



# Blackwork Journey Blog

May 2023



## Blackwork Journey Exploration Kogin

E - Book EB0028



Creative Thinking!



New Ideas!



### May and the beginning of another busy month!

2023 is speeding by, the days are longer and the nights shorter. I visited a number of embroidery groups last month to give talks and to teach workshops on a wide variety of subjects. Wherever I went the groups were expanding with new members and stimulating programmes. After the difficulties of the past few years it is a joy to see some normality returning and most people are picking up the challenges and moving forward. However, the comment that I encountered most when talking to members during the workshops was the loss of confidence they were experiencing with their projects, especially amongst the older members.

Certainly being unable to meet friends and family face to face was challenging, but for many people who live on their own, the lack of contact led to isolation and loneliness and once the restrictions were lifted many members found it difficult to resume their normal pattern of life. Slow stitching and mindfulness has really played its part and to help people, I have taken packs of fabric and leaflets wherever I have been. Explained what it is, how to approach it and the potential benefits.



One can often achieve quiet satisfaction by simply going through all the bags of fabric scraps that most of us have accumulated over the years and then using some of them. It is not necessary to have an end product in mind, the aim is simply to sit quietly and stitch. It can be any stitch, any pattern, controlled or free – whatever satisfies the hands and the mind.

I have found this approach particularly helpful when I am planning projects and my mind needs to focus. By sitting quietly and stitching helps me to think things through logically without interruptions or distractions.

So go through your bags, sort out your unused threads and stitch!

*Recycle, reuse!*



### Two new projects for May - PR0076 Creative Thinking and EB0028 Exploration Kogin



#### One idea in embroidery often leads to another.....

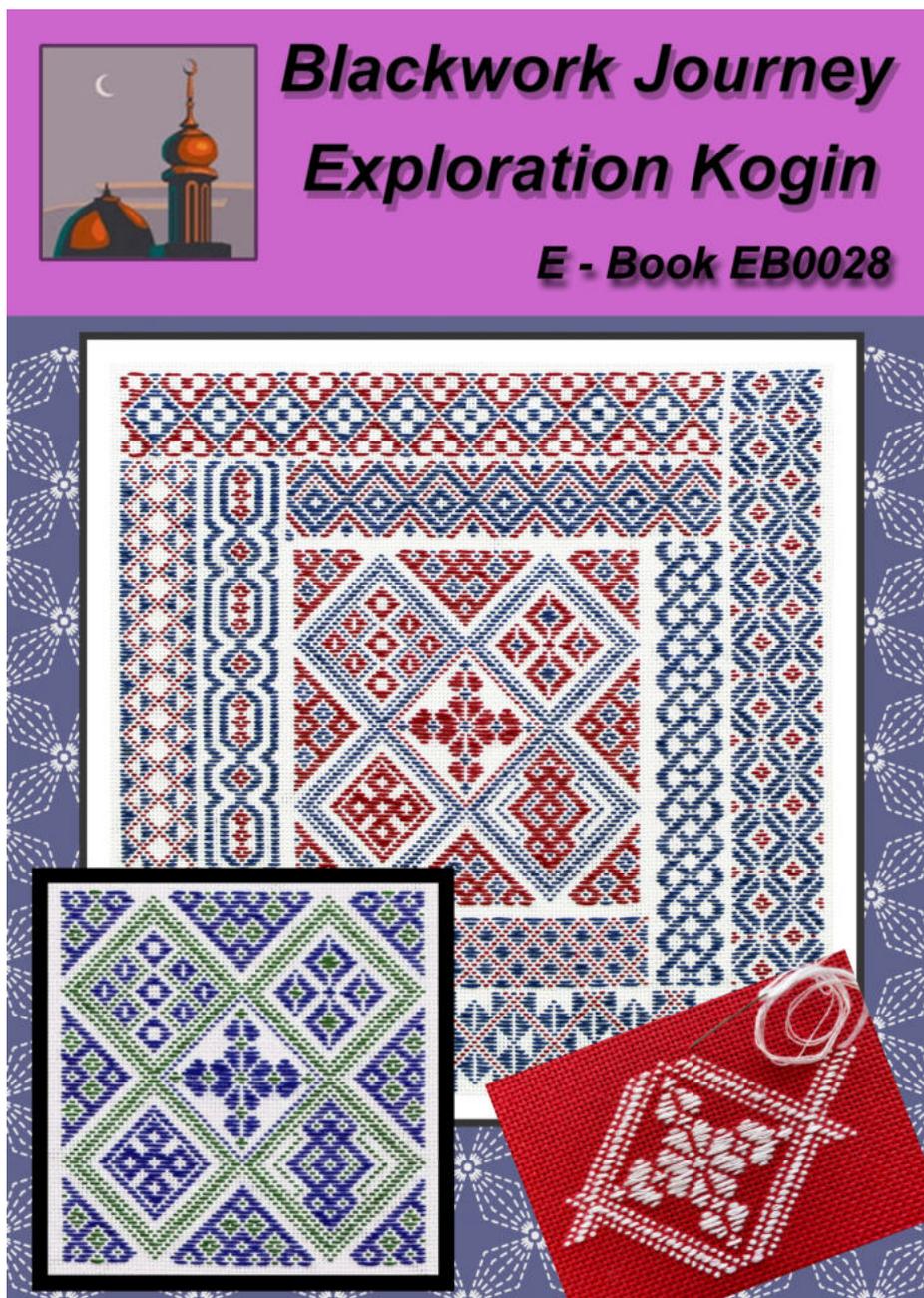
I was asked whether I could design a wedding sampler for a friend and at the same time, if I could create some scissor keeper patterns and a small sampler for an embroidery group as part of a pulled thread and blackwork workshop I am doing later in the month. I also need a birthday card for a special family member and could not find exactly what I was looking for. So, out came the needle, threads and fabric and my software design programme "PC Stitch".

To create the wedding sampler, I started by designing a simple blackwork border, working out what the message needed to be and inserting it into the border using several different size alphabets. Floral bands and motifs were added. These could be worked in any colour to suit the occasion. The wording could also be changed for other occasions such as "Congratulations", "New Home", "Golden Wedding" etc.

Small gifts such as scissor keepers, pin cushions scented sachets were designed using the same blackwork pattern. Initials were added, pulled thread work patterns included and the ideas just kept coming!

The sampler uses the same motif with four pulled thread work patterns inserted. The design could be enlarged by adding extra motifs and filler patterns very easily. Each pattern is "bite size" to give variety and does not take long to stitch.

EB0028 Exploration Kogin



**Large Sampler**

**Design Area:** 12.64 x 12.57 inches

**Stitches:** 177 x 176

**Small Picture:**

**Design Area:** 6.21 x 6.14 inches

**Stitches:** 87 x 86

Building up patterns in a Kogin sampler is very satisfying to do and is perfect for readers new to this technique.

It can be worked on a variety of different fabrics from Zweigart 16 count Aida to Zweigart 18 count Davosa or 20 count Bellana. DMC stranded floss, Cotton P rle No. 8 or matt Sashiko threads can be used.

Other projects can be developed from the main design including bands for table linen, bookmarks and a smaller sampler suitable for a picture or box top.



*Extract from pattern*



### Choosing the right glass

If you are planning to mount your embroidery in a frame, it is important to ensure the right type of glass is used, especially where it could be exposed to the damaging effects of UV light which causes colours to fade and lose their vibrancy.

Ideally, I would use non-reflective glass as it has a coating which absorbs light, eliminates reflections and glare and still provides maximum visibility. The addition of a card mount is also useful as it prevents the embroidery from touching the glass.

Of course, not all embroideries need to be framed behind glass, but as textiles can be damaged by exposure to light over a period of time, positioning an embroidery out of direct sunlight is important.



*Light damage on an old linen sampler*

This is an old sampler that was worked on fine linen. It consists mainly of alphabets and numbers worked in eyelet stitch, cross stitch and four-sided stitch with bands of pattern between the rows.

Unfortunately there is no name or date which would help to identify its owner or when it was stitched, but at some point I want to recreate at least part of the sampler using modern threads on linen fabric. Unfortunately it has deteriorated with age and affected by exposure to light which has caused the colours to fade badly.

We all have some precious items we have collected or made over the years and this article from the “Division of Textiles” in cooperation with the Smithsonian's Public Inquiry Services makes interesting reading.

### **How do I store antique textiles at home?**

#### **General Procedures**

The storage area should be clean, cool, dry, dark and as free as possible from drastic changes in temperature and humidity, thus ruling out the basement or attic. It is also best to set aside one drawer or chest of drawers just for the storage of family heirlooms.

#### **Specific Suggestions**

1. Textiles should be stored as clean as possible because dust particles can actually cut fibres through friction and abrasion. Colourfast and washable items should be washed and stored un-ironed, unstarched and unblued. (Information on wet cleaning cottons and linens, quilts and coverlets, and samplers is available upon written request.)

An item that cannot be cleaned in any other way should, if possible, be vacuumed. Loose soil and dust can be removed by placing the textile on a flat surface, placing a piece of fiberglass screening between the textile and vacuum cleaner head, and then vacuuming with a weak-suction hand vacuum cleaner.

- **CAUTION:** Textiles, such as samplers, painted and embroidered pictures and beaded work should not be vacuumed, as embroidery yarns and beads can be drawn through the screening.

2. It is preferable to store textiles flat, subject to minimum abrasion, folding, and pressure. If folding is necessary, avoid sharp folds by padding at the points of folds with strips of washed unbleached muslin or old sheets.

For maximum preservation, antique textiles, especially cottons and linens, should have no direct contact with wood, blue tissue, regular tissue, or other wrapping paper. Most paper tends to be acidic which is especially damaging to textiles. Instead, textiles can be wrapped in clean, white cotton cloth, such as an old sheet or pillowcase, or in muslin. Because textile fibres need to be in an environment where there is some air movement, fabrics should not be sealed in air-tight plastic bags or containers to prevent damage from moisture condensation. Also, because some plastics give off fumes as they decompose with age, they should not come in direct contact with antique textiles. After wrapping the textiles in cotton muslin or sheeting, they can be loosely encased in an unsealed plastic wrapping. The best place to store antique fabrics is on top in a drawer. Storing them at the bottom of a drawer under heavy items can cause sharp folds, which may be difficult to remove and which may cause splits in the cloth.

Fragile fabrics (which may be light or heavy in weight), likely to wear thin along folds, should be rolled over cloth covered cardboard tubes (mailing tubes are good; even paper towel tubes can be used for small items). The greatest care must be taken to avoid creasing the fabric in the process of rolling it because creases can split fragile cloth as cleanly as a knife can. Rolling too tight could also be harmful; proper tension can be maintained if rolling is done on a table or other flat surface that is at least as wide as the cloth

and that has been cleared for this purpose. The cloth should rest flat and smooth on the table. As the roller glides along, it picks up the cloth as it moves away from the individual(s) doing the rolling. Painted textiles should not be rolled or folded; such treatment can cause the painted surface to crack.

3. Stored textiles should not be exposed to the light because the natural cellulose fibers (cotton and linen) and animal fibres (silk and wool), of which most antique textiles are made, are damaged by the sun's and indoor fixtures' light rays.

4. Air conditioning in which the temperature is in the 65-70° F (18-21° C) range and the relative humidity is between 40% and 50% is ideal for textile storage. With these conditions, excessive drying is avoided and mold and mildew growth caused by excess moisture are discouraged.

5. Mildew and moths can be discouraged in temperate climates by keeping fabrics and their storage places perfectly clean, dry, cool, and regularly aired and inspected.

6. Textiles should be removed from storage periodically and aired. If the item has been folded, care should be taken to refold it, changing the position of the folds so that the same fibers are not subjected to the tension of folding, which can cause fibre breakage over a long period of time.

### **Tapestries and Rugs**

Avoid folding tapestries and rugs. If a fold is ever necessary, it should be made in the direction that is most natural for the textile, usually parallel to the weft (perpendicular to the selvages).

In rolling a tapestry, the pole over which it is rolled should extend beyond the ends of the tapestry. Be certain that no creases are rolled into the textile. Never use a metal pole or pipe as the base for rolling a tapestry. Metal can cause serious damage to natural fibres and can also stain them.

Before storing a tapestry, carefully remove any metal rings, hooks, or other fastenings. If a lined tapestry is to be stored over a long period of time and it has a good backing, which the owner wishes to retain, it might be wise to loosen the backing around the sides and bottom edge of the textile so both layers can be rolled without creases forming on the back.

### **Costume Items**

It is recommended that all costumes and their accessories be stored flat. If folding is necessary, besides following the applicable general procedures, garments should be folded following natural body lines or seamlines, such as waistline, armholes, etc.

Sleeves should be folded carefully across the bodice front. Sleeves, shoulders, and other parts may need to be lightly padded with soft cotton cloth to keep such parts smooth.

It is especially important that costume items stored flat are not crushed by heavier textiles stored on top of them. If they must be stored on hangers, the hangers should be well-padded and the garments should not be stored in a closet in which they are crushed by other garments. If the garment's upper part, especially the shoulder area, is not sturdy, it should not be stored on a hanger.

- NOTE: This general information is provided in good faith, but without reference to or examination of a particular object, the Smithsonian Institution disclaims responsibility for the possible ill-effects of applying the process to an object.

Prepared by the “Division of Textiles” in cooperation with the Smithsonian's Public Inquiry Services  
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## EB0009 Sublime Stitches Evenweave

Marion Sharrock sent a picture to the Facebook group of her framed version of ‘Sublime Stitches’ which emphasises how important correct framing is. Whilst professional framing is expensive when the piece of work is as special as this, it deserves the best! The double card mount and the pale wooden frame emphasises the embroidery and it has become an heirloom to be treasured and admired! Congratulations Marion from all the members of Blackwork Journey!!

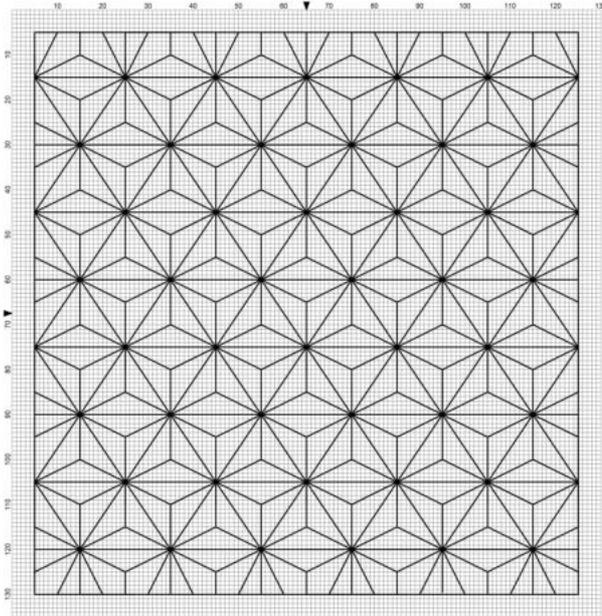


*Star of the Month*  
*Marion Sharrock*

## Kawari Asanoha Sashiko design

Finally, just for fun, I have attached a Japanese Sashiko pattern for you to experiment with. I have included a counted thread chart which can be worked on Zweigart evenweave fabric or Aida or drawn onto a piece of calico or cotton and attached to the front of a tote bag.

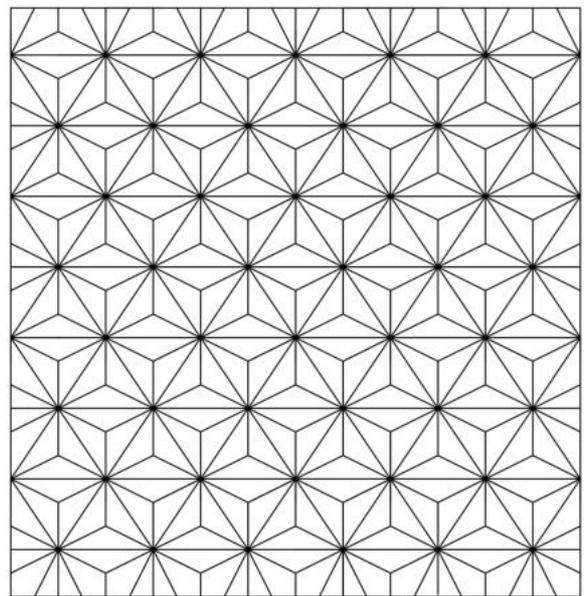
Kawari Asanoha is one of the most common sashiko designs based on the hemp leaf which figures prominently in Japanese culture. It is a symbol of health and there are many variations.



### Design 1 Counted thread design to apply to bag:

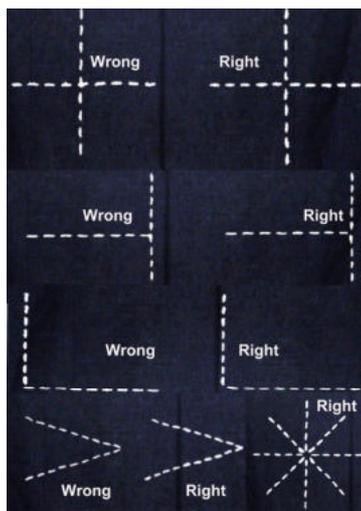
**Fabric:** Zweigart 28 count evenweave or Zweigart 14 count

Aida, 12 x 12 inches minimum



## Design 2 Kawari Asanoha – no grid.

Trace the design onto the calico or cotton fabric using a water soluble pen or chalk pencil.



### Stitch used:

Sashiko running stitch.

Use the chart to see how the lines meet up. They do not cross in the middle but leave a small circle.

If you have never tried sashiko before don't worry about the stitch length. The more you do the more even the stitches will be! Relax and enjoy the journey.

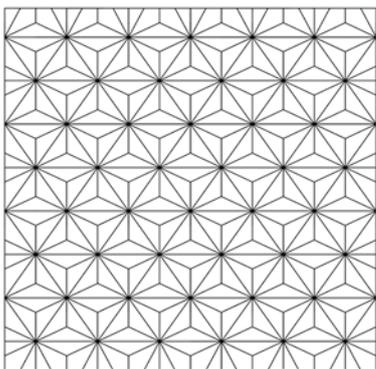
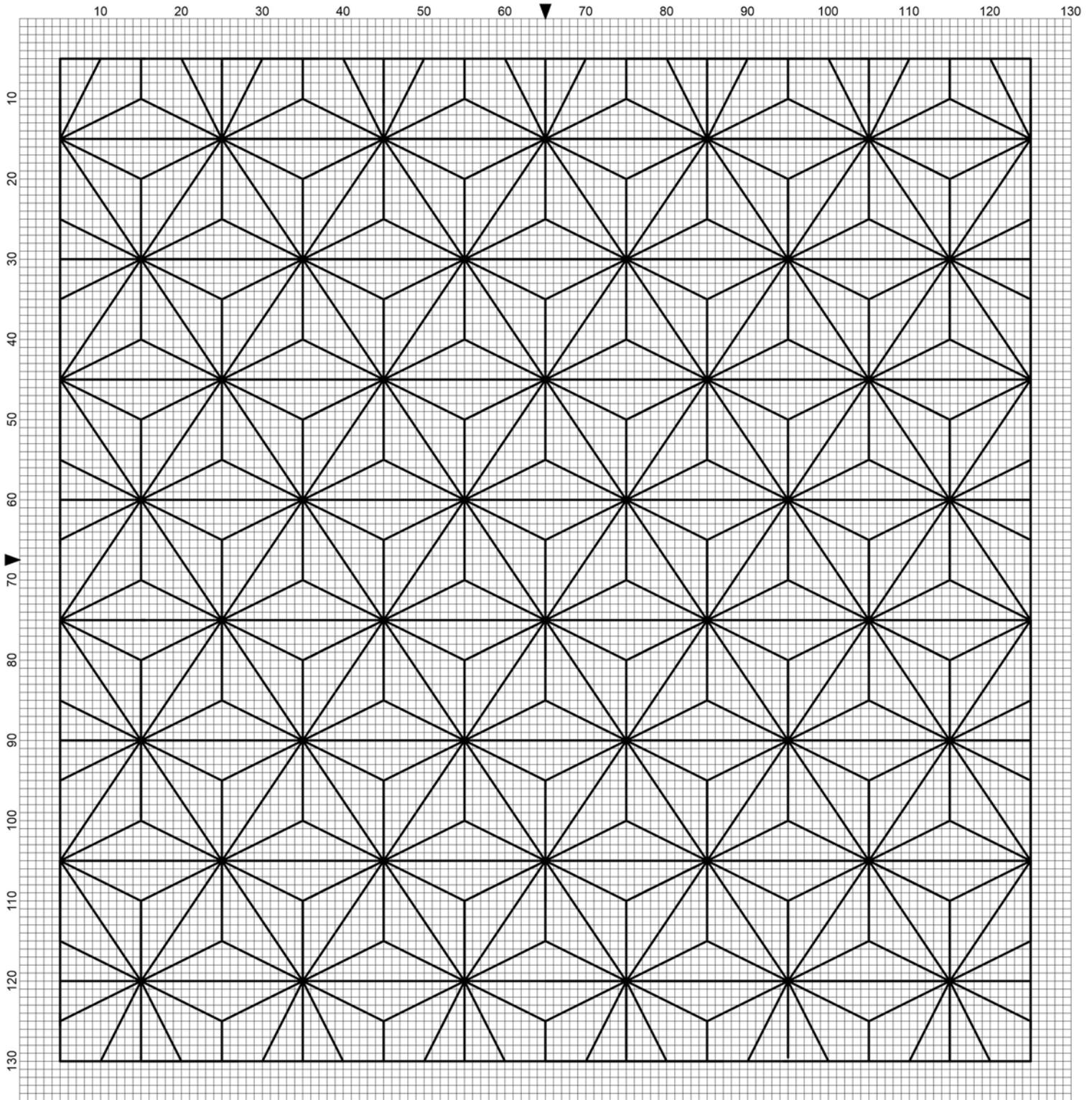
I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog. If you have any queries please contact:

[lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk](mailto:lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk)

Happy stitching,

*Liz*

# Kawari Asanoha Bag Pattern



## Pattern Grid: 12 x 12.5 inches

The pattern can be drawn directly onto the bag fabric or on a separate calico square and applied to the front of the bag as a pocket. Pre-made cotton bag.

If working on dark fabric is difficult draw the pattern onto light coloured fabric.

**Tools:** ruler, tailor's chalk pencil or white coloured pencil, water-soluble pen or HB pencil.

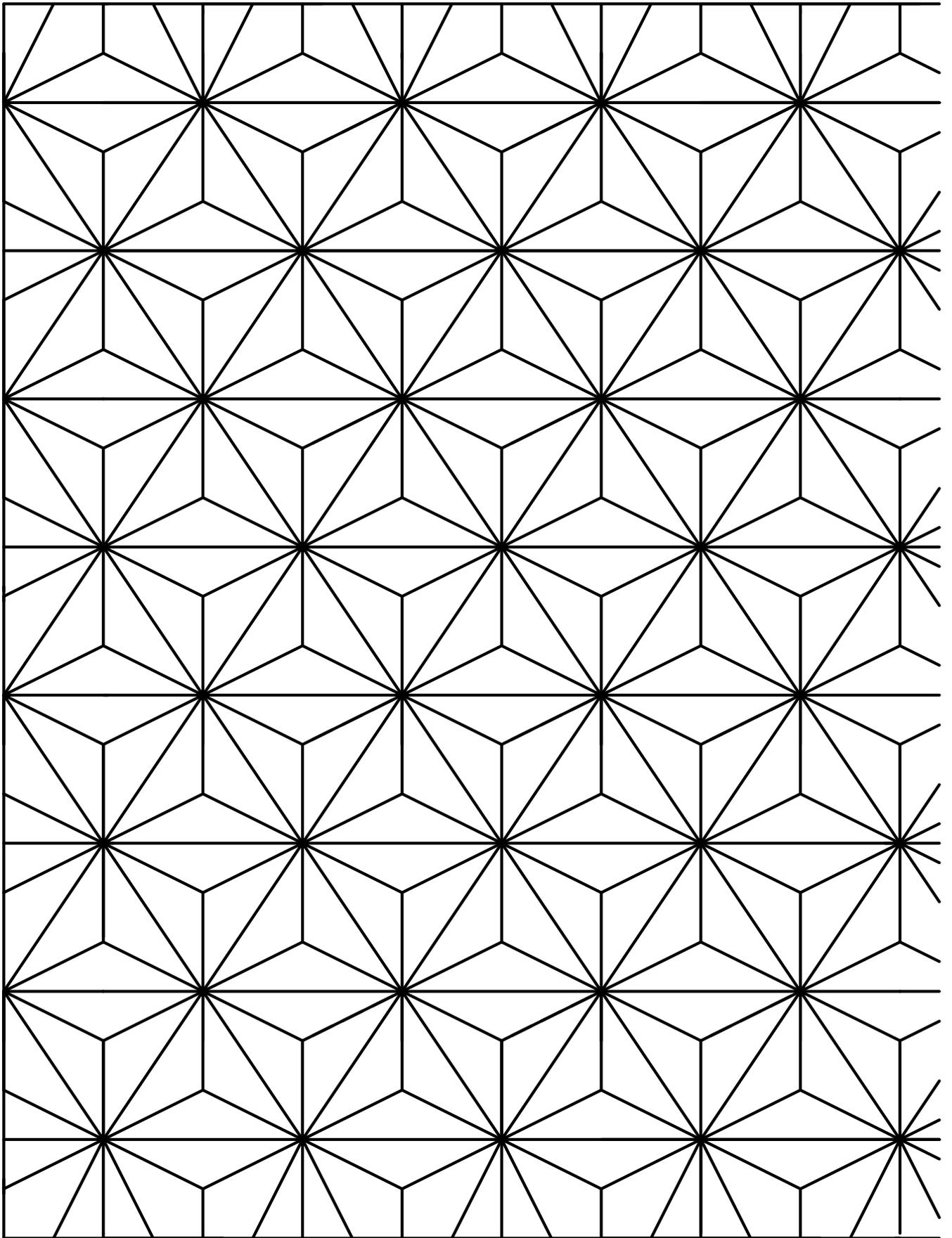
**Material:** Half yard of cotton or pre-washed calico. Bag lining optional.

Webbing for straps, one yard or make fabric straps.

**Threads:** Sashiko medium weight, one skein or Cotton Perle No 8, one ball.

Crochet cotton or stranded floss can be used. (4-6 strands).

Sashiko needle or crewel needle (sharp point, big eye).



Kawari Asanoha Pattern

