stitches per inch and even as few as 5 per inch. It really depends on the artistic look you want to create. Check out Tim's video where he demonstrates how easy this technique is; no marking or thimble needed!

<http://timquilts.com/2013/05/05/more-on-big-stitch-quilting-and-a-video/>

Here's Tim's Big Stitch in the center of a block on his blog at <http://timquilts.com/tag/big-stitch-quilting/>

Other resources to check out showing you how to sew the Big Stitch --

<http://www.craftsy.com/blog/2014/08/big-stitch-quilting-basics/>

Minick and Simpson Show How to Big Stitch Hand Quilt - Fat Quarter Shop
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBGs1qBHa-4>

Big Stitch Utility Quilting with Carolyn Forster
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwK5JYxt5h0>

Determine your design --- before selecting your fabric

To decide what fabric you are going to use, you'll need to decide if you want to create your own design or use a design already printed on a piece of fabric. Both are fun to do.

Making your own design -

We'll need some simple shapes since the BIG stitch technique uses a longer stitch length – think running stitch. Let's take advantage of the shapes of the nature around us. Go for a walk in your yard or in your neighborhood and pick up leaves of different sizes and shapes or other interesting objects that remind you of the season.



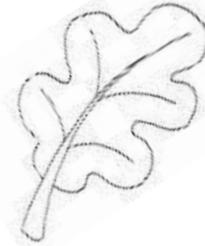
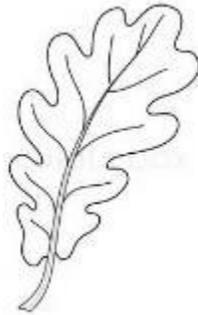
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Trace around your leaves and/or objects. Think about simplifying the lines, perhaps rounding sharp points. Some examples of different leaf shapes “decluttered.”

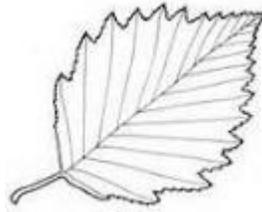
Maple



Oak



Birch



Using paper, cut out a few sizes and arranged them in a pleasing design. Try to keep the majority of your shapes inside the final flag dimensions and remember the flag has a point at the bottom.

I made a “window” out of paper that measured the final flag dimensions and shape and drew it on the fabric (the black line in the picture) to audition the design placement

Chose a fabric that is a solid or tone on tone that reads like a solid. I used the same design on these two fabrics.

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I loved this batik for its vibrant red-orange and shots of violet-brown but it was too busy even when I stitched really, really big.

Here is the same design showing up much better on a solid.



If you don't want to create your own pattern, I've made two for you to choose from at the end of the instructions. You can use them as is, or use them as a starting point.

Another alternative is to use a pre-printed design on commercial fabric.

Using a pre printed fabric design-



Here are examples of medium scale fabric prints that are good candidates for the BIG stitch. You can stitch around the shapes or accent features in the shapes. This is a great opportunity to use up some of your stash or scraps.

To help preview what the final flag would look like, make a "window" out of paper of the finished shape and dimensions. Move it around the fabric to find a group of pleasing shapes.



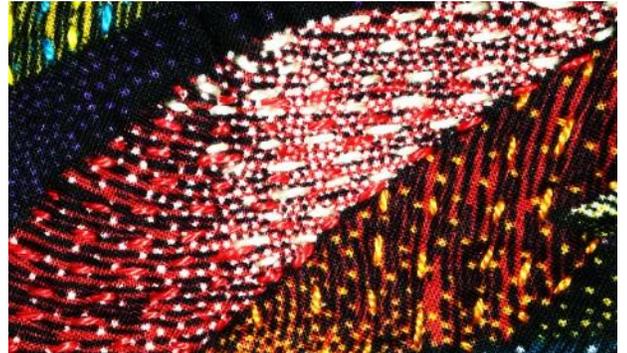
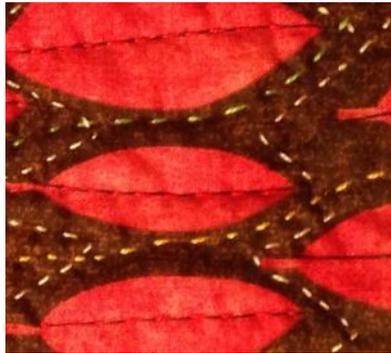
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Sewing Instructions:

Please read through all of the instructions first. If you don't have a copy of the General Instructions, please download from the www.GLHQ.org website under ACTIVITIES, Block of the Month 2015-2016, BOM General Directions Link. All seam allowances are $\frac{1}{4}$ " unless instructed otherwise.

Materials:

- One 9" x 9" rectangle for the front; see comments about selecting fabric and creating your design above.
 - One rectangle 9" x 9" of very thin batting
 - One 9" x 9" rectangle of interfacing fabric (can be non-woven interfacing or a plain piece of fabric); you will use this to make your quilt sandwich when you stitch. We will add another backing to finish the flag. You will not see it or your stitches on the backside after you've assembled the flag.
 - One 6" x 8" rectangle for the back
 - Top stitching or heavy weight thread or perle cotton for BIG stitch
1. Select a heavy thread, like 30 wt. or 12 wt. or use perle cotton #8. Pick a color that contrasts with your fabric, if you want your stitches to stand out. If you want a more subtle appearance, chose a thread that more closely matches your fabric. Use a large eyed needle, I used an embroidery 5 and 7 needles.
 2. Mark the design on the front fabric. If using a pre-printed piece of fabric, decide which designs you'll stitch around or accent.
 3. Layer top fabric, thin batting and interfacing fabric into a quilt sandwich.
 4. Stitch your design using the BIG Stitch. The idea is to see the thread, so make your stitches $\frac{1}{8}$ " or a bit longer. If you are using a fabric with a printed design, stitch around some of the shapes. Make some straight or curvy background stitches. Experiment and have fun. Try interweaving two different colors.



5. When you are satisfied with the amount of Big Stitching you've done, trim the quilt sandwich to 6" x 8." NOTE: Make sure the orientation is correct- measure twice (even three times) to make sure you are not cutting off your hard work. HINT: That preview window would be handy to use at this point.
6. On the backside of the quilt sandwich mark the Center Top and Center Bottom.
7. Layer the 6" x 8" Backing piece RST with the Front.

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8. Turn the entire sandwich/backing over, so you can see the backside of the quilt sandwich. Again make sure you have marked what is the top and the bottom, because you are going to create the point at the bottom. You do not want to cut off the wrong end!
9. From the bottom, measure up 2" on each side. Draw a line from each side down to the point at the bottom.
10. Cut from the 2" side marks to the bottom of the center bottom point to make the flag point.
11. Sew around the outside (1/4" seam allowance), leaving a 2" long opening (on the top or side) for turning inside out.
12. Trim points, trim the batting close to the seam being careful not to cut the seam allowances from the front or back fabric.
13. Turn right side out.
14. Close opening, top stitch around outside of flag, if desired.
15. At the top, stitch 3/4" long buttonholes 3/8" in from top and sides of flag at the top.

16. Optional: Add beads or other embellishments to make your design unique.



Don't forget the BLOTTO

If you are participating in the BLOTTO, please make a second flag and bring it to the November Guild meeting to enter the drawing for a chance to win all of the autumn themed flags submitted.

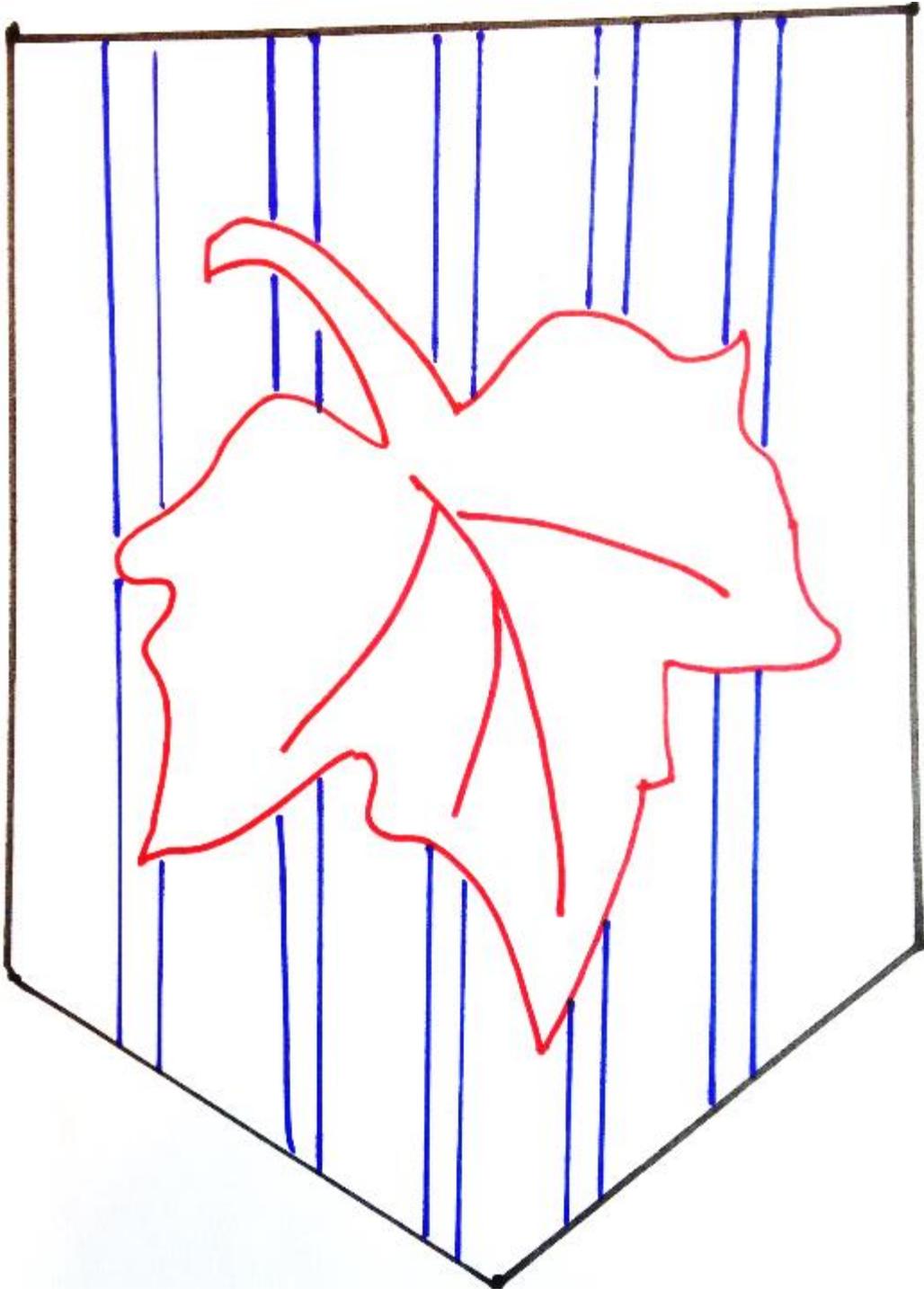
Enjoy the fall colors and season. I encourage you to go for a walk on a pleasant day and soak in the color of autumn even if you don't go "leaf hunting."

Hope you have fun with the BIG STITCH technique....BIG IS GOOD!

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If you don't want to make your own pattern, here are two you can use.

A single Maple Leaf – try different colored threads on the vertical lines, or make the lines curvy instead.



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Oak Leaves blowing in the wind – try outlining the leaves in different colors

