

# Multi-Color (Complex) Sashiko

Sashiko embroidery is rooted in Asian culture and tradition. Historically this style of embroidery was used to bind layers of fabric together to add extra warmth, and to repair worn areas of garments.



Embroidery Library has several different styles of designs that are inspired by this beautiful, traditional form of embroidery. The image to the left is called "multi-color" or "complex" Sashiko. The descriptions and definitions of different Sashiko styles are below:

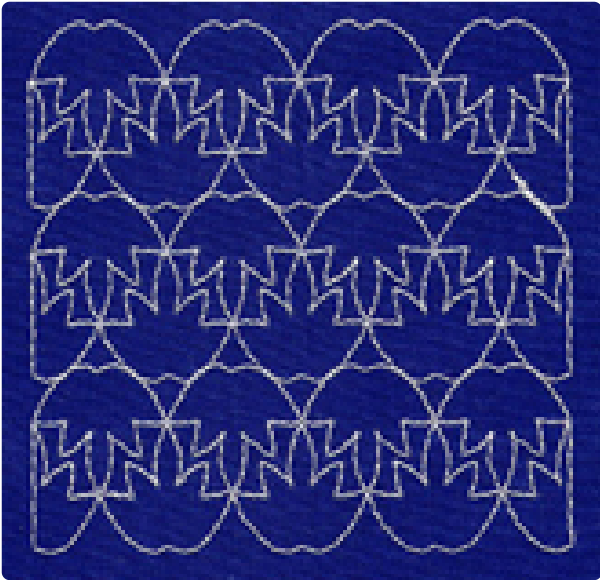
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## Products Used

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A Blooming Sashiko Design Pack - XXL (Sku: EDP13320-1)

## Steps To Complete



### Simple Sashiko

Simple Sashiko designs are single running stitch designs. These designs can be used like simple Redwork, or to quilt layers of fabric and batting together. Instructions for using these types of designs to quilt can be found by [clicking here](#).



### Applique Sashiko

Applique Sashiko designs combine the simple stitching of the traditional use with a raw-edge applique method. Instructions for stitching these types of Sashiko designs can be found by [clicking here](#).

30 weight cotton thread is recommended (but not required) for the simple stitching areas. We use Madeira Cotona from [TheSewphisticatedStitcher](#).

## Multi-Color or Complex Sashiko

Complex Sashiko designs retain the look and feel of the tradition, but also feature colorful, complex details. It is not advised that these designs be used to quilt through layers of fabric, as the complex areas (in the example to the left, the birds) will tamp the batting down flat.



There are no special instructions for stitching these designs. The only thing that is unique is that the single running stitch lines (shown in white above) can be stitched with 30 weight cotton thread. That adds more emphasis to the stitching, bringing more balance and a heartier look. However, using 30 weight thread is optional.

These designs bring vibrant color to your projects while embodying the spirit of the style. Examples for using these types of designs are below.



Elena in Germany used her Janome MC300E to make this beautiful quilt, which features both simple Sashiko and complex Sashiko. The designs were stitched onto fabric, cut into squares, and then pieced together to make a quilt.

Elena embroidered for four days and nights to make this beautiful quilt. For her son's 16th birthday the family cooked Asian food and enjoyed it in a dining room decorated with this quilt. Beautiful work!



Pat in the UK used her Janome 11000 to make this tote bag, featuring the [Cherry Blossom Sashiko Square](#). She stitched the design onto fabric and then constructed the tote bag.

She writes, "I was looking for a project to use some Japanese-inspired material. I made this tote with extended top using the [cherry blossoms](#)."

It's a perfect match! Thank you for sharing this idea, Pat!





Charlene made this stunning vest featuring the complex Sashiko designs. She stitched the designs onto felt, and then pieced the blocks together.

She writes, "I made the vest reversible by using another old fabric with a Queen Anne's gold scroll design and tiny flowers that matched my embroidery. The front button closes with a magnet, and the button is a carved sea shell."



Not only is this a beautiful use of the Sashiko designs, but it also pays tribute to the history of Sashiko, how embroidery was used to repair (recycle, really) worn clothing. Charlene's use of old fabric is an excellent (and unintentional) nod to the tradition.

Wonderful, Charlene, thank you for sharing!



Jennifer and her Janome 350E stitched these boxes featuring complex Sashiko designs. She writes, "The boxes give a roomy fit to a small square box of facial tissues. I have attached a little bling to the lid which hangs over the front of the box. These boxes could be used for tissues, or hankies, or whatever we girls like to keep in small boxes."

Excellent idea, Jennifer -- creative, colorful, and conventional. A perfect trio!



Nancy and her Brother PE-700 constructed cosmetic bags for her daughters. She writes, "They love Asian designs and these were the perfect gifts with your Sashiko designs. The bags were lined and padded and had a Velcro closure across the top."

Beautiful work, Nancy, and thank you for sending the photos!



Here's a quilt that Adelyn made with the complex Sashiko designs. The quilt is called Something Like Sashiko.

The quilt features complex multi-colored quilt blocks stitched onto fabric, cut into blocks, and then pieced together.





She also used single-run, simple Sashiko designs to quilt the fabric, batting, and back together.

Then, she added crystals and sequins for added "bling."

This is wonderful, Adelyn -- love how you combined the techniques!



Gertrude from the Netherlands made this beautiful tote bag with alternative complex and simple Sashiko blocks.

Gertrude modified the free [Patchwork Purse project instructions](#). In place of the symmetrical designs, she used Sashiko, and she opted for stitched-in handles rather than loops.

The modifications are excellent, Gertrude. Thank you for sending this photo and sharing your work with us!