

Creating Gorgeous Wall Hangings

From Painted And Embellished Fabric

Sherrill Kahn

Materials

Fabric: good quality white cotton or quilters' muslin with a high thread count, ironed very well. Choose the finished size of the wall hanging and tear the material slightly larger than the finished size.

Jacquard inkjet cloth (optional): This fabric is used with computer images and inkjet printers. It enables you to make numerous prints of the same subject on fabric. It has a coating that makes the final print waterproof. You can add painted glazes, embellishments or any other decoration that you choose. You could also use Lazertran or T-shirt transfer paper.

Sponge: that never hardens. Cut the sponge into 1 inch (2.5 cm) squares. The sponge can be found where supplies for wallpaper and painting are located. It is often called a 'hydrophilic' sponge. It is my primary painting tool.

Paint: Jacquard Textile Paint (excellent for glazing and doing transparent overlays of colour), Jacquard Lumiere (luscious metallic and pearlescent colours that shimmer on your work), Jacquard Neopaque (light bodied acrylic in opaque colours), and Jacquard Dye-naflo (liquid, brilliant colour that is similar to a dye but heat sets with an iron). Other paints may be used if you wish; a degree of transparency is good but most acrylics will do the job.

Applicator tipped bottles: Jacquard makes a plastic bottle that can be filled with paint colours of your choice. The bottle comes with a 7mm metal applicator tip and works beautifully for adding lines of colour to your work. Alternatively try the bottles that silk painters use for outline medium.

'Impress Me' rubber stamps to add texture and pattern to the design.

Brushes: size 2 detail brush; half inch (1.5 cm) flat brush.

Fabric glue.

Large container for water, paper towels, old shirt.

Plastic to cover the work surface.

Quilt wadding (batting) or cotton flannel: the same size as the finished wall hanging. I frequently purchase flannel sheets to use as a batting for my pieces. It doesn't pill like typical quilt batting.

Coordinating fabric strips for finishing and binding the wall hanging.

Lining fabric: for the finished wall hanging.

Sewing machine and sewing supplies.

Embellishment supplies, such as beads, buttons, polymer clay pieces, tyvek shapes, ribbons, charms, decorative yarn, painted and rubber stamped fabric, shrink plastic pieces; cords, metal findings or anything else that you fancy.

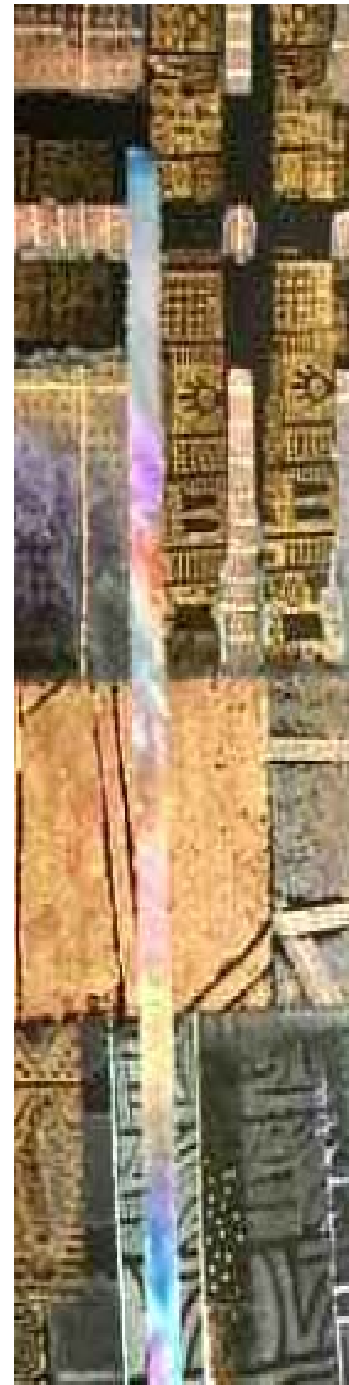
Piece of flat wooden moulding 2-3 in (5-8 cm) wider than the finished wall hanging to use

for attaching the wall hanging. Sand the piece very well. I use moulding that is about 1.25 in

(3 cm) high.

Hammer

Metal sawtooth picture hanger.



There is nothing more enjoyable than creating wall hangings. My background is fine art painting, including the creation of hundreds of paper collages. Putting together fabrics, ribbons, embellishments and beads to create wall hangings is exactly like creating collages.

Don't worry about perfect piecing. Pin several pieces of painted fabric together to create a piece of larger fabric. This will be the background for the wall hanging. Then start playing with smaller pieces of fabric for 'collage'. Lay the smaller pieces of fabric on the background, turning them in many directions and moving them to different parts of the composition. When satisfied, pin the pieces in place and, using a straight stitch, sew about 1/8 inch (about 2 mm) from the raw edge.

Some of the techniques for enriching the surface of the wall hanging could include adding beads, handmade embellishments, machine embroidery, zigzag stitches and hand embroidery. The joy comes from putting it all together. I love the creative process of the wall hanging - the interaction of colour, line and texture. I like to try unusual embellishments as well. One of the samples in this article includes thin copper strips that have been textured with a paper crimper. Don't be afraid to experiment with unusual colour combinations or embellishments. The main thing is to have great fun letting the creative process take over.

Examples

This is an example of using the piece of fabric shown in the step-by-step process from Part One of this article. The background piece of fabric was created using fabric painting collage and fabric painting techniques and rubber stamping. The example from the first article was pinned in an area that I thought was most complimentary and then sewed into place. More collage and paint was then worked until a satisfactory final result was achieved.



Example



Detail

This example combines fabric painting, many pieces of painted and commercial fabric collage in various sizes, and rubber stamping. In addition, glued fabric layers, machine embroidery and ribbon have been added. Selected areas have been highlighted with applicator tipped paint.



Example 2



Detail



Example 3. This example combines fabric painting, painted fabric collage, rubber stamping and applicator tipped paint. Layers of colour were combined to create a rich surface.



Example 4. This example combines machine embroidery, fabric painting, painted fabric collage and rubber-stamping, using commercial fabric in certain areas. Applicator tipped paint was used to add pizzazz to the final wall hanging.



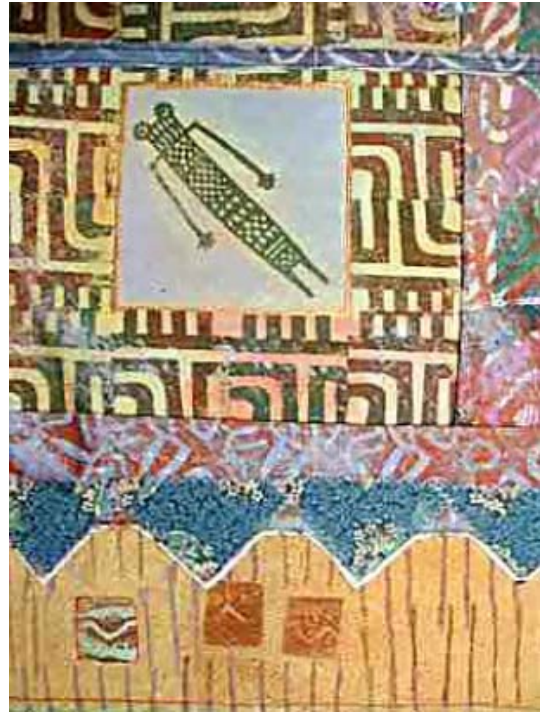
Example 5 (left) with detail above.

This example combines print making techniques, fabric painting, painted fabric collage, embroidery and applicator tipped paint.



Example 6 (left) with detail above.

This example includes copper ribbon that has been put through a paper crimper, fabric dangles, silk ribbon, machine embroidery, fabric painting, seed beads, painted fabric collage, rubber stamping and applicator tipped highlights.



Example 7 (left) with detail right.

This example includes Styrofoam plate printing, rubber stamping, fabric painting, painted and rubber stamped fabric collage, commercial fabric strips, ribbon and applicator tipped paint.

Finishing Techniques

Step One: After you are pleased with all of the machine and hand work on your wall hanging, cut a piece of backing fabric and flannel (I use cotton flannel sheets for this) the same size as the wall hanging. Place the flannel under the wall hanging. Make sure all of the pieces are ironed very well with steam.

Step Two: Place the right sides of the wall hanging and the lining together and pin in place.

Step Three: With a straight stitch, sew around three sides, leaving one side open.

Step Four: Snip the corners and trim the three sides that were sewn, not the open end.

Step Five: Turn right sides out and iron well.

Step Six: Turn the open end under 5/8 inch (about 2 cm) and iron well.

Step Seven: Slip stitch the open end closed.

Step Eight: Cut a piece of wood moulding about 1 inch (2.5 cm) wider than the top of the wall hanging.

Step Nine: Paint and decorate the moulding to coordinate with the wall hanging. The moulding should have a right angle on the bottom so that the wall hanging can butt against the edge.

Step Ten: Glue the wall hanging to the decorated moulding with fabric glue.

Step Eleven: Nail a sawtooth hanger to the moulding and hang your masterpiece on the wall.

Some Variations

1. Sew decorative bindings around the edge of the wall hanging.
2. Sew decorative triangles or rectangles around the raw edge of the wall hanging.
3. Create unusual shapes for the finished wall hanging.
4. Experiment with different ways of hanging the wall hanging - from found objects to interesting pieces of wood.

This article is intended to inspire you and encourage you to pull out the stops when creating wall hangings. I live by the words 'what if' and 'have fun'. I hope you will have a wonderful time making your beautiful creations.

Suppliers

Jacquard

Art supply shops or Art Van Go (WOW), The Studios, 1 Stevenage Road, Knebworth, Herts, SG3 6AN, UK, email. art@artvango.co.uk.

Computer Transfer Papers

T-shirt transfer paper is obtainable from any big stationers or computer supply shop.
Lazertran can be obtained from
UK: Gillsew: gillsew@ukonline.co.uk
Worldwide (incl. UK): www.lazertran.com

Sherrill Kahn's designs are based upon ethnic cultures, primitive art, patterns, borders, designs from nature and others. Her latest book **Acrylic Paint Pizzazz - Collage Techniques for Paper & Fabric** (ISBN 978-1-906314-16-3) was reviewed in the March 2010 issue of Workshop on the Web.