

Color-your-Day Creative

With textile artist Paula Scaffidi [fiberella.com](http://www.fiberella.com)

Creative eLearning courses www.fiberellastudio.com

Video Companion for this Project <http://www.fiberellastudio.com/embellish.html>

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Silk Baskets to Custom Color



Created for flower girls to carry at a beach wedding, these twin baskets have matching handles, each with a different embellishment at opposite ends. I intentionally frayed light blue silk. At one end it fans out to resemble a weathered sea shell and on the other it abstractly suggests an ocean wave or water flowing. The twist above the handle made me think of rope.

Gather the Essentials!

NOTIONS, TOOLS AND SEWING ACCESSORIES

- Two ½" strips of manila file folder
- Painter's blue tape
- Clover Wonder Clips
- Clover Hera Marker
- Ruler
- Isacord thread to match (or compliment) each of your three silk fabrics (specs below)
- Hand sewing needle, thimble, threader
- Small scissors
- Steam iron, ironing board
- Tailor's awl
- Microtex or Jeans 80 machine needle
- Essential: An Edgestitch foot for your sewing machine. I used my BERNINA 10C

MATERIALS

- Rigid Weave by innovative craft (one pack has 10 yds. Enough for 2+ baskets)
 - You'll use *less than* half a package of Rigid Weave for one basket. IF you shorten the handle to 13" or less (mine was 21") you could actually create *three* baskets from one pack of Rigid Weave... more economical for multiple gifts!
- Doupioni Silk Fabric – total 2/3 yard @ 44" wide
 - Color A – 9 ½" x 44" – forms entire base and vertical supports for sidewalls; shows intermittently in side walls and fills in the base
 - Color B – 4 ¾" x 44" – intermittent in sidewall and for textural element on top of handle
 - Color C – 9 ½" x 44" – handle, intermittent in sidewalls and also the finishing top band

Silk Baskets Step-by-Step

Cut & Press the Strips

1. Cut Rigid Weave into initial segments as follows:
 - 36" length (base and side wall supports)
 - 28" length (base and side wall supports)
 - Two 24" lengths (side walls)
 - 21" length (handles)
 - 22" length (edge band)

Split the 22" piece lengthwise. You will only need one of the two narrow pieces per basket.

2. Cut (or tear)* all doupioni into 4 ¾" x 44" strips (you will have a few scraps left for extra embellishment).

**Note: I like to tear once across the weft to establish "on grain" all the way across (the texture of the doupioni; which will look best when that grain line runs evenly parallel to the basket strips. After that first tear, you can carefully cut parallel to the tear for the remaining cuts. TIP: Silk is easier to rotary cut through if you stack more than one color at the same time; aligning that one torn edge for grain line accuracy on the strips.*

You'll have enough fabric to trim fabric flush with the Rigid Weave after sewing in the Rigid Weave to the initially pre-cut strips (directions to follow); and enough fabric to fold fabric over raw edges on both handle ends and on the exposed edge of the basket band.

3. Press a ½" crease along one long edge of each cut/torn strip. TIP: To press a neat and even hem, tuck ½" file strips into a fold along the edge, so that the fabric just comes to meet the edge of the strips. Using a tailor's awl to hold the fabric-over-manila-strip in place at the tip of the iron, press. Lift iron. Slide manila strip(s) as needed to continue the evenly pressed hem. Using two strips of manila file folder, it goes faster.

Wrap & Stitch Strips

4. In general, you will wrap all Rigid Weave pre-cut strips with fabric, then sew and trim. Please note in the steps below, the handle and narrow edge band strip are to be trimmed differently, with some extra fabric left on just those two. Wrap the following pre-cut Rigid Weave pieces in fabric using this method: Fold the fabric over the Rigid Weave strips. Your goal is to have the nicely pressed hem from Step 2 end up neatly on the outside edge along the Rigid Weave. So adjust your starting position of the non-hem-pressed long edge of the silk on the Rigid Weave as needed. The fold of the hem should sit evenly along one edge. When it does, press and allow to cool. These will be ready for stitching.

36" and 28" – wrap in your Color A (base and sidewall vertical supports)

24" – Color B (sidewall)

24" – Color C (sidewall)

36" and 28" – wrapped in your Color A, place the narrow strip on a fabric length that offers an inch+ of excess fabric on one edge of the strip; ½" or more at the other end. The ½" end will be cut flush to expose the Rigid Weave. The edge with the inch+ will *not be trimmed off!* Instead that excess will be used to wrap the exposed edge of basket band for a nice finish, as seen in the video link: <http://www.fiberellastudio.com/embellish.html>

21" - Color C (handle)

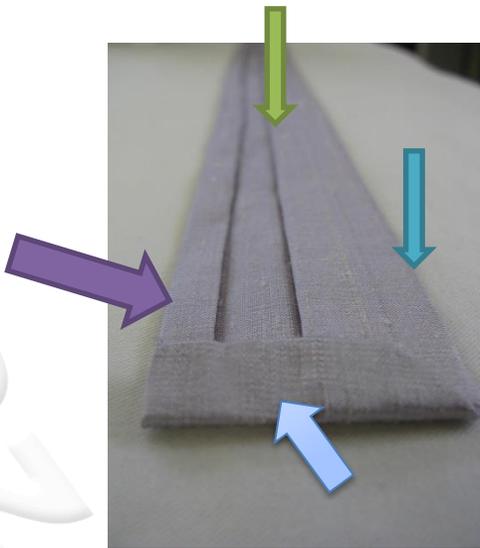
Wrap technique for this handle piece is the same as above EXCEPT take care to allow about an inch of excess fabric *on both ends* as you initially place the Rigid Weave on the strip. This excess will be used to fully cover the two exposed short handle edges.

22" - Color C (narrow edge band that was split lengthwise)

Wrap 1 *split lengthwise (half width)* 22" piece as follows: Place Rigid Weave leaving an excess of fabric, about one+ inch at one short end, aligning with the raw, not-hem-pressed edge. You can do with less excess fabric (½" is fine) at the other short end. The ½" side will be trimmed flush with the Rigid Weave. Wrap technique for the band is shown in the photo next page. Roll twice to fully encase with silk. Pressed hem is still visible on the opposite side.

Sew the Strips and Trim as Specified

- You can tie-on and tie-off on the Rigid Weave for the handle strip. On the other strips to weave, you don't need to tie on and off, since these will be trimmed flush in the next step anyway. After stitching both long edges cut the 36" length into 3 pieces, each @ 11 ½" (You will have a little waste). From the 28" length cut two pieces that are 13" each. (Trimming Summary next page).
- For all strips sew along both long edges where fabric folds over the Rigid Weave, sewing in the same direction each time. Use a -2 or +2 needle position with your Edgestitch foot, a 2.5mm straight stitch. Adjust your presser foot pressure to handle thicker fabric if the setting is available on your model machine. On my BERNINA that's a 40 setting from a norm of 50. Use matching thread up top and in the bobbin.
- To sew the edge band piece, first stitch the wrapped edge adjacent the excess fabric (green arrow below). Then stitch along the outer fold (turquoise arrow). The excess fabric has a pressed hem (purple arrow). Roll that pressed hem over one extra time and press again! That will make a nice and sturdy hem for hand stitching inside the basket.



Narrow Rigid Weave strip is on the right, encased in fabric, placed along the long non-pressed-hem edge of the silk and rolled twice to completely cover. Press.

- After machine stitching, white arrow shows how the excess fabric will eventually be wrapped over to encase the raw edge, on the part of the band that will be left exposed on the basket as seen in the video link: <http://www.fiberellastudio.com/embellish.html>
- Green arrow indicates the first edge to stitch at the machine (stitched before folding/wrapping excess fabric at white arrow)
- Turquoise arrow is where the second row of machine stitching takes place
- Purple arrow is adjusted to form a double fold, so roll it again! Press well for use as the final hem; the place where you'll hand stitch inside of the basket

Trimming Summary

COLOR A (silver gray) –

- Already sewn Color A 36" length was cut into three 11 ½" lengths; 28" length into two 13" lengths. Rigid Weave should completely fill these segments. Together these will form an all silver gray base (or your Color A) plus side vertical supports that will show intermittently.

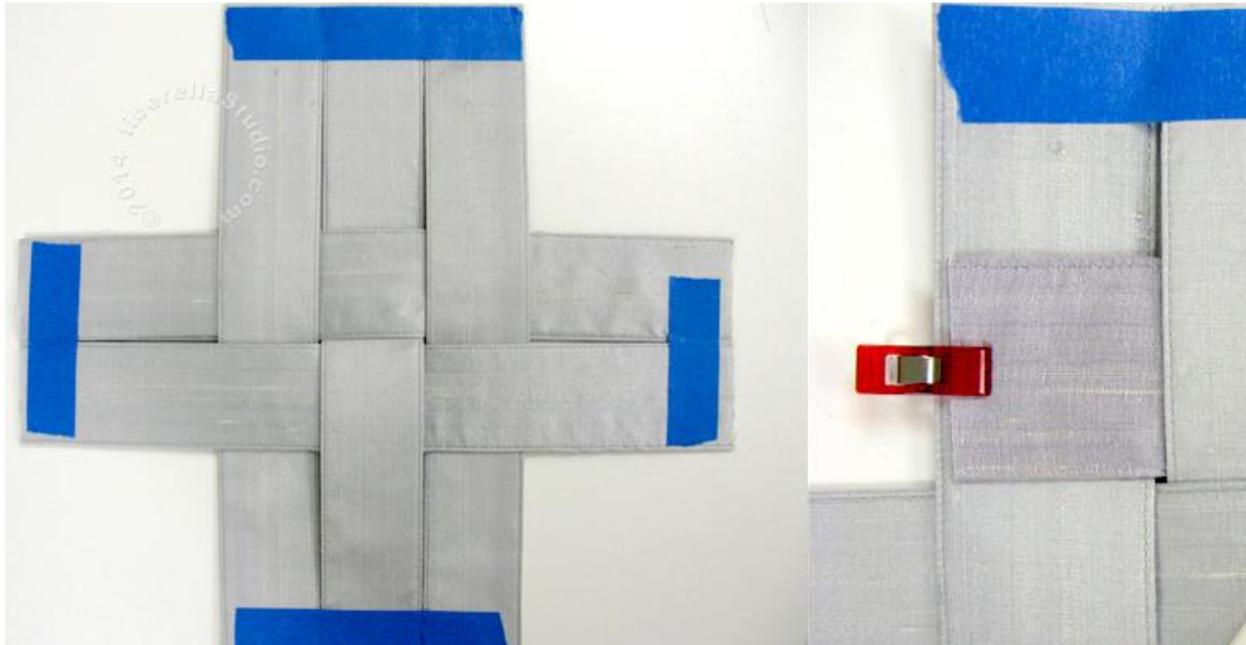
COLOR B (light blue) –

- A sidewall: Trim to 24" length to 22" and weave in as your side walls, creating intermittent color there; Rigid Weave shows on the end cuts
- Embellish: Twist and set aside the remaining piece of COLOR B for textural rope trim on your handle OR save for your own embellishment trim ideas.

COLOR C (orchid) –

- Another 24" sidewall strip sidewall was trimmed to 22" and weave in as one of your side walls, creating intermittent color there; Rigid Weave shows on the end cuts
- Handle piece: You should still have an inch or so of extra silk on BOTH short edges. You will need this to wrap over the exposed cut edges of the handle strip
- Edge Band: You left the end with the inch+ of excess fabric untrimmed or merely straightened out a bit. The only flush trim was cut at the end with only the ½" of fabric. That end with the extra silk will be wrapped over to form a finished edge band at top of the basket.

Weave and Finish



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5. Place the three 11 ½" lengths *snugly together* on a cutting mat or table in a vertical orientation. Weave the two 13" strips horizontally as shown in photo above at left, snug up and tape. See watermark above left in photo? Start weaving sidewalls there with Color C, 24" stitched strip. Red clip shows starting of the strip *just shy of the stitched edge below it*. All raw edges will be eventually hidden by overlaps. After Color C is woven, clips holding, then Color B 24" stitched strip is woven using opposite overlaps and underlapping.
6. *TIP:* Creases help form neat corner bends! [See free-view video here:](http://www.fiberellastudio.com/embellish.html)
<http://www.fiberellastudio.com/embellish.html>
7. Weave the bottom side wall, creating the four corners as you go. Use clips to hold while working. Overlap where you began to weave, and trim strip length as needed ...*so that you can end the strip well hidden from both the outside and the inside view!* (video above)
8. Repeat the last step for the top sidewall strip, alternating with an opposing in and out weave used to add in the bottom sidewall strip.

9. Once snug, trim any end cuts of your weaving strips that face the ceiling as needed for a level top edge of the basket. Whipstitch to seal up the raw edges/end cuts facing the ceiling.

10. Position and whip stitch top band into place as seen in the video (link above and below).



11. Securely hand stitch the handle into place using a thimble. Add any embellishment desired into place. Have fun creating embellishment to suit your mood, interior, upcoming special occasion, etc. You can use any techniques or notions (Clover has some cute ones) to create flowers, Yo-Yos, etc. Note: You will have a little bit of extra silk to play with included in the initial fabric requirements. In mine, photo above, I use one entire extra fabric strip, bolt width, intentionally frayed and twisted, to add the “rope” embellishment for both baskets.

Additional Creative Options

Another avenue would be to use quilting cotton; perhaps in highly contrasting colors or values to more prominently feature the basket’s naturally occurring woven patterns. You could split *all of the Rigid Weave strips in half lengthwise* as specified above to achieve the same size basket, but with the potential for more pattern repeats while weaving with more contrasting values (light, medium and/or dark fabrics). You would need a bit more fabric.

Or just stick with tints, the full width of the Rigid Weave, in silk doupioni for this elegant look. What about using sunset tints instead? Shot silks are iridescent, changing color when viewed from different angles. What fun that would be! Depending on which direction the same fabric strips are woven, light would work its magic with variations of color to enjoy. Create one in all black silk for special effect.

So have some fun! Email Paula@fiberella.com if you have any questions or would like to share photos.

Source more free-views from the Fiberella Studio here: http://www.fiberella.com/html/it-s_simple.html *enJOY*

*Best wishes,
Paula*