

David Taylor, Jr.



# making fabric from paper

by beryl taylor



*Left: "Mystic Medieval" —The main background is a collage of vintage wallpapers, tea-stained for an aged appearance and decorated with Latin and rubber-stamped text. Small strips of handmade paper were stitched to the background and beaded. The background to the centerpiece is laminated tissue paper with gold cord edging and eyelets. The "Griffin" is built-up with individual feathers of "fabric" paper; each feather hand painted with acrylic paint, embossed with a small heart, and hand stitched with gold beads. The head and feet are decorated with gold rub-ons; the eye is a rolled paper bead. The whole bird sits on a tea-dyed cotton panel decorated throughout with a small running stitch.*

**S**o, you've found a gorgeous stash of wrapping paper you would love to incorporate into a quilt or fabric design. Too bad a needle would ruin the paper if you stitched it, right? Wrong. Artist Beryl Taylor has developed a way to turn paper into "fabric" using a few simple steps and tools you can find at your local craft store.

The fabric paper I make is the base material used in most of my work. It is fabricated in a process I have developed over many years, but it is an evolving technique and changes with every batch I produce.

I love to use my paper because it is an amalgam of the two media with which I most like to work. It is a fantastic background for either machine or hand embroidery. The slight variations produced from batch to batch contribute to the unique beauty of the overall piece.

The finished paper consists of three layers, and the process for producing the paper is carried out in four stages.

## materials

- 1 sheet of light-colored, 100% cotton fabric cut to size (I prefer white or cream.)
- Magazine clippings, photocopies, gift wrap, tissue paper, text, or other printed materials
- Torn strips of lens tissue or craft tissue paper from your local craft store
- Fabric dyes or liquid acrylics in your chosen color scheme
- PVA or white glue
- Water
- A large sheet of plastic

# how to make fabric paper



*Step 2: White muslin painted with glue mixture, then torn papers randomly placed on top.*



*Step 3: Another coat of glue was placed on top of the papers and muslin, then strips of torn tissue paper pressed on top.*



*Step 4: While the collage was still wet, the fabric paper was painted with liquid acrylic paints.*

## step 1

Lay the fabric on the plastic sheet. This enables you to peel the finished paper from the work surface later without it sticking.

## step 2

Mix the PVA or white glue with water; the more diluted the mixture, the softer the finished paper, the less diluted, the stiffer the finished paper. Paint the entire piece of fabric with the glue solution and place the magazine clippings, or other paper scraps, onto the fabric in a way that complements your vision of the finished piece. This might involve completely covering the fabric or leaving spaces between the paper scraps; it's your choice. You can repeat images, arrange them in a pattern, or space them randomly. Tap the paper down so that it fuses with the solution-covered fabric.

## step 3

While the fabric and the papers are still wet, apply another coat of the diluted PVA or white glue on top of the collage. Embed the torn strips of tissue into the glue layer and press into the fabric with a sponge in order to remove any air pockets.

## step 4

While the collage is still wet, paint with the colored dyes or paints using a sponge applicator and allowing the colors to run into and blend with one another. Let dry overnight, remove the finished product from the plastic sheet, and you have a sheet of collaged fiber that looks and sews like fabric. ●



*Above: Detailed sample of the finished process.*

*Right: "Gertrude"—The background is the fabric paper on batting. The doorway frame is machine stitched to the background with gold thread and hand painted with diluted acrylics. Columns are adorned with fine cane, hand stitched in place; bases and capitols decorated with wooden beads. Vintage photograph is photo-transferred onto silk and sewn to background with a beaded edge. Border is transparent ribbon with seed beading.*



