

# Digital Quilting Designs

## FREE DIGITAL ART TECHNIQUES FOR COLLAGE AND QUILT



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MARGARET APPLIN

Digital technology and the ubiquitous camera phone have made us all photographers. As fiber



artists, the logical next step is to explore digital fabric printing.

In our eBook *Digital Quilting Designs: Free Digital Art*

*Techniques for Collage and Quilt*, three fiber artists show you how to use photo-editing software, a printer, and surface design to create digital photo art.

Margaret Applin is full of Photoshop® project ideas. One of her most popular techniques is creating digital collages using journal pages, paintings, textured fabric scraps—anything with an interesting design. She walks you step-by-step through the process in "From Flat to Fabulous with Digital Monoprints."

In "From Snapshot to Art Quilt," Natalya Aikens shows how to use digital art techniques to manipulate photos and print them onto fabric. By layering them with vintage textiles and adding machine and hand stitching, you can add a personal, handmade touch to your digital photo art.

Wen Redmond shows you how to lend the texture of an oil painting to digital printing on fabric in "Textured Fiber Photographs." Her process involves spreading a thin layer of molding paste onto stabilizer before running it through the printer.

Another digital collage idea from Margaret, "Using Digital Imagery in Quilting Collages," focuses on manipulating your own imagery in Photoshop Elements to create stamps, Thermofax screens, masks, and brushes. Then she shows you how to combine the resulting digital quilt designs into stitched fiber art.

With these artists and their digital art techniques to guide you, there is no limit to the art you can create.

Warmly,

VIVIKA HANSEN DENEGRE  
Editorial Director

## Quilting Arts

MAGAZINE®

### DIGITAL QUILTING DESIGNS

### FREE DIGITAL ART TECHNIQUES FOR COLLAGE AND QUILT

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## FROM flat TO fabulous WITH DIGITAL MONOPRINTS

BY MARGARET APPLIN

When I monoprint, I use a variety of organic forms, stencils, and texture tools. However, as much as I enjoy the technique, my monoprinting results sometimes leave me feeling flat and I find myself reaching for more: more depth, more mystery, more layers. But with digital monoprinting, the textures and patterns that I love working with on paper or fabric can be transformed and maximized to create the basis for dimensional imagery for my fiber art. My digital monoprints are a blend of marks I have made on paper and fabric (in color and black and white), fused together within a digital design environment. Best of all, I don't spill any paint in the process!

## DIRECTIONS

### Creating a digital monoprint

1. Select a variety of items to incorporate into your digital collage, and scan or upload them into your computer.
2. Open your photo-editing software. (I use Adobe® Photoshop® Elements 7, so these instructions are specific to that software; adjust as necessary for the program you're using.) Create a new file set at 300 dpi with a white background. (I prefer to work in a square-shaped layout, but any shape or orientation will work.)
3. Save and name your file. I always add "recipe" onto the end of the file name so I know it is the version with all the layers.
4. One-by-one, open up each image and drag it onto the new file in any order. When a layer is selected, you can resize, rotate, flip, or shift your image to place it exactly where you want it.
5. Experiment by moving the layers around and manipulating the look and feel with blending modes and filters until you are happy with the design. Read "Creating 'Indian Summer' Digital Monoprint" to learn the specific steps I used to create that particular digital image.

### MATERIALS

- Photo-editing software
- A selection of items to use as layers in your digital collage (see "Items to use for Digital Collage")
- Ink-jet printer fabric sheets
- Printer
- Fabric, batting, paints, and embellishments as desired (to complete the quilt)

### items to use for

#### DIGITAL COLLAGE

Select a variety of these items from your own artwork:

- Journal pages (finished or unfinished)
- Existing textured or patterned backgrounds
- Existing monoprints
- Fabric scraps with lots of texture
- Simple hand-drawn shapes or silhouettes
- Watercolor paintings or other paintings
- Copyright-free photographs

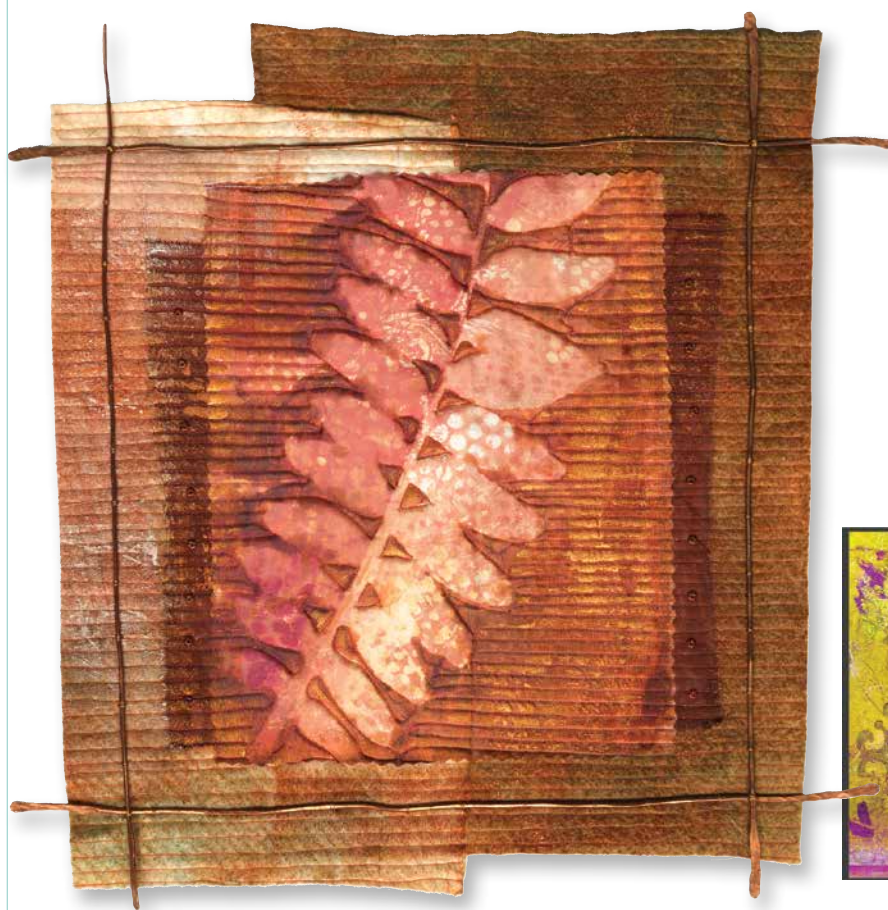
**NOTE:** This process is highly addictive and equally frustrating until you get the hang of the effects of the blending modes. Your image layout can change dramatically with the smallest adjustment, or it may not change at all when you expect it to. You can always "undo," so there is no need to panic, but always remember to save your work.

6. When you have completed your monoprint design, duplicate the file, rename it so you do not write over the original "recipe" file, and then flatten the image before you print it. (You always have the option of starting all over again using the flattened image!)

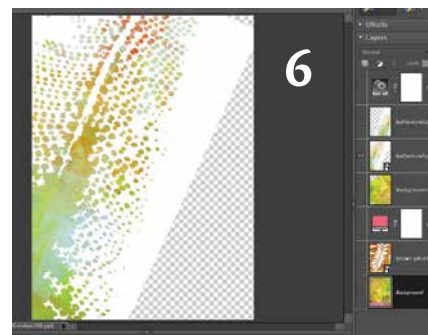


## CREATING 'INDIAN SUMMER' DIGITAL MONOPRINT

For "Indian Summer" (14" x 13") I combined three elements: a gelatin monoprint on paper, a section from a larger collage, and a photograph of a tropical leaf that I had previously transformed to a Photoshop Elements brush (below).

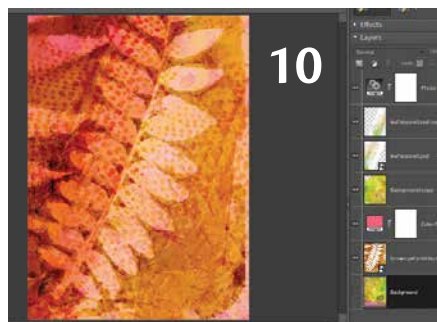
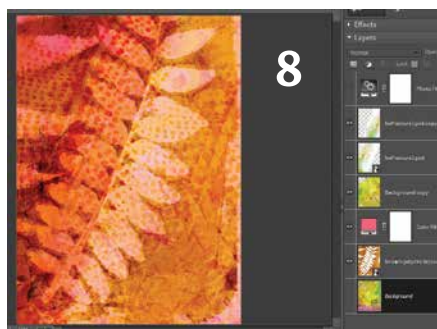
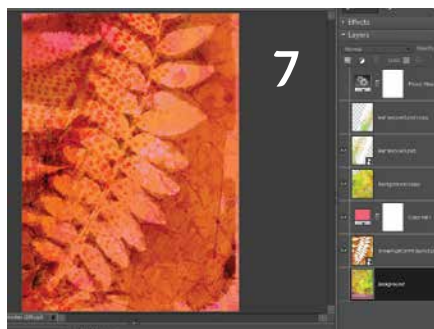


Process images by Margaret Applin



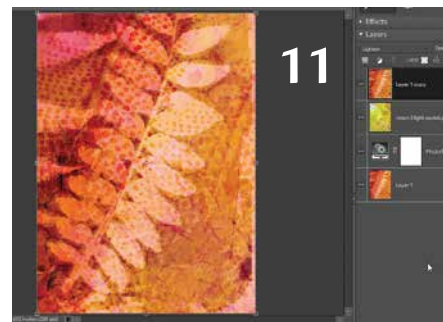
Within Photoshop Elements, these images were added as layers and then further manipulated with adjustments and blending modes to create the final image that was printed to fabric and incorporated into the quilted wall hanging. (Additional manipulations were created prior to the completion of the final design that are not outlined here.) Through the following steps, you can see how the layers were applied and manipulated to get to the look and feel of the final print.

1. I started this design using the image of the collage as the background. (Figure 1) (I recommend that you not use an image as the background, as I did here, but instead create a new file set at 300 dpi with a white background per the instructions for “Creating a Digital Monoprint.”)
2. Because I started my file with an image as the background, I had to turn off the background layer. (Figure 2)



3. The gelatin monoprint became my bottom layer. (Figure 3)
4. Next, I created a fill layer using a solid color selected from the color picker tool. On this layer, I selected the “Multiply” blending mode from the drop-down selection. This step allowed the color to penetrate everything below it. (Figure 4)
5. At this point, I duplicated a copy of my background image to incorporate into the layers. (To turn the layer on, click on the box immediately to the left of the image. You will see the eye image letting you know that it is visible.) On this layer, I selected the “Soft Light” blending mode and then I rotated the image 180°. (Figure 5)
6. Prior to adding the tropical leaf brush to my file, I had created a separate file using my brush as a mask on a different background. I grouped the layers and then when I flattened the file and saved it, the color remained. This is the image that I used within this design. (Figure 6)
7. When I applied the first leaf layer, I shifted it all the way over to the left, hanging off the edge. On this layer, I selected the “Color Burn” blending mode. (Figure 7)
8. I duplicated the leaf texture layer and dragged it over to the right side and left it hanging off the edge. I also flipped this image horizontally so the direction of the vein was opposite the other layer. On this layer, I selected the “Soft Light” blending mode. You can see how the background of each leaf layer is white. I used this to my advantage to split the shading on the two sides of my design. (Figure 8)

9. For the purposes of this demonstration, I shut off the bottom layer to illustrate how the “Color Burn” on the left and the “Soft Light” on the right appear. The main edge that you see in the middle was positioned to fall right along the stem of the bottom layered image. Using the eraser tool set at 15% opacity and selecting the leaf texture duplicate layer, I touched up the edge that had formed due to the overlap of the two leaf texture layers to make it fade out. I applied the eraser at





both the top and bottom of the edge. (By using a lower opacity to erase, you can apply it more with very subtle changes at each mouse click. This allows for much better blending of the edge.) I did not do any touch-up erasing along the very middle of the edge. (Figure 9)

10. The last step of this design was the addition of a photo filter adjustment. I selected Sepia at a 30% density. (Figure 10)
11. Next, I duplicated my file, renamed it so I would not write over the original "recipe" file, and then flattened the image. (Figure 11) Then I started all over again using the flattened image. After this second level of manipulations and adjustments, I printed the final image to a silk habotai ink-jet printer fabric sheet.



## CREATE THE QUILT

1. Print your digital monoprint onto an ink-jet printer fabric sheet. Once the image is dry, heat set it with an iron. (Another option is to print your digital monoprint onto paper and then transfer it onto the fabric of your choice using iron-on transfer paper.) For "Indian Summer" I printed my digital monoprint onto a piece of silk habotai ink-jet printer fabric.
2. Incorporate your digital monoprint into a quilt. You can simply sandwich the printed fabric, quilt,

bind, and embellish as desired. Or you can combine the monoprint with additional fabrics and make a larger piece. For "Indian Summer," I layered the printed fabric on pieces of coffee-stained cotton batting and then quilted the piece. Next, I painted it using acrylic paint and a brayer. I added some Lumiere® metallic paint to highlight certain areas. The embellishments are copper-colored beads and heavy-duty copper wire attached with thread to the edges of the wall hanging. ♦

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

## HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR digital collage

- Pay attention to what layer you are on while making adjustments. You may think you are making a specific adjustment and you don't see the results you want because you have a different layer selected.
- Use the "Undo" and "Redo" buttons as you make adjustments to see if you really like the changes you made before continuing.
- During the design process, if you love a particular result you have created, duplicate it and save it as its own file; then continue working on your main file. That way, if you are unhappy with the results after further manipulation you can go back to the part you especially liked. (I do this so frequently that I have numerous versions of that one design layout. I find that I will go back to one of my saved files to begin a new design using different color schemes or additional textures.)
- Blending modes are like chemistry. Learn to anticipate the results of certain modes by experimenting and playing.
- When you start to build your digital design files, it helps to be very organized. Create a file-naming convention or different folders for your backgrounds, brushes, etc. Before you realize it, you will have collected a number of images that you will be searching through for a design.
- If you are sure of a design that you want to print out, save it as a duplicate with a new file name ("xxxx-final") and use that smaller file for printing. Save your original design with all of the layers as your "recipe" file.

# FROM SNAPSHOT TO **art quilt**

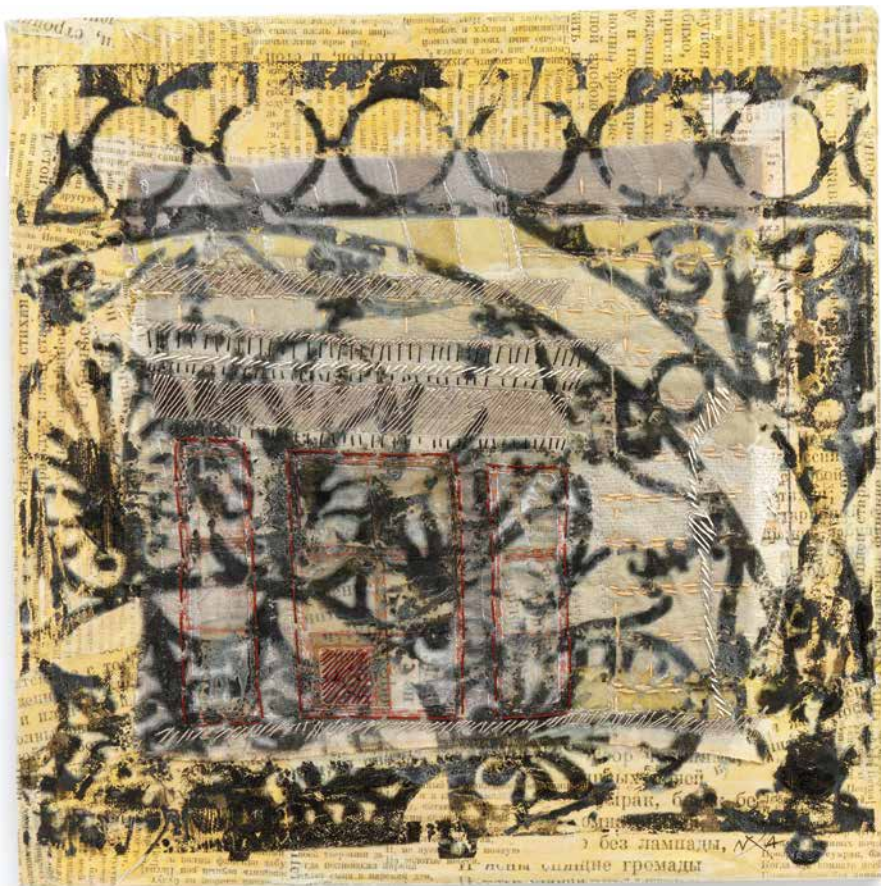
BY NATALYA AIKENS



"St. Pete Lace 2" • 12" × 12" (left),  
"St. Pete Lace 4" • 12" × 12" (right)

ADAPTED FROM  
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"St. Pete Lacey 4" • 12" × 12"

I enjoy photographing architecture during my travels and often use my photos to make artwork. My process involves manipulating photos in Photoshop so I can print the images on various materials. I then layer the images with vintage textiles and recyclables in my stash, thread sketch with my trusty Bernina® sewing machine, and add lots of hand stitching.

## DIRECTIONS

### Select and save your photo

1. Select a photo to use in Photoshop or the photo-editing software of your choice. Some points to consider when selecting a photo are the crispness of the shot, visual interest, and resolution.
2. Open Photoshop and then open your photo. Select "Save As" and save the image in its own folder and name it. You can name the image file anything. For example, "fence original.jpg" will do. Save the photo in the format that it is in, whether it is a jpeg, a tiff, or a raw file.
3. Once you have your image saved, decide if you need to crop the

## MATERIALS

- Adobe® Photoshop® Elements or photo-editing software of your choice
- Photos
- Fabric
- Sewing machine with free-motion capabilities
- Thread
- Needle and thread for hand sewing

### Optional

- Transfer Artist Paper™ (TAP)
- Organza
- Sheers
- Vintage fabric, lace, or recycled fibers (I use dryer sheets.)
- Tear-away stabilizer
- Freezer paper
- Wooden frame or stretched canvas

photo. Make sure the rulers are visible on the sides of your photo. Go to "View" and make sure there is a check mark next to the word "Rulers." Use the "Crop" tool and crop your image.

4. Next, size your photo. It is best to keep the file large from the beginning, as you can always make it smaller later. But if you know you'd like to work small, then size it close to what your final project will be.
5. Save your correctly sized photo by clicking "Save As" and adding something like "sized" to the title of the photo.



"Piter's Rooftops 1" • 20" x 20"

## Alter your photo

Now that you have sized and saved your image, playtime can begin.

1. Get started by playing with the "Enhance" feature and select Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Brightness/Contrast, or Shadows/Highlights and Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation. Sometimes just a few adjustments are all you need to add a fun, new look to your photo.
2. Once you have adjusted the photo to the look you like, save your photo with a new name. Add something descriptive to the title,

like "hue." Save several variations of your photo if you can't make up your mind, or if you decide you want to do a whole series.

3. Next, play with the filters. You can do just a bit of transformation by using filters such as "Colored Pencil," "Smudge Stick," and "Poster Edges." Or you can go radical by using filters like "Palette Knife," "Sumi-e," "Chalk & Charcoal," and "Stamp." Explore and try to find a filter you like and make sure that you save each individual variation as you work.

4. Continue to experiment with a variety of tools to achieve the look and feel you want for your image. For more information on some of the tools I use in my work, see "Photoshop Tools."

## Layer images

The next step is to experiment with layering images to add depth to your work.

1. If you want to layer two images exactly one over the other, first make sure they are the same resolution and size.
2. Using the "Move" tool, click and drag one image on top of the other (from one photo to the other photo). You need to have both photos open on your screen in order to do this.
3. Once the images are in one document, adjust the opacity of each image and decide how much you want to see of the image underneath. In the little side panel where you see your layers is a window that says "Opacity 100%." Click on the arrow next to the 100 and adjust down.

**TIP:** If you prefer to skip the layering in Photoshop, you can still achieve a layered effect by printing two different images on sheer fabric (or one on a sheer and one on a solid) and layering them when stitching.



## Put it all together

There are many ways to bring your piece together. One of my favorite ways to stitch on my art quilts is to do a little bit of thread painting with my sewing machine first. Then I add hand stitching, using the versatile straight stitch. It is amazing what subtle effects can be achieved with variegated thread and a needle. Here are the steps I use to finish my art quilts.

1. Print your fabric on sheers to be layered and overlapped on the edges. The easiest way to print your image on fabric is to buy prepared 8½" × 11" fabric sheets. They come in a few different types of fabric including organza, silk, and cotton. Most printers have no

trouble printing on these. You can also get sheets of freezer paper and iron your chosen fabric onto them. In this case, remember to make sure your fabric edges are trimmed perfectly; you wouldn't want your printer to get upset. You can also print onto dryer sheets by first ironing them onto freezer paper. If you have a more advanced printer that accepts rolls of paper, you can buy various fabrics on a roll.

**TIP:** *Vintage linens and lace will not go through the printer, but you can print your image on organza and layer it over vintage fabrics, or trap lace between printed sheers. For more ideas, see "Image Transfer."*



"St. Pete Lace 13" • 15" × 15"

## image transfer

What if there is no way to get your chosen fabric through the printer? Say it's a vintage textile or has way too much texture. Here are two methods I use to transfer images to my quilts.

**ORGANZA** Printing your image on organza and then layering it over your fabric of choice is one way to get your image onto your quilt. You can combine several layers of organza and translucent papers for some lovely ethereal effects, or trap sheer scraps between your organza layers and place netting on top to secure them in place.

### TRANSFER ARTIST PAPER

Another method is TAP (Transfer Artist Paper). TAP is a heat transfer method using special paper. TAP can be used to transfer a stamp-like image. To use TAP, make your image one color (usually black), print the mirror image of it onto TAP paper, cut and scrape away parts of the design, and then make the transfer. This method takes a bit of elbow grease, but is well worth the effort.

2. There are two options when adding machine stitching. You can add machine stitching using tear-away stabilizer underneath the sheers to prevent a puckered effect. Or, if you prefer a puckered, textured look, you can piece sheer panels together using a French seam for a lovely, clean finish. Then thread

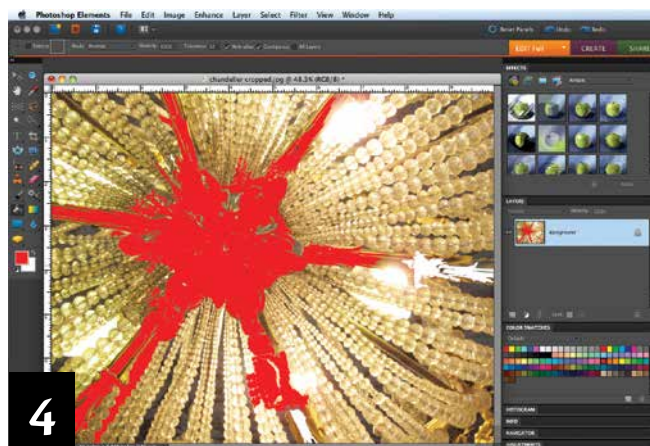
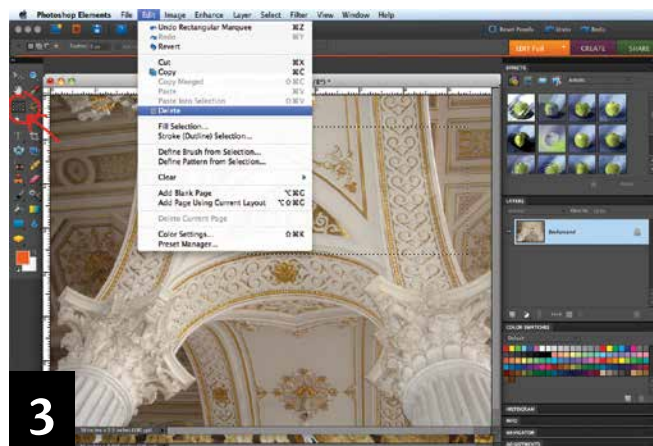
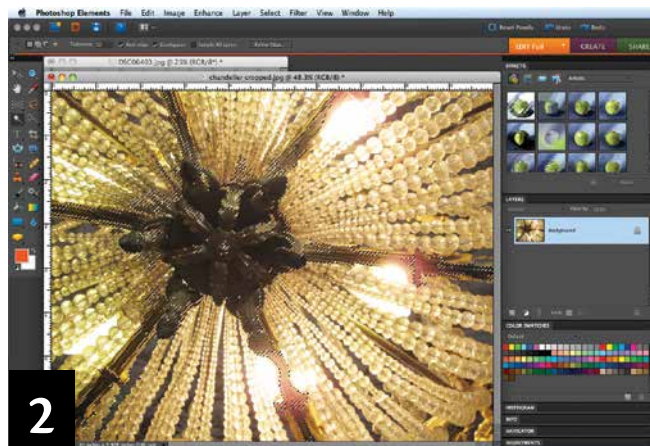
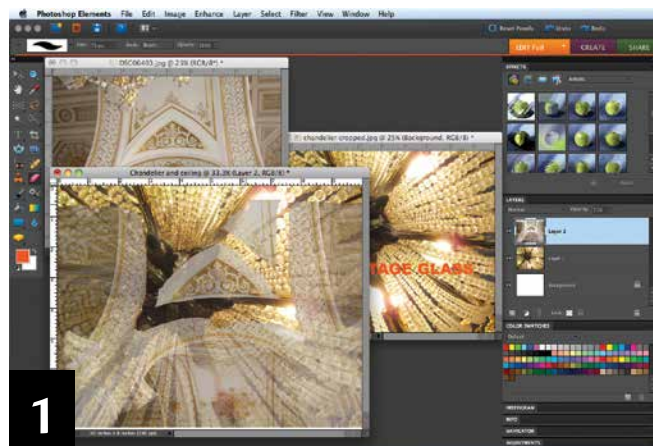
sketch with your sewing machine without stabilizer in order to purposefully pucker the material.

3. Once the machine stitching has been added, use hand stitching to emphasize areas of the image. If you didn't use stabilizer while stitching, hand stitching can help bring those puckers back under

control and create a whole lot of texture in the process. A plain straight stitch will add a subtle effect to your quilt when using variegated thread.

4. Finish, bind, or mount your quilt as desired.

## PHOTOSHOP TOOLS



1. Eraser; 2. Magic Wand; 3. Rectangular Marquee; 4. Paint Bucket

There are many tools available in Photoshop to alter your photo. Here are some of my favorites.

### Eraser

When layering multiple images you can use the “Eraser” tool to erase portions of the top image so the one underneath can peek through. Simply

increase or decrease the size of your eraser by selecting brush size.

### Magic Wand

If you'd like to remove a portion of your image, the “Magic Wand” can



live up to its name. When you click on an area with the Magic Wand, it selects all pixels that have the same color as the pixel you clicked on. For example, if there is a large single color area that you want to remove, click on the middle of it and it will select most of the area. Hold down the shift key as you select more areas. When you have a section you are ready to remove, go to Edit>Delete. If you have selected an area by mistake, click Edit>Undo. If you want to stop and deselect all that the Magic Wand has selected, go to Select>Deselect.

## Rectangular Marquee

If you have a large multicolored area that you want to get rid of, or if you want to get rid of small rectangles or ovals in your photo, use the “Rectangular Marquee” tool. Click on your photo and drag the rectangle to the size you want. Then choose Edit>Delete. You can switch from

the “Rectangle” to the “Elliptical Marquee” by holding your cursor over the little triangle in the corner of the “Marquee” tool.

## Paint Bucket

The “Paint Bucket” tool is handy when you want to replace a color with another color. Use the “Eyedropper” tool first to select a color from the palette panel or from another area of your photo, then click on the Paint Bucket tool. Bring the paint bucket over the area where you want to replace color and click. All the similar color pixels will fill with the new color. Alternatively, you can select an area with the Rectangular Marquee tool, switch to the bucket, and fill that perfect rectangle or circle.

## Free Transform

“Free Transform” is also fun to play with, especially if you have a single element in your photo that

you would like to transform. Select that element first with the Magic Wand, switch back to the Move tool, then go to Image>Transform>Free Transform. A square or a rectangle will appear around your element. Tug at its corners, or sides, or turn it to transform your photo. Click “Enter” on your keyboard to complete the transformation.

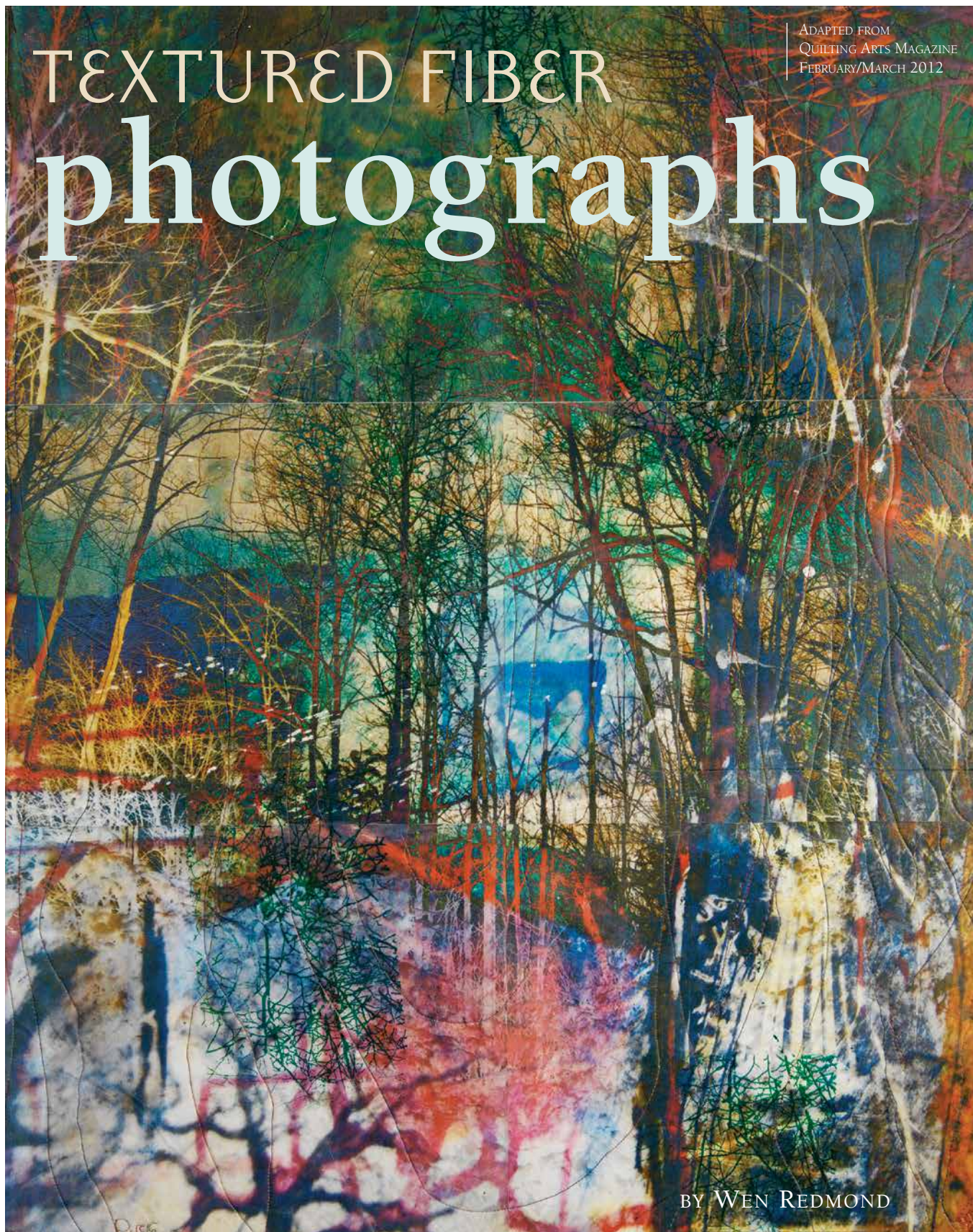
**TIP:** Remember that you can always switch the order of your layers by dragging a layer up or down in the panel to switch around. By using the “Move” tool you can also move your images around and align different portions of the photos. Whatever you do, just remember to “Save As” while you are working. 🌸

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# TEXTURED FIBER photographs



BY WEN REDMOND



Printing a photo on a textured background lends an unusual dimension to fiber art. My process involves spreading lightweight molding paste onto a stabilizer base. The molding-paste base, or substrate, can then be painted and fed into a printer to create a painterly photo thin enough to be sewn and manipulated. This technique works with most photographs and is inspired by the textured brushstrokes of an oil painting.

## MATERIALS

- Stabilizer, medium to firm (I use a rayon/polyester cut-away stabilizer.)
- Plastic drop cloth
- Lightweight molding paste
- Spreader (old credit cards or palette knife)
- Glue stick or double-stick tape
- Acrylic paint of your choice, 1 or 2 colors
- Paintbrush
- Rotary cutter and mat
- Scissors
- Photo
- Photo-editing software of your choice
- Printer with pigment ink (I use an Epson® printer with DURABrite Ultra™ inks or UltraChrome™ inks (These inks are both fade- and water-resistant.)
- Printer paper
- Varnish
- Foam brush

### Optional

- Stamps, sticks, or cheesecloth for additional texture
- Sandpaper

Previous page: "Pause" • 32" × 25"

## DIRECTIONS

### Prepare the base

1. Begin by covering your work surface with a plastic drop cloth.
2. Cut your stabilizer base to your desired size and place it on your work surface. (To become familiar with this technique, you may want to start with a small sample.)
3. Use an old credit card or a palette knife and spread a thin layer of molding paste onto the stabilizer. You may simulate brushstrokes or texture the molding paste with stamps or sticks. For my sample, I pressed cheesecloth into a small area. (Figure 1)

**TIP:** The texture of the molding paste shouldn't be higher than the thickness of a penny or it will jam in the printer later. However, if your molding paste dries too thick you can use sandpaper to reduce the thickness.

4. Continue to texture the paste so that it suits the texture in your photograph. Consider the effect you want to achieve. Think about oil paintings and the look of their textured brushstrokes. You may

want a lot of texture for some photographic images, such as an old wall or landscape, or you may want just a touch of texture to add interest to the background of a portrait. Allow it to dry until tacky.

5. Apply a thin wash of acrylic paint on top of the dry molding paste to accent the texture. (Molding paste accepts paint well.) Adding a wash of paint will create additional color accents and highlights in your finished printed photograph, especially if the image is black and white or light in tone. To create an acrylic wash, dilute your acrylic paint with water, in a 1-to-1 ratio. Be sure your wash is light in hue so that your photograph will show up when you print it on the molding paste. Allow the paint to dry completely. (Figure 2)



Figure 1

Process photos by Wen Redmond

**NOTE:** *Metallic washes work well because they settle into the nooks and crannies of the molding paste and will highlight your final image.*

## Print the image

1. While you wait for the paint on your molding paste to dry, prepare your digital photograph.
2. Size your photograph in the photo-editing software of your choice. You can divide the image into a triptych, as I did in the piece shown on the next page, or use the image as is. There are many effects you can achieve with the techniques and tools available through photo-editing software. Let your creativity flourish.



Figure 2

3. In order to get a full-bleed effect or a print that covers the edges (as in my image), print your photo using the Microsoft® Word program. Setting it up in Word will allow your printer to output the image exactly where you have placed the molding paste substrate.
4. Insert your picture into your Word file. In order to move the picture around in your Word document, you need to navigate to the “Format Picture” option. To do so,

either double-click on the picture and select “Format Picture” or go to the main toolbar, find “Format,” and then select “Format Picture.” (Figure 3) In the resulting pop-up window, select Layout>Advanced Layout>In Line With Text. (Figure 4) These steps will provide you with toggle squares on each corner, allowing you to grab the corners and change the size and orientation of the picture.

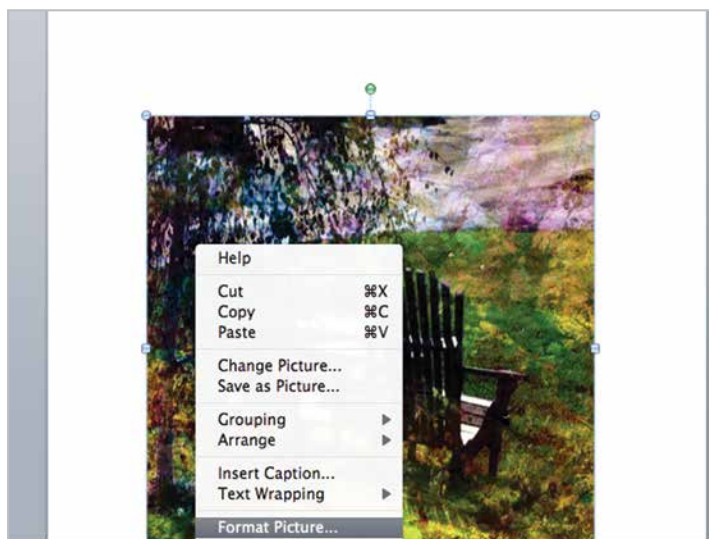


Figure 3

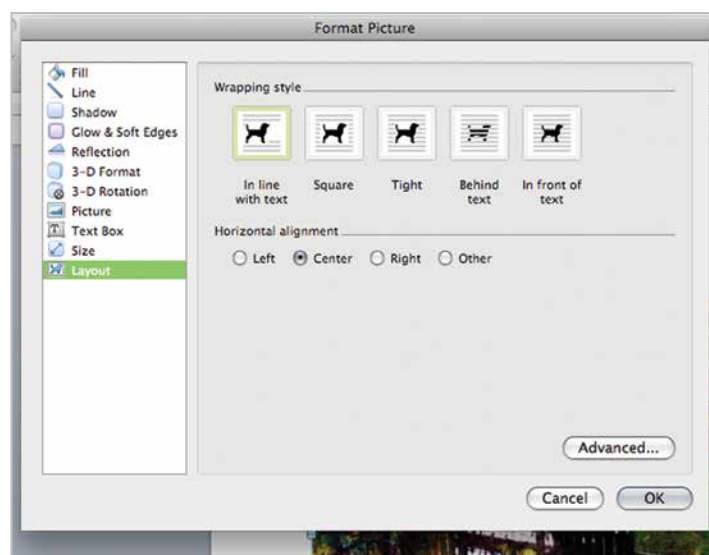
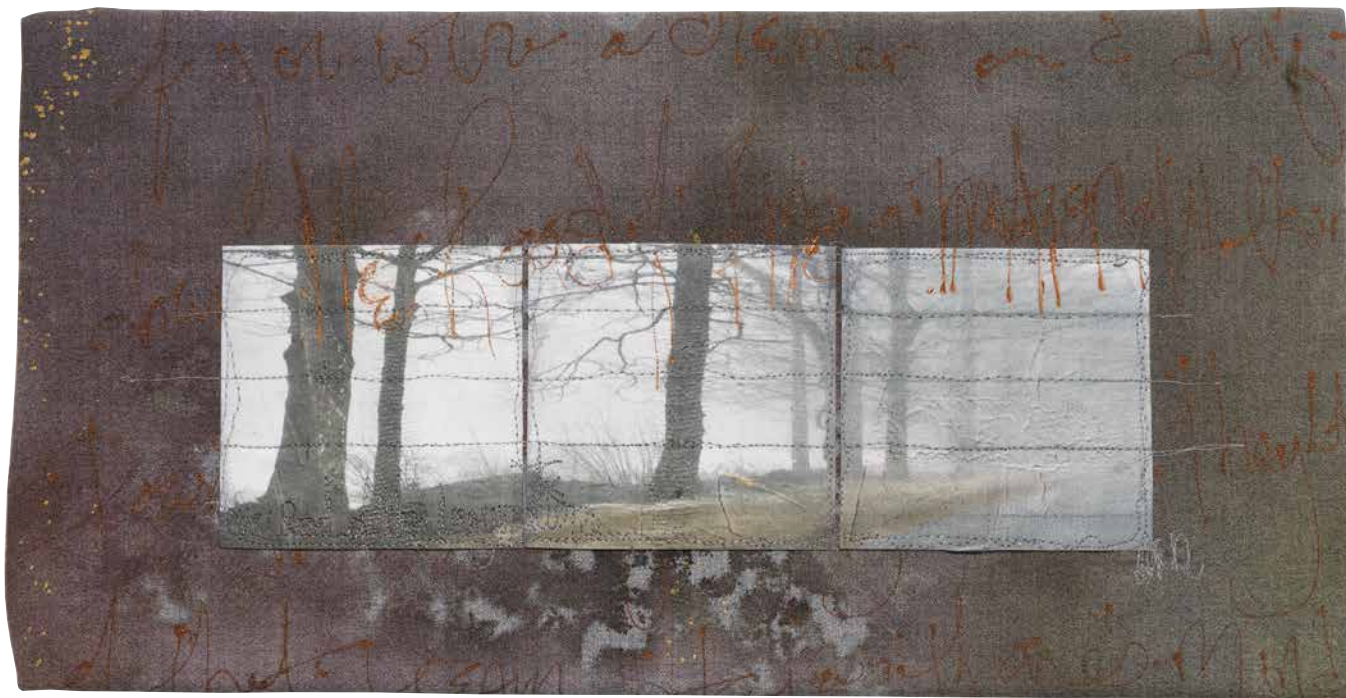


Figure 4





"The Road of the Imagination" • 12" × 18"

5. Make sure the area that the picture takes up in your Word file is slightly larger than your molding paste substrate. The printed photo will overprint the substrate onto your carrier sheet—a simple piece of printer paper.
6. Use a glue stick or double-sided tape to attach the dry molding paste substrate to the carrier paper in exactly the same position shown in the Word document.
7. Insert the paper and print your image.
8. Remove the substrate from the carrier paper and let it dry.

**NOTE:** The molding paste substrate can also print without a carrier sheet, just as you would any paper.

9. Once the ink is dry, cover your printed photograph with varnish to protect the image. Apply a light coat of varnish with a foam brush. Do not iron.

## Finish

Once the molding paste substrate is printed with your photograph you can add it to your project. Molding paste substrates are thick, so adjust your sewing machine accordingly. Also, once sewn, the molding paste

will hold the holes that the needle makes, so ripping out stitches is not an option.

The molding paste substrate can be sewn onto a fabric background and mounted, like "The Road of the Imagination" or sewn together with others to create an even larger photograph, like "Pause." It can also be added to mixed-media work, or simply framed. The ways in which you present this unusual fiber photograph are numerous; let your imagination be your guide. 🌸

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# USING DIGITAL IMAGERY IN quilted collages



"Late Spring" • 11½" × 11½"

BY MARGARET APPLIN



I love summer—the colors, varieties, and textures of blooming flowers; the early-morning chatter of birds; and the warm days and nights. It's the time of year when everything is so alive and filled with energy and my senses are on overload. This was the inspiration for my latest series of quilted collages and a journal cover. What started out as a few journal pages using butterfly and flower imagery quickly transformed into art quilts full of color and texture.

Over the past year, I have learned how to work with digital layers in Adobe Photoshop Elements. And now I find that every piece of art I create incorporates some digital element. Doodles become masks and brushes. Flower photos become stamps and backgrounds. My images take on a new life, manipulated through layers, and burned through blending modes and filters. Through this experimentation and play, I also generate a number of images I turn into Thermofax screens for use in surface design on fabric. Photo-editing software is a great tool; it allows me to reuse my photographs to create unlimited personal imagery.

## DIRECTIONS

### Preparing your image

1. Pull out your journal or some clean pieces of watercolor paper and freely create using your favorite tools, images, paints, stencils, and collage elements without planning or trying to control the finished page. The power of play is an important part of the collage process—just have fun with it!

2. Using your preferred method, transfer your finished pages to your computer. I use both my scanner and my digital camera. To capture the truest colors with your digital camera, use natural light.
3. Open up your artwork in your photo-editing software and experiment digitally. (See “Tips for Working with Adobe Photoshop Elements.”)
4. Transfer your image to fabric using your preferred method. For my images I use iron-on transfer paper. When using any kind of transfer product, remember to flip the images in the computer prior to printing. Use pieces of fabric large enough to accommodate an expanding design. My original foundation pieces were cut to approximately 14" square.

**TIP:** Unless you specifically want the background fabric to show through your image, I suggest using a bright white silk or cotton as your foundation fabric so your image stays as bright as possible and does not get muddled by different colored background fabrics.

## MATERIALS

- Journal or watercolor paper
- Journaling supplies, including pens, pencils, paints, and ephemera
- Stencils and stencil brushes
- Computer, scanner, and digital camera
- Photo-editing software (I use Adobe® Photoshop® Elements.)
- Printer
- Iron-on transfer paper
- Fabric (I recommend bright white silk or cotton.)
- Adirondack® Color Wash
- Large paintbrush
- Tracing paper
- Floral images
- Scissors
- Batting
- Stabilizer
- Sewing machine with free-motion capability
- Fabric scraps and lace
- Sheer fabric
- Embroidery scissors
- Heavy-body white paint

### Optional

- Thermofax® screens
- Embroidery floss
- Embroidery needle and thread
- Beads, beading needle, and thread

## tips FOR WORKING WITH Adobe Photoshop Elements

Here are a few techniques I use with my photo-editing software. Remember to start by creating a copy of your image to use for further manipulation.

- Layer your new images with other images containing text; or type directly on top of your images.
- Layer more than one of your new images together; or create a larger digital collage using a variety of new or old images.
- Change the hue and saturation of your images and move them around to see how their position changes the effect.
- Adjust the opacity of one or more of the layers to see how the effect changes.
- Use brushes or text to layer other elements over your images.
- Use masks to create distressed edges. Masks are great because they reduce the sharp edges of the image against the foundation fabric, which helps the image blend into the background.
- Build photos with a lot of texture into your layers and play with the blending modes to create a distressed look. Try filters to further transform the look and feel.
- Select a few images that stand out and crop them into smaller sections to transfer to fabric.

## Adding color

5. Add color around your transferred image. I use diluted Adirondack Color Washes with a large brush to obtain a watercolor look, intentionally leaving white space to create additional interest. With this product you can go back into your design with the washes at full strength using your brush to add darker, more intense values if desired. I usually paint on dry fabric, but you can always dampen the fabric for a different painting result.

**TIP:** *The closer to the edge of your transferred image you paint, the more likely the paint might bleed underneath your image. This can add interest to your design or possibly cause unwelcome changes to your image. Don't abandon your collage if this happens. You can continue to add layers to it later through stenciling.*

6. Trace a simple floral motif or another motif onto tracing paper. You may need to resize the motif depending on how large or small you want it relative to your design. Decide where you would like to place the motif on your layout. I use this technique to capture the lines from my flower photographs.

## Making the collage

7. Cut a piece of batting and stabilizer the same size as your design's foundation fabric. Layer your quilt sandwich to get ready for machine stitching.
8. There are two ways to add your traced motif: by adding a sheer (or other fabric) layer and then stitching along the traced

outline (Option A), or by simply stitching along the traced outline (Option B). Try a combination of both techniques to create depth in your collage.

**Option A:** Use fabric to create an image that appears as if it is in the forefront of the collage. Layer a piece of fabric between the tracing paper and your base fabric (with the transferred image). Stitch through all of the layers, gently peel off the tracing paper, and trim around the stitched lines as close as possible with embroidery scissors. I tend to use sheer fabrics for this step. In one of my collages, using a sheer fabric, I extended a butterfly image that was cut off in my transferred image. The sheer overlay on the wings subtly pulled the complete image up and out of the original transferred image on the collage, reducing the obvious line between the image transfer and the background. Continue with this technique until you are satisfied with your design.

**Option B:** Stitch the design directly to your base fabric without an additional piece of fabric sandwiched in between. Remove the tracing paper template and use heavy-body white paint and a paintbrush to lightly define the stitch-drawn image. The white paint creates a ghostly feel, allowing the image to be defined, yet recede into the background.

**TIP:** *Applying screen prints at this point is an alternative to tracing and transferring motifs. You can still free-motion stitch through the paints or dyes used.*





"Height of Summer" • 11½" × 11½"

## Adding more layers

By working light to dark, and using a variety of surface design techniques, you can easily create depth through layers on your art-quilted collages. Also, by working on more than one collage at once, a similar look and feel

will develop and the finished collages will tell a story you weren't aware of while developing your art-quilt pieces.

1. Incorporate fabric scraps into your collage to effectively add layers and help blend the layers. Try to choose fabrics that don't
2. At this stage, stencil to blend the edges and to help blend the fabric scraps into your design. Don't stray too far from the colors of

overpower your current design; instead, select fabrics that subtly complement your design.

the background fabric. A couple layers of subtle blending are more effective than one layer of a bolder color. Blend the stenciling over both the transferred image and background fabric to pull them together and reduce any obvious straight lines.

**TIP:** When stenciling, use a light hand and a small amount of paint on your stencil brush. You can always add more paint, but it's hard to remove what's already been applied to the fabric.

3. Take a step back from your collage for a different perspective. If your stenciling tends to be heavier in one place than another, go back in to balance the overall design. Screen printing can be substituted or used in conjunction with stencils during this step.

4. Add a second blending layer of stenciling if you wish, using a different shade of one of the colors taken directly from your transferred image. Again, subtle is better to encourage the blending process. If there is an area of your image where too much color bled under your image, add stenciling over this area in a color that's lighter than the background. If too much contrast is created, stencil a little more with a paint color between the one you first used and the background color you are trying to blend into.

## Adding embellishment

1. Add hand embroidery as you wish. I tend to use it lightly or in small sections. For my designs, I added French knots in places, chicken

scratch stitches, and tiny flower shoots. I chose darker colors for the embroidery floss and thread so this layer would appear closer than other pieces within the layers. The final layer should pop off the collage, helping to anchor the depth created.

2. Incorporate beading for added texture and sparkle. I chose to use the smallest beads so they wouldn't overwhelm the design but would still create a layer of additional texture. On one collage, I used small metallic beads to frame the image. Depending on the colors and fabrics you select, you may choose to incorporate more beads of different sizes and colors.

## Finishing

1. Mount your quilted collage on a temporary mount. This allows the collage to be reused without damaging it. I temporarily mount my collages on heavy cardboard with heavy-duty tape and create a mount on the back side for hanging. This creates the option of using my collages in a different format later on, such as for a pillow or tote bag.
2. Once the finished collage is mounted, go back into the design with stenciling once more to add interest along the edges of the collage to help pull the design together. Again, stenciling should be intentionally subtle so as not to draw the eye away from the central image and other layered details.

Remember to play, experiment freely, and enjoy the process! 🌸

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### Journal

12" × 8½" × 2"

"The cover of this journal was created through the process described in this article. There are three signatures sewn into a painted canvas cover. I attached my art-quilted collage to the front of the journal with machine stitching. I chose to machine baste the pages into the journal so that I can easily remove pages to work on outside the journal and then re-stitch the pages in once finished. The pages of the journal were all painted using diluted Adirondack Color Washes, with some Lumiere® metallic paints mixed in to make the pages glimmer."