

QUILTING WITH SPECIAL FABRICS

Courtesy of Quilting Board

There are many fabrics available today that are not traditionally used in quilting yet would give depth and variety to the quilt and make an artistic statement. Many fabrics available in a full service fabric or bridal department would look great as an accent in your art quilts.

Crazy quilts were very popular and made between 1890 and 1910. There were earlier crazy quilts made of cotton and wool but many quilts from this particular era used velvet, satin, and silk fabrics. The wealthy women of that time were able to pay a dressmaker to make their clothing and purchase other necessary household items. And because of their economic status they were able to do "fancy work" rather than making utility quilts. Most fabrics used were probably scraps from their ball gowns.

If you study many of the older crazy quilts you will also find that they are heavily embellished with embroidery, laces and charms. The fabrics chosen for early crazy quilts were not fabrics that will last a long time. The crazy quilts that have survived are very worn and tattered yet considered quite lovely considering their fine workmanship.

We have many fabrics today that are readily available and with the advent of polyester, nylon, and other man made materials they will last much longer than the fabrics available at the turn of the last century.

We will consider some of the new fabrics available for purchase in the 21st century that might add an artistic embellishment to your wall quilts and art quilts.

Ultra suede -- The fiber content of ultra suede is polyester. It is available in many colors. Ultra suede does not ravel or fray so appliqué pieces can be cut on the turn under line and stitched or fused without having to turn under a seam allowance. For example you could piece a sunset background, cut a silhouette out of black ultra suede. Fuse or machine appliqué for a fast wall quilt.

Lamé -- Lamé is a very lightweight nylon fabric -- sometimes it is called "tissue" lamé. It has a metallic appearance and comes in many bright colors including gold and silver. It is very thin and frays and ravel excessively. Used by itself it would be too flimsy and lightweight to stitch into a quilt and it would not wear well. If the same fabric is first fused to a woven fusible interfacing it would be of sufficient weight to use in a wall quilt or art quilt. Once the interfacing is fused, simply cut your pattern pieces as usual. Stars are a great example for using gold or silver metallic lame. A blue lamé could be used to depict a lake or pond.

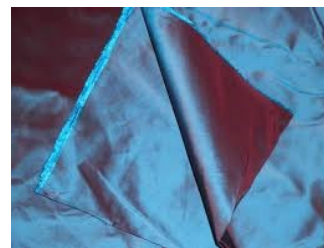


Interfacing for special fabrics - Be sure to buy woven fusible interfacing. Woven interfacing is lightweight 100% cotton fabric and has a lightweight fusible on one side. Have your iron at a heat setting required on the interfacing instructions. Most interfacings have you set the iron to a "wool" setting. For fusing to the lamé you will need to first fuse the interfacing to the wrong side of the lamé and then turn it over and using a pressing cloth, over the lamé. If you don't use a pressing cloth, the lamé will melt from the heat. Any pressing on your quilt top would need to be done with a pressing cloth to keep the lamé from melting.

A good pressing cloth for this purpose could simply be a scrap of muslin fabric -- it need not be fancy.



Taffeta -- Taffeta is a shiny fabric but is heavier than lamé. It could be used in a wall quilt or art quilt without any special treatment. You may apply fusible interfacing if you wish. Again this fabric would not wear well in a bed quilt or something that is laundered often. Taffeta is available in polyester, acetate, and silk. The polyester might be a better choice for an art quilt.



Blouse or lining fabric -- There are some beautiful blouse or lining fabrics available that could be used in a quilt. Because so many of them are lightweight, woven fusible interfacing should be applied as above. Most blouse fabric is polyester or silk.

Bridal satin -- Bridal satin is a very shiny fabric and is made from acetate, polyester, or silk. The wrong side of bridal satin is dull. It would be lovely as accent pieces in your wall or art quilts.

Satin Brocade -- Brocade fabric is a shiny bridal fabric that has a design woven into it. The right side would show the design as shiny and the background dull. The wrong side would show the background as shiny and the design dull. This fabric may be used with either the right side or the wrong side -- whichever you prefer. I picture brocade as a border fabric for an antique hankie quilt or a vintage linen crazy quilt.



Shantung -- Shantung has some "nubs" woven into the fabric or it could also be shantung brocade. This is a very versatile fabric. The shantung brocade has a very "rich" look. It is not as shiny as the satin brocade yet is very beautiful fabric for an elegant piece of wall art.



Organza -- Organza is a sheer fabric that you can see through. It is usually made from nylon or polyester. This fabric would be excellent to use as "water" a fish bowl. You could still see the "fish" fabric through the "water". Sparkle organza is also available -- a glitter of sorts is added to the fabric and makes an interesting texture.



Nylon tulle or nylon netting -- The nylon tulle is a finer weave than the netting. Netting is very inexpensive -- usually less than a dollar a yard, tulle is more expensive. Tulle is usually used for bridal veils and netting is used for crafts. Very fine tulle can be used for shadow appliqué by placing the fabric pieces under the tulle and machine appliqué or quilt.

Before purchasing specialty fabrics be sure to check the end of the bolt for fiber content and washing instructions. Most polyesters and nylons are machine washable. Some silks and acetates are not. Be sure to check before you buy and make another selection if you prefer to have washable fabric.

Since most of the fabrics above are synthetic be sure to set your iron at a lower setting than "wool" or "cotton". Acetates are the lowest setting, nylons and silks next, then polyesters. Cottons can be pressed at a much hotter setting than synthetic or man made fabrics.



Next time you shop for quilting fabric be sure to check out special fabrics available in the other departments of the fabric store. You might be surprised at what you will find. Let your imagination go and think of all the uses for ultra suede, shiny, and sheer fabrics in your future wall quilts and art quilts.

WORKS OF BENJAMIN SHINE, TULLE CREATIONS

Courtesy of Painting with Fabric—Tulle Creations by Benjamin Shine

During my quest for fun articles and information that I could include in the newsletter, I stumbled across the works of Benjamin Shine and thought they would be appreciated by our members. Enjoy!

Benjamin Shine is a gifted British artist and sculptor who expresses his creativity using one of the most unlikely mediums – tulle fabric. He crafts images out of tulle fabric using nothing more than a hot iron and his imagination. Benjamin has done quite a full abstract designs as well as full celebrity portraits. In an interview, here is what he said of his work: *"The idea of 'painting with fabric' led to the development of this technique where the portrait image is created through the intricate pleating and pressing of a single length of tulle fabric. The technique aims to utilize the translucent qualities of the tulle fabric to generate various gradients, tones and textures."*



WORKS OF BENJAMIN SHINE, TULLE CREATIONS (Cont'd)



Submitted by Deb Shoemaker