

SIMPLE QUILT EMBELLISHMENT

When we were in Houston for the 2004 Fall International Quilt Market we were impressed with the number of quilters using embellishments on their finished works of art. This year we noticed that this theme was continuing. We brought a large assortment of embellishments into our retail store, and from the interest our display generates, quilting embellishment is becoming a huge trend!

Perhaps you've seen various embellishments on quilts in local quilt stores or galleries, and wondered how you could get started with this new trend? We've pulled together some simple embellishments and ideas for getting started. Since the tools and products required for embellishment can get pricy, we've come up with some great items to let you get your feet wet. Once you try embellishing we think you'll be hooked!

To get started with simple quilt embellishment look no further than your very own sewing machine. When was the last time you played with a combination of decorative stitches and variegated threads? Pull out some scrap fabric and batting and allow yourself to play! You might be amazed at what your machine can do for you. If you love machine appliqué try using some of these stitches in place of the traditional zigzag or buttonhole stitch. **Bee Creative** has a wonderful pattern available called "*Mystic Midnight*", that will allow you to make a stunning quilt using all of the decorative stitches on your machine.

If you're ready to branch out to some of the other items available, a good place to start is with glitter. Various colors and sizes of glitter are available (we like the products from **Art Institute Glitter, Inc.**), and are easily applied with a clear-drying glue that allows fabric to stay soft and supple. If you're making a quilt for a little girl that features angels, butterflies, fairies, etc., embellish these characters with a little spot of glitter! It's easy to do and can be done once you've finished your quilt.

Crystals and rhinestones seem to be very popular these days, both in the quilting and apparel industries. Our favorite crystals to use are the **Swarovski™ Hot-Fix crystals**, which can easily be applied using a **BeJeweler™** or similar product. We've added crystals to accent designs in the fabric, to create a new design, and to accent machine quilting patterns such as words, stars, etc.

Many of us have beads of various types in our "crafting archives", so why not pull them out and add them to a quilt? Beads in all shapes and sizes, and of various materials, can be used to bring interest to a quilt. Use large single beads or a cluster of seed beads to create your desired look. Check out **All-In-One Beading Buddy** from C&T Publishing for great tips on beginning beading and embellishment.

Preprinted panels are a wonderful way to pull together a number of embellishments in one project. "*The Rhinestone Cowboy*" preprinted panel from **Possibilities®** gives ample opportunity for adding glitter, crystals, beads, and decorative stitching. What's more, by using a preprinted panel you can spend your time playing with the embellishments, and spend less time piecing the quilt.

How ever you choose to get started, it is clear to us that embellishing quilts is certainly becoming more popular. Jump in and give it a try! Let your mind get creative and artistic and see what you can come up with. We wish you luck!

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