

Directions for Embroidered Soap Project / May 2000

Step 1. Print the instructions.

These are .pdf files, and require Adobe Acrobat Reader software in order to view and print.

Step 2. Sew out Monogram letter of your choice.

Place one layer of “Craftmistress” (see materials sources below) in the embroidery hoop, drum tight. If possible, load the bottom bobbin with the same color thread as the thread you are using for the sewn design. Upper thread tensions should be slightly looser than for other types of backing, so that the bobbin thread, if it is a different color, won't be pulled through to the top.

Some of the soap will be absorbed by the embroidery thread when the project is assembled, which has the affect of darkening the colors (they will look like they do when wet) so take this into consideration when choosing the thread colors - consider choosing colors that are lighter and brighter than you otherwise might choose.

Note: Craftmistress produces two products that are both suitable for this project. “Romeo” is a heavy-weight water-soluble stabilizer (one layer required), and “Guliette” is a lighter weight version (two layers required).

Step 3. Trim the design

Carefully trim away as much of the excess water-soluble stabilizer as possible, being careful not to cut the embroidery. Satin stitch details, like the parts that form the letter “B” in our example, will be nearly separated from the stabilizer following sewing by the needle penetrations, so pinch the design between thumb and forefinger and carefully remove interior shapes.

Step 4. Soften the surface of the bar of soap.

Place a clean kitchen sponge on a dinner plate, or other shallow container, and flood the sponge with warm water. Allow enough excess water to surround the sponge up to about half its thickness.

Place the bar of soap face down on the wet sponge, and allow it to rest on the wet sponge for 10-15 minutes. Check frequently to see that the soap is softening but not completely dissolving - different types of soap will dissolve at different rates. This method has the advantage of keeping the other surfaces of the soap bar dry, which makes the bar much less slippery to pick up.

(Note that the texture of the sponge may be transferred to the softened soap, which may or may not be desirable. If you prefer a smooth surface, place a piece of dampened medium-weight cutaway backing, or other smooth textured fabric on top of the sponge, then place the soap on top of the fabric)

Step 5. Apply the embroidered design to the soap.

Once the soap surface has softened, turn the bar of soap over with the softened side up, and carefully place the embroidered letter on the soft surface, insuring that the design is centered and the shape of the letter hasn't been altered by removing the excess stabilizer - it is difficult to reposition the embroidery.

Once the design is positioned, lightly tap it all over with your finger to insure that the design is bonded with the soft soap surface.

Step 6. Dissolve the remaining stabilizer.

Place the soap embroidery side down on the wet sponge, and allow the surface to remain in contact with the wet sponge (with or without fabric layer in between) for 30-60 minutes, depending on how easily your soap dissolves.

Carefully turn the soap over, embroidery side up, and rest on a dry surface. It is helpful to elevate the soap slightly, using push-pins or thumb tacks as legs.

Mist the top surface with water, and cover with a layer of transparent kitchen cling film or other plastic wrap. Leave the plastic in place for about 60 minutes. Check periodically to see that the soap isn't dissolving.

Remove the plastic and allow the soap to dry thoroughly.

Congratulations! Your project is complete.

(If you use the soap to wash with, the stitching will eventually separate from the soap)

Sources for Materials

Romeo water-soluble stabilizer:

In the US, Romeo can be ordered online from:

Erica's Craft and Sewing Center
South Bend, IN

<http://www.ericas.com/embdesigns/romeo.htm>

SewSmart
Kirkland, AZ

<http://www.sewsmart.com/Catalog.html>

Also available in the US and Canada through many Pfaff dealers.

In Germany:

Nachmaschined Gabriel
Stepensweg 86
28217 Bremen

In Denmark:

Ana'r Sym Askiner
Amagerbrogarde 263,
2300 Kopenavn 5

In the UK, and for all other enquiries:

<http://www.craftmistress.com>

Bar Soap:

This is quite easy to find, and comes in a variety of sizes and colors.

Try to find a type of soap that is not imprinted with the manufacturer's logo, which may interfere with the placement of the embroidery.

Our example was done on a bar of "Morning Song" moisturizing soap. We chose it not only for its rectangular shape and for its color, but also because it came in an attractive bag with a pearl ribbon tie, which makes a nice presentation as a gift.

This soap is sold in the US by Bed & Body Works. To find a Bed & Body Works store near you in the US, go to:

<http://www.bathandbodyworks.com/about/bath.asp>