

Circular Leaf Block

inspired by Baltimore Goes Modern by Cathy Erickson

Quilt by: Cathy Erickson



Featured Artist: Cathy Erickson

Cathy Erickson



Cathy Erickson made her first quilt in 1996 while waiting for her daughter during dance class. In 2015 Cathy was caught up in the modern quilt movement. This was the beginning of her series "Baltimore Goes Modern." Her quilts use blocks from antique Baltimore Album Quilts as inspiration for modern quilts. She uses large blocks, modern colors, deconstruction, and graphic quilting to add a modern twist to very traditional appliqué blocks.

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Inspiration

For the June Block of the Month, I wanted to choose an inspiration that fit in with my "Baltimore Goes Modern" series. In my series I always start with a block that is found in my collection of antique album quilts. The Baltimore quilters had a wonderful fascination with leaves. Leaves in circular designs are particularly interesting.



Cherry and Leaf block by Cornelia Chamberlain



The above Baltimore Album block is from a quilt by Cornelia Chamberlain (1820-1895). Cornelia lived in Maryland her entire life. In 1850 she was living close to downtown Baltimore. Her husband was a shoemaker and they had 4 children as per the 1850 census. Her home was close to other documented Baltimore Album quilters.



Inspiration

Cornelia has another leaf block on her quilt that includes cherries and several other blocks that have leaves and flowers.



Cherry and Leaf block by Cornelia Chamberlain



Inspiration

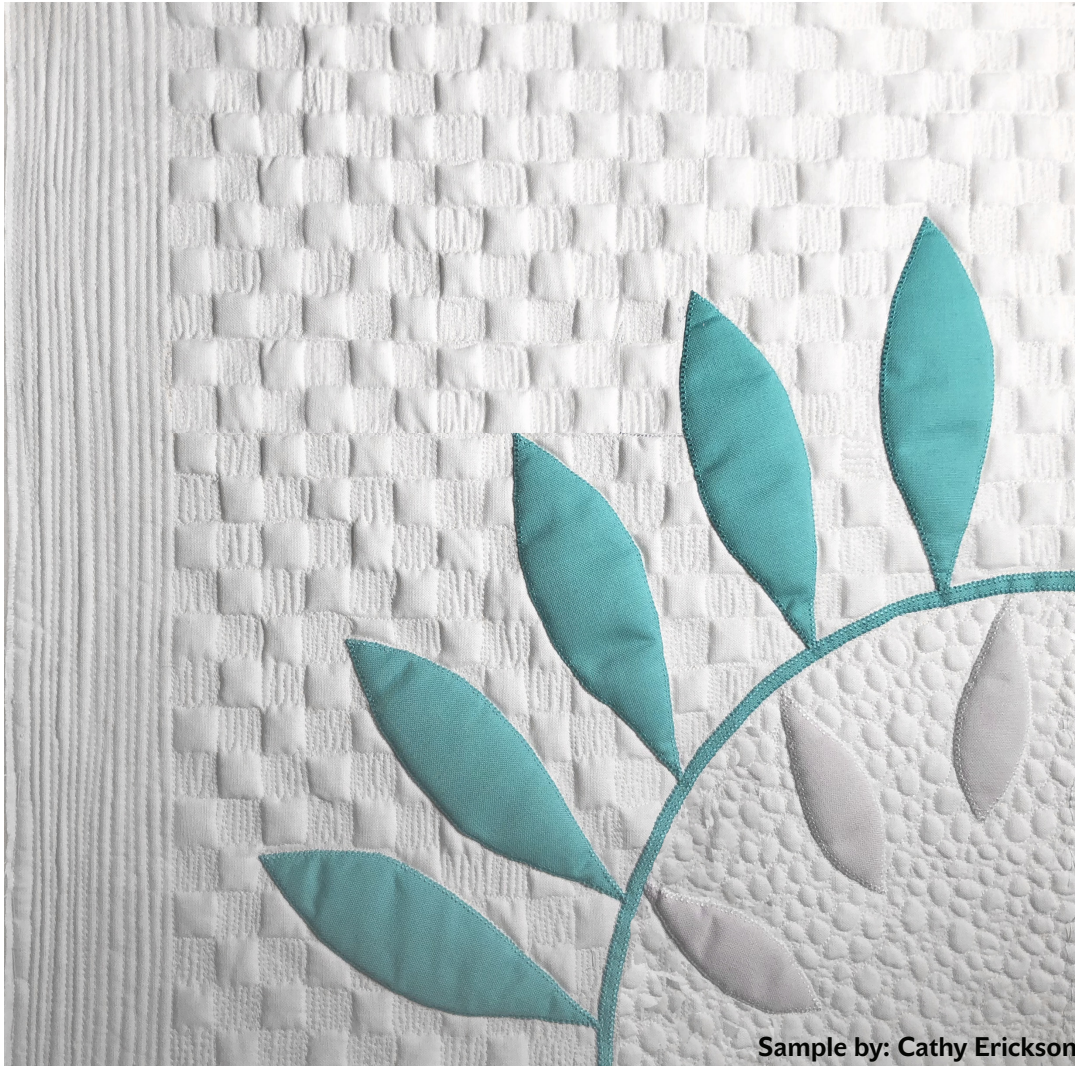


Here is that Baltimore Album quilt that those two blocks came from. It is unknown if all the blocks were made by Cornelia. The wide variety of designs of wreaths almost suggests that more than one quilter was involved. Each quilter put their own spin on a circular design with different arrangements of leaves, flowers, cherries, and grapes.

In my "Baltimore Goes Modern" series I love to go big with large blocks, modern colors, graphic quilting, and deconstructed blocks. That is why I chose to use only a quarter of a circle for my block design. There is also plenty of space for graphic quilting.



Sample Block



Sample by: Cathy Erickson

Supplies:

- 13 ½" x 13 ½" fabric for background
- ¼ yard fabric for large leaves & stem
- Fabric scraps for small leaves
- 14" x 14" square piece of batting
- 14" x 14" fabric for backing fabric
- Light-weight fusible
- Stabilizer for machine appliqué (i.e. iron on tear away stabilizer)
- 40 weight thread for machine appliqué in colors to match leaf colors
- 100 weight, 60 weight, or 50 weight thread for quilting
- I quilted my block with 100 wt. silk thread and used a 70/10 needle.
- 10"x15" piece of freezer paper:
- Water-soluble marking pen for marking quilt designs
- Light Box



Instructions

To begin, print off Pages 18 to 22. The block is divided into four sections. Page 22 has the pattern pieces used to make the block. After printing off each page, measure each large square to verify that it is $6 \frac{3}{4}$ inches by $6 \frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Cut out the four squares on Pages 18 to 21 along the lines. Arrange the cut out blocks so that the grey edges match, as well as the leaves on each block. Tape the four blocks together to make a finished pattern square that is $13 \frac{1}{2}$ by $13 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. The pattern will be used for the placement of the appliqué leaves.

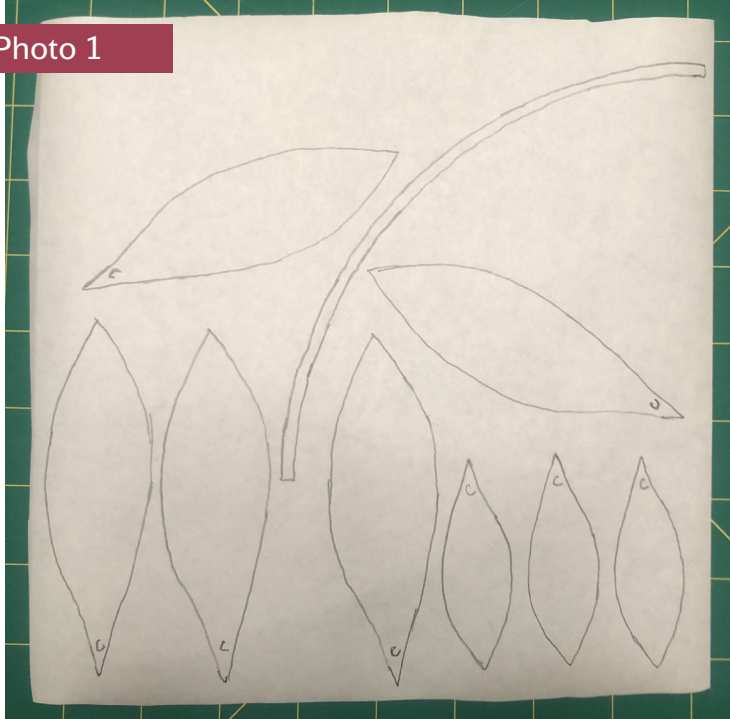
Machine Appliqué:

The instructions I am supplying here are for machine appliqué using fusing. If you are more used to hand appliqué please use the leaf patterns on Page 22 for the finished leaf sizes. Then hand appliqué using your favorite technique.



Instructions

Photo 1



1. Print out Page 22 with the Pattern Piece outlines.
2. Using a light box or window trace the pattern pieces from Page 22 onto the dull side of the freezer paper. You'll need to trace out 5 large leaves, 3 small leaves, and 1 curved stem (Photo 1).

Tip: Freezer paper shrinks when you iron it. So it is important to pre-shrink it before using it for patterns. In general cut a square of freezer paper, iron it on the dull side about three times in order to shrink the paper as much as possible. After that is done, it is ready for use in making patterns.

3. Mark the letter C on one end of each leaf. This is the part of the leaf that touches the center circle. Use a pencil for the tracing part. An ink pen might transfer to the iron and a permanent marker can transfer though the paper onto the fabric. This is especially noticeable if the fabric is light in color.
4. Apply lightweight fusing to the back of the fabric for the leaves and stem. Use the instructions for fusing that are supplied with the paper backed fusible. Leave the fusible paper backing in place.



Instructions

Photo 2



Photo 3



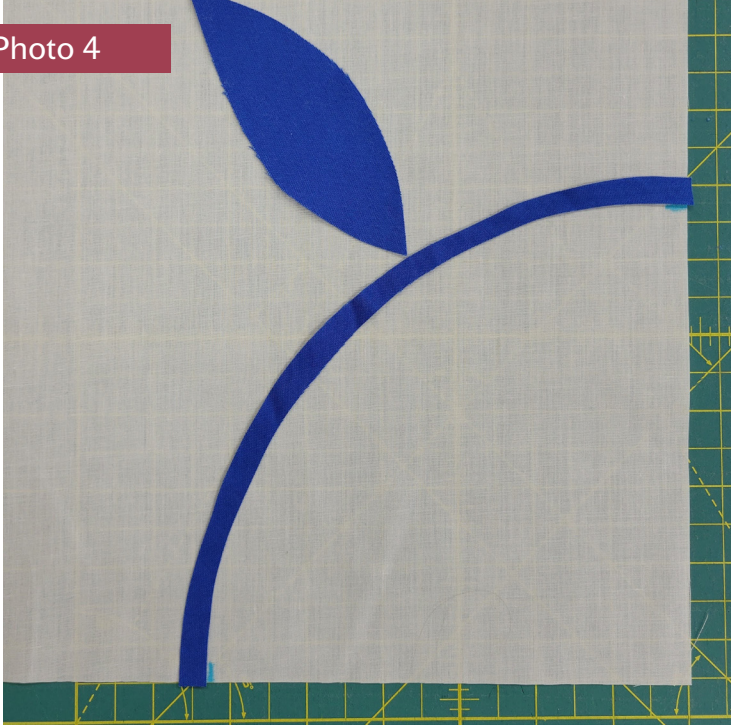
5. Cut the freezer pattern pieces apart. Place the shiny side of the large leaves and stem onto the right side of the leaf fabric. Iron the freezer paper pieces to the right side of the fabric.
6. Repeat with the three small leaf freezer paper pieces onto the right side of the fabric (Photo 2).
7. Using scissors, cut out the shapes on the line. If the freezer paper comes loose while cutting, re-iron it to the fabric.
8. Once all the pieces are cut out, remove the fusible backing paper and freezer paper.
9. There are several ways to position the leaves on the background fabric.

ONE: Place the pattern for the block on a light box. Using the outline as a guide, arrange the leaves in place. When removing the freezer paper, note which end had the C, as that is the point which will touch the stem (Photo 3).



Instructions

Photo 4



TWO: From the bottom right hand corner of your background fabric, measure $6 \frac{1}{4}$ " up and $6 \frac{1}{4}$ " to the left, and mark those spots on the edge of the fabric. Use those marks as a guide for placing the stem (Photo 4).

10. Continue until all the leaves and stem are in place and freezer paper is removed (Photo 5).

11. Carefully move the block, with pieces in place, to the iron. If needed, pin the pieces in place before moving. Remove the pins and make sure the pieces are in place. Press and fuse the appliqué pieces with the iron.

Photo 5



TIP: It is crucial to have a clean iron when the background fabric is white or a light fabric. If in doubt, use a cover cloth between the iron and your block.

12. Next add a machine appliqué stabilizer to the back of your block. Using a tear away stabilizer is the best choice for this block. Follow instructions on the packaging for use.



Instructions

Photo 6

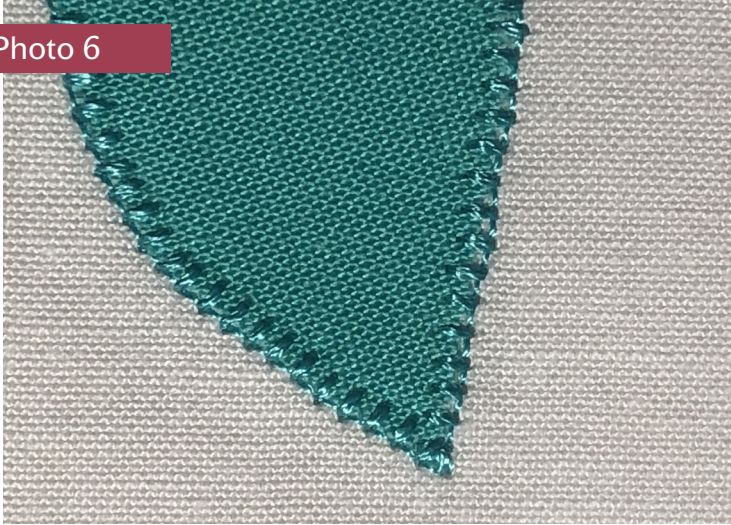
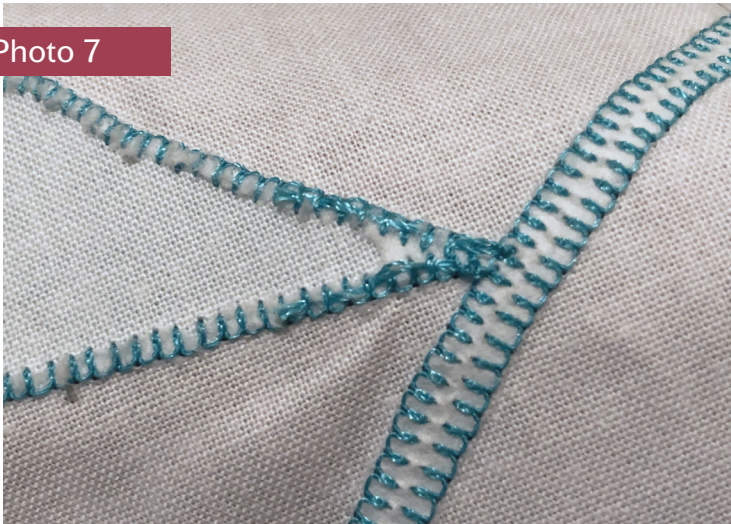


Photo 7



13. Appliqué the edge of each piece with a blanket stitch. I used a 40 weight thread that closely matches the fabric color of the leaf. Before I work on a block, I always have a practice sample that is just a leaf or two to practice on. This allows me try out different colors of threads as well as perfect my machine appliqué stitching (Photo 6).

14. Remove the stabilizer carefully from the back. Since the buttonhole stitches almost touch on the stem piece, the stabilizer here may be left in place.

15. Use a needle to take the end and beginning threads to the back of the block. Tie a knot and then thread a needle and work the stitches through the buttonhole stitching. The goal is to not have dark threads show through the background fabric (Photo 7).

16. Press the top to give it a crisp flat look. In an antique block the quilting would normally be the same for the entire block. Sometimes flowers, leaves, and feathers are included in the background quilting. To achieve a modern look, I usually break up a block into at least 3 different areas of



Quilting

quilting. I like to use circles, squares, and lines as graphic additions. In a large quilt I will grid off dozens of different quilting areas and often use more than a dozen different stitches.

Shown below are the main stitches used on this block.

I feel comfortable marking my quilt design on the top before I actually layer the top with batting and a back. This allows me to consider the quilting as a design element. To mark the



Straight lines done with a walking foot



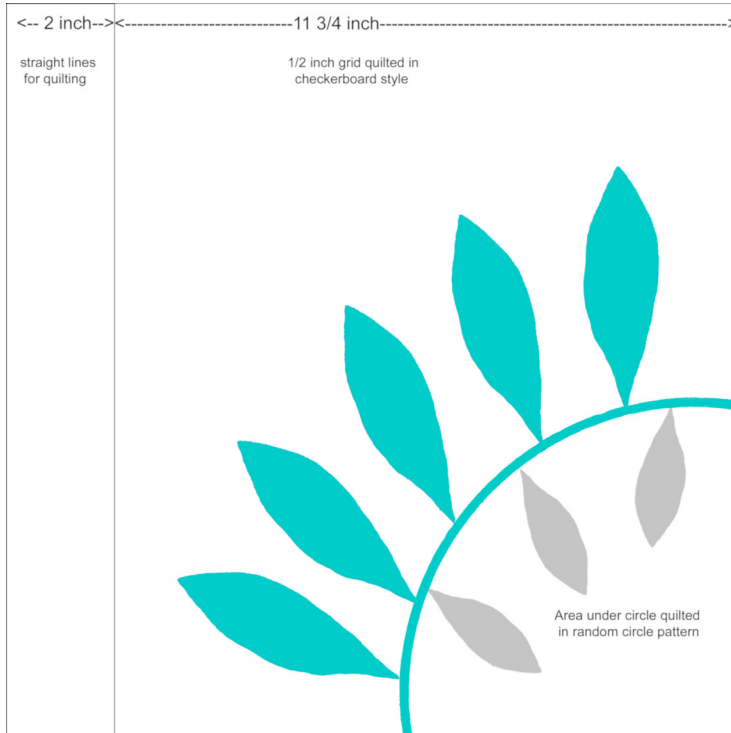
½ inch squares done in a checkerboard style using a free motion quilting foot



Circle quilting or pebbles done with a free motion foot. Circles are quilted in different shapes and sizes. The end result is quite organic.



Quilting



quilt block, use a water soluble blue pen. Be sure to test that the pen you use for marking is water removable by testing on a small scrap of background fabric.

1. For the area that is straight lines, measure 2" in from the left side edge of the block and draw a vertical line.

From this line, mark a square grid across the remaining background fabric every $\frac{1}{2}$ " horizontally and vertically.

The lower right area below the stem does not need to be marked (Photo 8).

2. Once the top is marked, layer it with the batting and backing fabric.
3. Baste the layers together. I hand baste mine and I stabilize all the layers together by pinning the block to a foam

Photo 8





Quilting

Photo 9



core board. Start with basting the outer edge followed by basting about every 3 to 4 inches. I also hand baste about a quarter inch away from the stem. The basting is removed while machine quilting the piece (Photo 9).

You can also pin baste the layers together.

The age-old question of quilting is “Where do I start?” I almost always start with the straight line quilting, followed by in-the-ditch quilting around every shape. Last is the free-motion quilting.



Quilting

Photo 10



4. Stitch straight lines from right to left to fill the 2" space, spacing lines about $\frac{1}{4}$ " - $\frac{1}{8}$ " apart (Photo 10).
5. Using thread that matches the background fabric, outline stitch around all the shapes. I do the outline stitch with my free-motion sewing foot.

Before starting free motion quilting I always practice first to make sure the machine tension is correct. For practice I have a small sandwich made up of the fabrics and batting I am using on the quilt. Practice also warms me up for the intensity of doing outline quilting.

6. Next I move on to quilting the free-motion squares. Using your water soluble pen, mark every other square with a dot, like a checkerboard. These are the squares that will be filled in with quilting.
7. I've drawn the stitching path that I approximately follow as a reference (Photo 11). I travel from square to square along the marked lines. Some squares might have more lines in them than others, but that is okay (Photo 12).



Quilting

Photo 11

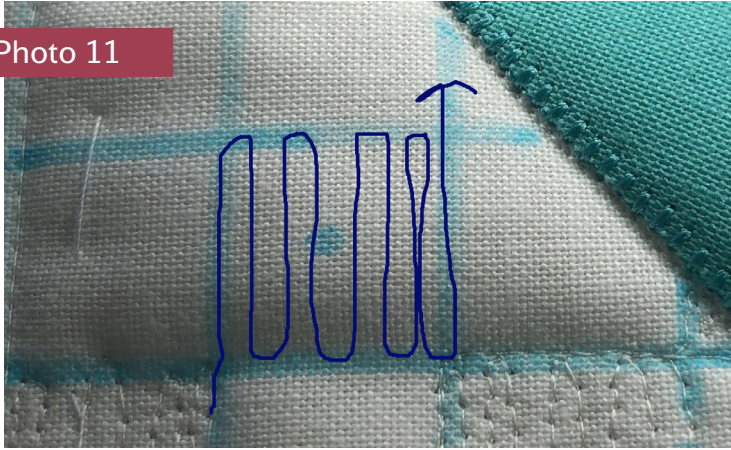
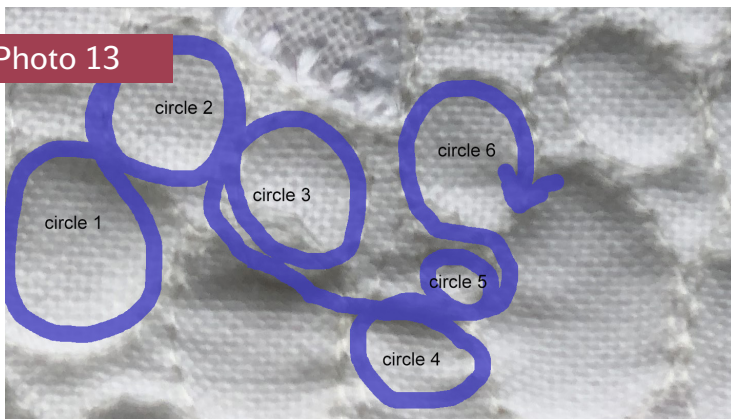


Photo 12



Photo 13

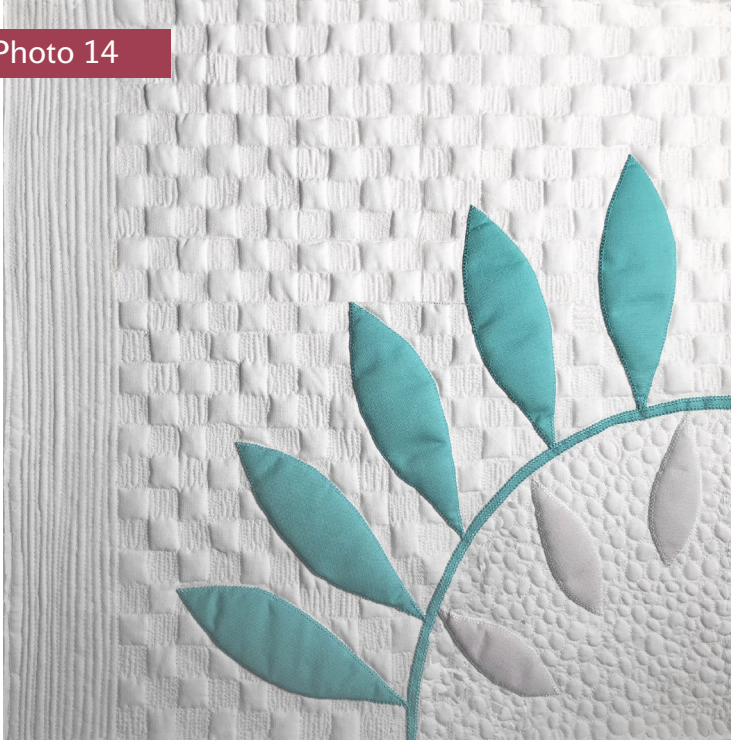


8. Quilting circles or pebbles are done free-motion as well. These will be added in the bottom right corner, around the small leaves. The stitch starts by making a circle on the background fabric. Next quilt another circle next to it, touching on one side. Third step is to make another circle but try a different size. Fourth step is to make another circle.... and so on... (Photo 13).
9. Finish quilting all the circles/pebbles in the lower right hand corner of the block.
10. Remove any basting stitches/pins that remain in the quilt.
11. Once the block is completely quilted



Quilting

Photo 14



it is time to remove the marking lines. Follow the instructions offered for your marking tool of use.

I soak the block in cold water to remove my blue lines. I soak it once, let the water in the basin drain, soak it again with fresh cold water, and then let the water drain, and finally soak it for a third time with cold water. At this point there should be no visible blue lines on the block. If you see any lines, soak in cold water again. After that I place the block on a thick towel and allow it to air dry. I do not squeeze the water out of the block as that tends to leave wrinkles that I would have to iron out.

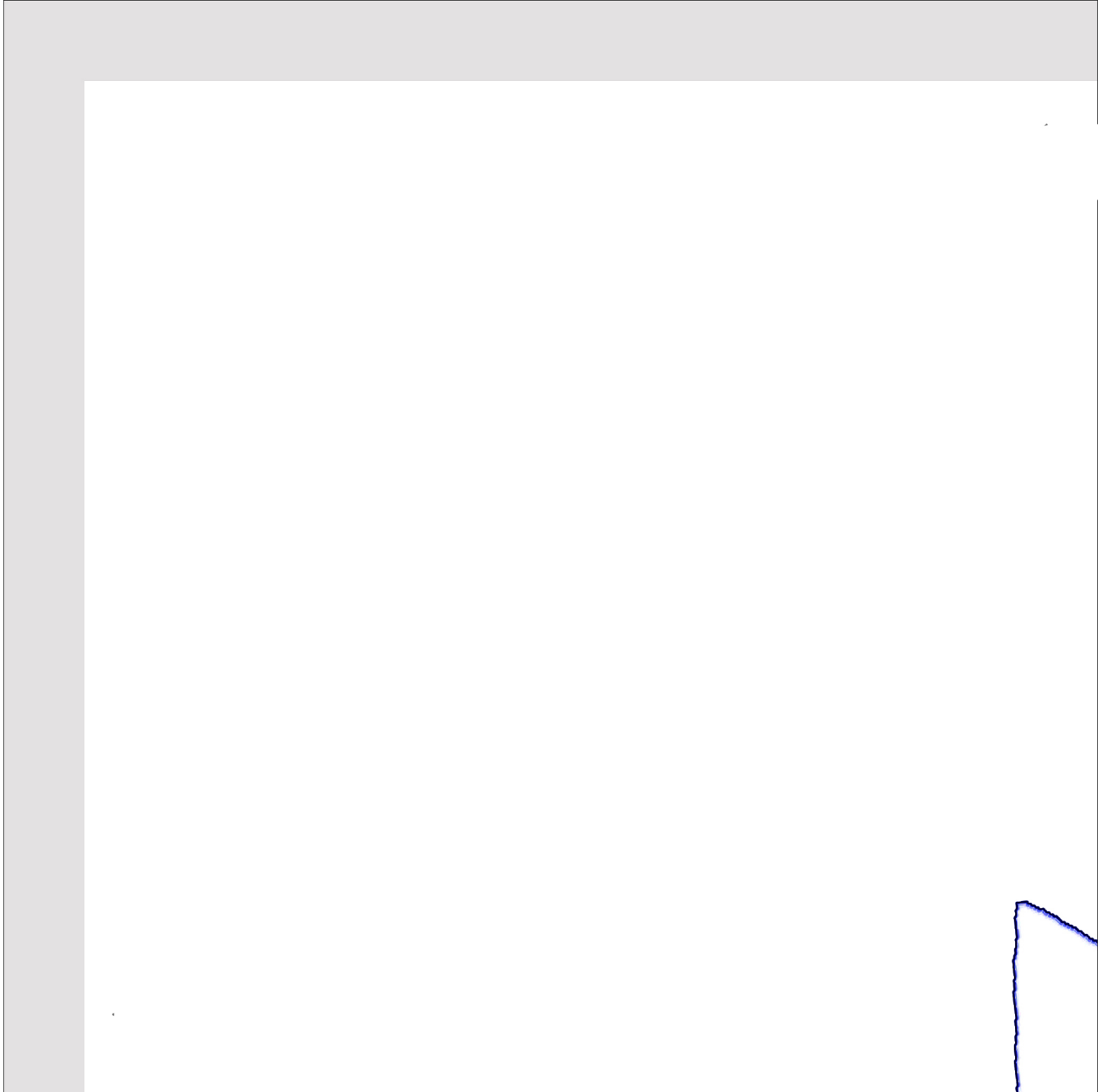
12. Once the block is completely dry, lightly press the block to flatten it.

13. Trim the finished block to 12 ½" x 12 ½" in size (Photo 14).

Finished?
Fantastic!

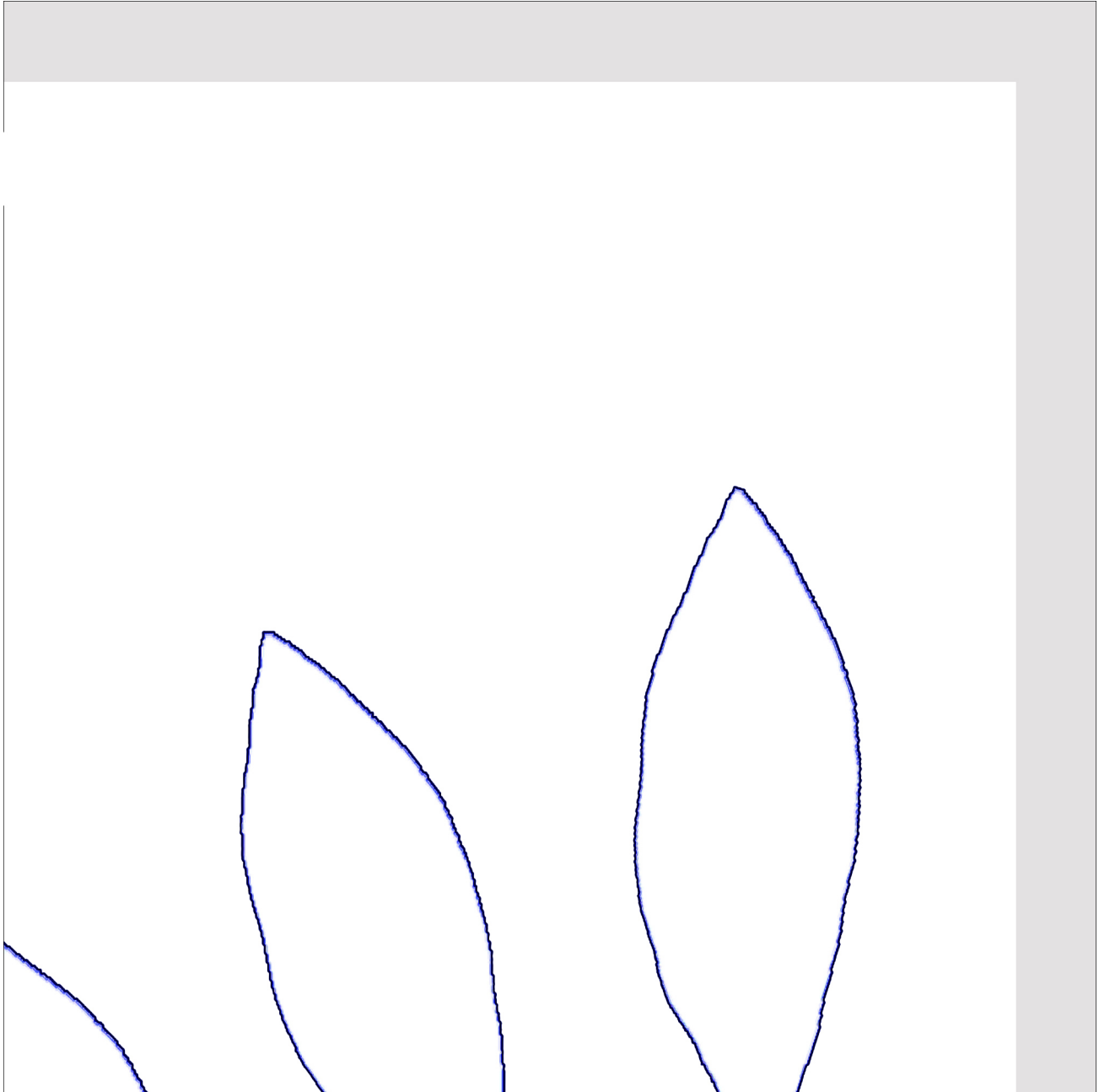


Upper Left Corner of Quilt Block



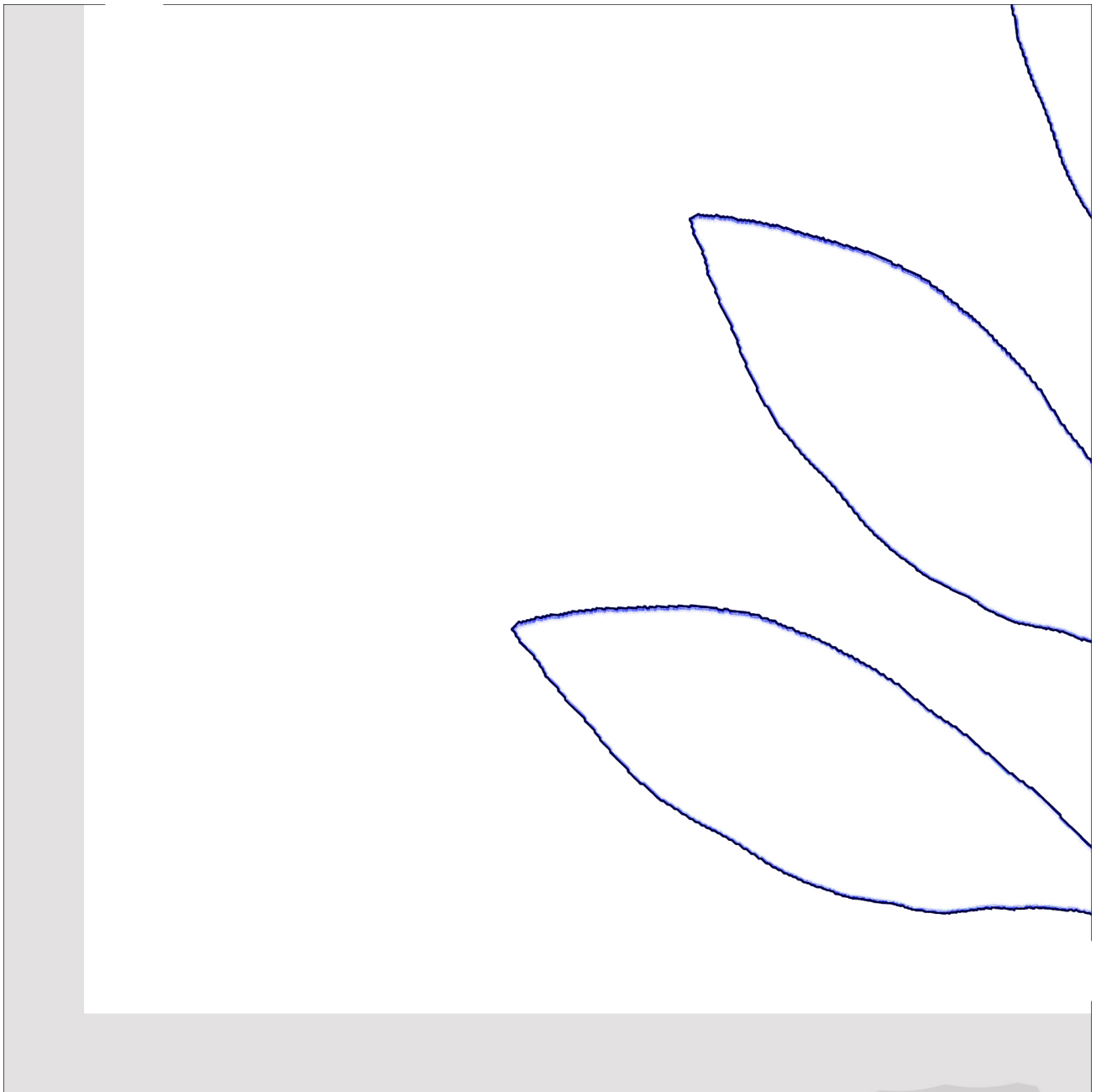


Upper Right Corner of Quilt Block





Lower Left Side of Quilt Block





Lower Right Side of Block





Pattern Pieces Used to Make the Block

