



DESIGN & MAKE

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CRFoo1 : Rags and Tatters Cushion



.....each month we see what we can do with some of the bits and pieces from The Cutting Room Floor



... comfortable . cosy and easy ...not a bad attempt...??



....and I always really like the hand sewn sides that we do it takes all the fuss out of making closures and looks great !

Rags and Tatters Cushion



We've made this cushion type a number of times for clients- making good use of their own bits and pieces. As it takes no time to do and there's not really a right or wrong way to make it, it's win - win really. The important thing is to keep it casual.

All of our odds and ends are saved in metal bins by colour and by type, and our starting point for this was the grey and off white spotty felted wool we used for two cushions in a recent project. The slivers of camels and off whites are all pieces of woollen fabrics, off-cuts from some of last winters projects.

On the face of it the bits and pieces we had to work with didn't look all that encouraging - they were no more than slivers and odd trimmings. The dark grey wool ground fabric came from our pile and we used it the size we had. We trimmed (frayed) the edges back to straighten it up- luckily it's a fairly loose weave and an easy one to fray. It ended up at 39 cms wide x 64 cms long (just under 16" x 26") which, folded in half is a perfect small cushion.

We quite like it when the bits and pieces of fabric keep some of the salvaged look about them, rags and tatter-y as long as they casually intentional rather than just messy. However, this isn't everyone's cup of tea, and it's really no big deal to tidy up the edges, or to only use the best bits, in order to make an altogether more chic affair.

When we frayed the sides though, we realised that, for authenticity, we'll now have to think of something to do with these... so ... watch this space.....

TO MAKE THE CUSHION COVER

1. Straighten the fabric by fraying the edges. Some fabrics are easier than others; you might be able to pull two or three threads at a time, but start with a single thread.

Tip ! For a firmer fabric, pin it to the worktable – or with drawing pins to a jig saw board or some other board – so that you give yourself something firm to pull against.

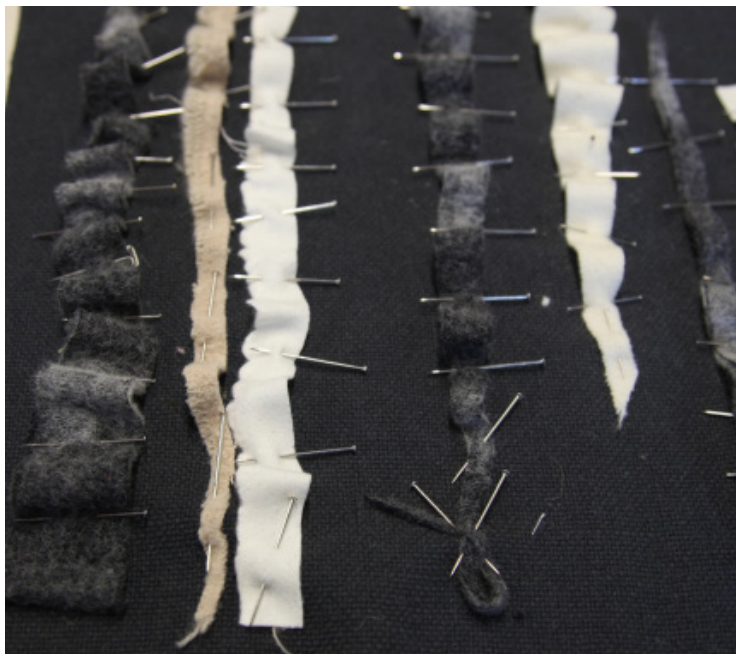
2. Trim the frayed edges away.
3. Fold the fabric in half, press, and mark the folded edge with a row of pins.
4. Unfold the fabric and open out, so that the half that you want to work on is nearest you. There's no reason why the whole cushion can't be worked so that it's reversible, but we just did the front.

TO ADD THE RAGS AND TATTERS

1. Collect the strips of fabric together and start to lay them onto the cushion ground – these were pretty much the sizes we had, but you might need to cut your left – overs down a bit. They can be shorter or longer, wider or thinner, but a mixture works best.
2. Pin them on, pinning across the strips, so they can stay in place as they are being machined. Allow each strip to have some movement, some wiggles and some pleating, just whatever seems to look OK.



3. Carry on pinning until it looks complete.



Tip ! Although I prefer to see the whole picture before stitching any strips down, others might prefer to stitch one of two in place at this stage, look at it, and then add more.



8. Stitch each in place, using straight stitches or zig- zagging, with one coloured thread or changing for each piece. Matching threads or not – doesn't need to be taken too seriously, but not careless either.



9. Trim away all loose ends. Take out the marking pins from along the fold line and give the cushion a good shake.

TO MAKE THE CUSHION

10. Fold in half again, now with the right sides together. Match the lower edges and pin to hold. Fray back approx. 5-6 mm (1/4").
11. Match the sides, pin for seaming and stitch 1.5 cms (5/8") from the raw edges. Neaten the edges if you need to. Remove the pins. Press the stitching from both sides to bed them in.
12. Press the seam open, until just before the fold. Turn out and press the seam from the front , pressing over a slightly damp cloth and a sleeve board or pressing roll.
13. Insert a cushion pad. Our cover needed a pad of 30 x 36 cms, so we took some filling out of a 35 cm (14") square pad, until it felt nicely squishy.

14. Pin the raw edges together 2 cms (3/4") from the edge.



15. Hand stitch along the pinned line, to enclose the pad securely. We happened to have this needle threaded up with the right amount of thread, left from the current project. I was going to use an off white or a dark grey linen thread, but thought that in the spirit of the thing, and the outside chance of it happening, we should use what we had in front of us. ...



16. At the ends either make visible knots or double stitch to the seams inside.



..... and here it is, finishedsitting on my sofa....



... in the end ...it's always about the colours and the textures



This cushion is from our *From the Cutting Room Floor* series where we endeavour to make good looking and useful furnishings from things we would normally throw away. We have so many that we can't save them all, but we do try... and most of these really do look too small to be of any value...

This cushion is fun and easy to do. It can be put together easily by children who like to come in and find things to do, and those who don't usually enjoy sewing. It makes very good use of the odd shapes and sizes, slivers of straightening-ups that frankly, without some purpose in mind, can be a bit of a nuisance to keep.

We are often asked for cushion contributions to charity auctions and Christmas fairs - and I'm quite sure we're not alone in this. Rags and Tatters cushions are a pretty good way for any of us who have workrooms and more scraps that we know what to do with to give something that's attractive, fun, planet-saving and useful.

And who'd have thought these re-cycled scraps could look this good !

PROJECT NO. CRF : 001 Rags and Tatters Cushion

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