

## February 2017 – Reverse Applique

As was described last month, Victorian crazy quilts were made with fancy dress fabric remnants. They were for the most part not used as quilts for warmth. However, there were wool crazy quilts that were poor but functional cousins of the fancy Victorian crazy quilts. They were pieced from woolen scraps from men's or women's suits and coats. The individual fabric pieces were often larger than those found on the fancy quilts. They were sparsely decorated with yarn which was added more to secure the pieces than to embellish the quilt. Another variation of crazy quilts, known as crumb quilts, save-all quilts, or peace-as-peace-can quilts, evolve from the popular Victorian crazy quilts. These were made from humble every day cotton fabrics. These quilts were seldom decorated with embroidery and the tops were almost always layered with batting and backing and quilted. Sometimes the entire surface was made from odd shaped scraps; at other times portions of a traditional patchwork block such as the diamonds for a LeMoyne star, were pieced in this manner.

This month we will be taking the traded crazyquilt hearts from January and putting them into a background using reverse appliqué. In reverse appliqué, instead of fabric pieces being applied to a background fabric, the edges of the top fabric are cut in a design and turned to reveal an underlying fabric. In our case that will be a crazy quilted heart. Ethnic examples of reverse appliqué, both involve several layers of fabric. One of these is the Molas made by the San Blas Indians of Panama and the other is the Pa ndau, created by the Hmong people of Southeast Asia.

1. Examine the crazyquilt heart that you have received. If it does not have stay stitching at the edges, machine stitch 1/4 inch inside the outline of the heart. Now trim the muslin away from the heart 1/4 inch from the stitching at the edge. This should coincide with the outline of the heart
2. Place your trimmed heart face side down onto the dull side of a piece of freezer paper that is roughly as large as the new background fabric. Trace around the heart as close to the edge as you can with a pencil. Remove the heart from the top of the paper. Draw another heart 3/8 inch inside the outline that you have already drawn.
3. Cut carefully on this new line and remove the center of your freezer paper. Take the larger piece with the heart shaped hole in the middle and iron it to the wrong side of your background fabric in the position that you want the final heart to be.
4. Draw a line 1/4 inch inside the freezer paper heart on your background fabric. Cut

on this line and remove the center heart. Now clip your curves and fold your quarter inch piece of background on to the freezer paper, and iron or glue it loosely in place.

5. Place your background fabric on top of your crazyquilt heart (right sides up). Position the heart under the background fabric so that the stay stitching does not show. Use pins at a few strategic points to hold the layers together.

6. Using a narrow, long zigzag stitch, and working from the right side of the design, machine appliqué the background fabric to the heart along the edge where they meet. Zigzag stitches should alternate on the background fabric and on the design fabric.

7. Starting at one corner of the block, carefully peel the paper template off of the back of the design panel. You will see holes in the heart edges where the sewing machine needle went through the paper. The paper template can be reused a couple of times if they are not torn.

8. Embellish as desired with whatever your imagination things up. Feel free to use additional appliqué, yarn, embroidery, buttons.....