

Photo + Digital Drawing + Paint + Stitch = Art Quilt

by Sherry D. Kleinman

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Susan Brubaker Knapp and Sherry D. Kleinman

Materials

- Digital photo (Be sure to use your own photo or a copyright-free image.)
- iPad or iPadPro with Tracing Paper App or equivalent drawing app
- Stylus or Apple Pencil

Note: My experimentations have been limited to Apple products. Use these instructions as guidelines only if you are using a PC or other products.

- Inkjet fabric sheets for home printer or commercially printed image on cloth
- Freezer paper
- Airbrush or transparent paint, colored pencils, textile paint
- Variety of paintbrushes: 1"–2" ones for background painting, smaller ones for detail painting
- Fusible batting*
- Backing and binding*

Optional

- Perle cotton for hand stitching
- * Yardage will depend on the size of the printed image.

With my smart phone always handy, I take many photos. I enjoy capturing everyday moments of people and animals. When I have a photo that 'speaks' to me—that is, it demands a second look—I know it is a candidate for interpretation in textiles.

I like to use the Tracing Paper App on my iPad as it allows me to reinterpret the photo. I can add or subtract lines and images to recreate it in a different way than what is seen in the photo.

When I print the image onto fabric, I use paint, pencil, and stitch to create my art quilt.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Upload the digital photo to Tracing Paper App or another drawing app.

Tip: Tracing Paper is a very intuitive, easy-to-follow app but there are other choices available that will have similar results. As a non-digital option, a light box or brightly lit window for tracing can be used.

2. Use a stylus or Apple Pencil (for the iPadPro only) to create a line drawing of the photo, picking and choosing what you want to include or leave out. When you're finished, save the final image in black and white and name it 'final.'

Tip: Save images to your digital photo album as you draw. You will have a series of steps saved, in case you change your mind or have technical difficulties like a crashed computer.

3. Print the final image using a home printer and purchased inkjet fabric sheets. Alternatively, upload the image to a commercial printing company.

Tip: Both printing options have pros and cons. Fabric sheets come in limited sizes and fabric choices but they allow you to keep going, working while you are inspired. Commercial textile printing offers a larger range of sizes, repeats, and fabric choices but you will have to wait and resume your work when the print is available. Follow the site's uploading instructions.

4. Iron freezer paper to the back of the printed fabric. This adds stability for the painting steps.


Tip: *I find heavyweight fabrics like duck or canvas do not need a freezer paper backing.*

5. With a 1"-2" brush, paint the entire surface in 1 color (background and objects). I often use a complimentary color to what will come next. I use transparent paint so the black line drawing shows through. Allow the paint to dry.
6. Color the drawing with markers, paint, or colored pencils.

Tip: *To test the media for bleeding, hold a marker/pencil down on a fabric scrap for 5 seconds. If bleeding occurs, use regular colored pencils rather than water-soluble media. Following the manufacturer's directions, heat set the color to seal it and prevent smearing.*

7. When the painting/drawing is complete, fuse batting to the reverse. This adds stability for the hand and machine stitching.
8. With black thread, machine stitch all of the black drawing lines. I also do a lot of hand stitching both with perle cotton and regular threads for areas I cannot do with the machine.

Tip: *I stitch with feed dogs up and do not use free motion. I stitch very slowly, stitch by stitch, to stay on the drawn lines.*

9. Fuse a backing to the piece. This finishes it nicely and hides the stitching and knots. Trim the piece and finish the edges, as desired. 

sherrykleinman.com

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