

Any Design as Applique

Discover fresh ways to use your favorite embroidery designs! The Design Muse tutorial series highlights simple techniques and tricks you can apply to all kinds of projects. Let these ideas inspire your own unique creations!



The beautiful thing about embroidery is how versatile it is depending on how you use it. If you get a little creative, you can transform one design type into something new! For example, applique is a wonderful way to add color and pop to projects without adding too much extra weight. Of course, not every design is applique, but did you know that you can turn many open, light-stitching designs into an applique? It's easy, and lets you create amazing, colorful results with just a simple trick.

Products Used

Fancy Feather (Sku: ESP15729-1)

Steps To Complete



So to start, gather up those fabric scraps you've been hoarding. (Yeah, we know you got 'em.) All you need is anything larger than your chosen light-stitching design.

Then, in addition to your usual cutaway stabilizer and temporary spray adhesive, you'll also want a very small, very sharp scissors, and a [printed template](#) of your embroidery design to help guide placement.



Here I'm using the [Fancy Feather](#). This trick works best with designs that are light and open, so your fabric shows through. Browse the [Light Stitching](#) category for more possibilities!

The scissors is key, because after you stitch your design with the fabric, you'll want something nimble and sharp to cut the fabric away around the edges.



What you stitch this on is up to you. This kind of effect looks fantastic on anything from pillows to tees. It's light enough for almost any project.

Whatever it is you're adding this to, hoop it up with your stabilizer. Then, take your first piece of applique fabric and lightly spray the back with your temporary spray adhesive. This piece of fabric should be a good deal larger than your design to give you plenty of room for error.



Gently place your fabric covering the area your design is going to be stitching in. You should have lots of excess fabric around it just in case.

Smooth the applique fabric onto the hooped fabric so it stays snugly in place.



Start stitching your design onto your fabric.



Piece of cake! Now you have your design stitched on top of your fabric.



Now all you need to do is remove the excess fabric. Grab that tiny sharp scissors, and carefully start cutting around the edges. Take care to cut through only the top layer of fabric.



Once your excess fabric is gone, boom! You have an applique design. Perfectly stitched onto its neat fabric edges. But really, why stop there?

You can repeat this effect to get the greatest impact out of your hoop.



Just reposition your design, playing around with mirroring and rotating (this is where a template is useful) and set up your next design for stitching.

You will place your fabric just as you did before. That may mean it will cover part of your original design at first.



Once your next design has stitched, you can cut away the excess fabric as before.



Keep going! I mean, what are all those fabric scraps for if not for making awesome things like this?



I decided to do a whole cascade of feathers. I had all the fabric, why not? The effect still stays light on your project and adds a beautiful touch without adding much bulk.



This is the final result!

So, now you know just how simple it is to add fabric behind light stitching designs. It can be applied to so many different ideas, and creates big effect if you repeat it on a project.



I think it looks totally chic on home decor, but you can get creative with how you use it in your own ways. Pillows, tees, kids clothes, towels... whatever! With that fabric stash you have hiding in your studio, the sky's the limit...