

Sashiko

by Ellen McCarthy

“I have a life-long love of hand stitching in all forms. When I was introduced to sashiko, I was taken by the almost austere and flowing nature of the designs and the subtle challenges of technique. I love being able to quickly grab and stitch a pre-printed panel and also to challenge myself by drafting historic designs. When I stitch sashiko, I become part of a world-wide community of artisans linked to a strong tradition of Japanese fabric design and skilled needleworkers. I honor those who have practiced sashiko for generations.”

Sashiko (often translated as “little stab”) is a traditional Japanese form of hand needlework that can be used in different ways, including:

Boro: Straight stitches used to mend cloth and apply patches. Generally free form and can be stitched with or without a pattern

Kogin: Very densely stitched geometric patterns, usually with diamond shapes. Stitches are placed directly on a small grid drawn on cloth.

Hitomezashi: single stitches that form a dense geometric or floral pattern. Stitches sometimes cross each other. Stitches are placed directly on a small grid drawn on cloth.

Moyouzashi: Running stitches that form straight and curved lines to create simple and intricate patterns or forms. Stitches never cross. Designs are grid-based but also use other lines and curves.

Kugurizashi: a combination of single stitches and thread woven through the stitches to create a regular pattern.

Traditional sashiko used indigo dyed cotton fabric and white cotton thread, but contemporary artisans use a variety of fabric and thread types and colors.

For this 2-hour workshop, we will focus on 2 **moyouzashi** pieces that you can easily finish at home.

Materials Provided: (Cost =\$7 payable to instructor IN CASH at the beginning of class):

Pre-printed design blocks

Sashiko Needle

Sashiko Thread

Materials to Bring:

Thread snips or small scissors

Small battery powered task light

Sturdy needle threader

Pencil/pen/paper for taking notes

