

# Soft Spot for Hearts

by Jude Hill



an image a bit further ... and play a little game by finding a way to make it mine somehow ... and thereby finding a way to get comfortable with this universally revered symbol?

### Exactng a Sampler

It should be noted that typically after picking a concept, I collect ideas by researching. I keep the concept in my mind constantly so everything around me is filtered through it. Being there is where I start and then staying there is the way to continue. One of the easiest ways to keep everything in one spot is keeping a journal devoted to a single idea. Lately, my journaling has evolved into something more exact, which is working directly on fabric ... a sampler, if you will. Working in this direct manner seems to eliminate the gap between ideas and action. Besides, the result is a marvelous cloth that can become a wall piece, or something useful like a pillow. Sort of a living library.

My new favorite thing is the Pitt artist pen. Although not marketed as fabric pens, I find them easy to use, and their permanence comes in many wonderful colors. You can draw directly on the ground fabric as a stitching guide or draw on separate fabric to cut out and appliqué. →

### Chance at Something New

I have never liked hearts. I have always avoided them because of their commonness and especially because of my secret fear of pink and all things too sweet. Oh, but now that I am a bit older, I am finding my fears hold a special place in my life. Like billboards screaming opportunity, I use them as challenges and I have come to appreciate them as a chance at something new.

The heart symbol is so universal, and many people use it as a metaphor. There are so many songs and stories out there ... endless images come to mind. Recently, I was asking myself what if ... I were to push my perspectives regarding the heart as



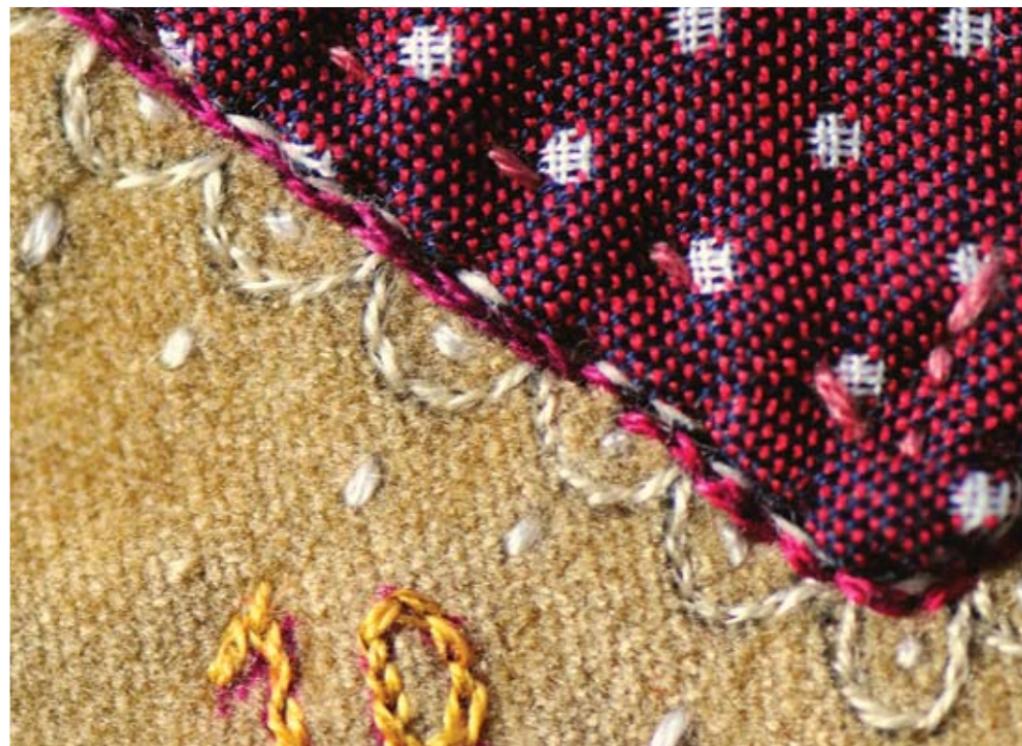


I tried a few stitching combinations — a split stitch, some couching, and then my “What if” process caused the split stitch to change into a backstitch in one section to break the outline a bit. I was on my way but now of course I found myself thinking about that broken line ... a broken heart? An achy breaky heart? Yes! A heart filled with contrast — that is a form of “broken,” right?

So then I decided to incorporate my favorite pattern: the checkerboard ... to investigate how many ways a heart can actually be broken. A heart that is perhaps divided ... or perhaps melting. A heart with a hole in it. A wounded heart full of holes.

I started to include some classic heart symbols after searching the Internet. I found mostly Valentine-style hearts — the kind with lace around the edge. I stitched one of those using some vintage silk and tiny white stitching to create lace. Love — the normal emotion that a heart represents — exploded into many possibilities.

A confused heart was simply expressed by swirly sections of tonal colors that made me think of the possibility of a heart of many colors. A color theme and the darker side brought a green and jealous heart, an awful blackened heart, and a heart filled →



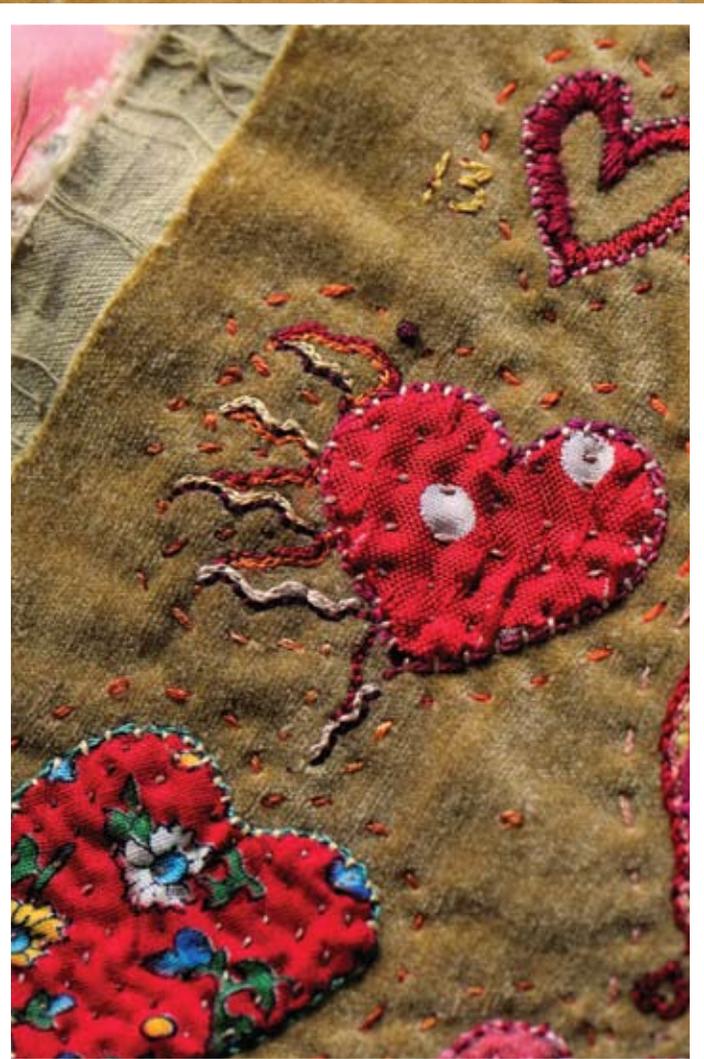
So with Pitt pens in hand, I reached for a thin golden cotton velvet to use as the base upon which I would build my ideas about the heart. I chose it for its warmth and softness. The velvet was chosen also because of its great ancient drape after having been washed many times — thereby exuding a feeling of history to honor all the many hearts that have gone before mine ... a fabric that can also be described as “comfy” ... to help soften my own journey. I backed this velvet with a cotton plaid just for a bit of stitching stability.

**Poof!**

So then I asked myself, what if ... I start with a plain heart and then I cut out a pinkish red heart, sew it all down? The first one was a just a heart. I stitched around it with a little black and white thread, my symbol for magic, just a little magic to get me started. And poof! I was off and running.



## What if ...



with the blue. On the lighter side emerged a heart of gold and a pure heart in luminous white silk. And then I thought, what if ... a quiet and invisible heart can be created without color? I think I will make that one by creating a heart-shaped hole.

### From a Distance

From a distance this exercise reminds me once again of dots. These hearts are soft spots ... lonely hearts in their separateness, but lyrical when convened together.

Sewing on velvet is so wonderful. The stitches sink right in and the soft surface is just a perfect nest for these little heart-shaped eggs. I have begun to string them together with that magic thread as I connect all the dots. I have also continued numbering them, for this sampler will be called Love Counts — a reminder that in any form, a heart is still a heart. ❖

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