

Shelly's Butterfly



Design size: 3.75"wide x 2.75" high

Designed by Helene Ossipov

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This is a beginning goldwork piece, with a lot of freedom for the student to make choices. The name comes from a member of Starlight Stitchers, who worked on the Golden Shamrock Petite Project. After finishing it, she said it was fun and wanted to do another. So here it is.

These are the materials that I used from my stash. This is your butterfly, so choose the colors that you want. You're going to make a lot of decisions here. Don't worry; there are no wrong decisions as long as your eyes are happy.

8 x 8 piece of a sturdy cotton fabric (x2)

Hoop or stretcher bars

#10 embroidery needle

#24 Chenille needle

#18 Chenille needle

#7 gold Japan thread*

Yellow silk thread

#4 Kreinik braid

Invisible thread

Yellow DMC floss

Gold sequins

Blue sequins

#15 gold beads

#8 gold bead

Beeswax

*If you can't find Japan thread, or don't want to use it, you can substitute the Kreinik braid.

Step 1: Draw the butterfly pattern on one piece of fabric, using a Frixion pen. Goldwork cannot be done in hand, so place both pieces of fabric in a hoop or on stretcher bars and make sure it's tight. The drawn outline is on top. Make sure the hoop is large enough to accommodate the entire design. You need two pieces of fabric to support the weight of the goldwork and to hide the beginning and ending pin stitches.

Step 2: Start with the body of the butterfly. The finished body should be slightly more than 1 inch long. The yellow floss is padding which will be covered by the Kreinik braid, so its color should be similar to that of the #4 Kreinik braid. Take a length of yellow floss (all six threads) that is about 12 inches long. Run it through the beeswax, so that it's a bit stiff. The beeswax isn't absolutely necessary, but it makes it easier to control the floss. Fold the floss so you have a hank of floss the length and width you want. Take one strand of floss and wrap it around several times to hold everything in place. To make a tapered edge, trim each end at an angle so that you have a taper. (Really, you can skip this step if it gives you too much grief.)

Step 3: Tack the body in place between the two wings using one strand of yellow floss. Make sure the cut ends (if you tapered) are against the fabric. Satin stitch the body of the butterfly

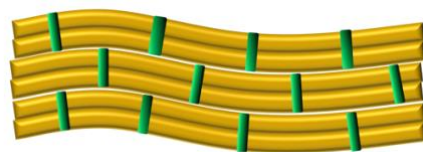
using the #4 Kreinik braid. I find that it's easier to start in the middle and then work my way to the ends.

Step 4: Couch the outline of the wings with two strands of #7 Japan thread. You can use Gutermann or silk thread to couch. You can choose to use a yellow that is close to the color of the Japan thread, or you can use a contrasting color. Couch every ¼ inch. Make sure that your stitches are evenly spaced, that they are perpendicular to the Japan thread, and that they hug the thread, so that there are not little “legs” sticking away from the Japan thread. A good way to do the spacing is to look at the lines created by the gold wrapping on the thread. Couch at every other line. See the example below.

Cut two 7” lengths of Japan thread. Cut an 18” length of silk or cotton thread, run it over the beeswax (making sure to run your fingers over it to remove any leftover bits of wax) and thread the embroidery needle.

The butterfly wings are divided in two, so you have four outlines to make. Start close to the body at the top left wing. Lay the Japan thread pair on the fabric making sure that there is about an inch or two tail at either end of the line. Bring the couching thread up close to the Japan thread and sink it on the opposite side of the pair. Be careful that the Japan threads lie side by side and don't twist over each other. Continue couching around the top half of the wing until you reach the body. Leave a tail of about an inch. You'll plunge that to the back later. For the bottom half of the wing, start at the lowest point where the wing meets the body. Work your way around the outline toward the upper half. When you reach the top half, you can stop there or continue to parallel the top half until you get to the body. Repeat for the other wing. Use new Japan threads for each outline; don't cross over. Bring all the ends to the back of the fabric. You can use a #18 Chenille needle or an awl. Overcast stitch the ends in place to the back of the fabric, being careful not to go through to the front.

Step 6: Couch more rows of #7 Japan thread (doubled) if you want. You can add more rows just to the outer edges or all around. When laying down more rows, make sure you “brick” the couching thread. That is, for the second row, the couching threads should be between the couching threads of the previous row. The rows of Japan thread should lie snugly next to each other; you should not see the ground fabric between the rows. See the illustration:



However, think about filigreeing the last row(s) to add a nice, open, lacy look. This is your butterfly, so you do you. Here is an example of filigreeing:



If you used a Frixion pen and you have any ink showing, this is the moment to blast your hair dryer at the butterfly until the ink disappears.

Step 7: Add sequins to the wings. You can choose any or all of the following three methods of attaching sequins. On the top wings, I attached the sequins with beads (method A). On the bottom wings, I used invisible thread for the overlapping sequins (method B) and blue thread for the scattered sequins (method C). But this is your butterfly, so do whatever makes your eyes happy.

A. Bring thread up through the center hole of the sequin. Pass through the center of a #15 seed bead and then pass back through the sequin's center hole. Make sure the bead is larger than the center hole; if the #15 is too small, use a #11.

B. Overlap the sequins. You'll essentially be backstitching the sequins. Come up through the center hole of the first sequin, then go back down into the fabric at the edge of the sequin, on the edge away from where you will overlap the next sequin. Come up at the opposite edge of the sequin. Pass your needle through the center hole of the second sequin and go back down through the center hole of the first sequin, overlapping the sequins. Come up at the edge of the second sequin. Pass your needle through the center hole of the third sequin and go back down through the center hole of the second sequin. Come back up at the edge of the third sequin. Continue until done. Do a final backstitch to hold the last sequin in place. Be careful the make a neat line, especially if you're using a contrasting thread.

These images show the sequins being laid from right to left:



C. Hold down the sequin with two, three, or four stitches. Come up through the center hole and down by the edge. If you use two stitches, make sure that they make a straight line. If you use three stitches, they should form a Y. If you use four stitches, they should form a cross.

You can decide to have the stitches facing irregular directions or you can have them lined up nicely.

Step 8: Add the #6 bead at the top of the body for the head. To add the antennae, lightly draw two lines, then couch one strand of Japan gold thread for each antenna. If you're feeling brave, you don't need to draw the lines, but just lay the Japan thread down and couch it.

