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# QUILTED JACKET

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## 3 WAYS

**UPCYCLE, MACHINE-QUILT, OR SCRAP-PIECE**  
A UNIQUE GARMENT

BY JUDITH NEUKAM

**C**url up under a quilt to read, nap, or watch TV, and you know the well-being and coziness a quilt offers. You may also find yourself admiring the vast options for fabric prints, color blending, and patchwork patterns. If you have a bent for traditional—or updated—artisan style, a quilted jacket project offers an opportunity to explore all these aspects of design while making something entirely individual.

This article shows an assortment of garments, blending techniques from quilters, garment sewers, and wearable artists. You can combine these techniques with additional construction, embellishment, and fabric manipulation methods to accomplish your vision.



### CREATIVE FREEDOM

You can use any fabric from cotton to brocade, and you decide whether to piece the fabrics. Any batting can work, depending on whether you want to establish warmth or add just a bit of loft. If you have an old quilt, consider repurposing it as a wear-anywhere garment. With thoughtful construction, you can even make your jacket reversible. These garments are fun to wear and make splendid gifts. Your fabric and assembly choices make every creation unique.

The pieces shown have three characteristics in common: a face material, a backing fabric, and batting. The face can be a recycled quilt, new patchwork, or whole cloth. The backing, usually cut from a single fabric, can also be a variety of fabrics of your choice. The batting doesn't show but determines the loft of your garment; it can be a flat cotton fabric, flannel, felt, or a variety of battings depending on how much padding you want your garment to have. The fabrics and techniques you choose will determine the way your garments wear.

### TAKE YOUR TIME

A quilted garment may take more time to create than a plain cloth one, but it can be more meaningful, too. Pick scraps you love from your fabric stash, and determine whether you need supplementary materials to craft a whole garment. From planning to sewing to wearing, your quilted jacket will spark joy from start to finish.

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*Judith Neukam is Threads contributing editor emerita. She's been creating quilted art-to-wear for decades.*

*Bring new life to a beloved vintage quilt. Thoughtful cutting highlights the original pieced motifs.*

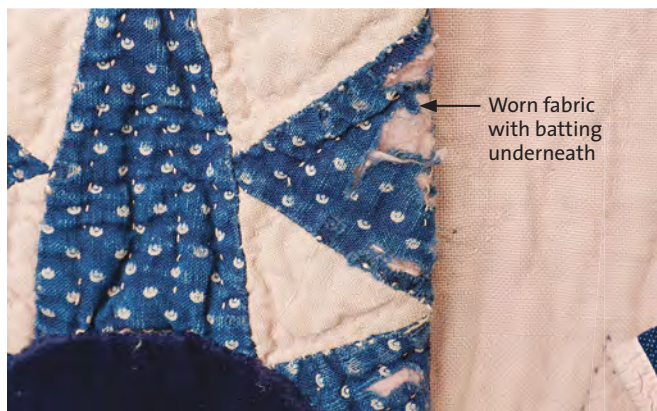


# Repurpose an Antique Quilt

Transform vintage quilts into beautiful jackets with creative repair and a thoughtful layout. Mending can be a rewarding part of the design process.

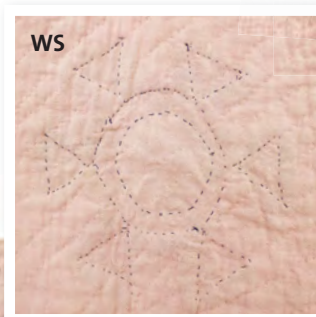
## ASSESS THE ORIGINAL

The antique quilt I repurposed for this jacket is probably close to 100 years old. It was hand-pieced and quilted. Its original three fabrics were a pink print, solid white, and a navy small print. There was some damage to the component materials.



## MEND AND REPAIR

The pink print, which was in the center of each star motif, had started to fail and needed to be replaced. I dyed the entire quilt a light, rosy brown and replaced the worn pink fabric pieces with navy velveteen. Velveteen is forgiving for hand sewing. Once the pattern pieces were cut, it was easy to replace the missing or damaged pink fabric with hand-stitched appliques, leaving the original backing and batting intact.

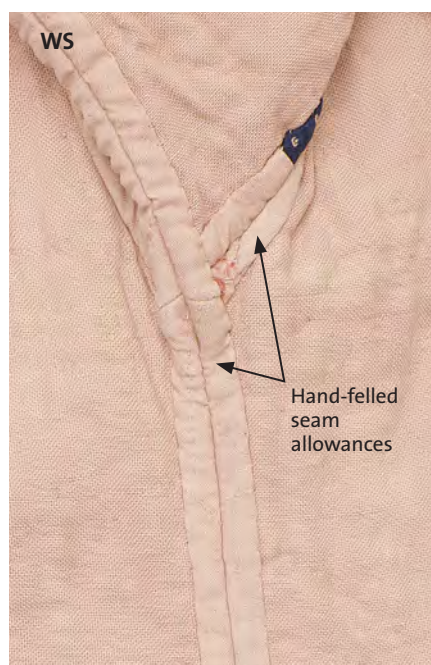


Velveteen appliques



## ASSEMBLE THE JACKET

Choose a simple jacket pattern and fit the parts until perfect. Then experiment with layouts, to determine how best to place the quilt motifs on the garment. It makes a difference whether the quilt elements fall on the center front or on the jacket side seams and where horizontal or vertical stripes land on your body. When you're satisfied with the design, mark the fabric 2 inches outside each pattern's cutting line. The extrawide seam allowances will be available if you need to make minor fit adjustments.



## ASSEMBLE THE JACKET

Sew the seams by machine, with right sides together. Then trim the seam allowance on the backing and batting to 1/4 inch wide. Finish by turning the untrimmed seam allowances to enclose the backing and batting allowances, then hand-stitch them to the backing inside the jacket.



# Make it Reversible

Speed up the process by working with whole, rather than patchwork, fabric. Make the jacket reversible for extra wearability, using these seam techniques.

## CHOOSE FABRICS AND A PATTERN

The sample jacket is made of cotton batik for the outer layer, and tone-on-tone printed cotton for the reverse face. Cotton flannel replaces a loftier batting, so the jacket is thin yet warm.

## QUILT THE PIECES

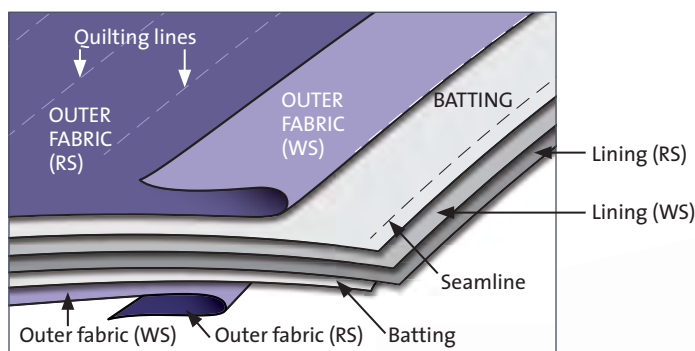
Cut each pattern piece from outer and lining fabric and batting. Layer them, then quilt in parallel vertical lines, 1 inch apart. Stop quilting at least 1 inch from all edges.

## MACHINE-SEW THE SIDE SEAMS

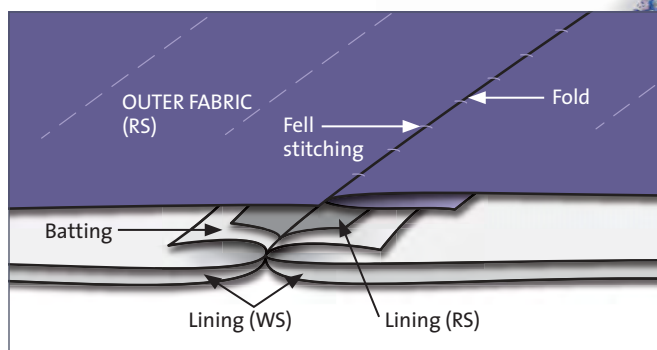
**1 Lay the quilted garment sections with two matching fabric faces together.** I recommend placing the sides with the less busy print together; you will hand-stitch the opposite face, and a busy print conceals your stitches more effectively.

**2 Fold back the outer fabric layers as far as the quilting lines to expose the batting, and pin the remaining layers.**

Sew the seam through the batting and lining layers. Trim the batting close to the stitching and grade the fabric seam allowance.



**3 Open out the seam and press the allowances open.** Lap one free fabric edge over the seamline. On the other edge, fold the allowance under and pin the fold along the seamline. Fell-stitch the fold in place by hand, stitching only through the top fabric layer.



## FELL-STITCH THE SHOULDER SEAMS

Machine-sew the seams, then trim the back seam allowances close to the stitching. On the front allowance, separate the layers and trim the lining and batting. Fold the front allowance's raw edge under, then fold the allowance toward the back to enclose the back allowance. Hand-sew the front allowance's folded edge.



*Hand-felled seam allowances make seams that look good on both garment faces.*

## ADD FINISHING TOUCHES

Attach a collar, bind the edges, and create closures as desired. Here, I left the neckline edge open during construction and inserted a quilted stand collar.

*Insert the collar into the open neckline, then hand-sew the layers.*

# Collage with Scraps

This technique uses scrap fabrics brilliantly. Rather than seaming pieces, you'll fuse and machine-quilt them to a foundation before bagging the lining by machine. The example garment is a vest, so the lining process is especially simple, but you could add sleeves after constructing the main vest piece.

## PREPARE THE REMNANTS

Sift through your stash; a benefit to this quilting method is that, when you use scraps from garments you have sewn, the collaged piece coordinates with your wardrobe. For this example, I used assorted hand-dyed and hand-painted silk fabrics. Cut the scraps with straight edges. Any shape will do.

## APPLIQUÉ THE FABRIC

**Cut the pattern from fusible interfacing**, with 1-inch-wide seam allowances. Lay the pieces fusible side up and cover them completely with silk scraps, overlapping the edges by  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Cover the fabric with a press cloth and fuse with an iron.

**Set the sewing machine for a zigzag stitch**, 2.0 mm long and 1.5 mm wide, and thread it with coordinating thread. Zigzag all the edges to the interfacing. This secures them to the foundation and prevents raveling.

## ADD QUILTING STITCHES

**Layer batting** as desired on the wrong side of the collaged pieces. The example vest has no batting and, therefore, is lightweight and supple. Install and thread a twin needle, and set the machine for a straight stitch.

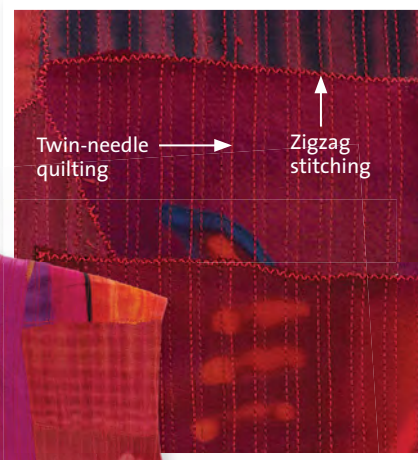
**Choose a stitch length** based on the batting's loft: Shorter stitches are appropriate for thin batting, longer stitches for thicker. Sew parallel rows diagonally or vertically on each piece  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch apart.

## LINE THE VEST

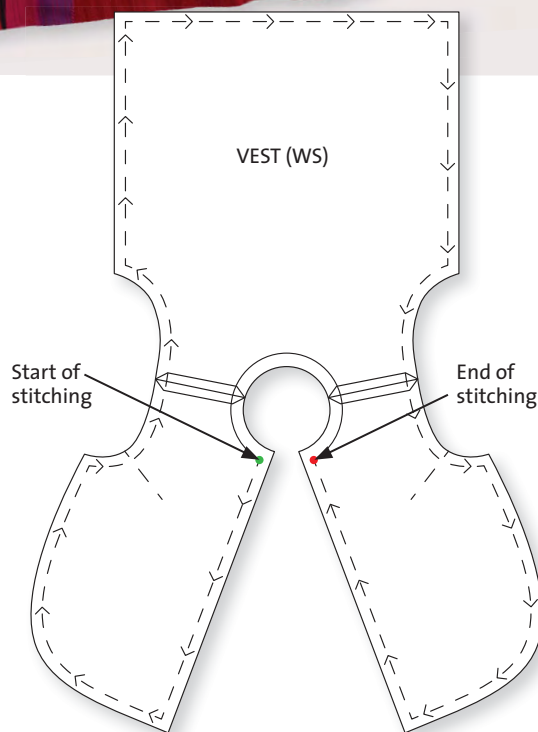
**Cut the lining** and sew its darts and shoulder seams. Sew the vest darts, trimming the batting from the dart intake, then sew the shoulder seams.

**Layer the lining and quilted vest** with right sides together. Starting at the neckline, sew down one front, across the front hem, up the side seam and around the armhole, down the back side seam, across the back hem, and repeat, ending at the opposite side of the neckline. Leave the neckline open and turn the vest right side out. Press the edges.

**Understitch** all the outer edges as far as possible.



*Stitching adds texture and secures the scraps.*

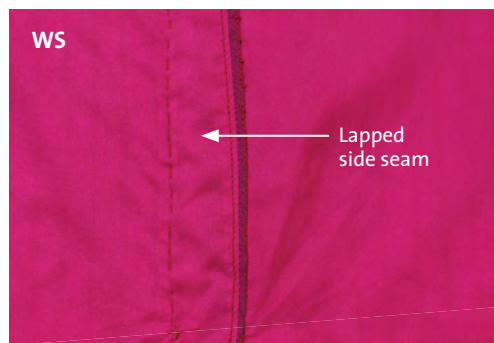


Photos: (p. 53; p. 57, right) Jack Deutsch; all others, Mike Yamin. Illustrations: Judith Neukam and Steven Fleck. Stylist: Jessica Saal. Hair and makeup: Agata Helena.com. Styling credits: (p. 53) earrings—J.Crew.com, vest and jeans—Picro (Anthropologie.com), blouse—Tahari (Macys.com), hat—FreePeople.com, boots—Joie (stylist's own); (p. 57) dress—I.N.C. International Concepts (Macys.com), bracelet—stylist's own, belt—Nine West (Nordstrom Rack.com).



## FINISH THE NECKLINE AND SIDE SEAMS

Finish the neck edge with binding or by applying a collar by hand. Try on the vest and lap the side seams front over back, pinning them in place at the desired position. Stitch the sides seams by hand or machine, and secure any wide seam allowances to the lining with hand stitches.



*Hand-sew a collar to enclose the neckline seam allowances.*



*A pieced silk lining makes use of even more coordinating fabric remnants.*



*Quilt a vibrant new fabric from silk scraps, then make an easy-to-sew lined vest.*