



Picture of Finished Project: Deconstructed Bargello Owl

Open your eyes to see how to use perforated paper to create a wise owl for the start of school! The Deconstructed Bargello Owl covers the basic bargello (Florentine embroidery) upright stitch using two standard patterns and an abstract face to bring your bird its character! One piece of perforated paper and six (maybe more) skeins of embroidery floss will let you get started on this adventure! Get your needle ready and read thru the instructions to bring your favorite bird to your stitching basket.

Supply List **NOTE: READ Thoughts & Color/Thread Selection BEFORE BUYING MATERIALS**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Needles:	Tapestry Size 24 or 26
Frame:	6" x 9" frame would be good. You could do each square in hand, but be sure the humidity in your house is low (i.e. avoid sweaty hands). Moisture impacts the stability of the perforated paper. <b>OR</b> 9" x 12" frame for full sheet of perforated paper
Ground Fabric:	1 sheet of perforated paper in the color of your bird, mine was brown
Threads:	I used DMC floss. Choose 5 skeins in one color family and 1 much lighter shade (or white or ecru or 712). More info in directions below. DMC #779 (darkest), #780 (closely matches brown perforated paper), #781, #782, #783, and #712 (lightest)
Ruler:	Yes, needed
Button Set:	No buttons in this project
Bead Set:	If you like beads, you can use them for the eyes
Paint	No paint used in this project
Cording/Ribbon	I did use ribbon. Read the instructions below for information. I bought 1 spool of 1/4" or so ribbon, but I wanted to buy 1 spool of 1", 1 spool of 1/2", and 1 spool of 1/8"—so read the instructions.
Glue	I used sticky felt
Felt	One sheet sticky felt in medium brown (OWL) for supporting the perforated paper One sheet regular felt in medium brown (OWL)

## THOUGHTS

Once I started on the path of an owl, I wanted to finish it. But then my thoughts strayed to...boy, I could use a white sheet of perforated paper for a flamingo...or a light blue sheet for an Eastern Blue Bird...or maybe a pale yellow for an ostrich. So don't just think wise-old owl. Extrapolate. Let your imagination thrive.

Also, I did this on perforated paper thinking it would be a simple hang-up like a bellpull for finishing. Then as I discussed it among friends and suggested that it could be a needlecase, some of them said a needlecase was more practical. And me being a person who has to be practical, I started moving toward the needlecase concept. Except perforated paper is probably NOT the best thing to use for a needlecase that will be used often. However, I made it work. I would suggest you consider using 18-count or 24-count canvas for the ground fabric, but you could use 20 count linen. It's your piece make it yours.

**Note: Be careful of ripping out stitches on perforated paper.** If you need to remove stitching, take your needle out and slowly pull the threads back out of the perforated holes. The paper can rip. It's not the end of the world if this happens, just take it slow. If a hole breaks, restitch as if the hole was there and it should not be really apparent. However, if you rip several holes in a row...then you need to stop and think. I would consider using glue or starting again. Normally there are 2 pieces of perforated paper in a package, so if you've used up all the 3" squares on the first sheet, you can move to the 2<sup>nd</sup> sheet.

Also let's think about what you are going to use for finishing. My next dilemma was backing material. If I was going to do the hang-up, then I needed to cover the back. Fabric (felt/Ultrasuede/etc) is the backing of choice (no fraying of cotton quilt fabric), but then I thought, wouldn't it be cool if I used feathers? I have a couple of small bags of feathers that I have used in other projects. You can sew on the shafts in layers or use the infamous glue word. But I have to admit that if you are going to use the hang-up a lot or take it up and down multiple times a year, the feathers will get bashed and will start to drop off. Just a warning for you if you go that route.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### COLOR/THREAD Selection

1. If you cannot find a color family that has 5 shades of 1 color, you can make it yourself. Remember the Apple Thread Blending Stitch-a-long project? Since you will be using all six strands of DMC thread, you can create your 5 shades by mixing up the strands (6 dark, 4 dark/2 med, 2 dark/2 med/2 light, 4 med/2 light, 2 med/4 light, 6 light). Blend the 3 shade family to make 6 shades.

### BARGELLO Information

Bargello, also known as Florentine Embroidery, has been documented back to the 1300's throughout Europe. There was a revival in the 1960 – 1980's with many great embroidery teachers generating books, designs, and kits. I stitched several beautiful pillows in wool that have survived the test of time (but one that I gifted did not survive the cat). There are books in the EGA Library that can be checked out. And there are several Group Correspondence Courses in Bargello work. I took a recent one from Gail Stafford and highly recommend it.

Bargello is a series of upright step stitches creating different patterns. The "star" of Bargello is usually the shading or color variations in each pattern. Classic Bargello uses one color and then tints and shades of that color from lightest to darkest and then repeated creating an ombre effect. When the pattern repeats, the lightest tint is stitched next to the darkest shade causing a striking contrast and then the ombre takes over again. It truly is beautiful.

There are dozens of different patterns in Bargello and there is 4-way Bargello (also my favorite). I have taken some creative license by providing a basic design (Owl Body), then a more complicated Hungarian Point design (Owl Feathers), then a completely off the way no-design (Owl Face) that you can change as you see fit for the face of your bird!

All stitches are upright! I used 6-strand DMC floss –the easiest for the majority of us to obtain. I stripped the floss and put them back together again. I attempted to lay the floss on the perforated canvas. Laying is harder to do in-hand than on a frame, but it can be accomplished. Again our Stitch-a-long pieces are fun, so don't fret if it's not perfect. Mine is not perfect (as you will soon see from the closeup pictures).

Enough of the blah, blah, enjoy and let's get stitching.

### PREPARATION:

**EACH FINISHED STITCHED DESIGN IS 3" x 3" Approximately**

**DO NOT CUT THE PERFORATED PAPER ON THE 3x3 DRAWING LINE!**

**DO NOT CUT!** : On the **back** of your ground fabric, **draw two (2) squares**. Each square is **3" x 3"** (or maybe 1 thread bigger). They need to have **at least 1 inch** space all the way around. **For finishing, I left 5 paper threads on all side of the 3" square (or completed stitching square)**. **So don't mess up those 5 threads! DO NOT CUT!**

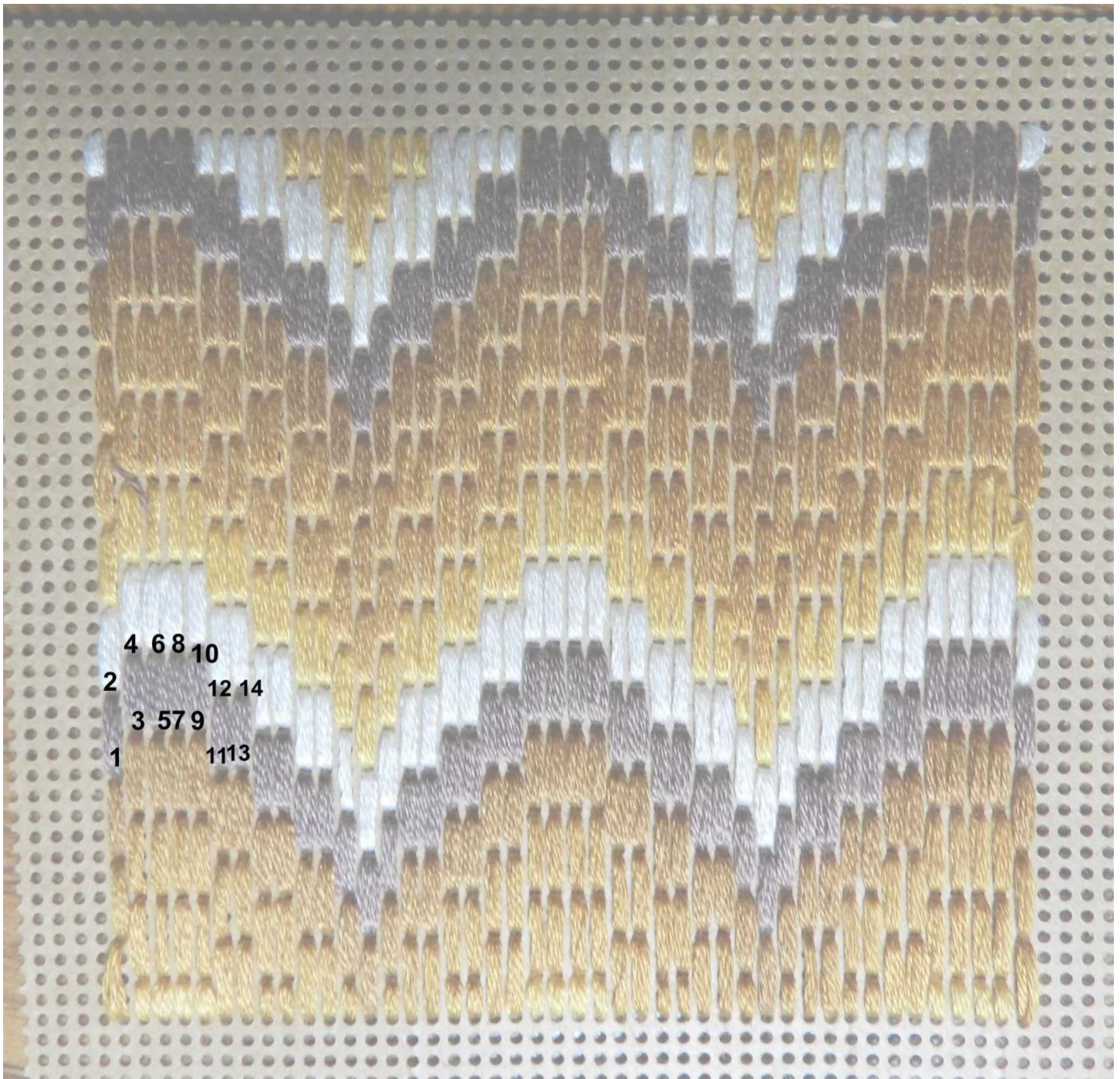
**Now in a completely different area, draw the third square 3"x3" for the face. You need wiggle room on the face all around the face!**

**Keep your threads in their sequence of dark to light. This will be very important. You don't want to do 2 rows in the same shade nor do you want to skip a shade.**

**DO NOT CUT. DO. NOT CUT**

**Each 3 inch square is worked separately** and they do stitch up fairly quickly. I stitched each square in less than 8 hours each and I had to do some ripping out (carefully) because I was designing as I went.

**NOTE IF YOU ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO CUT, THEN CUT 4" SQUARES AT A MINIMUM!** You can get three 4"x4" pieces of paper from the 1 9x12 piece of perforated paper.



This is a picture of the OWL BODY as you will STITCH IT. BUT TO USE IT- TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN SO THE SCALLOPS ARE RUNNING ALONG THE EDGE. So they look like bird feathers (duh).

**OWL BODY:**

Standard Bargello Upright Stitch over 4 vertical threads. Every stitch covers 4 vertical threads. You may step up or step down, but each stitch covers 4 vertical threads.

The pattern for the OWL BODY is the easiest of the patterns. Relax and enjoy the soothing stitching of Bargello.

**READ ONLY: Don't stitch yet!**

From the **center** to the right (and to the left):

**CENTER: Four Stitches side-by-side,**

step down 2 threads, Two Stitches, step down 2 threads, Two Stitches, step down 2 threads, Two Stitches, step down 2 threads, One Stitch, step down 2 threads, One Stitch, then step **UP** 2 threads, One Stitch,

step up 2 threads, Two Stitches, step up 2 threads, Two Stitches, step up 2 threads, Two Stitches,  
step up 2 threads, Four Stitches,  
step **down** 2 threads, One Stitch

Do you see how the pattern goes from the Center top of the Hill down to the valley and then back up again? Back to the top of the hill and then back down again where we hit the 3" line to say stop.

This pattern goes up and down creating hills or scallops along the way.

**NOW YOU CAN STITCH:**

I have numbered the stitches 1 coming up thru the paper from the back, 2 going down into the paper, 3 coming up, 4 going down. All odd number are coming up and evens going down.

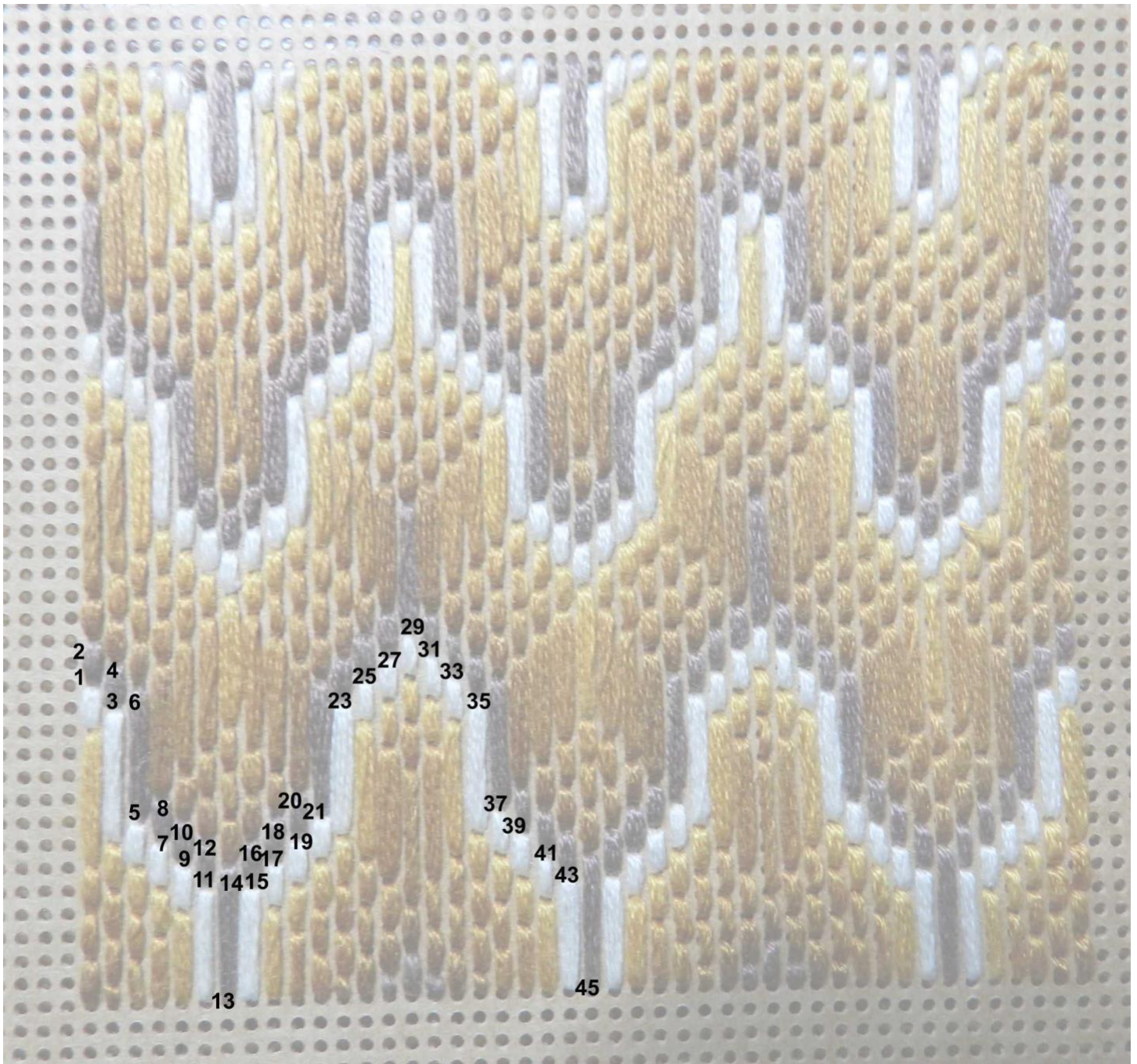
Skip 12 threads up from the bottom pencil line and come up in that hole and start your stitching by coming up from the back in that hole.

NOTE 1: Waste knot or what? If you use a waste knot on perforated paper be sure you do not pull it tight—just let it lay on the back. And you want to cover your back thread as you go. You are going to have 5 empty canvas/paper threads surrounding your design, so you don't want fuzz showing up.

**ROWS**

First Row is Darkest. Then it's your choice, you can move to the lightest color and stitch that above the darkest or start stitching down and stitching lighter shades. It better technique-wise to stitch from an empty hole to a full hole. Sometimes it's easier turning the canvas upside down or even sideways!

NOTE 2: Notice that the hills are going up and down with the darkest at the top. For FINISHING you will turn the whole embroidered piece upside down so the feathers go in the correct direction.



This is a picture of the OWL-FEATHERS section. You can use this rightside up or upside down based on your view of how the feathers grow.

**OWL FEATHERS:**

The Hungarian Point Bargello Stitch is one of the prettiest of the Bargello stitches, but also a bit more challenging to stitch because each row is just a little different.

We are also going to introduce a new vertical stitch. We are going to still have Upright Stitches, but the Hungarian Point uses over-2 and over-6 as the standard vertical stitch. And the steps up and down will be only a Step Up or Step Down of one (yes, 1).

So pay attention! I did a lot of ripping in this section and it's because I was designing as I went—not a good move, so I changed to paper, graphed it, and then went back to stitching.

Take your second piece of 3"x3" paper/canvas/fabric.

Count up 14 threads along the left edge, bring your needle up in the hole above that thread—that's the #1 in the picture.

Up at #1, vertical stitch over two threads, in/down at #2

Step DOWN 1 thread, come up from the back at #3 cover two vertical threads, in/down at #4

Now the BIG VERTICAL DOWN—count down 5 threads! Come from the back at #5, cover 6 vertical threads, and then go in/down at #6.

Another BIG VERTICAL DOWN—count down 7 threads (or move down 1 from the previous stitch), come up at #7 cover 2 threads, in/down at #8.

Do you have the pattern yet?

We stitch 4 over-2 stitches followed by a BIG jump up or down. Look at the picture. We are going to create pretty little diamond patterns.

Look at the picture, do you see the zig-zag rows of vertical stitches—sometimes over 6 threads, sometimes over 2 threads? That's what Hungarian Point can create.

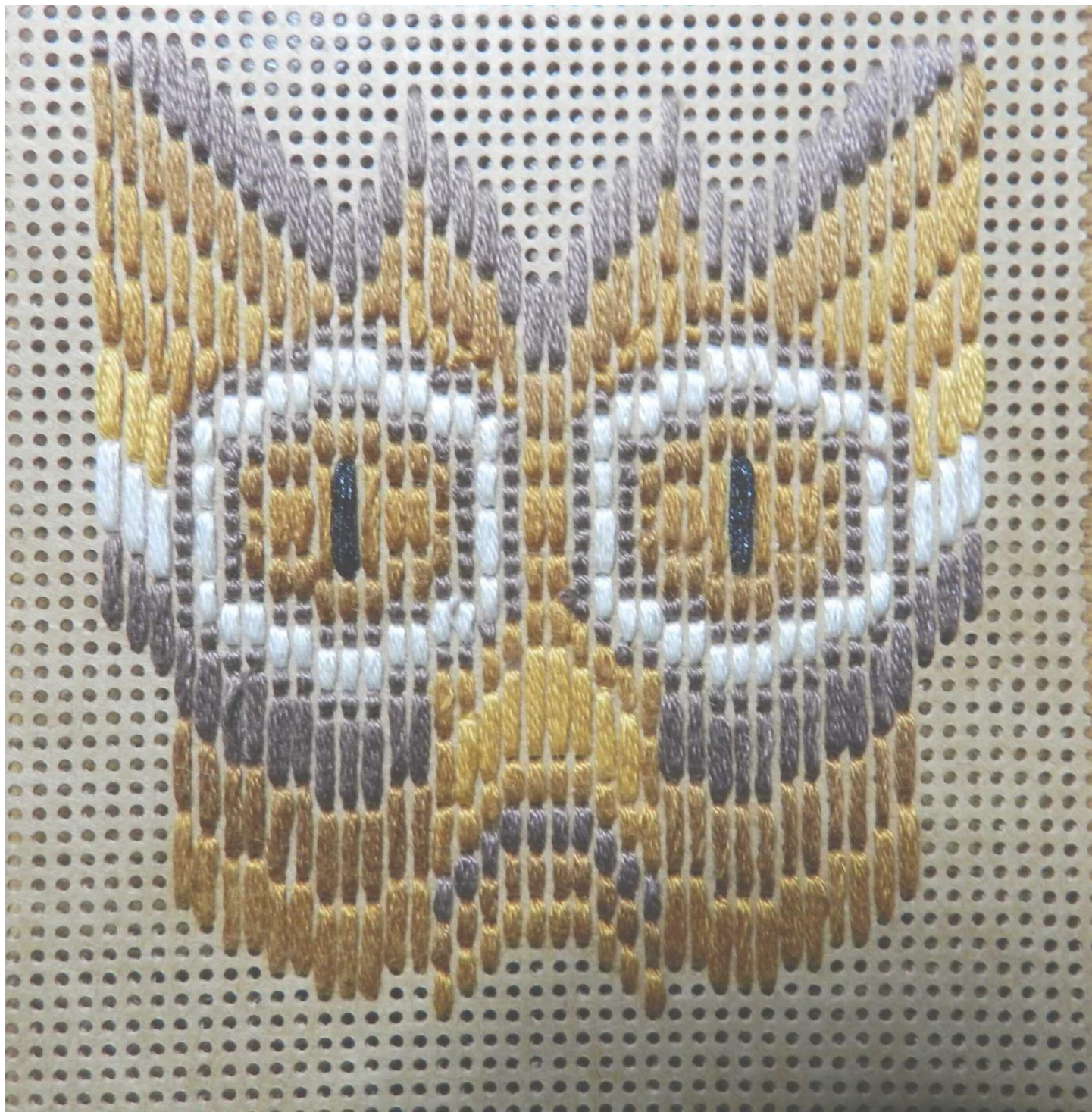
NOTE: Stitch this one carefully! You need to really watch the pattern. Each row is slightly different. If you try to stitch a LONG stitch on top of another LONG stitch, you know you need to stop, look at the pattern, and stitch a short stitch on top of the long stitch. It really easy to just be stitching over 2, step 1 over 2, step 1, over 2, step 1 and then realize you forgot to put in a long stitch. So be careful and take your time.

Again, darkest shade to lightest shade is the key. On one side (top or bottom) of the dark is the lightest; on the other side (top or bottom) of the darkest is the lighter-darker shade. This is the beauty of bargello.



**OWL-FACE IN TRUE COLOR**—Note the variety of thread lengths, over 1, over 2, over 3, over 4. Start at the center which is just above his nose between his eyes! This shows the mistake I made by cutting the perforated paper too small. I had to add a bigger piece behind it that matched the sizes of OWL-BODY and OWL-FEATHERS (and tack them together with stitches). Learn from my mistakes!





**OWL-FACE IN Faded**—Note the variety of thread lengths, over 1, over 2, over 3, over 4. Start at the center which is just above his nose between his eyes! This is straight on view.

OWL FACE:

## EGA Stitch-a-Long 2025 September Deconstructed Bargello Owl (Stephanie Murphy)

You will use your third piece of 3x3 paper/canvas/fabric for the face.

The face is a conglomeration of all size vertical stitches. I would recommend finding the center of your perforated paper and putting in the eyes first.

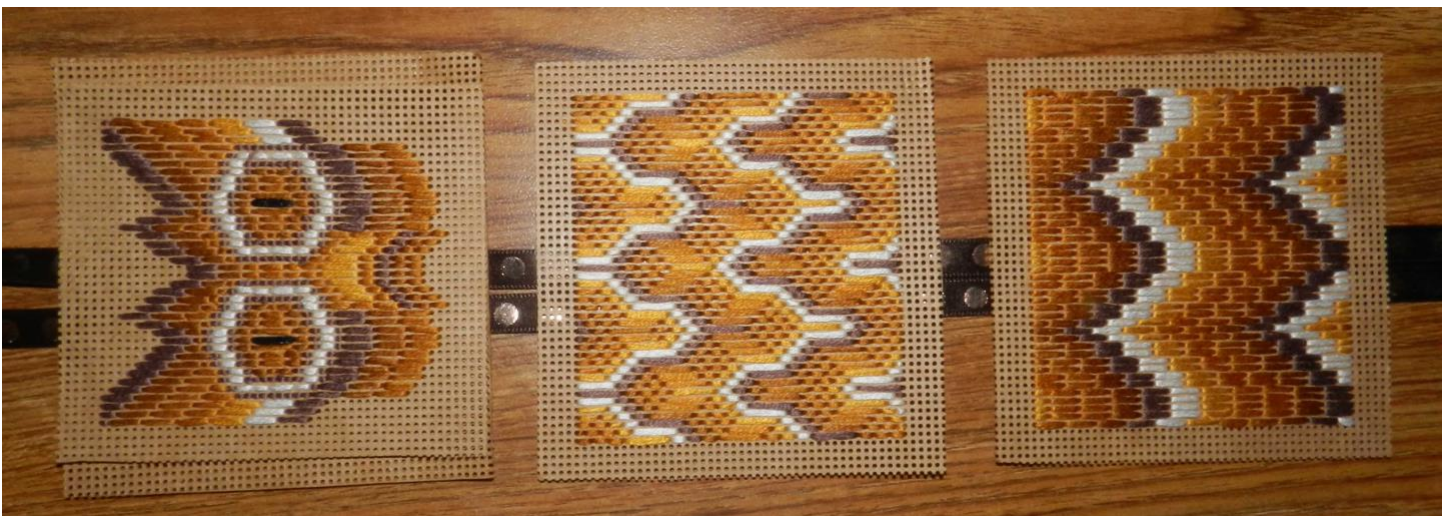
Pay attention!

I stitched the face of my owl only. I could have finished stitching by covering all the brown perforated paper with brown DMC floss to "fill in" the background. I chose not to because I was thinking I might cut out the face for the front of the needlecase. I decided not to do that, but you could.

### **Finishing Instructions for your project**

#### **Materials Needed To Make a Wall Hanging:**

1. Completed Embroidery
2. Backing material (1 8.5 x 11 cork sheet). Use a non-frayable edged backing material or use fray check on fabric edging (or fold over and sew carefully)
3. Glue (or needle and thread)
4. Ribbon, max 1 yard



1. Addition the ribbon and your squares of finished owl pieces. Your choice would be a single wide ribbon or a folded-over thinner ribbon that would provide a hanger at the top (folded over section).
2. Leave enough ribbon at the top to provide a hanger.
3. Place squares of owl on top of the ribbon leaving some space in between (Owl Face on top, Feathers in the middle, and Body Feathers at the bottom.)
4. Cut back material the same size as the owl squares.
5. Put the backing material underneath each owl square with the ribbon in the MIDDLE (between the 2 layers of backing and embroidery).

6. When you are happy with placement, take embroidery squares off, and place some glue between the backing square and the ribbon. Ribbon will be on top of the backside of the backing material. Glue will be between the Ribbon and the Backside of the Backing Material. This is to stabilize the squares in the position you need the embroidery to be. **YOU MAY WANT TO REINFORCE THIS GLUE WITH STITCHING!**
7. Let the glue dry a bit according to instructions.
8. Now place each square on top of the appropriate backing square and sew the embroidery edges to the backing fabric edges. You do not want the squares to slide up and down the ribbon! Be sure each stays in its place. You may need to add some teeny-tiny stitches in the middle!
9. After completing the sewing on all 3 squares, add a hanger to the top and trim the bottom. Voila!
10. And you're finished! Congratulations!

**Materials Needed To Make a Needlecase:**

Completed Embroidery  
Backing material (8.5 x 11 cork sheet (DO NOT CUT YET)  
Felt (8.5 x 11 felt sheet)  
Glue  
Sharp needle and thread  
Thimble (optional)  
2 1-inch wide 11" Long strips of cork sheet OR Ribbon



This is a Picture of all the construction pieces you will need for finishing.

Top Row: Left to Right: Cork Fabric Backing for Owl Face, Followed by Two Cork Backing with Felt Pads for needles

Bottom Row: Back of Owl Face, Back of Owl Body, and Back of Owl Feathers.

On top of Back Row: strip to connect the pieces together creating a band to connect pieces and fold over to close needle case.

1. Breathe deep. You will need patience for the finishing. I'm going to suggest that you check not once, not twice, but three or four times before doing any stitching!
2. **Take each stitched piece and trim leaving 5 empty threads all the way around each piece.** Your 3" piece is now closer to 4".
3. Put each of the 3 pieces on top of each other and check to see if they are the same size. Now's the time to do some trimming if any are "different".
4. Take your backing fabric.
5. Making the strap: Cut along the long edge of your back fabric (cork, Ultrasuede, felt) a 1-inch strip of fabric (by 9" or 10"). Do this again to have Two (2) 1-inch strips. Glue these back sides together and set aside to dry. I used E6000 Liquid – a new product that seemed to work pretty well. It says to let dry for 8 hours; I probably let it dry for maybe 30 minutes as I was doing all the rest of the work.

**NOTE:** If you are using a ribbon, you can avoid this step!

6. Cut out of the remaining piece of backing fabric the exact same size of each of your stitched squares. **(BIGGER THAN 3" !!!!!)**
7. I decided to put felt on the inside of the OWL BODY and OWL FEATHERS pieces and left the OWL FACE back empty, no felt, so there would not be any grating against the right side of the OWL FEATHERS piece. Your choice.
8. I cut 2 pieces of felt –one large square and one smaller square for EACH OWL BODY & OWL FEATHERS piece.

9. Determine where you want your needle pad to be on the backing material. I wanted as much of the cork fabric to show, so I made my larger square smaller than the entire piece and made the smaller square even smaller to fit underneath the square that you will see & use as a needle holder.
10. I tacked the smaller square onto the FRONT of the backing fabric (i.e., the side you will see) and then stitched (with one strand of floss) the felt OVER the smaller square.
11. Do this twice—once for the OWL BODY backing and once for the OWL FEATHERS backing.
12. You should have pieces that look like the picture on Page 11 describing the pieces that are needed for finishing.
13. Once you have all these pieces, you are down to less six hours to go! Hurray!
14. Now we start stitching the pieces together. I want you to check and double check whenever you are stitching. I want you to start by putting those pieces of the picture in front of you just the way they are in the picture. Do you notice that:
  - a. You are looking at the BACKS of the stitched pieces?
  - b. The stitched pieces are laid out as OWL-FACE, OWL-BODY, and OWL-FEATHERS. This is IMPORTANT.
15. So why are they laid out that way? When you do the needlecase, you want the OWL-FACE on the FRONT and the OWL-BODY on the BACK and the fold in section will be the OWL-FEATHERS.
16. ALSO be sure the OWL-BODY is upside down with the scallops on the bottom. Same is true for the OWL-FEATHERS, but this piece is more of a judgement call on which way you “see” it as feathers!
17. Now let’s lay the strap on top of the 3 pieces. You only need an inch or so on top of the OWL-FEATHERS piece—you need more hanging off the front (left, in photo) to let you do a wrap-around strap.



This picture shows the wrong side of the OWL-FEATHERS with strap tacked on to the front only. Please put the pin on the OWL-FEATHERS side of the strap so you remember to leave the GAP while stitching all around the OWL-FEATHERS piece once the backing fabric with felt on it (Step 18)



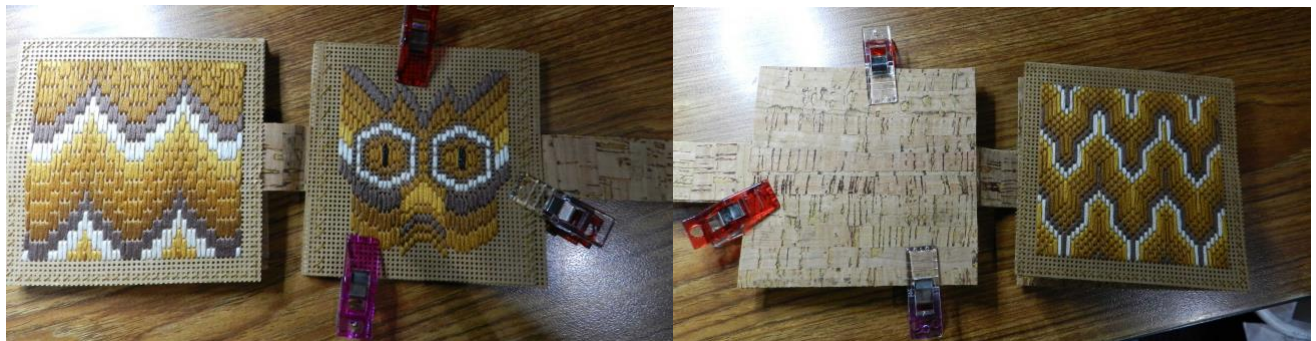
This shows Step 18 BEFORE stitching-ready to be stitched with clips. Move the pin!!!

18. Place a straight pin in the strap where it is hitting the edge of the OWL-FEATHERS piece. Now tack stitch the strap to the inside stitching of the OWL-FEATHERS piece keeping your straight pin aligned with the side. Once that is tacked in place, put the backing fabric with the OWL-FEATHERS back, hold together with quilt clips, and stitch together the edges and thru the strap. **START STITCHING ABOVE OR BELOW THE STRAP ENTRANCE TO YOUR SQUARE. YOU WILL NOT STITCH ACROSS THIS STRAP. YOU WILL LEAVE THIS GAP.** You will need a Sharp strong needle; I used 1-ply floss. I used ½ cross stitch (only crossing in one direction) and every other perforated paper thread. I used a color that matched the perforated paper (in my case DMC 780). This is now the OWL-FEATHERS-page. **YOU COULD CAREFULLY STITCH THE STITCHED PIECE TO THE STRAP ON LEAVING THE BACKING FABRIC FREE ALONG THE STRAP. THIS LEAVES A GAP FOR FUTURE USE.**
19. O.k. when you are all the way around, you are 1/3 done! Take a breath. Rest your hand. THINK.
20. Place your piece back down like in the picture on Page 11 now put the OWL-BODY good side down underneath the strap next to the OWL-FEATHERS page and the OWL-BODY-Backing Fabric with felt added good side UP on top of the strap. Read this twice.
21. DO NOT STITCH
22. Now fold over the OWL-FEATHERS-page on top of the OWL-BODY set. Look at the strap. How much space do you have to leave to allow it to fold nicely without pulling and snagging? Move your pin on the strap to the OWL-BODY side of the strap and re-pin.

23. Now you *could* put some tacking stitches to hold the strap in place onto the back of the OWL-BODY stitched piece. I did not because of #25 & #26. BE AWARE. CHECK TWICE.
24. Put the backing material over the OWL-BODY and put the quilt clips on the piece to hold it in place.
25. DO NOT STITCH:



26. Turn the piece over—look at it. Is the long strap to the left? Is the OWL-FEATHERS to the right? If so, is the OWL-BODY positioned so that the OWL-BODY scallops are facing down (i.e, scalloped edge along the bottom)? If so –good, now you can stitch. If not, turn the OWL-BODY upside down, then you can stitch.
27. Now tack stitch the strap to the inside stitching of the OWL-BODY piece keeping your straight pin aligned with the side. Once that is tacked in place, put the backing fabric with the OWL-BODY back, hold together with quilt clips, and stitch together the edges and thru the strap. You will need a Sharp strong needle; I used 1-ply floss. I used ½ cross stitch (only crossing in one direction) and every other perforated paper thread. I used a color that matched the perforated paper (in my case DMC 780). This is now the OWL-BODY-page.
28. O.k. when you are all the way around, you are 2/3 done! Take a breath. Rest your hand. THINK.
29. Now you know the drill. Put your piece down following the picture on page 11. Add the OWL-FACE face down under the strap and the plain cork backing on top of the strap. Put clips in place. DO NOT STITCH.



30. Fold the OWL-FEATHER page to the left on top of the OWL-BODY page. Fold the unstitched, but clipped OWL-FACE pieces over on top of the OWL-FEATHER page. FIRST: IS the OWL-FACE right side up? SECOND: Adjust the strap so that it snugs up, but doesn't pull BETWEEN THE OWL-BODY page and the OWL-FACE page. Move your pin to align with the strap along the side of the OWL-FACE where it's going to connect to the OWL-BODY page. You should still have a couple of inches on the right hand side handing off the needlecase toward the back of the needlecase.
31. DON'T STITCH YET. Check to be sure that the strap is horizontally straight so the end from the OWL-FACE section will be able to slide into the GAP you left on the OWL-FEATHERS section. You sort of want your pages to line up.
32. Now stitch the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final section of your owl! Once you are finished with this, then you are 3/3 done! Congrats! Once last thing!

33. I trimmed the end of my strap into a semi-V shape to more easily slide into the GAP. If the strap is too long, just trim it a bit.



TRIM ONLY A LITTLE AT A TIME.

34. And you're finished! Congratulations!