Foil Application and Metallic Techniques
by Marlene Glickman
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Note. The following information is experimental. Many metallic finishes are not washable nor dry cleanable. If you want to use foils in a wearable, you will need to test it first. Mainly it is used in artwork that hangs on the wall or a purse that isn’t going to be washed nor dry cleaned. If you place a hand dyed sheer over the foil for a softer effect, you will have less concerns when ironing. Once you have tried each one of the techniques below, use any combination to create the fabric and foil effect you want.

Basics
Take fabric and lay on a flat surface. Iron fabric, if needed, so it is flat. Apply adhesive (dry or liquid) and then apply foil, pretty side facing you. Cover with a pressing paper or parchment. Iron with medium heat for a few seconds or longer as needed. Some liquid glues work with pressure from your fingernail or a burnishing tool after the glue is tacky. Some fusibles take longer to melt and bond with the fabric and foil. Foil with bond to paper with just heat but is harder to control the design. You can use the tip of an iron to draw with.

If you want to soften the effects of the metallic look, cover with a sheer fabric. This can be hand dyed using the Color Hue Dyes and Silk Organza. You can also use tulle (very fine netting) as well as nylon sheers from fabric stores.

If you don’t wait until the fusible is cool to remove the paper and you don’t wait for the foil to cool to remove the film, you can get a textured effect. OR…sometimes pull the partially melted fusible off the fabric as it is still sticking to the backside of the foil.

Foil is on a see through film. You will see the film easily when you fuse the foil and then remove it from the fabric as the foil is left on the fabric and only the film remains.

Individual Techniques with Different Fusing Elements

1. Fusible Thread
You can purchase on line from YLI, Superior Threads (Charlottes) or at a show from a vendor for Marathons brand. Charlottes and Marathons are lightweight enough to go through the top needle. Lay the thread randomly on your pressed fabric. Cover with foil and pressing cloth. Iron for at least 8-10 seconds in medium high heat moving the iron while you press. Let cool and remove foil. You can fray the ends of the thread for a brush/feather look. You can also put it in the needle, stitch your design on the top of the fabric, then fuse with foil. See Full Page instructions “Fine Line Foils Using Fusible Thread”.

2. Fusible Thread Bobbin work
Put the thread in the bobbin and reverse sew on wrong side of the fabric so the fusible is on the right side with the bobbin thread. Cover with foil and pressing cloth and repeat directions above leaving the iron on a bit longer to melt the thread. See Full Page instructions and photo on page 4 entitled “Fine Line Foils Using Fusible Thread”.

3. Dry Fusible with paper backings (tape and sheets)

My favorite dry fusible is Lite Steam a Seam 2. Joanns Fabrics carries this in ¼ and ½ inch tape on a roll and in sheets or by the yard. Wonder Under comes in light to heavy weight and I hear they have really improved their fusible product so it is much lighter weight now. If you want to sew with a needle through any of the foil, the lighter the fusible the easier this will be without gunking up the needle. Paper fusibles: Draw and cut the shape you want. Remove the easily removed paper. Press sticky side of fusible to your fabric. Position, or reposition until you like what you see. Touch lightly with an iron for 1-3 seconds. Let cool. Remove the paper. Cover with foil and pressing paper. Iron, moving the iron for 7-8 seconds depending on the color of foil. Let cool. Remove top paper. You can fuse another foil over the fusible to alter the color. The fusible reactivates which is why you have to be careful when ironing over the foil on the right side on your garment or artwork without a pressing sheet. Because it reactivates, you can lay other shapes and pieces of foil over the existing fused foil and change parts of the colors. You can also draw with the tip of the iron to make lines or shapes. For instance, you have a foil moon in silver, you can add some color effects so you place a blue foil over the top and just draw the lines over the moon using the tip of an iron. Note: if you remove the paper backing or foil before it is cool, it has a different more grainy effect.

4. Sewing Studio: Bonash fusible powder

A little goes a long way. Think grains of sand. When melted they spread and join together so for a scattered sparkle effect, just use a few grains. Sprinkle grains on fabric. Cover with foil. Cover with a pressing paper. Iron to melt grains for at least 10-15 seconds moving the iron. Bonash sells the powder separately or with a wonderful pressing sheet that tolerates a lot of heat. Remove pressing sheet and remove foil film. Some specialty shops carry Bonash. It is also referred to as 007 Bonash mending powder. If you see a Bonash demonstration at a sewing show, go watch. The demonstrators are knowledgeable and show many ways to use the powder. They have also started to show surface design techniques with foils and glitter.

5: Misty Fuse (no paper backing)

Cut or rip the Misty Fuse into the shape you want. Place on the fabric. Cover with foil pretty side up and cover the foil with a pressing paper. Iron moving the iron for 7-10 seconds. Let cool and remove. This is one of my favorites as it is so wispy looking. Check out their website for other ways to play with Misty Fuse. www.mistyfuse.com. Iris is very helpful with suggestions for unusual uses for Misty Fuse. It comes in white, black and ultraviolet (if you are using it with whites). Here is a recent suggestion she made to the Quiltart site:

From: Iris Karp <IrisKarp@earthlink.net> To: quiltart@quilt.net
Subject: Regarding fabric in the printer

Thought I should mention that you can iron fabric prefused with Mistyfuse to parchment and run it through your printer. Mistyfuse. Easiest if the fabric is fused all the way to the leading edge. I've also just run parchment paper through both laser and inkjet printers, printed on that and then ironed prefused fabric on top to transfer the design to the back of the fabric for a cutting guide (Mistyfuse lifts the line off the parchment when you iron) and also as an image visible through a sheer. Printing on parchment is tricky but doable; the ink from either printer is just sitting on the surface of the paper so be careful. If you're printing on the fabric side you can reuse the same piece of parchment over and over. Iris
6: Wet Fusible Glues
I recommend using Screen Trans grey goop from Screen Trans or www.lauramurraydesigns.com. See details at Laura Murray site or in Jane Dunewold’s book Complex Cloth. You can apply with a paint brush, stamp, silk screen or styro carved shape. Cover with foil, pressing sheet and press for a very few seconds. You can also try other foil glues and follow their instructions. A fellow artist, Jan Navales, said she used a heavy duty foil with Elmer’s glue. If you wait for the Elmer’s to dry a bit, it won’t spread as much when you press the foil. Cover with foil pretty side facing you. Cover with pressing paper. Iron for a few seconds. Remove from ironing board and let cool. Peel foil film off.

7: Softening the metallic effects of foil using sheers
You can use your store bought sheers to soften the effects of the foil by cutting and laying over the foil. To get a specific color or design you can spray dye silk organza with water and then Color Hue dyes in spray bottles. Sop up extra dye with a silk wipe up cloth. Spray again until you achieve the depth of color you want. Remove excess water with a silk cloth. Iron to dry. Cover foil work. If it isn’t the color nor darkness of color you want, return to the dye table and dye it some more. You can also fuse foil to the sheers. Just make sure you use a pressing sheet so the sheer doesn’t melt with the ironing process.

You can also dye the silk organza and fuse it to cardstock for a silk greeting card. Use your dyed workshop leftovers. Cut 3 by 4 ½ inches and fuse at the top using Steam a Seam Lite to a piece of cardstock. Decorate the paper card with gel pens.

8: Lumiere Stencil work
Another metallic effect can be achieved using Lumiere fabric paints. Apply very, very lightly. Using a sponge, pour a small amount of Lumiere onto a Styrofoam work surface. Dab the Styrofoam tray with a sponge to remove excess from the sponge. Position the stencil (you can tape it if you want to) dabbing over and over to fill the stencil open area. The gold or copper looks great on black. Let dry. Lumiere has to be heat set ironing the wrong dry side of the fabric for 15 seconds moving the iron. Clean stencils you used with a damp sponge. To thin the Lumiere fabric paint down so it will go lightly on lightweight fabrics (like sheers and lightweight silk) add shaving cream (cheaper is better as it holds the foam longer). Put shaving cream on the tray or in a dish, add Lumiere fabric paint and stir well. You can also shift the color of the Lumiere and shaving cream by adding Color Hue Dye concentrates.
Fine line foils
Using fusible thread
by Marlene Glickman

Fine lines are possible using fusible threads, whether you sew them in a particular pattern or design or just lay them on the fabric, cover with foil and iron to bond together.

Supplies
Fabric, Fusible Thread (YLI’s or Superior’s Charlotte’s Fusible Thread or Marathon’s), Foil (the kind printers use for fancy cards), Iron and pressing, sheet or fusible pressing paper and ideas. Over-dyeing and sheers are optional.

Free Form Foiling
1. Turn the iron on medium heat. Place a pressing sheet to protect your ironing board cover and have a spare pressing paper to the side.
3. Take a piece of fusible thread and arrange on the fabric. A little goes a long way for creating a fine line design. You can fray the ends of the thread for a softer look.
4. Cover with a piece of foil with the pretty side up facing you.
5. Cover the foil with a pressing paper to protect your iron.
6. With the iron on medium heat, press the paper for 5-10 seconds moving the iron around.
7. Let cool. Remove the pressing sheet. Pull off the foil and see your design.

Controlled Fine Line Foiling
1. Wind your bobbin with fusible thread. I have found that the thread in the needles creates a lot of tension so I do reverse bobbin thread work. Loosen the tension on your bobbin case so it easily drops 3-6 inches while holding the thread and letting the bobbin drop.
2. Insert the bobbin in the machine. Thread the top of the machine with a similar or contrasting normal sewing thread. The top tension you set will determine how much the top thread comes through on the bobbin side of the fabric. Interesting possibilities.
4. Set the machine for free motion for wavy lines or leave the feed dogs up for straight lines.
5. Place your fabric under your needle and sew straight or free motion any design you like.
6. Take to the ironing board, cover with foil, pressing sheet and press for 4-8 seconds with a medium hot iron. Let cool. Remove pressing sheet, foil sheet and see what you have. While pressing, the iron melts the thread and flattens it a bit.

Ideas: Layer hand dyed sheers over the foil work to soften the effects of the shiny foil. Re-use the foil by placing a piece of fusible in a circle or square and fusing to the fabric. Cover with used foiled and get the reverse design.
Embellish paper or fabric using a wide range of metallics and colors adding a glimmer to your work. Too much glitz? Just add sheers to soften the effects.

Supplies
- Paper (cardstock, fancy, handmade)
- Fabric
- Silk Organza or sheer fabrics
- Foils
- Fusible tape and Fusible sheets
- Assorted gel pens
- Pressing Sheets, Iron
- Design Ideas
- Colored Pencils

Sequence
1. Protect ironing surface with a pressing sheet. Place paper on the ironing surface.
2. Cut out a piece of foil. Lay on top of the paper. Cover with a second pressing sheet. Fuse by ironing for a few seconds. Sometimes not all the foil fuses to the paper. Use a hotter iron temperature or use a fusible to get it to stick, if you want a solid image. Note: Fusibles with a paper backing that you can draw on, cut out and place on the paper or fabric will give you a more precise design. Some fusibles without paper give a more diffused look.
3. Dye silk organza or using sheer fabric create an overlay on the paper image.
4. Fuse a foil design to the sheer. Arrange over the paper image. Fuse together with another piece of fusible.
5. Draw designs to enhance the image using gel pens, indelible ink pens or dye pens.

More Options
- Save the foil not used for a reverse image. Cut a piece of fusible and fuse to a piece of fabric or paper. Peel off the paper. Place the used foil over the fusible. Cover with a pressing sheet and iron. Let cool and remove the pressing sheet and foil’s film that is left.
- If the foil is too garish or bright for your taste or project, cover with layers of sheers until you have the softness you want.
- Foil and fabrics can be fused to sheets of paper and used for chapter dividers in hand made journals. Use a cardstock weight to hold the fabric.
- Your wipe up paper towels from dye workshops can be used as fabric. Just fuse a woven or pellon fusible fabric to the back. Sew as you would fabric. Note: This is not a wash and wear item. It is fine for journals or artwork that will hang on the wall.
Create a mini-collage with fabric, foil and feathers using fusibles. Incorporate it into a wall hanging, as a cover for your artist journal or fuse/sew onto a piece of heavyweight watercolor paper or cardstock for a creative mixed media greeting card. Note: Read and follow the instructions on the fusible you decide to use. Dry sheet fusibles vary in application. Some call for steam and some not. Some are heavyweight and some are very sheer. Use a pressing paper to protect your iron and ironing board cover.

1. **Fabric**: Choose a medium weight base fabric for your collage. This can be a solid or print, hand dyed or painted fabric. Cut it into a 5 inch square. I recommend a 3 by 4 inch rectangle for a greeting card or a 5 by 8 inch rectangle for a journal page or cover. You can make it any size you want if you plan to use it as part of an art quilt or for wearable (but not necessarily washable) art.

2. **Foil**: Cut a shape from a fusible sheet. Position it on your base fabric. Iron for a few seconds to secure the fusible. Let cool. Remove the paper. Lay the foil shiny side up facing you. The dull side is down touching the fusible. Cover with a pressing paper. Iron for a few seconds. Remove the pressing paper. Let the foil cool. Peel off the plastic film. Any remaining foil can be reused as a negative image. You can also layer the foils. Iron each piece separately in sequence. For example, do a large square in gold foil, then a smaller square in copper foil, then a smaller square in silver. Cover with pressing sheet before ironing each foil to the foil below. As long as the fusible can be reactivated, another layer of foil can be added.

3. **Feather**: Position the feather. Place a couple of strips of fusible tape underneath the feather. You can fuse just one side of the feather and let the other half curve 3-dimensionally. Cover the feather with a pressing paper and iron for about 8-10 seconds. Remove the pressing paper. Let cool.

4. **Sheer**: Place strips of fusible tape all around the edges of the collage. Press. Remove paper. Cover fusible tape and the collage with a sheer fabric. Cover with a pressing cloth. Iron for 8-10 seconds to secure the sheer fabric to the collage. You can also use dry sheet fusibles that are not backed with paper and just cut the strips you want, position them, lay sheer on top, pressing sheet, iron.

5. **Optional**: Use creative hand stitches, free motion embroidery and/or beading to embellish your design. Do a series using the positive and negative images.

6. **Incorporate**: Sew to the front cover of your fabric journal. Sew onto a fiber wrapped canvas frame and hang as wall art. Glue and sew to heavy cardstock. Use just a few stitches to prevent cutting the paper.

7. **Note**: This is an experimental technique and wash-ability is in question. Some foils dry out with age. When it begins to flake off the film, handle carefully and with a mask.
Resources

**Foil:** www.Lauramurraydesigns.com  You can get foil, sampler foil kits and Screen Trans foil goop as well as Shiva Paint Sticks. She has a wonderful new book out on star points.
www.Embellishmentvillage.com also carries foil and a lightweight foiling glue. The glue needs to dry a bit before applying the foil with your finger or burnishing tool (no iron needed) and I hear it is safe to iron, dry clean and wash so it would work on quilts and garments not just wall art.

**Steam a Seam Lite:** Joanne’s or The Warm Company: Steam a Seam Lite dry fusible sheets or hemming tapes in 1/4 to 1/2 inch wide rolls.

**Misty Fuse:** Online at www.mistyfuse.com/ you can get the sheer web called Misty Fuse in black or white as well as Ultraviolet. It is dry (no tacky surface, no paper sheets to peel off) and has a wonderful weblike appearance. Very light.

**Fusible Threads:** Each one requires a different amount of time to fuse. Some go easily through the needle on the sewing machine, some need to go through the bobbin.
www.YLIcorp.com
Superior Threads makes one called Charlotte’s Fusible Marathons

**Silk Dyes:** www.SilkDyes.com - Color Hue Instant Setting Dyes (works on silk, linen, rayon and wool). 10 Color Dye kits available along with a Simple Silk Dyeing DVD over 1 hour long showing how to mix and use the dyes. Use dyes mixed with water to dye sheer silk organza and use over the foil to soften the metallic effect. Dye silk broadcloth (feels and sews like cotton) and use as a base fabric to add foil to and then cover with a dyed sheer organza. Free art newsletter with helpful hints available, if you sign up

Marlene is available for lectures, demonstrations and workshops on easy dyeing with instant setting silk dyes, creative collage, thread painting techniques, foiled fabrics, the daily art process and fabric journaling.

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