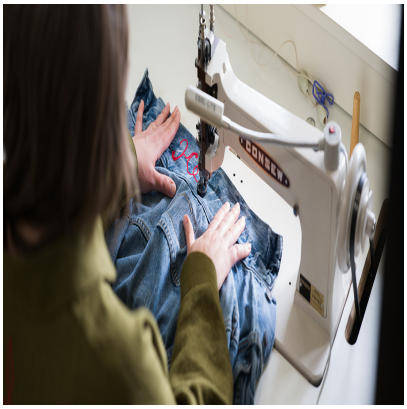
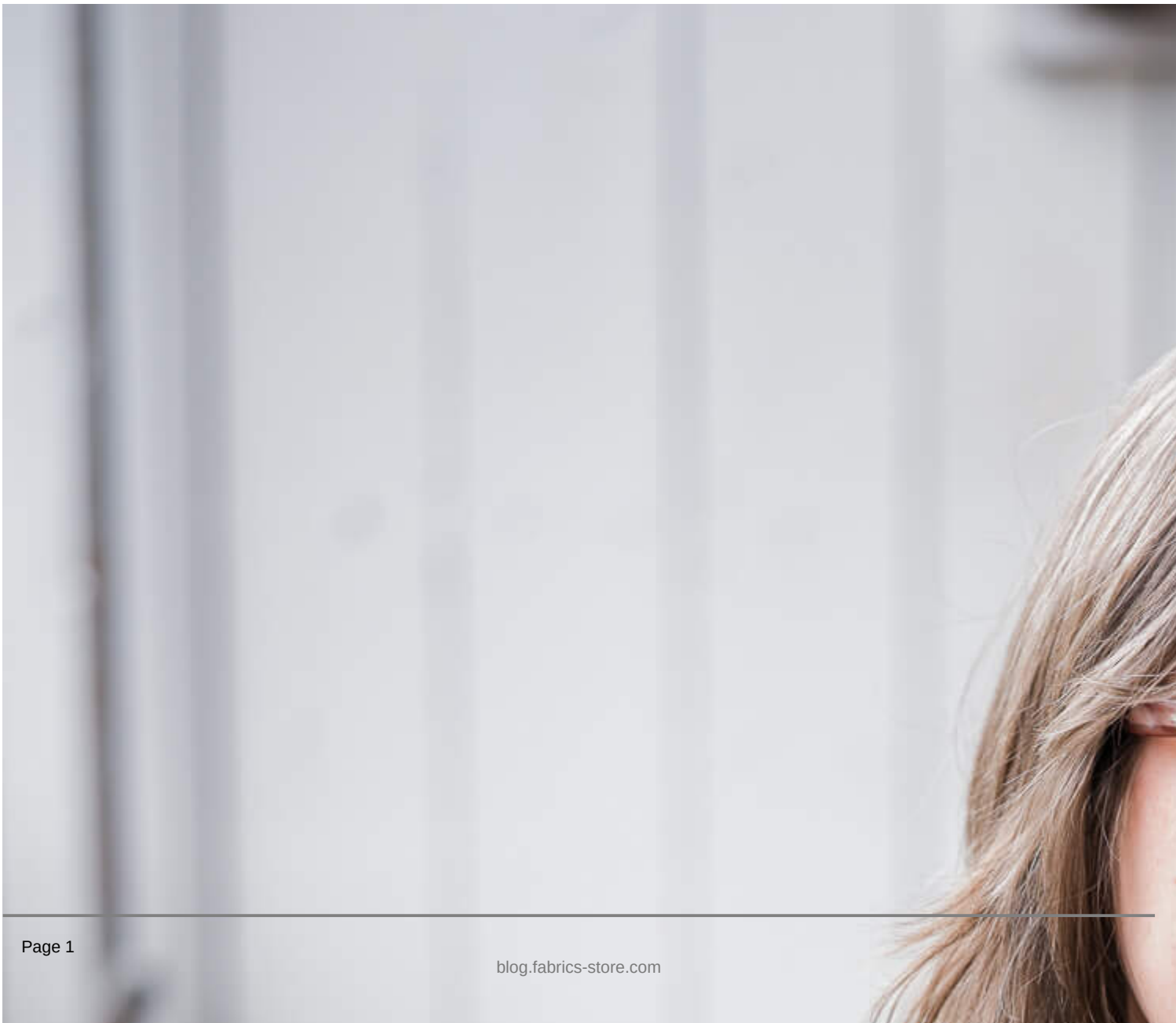


Curated By You: Meg Stively Adorns the Olya Shirt with Machine Chain Stitch Embroidery

Description



Meg wears the Olya shirt by Paper Theory made with FS Olive Branch Signatur

Could you tell us a bit about yourself and how you got into sewing?

I have a strong family history with sewingâ??my mom, grandmother, and aunt are incredibly skilledâ??but I didnâ??t learn how to sew until after I turned 30. I was in school studying to be a Speech Language Pathologist, and sort of struggling with the direction Iâ??d chosen for my career. One night, I had a really fantastic dream. I was a tailor, living in some beautiful European countryside, sewing and repairing clothes.

I took a risk and dropped out of school, bought a sewing machine, took some classes at Portland Fashion Institute, and fell in love with the craft. My risk was validated soon after. A few months after buying my machine, I got a job at a local pattern company here in Portland, shipping out sewing patterns across the world. I spent over 10 years at that company, teaching people how to sew and writing about sewing.

Why do you sew?

Sewing challenges parts of my brain in a really rewarding, inspiring way. I struggle with math and geometry, and being able to transform 2D fabric into an outfit makes me feel like a rockstar or a magician. Itâ??s a deep sense of pride coupled with a strong appreciation of self-expression, sustainability, and creativity.

Iâ??m also quite fond of creative risks. I have made decisions throughout my career that some people might consider impulsive, but I really like to follow my hunches and omens.. I find it hard to ignore the pull towards new projects, and sewing will never run short of challenging and intriguing things to make.



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Where is home and how does it affect your creative practice?

I live in Portland, Oregon, which is teeming with creative people in fashion and textiles. My creative practice has always been very communal, and itâ??s something I love to share with people in real life, both online and locally.

I recently took another risk and left my job to pursue freelance work. I bought a chain stitching machine and I am going to start teaching lessons, selling some of my wares, and finding new ways to work within the creative community here in Portland. I really do think that where I live helps me take these creative risks and find support from my community.



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How do you balance motherhood and work?

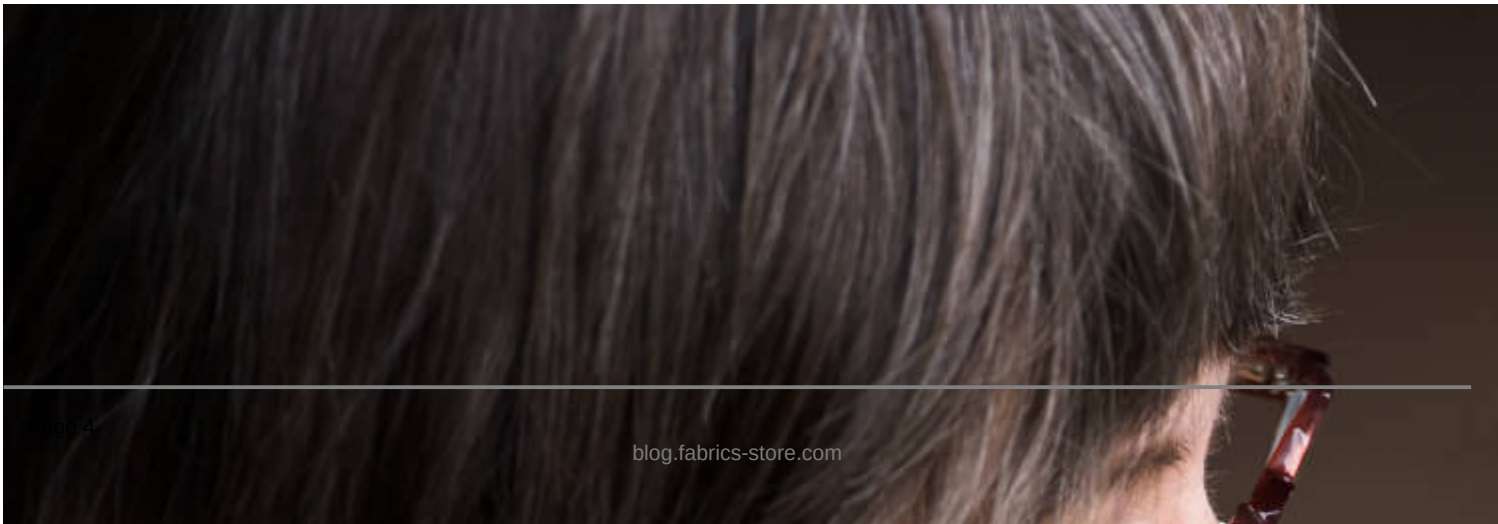
I havenâ??t quite figured that out yet! Being a mother didnâ??t come easily to me in the beginning, and I tended to go to my work as a distraction, because it was familiar. I ended up getting very overwhelmed and unbalanced, and it all came to a head last year when my daughter turned five.

I read â??Iâ??ll Show Myself Outâ?• by Jessi Klein, and an excerpt completely changed my perspective on motherhood and work. Hereâ??s a quote:

â??Every mother you know is in this fight with herself. The sword that hangs over her is a sword of exhaustion, of frustration, of patience run dry, a sword of indignation at how little she feels like a human when she so often has to look and behave like an animal. Mostly, it is the sword of rage: the rage and shock of how completely she must annihilate herself to keep her child alive.â?•

Finding a balance between motherhood and work (both personal creative work and the paycheck kind of work) is top of my mind right now. Itâ??s very much a day-by-day thing. So, if anyone out there reading this has experienced trouble finding that balance, youâ??re not alone. There are sacrifices in every direction, so you need to remain flexible and not be afraid to make changesâ??even drastic onesâ??if it feels right.

The cool thing about being a creative person is that I know Iâ??ll continuously adapt to find the balance, and Iâ??ll be a better mother because of it.



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Has your sewing practice changed your relationship to your body image and self- acceptance?

Sewing has been the most radical form of self-acceptance for me. Being able to understand *why* clothes in a store never quite fit right is so incredibly empowering! Understanding how garments come together is like learning this special secret that allows you to dress yourself however you feel most comfortable. Sewing has really lowered my tolerance for clothes and fabrics that donâ??t feel good while I move or lounge around.

What are your seven favourite sewing patterns?

I love working with denim and linen, so my favorite patterns tend to work for those fabrics.

1. The Georgia tee from Elizabeth Suzann

2. The LB Pullover from Paper Theory

3. The Coe Trousers from Daughter Judy

4. The Nehalem Pants from Sew House Seven

5. The Joss Pants from Seamwork

6. The Kidman Jacket from Elbe Textiles

7. The Phen shirt from Pattern Fantastique


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Do you have a community of makers around you or do you find you are on your own?

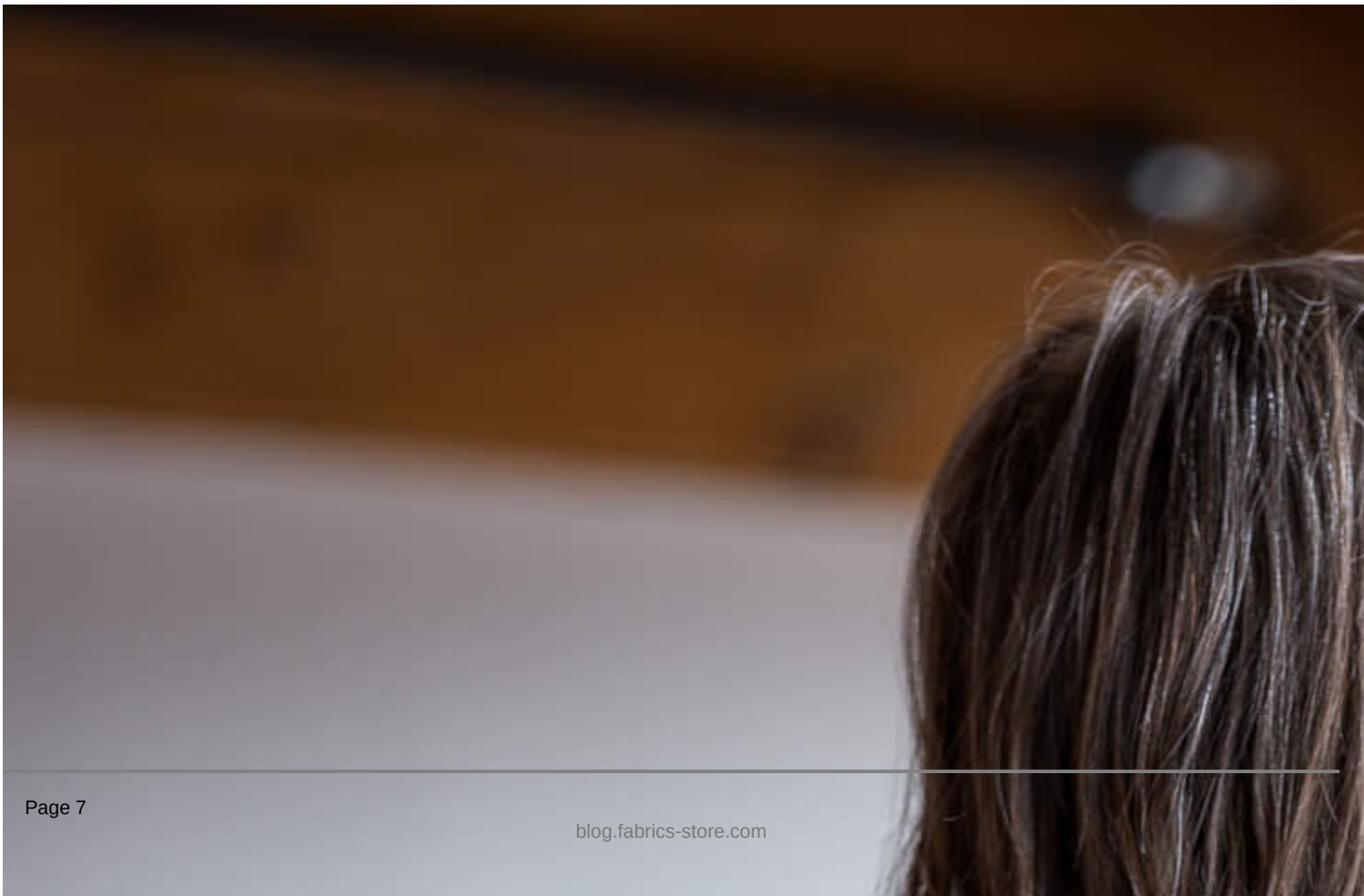
I insist on being part of a community, especially online communities that can connect me to folks around the world. I love the Cascadia Discord channel that Becky from Portland Frocktails runs.

Iâ??m always looking for new Instagram and Blue Sky sewing friends. And here in Portland, I regularly get together with crafty friends at breweries for some creative conversations.

If Iâ??ve learned one thing about working closely within the sewing community around the world over the past decade, weâ??re the friendliest, coolest group of people out there.

How important is it to make something with your hands?

Making and doing things with my hands is something I really value, even in my 9-5 jobs. I get restless without some kind of physicality to my work. Sewing is the perfect outlet for that.



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What has been the most rewarding sewing project youâ??ve completed so far and why?

I made a quilt out of fabric scraps from garments I made over years and years. I took an online class called Improvisational Quilting for Garment Sewists from Sew DIY. I canâ??t even describe how much fun this project was. There is nothing more rewarding than having fun while youâ??re planning, cutting, and sewing a project, and each of those steps was totally exhilarating.

What is more important to you â?? the process or the final product (ie your garment)?

I think the process is more rewarding and where all the action happens, but I really treasure the final product. I see the finished product as a reflection of the process, a stark reminder of all that I am capable of.



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What does success mean to you?

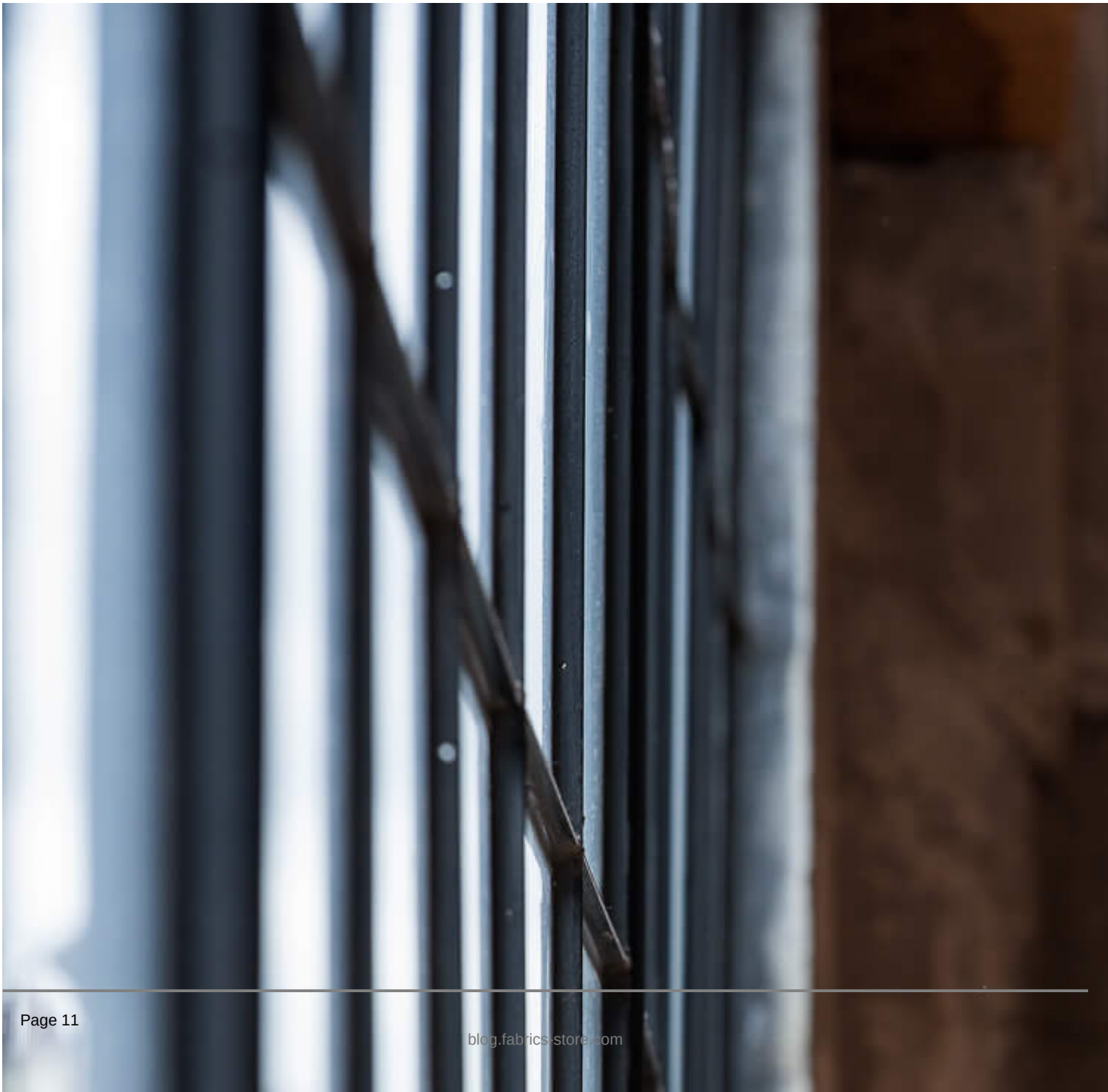
To me, success means overcoming challenges and finding my own way to work through them. When success comes too naturally, I donâ??t feel like Iâ??ve grown throughout the process. Luckily, Iâ??m the kind of person who regularly confronts failureâ??seriously, I canâ??t count how many mistakes I make on each and every projectâ??but I donâ??t let it deter me too much. That feels like success to me.



What have you chosen to make out of FS linen and why?

I sewed the Olya shirt pattern from Paper Theory using the Signature Finish IL019 fabric in Olive Branch. I love a good linen button-up, and since Iâ??ve gotten my new chain stitching machine, the back yoke is such a great place to add some decorative stitching.

I knew this fabric would be perfect, because it has enough body to show off the details on this shirt design, but it is so drapey and comfortable. It also took the chain stitching so well! Linen is such a great fabric for embroidery.



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What is it like working with fabrics-store linen? (once you have completed your project)

I have sewn with so many different types of linen, and this is by far one of my favorites. My favorite fabric used to be a linen and rayon blend, because the rayon would give the linen more drape, and it tended to be less scratchy. But this Fabrics-Store linen is soft and drapey right away, without the added rayon.

I tried a few different types of interfacing with this fabric, and it took to all of them so nicely. It still kept its softness. I had no problem sewing buttonholes and getting a nice press on the collar and cuffs. This is going to be one of my favorite shirts!

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