

Buttons and Beads Motifs

CQ Lessons & Challenge, Lesson #10

Contributed by Carolyn, DecPainter

Often, the most difficult part of embellishing a Crazy Quilt block is simply getting started!

Building a motif using buttons, beads, charms, silk ribbons, lace, etc. can often be just what you need to “jump-start” your imagination and begin the embellishing process.



Photo #1

One thing that helps me is to first establish a base, or foundation, on which to build the motif. Using a piece of lace, such as a medallion, or a piece of lace with flowers on it helps me avoid the problem of piling up too much “junk,” just because I’m trying to cover up the underlying fabric. Using the lace does that job very well, as you don’t mind if you see a little lace in between the buttons and beads. The piece of lace above is actually a neckline applique for a blouse or dress. It was purchased online.



Photo #2

Another way to begin building your motif can be the use of a silk ribbon bow. Be sure to use a long enough piece of ribbon so you can wind and fold the ends, using small beads, etc. to tack the ribbon streamers in place. The streamers serve to expand the area that the motif covers. Please see the example in photos #2, above, and #3, below.



Photo #3

To begin building the motif, I start with an especially pretty button or bead. This can include a button with a shank, (which helps to elevate the center of the motif), or a large bead or other object. In photo #3, above, I used a beautiful polymer clay rose, (like Fimo or Sculpey) “bead” that I purchased on eBay. Medium sized beads, buttons or other objects are fitted beside, and up under the sides of the rose or button with a shank, which helps to support the taller object and keep it from laying over on its side. The smaller objects are placed last. Audition each object before sewing it down. I tried the various pieces you see at the right of the heart, above, but ended up using the pretty leaves which were purchased at JoAnn Fabrics.



Photo #4

When in doubt about a particular embellishment, or even the entire motif, walk away from it, and then return a while later. The instant you see the motif, after taking a break, you will either love it or hate it! I have cut, snipped, pulled, and completely removed a motif rather than continuing to try to “fix it.” Slipping a piece of lace underneath, or adding a ribbon, will often make all the difference. As Nicki has said in the past, a piece of ribbon will often be all you need to complete your block.

NOTE: For pretty obvious reasons, LOL!, any embroidery or seam treatments really ought to be done before attaching the silk ribbon and/or button and bead clusters; otherwise, you might have “*to hold your mouth JUST right to fit it around all the pretties.*” Or bring your stitching thread to the back and up on the other side of the ribbon and/or button and bead clusters.