

Add Pop Art Pizzazz with Heat Transfer Vinyl

by Cheryl Sleboda

Sponsored by Bernina of America and eQuilter.com



Host Susan Brubaker Knapp with Cheryl Sleboda

Materials

- Quilt top
- Heat Transfer Vinyl (I use Power Shine Glitter and Power Shine Foil from Sew Much Cosplay™ by RNK.)
- Strong scissors or heavy-duty snips

Optional

- Laser thermometer or infrared thermometer
- Digital cutting machine (I use ScanNCut by Brother.)
- Parchment paper

Quilts that need a certain pop of something might be the perfect candidate for Heat Transfer Vinyl embellishment and appliqué. I set out to use these elements in my own comic book-themed quilt series and saw just how easy they were to use. I liked them so much that I created “a comic book sound effect” challenge for my friends. The quilts all came out amazing with the addition of glitters and foils that really make them pop! If you’re looking to add glitter and glitz to an art quilt, consider the possibilities.

Heat Transfer Vinyl (HTV) is a material that is meant to be ironed onto a fabric. HTV comes in a variety of colors in solids, glitters, foils, and even flocked finishes. An adhesive backing is already on the material so you just need to cut the HTV and apply it to your project. Some types of HTV are created for heat presses and require more heat than a typical iron can provide. Here, we will be using a type that is appropriate for fabric and for the irons we all have in our sewing rooms.

DIRECTIONS

1. Check the HTV packaging for the temperature setting of the iron. The product I used is fused to the fabric between 135°–165° F.

Tip: Don’t know the exact temperature of your iron? Most of us don’t! Use a laser or infrared thermometer to check the iron at various settings until you find the heat setting you need. If desired, mark the iron with a permanent marker at that setting for future reference.

2. Using a permanent marker, draw directly on the pressing sheet of the vinyl to mark the shape you want to cut, and use heavy-duty scissors or snips to cut out the design. (figure 1)


Tip: For a cleaner cut, use a digital cutter. For those instructions, see the call out box “Tips for Cutting with a Digital Cutter.”

3. Place the HTV on the quilt top with the adhesive facing the quilt.

4. Press the HTV to the quilt top, pressing hard. Pick up and move the iron—rather than gliding it on the surface—if you need to cover a larger surface.

Tip: A hard ironing surface works best for fusing HTV. Soft cushiony surfaces may cause shifting of the vinyl as you press.

5. While the vinyl is warm, but not hot, gently peel back the pressing sheet to reveal the vinyl underneath. The glue must be cool enough to stick to the fabric and the pressing sheet, and warm enough not to pull up the newly ironed design.
6. When cool, sew the HTV shape onto a quilt top as you would a fabric appliqué shape. (figure 2) Needle holes may be visible if you unsew this stitching.

Tip: Sewing through the vinyl is not difficult. For glitter vinyl, use a thicker needle—such as a 90 or 100—so the needle is strong enough to punch through the glitter and adhesive 

muppin.com

TIPS FOR CHOOSING HEAT TRANSFER VINYL

There are a few features to look for in HTV:

Does it include a pressing layer on top or not?

- The pressing sheet layer is typically clear and adhered to the actual vinyl, kind of like a big sticker. This layer allows you to iron the HTV directly onto fabric and to see where you are placing the vinyl.

How easy is it to cut?

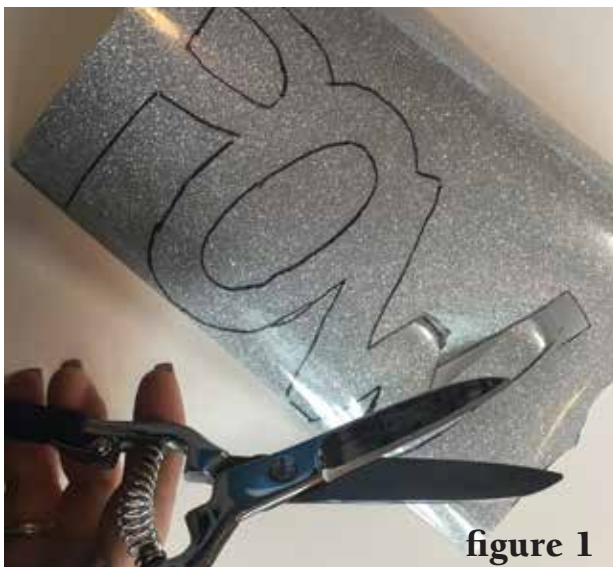
- The glue layer can be stiff and difficult to cut, so assess this with some test cutting before attempting your designs and choose appropriate cutting tools.

Can it be laundered?

- Since HTV can be used for garments or other items that may need to be washed, this is a good thing to check. Wash and dry a sample to test the material for its longevity on your project. Or only use the material on art quilts that will not be laundered.

How about glitter vs. foil?

- **Glitter** makes lots of artists nervous because of shedding. If the HTV is made of glitter or a flocked material, ensure it's bonded to the backing adhesive properly so it doesn't flake off. Test washing is recommended. If using a glitter, a fine grain is best so it doesn't feel scratchy or catch on any sheers, silks, or other materials you may use. If artwork containing HTV may be stacked on top of another piece—with the HTV layer touching another quilt—check that the glitter doesn't migrate onto other artwork.
- **Foil** creates a high metallic shine but because some foil HTVs are thinner than flocked or glitter HTVs, they can also show the imperfections of the fabric under it such as wrinkles or seams. Before using HTV foil, make sure wrinkles are ironed out, slubs are trimmed off, and stray threads are removed.





From top, "KA-RACK!" by Susan Fletcher King,
 "POOF" by Donna Morales-Oemig, and
 "WHIIIRRR" by Sara Mika

WORKING WITH A DIFFERENT PRODUCT

If the HTV you are working with has no pre-adhered pressing sheet, the steps to fuse the HTV to fabric are slightly different. Check the instructions on the package but, generally, here are the steps.

- Follow Step 1 and the Tip.
- Instead of drawing onto the vinyl directly, draw the design in reverse on the adhesive side, and cut with strong scissors or snips.
- Follow Step 3.
- Cover with parchment paper and press as in Step 4.

TIPS FOR CUTTING WITH A DIGITAL CUTTER

- To set the blade depth, test the digital cutter with a scrap piece of the HTV you are using. By setting the blade to cut through the vinyl—and not the pressing sheet—you will be able to pull away the parts of the vinyl that you do not want to transfer to the project and all of the remaining parts stay in place on the pressing sheet. This is called “weeding” the vinyl.
- Choose the digital design to be cut and layer the vinyl with the pressing sheet down and the adhesive side up onto the digital cutting mat. You may need to reverse the design as it will be cut from the backside.
- Cut the design and carefully weed the vinyl for any interior cut pieces that need to be removed before placement.
- Use the pressing sheet to place the design onto the fabric exactly where you want it and press following Steps 4 and 5.