

Raw Edge Collage Quilting

Made Simple with Marlene

1. Select a photo to turn into a collage. Use one of yours or one you have copyright okay.
2. Enlarge it to the size you want the quilt collage to be. I use Publisher to enlarge, but you can use another program or take it to a store to enlarge.
3. Look closely at the photo to see colors in it. Go to a paint department and select paint cards of the colors you will be using, the ones that contain the colors from lightest to darkest.
4. Write on the cards, numbering the lightest #1 up to the darkest color being the highest number plus an abbreviation for the color, such as for blue the second lightest number, B2. Star the colors you will be using in your collage, as *B2. Select fabrics that closely match each. Place in piles with the color cards. I suggest using batiks or hand dyed fabrics rather than prints or solids. They make a more interesting outcome for the most part. Of course, exceptions do occur. Use your intuitive judgment.
5. Get some clear plastic 4 ml thick or thicker. Pin the photo with the plastic over it onto a foam board. Make sure there is extra plastic, especially at the top. Make the top at least 6 inches above the start of the drawing. You will need that later for pinning.
6. With a black fine point Sharpie (not ultra fine) outline the basic shapes. Then go back and draw the smaller shapes. Number each shape with it's own number plus the color number, such as 12 B2. Remove from foam board.
7. Turn the plastic drawing wrong side up. On the foam board now place a piece of freezer paper with the dull side up on top of the drawing on the plastic that is wrong side up and pin both to the board. Draw the shapes with a pencil onto the freezer paper. Draw the large shapes first. Then put another piece of freezer paper over the plastic and draw the small shapes with a different color of pencil. Put the piece numbers and the color numbers on the basic shapes and the smaller shapes.
8. You will cut out each piece when ready to use and iron onto fabric on the wrong side, then cutting out the fabric a hair larger than the freezer paper.
9. First prepare the fabric. Decide which method you want to use.
 - ♦ Fusible lightweight web, making a clean edge— Select the fabrics

Some that I've done for example.
 Florals or landscapes are easiest to begin with.
 Look over your photos or a friend's or family member's photos and begin with a simple one.



Adapted from a Grace Errea pattern, glue for softer edges plus added dimensional elements



1905 Grandparents' Wedding Photo, used glue for a softer edge



Grandpa and granddaughter, fusible web for crisp edges



Sierra Leone prison photo taken by son, fusible web for crisper edges

you will be using in your collage, selecting larger pieces for predominate colors. Iron on the fusible web (get the lightest weight you can get) to the wrong side, guesstimating the amount of fabric needed for this project. You don't want to do yards of one color, for example. Do all the pieces of fabric selected.

- ♦ Or—Washable glue, making a softer edge that will fringe a bit—Select the fabrics you will be using in your collage, selecting larger pieces for predominate colors. Use sizing or quilting starch alternative and iron each piece.
10. Decide if you are going to piece the background or use a piece of batik that will end up partially showing. This is easiest if you are new at this. You can always use a lightweight piece of neutral fabric that will totally be covered or a non-fusible lightweight interfacing to make it have more softness. Some people like to add a layer of nylon netting to give more stability. Once the background is ready, you are ready to begin the collage.
 11. If you are using the fusible web method, you will want to work on either one of those commercial cutting boards that have an ironing surface or make an ironing surface with fabric and batting, maybe the heat reflecting batting you use for hot pads. Pin the background and the plastic drawing right sides up onto the ironing surface with the plastic drawing on top and enough extra plastic so you can easily lift it to place the collage pieces. Pin the background down on all sides, but only pin the plastic at the top.
 12. If you are using the glue method, pin as above, but pin onto a piece of foam board as you will not need heat to bond your pieces.
 13. To create your collage, you will work from the back to the front. That is, if you were there actually looking at this scene, the part that would be farthest away from you is the starting point. In a landscape, for example the sky would be first, then the distant mountains, then the nearer hills, etc. always coming closer to you as you work. The farther away, the fewer details. The closer to the viewer, the more details.
 14. Pick up the first freezer paper with the big shapes. Cut out the pieces from the farthest away shapes. Iron onto the back side of the selected fabrics and cut out a smidge larger than the freezer paper, especially if you are using a neutral background that you don't want to show.
 15. Pull off the freezer paper. Save it as you may want to use it again. It can be used quite a few times. Pick up the plastic and place the fabric piece approximately where it goes. Lower the plastic and note where to move the fabric. Adjust until it lines up with the drawing on the plastic. When you are satisfied: if using fusible web, iron it in place; if using glue, gently lift the corners so as not to shift the shape and put small dots of glue on back and press down.
 16. Continue until all major shapes are in place.
 17. Now go back and do the same with the smaller detail pieces.
 18. You can now stitch down with invisible thread through collage pieces and backing, or you can move forward to making the quilt sandwich and quilt it as you attach the pieces. It depends on the final look you desire. I suggest you use 505 Spray to make the sandwich, as you will find it easier to quilt than having to stop to take out pins. If you go to the final quilting, first determine if you want to add a framing border or two before quilting. If you do, add the border/s and then proceed to make the sandwich.
 19. Trim. Block. Add sleeve. Bind. Put on label on back. Enjoy!
 20. PS—You can add trapunto, extra batting in elements that you stuff by sewing 2 together, cording, beading, etc.

Supply List for Raw Edge Collage Quilting

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- 1 Select and enlarge a photo.
- 2 4 ml or thicker plastic a foot or so larger than enlarged photo.
- 3 Foam board for everyone, and ironing surface if using fusible web, and if so, small iron
- 4 Paint chips with graduated colors that match photo, numbered/coded and ready to use (read directions)
- 5 Fine point black sharpie, not ultra fine
- 6 Pencil plus a color pencil—not the ones that disappear with heat
- 7 Paper scissors and cloth scissors, make sure they are very sharp and can cut little twists and turns
- 8 Freezer paper
- 9 Fairly strong pins to pin to foam board
- 10 Fusible web if using that method or water soluble glue if using that method
- 11 Selection of possible fabrics for collage, please read directions (plus background, for collage or under fabric)
- 12 Sewing machine and its various parts and applique foot (open toe) for collage, and quilting foot when get to the quilting part
- 13 Invisible threads—clear and smoky
- 14 Thread for quilting
- 15 Usual sewing tools plus longer tweezers for placing collage pieces (I use the one that came with my serger), and if doing soft edge, I like to use my bamboo stick to help keep edges down when sewing
- 16 If in doubt, bring it.