

Applique or Die Based Ornaments

The holidays are so full of joy, laughter – and color! That color is more than just red and green, which makes it a Kismet Christmas!

I wanted to bring you a bit of inspiration, just in time for some last-minute stitching! C'mon – you know you are stitching into the wee hours. At least I am! No matter how much I plan...and plan...and plan...I end up pulling some late nights for one.last.project.

Here is my last project of the season. Ok, maybe my last project! What could be more appropriate for this time of year than a couple of appliqued and embellished ornaments. Of course, they are embellished with Aurifil thread! Naturally!

Want to create your own similar ornaments? Great! Here is what you'll need:

- Wool or bamboo felt
- Steam-A-Seam 2 light
- Kismet thread collection (ok, you can use another one, but really, why would you want to?)
- Favorite fabrics – mine are batiks, of course!
- Baker's twine
- Schmetz Non-stick machine needles (I recommend 90/14)
- Favorite applique patterns or motifs

I pulled motifs from existing patterns with applique, and used favorite die cuts I had as well. You can draw or create your own too!

1. Decide on your base size. If using an existing applique motif or a die cut, you can trace or cut a sample motif out on plain paper to determine what size and shape base will work best for your project.
2. Apply fusible, following the manufacturer's instructions, to the wrong side of your base fabric (felt/felted wool). You will want to have enough fused for two pieces of base fabric.
3. Cut two (yes, I did say two) base shapes. One will have fusible on the back and one will not.
4. If your wool or felt is thin, you will need to cut a third base to provide additional support (add fusible to the back of this base as well). Why? I found that three layers of thin felted wool or felt gave the ornament enough body to keep it from sagging or curling in. Matching raw edges, fuse the non-fused base shape to the fused base shape. You now have a base shape that is somewhat thicker AND there is no fusible on the back to cause drag when embellishing.

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5. Trace your motifs to your fusible material, again following the manufacturer's instructions. Remember to reverse shapes if necessary for motifs not designed for fusible applique.
6. Cut the traced images out, cutting just OUTSIDE the traced lines, and fuse to the wrong side of your fabrics. Now wait – just a couple of minutes – and let the fabric cool before cutting ON the traced lines.
7. Now you will begin building your motifs from the bottom up. You may not have layer motifs, which is fine. But if you do have layered motifs, for the best results, arrange the bottom layer first and fuse into place.
8. Once the base layer is fused, allow it to cool. At this point, I embellish the base layer. As you can see from my ornaments, I favor a simple straight stitch, about 1/8" from the edge of the applique. I lengthen my stitch to give the stitch a slightly more visible look. And to allow for the thickness of the base.

If you love hand stitching, or decorative stitches, go for it! If using a machine stitch, again, remember to lengthen your stitch to accommodate the thicker base layer. I LOVE LOVE LOVE Aurifil's 28 weight thread for this. It has enough weight to make it more visible than a 40 weight, but is light enough that I don't have to slow down when stitching to avoid fraying and breakage.

9. Continue building up the layers. Fuse into place, let cool, then stitch.
10. Once my motifs were complete, I also used some contrasting threads and did just a bit of straight-line stitching on the base felt itself to add a bit of dimension and interest.
11. Cut 11" to 12" of baker's twine. Tie a small knot at the end to form a loop. Position this knotted end approximately 1" in from the raw edge of your base, on the wrong side. Check the position to make sure the ornament will hang correctly!
12. Matching raw edges, place the fused side of the remaining base unit against the back of the stitched unit. Fuse together. This is thick, so give the fusible time to work and apply pressure and heat.
13. Set your stitch length to its longest length and edge stitch around the entire ornament. You can also choose to do an overcast stitch to create a decorative edge.
14. I finished mine off by hand tacking a tiny tassel to the bottom of each ornament.

I'm so thrilled with how these turned out that I'm already planning more Kismet ornaments for next year!