
Embroidered Heart Ornaments with Rebecca Ringquist

Chapter 1 - Embroidered Heart Ornaments

Overview

- I am such a sucker for pink and red, and I am an extra sentimental sentimentalist, and these heart ornaments are a great way to show your love for someone that you care about and to add lots of personal details. My name's Rebecca Ringquist. I'm a Portland based artist and designer. In this class, I'm gonna show you how to make beautiful heart ornaments that are perfect for your favorite valentine. This project starts out as an embroidery sampler, just like a lot of the Dropcloth samplers do. Once we finish all the embroidery together, then I'm gonna show you two different ways to turn them into embroidered ornaments. And along the way, I'm also gonna show you a couple of ways of adding your own personal details for your own valentine. These little ornaments are so sweet they almost hurt your teeth, and they make an excellent gift for the valentines in your life. (upbeat music)

Materials

- I'm gonna show you two different versions of the heart ornaments. And to do that, you're gonna need the following materials, an iron and an ironing surface. You'll need fabric to back your ornament with, either a cotton fabric in a color that corresponds with the red hearts, or you can use this wool fabric. This is wool felt. You'll need embroidery hoops, some small ones. This is a four inch or a six inch, either is fine. I'm also using this fusible web. It's called Shape-Flex. It's made by Pellon, and that reinforces your embroidery. I'll use that on the backside of the embroidery. You'll need Poly-Fil, or you could also use cotton balls or fabric scraps to stuff the embroidered ornament with. Pinking shears, embroidery scissors, or you could just use any old pair of scissors. A pencil, needles. I like the straw needles. These are also called milliner's needles, and I like size three or four. I like to have a little bit of wax to wax my thread with. This one is made by Sew Fine. I'm using pearl cotton for all my embroidery. This is a set that I have on my website. They're nine beautiful colors. You may wanna have a bell to add a little jingle to your ornament. And then I always like to pre thread my needles so I have them in a little bit of wool. This is another project that's on Creativebug, this needle holder. And last but not least, you'll need the sampler. This is the heart ornament sampler. It's available on my website, and it comes pre printed inside on cotton that's 100% ready to stitch. However, you could certainly design your own heart ornament.

Stitch your design

- Let's get our fabric ready for embroidery. To do that, you'll get it out of the package that it comes in. And it usually has a bit of a crease in it, from being in the packaging. So I'm gonna iron the creases out. Normally, if I was going to embroider this without a backing, I wouldn't even bother because the hoop takes all the creases out. But, since I'm gonna add the Shape-Flex, I just wanna get some of that crease out. You can see the crease is also here, where the fabric is gonna get cut when I turn this embroidery into ornaments. So it's not super important that it's perfect. Now I'm gonna get out the Shape-Flex. Shape-Flex is an iron on stabilizer, and it's actually woven. So it's a woven, cotton fabric that just adds a little bit of heft to your embroidery. And it makes for a more even, stable stitching experience. So I'm gonna cut out a piece. I'm gonna lay this over the Shape-Flex, and cut out a piece with my scissors here. And it doesn't need to be perfect, because

it's going to go on the back. So don't worry about it being super neat and tidy. You can see I'm just cutting it with these little embroidery snips, to make a piece that's about the right size. Pull that back, set this big piece aside. So now I'm gonna put this face down and lay this Shape-Flex over the back. Let me grab the iron. And now I'm going to iron this down. As you're looking at the Shape-Flex, it's hard to see, but you can feel it with your finger, the side that the glue is on. So it feels a little rough, and it's a heat activated glue that attaches the Shape-Flex, with the iron to your fabric. A lot of the time I like to use another piece of fabric as a backing for my embroidery, 'cause it adds color and texture. However, for a project like this, that's gonna get turned into an ornament, I've really come to love the Shape-Flex because it makes for a really even surface. And that way I don't have, the fabric isn't kind of flaking apart, when I go to stitch it together later with the sewing machine. Now this is ready, we can move on to embroidery. I'm gonna get my embroidery sampler in the hoop so we can get started with some stitches. I've got a number of these heart ornaments in progress. And, most of them use backstitch, including the one that I'm gonna show you here. This basket weave. It's a basket weave design, but I'm actually gonna stitch it with backstitch. I always like to use these rubber paper sorters on my finger to prevent getting a ton of callous. And I have my thread ready here. So, you can see on this example, I've already stitched it with backstitch going up and down, or vertically. And now I'm going back and using more backstitch in horizontal lines, to make this basket weave effect. And I have one that's finished here in different shades of pink. So I'm using this WonderFil pearl cotton. This is from the set that I have in the shop. And this is 1090. And I have the ends tied together, to make a stitch that is two threads thick. Of course, I'm gonna show a few stitches for these heart ornaments. You could do the embroidery with any number of stitches. It's up to you how you wanna do it. And I've got lots of embroidery classes on Creativebug. So if you're curious and wanting to know more about stitches, you could check out some of those. So let me explain what I'm doing here. I sort of got ahead of myself. I'm gonna come up at the very beginning, like this. I'm gonna make one stitch going down, just following along on this white, printed line. I'm going forward one. And now I'm gonna skip ahead, and go back and fill in that space. And that's the back stitch. So now I'm going forward again. And sometimes you have to kind of go up and down a few times to find the exact spot that you wanna bring your needle up. And go down again, to continue with that back stitch. And do one more stitch to finish that line. So now I'm going back in the opposite direction on the next line up. I love doing these close together rows of backstitch. They sort of look like corduroy. And I really love stitching with variegated thread, because it creates this modeled effect effortlessly, without changing colors very often. it just changes colors for you when the thread is variegated, or piece dyed like this, it's so much fun. Okay, I'm going to go back down here. And I've got plenty of thread to keep going but I wanna show you a few different other options. And I'd like to show you how I tie off my thread. So, I'm just gonna come around to the back. And I could tie and knot here, but lately what I've been doing is just slipping my needle underneath the nearby threads. So I'm gonna go underneath those green ones, and kind of, this is called burying the stitches. So then now I'm gonna go back in the other direction, like that, and it eliminates the need for a knot. And it's much easier. It just buries the threads underneath there. If I were making something that was gonna be a garment that I was gonna wear a lot and move around, then I would probably still tie a knot. But these ornaments aren't gonna get a lot of wear and tear. They're just gonna hang neatly on a wall. So I'm not worried about that. So I think burying the stitches is a great way to go. I wanna show you a couple finished versions of this basket weave. Here's one. And here's another one. I'll have more to show you later, when I show you the finished ornaments. This one is using all different colors of variegated thread, in sort of a

haphazard way. But you still get this basket weave pattern, because the way the stitches are laid out. And this one is just done in pinks and reds. For this heart that's got all different colors kind of scattershot all over the place, the person who generously stitched this for me used short bits of thread. And did a little bit of purple, and then went on and did a little bit of blue. You can also skip around a bit. So if you're stitching purple here, and you don't want the the line next to it to be purple, you could go back over here. And you know skip from this area over to this area, up to this area. It's gonna be encapsulated in an ornament, so it's fine to have some carryover on the back. I also used backstitch for this heart, the one that sort of looks like an exploding heart and a bit of exploding dynamite perhaps. This one has a lot of energy. And this is all backstitch as well. So you can see it's the same deal on this one. All different colors of thread. And on this example, we use two different colors of variegated blue that radiate out from the center. So, backstitch is always my favorite stitch. You know, I've done a number of workshops with Creativebug, showing maybe a hundred stitches now. But I always go back to backstitch. It's my favorite, 'cause it's the most versatile. Next I wanna show you the satin stitch. Susie who stitched this one used satin stitch to fill in circles on this heart. And I wanna demonstrate how she did that over here. So, I'm gonna cover one of these circles in satin stitch. And to do that, I like to start in the middle of the circle. So I'm gonna do the first line going across, sort of bisecting that circle. And I'm bringing my needle up outside of the white printed line. And then I'm going down on the other side, also outside of the white, printed line to make that first stitch. And again, I'm using this variegated pearl cotton. Now, the next stitch is gonna be right next to that first one, going out. So I start in the center, now I'm going to the top, and then I'll go to the center again, and go down towards the bottom of the circle. And as I'm pulling my threads, I wanna pull them evenly, but not too hard. Because you don't want your fabric to get all puckered up. You also want the threads to lay nice and flat. You want the threads to kind of retain some of their fluff, if that makes sense. And occasionally you can see here, hopefully you can see that, that there's a little bit of a ridge between the stitch and the other stitch. So I'm gonna add in one more line there. As I'm stitching along, I end up adding more than just an even set of parallel lines going across the fabric. I want these circles to look more three-dimensional, or sort of like globes. Okay, now I'm going back to the bottom. And I'm gonna do these going across. If you really wanted to increase the three dimensionality of these circles, you could do the satin stitching in one direction, and then do perpendicular stitches going in the other direction. But I think just doing one layer going across is just the right amount. So, as you're going down to the bottom, you wanna make sure that your stitches are getting shorter, so that you have a circle and not a square. I think this will be the last one. There we go, so there's that first circle. And you can see here, in Susie's version, then she used a running stitch to go around each one of those. So I'll show that here. Since I'm using green, I'm gonna do it over here on a different area, 'cause I think I'll do a running stitch around this one in a different color, to make the color really pop. And the running stitch is the same as the quilting stitch. But, unlike the quilting stitch, for the running stitch in embroidery, I'm usually going, kind of using a stabbing motion and going up, up, and down with my needle instead of gathering up a number of stitches on the needle like you would with quilting. And the reason for that is because you wanna be really particular about where your stitches go, especially when you have a pre-printed fabric or a pre-printed pattern, like I do here. There we go. You can see it in Susie's version, the thread is much thinner. And this one is stitched with embroidery floss. And it looks like she just used one strand of the floss to make this really faint line. That makes a really nice contrast between the big, bold satin stitch circles and that tiny little running stitch that kind of fades into the distance. The running stitch is also what I've used here,

between the arrows and around. Here's another example in between the arrows. And then around the circles, in this example. These circles are just stitched with backstitch, instead of satin stitch. And then these little running stitches around the outside. The last little section of this sampler are these arrows. And these are stitched with backstitch. The ones on this example are stitched with chain stitch. And then the background in both areas are both filled in with running stitch. If you'd like to learn the chain stitch, or tons of other stitches, please check out my embroidery sampler class. And my favorite thing about being an embroidery designer is that I have an idea of what stitches I'm gonna use for these samplers, as I'm drawing them in my workshop. But I love the way everyone interprets them differently. And one of my favorite parts of my job is looking to see how everybody's embroidered theirs in their own special way.

Construct your ornament

- Once you've finished your embroidery, you have two choices about how to stitch these into ornaments. The first is using a cotton backing, and you can see on this one I used a bit of a flannel, and the second is using a wool felt like I've done here, and I've also added a little embroidery to this one. The first way that I'm gonna show you how to do it is with the cotton backing. When you're picking out the backing fabric, it's a great opportunity to add a little bit of sentimentality. So you could use a scrap of a fabric from someone who was meaningful to you. This is a little bit of a scrap from one of my dad's shirts. Could also add a little bit of embroidery like I did here. I stitched "I love you", and I think that would make a really great background. To do that I just used a pencil, and I wrote out the words that I wanted to embroider, and then I stitched it over with the back stitch. For the back of this one, I think I'm gonna use this really fun water skiing fabric. I've had this in my scrap bin forever. You can see it has a bit of a faded line, but I don't think that'll matter for the background of this guy. I'm gonna cut it out, and I'm gonna cut it out with pinking shears. So you might be wondering that there's not a lot of seam allowance in here, and that's intentional. You can see on this example that the embroidery goes right up to the seam. So I like to have embroidery going right up to the max, so I'm gonna cut this out. Just cutting it out with pinking shears. You could use regular fabric shears here, I just happen to have my pinking shears ready. And I'm going to cut off a little bit of the excess, just to get it out of the way when I'm sewing. And now I'm going to lay this down right sides together on the backing fabric, and you can kind of figure out where you want your embroidery to go in relationship to the fade. If you were using a fabric that had embroidery on it, you'll want to consider how the embroidery is gonna look. You want it to be right side up, or maybe you don't, but you, you know, be intentional about where you're putting your embroidery with the embroidered background. Since I'm using this fabric that has kind of an all over design, I'm gonna do that in the corner. And I'll cut this out to roughly the same shape. Okay, so now these are right sides together, and I'm gonna use a needle, you could use a pin here, but I have a needle to hold those two pieces together. And then when I go over to the sewing machine, I'm gonna sew right up to the edge of where the embroidery ends. So there's about a quarter of an inch of fabric that's printed, but I'm gonna sew right up to the edge of that embroidery, because I want the embroidery to go all the way to the seam. I don't want any of the background fabric to be showing. Of course, you might choose to have a little bit of the background fabric showing. If sewing that close to the embroidery makes you nervous, you could add a little bit. As you stitch this together, you wanna make sure that you leave about a two inch gap where you're gonna add your stuffing. I like to do that right at the beginning. So I'm gonna start up here, I'm gonna stop here, and then I'm gonna start again down here. So I want the opening to be along one of the long sides of the heart.

Now go forward, and then I'm gonna use the reverse button and stitch back. Okay, now I'm gonna stop, raise up my presser foot, and pull the heart forward, and then start again down here. And I like to lower my needle down, so that I know I'm getting it right on the edge of that embroidery. So I lower the needle before I lower the presser foot. Now when I get down to the point of the heart, I'm just gonna do a little back and forth there. I'm gonna lower the needle again manually to make sure it's in just the right spot, then raise up the presser foot, and do a turn. Lower the presser foot again, and now I can start. And as I'm stitching this, I'm going nice and slow. You don't need to speed through it. You wanna make sure that you're getting your needle going up and down right on the edge of the embroidery, so it's not a race. Just think about going really slow, so that you get your stitches in right where you want them to be. Especially as you get around to these curves. (sewing machine whirs) Okay, so I'm in the middle of that heart. I'm gonna manually lower the needle, raise the presser foot, come back around like that. (sewing machine whirs) Okay, so then to end, I'm gonna do a little bit of a back and forth. So I'm just gonna do a little reverse. (sewing machine whirs) And then come back. Now I'm raising the presser foot up, and I can cut the threads here with the thread cutter on my sewing machine. Before I turn this right side out, I'm gonna take out the needle or pin, whatever you're using to hold those together, and I'm gonna trim off the excess. And this is a point where you really do want to use pinking shears, 'cause it makes for a smoother turned out ornament. So I'm just trimming this down to about a quarter of an inch to this machine stitch line. Like that. If you don't have pinking shears, after you cut that out, you can go back in with just a sharp pair of embroidery snips, and you can cut little notches along the way, especially in the curved areas like this. I'm gonna cut one that goes right down there to the center of the heart. So you can cut little notches like that with your embroidery snips, or use pinking shears which is much easier. Okay, I'm gonna cut that thread that carried over on both sides, and now I'm going to turn this right side out. This is always a fun moment, because it's the last time you get to see the backside of the embroidery, and the big reveal is always so much fun. Ta da! I'm just using my fingers to coax it into shape. The point of the heart is the trickiest. Actually, I'm gonna go back. I forgot to trim that, but I'm gonna cut, where the heart comes to a point like this, I'm gonna cut across the top of it, so there's not that excess fabric. So I'm not cutting through the threads, I'm just cutting it flat across that top, so that there's less fabric, so I can make it a nice sharp point as I turn it out. Use the backside of this pencil to kind of shove that fabric where it needs to be. When you've got your ornament turned out the way you like it, then it's time to stuff it. So I'm using Poly-Fil. You could also use cotton balls, or scraps of fabric. This is gonna get turned into an ornament, but if you wanted to, you could also turn this into a little lavender sachet or something like that, or a pin cushion if you wanted to stuff it with walnut shells. I'm gonna stuff it with Poly-Fil, and I like to stuff it with kind of a lot, so it has some density. And once you start stuffing it, you might notice that there's a few places that just need to kind of wiggle out, and if you need to stuff your pencil back in there, or a chopstick to get it nice and even, you can do that. So that looks pretty good. That's nice and stuffed. And now I'm gonna fold these flaps over, and have them meet like that. And now then last step is to hand stitch it shut with a blind stitch. So I'm gonna bring my needle up, I'm gonna go underneath, and then bring it up right here, right in the middle of that seam. I'm starting in the place where the fabric is machine stitched together, just to bury that knot. And now I'm gonna fold those two edges under, and this is a blind stitch. So I'm going, I'm gonna come up, my needle goes back down I'm coming up right on that edge. Pull my needle through. Whoop. And then I'm gonna go over to the other side, to the brown fabric, and put my needle in there, and then go down a little bit, and come up on that edge, on the brown side. Whoops, I keep getting stuck on the top of the heart.

So now I'm coming back over to the right side. I'm gonna go in just a little bit and then down, and I wanna come up with my needle right on the edge of that stitching, just like I did with the machine sewing, so that it's turned under at the same rate. So I'm just going side to side. Okay, come to the end here, and now I'm gonna just put my needle in, and go all the way down to the end, to kind of bury that stitch. So I bury the stitch all the way down to the end, and now is a good time, since I have thread coming out the bottom of this heart, I may as well add a little bell. So I'm gonna add one of these brass bells, and you can see it. I don't know if you can hear, it makes the sweetest little tinkling sound. And I'm gonna stitch that on like so. Go through again, and then come back to make a little knot. There's a few little pieces of that Poly-Fil coming out. Now I'm gonna just trim that knot. So there's the bell, and then with the extra pearl cotton, I'm gonna tie a knot at one end of this. I'm gonna make a loop so that it could hang. And make a true ornament. So it's on one side, and then I'm just gonna take it to the other side at the top of the heart, and pull it out to the length that you want it. And then do a tiny little knot over here, and go through that spot again. And then trim it. There we go. So there's the first ornament stitched up with the fabric backing. Now I wanna show you an alternate way of assembling these with a felt backing, like I did on this one, which happens to have really loud bells. It's the same way, the same basic concept, but instead of fabric backing we're gonna use felt, and this one happens to be a really fun Pendleton felt. For this ornament, I'm gonna use the blue heart here. I'm gonna cut it out, kind of a rough cut with the pinking shears. And it'll get cut down to size later, with also with the pinking shears, but I'm gonna cut it. Because this felt is expensive, I wanna not cut more than I actually need. So there we go. Okay. Now the cool thing about this Pendleton wool is it is actually different on both sides, one side is not the same as the other, so opposite of when I used fabric backing, I wanna stitch it together with wrong sides together. So I'm going to put the wrong sides together like that, and I'm gonna again use a pin, or a needle to hold the two sides together. And now I'm gonna stitch it together on the sewing machine, again stitching right next to where the embroidery ends. So I'm not having any seam allowance, I'm just stitching right up at the edge of the embroidery. Unlike when we used the fabric backing, I'm gonna stitch all the way around, because this is not gonna get turned out or anything. You can stitch all the way around, you do not need to leave a little spot for turning. But in the same way as the last time, I'm gonna manually lower my needle down so I know it's in the exact right spot, and I'm gonna start over here on this edge. (sewing machine whirs) All right, that's the end. Move this to the side so I can show you how I finish this. So I'm just cutting away those little threads that are left over from the swing machine. Take my needle out, maybe you used a pin, and now I'm gonna go back very carefully with my pinking shears, and I'm gonna cut away all of this white. And at the same time, I'm also cutting through the felt. And you just wanna go nice and slowly, because you do not wanna cut through those machine stitches. Ta da! I love the way it looks when you're finished cutting it out. There's the background. There's a couple little threads back here that need to get trimmed. So there we go. I love the way they sort of look like a valentine cookie. Now I'm gonna use some thread to add a loop. Go through the front. There we go. There we go. Trim this one a little bit it. And if you wanted to, you could add bells like I did on this version. You could have a bell at the bottom, or bells at the top. You could also see on the back of this one where I stitched an H, this is for my son Harvey, and you'll find that stitching on this wool is really nice, 'cause it's so soft, and it's a bit like stitching through a cloud. And for this H I just freehanded an H, and then I did a bunch of running stitches around it. But if you'd like to learn more about transferring a specific image, or text, or letters, you can check out my Creativebug class on embroidery transfer techniques. I'd like to show you some other finished versions of the heart ornaments. Here's one of the arrow hearts. This

one has the same water skiing people on it. This is another one that has the same starburst as the blue one that I stitched with the felt backing, but for this one I did a little appliqué of a name, my son Leo. And this one's stitched with, on the back I use a little scrap from one of my dad's shirts, so that's a nice little memory from my dad, my son's grandpa, and then here's another one that I stitched my niece's name on the back. I haven't stitched this one shut yet, but I will. And this one has a little metallic floss in the center, which pro tip, if you're stitching with metallic floss, this is all back stitched, except for the metallic is couched, because you do not wanna be back stitching with metallic thread, it'll give you a giant headache. Whatever embroidery stitches you decide to use, these will make a very sweet memento for the Valentines in your life.