Checkerboard Girl — Yea, Yea, Yea!

Inspired by *The Beatles Quilt* by Pat Holly and Sue Nickels

Sample by: Sue Nickels and Pat Holly
Sue has been quilting for over 40 years, starting by hand and gradually focusing on machine work, and has been teaching machine techniques for the past 30 years. Sue has taught and lectured nationally and internationally for shops, guilds and major conferences. She has also been a judge for many quilt shows and is an AQS author. Her most recent book is “Fabulous Feathers and Fillers” and latest projects include ruler work using rulers she has developed for machine quilting! Sue’s priority in the workshops she teaches is to provide a relaxed environment for students to learn machine techniques that are timesaving. Sue emphasizes the best quality workmanship, never compromising quality for speed!

Pat sees the quilts she makes as a culmination of many experiences in her life. A lifelong exposure to sewing, love of history, and the need to create are all part of Pat’s quiltmaking. She studied weaving and graphic design in art school. The skills learned in art school and the years of experience with the sewing machine allow her to design and produce the quilts that pay tribute to the textile creators of the past. She has been making quilts for over 40 years. In addition to being an author and teacher, Pat has won many national awards for her quilts.

Sue and Pat have won numerous awards for their collaborative quilts. These include the 1998 AQS Best of Show for “The Beatles Quilt” and “Two of Us” which won the 2014 AQS Home Machine Workmanship Award. Together they held the Hollygirls Quilt Retreats in northern Michigan for 7 years, teaching the machine techniques they have used on their quilts.

Sue’s Website: www.Sue-Nickels.com

Pat’s Website: www.pink-elephants.net
Quilt Inspiration

Our April Block of the Month is inspired by our quilt “The Beatles Quilt.” This quilt won the 1998 AQS Best of Show and is in the collection of the National Quilt Museum. We used the folk-art style girl in a few of the appliqué blocks—Baby’s in Black, Eleanor Rigby, Long and Winding Road and Lady Madonna. We love to look at the folk art style appliqué quilts from the 1800’s for inspiration in our designs and this girl is featured in a famous appliqué quilt in the collection of the American Folk Art Museum. This is the perfect motif to use for our block to teach our method of “stitched raw edge machine appliqué.” "The Beatles Quilt" also has some fun piecing techniques and we have incorporated the four-patch border to show an easy piecing method that twirls the intersections to lay perfectly flat! We used the fun colors from the quilt that give a feel for the time! Feel free to use any color scheme for your block.

All You Need is Love from Pat and Sue

Quilt: The Beatles Quilt by Sue Nickels and Pat Holly
Sample Block

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Supplies

Fabric
- We used 100% cotton fabrics, and Kona solids. We like to prewash our fabrics
- 9 ½” x 9 ½” square background- we used a magenta (starch this fabric)
- Fat quarter blue and fat quarter dark pink (used for four-patch border)
- 10” x 10” piece green for stems and leaves
- Small pieces orange, pink, tan, black for appliqué (also some of blue and dark pink from four-patch fabric)
- 100% cotton 50 weight thread for appliqué and piecing in colors to match fabric
- Paper backed fusible web- two 8” x 10” pieces (we use SoftFuse brand)
- Sewing machine (we use the blanket stitch for appliqué and straight stitch for piecing)
- Open toe appliqué foot
- 1/4” foot for piecing (with guide and straight stitch throat plate)
- Small good quality scissors (we like Karen Kay Buckley’s 5” multipurpose/orange)
- Small tweezers
- Pencil for drawing on paper backed fusible web
- Fabric marking pencil (Quilters Choice brand)
- Black fine point permanent marker such as Pigma Micron .05
- Soft pink colored pencil such as Prismacolor blush pink #PC928.
- Easy threading needles (Clover Easy thread brand)
- Cutting mat, rotary cutter and ruler (6” x 12”)
- Spray starch (we use Best Press brand)
- Light box
- Removable tape
Instructions

Appliqué center instructions:
1. Print appliqué pattern on page 16. Use reverse side of pattern to trace appliqué designs on paper side of fusible web (place on light box if needed). Using pencil, draw each design individually. Trace the hash marks onto the pattern pieces, these indicate which edge will lay underneath another section (Photo 3).

2. Cut outside the drawn line on each piece. Larger pieces- cut ¼” on inside to reduce amount of fusible in project (girl’s skirt, for example) (Photo 4).

   Please note: if using other than SoftFuse brand follow their directions for heat setting and length of time to fuse.

3. Using a dry iron on cotton setting (adjust if needed- too hot if paper scorches) fuse to fabric for about 8-10 seconds (Photo 5). Important: fusible side down to back of fabric.
4. Using small sharp scissors, cut pieces on pencil line. Leave ¼” extra fabric on sides that have hash marks to lay under adjoining piece (Photo 6 & 7).

**Note:** Draw face on girl now using the fine point permanent marker- place piece on pattern and trace. Add soft pink blush to cheeks using light pink colored pencil. This is easier to do before fusing to background.

5. Using light box, tape pattern right side facing up. Position background square on pattern (lightly tape in place). Remove paper from back of appliqué pieces as you go and position pieces on background following pattern. Use small tweezers to handle the pieces for easier placement (Photo 8).
6. Carefully move background square to ironing board. Press using cotton setting for 12-15 seconds (Photo 9).

Ready to stitch!

7. We’ll stitch the vines and leaves first. Thread machine with matching color thread to appliqué in top and in bobbin (green thread for green leaves and stems). Select blanket stitch. Adjust length and width to small settings (we use about 2 width and 2 length). Move needle position all the way to the right, if possible. Use needle down option. Practice first to check settings (Photo 10 & 11).
8. Start with about 12” lengths of top and bobbin thread (you can bring bobbin thread to the top to begin for control of threads as you stitch). Stitch slowly, pivoting often (Photo 12).

9. At the end, leave about 12” length of top and bobbin thread. Bring the threads on top to back using easy-threading needle (Photo 13).

10. Tie all threads and knot on the back- bury under stitches if needed. We don’t need to bury the threads on a dark background as threads won’t shadow through as they would with a light background. Continue with all green leaves and stems.

Change to next color thread for next appliqué pieces and so on until all appliqué pieces are stitched. These are small pieces and will take time to stitch. Stitch slowly and take your time.

11. Carefully cut background down to 8½” x 8½” square. The background block is cut a little bigger initially to allow for any shrinkage or distortion that might happen during stitching. Using a fabric marking pencil, draw the cutting lines first to be sure of accuracy. A cutting mistake would be sad, after completing the stitching on this block (Photo 14).

Your block is ready to add the four-patch border!
Four-Patch Border instructions:
12. Press the blue and dark pink fabric. Lightly starch if desired – this sometimes help with piecing. Place the fabrics together on the mat board, right sides together. Make an even cut along the shorter side (18” side – if the fabric has shrunk and is less than 18”, do not worry – there will be plenty). Cut four sets, 1½” x 18”. Be careful when handling the sets so they stay together. Cut one additional 1½” x 18” set. We will use this to test the quarter inch on the machine.

Test 1/4 inch seam allowance:
13. Use the additional 1½” x 18” set. Make two 1½” x 3” cuts from this set. Use two blue rectangles and one pink rectangle for the test. Set up the sewing machine with your quarter inch foot (or whatever you use to stitch a quarter inch seam).

14. Thread the machine with cotton thread in top and bobbin. We like to use an average weight cotton thread and a sharp 80/12 needle. Set the stitch length to about 2.0. For straight stitching, we find it helpful to use a straight stitch throat plate if you have one.

15. Sew the three rectangles together placing the pink in the center. Press the seam allowances toward the blue fabric. It should measure 3½” across and the width of the pink should be one inch. If it is smaller than one inch, your seam allowance is too big. If it measures more than one inch, the seam is too small. Make the necessary adjustments and you are ready to sew (Photo 15).
**Instructions**

**Prepare strip units:**
16. Sew the four 1½” x 18” together using ¼” seam. Press seam allowance to the blue fabric. These should measure 2½” wide. If not, correct the error now (Photo 16).

**Cut segments:**
17. We need 20 four-patches for the border. To make these, we will subcut the strip units in 1½” x 2½” segments, 40 total are needed. There will be some extra (Photo 17).

**Assemble the segments into four-patches:**
18. Place two segments next to each other. The left segment should have the blue on top, the right should have the pink on top. Place the right segment on top of the left segment, right sides together and seam allowances opposing. Sew the seam (Photo 18).

Note: It is important that all the four-patches are assembled in the same orientation. This will make keeping the seam allowances opposing possible.
Instructions

Twirling the seams:
19. Turn the block over. You will see the pink seam allowances are pressed toward the blue square. We want the blue seam allowance to follow the direction the pink is placed. This means the blue seam allowance will be pressed toward the pink square (top and bottom). Another way to think of this is the seams are all folded in a counter-clockwise direction. When you do this, the center will open up and may be pressed flat (Photo 19).

Note: These four-patch blocks should measure 2½” x 2½”. If the block is not the correct size, make any necessary corrections before continuing.

Making the border:
20. Continue making four-patches and twirling the seams. Make 20 four-patches. We will add the sides first then the top and bottom. The sides are made from 4 four-patches per side and the top and bottom from 6 four-patches each. How the four patch-blocks are oriented is very important so follow the directions carefully.
21. We will be making these borders by sewing the four patch-blocks together. When you join two of the blocks, that seam also will be “twirled”. This time, the seam allowances will be twirling in a clockwise manner. Also, make sure the block is in the correct orientation. In Photo 21, the block is oriented with a blue square in the upper left. After the two blocks are sewn together, they should measure 2½” x 4½”. Make any corrections at this point (Photo 20).

22. Side borders are made by sewing 4 four-patch blocks together. First, sew two blocks together. Repeat to make another two block set. Sew these two sets together. Be sure the blocks are oriented with the blue square in the upper left and are sewn together vertically (like a column). After the units are sewn together, make sure they measure 2½” x 8½”. Make any necessary corrections (Photo 21).

23. Lay out the two side borders and the appliqué block. (Photo 22).
24. Sew the sides to the block. Press the seam allowances toward the appliqué block (Photo 23).

25. Prepare top and bottom borders by laying out the six four-patch blocks for each border (Photo 24).

26. Notice in the photo that the four-patches are oriented with the blue square in the upper left and the blocks will be assembled horizontally (in a row). Sew the blocks in sets of two (Photo 25).
27. Next, sew these three units together. Check that the borders measure 2½” x 12½”. Lay them out with the appliqué section before stitching to make sure the orientation is correct (Photo 26).

28. Sew the borders on. Press the seam allowance toward the appliqué block (Photo 27).

29. Be careful handling the block with the pieced outer edge.

Finished? Fantastic!
Template

Checkerboard Girl

Pat Holly and Sue Nickels