Reverse AppliquÃ© Runner with Natalie Chanin

Chapter 1 - Introduction
Overview
(gentle music) - Reverse applique is one of the cores techniques of all the things we do here at Alabama Chanin. The table runner is a great project because there's no construction involved. The process is really simple. It's two layers of a cotton jersey knit that are layered together, sewn together with a straight or running stitch, and then the top layer of the fabric is removed in certain areas to reveal the fabric that's underneath. (upbeat music)

Chapter 2 - Stenciling
Materials
- To get started with the stenciling, we just have collected our supplies together. The first thing you're going to need is a stencil design. We've taken the design from Alabama Studio Sewing + Design which is this Paisley stencil on page 124, but this could be any design that you find anywhere, and that is copyright-free, so we've printed this stencil out. This is downloadable from our website, AlabamaChanin.com. We have a printed stencil. We use this really wonderful material called pennant felt, which is actually exactly what it sounds. It's what they use to make those little pennants with, at ball games. It has a great durability, it's very easy to cut, and holds the stencil shape really well, after the stencil is cut. But you can substitute for this. There are Mylars that you can purchase at every hobby craft center. When we first started making stencils, we actually just used posterboard, or a cardboard, something like that, so you can also just use things that you have readily available in your home. We use a cutting mat, so as not to damage the surface that we're cutting on. We use a utility knife, or this happens to be an Exacto knife. Once the stencil is completed and finished, we're gonna be transferring the finished stencil onto this cotton jersey fabric here. With the fabric, we're gonna be using a Createx airbrush paint, and there are several methods, and materials that you can use to transfer through the stencil onto the cotton jersey fabric. At Alabama Chanin, we use a very simple airbrush tool. This is connected to any basic air compressor that you might use for filling up the tires of your car, or that you have for home use. Since this is not readily available for everyone, we're going to be using a variety of spray bottles, but you can use anything as simple as a household sponge. We did a small shop at a local craft store, and there are all kinds of different methods. From sponges on rollers, stencil brushes, squeegees. There are specially-made sponges for the transfer of stencil. These are all readily available everywhere. It's always our suggestion that you use what you have readily available at home, and see how that works before you spend a lot of money investing into supplies that you may not use. Sponges like this will leave kind of a print, in the shape of the sponge there, but it can also be a beautiful effect. So it's a very simple thing, it shouldn't feel intimidating whatsoever to get started with it.

Creating the stencil
- The first step of this is to affix this design to our stencil Felt, here. Now we've just sent this out to our local printer and had it printed in one full piece, so it's really very affordable and much easier than printing it out on a home printer where you have to then piece the design together, but everything is possible, so just do what's easiest and what works best for you in your own home. We

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used this Spray Mount to attach the printed artwork onto to the Pennant Felt. This has a whole list of dangers and rules that you should follow when you're using it. You should definitely have good ventilation. It's not very good for your lungs and there are some storage regulations that you should take care to notice, but all you do is open this up and you're just going to lightly coat the back of your paper (whooshing) and then you're just going to lightly press it down. I'm going to put this, kind of, down in the middle of my stencil Felt. You see how easy it is to pick it up and reposition it, so you get it perfectly in the middle of your, or not perfectly, nothing is perfect in this world, but in the middle as best you can of your cut piece of Pennant Felt. The next step is to take your X-Acto knife, these are very, very sharp. This is a tool. I always warn everybody who works in our studio this can cause a lot of damage to your fingers. So always work in a way that you are very mindful of where you're cutting and what you're cutting on. This is one of the reasons that we also use this mat on the back, just to keep this from cutting through. It will destroy any furniture or anything that's laying underneath your design. So it doesn't matter where you start. You can start any place at all and what we're going to do is cut away the black area of the pattern design. And all I do is I hold my hand slightly and put the point of the knife exactly on the black line and then I just push it through and start to cut. (scratching) Again, this is not a perfect method, so you just do, kind of, the best you can and just follow the stencil line around. You have to pick the knife up from time to time and move it, so that you can a smooth line, and you just follow the line all the way around. Sometimes it's easier in areas to again lift this up and use kind of a sawing method to saw through the Pennant Felt. (scratching) Again, be very, very mindful of where your fingers are on the back of the Pennant Felt. You don't want any accidents in the process of making beautiful textiles. So you just simply trace around the black line all the way, you're cutting that whole area away. You know when we first started working with stencils we really just used cardboard. I just got poster board, like what you get at every local grocery store, what every grades school kid uses for their, you know, class project. We graduated from there and started using some cardboards and different kinds of boards and that sort of thing. Today on the market, there are all kinds of stenciling supplies and materials available, they're readily in small towns, all across America and the world, that you can use for this, from this Pennant Felt to Mylar. The Pennant Felt is perhaps a little bit more difficult to find then the Mylar is. We do sell this from our online store by the yard and I think if you can just do a quick internet search you might find some other possibilities, but we urge everyone to explore and try all different kinds of materials. You may find something better then what we found, so let us know if you come across something that works even better than this. And you just continue around the entire stencil shape until you've removed all of the black areas . I have prepared one already, which I have here. So, once everything is cut, the stencil will look like this and you simply remove the paper for your finished design.

Applying stencil to fabric

- I'm going to use this butcher paper to protect my work surface as we transfer the textile paint on to the fabric. You can use newspapers, anything that you have available at your home. We've cut some pieces of fabric but we suggest doing this on just any kind of scrap of the same fabric that you're gonna use. It's better to test this process out. Not on your original project, in case something should go wrong. And then it also gives you the option to try a few colors, a different technique, a different spray bottles. We're gonna show you how those different things and tools can lend different results to the finished product. The first thing that we do is take our stencil. And again, we're gonna spray a light coating of the spray mount on the back of the stencil. Just to make it

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adhere to this fabric a little bit better. So, it's just a light coating. Again, use that in an area that is well ventilated. And you'll see that once you lay the stencil down on top of the fabric, that that adhesive helps it just adhere to the fabric lightly. Like I mentioned before, we use an airbrush gun in a normal situation. But today, we're going to be using the spray bottles. We did some experiments with them and found that actually the smaller bottle produced a nicer mist that gave a kind of even paint distribution over the stencil. But we'll try each of them so that you can see what the difference in the two things are. I'm gonna use just a small pencil to hold my stencil down as I spray, and I'm just going to pump this spray bottle. (bottle spritzing) And cover the stenciled area. Conversely, you can try other using other bottles. You can see that this produces a kind of gloppy surface. So this doesn't really work out for me. So what I would use, this smaller spray bottle, if that's the look that I wanted to go for. Or what I might do, is pour some of this paint into the plate here, (mumbles). and I would choose one of these stencil brush just perhaps, to try it this way. So, you just continue doing this across the whole piece of your fabric. Always keep in mind that it really is to test methods on a scrap before you start doing the whole project. I'm gonna switch back to the spray bottle because it works better for me. And continue over the course of the whole fabric. You can see that this just goes a little bit faster and it seems to make a cleaner line on it. So this is one of the reasons, it's very important to test out the methods that you're going to use when you're working. So, at this point, it's really important also to talk about the actual paint itself. Again, many hobby stores carry all different kinds of paint. We are very fond of this Createx Airbrush Colors. It is a water-based paint that is very easy to mix. It comes in a range of colors and we use these colors pretty much to make every color that we use at our office. If you have just a few little samples of colors can make a limitless range. So it's not necessary to buy everyone that you see. When we are using these colors with the airbrush, we allow them to air dry and cure. It takes about three weeks for it to really make a permanent bond with the fabric. It's really important as you are working with paints to read the manufacture's suggestion that you don't stencil at one day, wash it the next, and have your work disappear. So that would be of course devastating for (laughs) anyone after you've gone through this whole process. So that is really important. We wash our garments after three weeks. Our label says, "Wash gently." And in the past, we have said, "Wash by hand." To be honest with you, I wash mine in the washing machine and throw it in the drier after it's done. So except on sunny days, when I try to hang the things outside. But on, you know, just general, if you use good laundry rules of washing on a gentle cycle, and taking care of your things, you should have no troubles, whatsoever. So now, we're just gonna peel this stencil back just to reveal the design on the fabric. You can see how sometimes you have to work it up slightly. So this is how you would reposition for example if you wanted to add a different stencil or you wanted to reposition the stencil on a larger design. You would simply lift it up like this and then, place it back down and continue with your stenciling.

Airbrush stenciling

- When we airbrush at Alabama Chanin there's just some steps that we go through and I'm gonna illustrate those steps here today. The first step is mixing your paint. It's really important to buy smaller containers because over time the paint is going to start to dry in the bottle. Move your paint into a little air brush jar, there are several different kinds of airbrushes that you can purchase but our experience is just to use the most simple, basic one, single action it's called. Once we have the airbrush filled with paint and ready to go we're going to connect our airbrush tool to our hose and our hose to our compressor. Lay your fabric out and smooth it into place. We're going to take our finished, cut stencil and apply our spray adhesive to the back of it. Again this is going to just give

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you a kind of firm, connection between the stencil and the piece of fabric underneath that you're going to be transferring the pattern to. Once you have your fabric laid out, lay the stencil on top of the fabric and we're ready to paint. Because the paint particles are very small we use a standard mask that you can find at every home improvement store. Move your airbrush tool over the stencil and the fabric in a very smooth method. You're laying the paint down at a really fine mist over the fabric which gives it a very opaque quality so the color of the fabric can very dramatically change how the paint appears once it dries onto the fabric. So it's really important not only for your airbrush tool but for the color of the paint to just always test on a scrap of fabric that you're going to be using for your project. We as a general rule keep our airbrush tool between 8 inches to 10 inches away from the stencil. We found that that keeps the paint from blowing out too much on the fabric and perhaps what we call over spraying underneath the stencil shape. You may find from time to time that your paint will clog. We have little method here that we use at Alabama Channin of just lightly placing our finger over the nozzle of the airbrush which builds up the pressure slightly behind the nozzle. When you release the finger it forces that built up pressure out and will push the particle actually through. In smaller stencil areas we'll use a small pointed object, an open paperclip, a pencil, anything that you have that has a small point to hold down the stencil while not getting your finger in the area where the airbrush is applying paint. Very exciting part of this is the final reveal when you pull the stencil away and see the finished pattern on the fabric underneath. At Alabama Chanin we sometimes use this simple technique as the finished technique for one of our garments. You got the finished design. And this is again, the foundation of everything that we do at Alabama Chanin. The stenciling allows wide variety of designs that we use on any number of garments at any time. If you allow your finished stencil to dry thoroughly and then store it flat, it's something that you can keep and use for years to come.

Chapter 3 - Preparing the Fabric

Materials

- These are the materials and tools that we're going to use to complete the reverse applique runner. We start with organic cotton jersey and we have it in two different color ways but you're welcome to use anything that you can find available in your own community. We have a button craft thread by Coats and Clark, a tailor's chalk to use for marking the fabric, we have a set of needles I have three different kinds here. We'll be talking about those a little bit later. Embroidery scissors, pins, an 18 inch see-through ruler, and a pair of garment scissors. Along with all of the things that you need for stenciling on a cotton jersey fabric which you can find in my workshop on the stenciling techniques.

Cutting the fabric

- So cotton jersey fabric has a grain just like any other woven fabric would have, and you can find that grain by looking very closely at the fabric. You can see these little rows of loops, the knitted loops of the fabric create these lines on the face of the fabric and that, those lines, are the grain of the fabric. Conversely if you turn around and look at the back of the fabric and stretch it slightly you'll see that there are no lines on the back of the fabric. So the lines on the face, and there are no lines on the back of the fabric. As a general rule we try to fold the fabric so that it runs along with the grain. So when we're ready to cut you just lay it out. And we do what we call patting the fabric in. So all you really do is you want to smooth the fabric. Since cotton jersey is a knit, you don't want to pull too tightly on it because you can actually stretch the fabric out, the little individual loops. So

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what we do is we call it just kind of patting in. We try to get all the wrinkles out and make the fabric lay as flatly as you can. Then I'm gonna inspect the grain line to make sure that I'm really running straight with the grain right here. Which seems to be the case. I'm gonna take my 18-inch ruler and cut a line straight as I can across the bottom of the fabric running perpendicular to the grain. And then I'm just gonna square off that bottom by cutting this away. We use these spring loaded scissors. We found in our office that the spring loaded action doesn't make our hands as tired when we're cutting over the course of the day. So these are very affordable, very durable pair of scissors. We save all of our scraps, so you can use these for projects and workshops that we're going to do in the future. So once we have this clean edge here, what I'm gonna do is open up the fabric in order to save in the cutting. I'm gonna find the grain line again, and fold this over slightly and make a new fold here. Making sure that I have this straight on the grain and the best way to do this is once you find the grain line and you have a pretty clear straight line there the best thing to do is you can pick this up and shake it slightly and lay it back down. Cotton jersey is a great fabric to work with because it kind of grasps to the fabric on the back so it prevents a lot of shifting of the fabric which makes it much easier to work with. Even in the sewing process it's almost like it sort of pins itself together. It's a wonderful, wonderful material. So we have a clean line down here which is gonna be the bottom of our table runner. I have a clean straight line here, which is gonna be the center of my table runner. Remember our table runner is 20 inches wide by 60 inches long. So what I'm going to do is I'm gonna measure off 10 inches with my see-through ruler by just placing it on the fabric and using my tailor's chalk to make a small mark along the length of the runner. Now this tailor's chalk will eventually you can brush it out or wash it off. When we're cutting we try to cut the bulk of the chalk away but should you wind up with a bit of residue of the chalk then you can just brush it away with a small fabric brush or with the first washing it will go. So once I have my 10 inches marked down the length of the fabric I'm gonna come back with the length of the ruler and draw my line. This is gonna make it really easy to just cut away. If I had folded a little bit better I would not have wasted so much fabric here. But again, we're gonna save this and use it for a future project. So, got that marked off. I'm gonna take my scissors again. Actually I'm gonna, first before I do anything, I'm gonna measure my 60 inches which is the length of this tape measure. Again you can make this any length or width that you'd like using fabrics that you have available. I'm just gonna mark off my 60 inches here so I know that that's the end of my cutting. All of our fabrics at Alabama Chanin have been pre-washed so there should never be any shrinkage or changing of the project once your piece is finished. It's really important to do this ahead of time because you don't want afterwards for the fabrics to draw in and around the stitches and become bubbly or not lay quite flat. So it's really important to wash everything that you want to use before you start your cutting process. So now I'm going to take my garment scissors and I'm simply gonna cut along this line to the 60 inch mark. Again we try to cut away all of the chalk and to have a smooth line that doesn't have any jagged pieces in it. This invariably happens with cotton jersey fabrics, sometimes you don't get a smooth line, and it's very easy afterwards to go back and just take those little jagged parts off. Again cotton jersey is very forgiving fabric so you can, you know if you have something a little off you can usually just kind of fudge it to make it all work in. So I have one last cut down here at the 60 inch mark to make. I'm just gonna come back in and square that off as best I can with the see-through ruler. These rulers are great for this kind of thing. Just gonna make one more mark with my tailor's chalk, get my scissors and cut that mark away. (scissors snipping) And we have a piece that is now 10 inches wide doubled so 20 inches wide by 60 inches long. We recommend that you do not unfold at this point but fold it neatly together and keep it like this until we're gonna use this for cutting our

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second piece of fabric. Okay. So I'm going to take my second color, this is actually going to be the outer edge of my fabric. (fabric rustling) I'm gonna try to fold this one a little bit better so I don't have any wastage whatsoever. That's the goal. Instead of squaring my end off this time, I'm going to use the squared end that I cut from the first piece. So we'll get this in. Just like pat it in. Just need to make sure that it's at least 10 inches wide there. Check my grain line to make sure that I don't have my fabric skewed, that the grain line is running parallel to this folded edge here, which it is. And then I'm gonna very gently take this piece that I've already pre-cut and I'm gonna lay this right on the fold and then unfold it again. Again, sort of pat it in so that it's level. It fits perfectly on there. And then I'm gonna use my scissors to simply cut around. We've found that this method of using your first cut piece to cut your second piece makes it much easier in the piecing process. The two pieces that you're joining together have a much more similar shape, rather than a lot more variation can occur when you measure twice. This is how we cut all of our production at Alabama Chanin by layering one piece over the other. And what happens is the one layer is probably like a sixteenth of an inch slightly larger than the piece you're cutting. And it seems to make the two pieces fit more perfectly together in the sewing process. So now that you have your two cut pieces of fabric and you're ready to follow the instructions from my stenciling workshop for applying your stencil to your outer layer of your project.

Pinning the fabric

- Refer to the stenciling workshop for the process of adding the paisley stencil to your reverse applique project. Remember that you only need to stencil the top layer of your fabric, so whichever color you've chose to be on the outside for the actual sewing will be the one that you stencil. So what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna lay out my two pieces of fabric. We're gonna start with the bottom layer. So, for me, this is this blue-gray fabric here, which we call blue slate. So I'm gonna lay out my blue slate fabric as flat as I can get it. When we lay these out, we lay them with the face of the fabric, or the grain of the fabric, running in the lengthwise direction, and the face of the fabric pointing up. So, again, if you give that fabric a little pull, you'll see those lines of the grain on the face of the fabric and no lines on the back of the fabric. Well once I have that laid out, I'm gonna add the top layer to it. Again, cotton jersey is really very forgiving and very wonderful fabric to work with. It kind of adheres to the layer underneath it, so what I'm gonna do is try to get it sort of roughly in the shape and area as the bottom layer. They're the backing layer, that we call it sometimes. What we do is we start to pat it in. We just kind of rub it so that the pieces start to join together. And then, once you get it to a certain point where it feels pretty flat, what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna flip it over to the backside, both pieces together, and I'm gonna do the same on the backside. I'm gonna try to make these as close to the same size as I can. Now, if you're doing this, and you find that you have a piece that's just much larger than the other, I mean, this can happen in the hand crafting process, you know, things shift and change. What we're gonna do is, if you have a piece that's too big in one area, we're just gonna cut it off, and it's gonna be fine. You know, there's a very beautiful story that the Amish, that comes from the Amish actually, that when they're making their quilts, they always turn one piece the wrong way or add a color that's not the right color, because they say that nothing should reach the perfection of God, and so we try to keep that in perspective as we work here at Alabama Chanin, that nothing is ever perfect. And we have a little saying that we say in the office, you know, this is not a cure for cancer. It's not gonna solve world hunger. It's a table runner. So we have to kind of keep those things in perspective as we work. So I'm just gonna keep working this. It takes a little bit of time, and it's better to spend a little bit more

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time working it in so that you have your two layers really even and neat. A little bit of added time here at the beginning will help you in the end just make your project a little flatter. The edges of my project have kind of rolled to the back here. This is a property of cotton jersey. I'm just gonna kind of unroll them and get them to lay together here. Again, you can turn it back and forth a few times. It helps. Just work gently and smoothly, and just keep working it in. When you're working with smaller projects, it's a little bit easier to do this process. This long expanse makes it a little more difficult to get it in perfectly flat, but just a little bit of patience, and you'll get it. So, what we're gonna do, once we have it worked in together, is we're gonna scatter our pins throughout the length of the project. It's really important not to pin along the lines and around the edges, because as you're working, the two pieces can shift, so it's really important to scatter your pins throughout. This will help keep the two layers joined really perfectly together as you're working on your project. I'm gonna grab a few more pins here. This type of sewing is really great to do when your traveling, or like, a lot of people say they sew when they're at ballgames or when they're waiting in a doctor's office. Because the pieces are generally kind of small, and you don't need a lot of, obviously you don't need a sewing machine, so all you really need is a needle and a pair of scissors and time. (lady giggles) Thread, and so a lot of people will take these projects with them on the road. And some people really like to use safety pins instead of straight pins, because, you know, as you're carrying your project around, you don't stick yourself with the pins. But I think it's always better to add more pins, rather than too few. I like these pins with a little white glass head on them. I find them easy to grab with my fingers and to manipulate like I need them. And that brings us to the sewing, which is the best part.

Chapter 4 - Stitching

Stitch around the shapes

- There are several different kinds of needles for hand sewing, and we've come to love some more than others. When I first started sewing and wrote Alabama Stich Book, I invariably always used these number nine sharps. It's a little bit of a shorter needle, but it still has a large enough eye that's able to accommodate our thicker button craft thread. Over the years as my sewing skills have improved, or my hands have become more agile, I've really come to love these Milliners, which are really needles that were made for hat making. I like the longer style. It's really important to remember that choosing a needle is kind of like choosing a pair of shoes. You really have to find the one that fits your hand, and actually changing a needle or needle length will actually change the way your stitches appear on the fabric. You may find that one particular stitch you prefer one needle, and another stitch you prefer another needle. So it's really important once you find the needle that you love, to take care of it and keep it so that you can always go back to it. These size 10 Milliners are ones that we use pretty much strictly only for beading. They have a longer length and are quite small, but the eye of the needle still will accommodate this thicker button craft thread that we love so much. For this reverse applique project, I'm going to use sort of this medium size Milliner from the John James. We're using our button craft thread, which again is one of the strongest threads that we've ever been able to find on the planet. I'm going to needle my thread, and take thread that is just slightly longer than from my finger to my elbwow. Very important now is to love my thread. You can see all the excess tension in the thread. So I am going to run my fingers over it to release all that excess tension. And tell the thread what it's supposed to do. Lots of love. So this thread is going to sew the most beautiful table runner that's ever been made. When it graces my table, everyone who comes for dinner at my house will leave with laughter and joy and love, and

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go into their life with lots of great memories from friendship and food that was shared around this beautiful table runner. So once I've perfectly loved my thread, I'm going to tie off with a double knot, by making a loop and bringing the ends through that loop. You can refer back to our Physics of Sewing workshop for all the details on loving your thread and tying your knot. I'm just going to give this one last tug to make sure that it's really tight, and at this point you have, I'm going to take these samples, we have a design decision that we have to make. So because our knots at Alabama Chanin are so complicated to make, and we tie so many of them, at the very begninning of the company we decided it was very beautiful to show those knots on the outside of the garment. So at this point in the process of making your project, you have to make a decision, if you want to put your knots on the back side of the fabric, so have a clean design on the outside. Or if you would like to do it with some of the knots on the outside, to have a little bit more of a deconstructed look on the fabric. Or with lots of knots on the outside of the fabric. This does not affect the durability of your project in any way shape or form. It's simply a design element that you can use to your advantage for every project. So now we are ready to sew. For this project I decided to put the knots on the back side of the fabric. So as I'm getting ready to sew, I'm going to bring my needle to the back of the fabric, and come up exactly on the line of one of the stenciled shapes, and pull it through to the face of the fabric. Then taking stitches that are between an 1/8th to a 1/4 of an inch, I'm going to simply follow the outline of the stenciled shape, exactly on that line. Using my fingers to correct any tension. The goal being that what you want to do is join these two layers of fabric as closely as possible together without either pulling the thread too tightly, and causing it to gather, or stretching it too far apart so that the thread bubbles up. So you just want a nice tight join of the two layers of fabric as closely as possible. So I like to think of it back to the idea of physics that if you're building a bridge, you want the two pieces of metal to sit as closely together as possible without buckling just for the durability of it. You just use your finger to kind of work that in so that you can get it as flat as possible. And then you just continue all the way around. This is a really meditative process. It's really wonderful to not be in a hurry, to settle in and enjoy the process of making something by hand. I have a friend who started sewing in this method, and she got so addicted to it that she just couldn't stop sewing, so she allowed herself two needles every morning before she went to work, to get herself into the zone for the day. Sometimes you'll have a little thread will twist up just slightly if you use the end of the needle you can just pull it out and send it back in. You can see how loving your thread really trains those two strands to travel side by side through the holes of the fabric that the needle makes. If you have something like that happen you just tug on the threads and then I'll just pick up and move it back to the point of the needle. If you're sewing and you find out that your thread is really knotting a lot, I would suggest that you go ahead and tie off on the back, cut the thread, love it again and tie a new knot and begin over again. Turning curves are sometimes a little bit more intricate, but you just work that in. You can see that the stitches are between an 1/8th of 1/4 of an inch. The goal is to keep them as uniform as is possible. My stitches are not exactly perfect, but then nothing in life is ever perfect. We just shoot to get the most uniform stitches that we can. Just move the fabric around that you can get the best access to the stencil. Keep turning it. So my thread is starting to get a little bit short. So I'm going to take this one last stitch. Then I'm going to move the thread to the back of the fabric by pushing the needle down, turning it over, and pulling it through. And I'm going to tie my knot off on the back side by making a loop, just like I did before, but sewing through that loop. I'm going to bring the knot, the loop, down close to the back side of the fabric, and hold it into place, and give it a little tug for my first knot. Then my second knot, I'm going try to get that thread up under that first knot, make a loop, and sew

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through it again, and if I get it up under that first knot it will kind of just fall into place there. And then I'm going to use my fingers to give it that one last little tug. Then I'm going to take my scissor, and I'm going to leave this longer tail, through 1/2 inch to 3/4 of an inch tail, because remember I want to sew for this generation, and the next, and the next, and the next. It's really important not to cut right up next to the knot because your knot will come untied if you cut right up next to it, and then you will lose this work. So you're going to continue sewing around. I've made some samples here, of a finished runner, that is completely sewn and before the reverse applique is cut. You can see what that looks like when it's finished. And the back with all of the knots. And now we are ready for the next step which is cutting the reverse applique.

Cut inside stenciled shapes
- And now that we've finished sewing all of the stencil shape, we're ready to cut. In our office, we use two different kinds of scissors, we have a five inch knife edge, and a four inch embroidery. These are both made by a company called Geiger. These two scissors are good for slightly different things, for longer sweeping cuts you'll use this five inch knife edge, and for smaller, more detail areas you'll use this four inch embroidery scissor. So I'm gonna start with the smaller scissor. You do this by pinching the top layer and the bottom layer. Just separating them carefully. And always bring your scissors in in a flat way. And then simply nip that top layer to expose the layer underneath. All you're doing is really just making a small hole where you can insert your scissors into that area. So I'm gonna put my scissors in and then just start trimming. The only thing you need to always remember is that you should never trim closer than one quarter to one eighth of an inch next to your sewing. You'll see that I've done a little jagged edge there. I'm just gonna get back in and nip that little part away. And you just work your way around, just like with the sewing. You just work yourself in a slow and gentle method all the way around, removing that top layer of fabric. Keeping in mind always that you don't want to get too close to your stitches. If that happens, what can happen is the two layers of fabric can separate and this will break away and you'll lose that one stitch. The question that everyone has is always what happens if I cut the back layer as I'm trimming this top layer away? And my answer is always nothing. What you're gonna do is your just gonna go in with a little whip stitch or applique a little piece over it. We even say sew a bead on it so everyone cherishes that one little spot where you've made a mistake. So if you sew this way for a long time it will happen that you do nip that back layer once, so the only really important thing is to take care of it quickly. Once a hole develops anyplace in any one of your garments, it's really important to go ahead and repair that. That old wives tale a stitch in time saves nine is really true in this case that if you repair it early on when you notice a small hole, you take one stitch. If you wait it will take nine to repair the area and it will be much more visible after time. So you just work your way around. It doesn't matter where you start or where you finish. Just again I'm gonna pinch this apart, move on to the next stencil shape. One thing that I forgot to mention when we were sewing, people ask us all the time, should I sew from one side to the other, should I start in the middle, what method should I use when I'm sewing across the length of a project? It's really important to not start at both ends and work towards the middle, but it doesn't really matter. You can work from one side all the way across the project or you can start in the middle and work out. The only thing that can happen if you work from both ends toward the middle is that you might wind up with some extra fabric in the middle that you don't want. The same is true with the cutting. People ask all the time should I sew everything and then cut? It's really a matter of taste. Some people prefer to sew one, cut one, some people prefer to sew everything as we've done in this project and then cut

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everything. I tend to sometimes do one thing and sometimes do another. It's really completely a matter of taste and enjoyment, what you enjoy to do in the moment. I usually tell people that really the goal is to enjoy what you're doing, so if you enjoy to sew for the moment, then sew, if you enjoy to cut for the moment, then cut. It is very exciting when you make that first nip and you see that first color in the middle. So that's kinda my favorite part of the whole process. So I'm just gonna keep continue cutting around all the stencil shapes. Removing this top layer. This is best done in a time when you're not in a hurry, you can sit down and really enjoy the process of revealing that color underneath. And you just continue in this way until all the stencil shapes have been removed. It works the easiest if you can flip the fabric and the project around as you move around the shape. You're gonna find in some of the stencil patterns that you work with that there's very small areas where there's not enough room to cut and leave an eighth of an inch between your stitching line. In the cases like this, we just do not cut that area and leave that as a little detail there. I find them very beautiful as well, the contrast between the cut and the uncut areas. Another point that's very important to note is that you'll see that on the edges of the project, the way we handle this is we start our knot an eighth of an inch from the edge of the cut project, go all the way around the stenciled shape and end again at an eighth of an inch from the cut edge. This area right here is left unstitched because we're going to go in and trim this away. This gives the pattern the appearance of traveling off the edges of the project. All of these edges are left raw. There's no reason to seal these off. What's gonna happen after the first time you wash the project is that these edges are gonna roll slightly and those little cotton fibers, if you look back to our workshop on the physics of sewing you'll remember that they're like little squiggles. And so what happens when you make this clean cut with a pair of scissors is that these little squiggles try to go back to their natural state and they begin to lock themselves together and make a seal. I also believe that the application of the textile paint helps hold that area, that cut area slightly in place so it gives it a little bit more stability. So there's no reason at all to ever finish an edge of any one of our garments. It would be important to note at this point as well, we wash our things in the washing machine. You can use a gentle cycle. And I throw them in the dryer if I don't have time to line dry. Obviously all of our clothes will last longer the fewer times that they're put in the dryer. But you shouldn't be afraid to use this, it should be an everyday heirloom that you keep in your family and your life forever. So we have a finished project, so we'll swap out for this one now. You can see how all of the edges are opened up. So all of the stenciled shapes were cut except for these very small areas that we talked about earlier. And now your table runner is finished and you're ready to entertain.

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