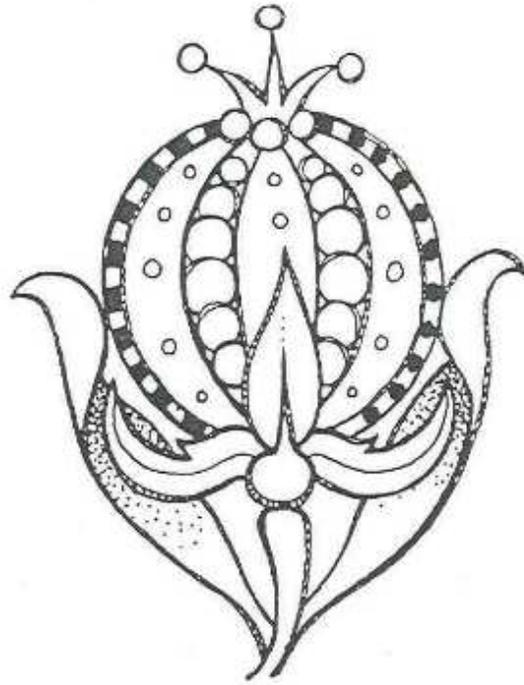
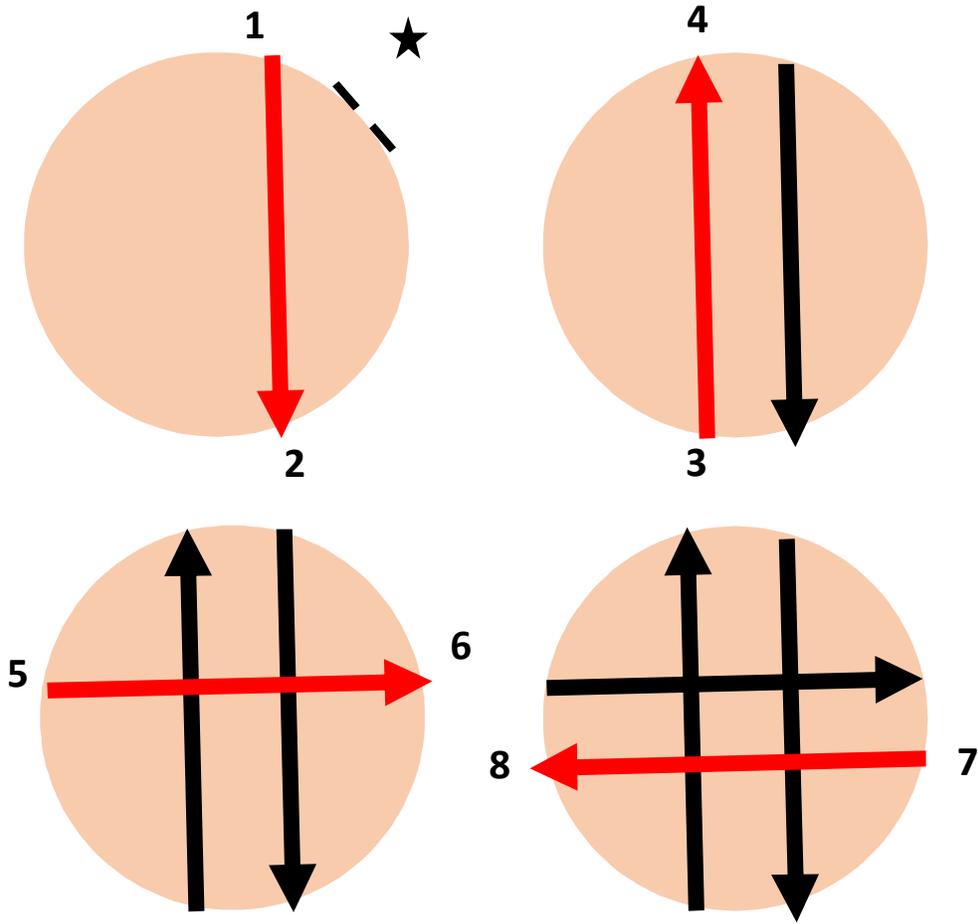


Shisha Embroidery



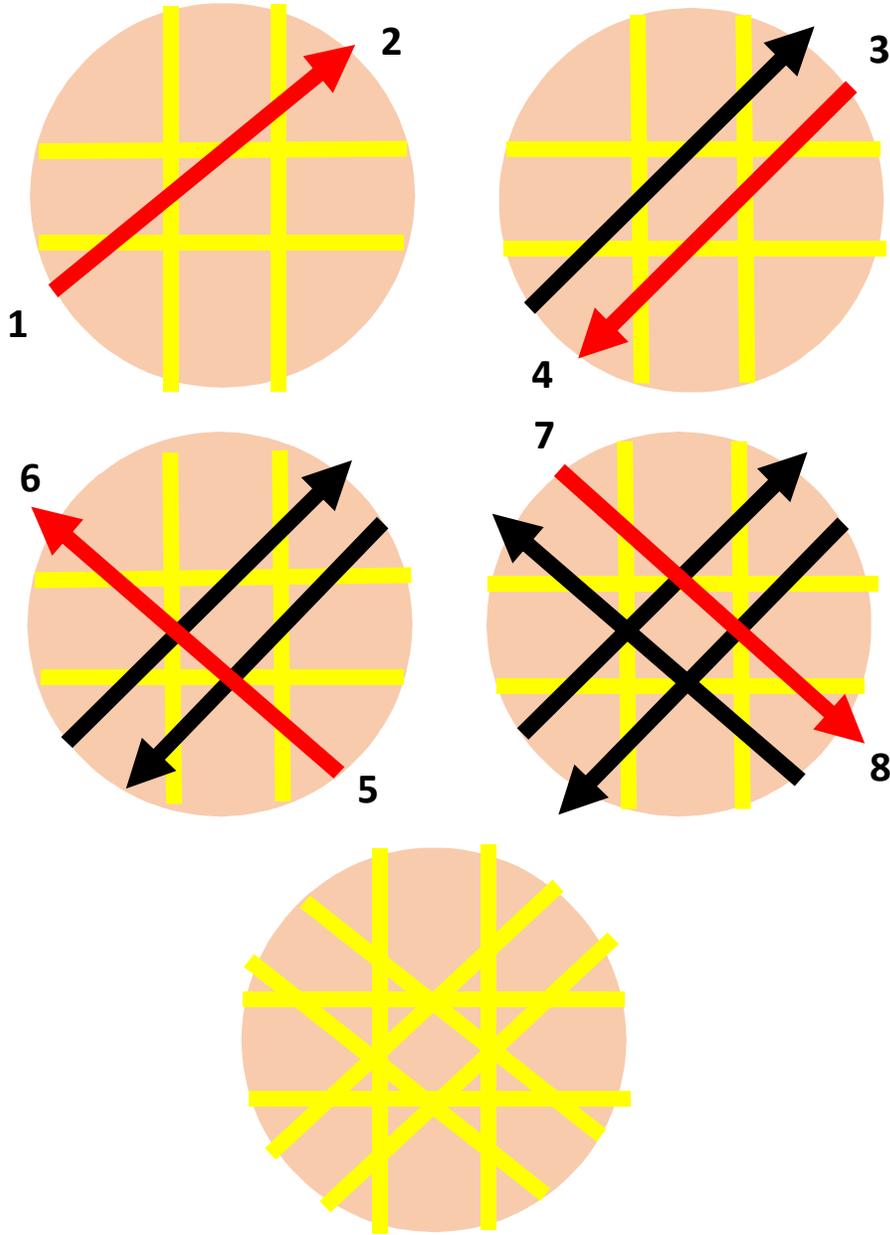
Compiled & Presented
by
HL Livia da Nicolosi

Foundation Stitches: The First Grid

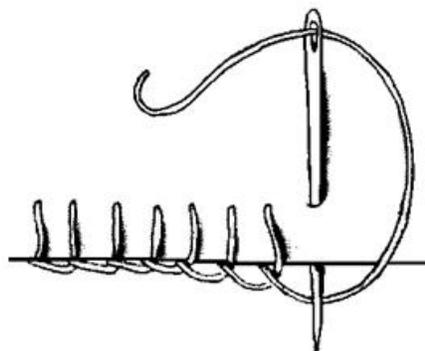


This completes the first grid.

Foundation Stitches: The Second Grid



This completes the second grid.



Basic Blanket/
Buttonhole Stitch

SHISHA EMBROIDERY

Shisha embroidery or mirror work is documentable to the 17th century although its origins are possibly much older – dating to the Mughal Empire (1526 – 1756) in India. Shisha or shisheh means “glass” in Persian. According to Anne Morrell in *The Techniques of Indian Embroidery*, a major influence on Indian textiles was Persian. I have also read – somewhere – that Marco Polo made mention of this type of embroidery. Materials used included coins, tin, silver, beetles, mica, and eventually glass mirrors. The process for making glass developed during the Mughal Empire.

Delving into the historical origins of Shisha embroidery provides valuable cultural insight. This class, however, is intended for fun – a chance to learn an exotic embroidery technique to embellish your oriental garb. With an assortment of colorful threads plus coins, mirrors, shells, cabochons, or even small circles cut from aluminum cans, the inspired embroiderer will be able to create an infinite variety of designs using different color combinations and decorative stitches. Enjoy!



BASIC INSTRUCTIONS

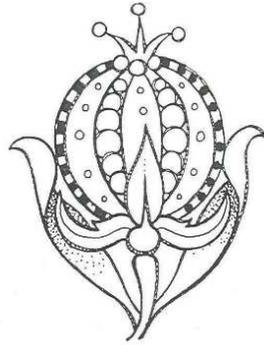
- 1) Cut a length of perle cotton and thread your needle. Knot the end.
- 2) Hold mirror or coin (or whatever object you wish to embroider) against the upper surface of the ground fabric with your thumb. Use a waste knot and a few tiny stitches against the edge of your mirror to secure your thread. Clip the waste knot after your thread is anchored.
- 3) Stitch the foundation stitches as shown in the following diagrams. Tension is important. Your foundation stitches need to be tight enough to hold the mirror but loose enough to allow the decorative stitching that follows.
- 4) After your foundation stitches have been laid, a decorative stitch will be used to cover the edge of the mirror. There are many different stitches and combinations of stitches that can be used. Possible stitches include twisted chain, herringbone, Cretan stitch, and buttonhole or blanket stitch. For the purposes of this class, a simple blanket stitch will be used.



TIPS

- ✧ Filing the edges of the mirrors with a pumice stone or a nail file will help to smooth the glass and keep your threads from fraying. Smoothing the glass also serves to keep your needle intact. Sharp edges have a tendency to roughen up the sides of your needle. I've ruined a few!
- ✧ Use an embroidery needle to lay the foundation stitches. Depending on the type of ground fabric, you may use either an embroidery or a tapestry needle to embroider the decorative stitches around the foundation stitches. I found it easier to use an embroidery needle. Both types of needles are included in your class materials.
- ✧ It is strictly personal preference whether this type of embroidery is done in the hand or with a hoop. My own preference is in the hand after trying it both ways.





RESOURCES

Coats & Clark's. *One Hundred Embroidery Stitches*. Coats & Clark's Sales Corp. 1964. New York, New York.

Morrell, Anne. *The Techniques of Indian Embroidery*. Interweave Press. 1995. Loveland, Colorado.

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Corbett, Mary. *Stitch Fun: A Step-By-Step Tutorial for Shisha Embroidery*. <https://www.needlenthread.com/2013/10/stitch-fun-shisha-stitch-tutorial.html>