

# Abstract Mixed-media Landscapes

by Denise Oyama Miller

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Host Susan Brubaker Knapp with Denise Oyama Miller

## Materials

Makes an 8" x 10" mounted, quilted landscape

- Felt batting, 9" x 11"
- Fusible web, 9" x 11" (I used Wonder-Under®.)
- Cotton batiks, paper, ribbons, etc. (See "Use It, Don't Lose It" for tips.)
- Glass-headed pins
- Craft and fabric scissors
- Sewing machine with zigzag or free-motion capability
- Three-dimensional embellishments such as beads, buttons, heavy yarns, thick appliques
- Fine wool embroidery thread or thin yarn for couching on finished edge
- 8" x 10" stretched canvas
- Acrylic paint
- Matte or satin medium for finishing
- Gloss medium for attaching to canvas
- Acrylic flat brushes 1" or 2"

## Optional

- Embroidery threads and embroidery needles
- Beads and beading needles

Mixed media is perfect for playing and experimenting. I love making small pieces as a warm-up exercise or just as a way to take a break between larger artwork. In this process, you can use almost any materials—fabric, paper, paint, threads, yarn, beads, and other ephemera—to make simple landscapes in an abstract or representational approach.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Apply the fusible to 1 side of the felt, following the manufacturer's directions.
2. To create the design, first determine the horizon line for the landscape. Make a light pencil line or chalk mark on the felt, if desired.

**Tip:** The color palette is up to you and your materials: try a primarily warm one with a cool accent color or vice versa, complementary colors, analogous colors, or any other combination you like.

## USE IT, DON'T LOSE IT

You can use almost any sort of materials to create a landscape. This is the perfect project for all the bits and bobs, leftovers, and precious finds you've been saving! Here are some of the items I've included in my work:

- Book pages, tickets, brochures
- Yarn, thread and floss, sari silk strips, other fibers
- Dyed cheesecloth
- Lace
- Hand-dyed or painted fabric
- Trim-aways from other fusing projects
- Other two-dimensional objects like postage stamps and stickers

3. Cut or tear random strips of fabric, paper, ribbons, or other two-dimensional fiber for the sky, distant mountains/hills, mid-ground, and foreground. Vary the widths and shapes. Play around with the order of the colors and the width sizes. With the fusible side of the felt up (remove the paper backing if the fusible has it), place the strips on top—covering the fusible completely. Pin the strips with glass-head (heat-resistant) pins. Press. Remove the pins.
4. Add other embellishments and embroidery such as ribbon, beads, couched fibers, loose thread, embroidery thread, dryer lint, yarn, etc. Add additional design elements, if desired (such as the flowers in my foreground).
5. Quilt randomly over the whole surface using straight lines, zigzag, and/or free-motion stitching. Vary the thread colors and use multiple threads at the same time to enhance the stitching, if desired.
6. If using, sew on three-dimensional embellishments such as beads, buttons, thick ribbons, etc. now.
7. Trim the landscape to 8" x 10". Finish the edge with 3 rows of zigzag stitch (2.8 width), reducing the stitch length for each round (.95, .75, .55).


**Tip:** Before stitching the edge, place a thin yarn or wool embroidery thread on the stitching line and catch it in the first row of zigzag stitch. This will ensure a nice flat edge.



Project photo courtesy of the artist

"After the Eclipse" • 8" x 10"

8. Paint a layer of matte or satin medium over the entire surface of the landscape as a varnish. This will make the piece slightly darker. Allow the landscape to dry completely.
9. Paint the sides of the stretched canvas with acrylic paint in a color to complement the landscape. Allow the edges to dry.
10. Paint a thick layer of gloss medium on the top surface of the stretched canvas. While still damp, place the finished landscape onto the stretched canvas and press down. Allow the medium to dry completely.

**Tip:** Place heavy books or a similar flat weight on top of the landscape—covering the entire top with equal weight—to seal the edges. 

[deniseoyamamiller.com](http://deniseoyamamiller.com)