

IDEAS FOR ADDING HOT FIX CRYSTALS TO DESIGNS

NOTE: Examples used are from BFC679 – Art Deco Bling

Often when you purchase designs created to be used with crystals they will have guides that stitch to show you where to put the crystals. But often you may have designs you would like to use with crystals but aren't sure how to go about deciding where to put them. This document contains some ideas that will make the process much easier! These ideas are not the only way to go about adding crystals, but are designed as guides you can follow to get started on the creative process. And remember as with all creative endeavors, there are no absolute rights or wrongs!

GOAL: To determine the main placement for your crystals and the *balancing* crystals to give an overall pleasing effect. By doing this you will not have the crystals overpower the design or the crystals get lost in the design and not be effective. There are several ways to do this.

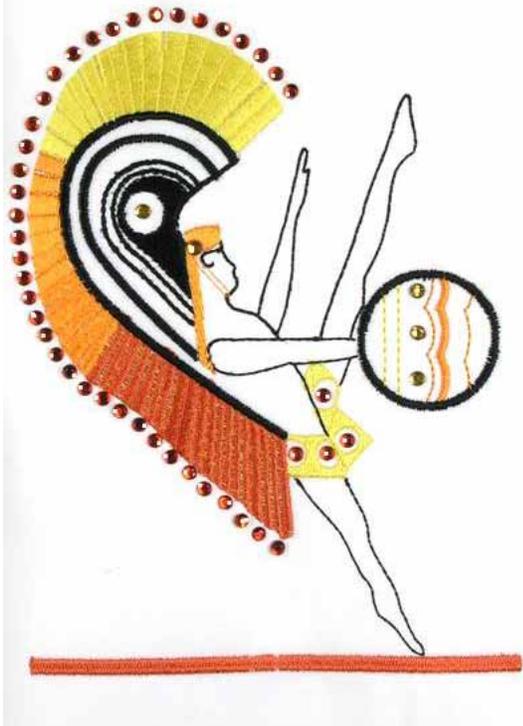
STEP 1: Step back and view the over all design.

Most designs have a central shape. It might be circular, triangle or square. This applies to all designs – not just geometric designs. For example flowers might be placed so they form a triangular shape – one on top and two below. Don't look too close – just see what your first impression is to determine the main shape of your design. The other thing to look for is a main *line*. It might be vertical – all the elements of the design are placed on top of each other. Or it may be a curve.

Here are some examples:



A definite Triangle even though there are also circles in the design.



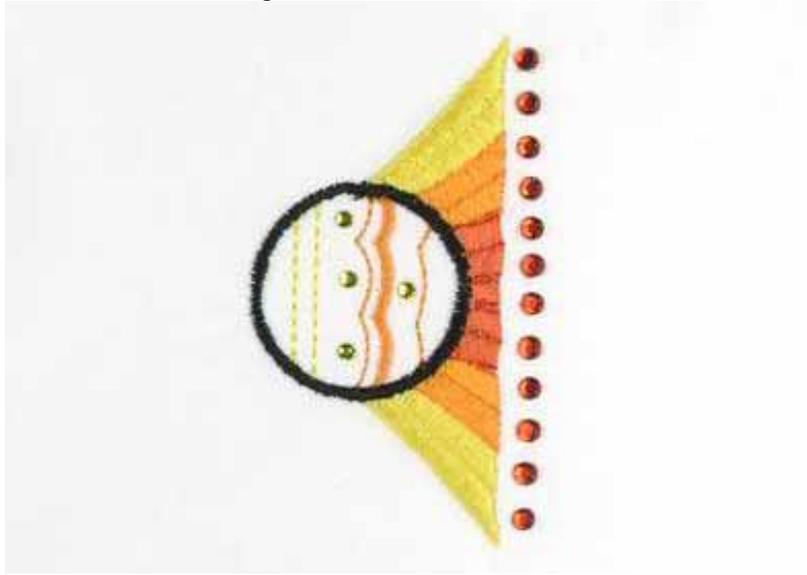
The above design has a main *curve*



This design has two curves – the fan and the stole.



The above has strong vertical and horizontal lines.



This design could be looked at several ways! It could be a circle, a triangle or as I decided a vertical line. If I had not put the crystals along the vertical line and had instead put them outside the circular edge, the look would be totally different.

I think you get the idea of what to look for. Again, go with your first impression. Don't try to analyze this too much. Your first impression is probably what others will see first also.

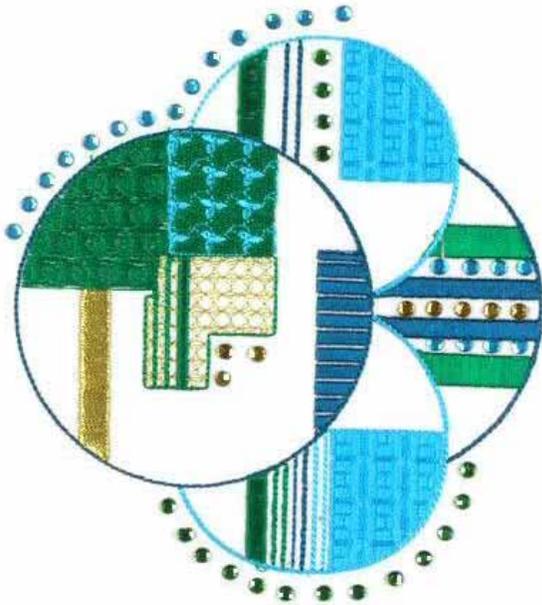
When placing your crystals you can't go wrong by emphasizing this main *theme* - whether it is a line or a shape. Then you add a few crystals to other parts of the design for balance.

In the dancer with the large headdress above, I placed most of the crystals following the curve of the headdress to emphasize this main design element. For balance just a few crystals are needed in other areas. I used the open circles in the pants and the headdress and the vertical line within the circle he is holding for balance.

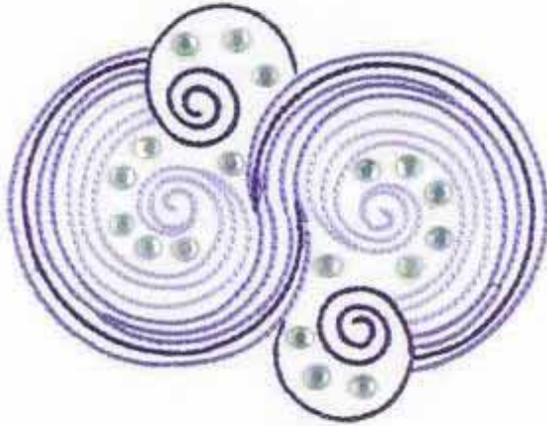
For the lady with the fan, I added crystals to emphasize the two main curves of the fan and stole. The additional crystals were added as centers for the flower and embellishment of her hat.

The gold pillars and fence have both a strong vertical and horizontal line. It is usually best with this kind of design to choose one of these. If you add crystals to both the vertical and horizontal lines, the design can look muddy. I chose the horizontal and added a few at the top of the pillars for balance. Instead I could have added crystals up the middle of the gold pillars and a couple of green crystals in the design of the fence, but not in a straight line so as not to take away from the vertical I want to emphasize.

Circle designs are very common, whether they are actual circles or an arrangement of elements in a circular shape:



This is probably the epitome of a *circular* theme. With an overall circular shape it is usually best not to put crystals all around the circle. If you do, it will not be as interesting and will lose some of the effect. It is better to put them following only one quarter to one half of the circle's perimeter. I have used the one quarter in the top two circles above and balanced it with the half circle at the bottom. If this was just one big circle, I could put crystals on one quarter of the circle on the top or to the side, and follow about half the circle on the opposite side. By using this method both your crystals and the design itself will be emphasized. The balancing crystals in the above design are the ones that follow the short horizontal and vertical elements inside the circle.



The above is another good example of a circle. Because the circle is the main theme, I want to place the crystals in a circular fashion, but this design had two choices – inside or outside the design. To give a more compact look – maybe to be repeated as a border – I chose inside the circle. If I was using this as a main design, I probably would have instead put crystals around the two outer circles on each side, but only about a quarter of the way around. Then my balancing crystals might have been inside the little circles created by the scrolls.

STEP 2 Balance

After you have viewed your design and added crystals following the main theme, look to see where you can add the balancing crystals. Often these look nice if they are in a different direction. If your main crystals are in a horizontal position, add a few crystals to make a vertical line.



On the above design, there are both strong vertical and horizontal elements. Because the lady is already very tall (as is often the case in Art Deco ladies) I decided to emphasize the horizontal lines by adding the green crystals along the fence. One possibility for additional crystals might have been across the horizontal lines in the yellow part of her dress. But if I had done this, your eye would see only these vertical stripes. So instead I placed them along the vertical line of her body. Some on her shoes, the flowers and one in her hat. Once you have placed the main crystals, it is good to just lay the other crystals in place and step back and look at them. You want the overall look to be pleasant. If something doesn't *look* quite right, it probably isn't. Move a few crystals and look again. Your eye will tell you when they are in good places on the design.

STEP 3 COLORS and SIZE

It may seem color would be the first step, but I wanted to explain the above so you will better understand how I choose colors. Colors can either match the design, or be totally different, or a combination of both. Using all clear or AB crystals will always look good. If you decide to use different colored crystals, do so sparingly. If you try to match all the colors in a design, the end result is probably going to look too busy and the *Bling* of the crystals can be lost. Usually two or at most three colors are enough. And of these two or three colors, you want one to be used a lot more than the others. Usually the crystals that follow the theme of the design should be the color you want to emphasize most. It should match the main color of the design or totally contrast with it. The red I used in the dancer above contrasted enough to make the crystals really stand out – the effect I was looking for. On the turquoise and green circle design above I used

crystals that matched the color of the design. Using the same colors make the crystals appear to be more part of the design and contrasting colors tend to make the crystals appear as an additional element in the design and draw your eye to them. Either method is good. It depends on whether you want the crystals to really stand out or blend in with the design more.

The size of the crystals must match your design. Putting very large crystals on a small design will over power it and if you have a large design and use small ones they will get lost unless you use a lot of them. Sometimes one large crystal is enough for a design – for example using one large clear or AB crystal on the petal of a rose as dew.

If you use medium or large crystals for the main theme of the design, then the smaller size are good for the balancing crystals.

OTHER IDEAS

Marking an image of the design. If you get a color chart with your designs that has a picture of the design on it, print it out. Then you can experiment with placement by using colored markers and putting dots where you want the crystals. You can play using different layouts until you like your arrangement. Having a black and white printout to do this is good also because it lets you see the effect of the crystals more dramatically. If the colored dots look skimpy, or don't seem to balance, it will be very obvious against the black and white printout.

Less is usually better. If in doubt whether to add any more crystals to your design, you probably already have enough. Unless you have a specific reason for a very encrusted design, crystals are usually more effective used in moderation.

Try Hot Fix Rhinestones. If you are just starting out using crystals, try experimenting with hot fix rhinestones instead. They are much less expensive and while they don't have quite the sparkle of real crystals, they look really good too. I did all the designs for the set I've used here for illustration with rhinestones instead of crystals to see how they look. I was very pleased with the result. For garments and things I want to be especially nice I would still use crystals, but where I want to use a lot of Bling and for things like hand bags, I won't hesitate to use the rhinestones. They are also good to practice with since the cost is so much lower.

The Scatter Method. If you have a design that you really want to use crystals with, but just can't figure out where to place them, try this method. Around the outside of the design, start scattering crystals moving outwards. Put the larger crystals closest to the design and as you move out, switch to smaller sizes. Also make them denser along the edge of the design and farther apart as you move out. This will give the design a totally different look and will *blend* it with the background. Your scatter shape doesn't have to be exactly the same shape as the design either. If you have a basically round group of flowers, your scattered crystals could be more of an oval shape or triangular – or even a totally random edge. If using crystals in this manner you can also mix colors, but it is usually best to stick to shades of a color. Start with the darkest towards the center and get lighter as you move outwards. This method tends to blend your design more into your fabric and is especially nice for garments. You can even make the outer most crystals the same color as your fabric to enhance this blending of design and fabric.

Thank you, Suz

Suz@BFC-Creations.com

<http://www.BFC-Creations.com>