



mirror magic

“Writing, I think, is not apart from living. Writing is a kind of double living. The writer experiences everything twice. Once in reality and once in that mirror which waits always before or behind.”

(Catherine Drinker Bowen, American writer 1897-1973)

By Clare Mooney

The first time I saw this quilt by Lisa Walton I just couldn't figure out how it was made. Call me naïve or a little stupid but it looked really hard.

Lisa said that's the reaction she usually gets. "This simple wallhanging uses reverse appliqué techniques and fusing to create an optical illusion, which will fascinate everyone who sees it."

I was intrigued to know how Lisa came up with the idea. She told me, "This project started out after I read an article by Jane Dunnewold, author of *Complex Cloth*. I believe she uses this exercise as a start to her design workshops and I really liked the concept of the expanded square and wanted to work out a way to turn it into a quilt. It is a great opportunity to look at symmetry and mirror images, and even the simplest shapes can result in an exciting, unique design. By following a few simple rules you can create something really interesting."

Lisa is fortunate to be able to work full-time doing something she loves. She says, "I am really lucky in that I am able to follow my passion. My husband Peter and I work together creating fabrics for Dyed and Gone to Heaven and we spend lots of time playing with colours. I am also having a wonderful time teaching all over the place. I taught in the UK last year and next year I am so excited to be invited back and also to teach in Italy and France. I can't wait."

Lisa has won awards both here in Australia and overseas for her quilts. She says about her quilting, "I am addicted to colour and texture. I can't really draw so most of my quilts are geometric in design. I mainly use my own hand-dyed fabrics as well as textured fabrics such as silks and velvets, although I enjoy using embellished fabrics. Of course, I usually add a few beads if the quilt calls for it."

Cutout Magic works most effectively with batiks, hand-dyed or other monochromatic fabrics. Patterned fabrics do not work well with this technique as the designs on the fabrics compete with the design of the quilt. Lisa shares a valuable story, "I taught a class once where one of the students created a beautiful intricate design for her block but then chose a patterned fabric. When she cut it all out and started to place it on the fabric her cut-up design was lost in the busy fabric. That's why I always recommend that students use a hand-dyed fabric or something similar."

With this technique you can try your hand at creating your own eye-catching designs. It is a great idea to try out your designs on paper first to make sure they are visually appealing and so that you know exactly what you are doing when you cut into your precious fabric. After all, there is nothing worse than ruining a favourite piece of fabric from your collection.



cutout magic

Finished size: 74cm x 74cm (29in x 29in)

This simple wallhanging made by Lisa Walton of Sydney NSW, combines reverse appliqué techniques and fusing to create a fascinating optical illusion.

Materials

1.1m (1¼yd) each of two contrasting batiks, hand-dyed or other monochromatic fabrics, see note
1m (1½yd) backing fabric
Batting at least 102cm (40in) square
Coordinating cotton thread for piecing
Quilting thread
30cm (⅓yd) fusible web 90cm (1yd) wide
2m (2¼yd) fusible web for basting, optional
Sheets of coloured paper and white paper

Small sharp scissors
Pencil
Chalk marker
Glue pen or glue stick
Pressing mat
Rotary cutter, ruler and mat

Note: Patterned fabrics do not work well with this technique as the designs on the fabrics compete with the design of the quilt. Use batiks, hand-dyed or other monochromatic fabrics.

Paper cutout technique

1. Before cutting your fabric it is suggested you make a few paper cutouts to familiarise yourself with Lisa's cutout technique.
2. Cut a piece of coloured paper into 5in squares and, following Diagram 1, rule diagonal lines across the squares.
3. Using one of the designs on the Pattern Sheet or your own simple design, cut along the lines. Place the cutout shapes on a sheet of white paper as you cut to avoid confusion. Do not try to cut perfect shapes; a little variety creates additional interest.
4. Flip out alternate shapes to create negative or mirror images. Glue the shapes to white paper.
5. Guidelines to follow when making cutouts are to keep the corners intact as this will make placement on the grid easier. Use every piece you cut and place all cutouts so they look like mirror images.

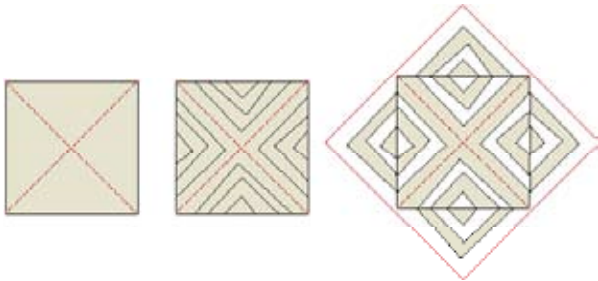


Diagram 1

Prepare Fabric 1

1. Fabric 1 forms the background of the quilt and is used for the outer border and the binding. On Lisa's quilt this is the blue/green fabric. Following Diagram 2, fold the fabric into quarters and square off the raw edges.

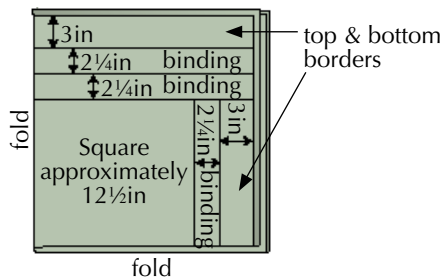


Diagram 2

From the folded fabric, cut:

- 3in strips for outer border
- 2 1/4in strips for the binding
- Square up the remaining fabric to the length of the shortest side, approximately 12 1/2in. The opened-out square should measure approximately 25in

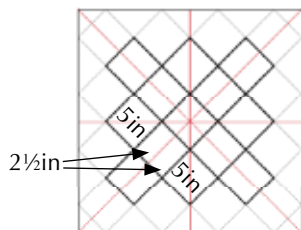


Diagram 3

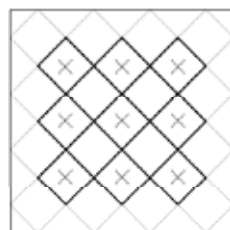


Diagram 4

2. Mark the centre of the square with a chalk marker or press it lightly to create guidelines.
3. Following Diagram 3, rule a grid on the square. The lines on either side of the diagonal lines are 2 1/2in away. Other lines are 5in apart.
4. Following Diagram 4, mark a cross in the nine blocks created in the grid. These will be the blocks for the positive shapes.

Prepare Fabric 2

From Fabric 2, cut:

- 4 strips, 2in x width of fabric (Border 1, the "peeper" border)
- 1 strip, 11in x width of fabric

1. From the fusible web, cut a strip 11in wide and the same length as the fabric. Fuse to the wrong side of the fabric strip.
2. From the fused fabric, cut 10 squares, 5in.
3. Following Diagram 5, peel the backing paper from two squares and place them right sides together. Pin at the centre to stabilise.
4. Pieces cut from these squares will form the main and mirror image cutouts for two squares on the grid.
5. Following Diagram 6, cut out the design carefully and place the mirror-image pieces and the main pieces aside, taking care to maintain the design.



Diagram 5

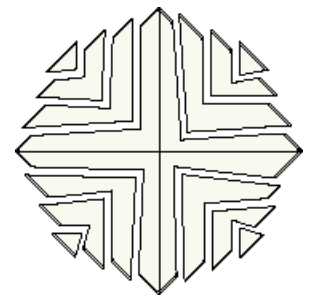


Diagram 6



Diagram 7

6. Following Diagram 7, carefully place one main piece on one of the marked squares on the grid and the cutout second pieces onto the empty diamonds surrounding it. Continue to arrange the pieces.
7. When a few sets have been arranged and you are happy with the design the pieces can be fused to the background with a warm iron and a pressing mat. Take care to cover or remove the marked lines, as this enhances the optical illusion.
8. Continue in the same manner until the grid is covered and all the squares except one are used.

Add the "peeper" border

1. Lisa used curved piecing to join the borders to her quilt top. Straight borders can be used instead if preferred. Make the finished width of the first or "peeper" border 3/4in wide. ➤



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2. To join the “peeper” border with curved piecing, trim a 2in strip of Fabric 2 to the same length as the square.
3. Following Diagram 8, with both the right side of the quilt and the strip facing upwards, place the strip on top of one edge of the quilt with the two pieces overlapping about 1in.

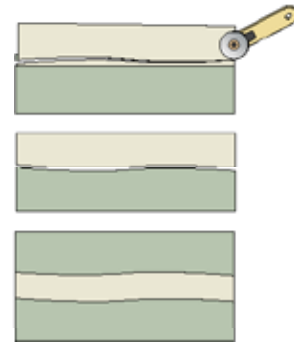


Diagram 8

4. With a rotary cutter and cutting very gentle curves, make a free-form cut from one side of the quilt to the other. Remove the two excess pieces, place the two edges right sides together and stitch with a ¼in seam allowance. Press the seam allowance towards the “peeper” border.
5. Add a border to the opposite edge of the quilt in the same manner and then add borders to the top and bottom edges of the quilt.
6. Use the 3in strips of Fabric 1 to add the wider second border to the quilt in the same manner.

Add the quilting

1. Machine quilting holds the fused edges and the layers together.
2. Following the instructions for Preparing the Quilt Sandwich in Basics on page 121, pin the quilt top, batting and backing together. Alternatively, fuse a large square of fusible web to the back of the quilt and another square to the wrong side of the backing fabric. Iron to fuse to either side of the batting. This method results in a firm and stable quilt, with no pins to impede the quilting process.
3. Quilt the layers together with a free-motion design that complements or contrasts with the cutout design. Lisa’s quilting design is shown in Diagram 9.



Diagram 9

Finish the quilt

1. Following the instructions for Binding the Quilt in Basics on page 121, use the six 2¼in strips to bind the edge of the quilt. ©

A kit of hand-dyed fabrics, fusible web and craft papers for the quilt top and binding is available from Lisa Walton at Dyed & Gone to Heaven for \$55 + postage in your choice of colours. See the Stockists & Contacts list.