

Garbage Can Fabric.

Cut a square of medium weight fusible interfacing. Squares larger than 18" are too unwieldy so smaller are ok but not larger.

Collect scraps and snippets from your sewing. The fabrics pictured below came from the trash can in my sewing room. They are trimmings from blocks I squared up, crumbs from the cutting table and all kinds of thread cuttings. There were some long savage edges that I did cut into smaller chunks.



Arrange them on the fusible side of the interfacing, you want even coverage but not too thick or chunky. Do a lot of fluffing and separate pieces that are stuck together. You want a flat even coverage.



Use a lot of steam and press, press, press until you think the fusible has adhered to the bottom of the fabric mess pretty good. This will only secure it well enough to get it over to the machine and under the needle. Snips will fall off but just set them aside to may be used later.

Here is where you can use up half gone bobbins and spools. You will be doing a lot of stitching. I start with a straight stitch going back and forth in a random pattern. I am just anchoring for later work. Then I go to a wide open zig zag and work in a grid side to side and then top to bottom. Precision is not an issue just get those snippets down and secured. The presser foot will hang up from time to time on a fold or string, just cut the fabric free and go on. I use my hands to help guide the foot over the folds and such. Loosening the presser foot pressure is helpful too.



Once you mainly have things secured with the zigzag then go to free motion. I find the darning foot works best here. Get out some bright or darker thread and start doing it in a stipple pattern. Here is a good time to practice free motion if you want. Again precision is not an issue; coverage is what you are going for. As you see loose areas go for it and get them down. If you find a bare patch, and you will, just snip a patch from a scrap and sew it down. If you want to try free motion appliqué then cut a shape, but keep it small to not lose that nice texture. Also you can use the petals from pulled apart silk flowers.

When the piece is secure with no loose strings and no bare patches you are ready for embellishment.



Here is where the fun begins. Rick Rack, cording, long strings of fabric, ribbon, yarn, any thing that can be couched down works. Loosen your presser foot pressure gage to zero, put on a couching foot and go for it. I used fancy stitches for couching, go slow and you can make gentle curving lines of embellishment.

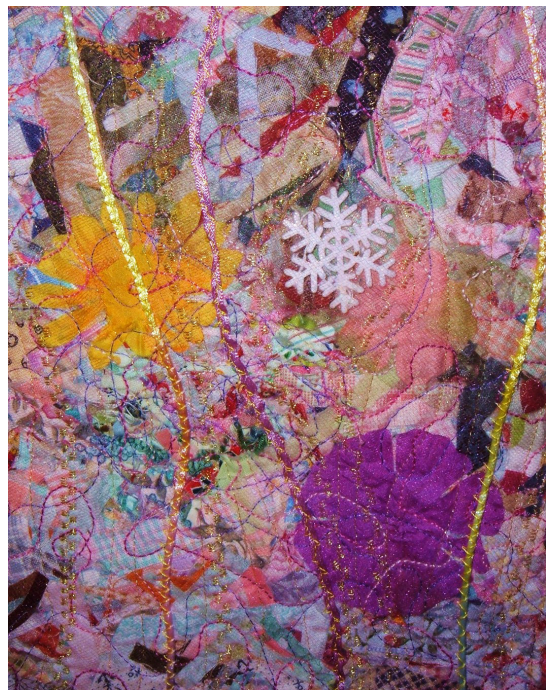


Give it a good pressing and it should lay flat. You are now ready to incorporate it into a project. It is stable and can take multiple washing and wear. If you like you can add a layer of tulle and add three dimensional inclusions that you keep in place by sewing around them.

Add buttons and charms later in the process so as to allow freer cutting and sewing. Experiment with lots of three dimensional objects but keep in mind if you are going to ever wash your finished project or not. You can also cut out smaller pieces as inclusions into other projects, like three dimensional flowers or use pieces to make little fabric houses, use for postcards, ATCs, binder covers....the weight is similar to canvas. I have some examples of some things I have made.



This was the first piece of garbage can fabric I ever made. It went into a back pack that has been well used and washed many times over. Buttons and charms are added after the completed project so as not to get into the way while sewing.



I did this with inclusions and lots of metallic threads. I liked it so much I had it framed and it hangs in my living room. The fabric was “free” but the framing was very much not! Still I think it was worth as it is one of my favorite pieces.



This bag is more crumb quilting but see how nice serger drippings make a fringe. I used the couching technique here with narrow rickrack. Decorative stitches show here but will not on garbage can fabric. I hope you all try this and have some fun with it. Remember, there are no mistakes, just happy accidents.