
AppliquÃ© Ruffle Pillow with Natalie Chanin

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- In this workshop we're going to learn the ruffle stripe applique, which is a technique that is detailed in our book Alabama Studio Sewing and Design. This is a really simple technique that can add a lot of dimension and texture to any project that you'd like to apply this applique to. (cheerful music)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- For this ruffle stripe applique project, you're going to need a pillow case. We've chosen a pillow case that is from our second book Alabama Studio Style. The instructions for making this exact pillow are all in this book, but again you can use anything that you have available in your home or that you can find readily in your community. We have a pillow form for actually stuffing the pillow afterwards. We're working today with our 100% organic cotton jersey. We have two colors, a turquoise and a sand color. We need an all-purpose thread. We've used these beautiful old spools of all-purpose thread. This is only going to be for basting our applique. For applying our applique to the pillow, we're going to be using our Coats and Clark button craft thread, tailor's chalk, our embroidery scissors, pins, needles, a see-through ruler, our rotary cutter, and a cutting mat.

Chapter 3 - Make Pillow

Cut fabric

- The first step is to cut your actual applique pieces. I'm gonna start with this turquoise fabric and move this out of the way just a little bit. Make sure that our fabric is running on the grain right here. I'm gonna line this folded edge up along the line of my cutting mat. These cutting mats are really great, they have one inch increments. It helps you really with your cutting. It makes it all very easy. We're gonna need our see-through ruler and our rotary cutter. So the first thing I'm gonna do is just to clean up this bottom edge so I'll have a straight line moving across the grain of the fabric. When you're using these rotary cutters it's really important to watch your fingers. Always keep your fingers away from the edge and just go very slowly and you get a nice clean finish there. Now I'm gonna cut my actual ruffle stripe. We've chosen to make our stripes an inch wide, you can choose any width that fits great with your project, whatever you'd like to do. These see-through rulers are really great because they have markings. It's two inches wide and right down the middle is a very strong one inch line, so I'm just gonna cut my applique using that line that's in the ruler. Line it up, matching the lines on my cutting mat here and again, very slowly, I'm gonna cut this strip across the grain at one inch wide. For this particular applique it doesn't really matter how long your cut strips are. If you run out of one strip, we'll just layer a second strip on top of it and you can continue sewing and if the strip is too long, we're just gonna cut away what we don't need. There we have one strip. Whoop, I missed a little part here. That happens sometime when you're cutting, I'm just gonna use my embroidery scissors, so there I have my applique stripe. I'm just gonna go ahead and cut another stripe to ensure that I have enough to complete the project, following the guidelines on the gridded mat. Just move my ruler along. You'll notice that the ends that I've cut are not very square, this looks like something that we would not be able to use, so I'm just gonna cut that away

and I think I have enough of our turquoise color, so I'm gonna move on to this lighter color now. This piece is a little bit smaller, this is a scrap, so it's actually two piece of fabric together. I'm just gonna line the grain of the fabric up with my gridded cutting board here. I'm gonna clean this bottom up so I'll have a perfect perpendicular square to my grain line. I'm just gonna put this scrap away and we're ready to cut our actual applique piece for the project, so I'm gonna go in at the inch. Follow that gridded line and just very slowly cut and move my ruler along til I get to the other edge there so I have here two pieces of applique. I'm gonna go ahead and cut two more just to be sure that I have enough to complete the whole project. I have two pieces of applique here.

Create ruffle

- Now that we have our applique strips cut, we're going to gather them and prepare them for the applique process, so I'm gonna use my all-purpose thread. This thread is actually going to be removed from the applique once we apply it to the pillow slip. I'm gonna needle my thread. And I'm actually gonna tie a little knot here in the end so that my gathers don't slip off the end of the basting thread. We're going to sew with a stitch that's about a quarter of an inch. The size of your stitches do affect how the ruffle looks in the end, so we have chosen this quarter of an inch to get this look that we have for our applique stripe, but you can experiment with the different stitch lengths and different kinds of basting stitches to see what happens to the applique before you apply it. For me this is the best part of the sewing process, to experiment with how stitches work and what changes when you vary things, so I'm just gonna start here at the end of our cut applique. Gonna kind of just eyeball down the middle and take about quarter of an inch stitches. These don't have to be perfect, you can see that it already starts to gather. I'm gonna stitch a little bit before I gather it, it just makes the process slightly easier. Once it's gathered it's a little bit hard to work up next to the gather, as long as your needle is you can just keep adding these stitches in. This is just gonna create the ruffle. Again, we're going to remove this thread once it's been appliqued to our pillow slip. You can see how that makes a pretty little ruffle. You just continue along the length of your strip. Should you get to a point where you run out of your strip, I'm just gonna cut this here to show you what happens. What you're gonna do is just overlap two pieces together. Just gonna put a pin in here and then you just keep sewing over it and you're gonna gather those two pieces together. You should overlap your two strips approximately an inch to keep them from unraveling as you apply your ruffled stripe, so I'm just gonna pull these up, and you'll see that it just gathers in exactly the same method. Just remove your pin and keep sewing. We've prepared some ruffles that are sewn a little bit further so you can see what this process looks like. I'm just gonna show you the end knots so you can see how to finish off your ruffle applique when you come to the desired length. Just gonna use this piece right here. So what I'm gonna do is just gather this up so that my applique feels complete and then I'm just gonna tie a little knot by making a loop and sewing through it. Then I'm gonna go ahead and give it a double knot just to make sure that that knot doesn't come untied. At the moment, this basting thread and these knots are the only thing that's holding your applique together, so you want to make sure that it doesn't break before you actually attach it to your pillow slip. I'm just gonna cut that knot, cut that thread, and then I'm gonna trim off my applique very close to that knot and you can see I have my finished applique there and I'll just use my fingers to adjust the width of the applique and actually, you just can kind of press down and it almost irons it into shape.

Baste ruffle

- Now we're ready to place and baste our gathered applique stripe to our pillow slip. So I have my two finished stripes here, ruffled stripes. I'm gonna use my ruler just to measure out, our stripe is three and a half inches from the edge of the pillow, so I'm gonna take my tailor's chalk and just make a little mark here, and another one. Last one here, and I'm gonna place the ruler and just draw a line to use as a guideline for where I'm gonna baste my ruffled stripe down. Our second ruffle is two inches from our first ruffle stripe, so again I'm just gonna mark this off as a guideline, and draw my second line. The tailor's chalk will be hidden underneath the actual ruffle stripe so you shouldn't be able to see that in the end. Now I'm just gonna place my finished ruffle stripe on the pillowcase, I'm just gonna reach my hand up in between, so that I can pin this into place. Just gonna make sure that it's securely pinned, we are gonna baste this down because when we sew the embroidery stitch afterwards you're gonna find that if you leave pins in here that your sewing threads are gonna be caught up in the pins, so we're just gonna give another basting stitch down the center line of that to make sure that it's secured to the fabric. And now I'm gonna pin my second one. A lighter color, over the second stripe. I'm just gonna insert my hand in here, hold this into place, and pin this second stripe down. And now I'm ready to baste my ruffle into place. I'm gonna take this lighter color all-purpose thread. For this particular section you can use a little bit of a larger running stitch because we are again going to remove this after we finish appliqueing the ruffle stripe. Just gonna tie a little knot here, we're gonna cut that away afterwards. So for this one I'm just gonna take out my pin, I'm just gonna use my fingers as I work along, just to make sure that my ruffles are following the line, they're nicely separated as I baste this down, I'm gonna take stitches that are about a half to three-quarters of an inch, you can see that it's a little, it's a lot of layers that you're sewing through, so you just have to take a little bit more time, you can probably not take as many stitches as you normally would in a running stitch, I'm gonna remove those pins as I work my way up, and just always check underneath to make sure that that chalked line that I'm still working down the middle of that line. When I first started sewing I used to love to skip the basting process, I always thought that that was a waste of time, but I've come to understand over the years that this has a very important purpose and it just makes sewing more enjoyable when your materials are in place and ready for you to do those more complicated embroidery stitches. Just gonna reposition this at the end just to make sure that I'm coming to the end of my pillow slip and that everything is still in a proper place, I'm just gonna repin this really quickly. And continue working til I get to the end of this ruffle stripe. Just checking that my chalked line is still in place, that my applique is centered on that line. It doesn't really matter if you finish your basting stitch on the inside or the outside, we're going to remove it anyway so it doesn't matter at this point. I finished my last stitch on the outside so I'm just gonna tie a little knot there again just to ensure that it doesn't separate from the pillow slip as I do my embroidery applique stitch. I'm gonna repeat this process for my second stripe, and we're going to be ready to sew.

Sew zig-zag stitch

- The application of our ruffled stripe applique is detailed in our book *Alabama Studio Sewing and Design*. On page 108 you'll find both the ruffle stripe and the application of a beaded ruffle stripe, which simply uses a beaded embroidery stitch. Today we'll be using and demonstrating the zig-zag chain for the application process, but there are so many beautiful embroidery stitches that you can use and it's really just a question of aesthetics and the look that you would like for your particular project and the one that you choose for the actual application. We're going to be using a double strand of our Button Craft thread to attach our ruffle stripe to the pillow slip. I'm going to needle my

thread. You can refer back to our physics of sewing workshops for tips and old wives tales about ways to make your sewing process easier. We do a little thing called loving your thread. You can see that once you remove the thread from the spool there's a lot of excess tension that comes from the manufacturing process. We do a little thing called loving our threads. You'll simply rub your fingers over the thread releasing the tension as you distribute the oil from your fingers on the thread itself. While we do this, we have to have a little talk to the thread and tell it exactly what it's supposed to do. So we say, this thread is going to sew the most beautiful pillow that's ever been made. The person who uses it in their home, it will bring them laughter, joy, prosperity, any of the things that you might like to wish for the person you're making this for or for yourself, should it be for your own home. By the time you've perfectly loved your thread, we're gonna tie a double knot and your thread will never knot again as you sew. I simply make a loop and bring the ends of the two strands of the thread through that loop. We leave a little bit of a longer tail at Alabama Chanin because we want to ensure that this thread is not going to become shorter and shorter and come down to the edge of the knot. If you cut your thread right down beside that knot, what will happen is your knot will come untied and your thread will begin to work its way out of your project. So it's really important, the second thing we do is tie a double knot. This is just to ensure that the weight of this very strong thread can be held by the very fine yarns that make up the loops of this cotton jersey fabric. I'm just gonna insert my thread here inside the pillow slip and at the very beginning of my ruffle stripe. And come up to the face of my project. At the very beginning we're gonna do something called a wrap stitch, just to secure that very beginning end so that our thread doesn't pull once our garment is finished. The zig-zag chain does exactly what it says. It's simply a chain stitch that's worked in a zig-zag method across the length of the applique. I'm going to start by going back in very close to the original point where my thread came up and start with a zig-zag stitch. I'm gonna stop once my needle is inserted, take the thread that came from the original hole, wrap it around the needle, and then pull the needle through. What this does is create a loop that goes over the length of your stitch. The next stitch I'm gonna go right back down very close to where I came up with that first stitch and do my zag, stopping again just as the needle is inserted. Gonna wrap this end that came from the original stitch and then pull that needle through again to create that second loop. We're just gonna continue this process of pulling the loops and inserting the needle back where the initial yarn came out. We're going to wrap using that thread that comes out of the hole and pulling our loops. If your thread gets caught on your ruffle like that just use the end of your needle, the eye of your needle, to just untether that and continue with your loops. Gonna insert my needle, sew my zig-zag stitch, wrap my thread, and pull my loop. Insert my needle, take my first zig-zag stitch, wrap my thread, and pull my loop. You can see that this particular stitch, these embroidery stitched like this, require quite a bit of thread. You're gonna notice that your thread runs out really quickly. All you're gonna do, when you come to this stitch, is insert your needle back down to the back of your fabric, tie off your knot with a double knot leaving a longer tail. You have your double knot on the back and to start again, all you're gonna do is rethread your needle. You're just gonna come back to the same spot. Insert your needle and begin your zig-zag process again. When you reach the end of your ruffle stripe applique row, you're gonna end in the same method by just inserting your needle down, coming back to the inside of the pillow, tying off your double knot, and clipping your thread.

Finishing

- So we have a partially completed pillow slip here that I'd like to show you, just so when you come

to the end of your row, you'll know how to take out your basting stitches. Here's this here. You can see that the zig-zag chain on the turquoise strap has been completed. So now I'm just gonna take my scissors and just use the point of the scissors to pull this basting stitch. And just pull this right out. You're still gonna see some of the, it seems like I didn't get the whole thing, but really, what you wanna do is just remove all of the basting stitch that you can see, here's another little piece right here, gonna pull that out. And just go through and continue checking. Now this is the basting stitch that attached the finished ruffle applique to the pillow slip. There's my beginning knot right there, I'm just gonna pull that out. I believe that I've removed all of my basting stitch that attached the actually ruffle stripe applique to the pillow slip. And now I'm just gonna check as carefully as I can, in the middle for my original basting stitch that ruffled this cut stripe. And it seems that through my sewing, I have encompassed all of the basting stitch inside the threads. I cannot actually see it anywhere. If you can't see it, I would just leave it inside because it will not ever come out. But if you can see little parts of it, you're just gonna very carefully take the tips of your scissors, find that thread and pull it out. We have a finished version of the pillow here. You can see that both of the ruffle stripes have been appliqued with the zig-zag chain stitch. At this point, you're ready to stuff your pillow. We have a pillow form here. Just gonna put this inside. You can usually just work those points up into the end. I'll usually just (thumping) fluff it up. May wanna reach back inside and get that corner really up in that corner there. Just takes a little time to work all the feathers in. (thumping) There you have our finished ruffle stripe applique pillow. All of our organic cotton fabrics are machine washable. This cut edge right here, nothing can happen, so just incorporate it in your life and use it every day.