



A boo-tiful TUTORIAL by Dianne Stauber

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Let's make some stumpwork ghosts, y'all!

Five years ago, when I first joined EGA, my first love was (and always will be) cross stitch. It will always be my go-to project when I want peace and mindfulness. However, once I started making friends in my chapter and going to meetings and seeing the OTHER types of needlework my new stitchy friends were working on...I fell down the best rabbit hole ever. Stumpwork was one of the first types of needlework to really get my attention, but I couldn't even conceive how it was possible to embroider a 3D butterfly (for example) with bendable wings. Incredible! In the spirit of my EGA newbie heart from five years ago, I created this tutorial for cute little stumpwork ghosts. (And also because my friend and fellow chapter member Garrett has always want to try it...and they inspire me to do all the things, including writing this!)

So what is stumpwork? It's also called "raised embroidery" and you can use a variety of different materials and techniques to create three dimensional elements in the design. You can use so many other forms of embroidery in stumpwork, including silk, goldwork, surface embroidery, beading, padding...the list goes on. You can learn more about stumpwork embroidery in this [EGA article](#).

So let's get going. Here are the supplies you're going to need:

- White cotton fabric. You can use 100% cotton or a hybrid. I used 100% cotton.
- The ghost page at the end of this tutorial.
- An embroidery hoop large enough to completely encircle the size ghost you chose.
- Floral wire. For the project model, I used 20 gauge...but I think it is too thick. It's simply what I had laying around the house. You might want to use something smaller (which has a higher gauge number and always confuses me.)
- An embroidery needle. I used a size 7.
- If you want to duplicate the model ghost, you'll need DMC Blanc, 02, 03, 04 & 310.
- Whatever tools you want to use to transfer the design to your fabric. We'll discuss a few on the next page.

Ready? Let's talk about transferring your new spooky friends to your fabric!

Let's talking about a few of the most popular ways to transfer a basic design:

You can use a lightboard. They're pretty cheap on Amazon. Tape the design to the lightboard, tape your fabric down as well. Turn on the lightboard and use a pen to outline the design you want. I recommend a Frixion pen or heat erasable pen with this method. If there are lines visible when you're all done, simply aim a hair dryer at them and POOF! They disappear!

If you do not have a lightboard and don't want to buy one, you can tape the design to a sunny window and now you have a lightboard! Tape your fabric over it and trace.

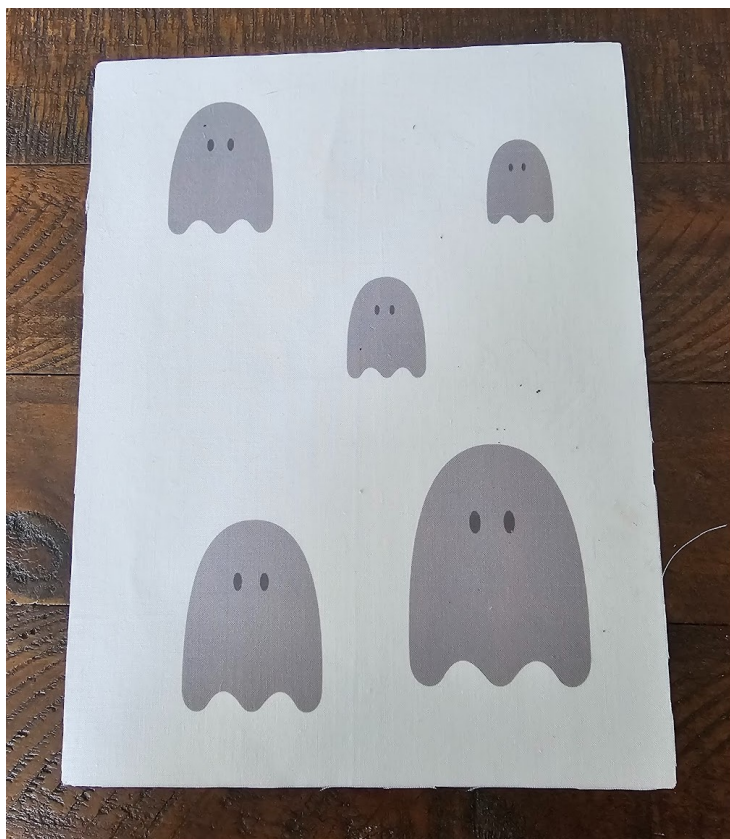
You can also use [wax-free tracing paper](#).

Or you can jump on the crazy train with me and print the design right on the fabric with your inkjet printer! There are tons of videos on YouTube how to do it. Search "how to print on fabric with an inkjet printer".

Whichever way you decide to transfer the design...have fun!

Once you have your design transferred to your fabric, give your cat a treat to get them OFF of the fabric so you can begin...





There are five ghosts in various sizes. The model is the ghost in the center of the page. You can choose what size spooky friend you want to create!

If you use an outlining method to transfer your ghost, your fabric won't look like this. Mine does because this was printed on my inkjet printer.

If you use the printer method, be sure to cover your entire ghost with stitching or the gray will show through.

Now hoop it up and grab your spookiest needleminder and scissors...because we're ready to begin!



Step 1: Using one strand of DMC Blanc, begin couching 1 piece of floral wire around the outline of the ghost shape. This will be your wire frame of the ghost, so we need to stitch it down in place. Leave a tail about 4 inches long coming from the bottom.

It's helpful if you bend the wire and shape it to the outline of the ghost before you start couching it down. See the picture below for an example.

Put couching stitches every half inch or so, making them closer together around corners.

Be sure you have two lengths of wire coming out of the bottom of the ghost as shown. Those lengths can be used to plunge the ghost wherever you want to put him.



Step 2: Once you've couched the wire frame down, it's time to cover that wire completely with buttonhole stitch. This step completely secures the wire to your piece. If you've never done this before, Jessica Long Embroidery has a wonderful tutorial video on how to do a wire slip that I highly recommend. You can [click here](#) to watch the video on YouTube or search her channel for "Stumpwork: an introduction to wired slips."

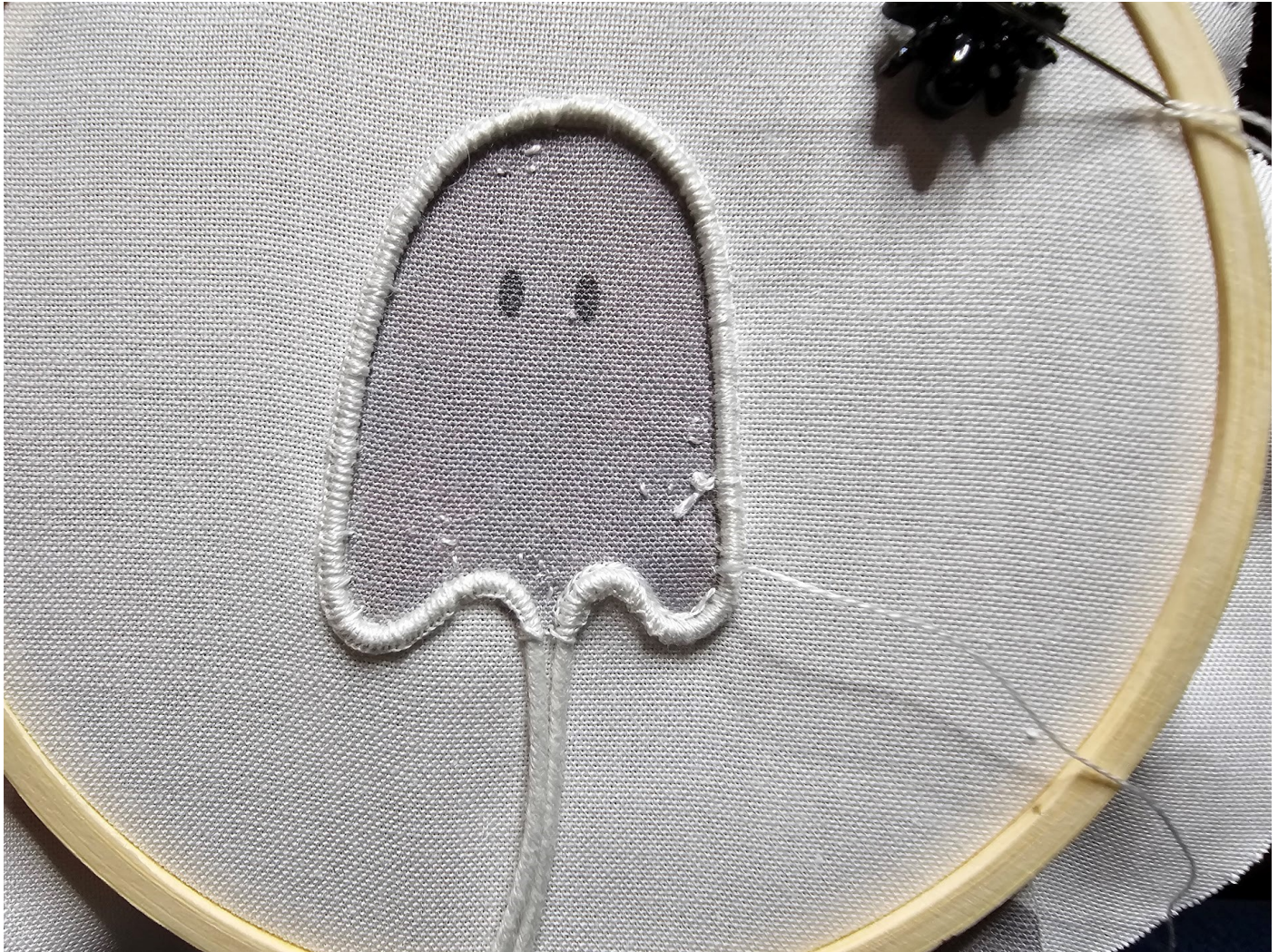
Note: when I did this step, I did the whole thing in white before I realized that I really should have done it in the four colors of floss I planned to use for the silk shading stitches. As such, the wire slip border of my ghost is completely white...which the interior of the ghost is done in silk shading/thread painting using four colors of DMC.

I can look at this as a mistake or I can look at it like the ghost has a glowing aura like dead Jedi Knights in Star Wars. I'm going with the Star Wars idea. :-)

Now let's buttonhole stitch that wire down! In the example below, you can see I've buttonholed the right side of the ghost and am working my way up to the top.



Step 3: Now that buttonhole is complete, you need a tight little row of split stitch going around the inside of the wire. This step is also covered in the Jessica Long video I shared. Below, you can see that I've begun split stitching in the bottom right of the ghost.



Step 4: Now that you have a row of split stitch complete, it's time to fill in your spooky friend with stitches! I opted for a thread painted look using 4 colors of DMC floss and long & short stitch. You can fill your ghost however you'd like.

If you want to do it my way, grab a pen and the 4 colors of DMC listed in the materials list and come with me...it's time to work.

Using a pen or pencil, draw lines to evenly divide your spooking friend into 4 lateral sections. These are the sections that you'll stitch each color in, but because you're using long and short stitch, the colors will blend easily into each other and you'll end up with a lovely fade effect.

If you've never used long and short stitch before or you've never done thread painting, check out YouTube for some examples.

Here, you can see that I've divided my ghostly friend into four sections:



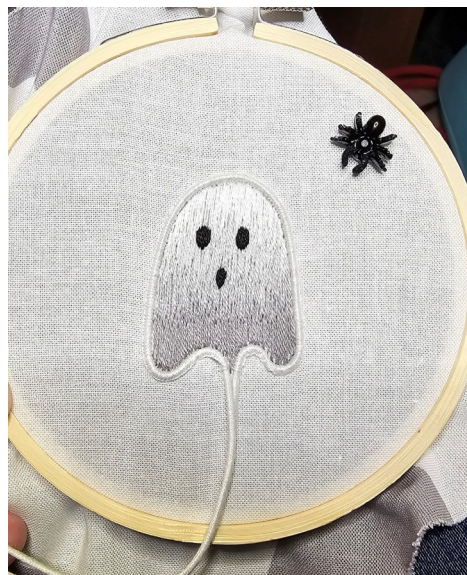
Step 5: Start long and short stitch. Since I wanted my ghost to be white on the top and graduate into darker gray at the bottom, I begin with the darkest color. Using DMC 04, begin stitching in the bottom quarter of the ghost. Come up on or near the line you drew with the pen and bring your needle down between the split stitch and the wire. Your stitches should cover the split stitch border.

In the picture below, you can see I've completed the first row of long and short stitch. Keep going with all of the different colors, making sure that your stitches blend into each other and you're not left with a hard line where the colors transition.

Again, YouTube videos are great for learning a new technique like this!



Step 6: Once you're done with all the layers, it's time to decide what kind of face your spooky friend will have. Will he have eyes? A mouth? Grab some DMC 310 or whatever color you desire and stitch up that face.



Step 7: remove the hoop and use very sharp fabric scissors to cut the fabric away from the wire slip. Make sure you do not cut your buttonhole stitches off of the wire as you go.

Once your spooky friend is free of the excess material, take one more pass around and look for stray threads to trip off, etc.

If you have little frays in places that can't be trimmed, you can use a little Alene's craft glue on your fingertip to smooth those down.

Once that's done, you're ready to put your super cool embroidered ghost friend someplace fun...like poking up out of a plant or popping up from behind a picture frame. Make sure he stays safe from household pets because...WIRE! Yikes.

I hope you've enjoyed stitching these little stumpwork ghosts. Why stop at one? Go back and do a few more!

Happy Halloween!



