

Mandala

Free-motion Challenge Quilting Along



Week 1 Expanded Quilting Diagrams & Tip Sheet
For more information about the challenge, visit FMQchallenge.com

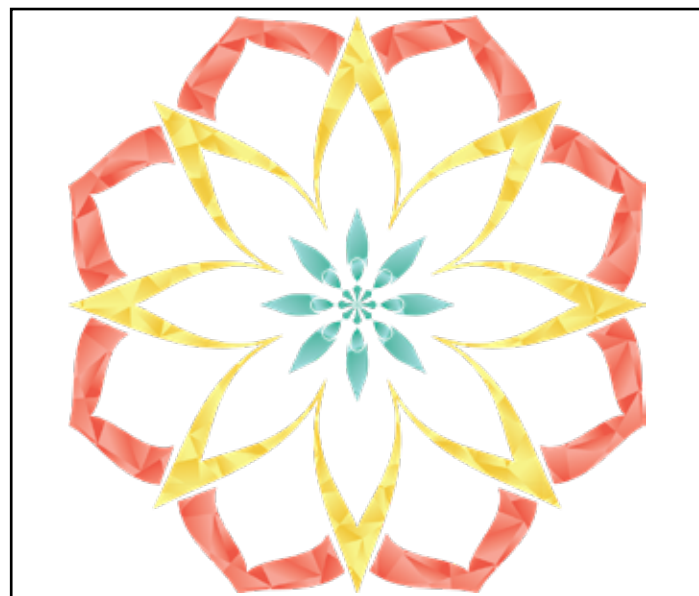


Week 1

Welcome to the first week of the Mandala Free-motion Challenge Quilting Along. I am so looking forward to quilting along with you through this video series. If you are nervous, don't be! I will be with you each step of the way.

In this first challenge, we are quilting the center of our mandala panel. Not only will you learn different design ideas, I'll also share tips on echoing, stitching in the seams as well as how to work your way through the area as efficiently as possible.

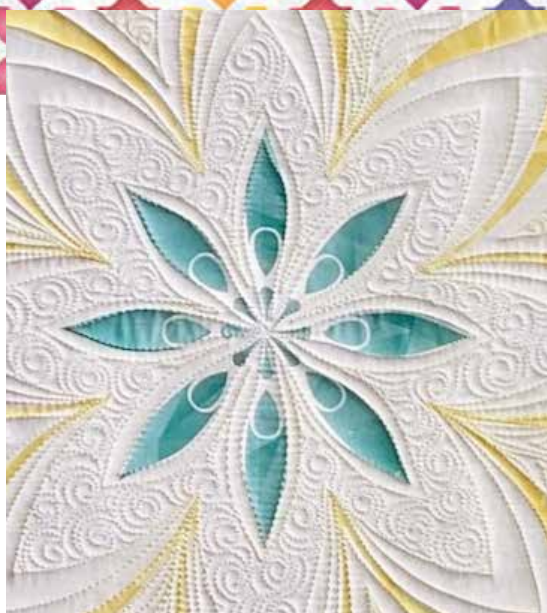
Scan the QR code to rewatch the Week 1 video tutorial.



Your Challenge

If you're quilting along with me on the custom Mandala panel, quilt the center portion, as shown on the right, with the designs of your choice. You can try some of the ones shown in the video, or come up with your own variations.

If you purchased the coordinating thread collection, use the yellow and white thread for this section.



Quilting the Center

It's no secret that I love echoing. For such a simple shape, it sure can make an impact on your quilt. Echo quilting is quilting a line the same shape as a block (or other element of the quilt) so that it's set apart a certain distance.

For the center of the Mandala panel, we are going to incorporate echoing in a few different ways.

Use Echoing to “Build Up” Smaller Shapes

We are kicking off this challenge by jumping right into quilting the center of the mandala. In this section we are going to use echo lines to enhance the shape of the green motif and to help keep it from getting overwhelmed by the filler quilting.

1. Starting from the center, quilt along the outer edge of the motif.

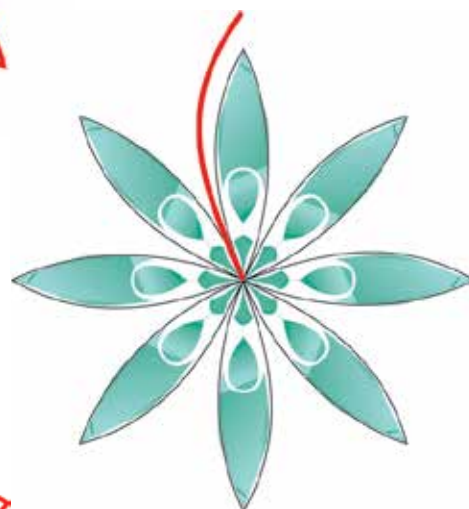
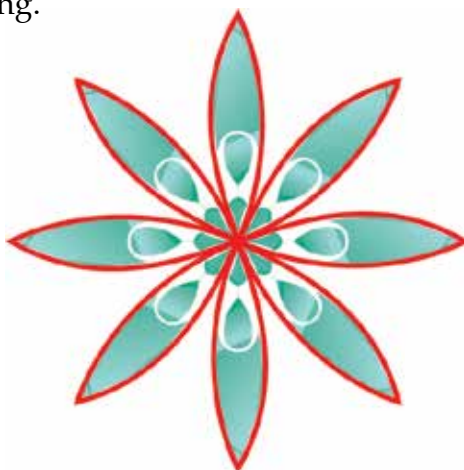
This is optional, but I personally like how it makes the detail stand out. Don't worry if the quilting isn't perfectly on the lines, just get it as close as you can. Continue quilting until reach the starting point.

2. Begin echoing the center motif.

Instead of starting new line of quilting, I am just going to start echoing from where I left off on the last step. This is more of a traditional echo line with same spacing around the whole area, so try to keep the spacing the same around the point.

3. Keep echoing until you return to the starting point.

You can add as many or as few echo lines as you'd like. For this quilt, I am going to quilt one echo line.



Quilting “Non-Traditional” Echoing

On the other side of the center area, we are going to incorporate a different variation of echoing. Instead of a “true” echo that has the same spacing throughout, we are going to quilt the lines so that they touch points of the quilt. While I love how it looks, I also like this option because it can be more efficient to quilt and it also works great in irregularly shaped areas such as this.

1. Starting from one of the yellow points, quilt along the “seam” to the next point.

As in the earlier section, this is optional. If you prefer, you can omit this step.



2. Echo the side of the arc, stopping about 1/2” or so inside the outer point.



3. Continue echoing, quilting the line so that it ends at the starting point.



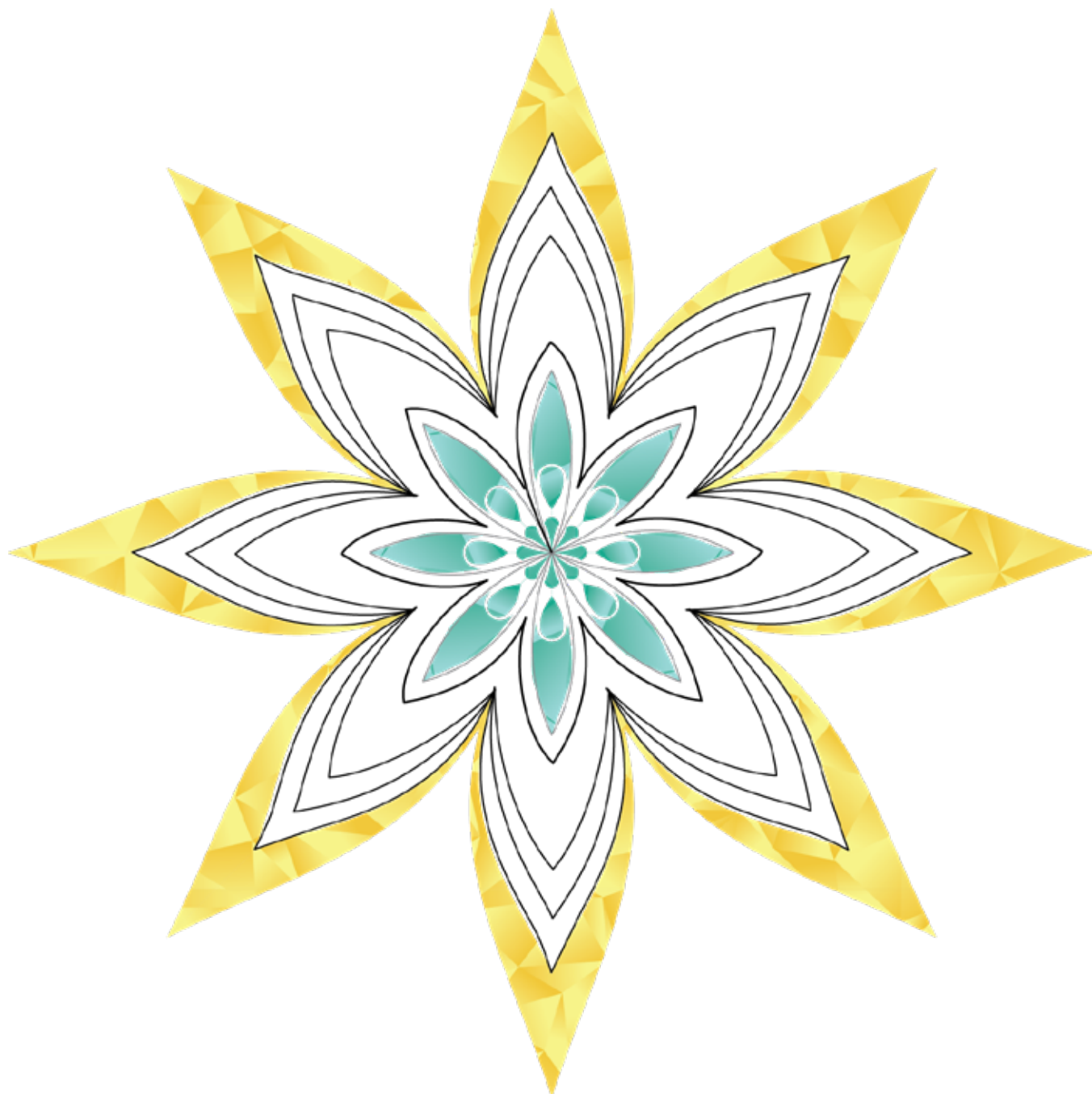
4. Repeat the steps above, adding as many echo lines as you prefer.



Tip: I used the Smiley ruler to help quilt the arc lines, but you can freehand them if you prefer.



Quilting “Non-Traditional” Echoing



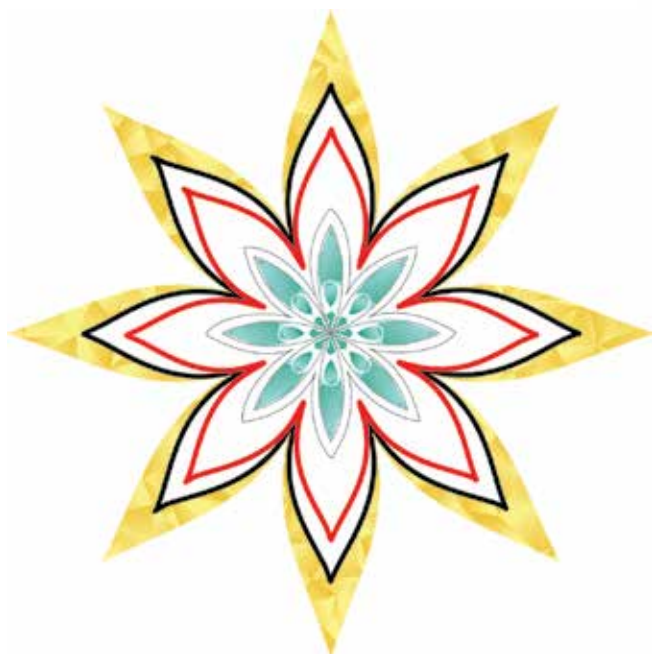
Use Echoing to Work Through a Space Efficiently

As with any quilt or design, you can approach the quilting in this section in a couple different ways.

Option #1 – One Ring at a Time

In this approach, each step of the design is quilted before starting the next one. For instance, stitching along all the “seams” first, then quilting the first echo and so on.

- Perfect if the area you’re quilting fits within your throat space.
- If you are the type of person that likes to do all of one thing then move on.
- When only quilting one or two echo lines.

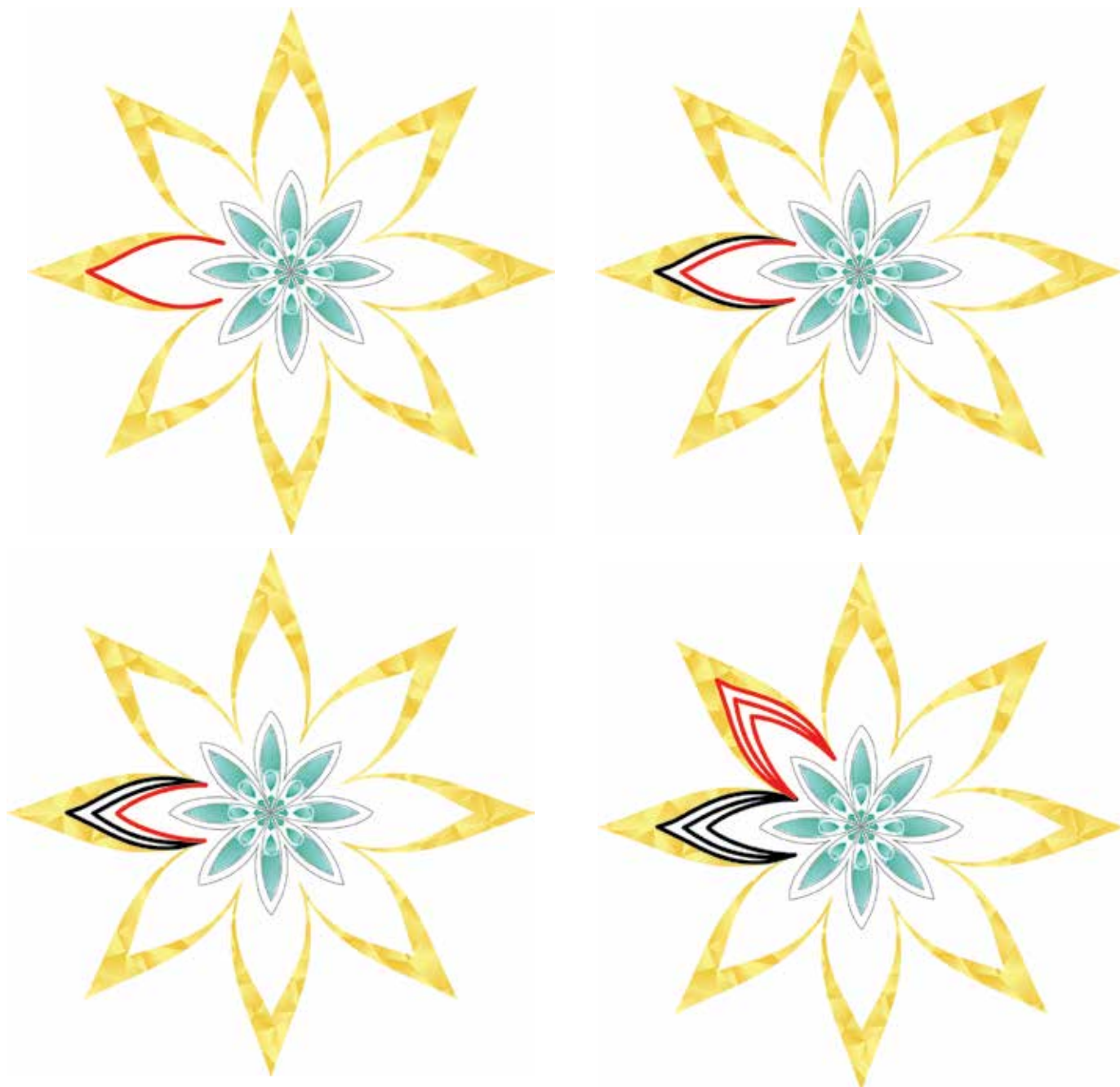




Option #2 - As You Go

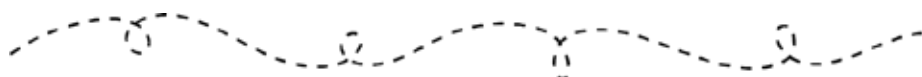
Instead of quilting each step before moving on, with this option each section is finished before moving onto the next one.

- Perfect if the area is larger than your quilting space, since it helps prevent moving back and forth.
- If you don't mind alternating between steps.
- When quilting multiple echo lines in an area.





Filling In Between the Lines



Add a “wow” factor to the center of your panel by filling in between the echo lines with a different filler design. While this means that the center will take a little longer to finish, the texture it adds is worth the effort.

The space in between the echo lines is fairly narrow, so opting for a smaller filler might make it easier to maneuver around the area. However you can choose the design that you feel the most comfortable quilting.



You can leave the space between the echo lines unquilted, or you can add texture by using filler design in that area.

If you purchased the coordinating thread collection, use the yellow or white thread for the echo lines. Then fill in the space between them, using the white thread.





Quilting the Next Section

Once the very center of the quilt is finished, it's time to move onto the next "ring" of the mandala. The sections in this area are a little round and a little pointy. For these areas, we are going to use echoing to highlight different portions of the shape and fill in the space with a couple different designs.

Option #1 - Echoes & Plumes

Echoing one side of an area will help draw attention to that shape and can also create secondary designs. In this portion of the quilt, echoing the tops will create the illusion of a "ring". When paired with the curvy, pointy look of the plume feather, the result is gorgeous look for the quilt.

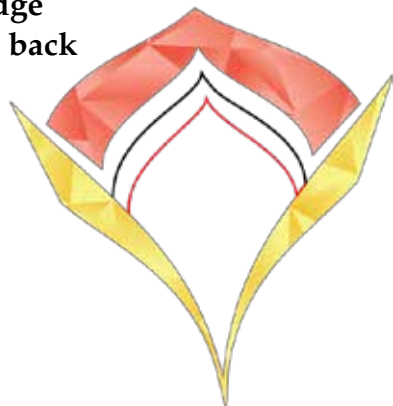
- 1. Starting on one side of the area, echo the curvy, point top stopping at the opposite side.**

I used the Taj ruler to help echo the shape, but you could freehand the echo lines as well.



- 2. Travel along the edge about 1/2", then echo back to the first side.**

I opted for two echo lines because it allows me to end up on the side I started from.



- 3. Travel along the curve of the area to the lowest point.**

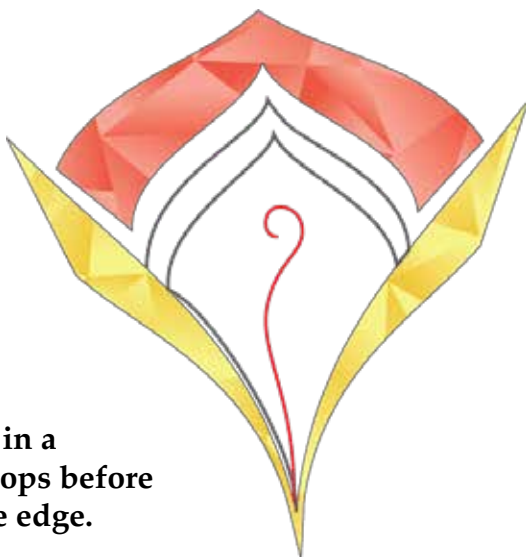
In this instance, I am using traveling, or stitching along the seam, to maneuver around the area. If you prefer, you can just tie off and start a new line of quilting at the bottom point



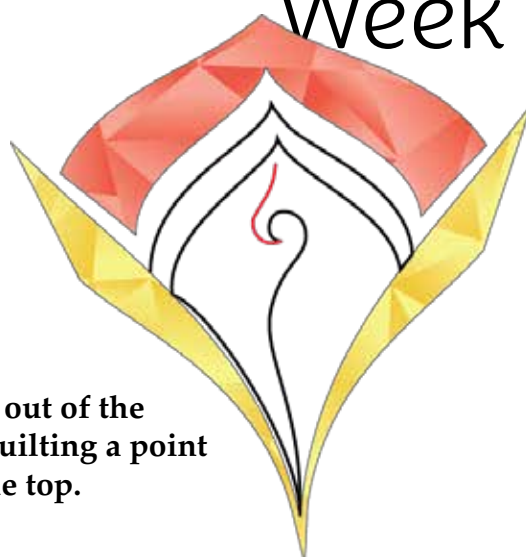


Week 1

4. Quilt the plume feather so that it fills in the area. Start by quilting a curvy "spine" towards the top, ending in a swirl that stops before reaching the edge.



5. Echo out of the swirl, quilting a point up to the top.



6. Echo around the outside of the previously quilted line, until merging into the spine.



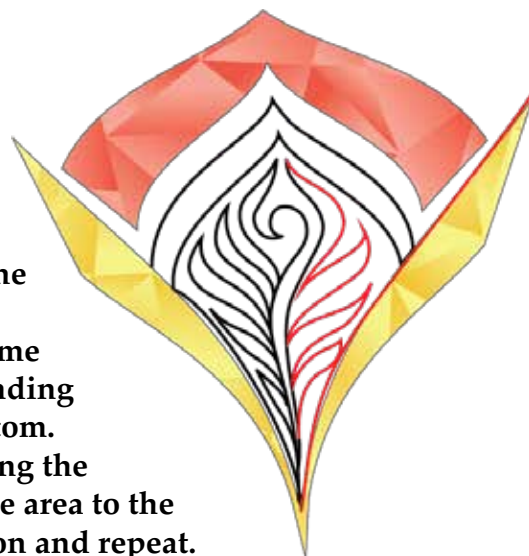
7. Work down the spine echoing the "ferny" shape, extending out towards the edge and back. Continue until reaching the bottom.



8. Echo the spine up the top, ending at the point.



9. Repeat the steps above, quilting the other side of the plume feather, ending at the bottom. Travel along the edge of the area to the next section and repeat.



Why the Plume Feather?

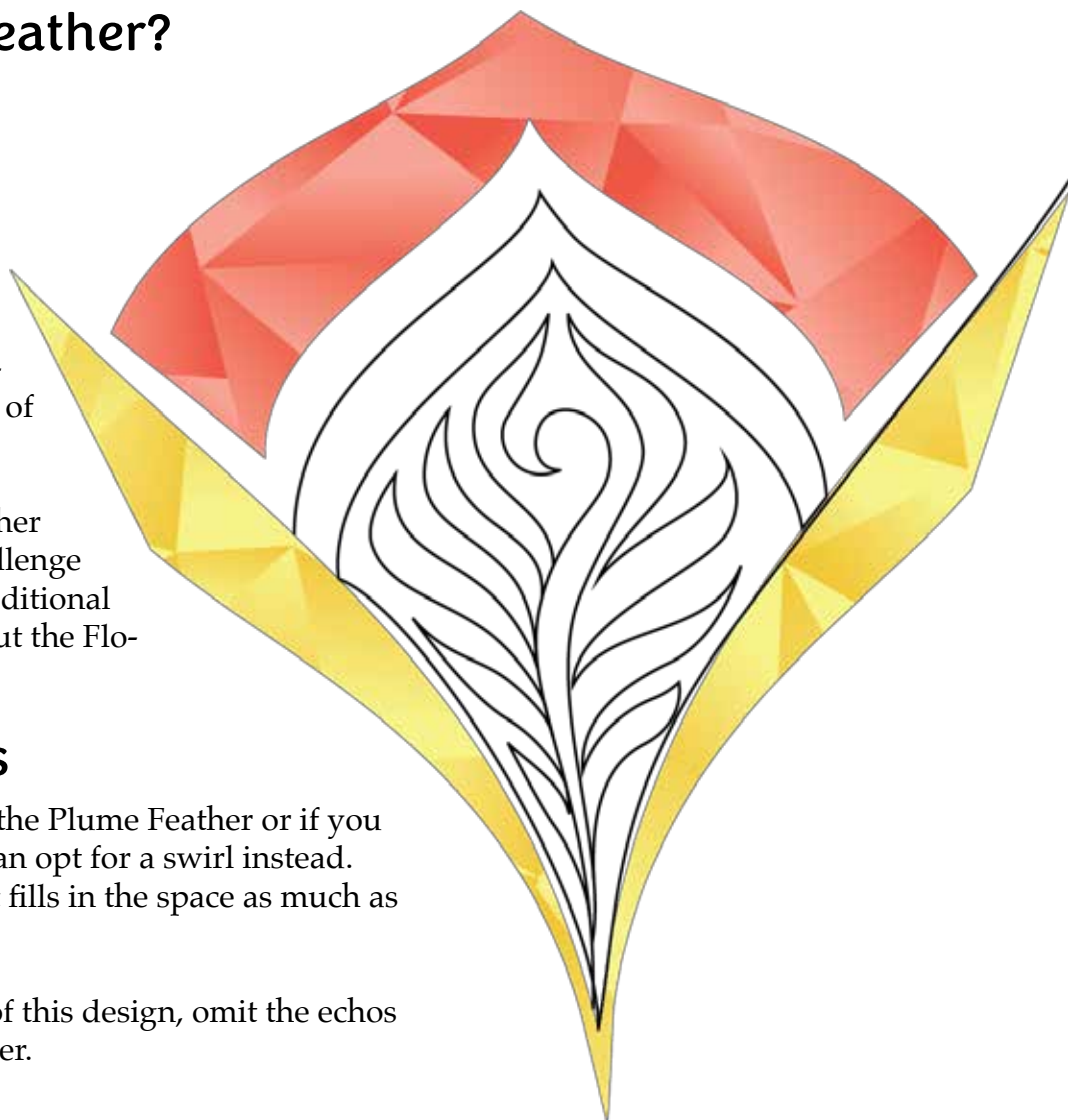
The plume feather is gorgeous no matter where you use it, but one reason I selected it for this area is because it starts and ends at the same point. This allows me to fill in the area and move onto the next without having to start a new line of quilting.

We have seen the Plume Feather in a previous free-motion challenge quilting along. If you need additional help with the design, check out the Flora & Foliage video series.

Alternate Options

If you don't love the look of the Plume Feather or if you prefer an easier option, you can opt for a swirl instead. Try to quilt the swirl so that it fills in the space as much as possible.

For another, easier variation of this design, omit the echos and quilt just the plume feather.





Option #2- Traditional Echoes & Fillers

For quilting that gives even more of a “wow”, echo around each side of the area and fill in with a small filler design.

This “traditional” echo quilting means the spacing between the quilting and the block is the same all the way around. This will highlight the individual shape as opposed to showing off a secondary pattern. It will look stunning on the quilt, however since a new line of quilting is needed for each section, it’s going to take longer to quilt....but sometimes, the extra work is worth the effort!

Starting about 1/2” or so inside the bottom of the area, quilt an echo line that goes around all the sides and returns to the starting point. I used rulers to help quilt the echo lines, but as we have already seen in this challenge, they are optional.

From that point, fill inside the echo lines with the design of your choice. It can be as complex or as simple as you prefer. Once it’s completely filled in, you can break thread and move onto the next section.

If you like the look of this design, but want a more efficient option try the a different variation. Instead of quilting the traditional echo lines that have the same spacing all the way around, quilt the echo lines so that they touch the bottom point. Fill in the area, returning to the starting point, then travel along the edge of the area to the next section.





Audition Designs

Use the diagrams below to audition quilting designs for your Mandala panel.

