



*The Art of Fabric Collage II*  
*Advanced Topics*

**by Jeanine Malaney**

# **The Art of Fabric Collage II Advanced Topics**

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Cover art: Spirit of the American West IV 20 x 16

# The Art of Fabric Collage II

## Chapter One - Painting *With* Fabric

### I Overview

In Book I you learned the basics and tools of fabric collage and experimented with my technique, I call "Painting with Fabric". In this Book II we will explore some topics in more depth and introduce advanced topics, such as elements of good design and composition, fabric choices, utilizing paints on fabric, creating borders with mitered corners and making your own binding. The Step by Step process of Painting with Fabric was defined in Book I. Now in Book II the Step by Step section takes you through my creation of an original fabric collage painting in minute detail. Every design and composition step is illustrated and alternatives discussed along with my rationale for each decision.

### II A Unique Medium

I have lectured and given demonstrations of my technique for quilt clubs and artists. I have also taught one-on-one in my home studio setting. Though I have been asked many times if I would teach a hands-on workshop, I always decline. My reason is this: my technique of Painting With Fabric is by definition a unique art form utilizing the medium of fabric. Every painting I create in fabric collage is unique because of fabric choices. The only way I could teach many in a classroom setting would be for me to create "kits" ahead of time. This would violate the uniqueness of this technique! There are many applique' wall-hanging kits already available for purchase at your typical quilt shop. For example, McKenna Ryan designs and kits are fabulous. This would be another way you might start this art form, by practicing with a commercially available kit. My technique of fabric collage allows individual creativity and hence each painting is truly original and unique.

Here is an example of what I mean by unique fabric choices. I rarely do two paintings of one subject, but here are two examples of fabric paintings inspired by the same photo. Because of my fabric choices, they are quite different. And if you were to "copy" my painting, assuredly yours would be different, since the fabrics available to you would be different from mine. Each local quilt or fabric shop carries limited selections. Another factor is just what is available in your stash the

day you start your design. For me, this definitely leads me down a certain design path. I do not design, then run out and buy what I need. I use whatever is available that day in my stash. I believe this actually enhances creativity!



*Cabin at Kalaloch I* 16 x 20



*Cabin at Kalaloch II* 16 x 20



*El Rancho Pinoso I* 25 x 42

*El Rancho Pinoso II* 25 x 42



## Chapter Three - More on Fabric Selection

Here are some examples and discussion of good and bad prints for use in landscape collage.

### I. Sky



*Figure 3-1 Great sky fabrics*



*Figure 3-2 Sky fabrics with caveats*

The sky is usually your lightest value, except Western skies can be an intense cobalt blue. Figure I-A fabrics are all great for skies. The second one down is hand-dyed without a pattern. I can place the light section of it (see right edge) at the horizon for realism or stitch around it for a cloud. Likewise, I would make clouds in the bottom three. Beware of printed sky materials as shown in Figure I-B. Each looks much too fakey, unless you use a small amount for a small sky or camouflage with trees so that the repeated pattern is not obvious.

### II. Water

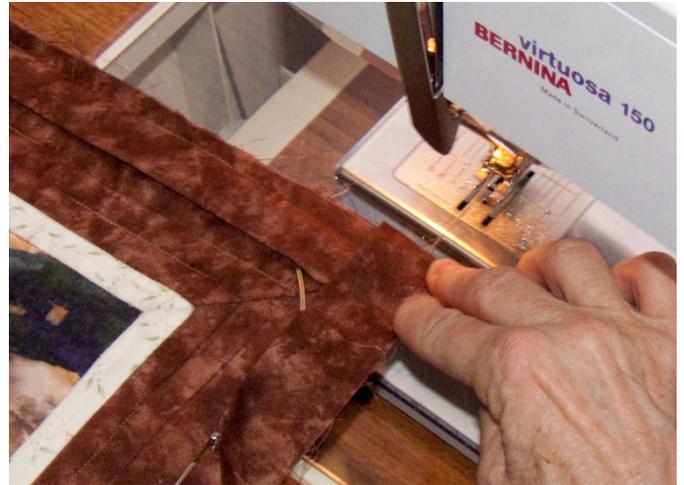


*Figure 3-3 Great water fabrics*

These six fabrics are great for water. They might also work for sky. Likewise, the sky materials above might work for water. The bottom material in Figure II is actually the reverse side of the one above it. Use both alternately to show a play of light upon part of the water.



*Figure 5-9 Fold straight up to form corner angle*



*Figure 5-10 Fold down over itself*



*Figure 5-11 Start sewing from the top*



*Figure 5-12 Sew on down the side*

Connecting with a smooth hidden seam. To connect the two ends, fold each back and open to opposite 45 degree angles. Press. Pin and sew together on these press lines. (Baste or pin first to check that you have it correct.) Trim excess. Press and complete attaching this section to the collage piece.

## Chapter Six - Step by Step *with* Illustrations

### Step I Find an inspiration; sketch a design or layout; plan for layering

#### A. Inspiration

I usually choose Colorado or Southwest landscapes (from my plein air sketches done on location or from my husband's photographs). I decided to paint an Oregon scene, a new subject for me. My niece and her husband own an organic farm and winery in Oregon ([www.Kookoolan Farms.com](http://www.KookoolanFarms.com)) and they sent me photos to use with their permission for inspiration. Here are two photos I considered:



*Inspiration Photo 1*



*Inspiration Photo 2*

[Remember, if you are going to exhibit or sell your art then never copy another person's photographs or art unless you have their permission. Copyright law (Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990) protects art works for the lifetime of the artist.]

What I like about Photo 1: the yummy raspberries in the foreground; the great perspective afforded by the hay bales diminishing in size into the distance; the trees silhouetted on the horizon. Problems with Photo 1: not sure of the focal point; the bales lead the eye back to nothing of consequence; the play of light/shadow is not strong; the colors are muted; a big sky is nice but not for the medium of fabric (because a "quilted sky" is not real effective, so I like to keep the sky to a minimum and/or create big puffy clouds to quilt around). What I like about Photo 2: the strong play of light and shadow on the bales and on the barn; the wonderful late afternoon shadows across the fields; the harvest golds; the quirky aspect of no sky; the clear perspective of foreground, middle-ground, and background.

I add two of the smaller buildings in the distance. Again, the sides facing the sun are much lighter than the shady sides of the buildings. Since this is a small painting, some of these detail pieces in the background buildings are quite small. I will apply fray check right away to all their edges so they will not fall apart as I am handling them to glue and then sew.



I add some middle-ground trees. They are a cooler green than the foreground bushes but warmer than the tree masses on the distant hills.

I cut out lots of hay bales and arrange them in diminishing size, leading the eye to the silos and barn, my focal point.

## Step IX Frame or add sleeve to hang from dowel

See Chapter Five, Section III for instructions on making a dowel sleeve. I am framing this painting. I use a staple gun to tack it in from the backside of the frame, trying to staple through the binding only. I don't pull too tight or I will decrease the quilted 3-D effect.



*Yamhill, Oregon*

22 x 28

## Step X Enjoy for many years!

Be sure to hang your fabric art where it will not get direct sun falling on it or it will fade! You should clean occasionally with your vacuum attachment.