

# **Freezer Paper Appliqué**

**By Horizon Quilt Patterns**

I preface these instructions by saying this is not my invention, but is a method I use that gives me excellent results.

For photos of this method in progress download the “Red Parrot” appliquéd pattern (free). It includes step-by-step photographs. There are also some simple shapes to begin with if you feel you need to start slowly. It is downloadable from my [website](#).

The items you will need to use these directions are:

- 1) Freezer Paper – either sheets or a roll
- 2) Glue Stick – washable. There are many brands. Look for them in office supply shops; the label should say “non-toxic, washable, acid free”. The brand I use is UHU.
- 3) Orange stick (manicure tool) or similar implement such as a wooden skewer.
- 4) Iron and ironing board
- 5) An appliquéd pattern
- 6) Fabric, for background and appliquéd pieces. Cotton works well but you can use any fabric that will not stain if water is applied.
- 7) A removable marker for marking the appliquéd placement on your background fabric. Chalk works well. Or use the method described in my “Overlay Placement Guide” article.
- 8) Thread, rayon (machine embroidery), cotton, invisible thread or silk. I prefer silk for hand sewing because it is fine, soft and strong.
- 9) A sewing machine or hand sewing supplies
- 10) Small pointed scissors

Print the appliquéd templates directly onto your freezer paper or trace them if you do not have the means to print them. Your templates will need to be a mirror image of the block pieces. The Templates in the pattern I provided are already reversed, giving you the mirror image required for this method of appliquéd.

## **NOTE: Printing on Freezer Paper.**

You need to print on the dull side of the freezer paper. Be sure you know how your paper feeds into your printer before you proceed. DO NOT print on freezer paper with a laser printer. Laser printers use heat to set the ink and this can cause a transfer of wax from the freezer paper to your printer. Ink jet printers are fine to use. Many people suggest sticking the freezer paper to another sheet of paper (either by adhering it with heat or taping it across the leading edge) but I find no need for this step and print many sheets of freezer paper without problems.

If you use freezer paper from a roll you need to flatten it. Do this by ironing it. Lay a piece of fabric over your ironing board, (I keep a piece of muslin especially for this purpose). Put the piece of freezer paper, trimmed to page size, SHINY side DOWN. Press it with a hot iron (a cotton or linen setting). Let the paper cool completely (lying flat) before peeling it off the muslin. This gives you a nice flat sheet to print on.

Note: If you trace the templates use the white freezer paper, it is easier to see through. Use a light-box or hold your work up to window if it is small enough if you still cannot see it clearly.

## **Templates:**

The templates I provide are without seam allowances. If you are using templates that include a seam allowance be sure you trim them off before proceeding. If the templates you are using are not labeled it is a good idea to do so before you cut them apart. Once the freezer paper templates are cut out, place them on the WRONG side of your appliqué fabric. Iron them in place with a hot iron making sure you have at least  $\frac{1}{2}$ " between adjacent pieces. Cut around the templates leaving a  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.

Now we use the glue stick. Apply a thin layer of glue all around the seam allowance, overlapping the glue slightly onto the edge of the freezer paper template. Holding the template with the attached fabric in one hand, work your way around it with your other hand, pinching the fabric over the edge of the freezer paper sticking the seam allowance to the template.

Lay the template and fabric on a flat hard surface, wrong side up. The glue may get onto the surface of your work area, to protect it work on a sheet of paper. If the surface is washable the glue will wipe off easily. Using the orange stick, work your way around the template to smooth the bulk of the seam allowance evenly. You can create very sharp corners and nice smooth curved edges this way. If your glue starts to dry too quickly a dab of water will make it workable again (I use a Q-tip dipped in water). When you are happy with the look of your appliqué piece turn it right side up and allow it to dry completely. Continue preparing the rest of your appliqué pieces in the same manner.

## **Placement Guidelines:**

When you complete the preparation of the appliqué pieces it is time to mark your background fabric with the placement guide. If your fabric is a light colour you can place it over the placement guide and trace around the shapes. If your fabric is a dark colour you may need to use a light box to do your tracing. Another method for dark fabrics is to use white carbon paper specifically for this purpose. An alternative to marking directly on the fabric is to use an overlay made from clear tablecloth plastic, especially for a complicated pattern. For detailed instructions on making and using an overlay please visit my Website.

## **Appliquéd:**

You are now ready to begin your appliquéd. At this point leave the freezer paper attached to the appliquéd pieces. Determine which piece needs to appliquéd first and start with it. In the pattern I have provided the templates are numbered in the sequence you should appliquéd them, #1 is appliquéd first, then #2 and so on.

For machine appliquéd choose the colour of thread you want to use for each appliquéd fabric (it can match or contrast, the choice is yours). Next, choose the stitch you want to use, this will depend on what stitches your machine has available. Remember, this first time is all practice. Try a few different stitches and stitch widths. If you are doing a buttonhole or blanket stitch you may want a wider stitch to make it show up better. If you are aiming for invisible work you want a stitch that is just wide enough to catch a few threads beyond the folded edge of your appliquéd piece. Also experiment with the different presser feet you have available. You want to have a good view of the area being stitched so a fairly open foot will work well but you also need the foot wide enough to ride on top of the appliquéd piece and cover a fair amount of the background fabric.

At the start of your stitching pull the bottom thread to the top and hold both threads as you begin stitching. Have the threads about 4" long. Work your way around the piece back to the starting point or to just past where another piece will overlap the one you are working on. Leave your ending threads long enough to tie off. Pull the threads (at the start and end of your stitching) to the back of your work and tie two or three knots then snip them off leaving about a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " tail.

Appliquéd as many pieces as you can before any pieces need to be overlapped. Turn your work over and trim away the background fabric behind the appliquéd piece leaving a  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance using a small pair of pointed scissors. The freezer paper behind the background fabric will help prevent you from poking through the appliquéd piece. Dampen, from the back, around each appliquéd piece. You can use a damp sponge or a light mist of water. You want it to be just damp enough to loosen the glue. Wait a moment for the water to penetrate the glue. Slip the orange stick under one edge of the freezer paper template and run it around to loosen the freezer paper. If the piece is large enough use your fingers to pull it free, tugging away from the seams horizontally. If you cannot get your fingers under the piece use tweezers. Removing the background fabric will make your appliquéd pieces stand up from the background and look less stiff. If you prefer to leave the background fabric whole simply cut a small slit in it then proceed as above, pulling the freezer paper out thought the slit.

Continue appliquéd, removing the freezer paper from each piece as it is added. When your appliquéd is completed trim and square up the block.