

Quilting and Embellishing



After you complete your basic piece and baste it to its backing, you will want to take some time to secure the sandwich with a quilting stitch. The piece might be just one block or a full sized cloth. My approach is not always a cut and dry step by step method but a more alternative back and forth layered approach to cloth construction. I might baste, quilt, embellish each individual block or component and then back it and quilt it all again, or I might do all the embellishing on top of a quilted piece. I hope these videos give you a good idea of how I might accomplish a finished piece using these methods. Actually it is never the same twice. If you free yourself from rules and simply feel the cloth in your hands, think about it and what you want to use it for, the cloth will tell you what it needs. Expect this part of the process to take some time, work on it a bit each day. With each stitch you will come to know it better.

Quilting

The simplest form of quilting is the running stitch. A stitch that is so much like weaving it excites me...up and down and in and out, running the cloth to hold the layers in place. The stitch can be big or small, even or uneven, and the cloth will still be held together. This variation is a matter of preference or skill level and is basically decided by the nature of the materials you are working with, what is available and on hand, and what kind of cloth you want to produce,

especially influenced by the end use you have in mind. The only rule I use is... stitch it as much as necessary to hold things together, and the second is, respect the nature of the fabrics. Through these considerations, the character of the cloth will develop on its own.

Quilting, although often considered a decorative element, is basically a functional one. The beauty that results from stitching cloth together has its own category of appreciation for me. It happens through a thoughtful process of consideration while giving layers of cloth a way to work together. After a time, you come to recognize that this is simply enough for this step in cloth making. For me, quilting is a term to define the simple process of permanently stitching through all the existing layers of cloth to hold them together. Any additional stitching I always consider to be embellishment.

Although quilting can be done sparsely on regular patchwork, the woven blocks may need more attention to secure everything in place. You need to think about what you are doing.

I use a large eye embroidery needle and embroidery thread for quilting. I adjust the size of the needle to accommodate the thread... most often a size 6-7 and two strands of thread.

The Running Stitch

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The Back Stitch

The back stitch variation is chosen when fabrics are slippery or maybe in this case when the edges are ragged..., basically it is chosen because the holding process needs more attention. Again the size, spacing and regularity of the stitch is to accommodate the structure of your cloth. Or maybe just your mood.

The Combination stitch

I like to think that this type of quilting grew out of the conversation with fabric. I call it Wizard quilting...because it transforms into what is needed as you go. In the simplest form it is a running stitch and a back stitch combined. It works well for the woven elements, running stitch that converts into a back stitch in loose areas, corners and ragged edges that are not behaving.

Layered Quilting

I work in layers more often than not. This means that element may be quilted in the component stage, to hold things together and then again after being applied to a larger piece. The invisible baste, to me is a quilting stitch, because it stays there permanently to hold things together. A regular running stitch can be used as well; it will just show in the finished piece. When using the layered technique, you will be quilting some sections more than once. There are many approaches to this and I cannot cover all of them here. The two simplest forms include

1. Quilting in one direction for the first layer. and then quilting all the way through in the other direction, catching all current layers.
2. Quilting the first layer as you see fit and then filling in around the current quilting with additional quilting to attach all the layers. Or in the case of an invisible baste, quilting right over and ignoring the first layer all together...

[View video](#)

Embellishing

There is so much to say about embellishing, it might fill a lifetime of posts and I certainly cannot detail it all here. Each cloth develops differently when it comes to embellishment. I am just touching on a few things here to give some idea of how I approach the cloth decoration using the weaving as a base. [View video](#)