

Illuminated Letters DUSTIN WEDEKIND



Tip: This is a great project for using up all those little beads you have left over from other projects.

These pins were inspired by medieval manuscripts created by monks who drew fantastic flora, fauna, and other patterns around letters in their books. Follow the simple guidelines here to embroider a rich-looking letter brooch, and you'll soon be on your way to beading a whole alphabet—without taking any vows!

MATERIALS

3–5mm beads: freshwater pearls, fire-polished, semiprecious stone, or size 8° seed beads

Size 11° seed beads in dark, light, and contrasting colors

Accent beads, buttons, or charms

Pin back

Two 4" squares of Eazy Felt

Size D beading thread

Thread Heaven or beeswax

Notions

Size 10 or 12 beading needle

Scissors

Colored pencil

TECHNIQUES

Single stitch and backstitch embroidery

Finished Size: 3" x 3"

STEP 1: Draw a simple letter on a piece of felt at least $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the edges. As you form the letter with a single line, exaggerate any open spaces within the letter (**Figure 1**).

STEP 2: Knot the end of a 6' piece of thread and pass through the back of the felt along the penciled line. Use single stitch embroidery to follow the line with 5mm and/or size 8° seed beads.

STEP 3: Backstitch a row of size 11° seed beads in the contrasting color all around the letter. Stitch close to the beads, but keep the line straight (**Figure 2**).

STEP 4: Backstitch a row of light-colored size 11's around the letter, followed by a row of dark-colored beads and another row of contrasting beads.

STEP 5: Sew accent beads to completely cover the negative spaces of the letter.

Pass through larger beads a few times to thoroughly secure them.

STEP 6: Trim the felt to $\frac{1}{8}$ " around the beads, being careful not to cut your stitches. Cut another piece of felt to the same size. With a new piece of thread, sew the pin back to the back of the second piece of felt. Pass the needle through the felt to the edge and stack the two pieces.

STEP 7: Exiting the back of the brooch, about $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the edge, string 3 dark seed beads. Pass through the top of the brooch, right next to the outside row of beads, and exit the back near the edge (**Figure 3**). Repeat all around, alternating 2 stitches using light beads with 1 stitch using dark beads. Finish the thread by trying a knot on the back, then passing through the felt and trimming close to the work.

Resource Eazy Felt: Any large craft store.

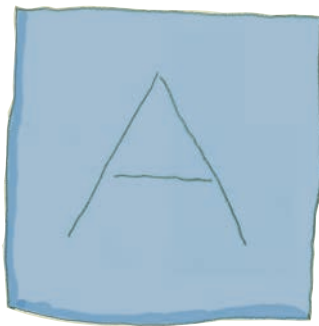


Figure 1

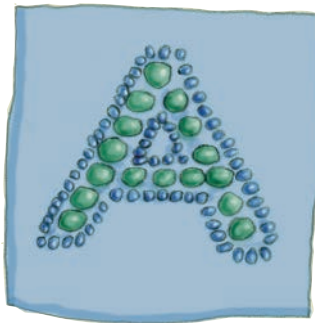


Figure 2

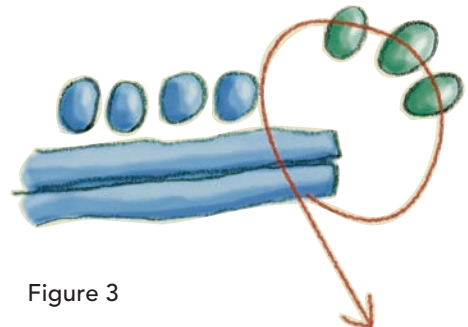


Figure 3