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Opening Extract from...

Fun with Fabric

Written by Jane Foster

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Fun with Fabric

Sew, cut, print and stick with
retro and vintage fabric



Jane
foster



Fun with Fabric

Sew, cut, print and stick with retro and vintage fabric

Jane Foster



COLLINS & BROWN

To my partner
Jim and my
daughter Polly



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Introduction

Ever since I was a student in the late 1980s, I've been fascinated by 1950s style and design: I just love the bold, geometric shapes and vibrant colours of this period, whether it's in textiles, furniture or simple pieces of homeware. I've found myself particularly drawn to Scandinavian designs, especially those on ceramics. I love the Swedish designs of Stig Lindberg (for Gustavsberg) and Marianne Westman (for Rörstrand) and the illustrative patterns on some earlier pieces from the Finnish company Arabia and the Norwegian company Figgjo Flint. I also like 1960s Marimekko fabrics, with their eye-catching, extra-large patterns and bold, vivid colours.

I was a child in the 1970s and my parents sometimes shopped in Habitat. I particularly recall a bright green sofa they bought that had green chrome arms and also a bright plastic Crayonne ice bucket – and many of my favourite projects feature similarly strong and vibrant colours. My parents also bought a few pieces of Danish furniture from Heals, at a time when many other people favoured the pretty and more 'feminine' designs from Laura Ashley and Sanderson. I, too, have steered away from pastels, preferring the bold!





I live with my partner, Jim, who shares my passion for retro style, and our daughter, Polly, in a small town in the south-west of England, surrounded by beautiful countryside. Our house couldn't be more different to its surroundings. It's a modern, four-storey eco townhouse clad with wood. Our house started as a blank canvas and we have transformed it into a colourful, happy home.

I have an eye for an interesting bargain and can spot a piece of fabric that I love from a car boot full of junk, while Jim loves re-wiring retro lamps and helping me with restoration projects. Together, we breathe new life into old fabric, retro objects and furniture that we've found in a variety of places: at car boot sales, in second-hand shops, on eBay and at markets. We've never taken any notice of trends – we just choose to live surrounded by fabrics and items that we love.

My friends often say that they are inspired by the way in which we've decorated our home and they regularly ask me for tips on how they can achieve the same look in their own homes. In 2008 I decided to start a blog alongside my company website, which now has over 1,000 subscribers – so it seems that I'm not the only person who has fallen in love with this period and design style! This book brings together projects which you can easily incorporate into your own home and you can adapt the designs to suit whatever fabrics you can find – I will also show you some simple techniques for screen printing your own fabrics. The projects in this book range from ever-so-easy items that you can make in a matter of minutes, to bigger projects such as patchworks and table runners – but, as I'm a busy mum, I've concentrated on simple shortcuts that even the most novice stitcher can master.

I've had great fun devising these projects and drawing inspiration from my collection of vintage fabrics and my own illustrations. I hope my enthusiasm is infectious – now go and have fun with fabric!

Ever so simple

If, like me, you love fabric, you'll find it hard to throw away even the tiniest scrap of a precious vintage or retro material – your cupboards and drawers will be full to overflowing with treasures that you just know you'll find a use for some day. This chapter features some really quick and easy projects that will enable you to showcase even the smallest pieces and give them new life. They really couldn't be more simple to make: if you can wield a glue stick and sew in a reasonably straight line, you can create all of these in next to no time! If you have kids, why not get them to help with projects like the fabric-covered matchboxes (page 18) and pots (page 20)? It's a fun way to spend an afternoon – and you'll be passing on your passion for fabrics to the next generation!

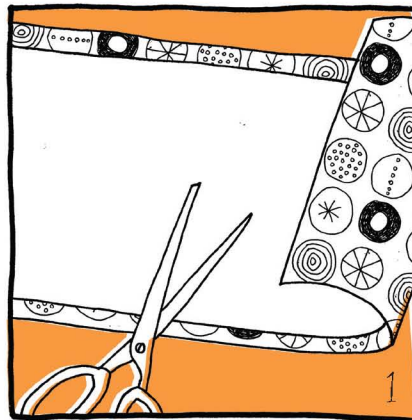


Shine a light

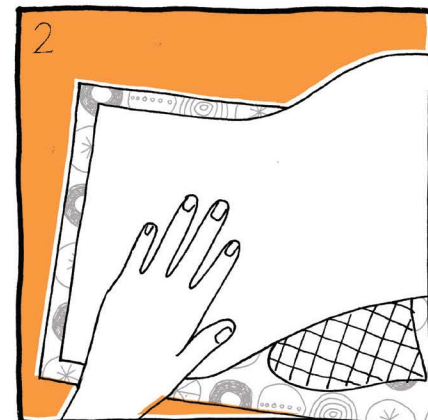
We've sourced many retro and vintage lamp bases over the past years from car boot sales and it's great fun making lampshades in interesting fabrics to go with them. The beauty is that you can make new shades if you fancy a change and they're a fraction of what you would pay in the shops. Also, no one else in your street will have the same!

You will need

This project uses a flat-packed lampshade kit, which contains everything you need (apart from your chosen fabric) and precise instructions. You can buy these online in a variety of shapes and sizes.



1 Place the long, self-adhesive panel from the kit on top of your fabric, making sure that the pattern on the fabric is straight and in line with the edges of the panel, and cut the fabric to about 2.5 cm (1 in.) larger all around than the lampshade panel.



2 Place the fabric right side down on your work surface, with the self-adhesive panel on top. When you're happy with the positioning, carefully peel back about 10 cm (4 in.) of the backing paper from the panel. Place the panel sticky side down on the fabric and smooth it out. Work down the whole length, smoothing the fabric out from the middle as you go.



The joys of printing

I was first introduced to screen printing at school when I was a teenager and I remember thinking it was the coolest, cleverest thing ever! My art teacher, Mrs Bruce, was also the coolest ever – she was a total inspiration and I loved everything about her. She was an eccentric: she had black backcombed hair, dark kohl eyeliner, red lips (think Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra!) and wore mostly black – which appealed to me, as I did, too!

Since that time, I've experimented with various methods of printing on fabric, some of which are demonstrated in the pages that follow. I've devised designs based on simple cut-out shapes that I can screen print at home, using inexpensive equipment; I've also discovered how to get my own illustrations printed digitally onto fabric and turn them into unique, one-off pieces that are really special to me and my family. To this day, I still get a thrill when peeling back the screen to reveal the first print of an image on fabric. I hope that the ideas shown here will inspire and encourage you to have a go at this creative and utterly absorbing craft.



Christmas stocking

I've always been attracted to Scandinavian Christmas designs, particularly ones in bright red and white, which combine graphic colour combinations with simple folk-art motifs such as hearts. This is what provided the inspiration for this Christmas stocking. You could print similar motifs onto plain white linen napkins for a fully co-ordinated Christmas look! If you're good at sewing, you might like to line your stocking with a contrasting fabric.

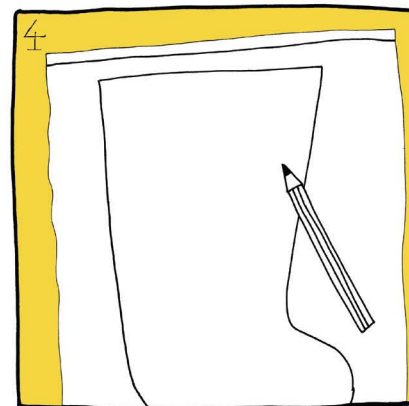
You will need

White and black paper
Template on page 107 (optional)
Craft knife
Cutting mat
Glue stick
Printed stocking fabric panel
Plain white linen or cotton fabric
Ruler
Pencil
Scissors
Pins
Iron
Sewing machine



1 Start by drawing a simple Christmas stocking shape on white paper. Now cut strips and circles (or any shape you fancy) of black paper and arrange them on the stocking template.

2 When you are happy with your layout, use a glue stick to carefully glue them onto the template, then cut around the drawn pencil line. Now stick the whole stocking onto a large piece of white paper.



3 Following the instructions on pages 80–81, prepare and print your design (or have it professionally printed) onto fabric.

4 Place your printed stocking fabric panel print side down on a flat surface and draw around the edge with a pencil. This will later become your sewing line.

*Why not...
Make things even simpler, and
use ribbon for the hanging loop?*



Get the retro look with Jane Foster!

Learn how to source fabulous fabrics
and print your own designs

Brighten up your home with over
15 easy craft projects



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