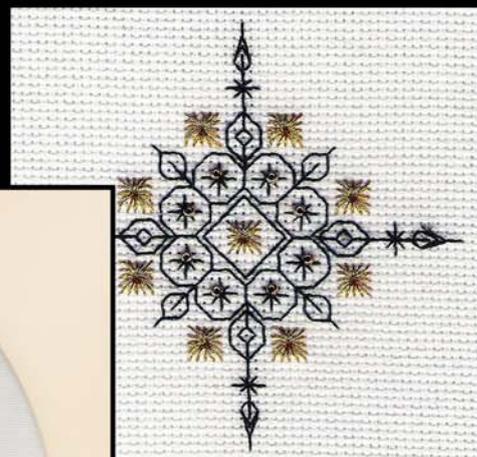




Blackwork Journey Blog

December 2012



*Happy Christmas
from
Blackwork Journey*



Inspiration

Mehndi for embroidery

December 2012

Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year...



I love to receive e-mails from readers, especially when they have pictures attached and an explanation about the materials and threads they have chosen to use. Whilst I create the design and give an indication of which threads and materials to use, I have to recommend materials and threads which are easily obtained across the world. However, it is often more fun to substitute your own threads and fabrics to produce your own very personal piece of work.

Kathy and Neale sent me the following e-mail and pictures which clearly show what I mean by personal choice, so thank you for your lovely work and for sharing it.

"I have also been very happily stitching on your design "Dragonflies". When we first saw it on your website, work with a purpose". Not just a random series of blocks with filling stitches but something that has a real theme. When I saw it, I immediately knew that I wanted to add colour to the floral motifs but most of all I wanted to change the wings of the Dragonflies from cross stitch to a blackwork woven pattern to make them look like the wings of a dragonfly. In my search for a metallic thread to use, I found a Bijoux metallic that has a black filament but seemed to include all the colours I'm using in the design. (The pictures won't do it justice!) I used a piece of hand dyed fabric, 32 count Lugana - Turbulence and along with



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black thread I used DMC 561, 550, 915 and 917 and then the Bijoux I used was 483 Tourmaline. The beads I will use are Mill Hill petite beads 40374”

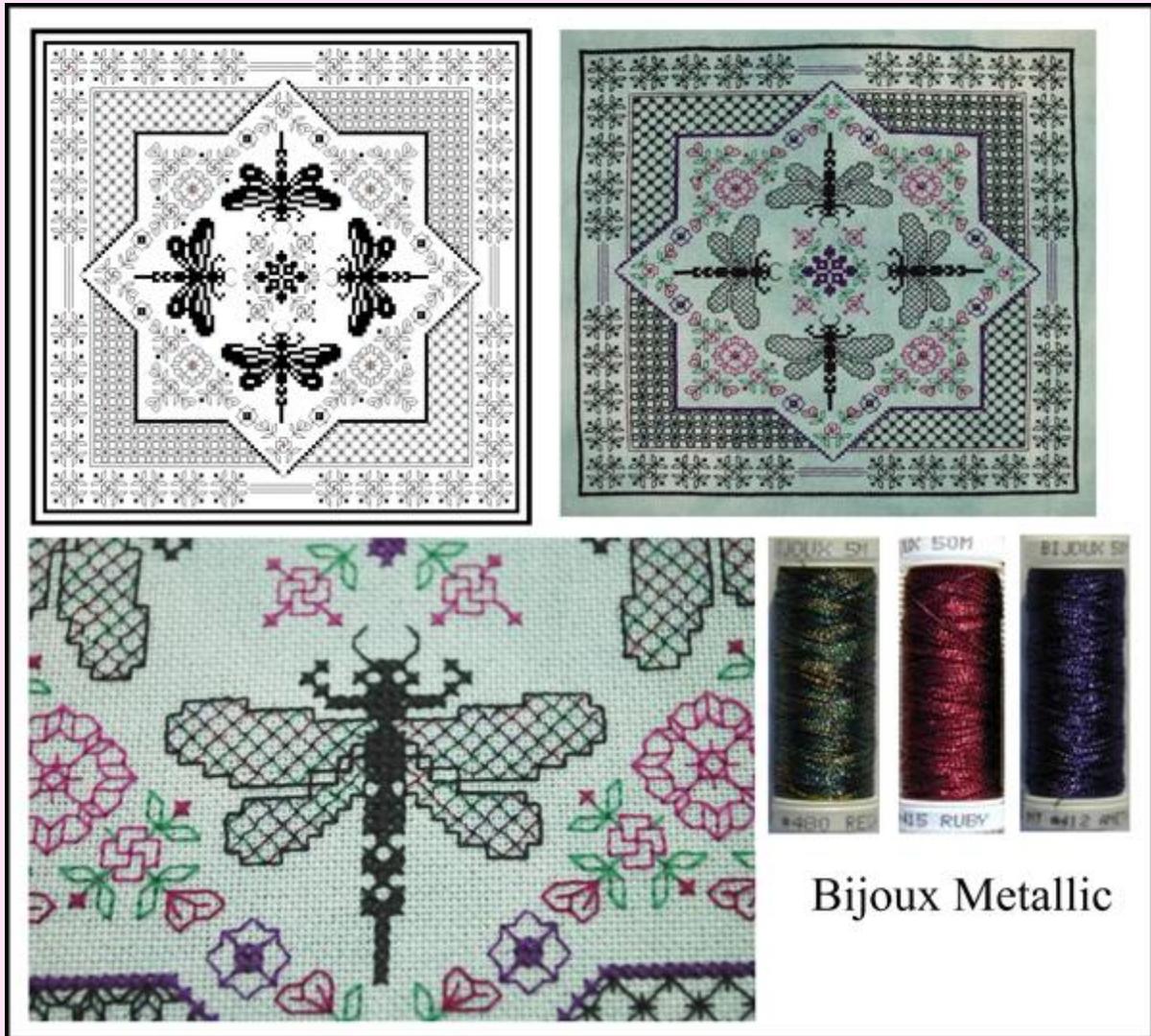


Chart CH0281 Dragonflies

(Note: Bijoux Metallic is an old thread with a new name. It was known as "Lacquered Jewels". It is a fine weight metallic thread of cord-type construction. Most colours are deep, rich jewel tones with a black cast to them. They are packaged on spools or made into skeins. All the colour numbers are the same as those for Lacquered Jewels".)

Inspiration comes in many guises...

I recently came across an old photograph taken in the Middle East of me having a henna "tattoo" on my hand and it made me think about the many places around the world where henna art is a fundamental part of life. Not only is it attractive, but it has significant meaning for the many societies who wear them. I have seen henna used in Spain, the Middle and Far

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Henna is widely used in India as a form of temporary body art where henna designs on the skin are called mehndi.

So what is henna?

Henna is a plant that has been used as a dye since the Bronze Age. It is ground into a brown paste and applied to the skin by a cone shaped funnel. Once the henna has dried, it stays on the skin for several weeks until it slowly fades!

Henna is typically applied during special occasions like weddings and Muslim festivals such as Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha as well as in Hindu festivals like Karva Chauth, Diwali, Bhaidooj and Teej. Before a wedding, a bride will have elaborate henna designs drawn onto her hands, arms and sometimes feet. In some regions, men will be decorated as well.



Applying Mehndi to hands (Jyothis 2011-04-08)

There are many common elements found in henna hand designs including flowers, paisley, swirls, tendrils, stars, vines, spirals and leaves, so could mehndi designs be used as a source of inspiration for embroidery?

After looking at a number of different articles on the subject, especially the work of Alexandra Linda Morgan

(Tap Dancing Lizard Publications www.tapdancinglizard.com)

I decided to draw my own designs on a hand template using a black and white theme.



These drawings led to a final embroidery called CH0298 'Henna Hand' which is worked in back stitch and straight stitches.

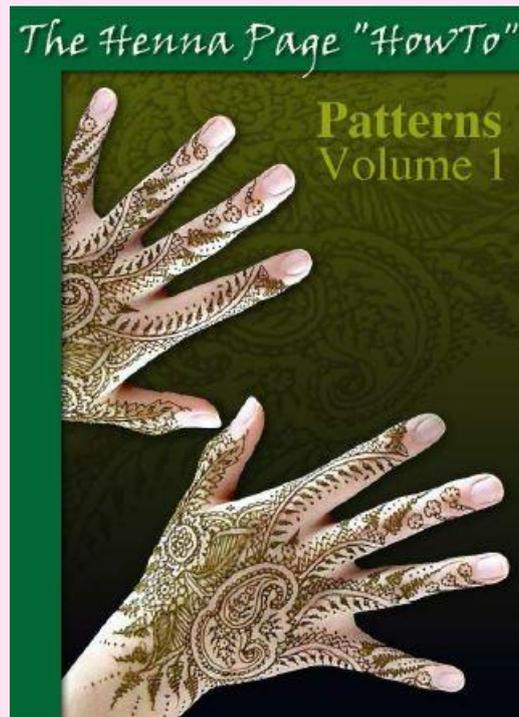
This is an area that I will explore more fully in the future. The designs are fun to create and when translated into embroidery are both simple and effective. I am not an artist, but I do like to 'doodle' and the results can be quite productive. I sketch the outlines in pencil first and then ink in the final lines using Pigma Micron Pens, Numbers 4 and 8. They do not bleed into the paper, give a clean outline and the ink does not deteriorate or fade.

Free PDFs are available to download from the Internet:

Henna "HowTo" Patterns Volume 1

Henna "HowTo" Patterns Volume 2

www.hennapage.com



Looking back it has been an eventful year for Blackwork Journey. I have made many new friends through the site and continue to design and publish charts in a number of international magazines. I have enjoyed the personal contact of talks and day schools and working with individuals who are new to the joys of blackwork and meeting new friends from Canada and Australia, as well as exploring more of the beautiful country I live in. I hope you have found something to interest you in the Blog and various sections on the site.

2013 will offer many new challenges but I wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year.

Happy stitching,

Liz