



DESIGN & MAKE

BY HEATHER LUKE

Cross Stitched Border Cushion



Cross stitched Border



Who doesn't want to bring back handfuls of glass beads from Venice, but what to do with them ? There are only so many necklaces....

The backs are as important as the fronts, the tops as the bottoms, and the insides as the outsides. That's a philosophy, a mantra, a rule maybe, but one that is pretty much bound to guarantee the success of everything, and anything, you turn your hand to. So the backs of cushions, the closures, are vital elements of cushion design and making - take a look at yours now and see how many are right side out and right side up? Unless you, or your housekeeper are fastidious, not many I'm guessing... It's a lot less irritating when the sides are equally good, and it doesn't much matter which way up they are !

Bordered cushions such as this fulfil a lot of the requirements of cushions- they hold a pad of course, but more than that the border helps the cushion to stay in place - something basic scatter cushions aren't that good at. The border can be modest, no more than a detail, or very deep, lavish even, minimally or highly decorated. These look much more complicated to make than they are - to break down the process they are essentially a simple scatter cushion, with a border stitched around once it has been made, much like an Oxford pillowcase.

Design

This one has parallel stitched rows that have been filled in with cross stitching on the front, but left plain on the back. The closure too, has been kept deliberately simple - both because it makes it a whole lot easier to make, and also to show that selvages can be attractive. However, a tidy finished edge is also possible just by turning the selvedge under and stitching it down neatly.

There is much scope for individual preference and advanced skills with these cushions - this one is just the starting point for many other ideas including contrast stitching, applied ribbons, perhaps knotted or tied into bows at the corners, or any amount of embroidered designs. Over to you....



Make

MATERIALS

FOR ANY SIZE OF CUSHION PAD

1. 1 x front to the size of the pad, plus 2 cm (1/2" or so) for easement, plus the border, plus seam allowances.
2. 2 x backs to half of this dimension plus 3 cms (1 1/4") more on the width of each to allow for the overlap.
3. 2 x brass rings for the eyelets - these were 12mm but any size as appropriate
4. 2 x Venetian or other glass beads
5. Embroidery thread or perle to match. Or any embroidery or crochet cotton- it can be used double
6. Wool or other thread to make the cross stitching and to twist or plait into a 25 cm (10") cord to hold the glass beads.

For this project we used a cushion pad of 40 cms, so the calculations are:

- a) for the front: 40 cms for the pad + 2 cms for easement + 14 cms for the borders (7 cms all round) plus 3 cms for the seam allowance (2 x 1.5 cms) So 1 x piece of fabric 60 cms x 60 cms.
(Or: 16" for the pad + 1/2" for easement plus + 6" (for 3" borders all round) plus 1 1/4" for two seam allowances. So 1 x piece of fabric 24" square.)
- b) for the two backs pieces : each 60 cms top to bottom x 33 cms wide- 3 cms added to each side for the overlap.
(Or: 24" top to bottom x 13 1/4" wide - 1 1/4" added to each side for the overlap.)

Note 1. The overlap: the size of this can vary - a bit less for a small pad, more for a bigger one. The concern is that the overlap should be wide enough to hold the cushion in without it straining, but not so much that it becomes difficult to insert the pad. This is likely to become more of a consideration as the cushion size gets larger and no longer fits into one width of fabric, or when it's being made from off-cuts.

Note 2. The easement: so that the cushion pad can sit comfortably within the cover - we prefer cushions per se to be squashy and comfortable than too fatly padded. So there may be a different consideration for personal taste. And again, less might be right for the smaller sizes and a touch more for the larger ones.

Note 3. The cutting out: this cushion, and also up to approx. 50 cms (20") square - depending on the depth of the borders - will fit within the normal furnishing fabric width of 135 cms or 54". In which case it's perfectly possible to avoid the side seams by folding, overlapping the back, then trimming away any excess. The raw edge that will sit behind the selvedge needs to be finished first, with a hem, pinking or binding - whichever seems the most appropriate.

Note 4. If this is your first one, ignore the last point and follow the instructions rigidly.....

Make

PREPARE

FOR ANY SIZE OF CUSHION PAD

1. Cut out one front and two backs to dimensions as above.

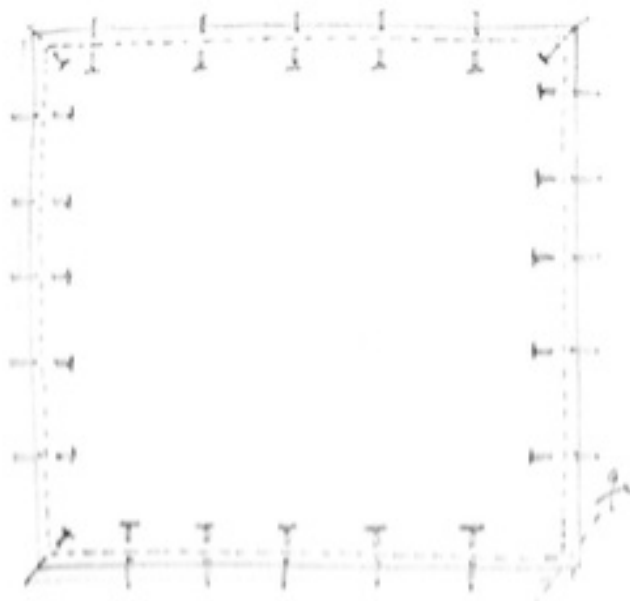
Tip! If you're quite new to this and have changed the dimensions, just run through the text and make the relevant notes, before you start.

TO MAKE THE COVER

1. Place the backs onto the worktable, right sides up, with the outer back uppermost. Measure the widths across the top and bottom to make sure they are equal to the front piece. Pin the two pieces together securely, leaving just a hand-width open unpinned at the centre.

2. Place the front piece over, right side down. Line up the raw edges and pin them together securely, along all four sides.

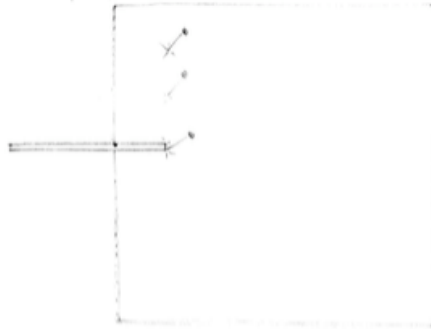
3. Stitch around the given seam allowance. Snip across the corners. Press the seams open. Turn the cover out. To do this i.e. to make the opening large enough reach inside through the hand-width opening and remove some of the overlap securing pins..



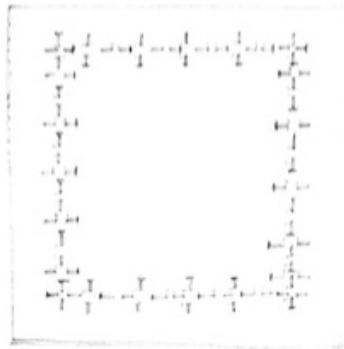
4. Make neat corners, then finger press the sides to make sure the outside line is good and straight. Press lightly, if necessary - this will almost always be fabric dependent, springy fabrics being less malleable than, say, linen that responds well to pressing - insert a few pins, or even tack a line to hold the outer edge. Pinning the overlap edges together will help to keep the back pieces in the right shape.

Make

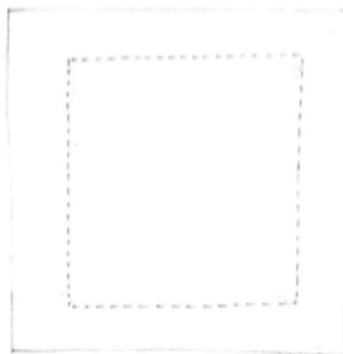
5. With the short measure and pins mark the border distance along each side, until you have worked all around, effectively creating an inner square.



6. Pin this square in, until there is no room for error. However many of these cushions we make, we never compromise on this stage of the preparation - or on the amount of pins used...



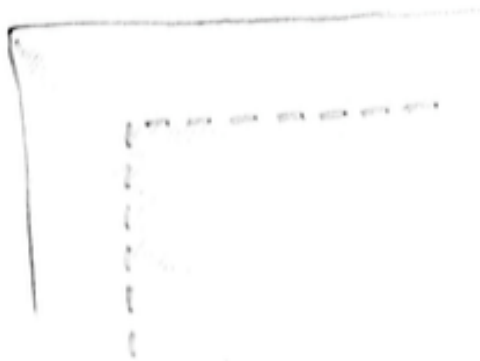
7. Either by hand, or by machine, stitch the border, following the pins that designate the line. If stitching by machining, leave the cross pins in place, as they help by adding some rigidity whilst holding the layers together. Once the border line has been stitched, take the pins out, press lightly - just enough to remove any pin marks and to bed in the stitching.



Tip! If the intention is for a double stitching line very close to the last, then you can leave the crossed pins in place. If further away, just move them over to cross the new line, so that they can still remain in place throughout the machining.

Make

STITCHING



A. Hand stitched lines need to be secure but can be largish and in thicker thread, such as linen thread, even wool or cord if the fabric can take it. Something we often do is to stitch the secure row first by machine in matching thread, and then over-stitch with another texture or colour for finish.



B. & C. Double stitched rows by hand or machine help to identify that there is a border and if machined as below, provide channels for further decoration.



Make

STITCHING



D. Here we made two machine stitched lines, in-filled with a cross stitch pattern in two tones of wool - the detail being in the change of texture and dimensions rather than actual colour.

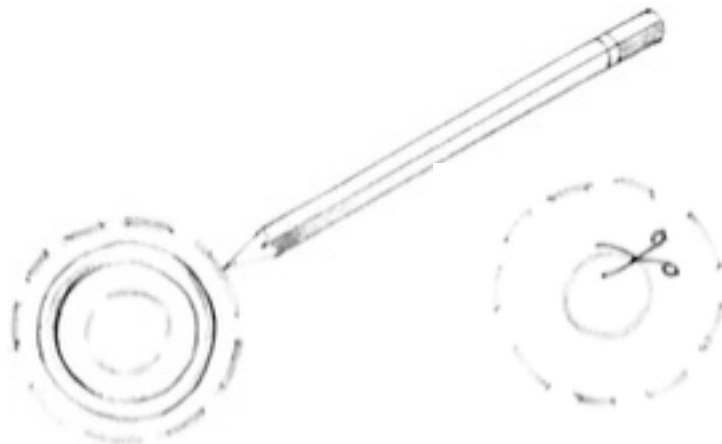


Make

TO MAKE THE EYELET

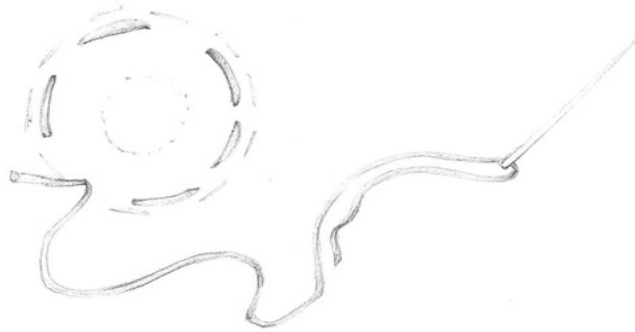


1. If you already know how many eyelets and where they should be before you start, then the best plan is, of course, to make them right at the beginning, when the fabric is easier to hold. Often though, it's worth seeing the finished article before planning the position, especially with something as easy to make as eyelets.
2. With the cushion back uppermost, mark the eyelet position at the centre, just within the selvedge, or approx. 3 cms (1 1/4") in from a neatly finished edge.
3. Take the brass ring and position it where the eyelet will be- check that it allows another one to be made beneath it. Draw a pencil line around both sides.
4. Cut away the fabric within the inner drawn ring- use the tips of small scissors.

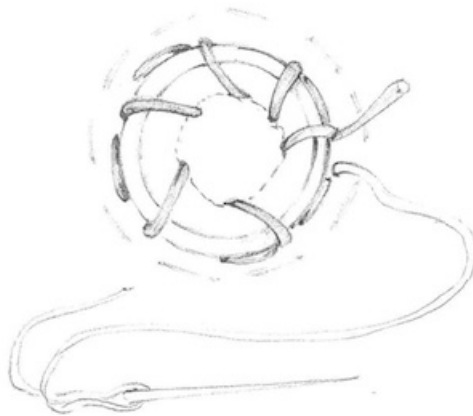


Make

5. Leave the end free, run a row of small stitches around, just inside or touching the outer pencilled line. The eyelet stitches will reach to the pencilled line and in doing so will enclose these.



6. Hold the ring over this stitching and secure it with approx. 6-8 equally spaced stitches. Pull them quite tight, at least enough to encourage the raw edge to be fold back over the ring, but without the main fabric puckering



Make

STITCHING

7. Continue to move around the ring with over-sewing stitches formed as tightly together as possible, enclosing all pencilled marks and stitches within. Fasten the thread off at the end by running it through the underside of the eyelet stitches.



* Instead of over-sewing, a blanket - type or buttonhole stitch, one that leaves a knotted edge on side or another, can be worked. Thread the colour for the security and then over-stitch with another texture or colour for finish.

* Buttonholes and eyelets tend to look their best when the stitching matches, or at least tones with the main fabric; unless specifically designed to show, these are the supporting act and not the star.



8. Press the stitches to bed them in a little - use steam, by damp cloth.

9. Thread the glass beads onto the cord or fine ribbon and secure them at each end. Fill the cushion cover with the pad, thread the cord and beads through the eyelets, tie or knot them, and there it is, done !



An interior designers guide to home furnishings, large and small, essential and ancillary, fun and serious. Here this bordered cushion, or false Oxford, similar in name and style to the pillow design, offers a great deal of scope for surface decoration, both within the border and around the stitching line, on the front of it, and of course within the closure. There are many other bordered cushions or false Oxfords in our arsenal - these are our favourite cushions, the border helps to hold the cushion in place, stops it slipping, and presents great opportunities for design detailing.

Project Ref: Crossed stitched border cushion

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