

Assisi

As its name suggests, Assisi work is of Italian origin. It is a type of cross stitch embroidery in which the background is filled with stitching and the motifs are left mainly unstitched, forming a reversed or negative image. This design technique is called voiding. The outlines of the motifs are worked in double running (or Holbein) stitch, as also are any details within the motif.

Assisi work flourished chiefly in the 17th century, although the term dates only from the beginning of the 20th century when this style of embroidery was revived in and around Assisi. Traditional Assisi work is wonderfully complex, filled with mythical creatures such as dragons, and complex, swirling, interlaced vines and foliage. Borders of delicate scrollwork in double running stitch help to soften the outline of the rectangular stitched areas and sometimes link one motif to another.

The bison image, being fairly large, does not lend itself as well to this form of embroidery, as there is a lot of white space. I did use several longer backstitches to produce more of a curve. This piece was stitched with DMC threads: #801 for the cross stitch, #3371 for the Holbein stitch and # 938 for some half cross stitches to add some definition. The fabric is 28 count Jobelan in winter white and I put the entire piece into a tea bath after washing, just to produce a more ivory tone.