

JULY 2017: Broderie Perse

This month we are taking a look at a type of appliqué that has interesting roots. 17th century European trade with India resulted in the huge popularity of Indian textiles. Exotic eastern designs were gradually toned down to better suit English tastes. However, when protective laws were put in effect by outraged English and French manufactures of wool and silk, the Indian chintzes and calicos that were favored for their colorfastness became scarce. This scarcity led the English needlewoman to cut up her small supplies of printed chintz to piece with plain fabric or to appliqué the floral motifs onto plain background fabric to make the prints go as far as possible. This type of appliqué was called Broderie Perse, from the French, which means to embroider chintz. Traditionally, the appliqués are realistic motifs, such as flowers, birds, and butterflies.

Look for richly printed fabrics with lots of different motifs, or combine motifs from several fabrics. Cut out the motifs and appliqué them to the background fabric by needle turned, or buttonhole stitch, or machine appliqué. If you plan to needle turn appliqué, make sure that the fabric is the appropriate weight and weave. Also make sure that you leave a small border around the motif to turn under.

This month we have a very fanciful peacock to use for our block. I have used rocks and flowering shrubs with the raw edge appliqué technique on the ground and I have used individual feathers for the bird. You may use the Broderie perse technique for any or all of these. It is up to your own imagination. You may also add any other embellishments that you choose.

