

Butterfly Bag

Felt these majestic butterflies and display them on bags.



Shirley Adams
Sewing Connection

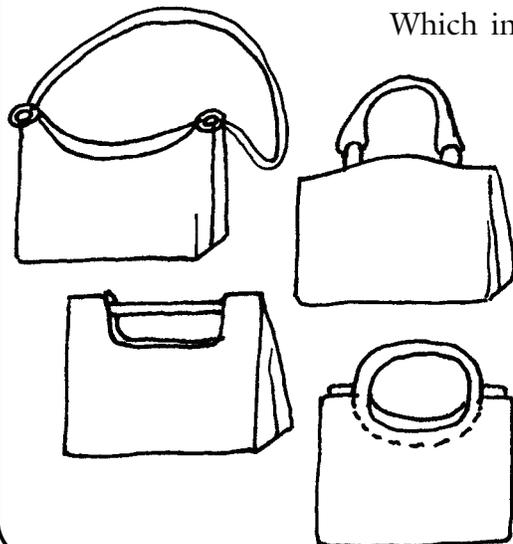
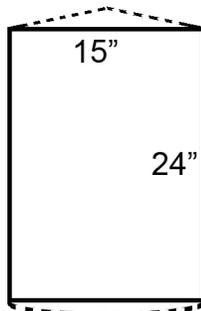
Butterfly Bag

with Shirley Adams Sewing Connection

This is a fun project and success is guaranteed as everyone can felt a beautiful butterfly. The magic of felting is that when part way done, if it doesn't thrill you, simply peel off and start anew with no residue remaining on the fabric. Definitely a win-win situation.

Let us first consider the bag onto which this embellishment will be attached. Most fabrics will be suitable. The black bag is a heavy winter coat fabric - wool melton. It also works well on suedes, wool crepes, denim, almost any medium to heavy fabric. Once fabric is chosen, consider shape and size.

The demonstrated bag, when opened flat, is 15" wide and 24" high with a bulge at top and bottom center. Horizontally fold a newspaper, dividing into front and back, to judge whether you want your bag larger or smaller, and adjust your layout accordingly. Instead of bulging at top centers, use a concave curve, or a squared-off indentation. It depends on what you plan for shoulder straps or shorter handles. Once you have cut out the bag itself, an interfacing will also be needed.

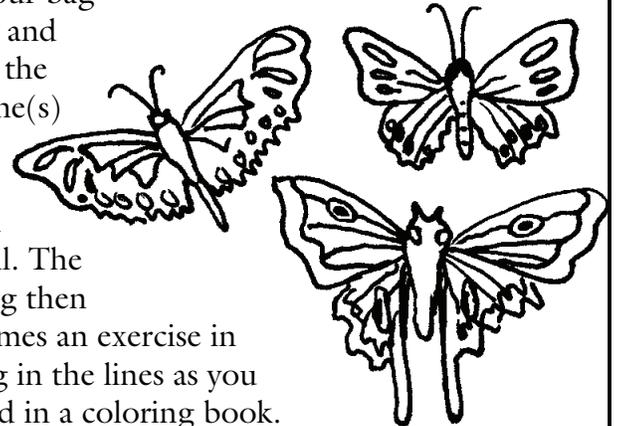


Which interfacing to use and when to apply depends on the fashion fabric weight. Medium weights may need a fusible fleece to

beef them up. Heavier weights are already thick and may only want a fusible interfacing (such as ArmoWeft or Fusi-Knit) to stabilize. With the felted design, it is possibly better to embellish first, apply the backing later to hold the felting in place.

I used only one large butterfly on the black bag. Enclosed is a pattern for this as well as some smaller ones. Trace what you prefer on another paper and cut out the shapes. Position it or them on your bag

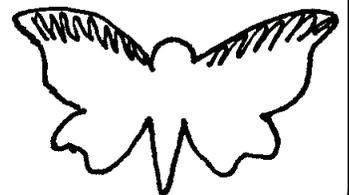
front and trace the outline(s) with a chalk pencil. The felting then becomes an exercise in filling in the lines as you would in a coloring book.



Put on a table (or on your lap) a piece of upholstery foam about 2" thick and big enough to support the size of your design - maybe a square foot. Purchase this in an upholstery department for very little. If presented with a choice of density, the denser (usually green in color) lasts much longer than the less dense (white or cream). Cover this with your fabric, centering the chalked design.

It requires very little roving (wool fiber) to make an impact. Choose the first color you will apply, and pull out two little puffs of identical size because, as you build your design in layers, you match the right and left wings with each application.

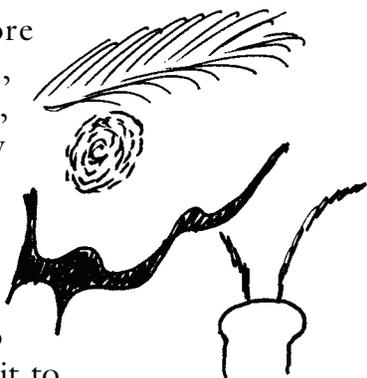
Lay the roving where you want it on each side. Using the enclosed felting needle, carefully "baste" it in place by poking the needle through the roving into the fabric in a few places to temporarily hold roving in place. The barbs on the needle are *very* sharp and will easily go right through your finger!!! If you like the effect you are creating, pull your fingers away, and quickly poke repeatedly all over the roving to push fibers into the fabric, affixing it in place.



Keep the needle straight up and down throughout the process. If you angle the needle while pulling it out, the point could break off if the fabric is tough. Perform this stabbing motion quickly and repeatedly until it is flat and one with the fabric. The process can also be done with a felting machine if you have one available. In this case, the upholstery foam will not be under it.

Pause to evaluate what you have just done. I said earlier, everyone can do this successfully because if you don't like the way it looks, merely pull it off and try a new color, amount of fiber; whatever pleases you.

Keep adding more fiber, streaks, spots, different colors, etc., until the butterfly wings make you happy. Fill in the body last. Perhaps add accents around the edges. Twist a little fiber to make a yarn and add it to the top for antennae.



At this point, your completed design can be undone if you're not happy. Sometimes, just adding more fiber here and there will turn your frown into a smile.

Make Your Design Permanent

a) Turn the fabric over and poke here and there to push a few fibers through *to the right side*, locking it in place. From the back side, poke only a fraction of the pokes you made on the right side. Now it cannot be pulled loose. This backside with its penetrated fibers will look like a shadowy version of the right side.

OR

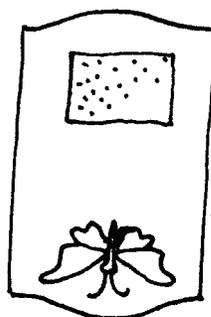
b) Fuse the fleece or interfacing to the fabric back side, which will affix the design in place as it entraps the penetrating fibers.

Constructing The Bag

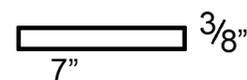
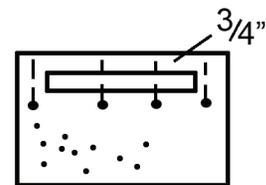
Once your design is finished, let's turn that fabric into a bag.

Optional: Outside zipper pocket for cell phone, car keys, sunglasses. Cut 2 pieces of lining fabric, one piece of fusible interfacing 9" x 7". Fuse the interfacing to one piece of lining.

Right sides together on plain end of bag fabric, place the interfaced lining piece. Center it right-



left and locate it 3" - 4" down from top fabric edge. Pin in place. Go down $\frac{3}{4}$ " from

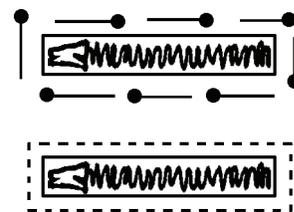


top pocket edge, and using

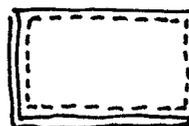
a ruler, draw a line 7" wide. Draw another line $\frac{3}{8}$ " farther down to complete a long, thin rectangle. Stitch on this line, removing pins as you come to them. Slash through all layers a 6" line down the center, then angle out to each corner.

Turn the pocket piece through the opening to the back side and steam press. Make sure you have it pulled through thoroughly so no lining will show on the right side.

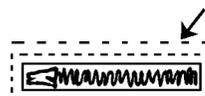
Right side up, slide a closed zipper under the opening, centering it and pin in place. Using a zipper foot, stitch all around about $\frac{1}{8}$ " from



opening edge, removing pins one at a time as you approach each.



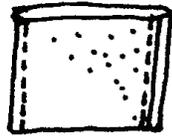
Turn the bag over and pin the remaining lining rectangle over the first one. Stitch the two pocket layers together all around.



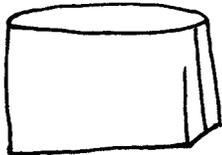
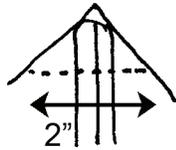
(Refer to bottom picture, previous column as the arrow points to the second stitch line)

On the bag right side, above the zipper only, stitch a **second line** through all layers to stabilize and better support the pocket contents.

Fold the bag in half, wrong side out, and stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " side seams. Press the seams open using a seam roll or some small surface inside the bag to steam press on. At each lower corner, refold so the seam is at the center instead of at the edge. Where it measures 2" - $2\frac{1}{2}$ " across, stitch a line through all layers perpendicular to the seam line. Trim off the points of the triangles formed to reduce some bulk. Turn the bag right side out.



fold

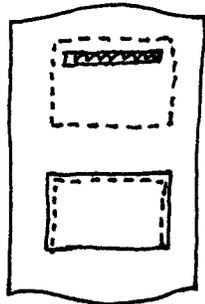


It now has the third dimension those lower corners produce.

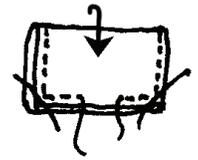
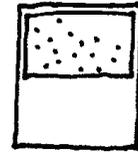
Lining

Cut layers of the same size as the outer purse from your lining fabric choice and its fusible interfacing. Cut also an inside patch pocket 9" x 12" (or whatever size you choose), and two layers of a zipper pocket, 9" x 7". Fuse the large piece as well as one layer of each pocket. Which interfacing you use here depends on the desired effect. If you want this bag to be more structured, use Craft Fuse or something equally stiff. If you want it soft and squishy, use a softer type.

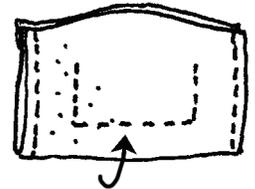
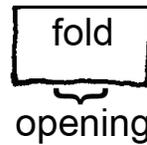
The pockets in the lining will appear as illustrated, openings located nearest top and bottom edges. The zip pocket will be done same as outer zipper pocket *except* stitch the outer perimeter through all lining layers instead of just sewing the two pocket layers together.



For the patch pocket, fuse one half of it, fold in half wrong side out and stitch, leaving an opening for turning at the bottom. Trim off two stitched corners to reduce bulk and turn right side out. Press.



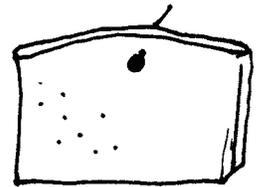
Topstitch its two sides and lower edges to one end of the bag lining, the fold edge of pocket closest to top edge of lining left open.



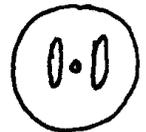
Fold lining in half wrong side out and stitch both side seams *a little deeper* than the outer layer because, since it will be inside, it needs to be a little smaller. Again, press open and square off lower corners the same way as outer bag.

Now decide how you will fasten the bag, and what kind of handle or shoulder strap you would prefer.

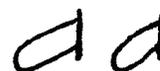
I used a purse magnet at the bag's open center. For this find the exact center of the lining opening, about 2" down from the top edge.



Poke a straight pin through both layers at this point. Mark the pinholes on the interfacing of both sides. Put the little metal reinforcement piece, which comes in the magnet package, on that dot in the



With a pen, mark through the left and right slits on the interfacing. With a little scissor point, slash those two little marks.

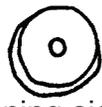


From the lining right side, insert the magnet prongs through the fabric slits. Fit the reinforcement disk over the prongs. With pliers to pinch closed, bend the prongs to

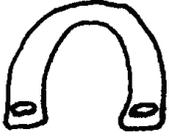


inside

the center and flatten as they overlap each other. Repeat this with remaining magnet parts where marked on other layer. It will now fasten.

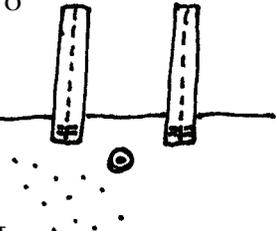


lining side



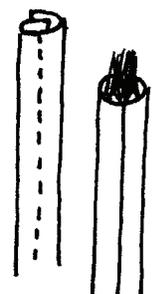
I purchased black plastic handles shaped like C's. The distance apart of the two lower slits dictated

where to put self-fabric straps that will connect the handles to the interfacing side of the lining

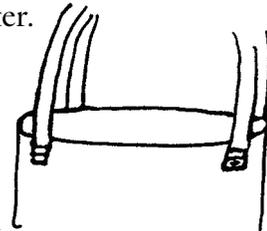


layer. Stitch one end of each, to the lining wrong side. Push the straps through a handle. Fold the loose end down to slightly beyond the first end to stagger the bulk and stitch. Repeat with second handle.

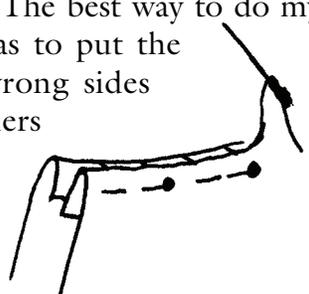
On another bag I might instead use shoulder straps. These would be about 30" long. Sometimes I fold in the raw edges and press, then stitch them flat. Other times I cut bias strips, stitch them into a tube and use a Fasturn to turn right side out, pulling a cable cord through while turning to pad out their center.



Either of these would be stitched at side seams or at least close to sides.

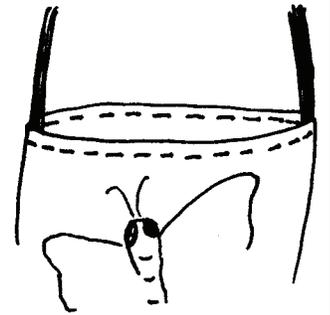


All that remains is to stitch the lining to the bag. This can be done in various ways influenced by other factors in the area. The best way to do my particular top joining was to put the lining inside the bag, wrong sides together. Push the corners down in place and smooth everything until it fits nicely. Fold both raw edges toward

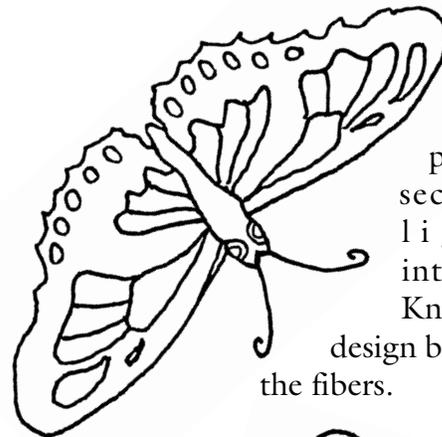


interfacings and pin the top folds together.

Invisibly hand stitch the layers together on their top folds. Press flat. Machine top stitch about 3/8" away from top edge.



The second bag photographed was made the same way but using denim, felting multiple smaller butterflies, and carried by a shoulder strap. This one I first bulked



up with a fusible fleece before felting the design. To permanently secure it, fuse a lightweight interfacing (Fusi-Knit) over the design backside to secure the fibers.

