

## 7 Quilted Bag Patterns

HANDMADE QUILT BAGS *from* Quilting Arts



**1** PRETTY PURSES  
MELANIE TESTA

**2** BLUE EVENING BAG  
SUSAN BRUBAKER KNAPP

**3** YELLOW EVENING BAG  
SUSAN BRUBAKER KNAPP

**4** PURPLE EVENING BAG  
SUSAN BRUBAKER KNAPP

**5** MINI MESSENGER BAG  
LUANNE HEDBLOM

**6** EASY & ELEGANT  
QUILTED BAG  
LINDA & LAURA KEMSHALL

**7** ARTFUL ECO BAG  
KELLI NINA PERKINS

We spend so much time honing our art quilting skills, what better way to show off our work than by sporting it when we're out and about?

In this e-book we share with you seven stylish quilted bag designs from some of our favorite QUILTING ARTS artists. If you are planning a night on the town, look no further than Melanie Testa's "Pretty Purse" designs. Sophisticated and chic with a sparkling zipper for added sizzle, this purse will make you a sure-fire fashionista whether you are hitting the coffee house or the martini bar.

Susan Brubaker Knapp offers three elegant purse designs to use those gloriously painted, stamped, and stenciled fabrics you've been creating and saving for just that special project. I made one of these classic evening bags for my mother—who lives in the bling capital of the world, Las Vegas—and she tells me she is the envy of all of her fashionable friends!

Like to print imagery on inkjet fabric? LuAnne Hedblom shows you how to personalize your bags by digitally

altering a favorite design or picture, printing it on fabric, and showcasing it on the flap of a mini-messenger bag.

If you love embellishment and stitch, but not necessarily the intricacies of sewing patterns, then Linda and Laura Kemshall's "Easy & Elegant Quilted Bag" is for you. A snap to assemble, you can spend the brunt of your time decorating it.

Lastly, you can be the talk of the produce aisle by making one of Kelli Perkins's colorful, eco-friendly grocery bags. Kelli cleverly added ties on the sides of these bags so they can be rolled up and stored in your glove compartment.

Enjoy!



Patricia (Pokey) Bolton  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Quilting Arts  
MAGAZINE®

7 QUILTED BAG PATTERNS  
HANDMADE QUILT BAGS  
from QUILTING ARTS

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# QUICK & pretty

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## TURNING WHOLECLOTH QUILTS INTO SWEET LITTLE PURSES

Here's a quick and easy gift idea. These quilted purses are fun to make. Because they're made from a quilted sandwich, there are numerous options for personalizing them. I like to start with one of my wholecloth painted fabrics and free-motion quilt it to enhance the painted design. However, you can use any fabrics of your choice to create your purses.

## DIRECTIONS

1. Create cloth for the face of your purse. (The 9" × 15" rectangle includes seam allowance, plus about 1" additional fabric on all 4 sides to allow for shrinkage during quilting.) You may choose to paint a wholecloth design as I

did, create a fabric collage, or use commercial fabric. You could also piece fabrics together, if you wish.

2. Sandwich the face, batting, and backing and quilt the layers together using free-motion stitching.
3. Trace the purse pattern onto the quilt sandwich and cut it out. Do not cut the notches in the middle of the pattern as these will be cut later.
4. Fold the fabric in half to create the purse shape so that the inside of the purse is facing out. Set the zipper and sew it in place. (Fig. A)
5. Trim the face, batting, and backing below the zipper tape to half the original seam allowance.
6. Open the zipper half way.
7. Using a ¼" seam allowance, straight stitch down each side of the purse. Then zigzag stitch the raw edges to finish.

Left: This painted wholecloth design was free-motion quilted and used as the fabric for the purse shown above.



BY MELANIE TESTA

## MATERIALS

- Zipper, 7" closed bottom
- Fabrics for top and backing (9" × 15" rectangle each)
- Batting (9" × 15" rectangle)
- Sewing machine with free-motion capabilities
- Hand-sewing needle and thread



Fig. A



8. Cut a notch on each side of the bottom edge.
9. Pinch the cutouts open, sew a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, and then machine zigzag stitch to finish the raw edge. (Fig. B)



Fig. B

10. Hand sew the zipper tape to the inside to conceal the raw edges of the quilt sandwich. (Fig. C)

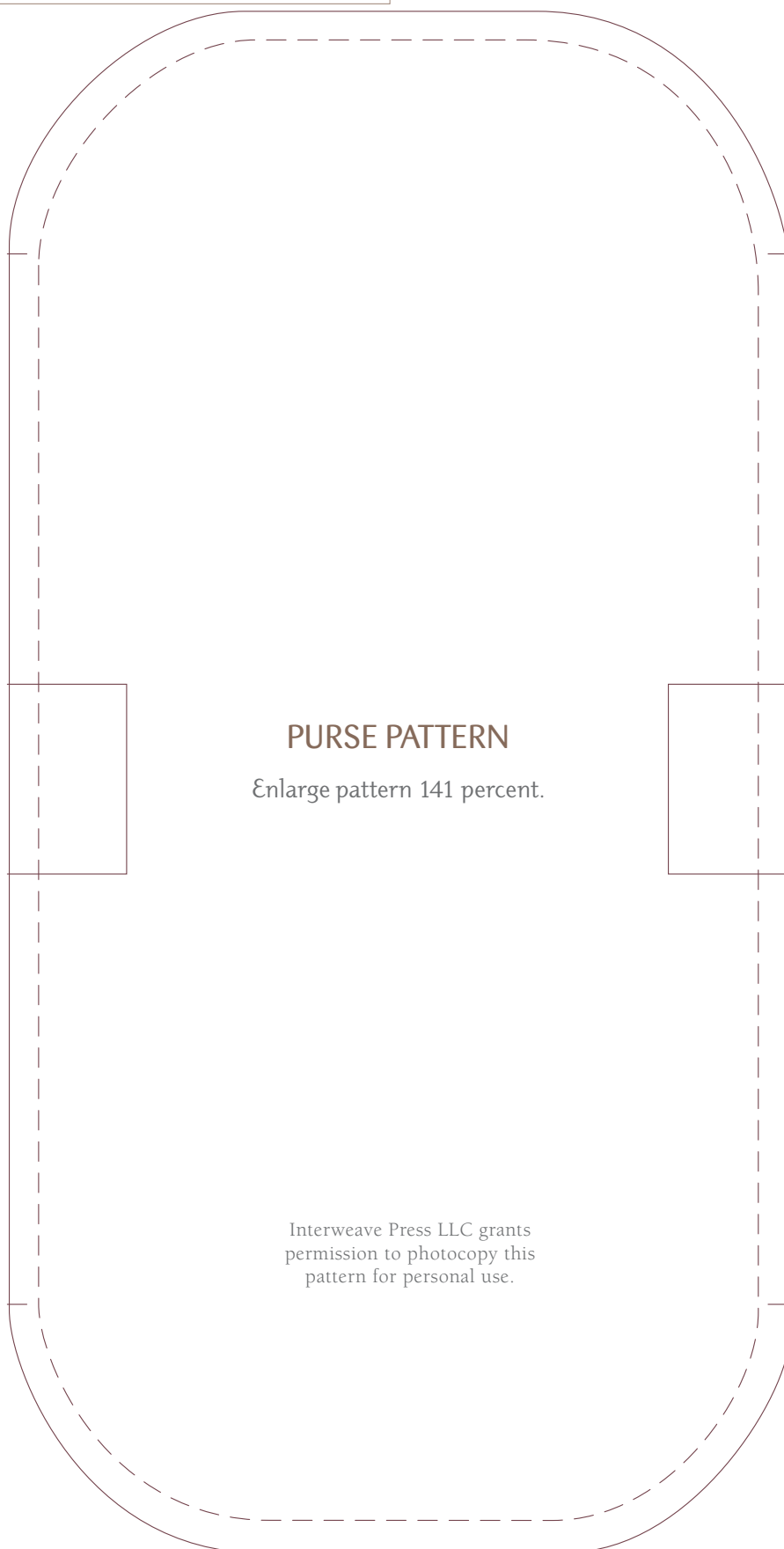


Fig. C

11. Turn it right-side out and voilà: you have a pretty purse! ♦

## resources

ZIPPER  
[zipperstop.com/id22](http://zipperstop.com/id22)



## PURSE PATTERN

Enlarge pattern 141 percent.

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# CLASSIC evening BAGS

Originally published in QUILTING ARTS GIFTS, Holiday 2008/2009



These little evening bags make great accessories, as you can construct them in any fabric to match your holiday ensemble, whether it's funky or elegant, artsy or casual. Add surface design elements to dress up your bag, or go without and keep it simple and speedy. Then choose from a long strap, a short one, or none at all.

## DIRECTIONS

### SURFACE DESIGN AND EMBELLISHMENT

1. Enlarge the patterns provided here to the desired size, or draft your own. My blue and purple bags measure about 11" at their widest point; the yellow print bag is about 10" wide. (If you enlarge the patterns here by 315 percent, those are the approximate sizes you'll get.)
2. Cut a piece of the exterior fabric that is 2"–3" larger in both directions than the purse pattern. This gives you room for the seam allowance and provides some extra for draw-up during the quilting and embellishing.
3. If you want to embellish your bag, do it now. First, place the fabric you are using for the exterior right-side up on a flat surface.

Trace around the pattern with a water-soluble marker or chalk marker, but do not cut out yet. This is the finished size. Cut a piece of batting and backing fabric slightly larger than the top fabric.

**NOTE:** *Keep any hand stitching or beading slightly within the marked lines for your bag, since you will be cutting out the pieces for the bag before stitching it together and you don't want to cut through any stitching or be sewing over beads. Any quilting should go past the marked lines.*

For the purple bag, I started with a hand-dyed fabric. Then I stenciled a feather motif onto it with blue, white, and silver fabric paint. Once the paint was dry, I heat set it. After layering this fabric with the batting and backing fabric, I quilted around the feathers and then beaded the areas between the stenciled designs with purple and blue beads in a feather design.

## MATERIALS

- Fat quarter of fabric for purse exterior and straps
- Fabric for purse backing (can be muslin or ugly fabric, as it will not show in the finished product)
- Fat quarter of fabric for purse lining
- Thread for piecing and quilting
- Feather stencils (I used ones from Stewart Gill.)
- Stiff-bristle paintbrush
- Metallic fabric paints, such as Alchemy by Stewart Gill or Lumiere® by Jacquard®
- Small seed beads
- Silamide beading thread
- Beading needles
- Velcro®
- Perle cotton
- Button(s) or other closure accent
- Batting
- Water-soluble or chalk marker

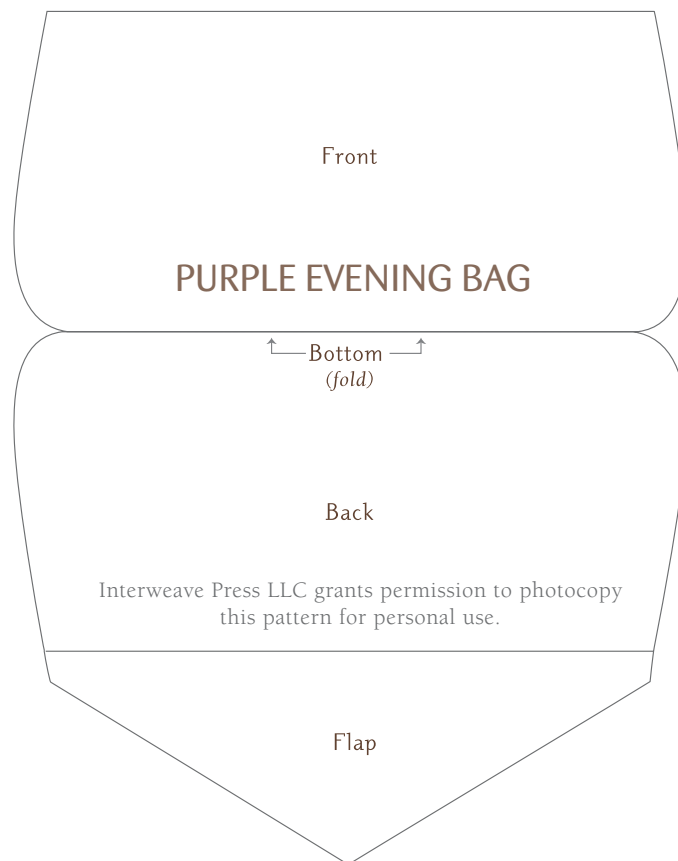
BY SUSAN BRUBAKER KNAPP

For the blue bag, I used a fabric from Lonni Rossi's Paintbox Brights collection by Andover Fabrics™ and simply quilted around the white vine motifs.

For the yellow bag, I took several dotted fabrics from BasicGrey's™ Urban Couture line by Moda, sliced them into strips, sewed them back together, quilted them with a square motif, and then hand stitched with perle cotton in a simple "chicken scratch" pattern.

## CONSTRUCT THE BAG

1. Take the pattern and place it face down on the wrong side of the piece you have prepared for the front of the evening bag. Using a water-soluble or chalk marker, trace around the pattern and mark the fold line. Then mark a second line  $\frac{1}{2}$ " outside the first line for the seam allowance (this is the cutting line). Cut out on the cutting line.
2. Fold the bag on the fold line, right sides together, and pin. Starting at the folded edge, and backstitching, sew 1 side of the bag together

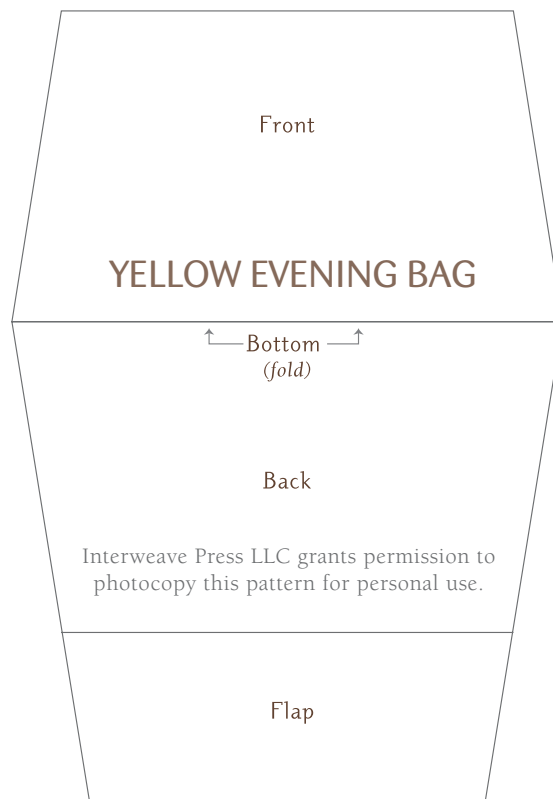


on the traced line. Proceed until you are  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the top, and backstitch. (This  $\frac{1}{2}$ " is left unstitched because the lining will attach here.) Repeat for the other side. Trim seams and clip curves to eliminate bulk and make curves smooth.

3. Turn the bag right-side out and use a blunt-tipped tool to poke out the corners and smooth the curves.

## MAKE THE LINING

1. Take the pattern, cut it on the line marked "Bottom (fold)" and place both pieces face down on the wrong side of the lining fabric. Trace around both pieces. Then mark a second line  $\frac{1}{2}$ " outside the first line for the seam allowance (this is the cutting line). Cut out on the cutting line.



- Place these 2 pieces right sides together with the piece for the front on top. Sew up the sides of the lining in the same manner that you sewed the outside of the bag, leaving  $\frac{1}{2}$ " at the top of the sides, and leaving the bottom unstitched. (You will sew this seam at the very end, after the bag and lining are stitched together.)
- Leave the lining inside out. Place the bag exterior inside the lining, so that the right sides are together. Match the side seams (finger pressing the seams open) and pin along the top and flap edges. Sew together on the marked lines. Trim the seams and clip the curves to eliminate bulk and make the curves smooth.
- Turn the bag right-side out and use a blunt-tipped tool to poke out the corners and smooth the curves. Put the lining inside the bag exterior. Press the edges and then topstitch very close to the seam line. Take care and go slowly through the bulky seams.
- Pull the lining out and then fold under and press the bottom raw edges about  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". It is best if the lining is just slightly shorter than the inside of the bag so it will not bunch up inside. Pin and sew a very small seam ( $\frac{1}{8}$ " or so) along the bottom to close. Put the lining back inside the bag.
- You may need to tack the lining to the inside of the bag in a few places so it will lie flat on the flap.

## FINISHING UP

- Make the strap: Cut or piece a strip  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide by 2" longer than the desired length. Press the strip in half lengthwise, right-side out. Press each edge in to the center fold, then fold in half on the center fold to tuck the raw edges in. Topstitch each long edge. Turn the raw edge under  $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each end and sew by hand to the inside of the bag at the seam line.
- Create closures: Each of my bags is held closed with a small piece of Velcro hand stitched to the underside of the flap and the front of the bag. Attach a button or accent piece to the front of the flap to add interest, if desired. ❁

# MINI messenger

## BAG

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2008/2009

### INKJET FABRIC COLLAGE

Don't you love it when someone makes you a special gift? Something unique, personal, and perfectly suited to you? Well, the best way to inspire that creative spirit in others is to make something special for the people on your gift list.

I enjoy making bags that feature my own nature-themed collages, which combine antique flower or bird images with vintage text. I print my collages on inkjet cotton sheets and combine these prints with commercial cotton fabrics for a one-of-a-kind handmade gift.

The mini messenger bag featured here is a quick and simple project. However, you may need to print your inkjet collage a day ahead of sewing to allow sufficient time for the ink to dry, depending on which type of inkjet cotton sheet you use.



BY LUANNE HEDBLOM





## MATERIALS

- Inkjet cotton sheets (EQ Printables Cotton, Jacquard® Inkjet Printing Cotton, etc.) for inkjet collage for the bag flap
- ½ yard Fabric A\*: cotton fabric for outer bag body and shoulder strap
- ½ yard or 1 fat quarter Fabric B\*: cotton fabric for bag and flap lining
- ½ yard Pellon® Fusible Fleece 987F (This is what I prefer; the fusible is not necessary, but it's easier to handle fused components when stitching.)
- Thread for machine stitching and quilting
- Computer
- Scanner
- Inkjet printer
- Sewing machine
- Steam iron

\* Instead, you can use assorted fabrics, as I did; the strap requires a 42" fabric length; otherwise, several fat quarters will provide variety.

## MAKING YOUR INKJET COLLAGE PRINT

1. Choose or design a collage to use in your 7½" square. You can scan a traditional cut-and-paste paper collage to print or, if you're familiar with Photoshop® or similar computer art programs, you can scan various vintage images from your collection into your computer to layer into a digital collage, as I have done. If you don't collect antique prints, most bookstores sell clipart books with CDs that offer many beautiful vintage images you can use for your digital or paper compositions.

**Note:** In sewing, you will lose the outer ¼" of your collage image for the seam allowance all around, so make sure no critical artistic elements fall within the outer ¼" of your collage image. Note my use of striped fabric border strips around the edges of the bag's collage; text, plain, or textured backgrounds around the border work well, too, to help keep your design intact without worrying about where the seam line falls.

2. Print your collage on an inkjet cotton sheet, following the manufacturer's instructions. For printing, I usually increase the image contrast and saturation, because fabric absorbs more ink than paper would. Also, I have found that on my Epson® C120 printer, using the "best photo" and "premium matte paper" print settings works best for me.

**TIP:** Inkjet cotton sheets are a bit costly, so to avoid waste, first test print your image (on matte cardstock if possible) at these "best" settings to see how it looks. With my printer, if the cardstock print seems a tiny bit bright, the fabric version will likely be right.

3. Allow the sheet to dry according to the product directions.
4. Rinse the sheet well to assure all excess ink is removed. Once it's dry, I always press it on the wrong side at the cotton/full steam setting to make sure that any shrinkage occurs before I cut my 7½" square for the bag flap.

**Note:** It's best to follow the manufacturer's instructions for rinsing, drying, and ironing your printed image.

## SEWING THE BAG

1. When your inkjet collage print is dry, ironed, and ready to use, cut out all your pattern pieces:

- **Bag body:** Cut 2 pieces 7½" × 10½" each of Fabric A, Fabric B, and fusible fleece.
- **Bag flap:** Cut 1 piece 7½" × 7½" each of inkjet collage, Fabric B, and fusible fleece.
- **Strap:** Cut 1 piece 4½" × 42" of Fabric A. Cut 1 piece 2¼" × 42" of fusible fleece.

**TIP:** If your inkjet collage image on the fabric has shrunk a bit to slightly less than a 7½" square, don't panic. Just be sure to leave enough plain fabric around the image equally, then cut the full 7½" square with your image centered.

2. Following the product instructions, fuse the fleece pieces to the wrong side of the inkjet print flap and the 2 Fabric A main bag pieces. Set the bag pieces aside.

**Note:** Fusible Fleece is not supposed to shrink. However, just before I fuse it in place, I hold the steam iron about ½" above the surface and steam well over the entire surface of the piece I'm about to fuse. It only takes a few extra seconds and assures that any miniscule potential shrinkage occurs before I fuse the fleece to my fabric piece. I think it gives a nicer finish to my fused pieces.

3. Put a pin in the top edge of your fused inkjet collage to temporarily mark it as the top. Place the Fabric B flap lining and the inkjet collage flap right sides together; they should be the same size. Using a ¼" seam allowance, sew down one

side, across the bottom, and up the other side. Leave the top edge open, remove your marking pin, and turn the flap right-side out, being careful to make sure your corners are fully turned and crisp.

**Note:** Your flap should now be about 7" wide by 7¼" long, with raw edges at the top.

4. Press the flap, making sure the edges are all even and straight. With the right-side up, topstitch ¼"–½" from the side and bottom edges. Finally, stitch across the top very close to the raw edge, just to keep all the layers together neatly.
5. Machine quilt the 2 Fabric A main bag pieces as desired. Straight stitching is easy and it always looks good. For quilting guidelines, I use tailor's chalk to draw a line down the center of the pieces lengthwise, and then I draw a line every 1" or so to either side, but no closer than ¾" to the edges. After stitching the quilting lines, brush away any remaining chalk.

**TIP:** For a subtle effect, choose a matching quilting thread. For fun, choose a contrasting color, taking your thread color cues from your inkjet collage. Changing threads on different fabrics is a good way to add interest.

6. Place the 2 quilted main bag pieces right sides together and sew with a ¼" seam allowance: down 1 long side, across the bottom, and up the other long side, leaving the top open. Turn right-side out, corners crisp, edges straight and even, and press.
7. Center the 2¼" strip of fusible fleece on the wrong side of the


- Fabric A strap piece and fuse it in place. Fold the unfused fabric on either side of the fleece strip in, so the lengthwise edges meet in the center, right sides up and press. (The fleece is now completely enclosed by fabric.) Fold the strap in half lengthwise, pin the folded edges together as needed to secure, and stitch  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge all the way along both long edges. Press.
- Match each raw end of the strap with the raw top edge of 1 side of the Fabric A bag back, right sides together and about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the side seams. (If you've used assorted fabrics, this is the intended back.) Take time to double-check and make sure the strap is not twisted before you stitch. Stitch close to the raw edge to secure, taking care to stitch through only 1 layer of the bag.
  - Match the raw edge of the collage bag flap with the raw edge of Fabric A bag, right sides together, on top of the strap layer you've just sewn. Pin as needed to secure, and stitch all the way across the top, close to the raw edge, again stitching through only 1 layer of the bag. Set aside.

*Note: The flap, lining-side out, should now cover the strap and should just barely meet each side seam of the bag.*

- On 1 short end of each Fabric B lining piece, press a generous  $\frac{1}{4}$ " toward the back side, but do not sew along the pressed edge yet. Place both Fabric B bag lining pieces right sides together, with the pressed under ends matching. Sew  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam along each long edge.
- Slip the inside-out Fabric B lining tube up over the bag/strap/flap assembly, so the raw top edges match and the side seams align. The right side of the lining should be facing the right side of the bag underneath on 1 side, and the flap lining on the other side. Pin as needed to secure the raw edges. Sew with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance all the way around this top edge of the bag/lining.
- Pull the lining up over the top of the bag, turning the lining right-side out, but keep the bag flap and strap with the Fabric A bag section for now. Flatten the lining section, with seams to each side, and stitch the previously pressed-under edges together, close to the edge.
- Press the lining section and then tuck it neatly all the way down inside the bag. The seam that joins the outer bag to the lining should form the top edge of the bag now. Take care to press the top of the bag so that this top edge is neat and even, and pin as needed to secure. Then, with the flap and strap extended above the bag body, right-sides out, topstitch around the top edge of the bag body,  $\frac{1}{4}$ " below the top edge/flap seam.
- Touch up the outer bag with a steam iron, taking care to flatten any bulk at the top of each side seam. The flap should fall down over the outer bag body to form the front of the bag, proudly displaying your beautiful inkjet collage. ❁

**TIP:** If you wish, take a moment now to sign your name on the lining with a fine permanent marker.

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# EASY & elegant QUILTED BAG

BY LINDA & LAURA  
KEMSHALL

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2007/2008

Bags can be such complicated things! They nearly always involve lots of pieces. What with all those front panels, back panels, side gussets, linings, pockets, flaps, straps, buckles, and zips, it would be understandable to think you need to be an engineer more than a quilter to make one. So, if you're a lover of gorgeous stitched bags but the thought of constructing one seems daunting, this example might be just the answer you need. Our embellished, triangular bag is inspired by the traditional, tribal hanging bags of India. These sturdy, hanging bags held precious belongings and made perfect sense for people who followed a nomadic lifestyle. They have the simplest possible pattern, meaning that after you have enjoyed creating the appliqué, embroidery, quilting, and embellishment, they can be constructed in a matter of minutes.

Basically the bag is just a square of textile the size of which can easily be adapted to suit a number of uses. The stitched and embellished square is folded envelope-style by taking three corners into the center and stitching them in place. The remaining, unstitched corner is extended to become the top point of the narrow triangle. The opening of the bag can be partially stitched together if you want to close the lower section. This increases the capacity of the bag and also ensures that the contents are held more securely. It can be designed as a decorative object for display or as a functional container. You could make a medium-sized bag to hold a sewing project to keep you occupied on a journey or while waiting for an appointment. You could just as easily scale the size down to make smaller versions as gift bags or holiday season decorations perfect for holding a little gift or a chocolate treat for someone special. Really tiny bags look wonderful as Christmas tree

decorations. We like to hang our embroidered bags around the house as beautiful objects for display.

Because the shape is so simple, you can relax about the construction and feel free to concentrate your talents on creating a glorious color scheme. Focus all your creativity on the stitching and surface decoration techniques and of course the decorative embellishments to make your bag unique.

Our example here uses free appliqué techniques with quilting, embroidery, fabric painting, and beading. The quilting is worked by hand in a Kantha style. This Indian technique traditionally made use of multiple layers of worn sari and dhoti fabrics—an early recycling of precious resources! The quilting, parallel lines of running stitches, was worked through several layers of soft cloth to make a strong fabric with a new lease of useful life. Because no batting was involved in traditional Kantha quilting, the stitched textile remained incredibly soft and fluid despite the

## MATERIALS

- A square of cotton fabric to act as a foundation (Unless you have a specific size in mind, 14" is generally a good size to work with to make a medium-sized bag. This fabric can be any color, as it will be covered with fabric scraps.)
- Lots of small scraps of different colored fabrics (We love to use loosely woven scrims and cheesecloth that we have hand dyed. Silk and polyester chiffons are also ideal.)
- A square of fine-gauge net or tulle, the same size as the foundation
- A square of batting, the same size as the foundation
- A square of backing fabric, the same size as the foundation
- A square of lining fabric, the same size as the foundation
- Embroidery and quilting threads
- Fabric strip for binding
- Fabric paints (We use Jacquard's® Lumiere® paints.)
- Small beads

density of the stitching. For our purposes, however, a firmer result is preferable, so we added a layer of batting and backing before finally lining the bag with an embroidered silk fabric in colors to complement the appliqué.

## DIRECTIONS

### SURFACE DESIGN & EMBELLISHMENT

1. Lay out your backing fabric, right-side down, place the batting on top, and lay the foundation

square of fabric on top of that to create a basic “quilt sandwich.”

2. Arrange small patches of different colored fabrics onto the foundation square until a pleasing composition is achieved. Overlap each shape to cover the foundation completely without leaving any gaps. Don't turn any seam allowances; this is raw-edged appliqué. In fact, try fraying your patches of fabric first to really soften the edges and help to blend the colors.

**TIP:** Keep the shapes of the patches simple; squares and rectangles work well. Use sheer and semi-sheer fabrics for really subtle color overlays. Metal organza adds a glamorous gleam and chiffon creates glorious colors without adding noticeable bulk. In some areas you might want to build up depth of color by layering 2 or more layers of semi-sheer fabrics.

3. When you are happy with the arrangement, cover the square of fabric patches with a layer of net or tulle. Be aware that the color of the tulle will slightly modify the colors of the fabrics beneath it. This is a great opportunity for experimentation. You could enjoy auditioning several different colors of net to assess the effect they have on the fabrics below. It's also a chance to demonstrate your understanding of color theory.

**Note:** Much like when mixing paint, layering sheer fabrics creates optical mixes. For example, a layer of black sheer adds depth, creating shades of colors (such as bright red to burgundy) and white makes pastel versions of colors. Placing red over yellow will result in orange, and a sheer blue

layer over yellow will appear green. With experience it becomes easier to predict these effects and exploit them to create a much wider range of colors than the original fabrics would suggest if viewed separately. The beauty of this technique is that you can keep auditioning different fabrics until you're happy with the effect.

4. Although the top layer of tulle will help in holding the patches in place, you'll need to baste through all the layers to hold them while you quilt. The rows of basting will need to be spaced according to the size and number of the fabric patches used. It's important to secure every patch or they will shift during quilting. Keep the knots of the basting threads on the top of the piece so that they can be pulled out easily as the area is quilted.

5. You are now ready to quilt the piece, as desired. We worked our square by making small running stitches by hand with a hand-dyed, single strand, cotton embroidery thread and a quilter's size-11 between needle. The thickness of the thread will dictate the needle size to a large extent, but a between needle has a large eye for its size and can accommodate a thicker thread than is conventionally used for quilting.

The density of the stitch pattern is a personal choice, but the closer the lines of quilting are worked the more texture is produced, especially if the stitches are a little tighter than the norm. We particularly like the rippling texture that Kantha quilting produces because when we paint the surface (after quilting), the paint emphasizes the texture of the quilting.

**Note:** When we quilt in a Kantha style we usually space our lines around  $\frac{1}{16}$ "– $\frac{1}{8}$ " apart. If you prefer to quilt by machine, try dropping the feed dogs and free-motion quilting across the patches instead.

Your free-appliqué quilted square could be considered finished at this stage, but we love to layer processes and techniques. For our example we added embroidered motifs over the top of our hand quilting.

6. Embroider on top of the quilting to introduce yet another element of visual interest. We used a sewing machine with an embroidery unit and a digital pear design created with 4-D Sketch software. If you don't have an embroidery machine with this software you can create a similar effect using free-motion quilting.

**TIP:** Try doodling with a pencil on paper or in your sketchbook to work out free-motion ideas before working on your quilted piece. After you've invested all that time in the stitching it'd be a real shame to spoil it with a mistake at this stage! Simple fruit shapes work really nicely, but you could also try flower shapes, leaves, or maybe something more geometric.

7. With all of this stitching, the back of your work might be looking a little untidy. Adding a lining layer to disguise the back of the quilting and embroidery will also prevent items you put in your bag from getting caught in the stitching and pulling the threads. Place your lining fabric on the back of your quilted square with the right side facing out. Secure around the edges with basting stitches until you are ready to attach the binding. We used a

- pretty embroidered silk to line our bag, but you can use any fabric that coordinates with your outer design.
- The embroidered motifs create enclosed shapes that can be filled in with paint. Apply paint to selected areas to draw attention to these shapes or to single out one motif for your focal point. Use the paint sparingly if you want the colors of fabric to be visible rather than completely obscured by the paint. We painted the narrow channel of the embroidered pears with a small watercolor paintbrush. Allow the paint to dry, then set it as recommended by the manufacturer, bearing in mind the nature of the materials involved, i.e. don't melt the net layer! If in doubt, don't iron.
  - Turn the square "on point" with the corner that will be the top of the bag facing north.
  - Draw east and west corners to the center of the square and catch with a couple of tiny stitches to hold. Bring the bottom, south corner in to meet the other 2 and stitch to hold.
  - Close the seam along the 2 short open edges using an invisible ladder stitch, just taking each stitch into the edge of the binding. Aim to do this as invisibly as possible using a matching thread color.
  - Embellish the opening edge of the bag with beads. We used small beads and applied them with a blanket stitch, popping 1 bead on

with every stitch. We used little cube-shaped beads as they seem to sit particularly comfortably on a bound edge.

- Hang the bag for display from the top corner with the binding extended to form a loop or attach a narrow ribbon or cord.

You could really go to town with this idea. This might be the opportunity to play with all those decorative fabrics you've been hoarding for a rainy day. To say nothing of the paints, beads, and buttons that have been lurking in cupboards waiting for their chance to shine! ✨

**Note:** We used Jacquard Lumiere paints; they are fairly opaque and can completely cover the color of the fabric beneath. They also have a fantastic metallic gleam that adds richness to the piece.

- If during the quilting and embroidery stage your piece has moved a little out of square, trim the edges of the piece as necessary and bind the edges with a strip of suitable fabric. We extended the strip of silk to make a hanging loop at the top corner of the bag. Alternatively you could add a hanging loop separately, made from cord or ribbon.

## CONSTRUCT THE BAG

1. Lay the finished fabric square on a table with the lining facing you.

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# ARTFUL eco bags

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## M A T E R I A L S

- 1 yard printed cotton fabric
- 2' matching grosgrain ribbon
- Machine thread

### Optional

- Plain canvas
- Fabric paint and paintbrush, if you want to paint, stamp, or stencil your own designs onto your bag

BY KELLI NINA PERKINS



In the past year, we've all become more aware of the impact of plastic grocery bags on the environment. The kindest thing we can do is to replace them with a reusable alternative. Why not make a boodle of fabric replacement bags, customized for your recipient? Everyone from moms to students can appreciate these little bags, with lots of room for groceries, library books, or art supplies. You can whip them up in no time, so plan to make a few for yourself as well. The best part is that you can roll them up and tuck them into your purse or glove box, so they're always handy for impromptu market strolls. If they get soiled, pop them in the washing machine and they're ready for the next trip.



## DIRECTIONS

1. Cut 2 each of bag body and facing.
2. Turn under  $\frac{1}{4}$ " along the long bottom edge of a facing piece 2 times and zigzag stitch to finish it. Repeat with the other facing.
3. Place a bag body and facing right sides together and pin in place. Using a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam, stitch around the bag top, from side seam to side seam (but not sewing the side seams), leaving the very top of each handle open. Repeat with the other bag body and facing. Clip all curves and turn each piece right-side out, then iron.
4. Fold the ribbon in half, locate the center of one bag side, and pin the ribbon to the bag body (fabric right-side up) so that the long pieces are toward the center of the bag and the folded edge aligns with the raw edge.
5. Place 2 bag bodies right sides together with the facing flipped up and pin. Stitch around the entire perimeter of the bag, from the edge of the facing piece, down the side, bottom, other side, and through to the end of the other side facing.
6. Make a gusset in each bottom corner by aligning the bottom seam with a side seam and opening the seam allowances flat. Sew straight across the corner about  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in from the tip. Repeat for the second gusset. Zigzag stitch the interior seam allowances to finish. Turn the bag right-side out and press.
7. Secure the facing to the inside by stitching down each side seam from the top of the bag to the end of the facing, using a zigzag stitch and coordinating thread.
8. With the bag turned right-side out and the facing on the inside, sew straight across each pair of handles,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " down from the top. Trim one of the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " flaps to  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and fold the raw edge. Fold the raw edge of the other flap under  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and pin it over the trimmed edge. Topstitch around the created rectangle.
9. To add letter blocks, cut some pieces of plain cotton canvas to whatever size you'd like. With black fabric paint, stamp block letters onto the canvas, then highlight them with a coordinating color of paint in a random stipple. Allow the paint to dry and then iron to set.

10. Dab the letters with a glue stick to temporarily hold them in place while you position them. When you're satisfied, zigzag stitch around the canvas to attach the fabric blocks. With a coordinating color of thread, free-motion stitch around each stamped letter.

11. To roll up a bag, lay it out on a table, text-side up. Fold the handles down, fold the top down, and then fold the bottom up so that the ribbon is centered on the side. On the side opposite the ribbon, begin rolling up the bag jellyroll style and then tie it with the ribbon. ❖

## Facing



*(top portion of template)*

*Cut 2*

## Body



*(entire template)*

*Cut 2*

*Enlarge pattern 246 percent.*

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