

Creating texture with a SOLDERING IRON

From Sonia Burke

Having finished with Christmas and New Year celebrations, the summer break is a time of great excitement and anticipation for me because it gives me time to ‘play’ with the inspiring ideas I have read about over the past year when I could only dream about these little projects because more pressing priorities engulfed the mere 24 hours allotted to me each day.

During this past summer I tackled the ideas of Margaret Beal – ‘Hot Tips for Fusing Fabrics’, *Quilting Arts, Winter 2005, p59*.

Basically, her article worked on the principle that synthetic fabrics respond to heat (using a soldering iron). Interesting textures can be created by layering synthetic fabrics, applying varying pressures with the heated tool and poking it, dragging it, and pressing it into various depths of the fabrics.

Considerations when trying this technique:

1. Toxic fumes may exude from synthetic fibres – so use a mask and ventilate your work space.
2. Keep all cords away from the soldering iron – it will ‘burn’ through them given the opportunity.
3. Work on a heat resistant surface as this will avoid the tip of the soldering iron from causing damage to benches – use a ceramic tiled surface or tape bound glass.
4. Clean the tip of the soldering iron regularly with fine steel wool.
5. A good soldering iron stand is a terracotta pot that is turned upside down – place the tip through the opening to ensure you always pick the iron up by the handle.
6. When ruling lines with the soldering iron, use a metal ruler – plastic will melt and wood will burn.

You may possibly “find” a soldering iron in amongst the tools in your garage. They are also available at your local hardware store (a fine tipped iron works best!).

So gather all the synthetics that you have put to the back of the cupboard over the years e.g. poly sheers, acrylic felts, Lurex and those other glitzy and ‘plastic’ fabrics and have a play.