

# Quilt Embellishments

**5** FREE QUILT EMBELLISHMENT IDEAS INCLUDING CRAZY QUILTING AND SURFACE EMBELLISHMENT



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AN EMBELLISHED AND EMBROIDERED  
PATCHWORK PAPER COLLAGE

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CHERYL SLEBODA

Quilting embellishments for art quilts run the gamut from beading and embroidery first popularized when crazy quilting began in the Victorian



era, to metal pieces, found objects, and even lighting. In fact, today's contemporary fiber artists who experiment with unusual quilt

embellishments incorporate elements of crazy quilting in their fiber art, breaking the rules and stretching the boundaries.

In *Quilt Embellishments: 5 Free Quilt Embellishment Ideas including Crazy Quilting and Surface Embellishment*, you'll find inspiration and how-tos for creating embellished fiber art in a contemporary way.

In "Florabundance: An Embellished and Embroidered Patchwork Paper Collage," Jill A. Kennedy shows how to make a crazy quilt-style paper quilt using decorative crazy quilt stitches and beaded embellishment.

Jamie Fingal creates modern versions of the crazy quilt, using metal embellishments like zippers, safety pins, and hardware to enhance her rebel quilting style. In "Put a Little Zip in Your Art Quilts: Designing and Embellishing with Zippers," Jamie shows how to give your quilt design some "tooth."

Fiber artist and jewelry maker Mary Hettmansperger explores "Metal as a Surface Embellishment," focusing on how to use metal cloth for quilting embellishments. Heat, patina solution, and hammering can all change the look and texture of hardware cloth, mesh, and screen for use in fabric embellishing.

Stef Francis shows you how to have "Fun with Silk Rods, Cocoons, and Bark," turning these hand-dyed natural treasures into quilting embellishments that lend richness and whimsy to your fiber art.

Finally, Cheryl Sleboda shines a light on modern embellishment techniques with "Light Up Your Art Quilts: Embellishing with LED Electronics."

*Quilt Embellishments: 5 Free Quilt Embellishment Ideas including Crazy Quilting and Surface Embellishment* will open your eyes to the possibilities of new and old embellishment techniques!

Warmly,

VIVIKA HANSEN DENEGRE  
Editor

## Quilting Arts

MAGAZINE\*

### QUILT EMBELLISHMENTS

#### 5 FREE QUILT EMBELLISHMENT IDEAS INCLUDING CRAZY QUILTING AND SURFACE EMBELLISHMENT

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# 'florabundance'

ADAPTED FROM  
 QUILTING ARTS MAGAZINE  
 JUNE/JULY 2009

AN EMBELLISHED AND EMBROIDERED  
 PATCHWORK PAPER COLLAGE



BY JILL A. KENNEDY



For me, nothing is more satisfying than being able to create artwork that combines several of my favorite mixed-media art techniques with embroidery, incorporating, too, my passion for pattern and love of color which, especially at this time of year, are in abundance.

## PATCHWORK PAPER-FABRIC BACKGROUND

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Choose a color scheme and gather your materials. Take 3 sheets of paper (construction or handmade) and draw shapes, patterns, and lines with colored wax crayons. Cover 1 sheet of paper with circular patterns, another with linear patterns, and the third sheet with just plain colored areas and no pattern. Push down firmly on the crayon to ensure that you leave enough wax on the paper's surface to resist the ink. Try rubbing the crayon sideways across the paper leaving a broken textured effect, as this will give nice resist results when the ink is brushed on top. Layer different colors on top of each other, and leave some areas of the paper without crayon so that the ink will soak in, giving a contrast to the waxed areas. Build up a collection of at least 3 different decorated papers.

**Note:** *Hard wax crayons will resist the ink more than soft wax crayons.*

2. Now use a pointed tool and scratch into the wax to create marks and give texture. These marks will suggest areas to stitch later.

**Tip:** *For pattern inspiration, check out books on oriental rugs and carpets.*



3. Take a large, soft paintbrush or a sponge brush and apply colored inks. Let them blend together and flood over the waxed paper, sponging off any excess if it gets too wet. Leave the papers to dry, allowing the ink to resist the wax.
4. To build up a rich surface, apply gold paint stick. Let the design guide you as to where to use it. Now apply a darker ink over the gold wax and leave the papers to dry again.
5. Iron the decorated papers between sheets of parchment paper, melting the wax into the paper. Repeat with more wax crayon and ink. Dry the papers and iron once again.

### MATERIALS

- Construction paper or handmade paper: a few sheets in different color tones
- Wax crayons
- Gold paint stick
- Pointed tool such as an awl or a dry pen
- Colored inks (or leftover fabric dyes)
- Paintbrushes: soft bristle or sponge
- WonderUnder®, ½ yard
- Iron-on Pellon® interfacing, ½ yard
- Parchment paper
- Iron and ironing board
- Sewing machine and accessories (A size-90 needle is a good choice.)
- Machine threads: rayon, silk, polyneon, and metallic
- Needles and hoop for hand embroidery
- Scissors
- Decorative yarns and threads
- Felt

#### For embellishment

- Beads, sequins
- More decorative yarns and threads
- Acrylic paints
- Muslin
- Rubber stamps
- Gold stamp pad
- Soldering iron and heat-resistant mat
- Sheer fabrics such as organza, twinkle, voile
- Tissue paper or water-soluble stabilizer
- Hoop for machine embroidery



## TURN PAPER INTO PAPER-FABRIC

1. Iron a piece of iron-on interfacing to the backs of your papers. Use a medium heat, between the wool and cotton settings, and remember to use parchment paper over and under your papers to protect them, as well as your iron and ironing surface.
2. Take a piece of WonderUnder and iron it to the fronts of the papers. Leave it to cool and then peel away the backing paper.

**Note:** *If you remove the backing paper while it is still warm, you will get a duller surface than if you leave the fusible to cool before removing the backing paper.*

3. Now comes the really fun part! This always scares my students, but I assure them, and you, that it won't be disastrous. Taking your decorated papers in hand, completely crumple and scrunch them up. This will soften the fibers in the papers and make them feel more like fabric. Make sure you crumple them well, all over, to ensure that sufficient softening occurs.

## ASSEMBLE THE PAPER-FABRIC BACKGROUND

1. Lay out your papers and select areas from each to cut out; rearrange them to make one piece of paper-fabric. At this stage, do not worry about the finished size.

**Tip:** *Don't be afraid to cut the papers into halves, quarters, thirds, etc., mixing them together. Think about balancing the composition by choosing areas that have pattern and placing them next to areas without.*



2. Once you have cut out the pieces, lay them face down in position on parchment paper. Make sure all of the edges butt up to each other, leaving no spaces or gaps between.
3. Now lay a piece of iron-on interfacing on top, cover with more parchment paper, and iron well to fix it in place.
4. Determine your desired finished size and cut out your favorite area from the paper-fabric. I chose a 9" x 9" square.

## STITCH, EMBROIDER, EMBELLISH

Now that you have created your patchwork paper-fabric it is ready for embroidery, embellishment, and stitch.

## FREE-MOTION EMBROIDERY

**Note:** *You will not need to place the paper-fabric in a hoop as it is stiff enough to machine stitch without one.*

1. Set up your sewing machine for free-motion embroidery. Use a clear monofilament thread in the bobbin to save using your special threads. Use your thread of choice on the top. Select colors that match and complement your chosen color scheme.

**Tip:** *Make sure you use a large-eyed machine needle to cope with the metallic threads, the thickness of the paper-fabric, and the embellishments being stitched.*

2. Machine stitch along the lines forming the patterns; use both straight and varied-width zigzag stitches. Working from light to dark, change threads regularly, building up an interesting stitched surface. Variegated threads look good, too, and add subtle color changes. Do not over-stitch the paper-fabric; aim to enhance the design with stitching that still allows the design to show through.
3. To add a different stitched texture to the surface, wind embroidery floss onto the bobbin, bypassing the tension spring in your machine, and machine a straight stitch upside down. Be sure to lower the upper tension before stitching. Draw a pattern onto the wrong side of the paper-fabric where you wish to place your design, and machine stitch following the drawn lines. Alternatively, for a more random effect, use a vermicelli stitch.
4. Choose some space-dyed knitted ribbon, or similar, and couch this into place using a free-motion







stitch or any pattern stitch that's built into your sewing machine. Again, be guided by the design you drew on the paper as to the placement of the couched ribbon; remember to keep the design balanced.

5. Lightly zigzag around the 4 outside edges of the paper-fabric to secure and protect them.

## HAND STITCHING

To add contrast to the free-motion stitching, incorporate a variety of hand embroidery stitches, again picking out details in the design to help with placement. There are many books available on the market covering hand embroidery stitches. Look online for free tutorials and refer to past issues of *QUILTING ARTS MAGAZINE* (see Leslie Levison's articles in Issues 1–16).

I have used a simple running stitch, backstitch, and French knots; be as adventurous as you like.

1. Look for spaces inside areas in the design that need accentuating. Use metallic yarn or embroidery floss and work long straight stitches across the space. Vary the thickness and type of fiber you use for added textural interest.



2. Work French knots in the centers of circles and swirls, etc. Grouping them together creates a raised, textured area.

**Tip:** A running stitch or backstitch makes a good outline and/or border stitch. Using these on top of the machine stitching will add depth to the design.



## EMBELLISHMENTS

I love to create a variety of embellishments for my pieces. I make embroidered floral motifs primarily using two substrates: a painted and stamped muslin, and layers of sheer fabrics. These motifs can be

digitally embroidered or free-motion embroidered. I also create what I call "cutwork ribbon," or a ribbon of stitched circles. And finally, I create my own cords for embellishing my work. For detailed instructions on how I make all of these embellishments, go to the Quilting Daily community ([quiltingdaily.com](http://quiltingdaily.com)) and click on "Free Resources."

Once you've created your embellishments, the fun is in deciding where to position them. Maintain a balanced composition and place the embellishments where they will make the most impact.

1. The floral motifs form the main focal point of the collage as they are large and stand proud on the decorated surface. Using a clear thread, stitch a few stitches around each flower center—just enough to hold them in place. You can layer a small motif on top of a large motif to create more depth.
2. Cut your cutwork ribbon to length, arrange it as you desire, and stitch it in place. I like to lay it half off one edge—this creates more interest and attracts the eye. Then I place another piece on the collage in a different direction, again having the end slightly overhang the edge.
3. Loop the cord down one edge, stitching it in place as you go. I left the tail long enough to couch down in a curlicue design on the surface of my piece.
4. Take another length of cord and tie knots every inch or so to add another feature to the edge of the collage; stitch this in place.





## FINISHING

5. Introduce fine detail to the collage by sewing on beads and sequins to accentuate the couched lines, heighten the stitched areas, and, of course, add some sparkle.

When all stitching is complete, cut a piece of felt to size and sew this to the wrong side of your patchwork paper collage to neaten the back. ❖

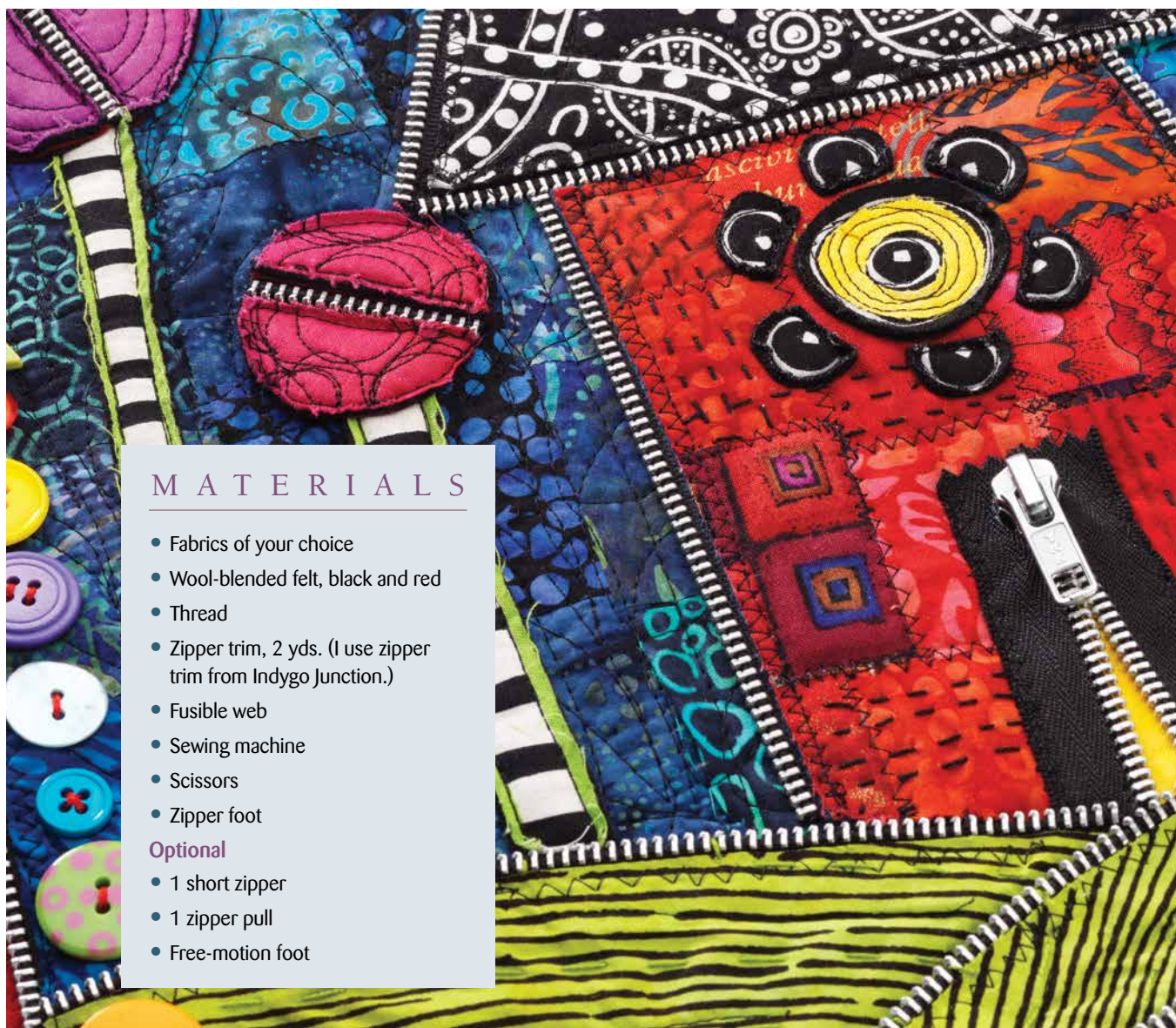
*jillkennedy.com*



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# put a little zip *in your art quilts*

DESIGNING AND EMBELLISHING WITH ZIPPERS



## MATERIALS

- Fabrics of your choice
- Wool-blended felt, black and red
- Thread
- Zipper trim, 2 yds. (I use zipper trim from Indygo Junction.)
- Fusible web
- Sewing machine
- Scissors
- Zipper foot
- Optional**
- 1 short zipper
- 1 zipper pull
- Free-motion foot

BY JAMIE FINGAL



When you want to add a little dimension, texture, or just a fun accent to your art quilts, zippers can play the part. Zippers can be a little tricky to work with, but once you get the hang of sewing with them, the embellishment possibilities are endless. I am partial to zippers with silver metal teeth and black trim, but recently I came across a line of zipper trim from Indygo Junction that offers a variety of trim colors and metal teeth. I've had fun using these colorful zipper trims in some of my pieces.

## DIRECTIONS

All of my art quilts are made the same way. I use black wool-blended felt as a foundation, and when the piece is complete, I back it with wool-blended felt in a different color. The following directions will guide you to create a quilt with zipper trim accents. For more ideas on how to incorporate zipper trim into your art quilts see "Variations."

1. Select fabrics with colors and patterns that pop. Prepare them with fusible web. Cut and arrange your fused fabrics on the black wool-blended felt to create a background design. Feel free to mix and match colors and patterns, just as long as they are in the same value family. Fuse the background design in place.
2. Select fabrics for your design elements (such as a house, flowers, teacup, leaf, etc.). Design and build each of these elements separately (on separate pieces of wool felt).
3. Select zipper trims to incorporate into your individual elements (see "Variations"). Pin the zipper trim under the edge of the wool felt in the areas where you would like to add it, taking care to determine

how much of the fabric trim should show.

4. Sew the zipper trim into place, anchoring your stitches at both ends, and taking out the pins as you sew. If you are new to working with zippers and/or zipper trim, use a zipper foot and change the location of the needle, depending on where the metal teeth are. (The

zipper foot is the narrowest foot; it can get into tight places and is great for applying other trims too.) Always have the zipper teeth visible to you when you start to sew. Do not overlap the zipper trim. (Accidentally running over the teeth with your sewing machine could bend and break the sewing machine needle. Be careful.) If you prefer, you can stitch zippers and zipper trims into place as I do: I use a clear, closed-toe free-motion foot with a zigzag stitch and no pins.

*Note: I use black polyester thread in the top and in the bobbin, but feel free to use whatever colors you desire. This process is not about perfection, but rather about having fun with your creative process.*



"Tea Fairy House" (detail on previous page) • 15" x 15"





"Kauai House" • 15" x 14"

5. Arrange and pin your individual design components to the prepared background design. Using a free-motion foot, sew each element into place, removing

the pins as you go and taking care to avoid stitching over any zipper teeth.

6. To add a zipper trim around the quilt edges, when your quilt is near completion (but before the backing has been added), start at the upper edge of the art quilt and pin a strip of zipper trim into place by tucking it under the wool foundation. Sew it into place and cut off the excess length with a pair of scissors.





- Turn your piece 90°, and pin another strip of zipper trim into place. Do not cut off the end yet. Sew the trim into place, taking the pins out as you proceed. Cut off the trim at the end of the side, so that the trim does not overlap. Continuing in this manner, add trim to the remaining two sides, if you wish.
- Back your quilt with a large piece of wool felt. (I like to cut the backing a little larger than the quilt top, to add extra color.) Free-motion machine quilt the backing into place along the edges and in key places on the quilt to anchor it. Add additional free-motion quilting and hand embroidery as desired.
- For easy hanging, use tabs from the top of aluminum soda cans; just sew them to the back of your piece.

## VARIATIONS

Follow these instructions to incorporate zipper trim as windows, round flowers with zipper petals, and big leaves with zipper veins on your art quilts. Each of these elements is prepared individually, on a separate piece of wool felt, and then attached to the prepared background.

### ZIPPER WINDOW

- Starting with a prepared house (built on a piece of wool felt), cut a slit in the center of the house fabric with a pair of scissors; cut out a square.

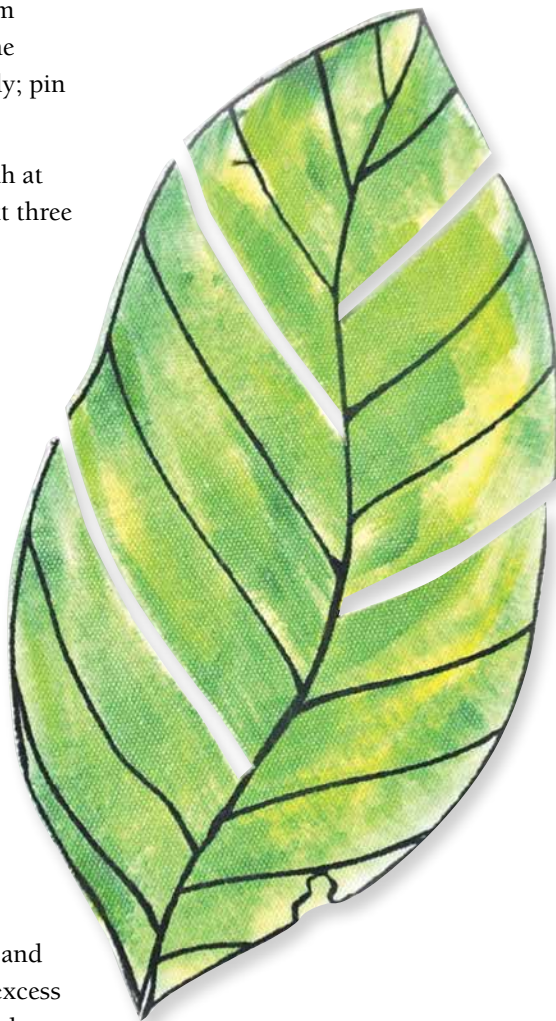
- Place a length of zipper trim underneath the inside of the window, along one side only; pin it into place and sew.
- Cut the excess zipper length at the end. Repeat for the next three sides.

### LEAVES WITH ZIPPER VEINS

- Use a fabric with a large leaf print. Cut out a leaf and fuse it to a wool-felt backing.
- Cut small slits where the veins of the leaf are (not every one, but perhaps two on each side). The slits have to be large enough for the zipper teeth to be visible.
- Do one slit at a time. (It is a bit tricky to hold this all in place.) Position the zipper trim in the slit, pin, and sew. Repeat. Then cut the excess zipper length and teeth on the sides.
- Pin and sew your leaf into place on your piece.

### ZIPPER STEM

- Cut a fabric strip for the stem, and cut a slightly larger piece of wool felt as the backing for the stem.
- Cut a length of zipper trim, place it underneath the stem, and pin.
- Sew the zipper trim in place; cut off the excess length as needed. Repeat on the opposite side of the stem.



### ZIPPER FLOWER CENTER

- Cut a fabric circle for the flower center and fuse it to a piece of wool felt.
- Take a strip of zipper trim and cut slits into it, about 1/4" apart. (The slits will help the trim to be sewn on more easily without puckering so it will lie somewhat flat.)
- Pin the zipper trim around the outer edge of the circular flower center. Carefully sew it into place.



“Urban Footscape” • 5" × 7" (top) and “The Little Black Dress” • 12" × 12" (bottom)

4. Cut petals about 1½" long from two colors of zipper trim. The petals will be positioned so that the center flower overlaps them slightly. To ensure that the petal strips will lie flat under the center flower, snip away about ¼" of the teeth at the top of each petal (make sure the metal part is always on the same side of the petal strip).
5. Pin the flower center and the petals into place on your prepared background design (the trimmed petal ends go underneath the flower center).
6. With the center of the flower under your sewing machine needle and using a free-motion foot, secure the flower center and the petals by sewing just inside the zipper on the flower center.
7. Remove the pins, and free-motion stitch a loop design on each petal to secure them to your art quilt.
8. Pin and sew the flower stem into place, being careful not to overlap the zipper teeth with the flower center. ♦

[jamiengaldesigns.com](http://jamiengaldesigns.com)



# METAL AS A *surface* embellishment

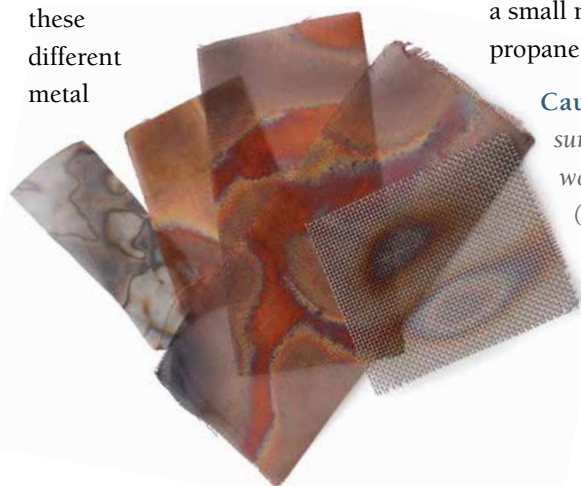
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## PART 3: METAL CLOTH

In the first two installments of this column, I discussed the use of copper foil and wire as embellishments on the quilt surface. This article addresses the possibilities for using metal cloth (hardware cloth, screen, and mesh specifically; see Figure 1) in fiber art. I will offer several techniques for altering and using these woven and pressed grid surfaces, and discuss their versatility on the quilt surface.

Keep in mind that there is a definite difference between hardware cloth, screen, and mesh—and that hardware cloth is nothing like what we consider cloth to be (see “Metal Cloth: An overview of hardware cloth, screen, and mesh”). Galvanized metal cloth is easily found in most hardware stores. Other metals like silver, copper, brass, and steel are also available through metal manufacturers, some craft stores, and jewelry suppliers.

I encourage you to experiment with these different metal



cloths. They are all interesting surfaces that can add dimension and interest to your fiber art, offering a variety of design options for any quilt surface.

### DIRECTIONS

#### APPLYING A PATINA WITH HEAT

Copper, stainless, and brass materials can all have a heat patina applied to their surface to create an aged look. (Figure 2) I prefer to apply heat with a small micro torch or a BernzOmatic propane torch.

**Caution:** When using a torch, be sure to wear protective eyewear; work on a safe burning surface (I use firebricks); have plenty of ventilation; and keep a bowl of water available for quenching and safety. I always do surface torching outdoors.

Lay the material flat on the firebrick or other

### MATERIALS

- Metal cloth of your choice (see “Metal Cloth: An overview of hardware cloth, screen, and mesh”)
- Ball pein hammer (typically used for metalworking)
- Small bench block or anvil
- Metal snips or utility scissors
- BernzOmatic® QUICKFIRE® propane torch
- Firebrick or other nonflammable surface
- Protective eyewear
- Bowl of water
- Latex or protective gloves
- Liver of sulfur (I prefer to use the rock form.)
- Flat plastic container
- Steel wool
- Paper towels

nonflammable surface. Light the torch and hold the flame about 4”–8” away from the metal. You will see the surface begin to change color. Do not hold the flame in one area too long or the finer meshes and screens may burn through. If the heat is applied for too long, the color can completely disappear.

BY MARY HETTMANSPERGER

Figure 1:  
Hardware  
cloth (above),  
mesh (below),  
and screen (bottom)







Figure 3



Figure 4

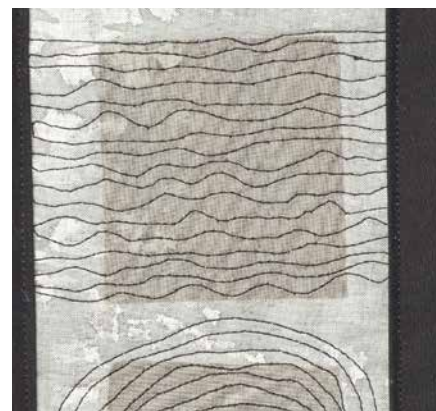


Figure 5

## APPLYING A PATINA WITH LIVER OF SULFUR

Liver of sulfur can also be used to age mesh or screen that is made of silver, brass, or copper. I prefer to use liver of sulfur in rock form, but any

kind can be used. When handling liver of sulfur, always follow the manufacturer's recommendations on the packaging and wear both safety glasses and protective gloves.

Fill a flat plastic container with very hot tap water and place a small liver of

sulfur rock in the bath. Quickly dunk the metal cloth into the bath, and once you see the color change, rinse off the liver of sulfur and place the material on a paper towel to dry. After the material has darkened, you can take steel wool and remove some of the patina, leaving a rich antique-colored tone. (Figure 3)

## metal cloth

### AN OVERVIEW OF HARDWARE CLOTH, SCREEN, AND MESH

**Screen and mesh** are types of woven metal cloth, also known as wire cloth. Wire cloth comes in a variety of metals; silver, gold, aluminum, nickel, brass, stainless steel, and copper are easily found online. The weave or grid of wire cloth comes in many sizes (determined by the grid count per inch): course wire cloth ranges from 1 × 1 to 16 × 16, medium ranges from 17 × 17 to 60 × 60, and fine ranges from 61 × 61 to 1500 × 1500. The largest weave is often used as fencing, and its open grids can be great for adding stability to a quilt surface; it can also be used as an internal stabilizer for a quilt that has heavy surface embellishment. I have also found smaller weaves useful for adding a stiff surface to a quilt top.

**Metal screens** are available in many different sizes and materials, and I find that they are all beautiful to add to the surface of art quilts. Metal and plastic screens often come in a standard-weave grid for bug protection, are both found in hardware stores, and are used for window and door inserts.

**Mesh**, often referred to as woven cloth, is the most pliable wire cloth and the best for shaping on the surface of a quilt; it is usually woven of a very fine wire and has an extremely dense weave.

**Hardware cloth** is like a pressed or fused grid, and has the most open weave. All open-weave materials offer your quilts a grid surface in which you can stitch, bead, embellish, and alter.

## EMBELLISHING WITH SCREEN AND FINE MESH

Screen-size woven cloth, when used as a flat embellishment, creates the look of screen doors and windows. It can also be used to capture fabric and other materials on the quilt surface. (Figure 4) Screen is easily cut with utility scissors and can be used in a variety of designs and applications; finer screens can be stitched through on the machine. (Figure 5) The material and grid size of the screen will determine the look that will be achieved.

Mesh, a tight and finely-woven material, can easily be cut, crumpled, folded, shaped, and then applied to the quilt surface in a variety of ways. (Figure 6)



Figure 6

## ADDING STRUCTURE

Heavier woven cloth, or hardware cloth, can be inserted inside a quilt to give it structure. (Figure 7) I like to use hardware cloth as an internal layer since you can hand stitch into it, but it can also be a great outer surface that allows you to weave through the grid.

## ATTACHING WITH WIRE

Metal cloth can be attached to the surface of a quilt with wire, thread, linen, floss, or string. (Figure 8) Many stitching and embroidery techniques can be used when doing this.

When using wire to secure items to the surface of a quilt, I like to create

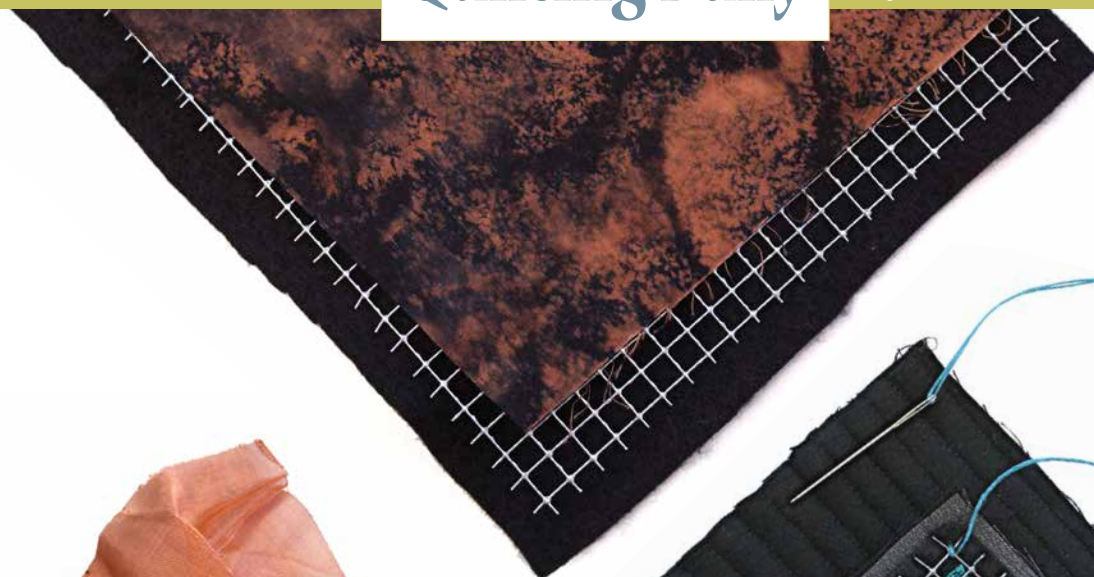


Figure 7

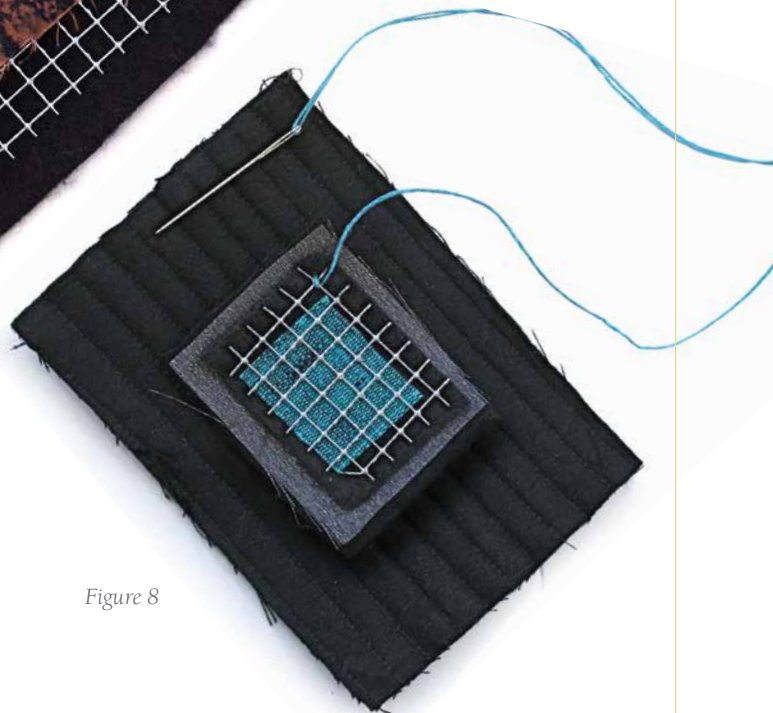


Figure 8

a ball that functions as a knot on the back of the piece. To do likewise, burn the end of a piece of thin 26-gauge wire; if the ball is not big enough, hold it longer in the fire or hammer it gently to make it a little larger. (For more details on this process, see my column in the October/November 2010 issue of *QUILTING ARTS*). Using a small amount of tape on the back side of the fabric is also a good trick for making the thin wire's knot hold.

## EXTREME HEATING

Depending on the effect

you want to achieve, you may want to try extreme heating to create a distressed look on mesh or screen; you can even burn holes through the surface, then attach the mesh or screen to a quilt top. (Figure 9) Use this method with copper, brass, or silver to create a very interesting aesthetic. ♦

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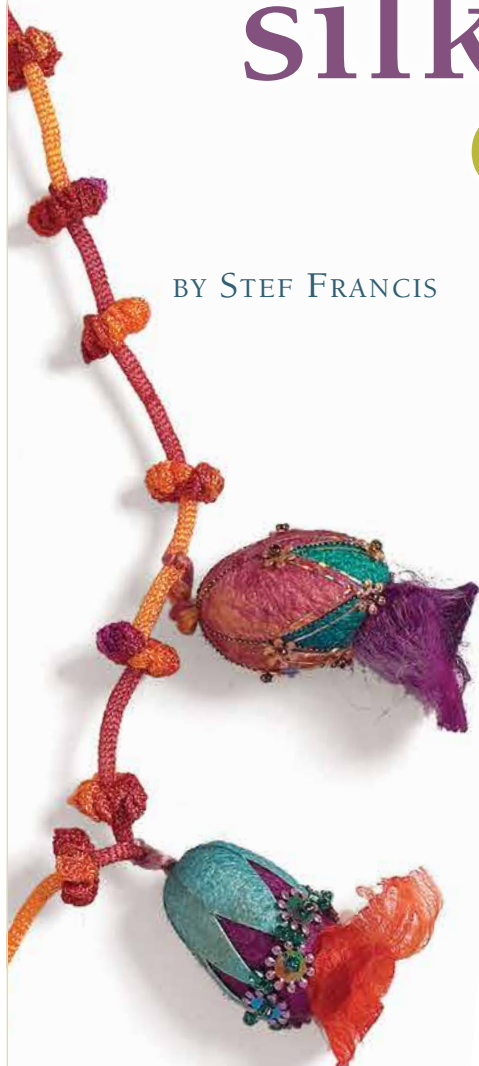
Recently I started working with mulberry bark that I dyed myself. The bark can be used just like fabric and stitched into by hand or machine. I have made a small bag using layers of dyed mulberry bark, silk rods, and dangling jesters. The handle to the bag was made from tubular ribbon, stuffed with double knitting wool, scrunched up, and bound at intervals with copper wire.

# fun with silk rods cocoons AND bark

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QUILTING ARTS MAGAZINE  
SPRING 2005

BY STEF FRANCIS

At exhibitions I am frequently asked, “What do you do with it?” in reference to some of the items I sell. Most recently this question has come up concerning silk carrier rods, silk cocoons, and mulberry bark.



simple stitches in my work: straight stitch, fly stitch, and French knots, made with space-dyed yarns and threads in a variety of colors and textures. I add beads, sequins, and gold leaf to enhance my designs.

## SILK RODS

First, you can pull the layers of rods apart for interesting effects. After pulling the rods apart, you can stitch two of them together at the edges with a simple running stitch to create a raised frill. Continue in a like manner adding more rod pieces to produce a piece of rectangular ‘rod fabric.’

Dye does not fully penetrate the rod, and as you separate the layers, the colors become increasingly pale, often turning white with a colored wavy edge. (See ‘Cuff’ picture.)

When you have a large enough piece of rod fabric, place it onto a piece of hand-dyed background fabric and stitch into the fabric and the rods. You can add additional bits of the rod pieces to complement the design.

Silk carrier rods are a waste product produced when the silk filament is wound off of the silk cocoon in the first stage of silk yarn production. The rods are about 4” to 5” long and resemble a split tube that can be pulled apart into several thin layers and then teased to expose the fibers. They are useful in embroidery, paper-making, and other fiber arts. When I use silk cocoons I cut off the end in order to remove the moth, and the ends resemble an acorn. They are useful in embroidery for general adornment. All the silk materials that I obtain are in their natural state, so I dye them in a variety of colors with cold water Procion dyes.

Although the results look wonderfully complex and intricate, I use fairly

## MATERIALS

- 5 pieces of dyed mulberry bark
- Fat quarter of hand-dyed fabric
- 2 or 3 packets of silk cocoons
- 2 or 3 packets of dyed silk rods
- Some space-dyed yarn for stitching
- Beads and sequins, as desired
- Sharp scissors
- Metallic and other novelty threads
- Thimble





Embellished jesters are tied to a ribbon cord to make a fun necklace.

## SILK COCOONS

Below are some project ideas:

### CORNUCOPIA

Stitch beads on them and add them to embroideries with beads and sequins tumbling out of the cut end.



### JESTER

Using sharp scissors, cut a zigzag pattern into them, starting from the cut end.

This weakens the opening and allows you to push them over an uncut cocoon. (I call these new cocoons my 'jesters' as I normally do them in fairly bright colors (see 'Jester' picture).

### LAYERED JESTER

To make a layered jester join two cocoons together as follows. After you have cut a jagged edge for the jester cocoon, slide an intact cocoon inside of it. Starting with a needle and



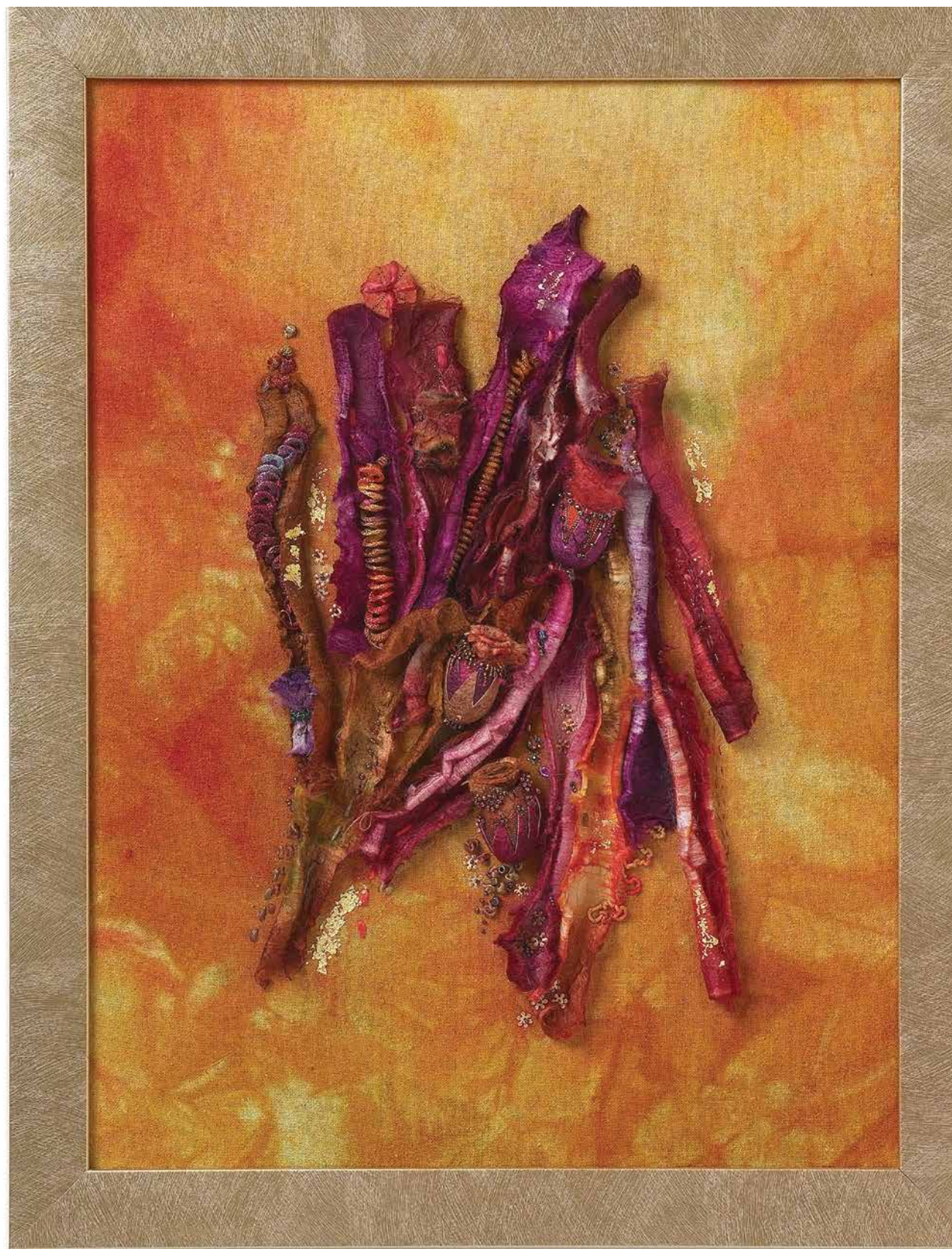
Hand-dyed cocoons in a variety of colors are ready to be embellished and made into art.





*Cuff bracelet*







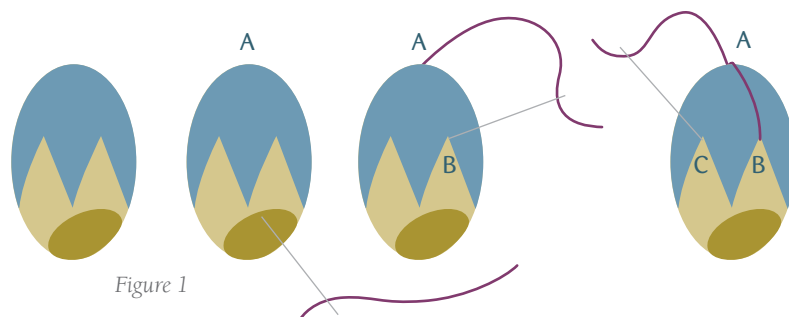


Figure 1

thread, stitch through the center of both cocoons so that thread emerges on the outside at point A (see figure 1). Push needle back into the inner cocoon at B and come out again at A. Enter the inner cocoon at C, come out at A. Continue around until the cocoons are safely joined. I have found that a thimble is a definite necessity for this work. Use a metallic or fancy thread. Once the two pieces are joined, the fun starts, as I embellish them with beads, sequins, and stitch.

## MIXING RODS AND COCOONS

After producing a number of newly adorned cocoons think about how

to use them. You can use them in conjunction with your textured rods as I have done with “Nephensis”. To create this piece:

1. Place a cocoon with its opening facing upwards.
2. Select a rod of a complimentary color. Take a layer from the rod and roll it up like a Swiss roll.
3. Put a dab of glue on the rolled end and push it into the cut end of the cocoon.
4. Repeat this with the other cocoons, and when finished, fan out the exposed frilly edges of the rolled rods.

## FURTHER IDEAS

### A small brooch

Finish them in the same manner as before with a small piece of rolled-up rod.

### A cuff bracelet

Using a running stitch and various embroidery yarns, stitch into the cocoons and add some French knots. Embellish further with three jesters, beads, and sequins.

### A fun necklace

Use stuffed ribbon scrunched up and knotted with jesters hanging from the front. ❁

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# LIGHT UP YOUR *art quilts*

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## EMBELLISHING WITH LED ELECTRONICS



### MATERIALS

- LED light that rates under 3.4 volts (This is usually indicated on the package.)
- 20mm, 3-volt coin cell battery: CR2032
- Finished art quilt or ATC
- Conductive thread
- Regular sewing thread
- Sewable battery holder
- Hand-sewing needle
- Permanent marker
- Small-tipped needle-nose pliers
- Craft knife
- Scissors
- Anti-fray glue, such as Fray Check™

BY CHERYL SLEBODA

I was given some circuitry supplies by my husband last Christmas.

Though I knew I wanted to put lights into a quilt, I didn't know the best way to go about it until I started reading on the Internet about how fashion design students were using LED (light emitting diode) lights in their garments. One thing led to another, I created my first circuit, and it really took off from there. LEDs are a truly unique embellishment, and all the necessary parts are readily available at your local electronics store or online. I've found they are a particularly fun addition to ATCs (artist trading cards).

### DIRECTIONS

1. LEDs have one long leg and one short leg; the longer leg is the positive lead. Using your

permanent marker, color the longer leg right next to the plastic base of the LED so you'll be able to tell which is which once you bend the legs into shape.

2. Using your needle-nose pliers, grab one of the LED legs by the tip, then slowly and carefully twist the leg into a spiral shape as close to the plastic base as possible. (Figure 1)
3. Using the pliers, carefully bend the spiral outward so that it will lie flat on the back of your quilt. (Figure 2) Do the same with the other leg. Once finished, make sure you can still tell which leg is the positive lead by looking for the permanent marker coloring.

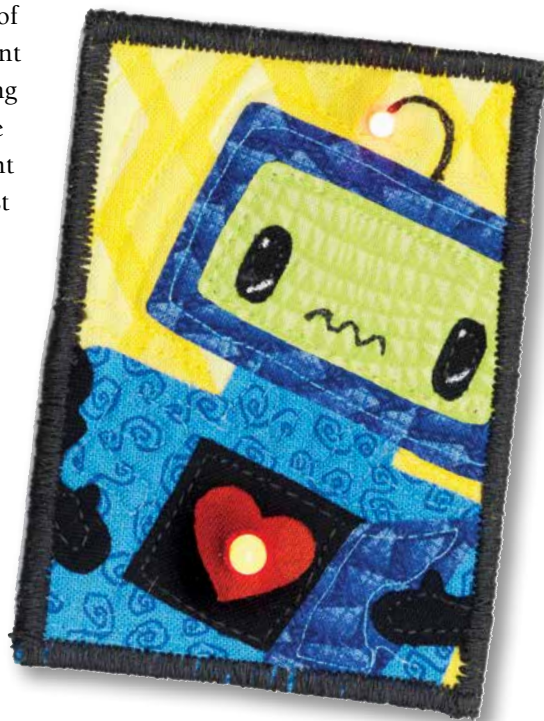
## tips for working with lights

- It is important to follow the positive and negative leads, or the circuit won't be complete and the lights will not light up.
- Choose a project that is not meant to be washed. If you must clean the quilt, remove the battery and use a damp cloth to very lightly wipe the surface of the quilt only.
- Do not use lights on projects that will be near or given to a child—or for people who behave like children! Beware of small parts around your children and pets.
- Remember that voltage matters; if you have an LED that is rated 5 volts, a 3-volt coin cell battery is not enough to power it. If you will be inserting many LEDs in your quilt, you can chain the leads to the battery holder. However, you may have to add additional batteries and holders to accommodate lots of LEDs, as too many LEDs in one circuit drains battery life quickly.
- I recommend reading a children's book on circuitry to learn more about how these electronics work, as children's books are very easy to follow.
- To turn off your light, remove the battery from the holder and store it in a safe place. You can even make a pocket for the battery on the quilt back, but don't leave it stored there for long periods of time (such as months) in case it becomes damaged and harms your quilt.

4. Select the spot on the front of your art quilt where you want the LED to be inserted. Using your craft knife, poke a hole in your quilt top at this point through all of the layers, just large enough for inserting the LED. You may need to make your hole X-shaped to avoid distorting the quilt top too much. If so, use your scissors to snip off the points of the X so they do not cover the LED.

**Tip:** *If you are concerned about fraying at the LED site, use a very small amount of anti-fray glue to seal the edges, but do not apply anti-fray glue once the LED is inserted, as it will not come off of the plastic section of the LED. Wait until the glue is dry before inserting the LED.*

5. Insert the LED, pushing it through the quilt back to the front. Using regular sewing thread and a hand-sewing needle, tack the LED in place by stitching through the spiral legs. Don't cover all of the metal as you will need something for the conductive thread to attach to.
6. Place the sewable battery holder on your quilt back in a location near the LED, but at least 1" away. I like to put mine close to the bottom of the quilt. Note which are the positive and negative leads on the battery holder, and angle the battery holder so that the conductive threads (which will be stitched between the LED legs and battery holder) will not cross.



7. Using the conductive thread, and starting with a large, secure knot, hand sew a running stitch just through the back fabric of your quilt, connecting the positive lead on the LED to the positive end of the battery holder. Make several passes through the LED spiral leg and the battery holder to ensure a good connection, and end with another large, secure knot. Do the same for the negative leads. (You may want to use a very tiny amount of Fray Check on the conductive thread knots as the thread is slippery and can unravel.)

**Note:** *Do not let the threads cross each other or you will short out the LED and battery.*

8. Insert the battery into the holder, aligning the positive and negative marks. Enjoy the light show! ✨

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