

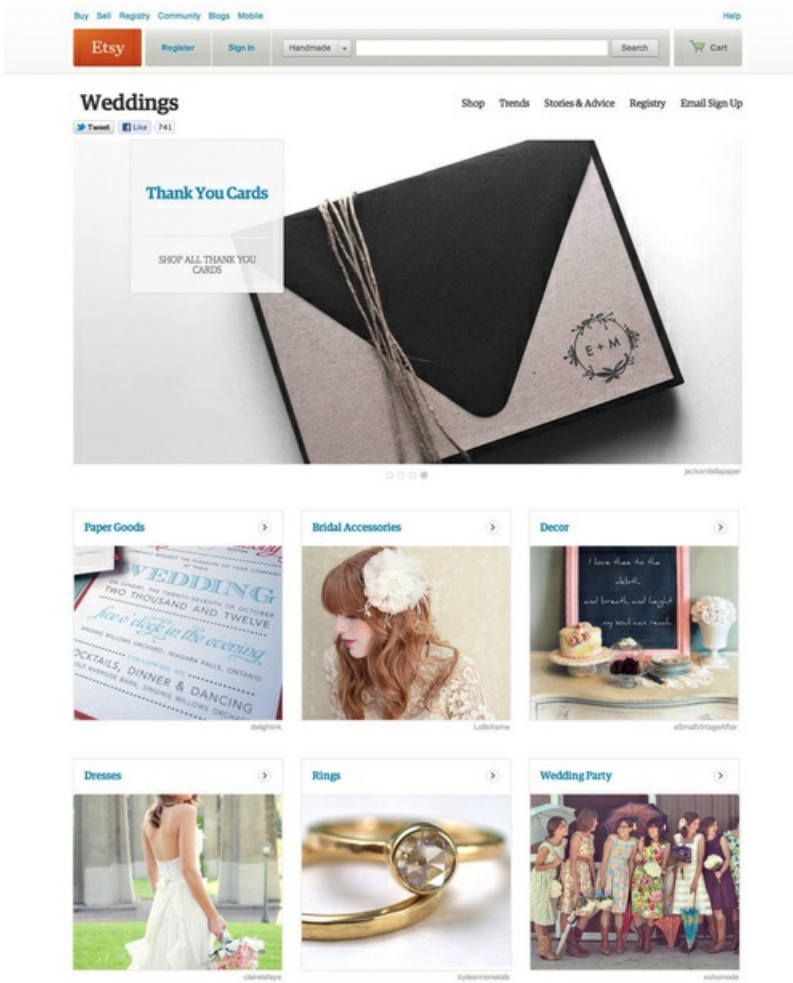
DIY Wedding Sparkle with Artistic Crystals: The Business of Bling

Editor: Liz Johnson
Monday, 28 May 2012 3:00



It's time to sparkle! We kick off a new series today that is different than anything we've done before here on Sew4Home. Over the past several months, we've worked with sponsor, Janome America to learn about their Artistic software brand, focusing on the Artistic Crystals system in particular. We've been very diligent students, and now have two weeks of wedding wonders planned that make use of this amazing integrated system of crystals, software, cutters and presses. But, it's more that just inspiring projects. We've designed the series with creative entrepreneurs in mind. These are projects you can make for yourself or make and sell as a home-based wedding accessories business. We call it: *The Business of Bling!*

The number of options out there for customized wedding gifts, accessories and reception coordinates is growing every day. Spend just a few minutes on creative shopping sites, like Etsy, and you'll discover an impressive number of shops dedicated to providing anything and everything wedding related. It's one of the most popular categories Etsy has. Today's brides are more DIY-focused than ever. Some simply want to save money, but many others are most interested in finding items that can be handcrafted with their special wedding theme in mind. And they are willing to pay to have something no one else has!



Artistic 101

There are three software programs available within the Artistic family: Artistic Monogram, Artistic Crystals and Artistic Suite. The Monogram software is targeted at home embroiderers and is not reviewed here. We focused on the use of Artistic Crystals V6.0, which drives the crystal design and application; and Artistic Suite V6, which combines both the Monogram and the Crystals software along with additional power to do digitizing and heat transfer. The Artistic website shows you all the available software packages.



To get started in the *Business of Bling*, you need software, a digital cutter and initial packages of the template material, the adhesive material and the crystals themselves. The software comes standard with drivers for the eCraft, Cameo and Zing digital cutters. We used the Cameo cutter for all our samples. The biggest variable will be the crystals. They come as pretty cut glass all the way up to dazzling Swarovski® Crystals. And, each type comes in a variety of colors and sizes. The variety is too much to go into here, but your Artistic dealer can help you decide what would be best for your projects.



A basic package starts at about \$800 from a certified Artistic Dealer. This price includes the Artistic Crystals software, a Cameo cutter, and the Artistic Starter Kit, a hard case kit that includes rhinestones, backer board, adhesive material, template material and a crystal brush. You would use your home iron to heat set the crystal designs.



If you want more flexibility and precision, and you want to be able to combine crystals with embroidery (and more), you could move to a premium package with the Artistic Suite software, a Cameo cutter, an Artistic Starter Kit, and an Artistic Press for heat setting. This will run you approximately \$2,100.

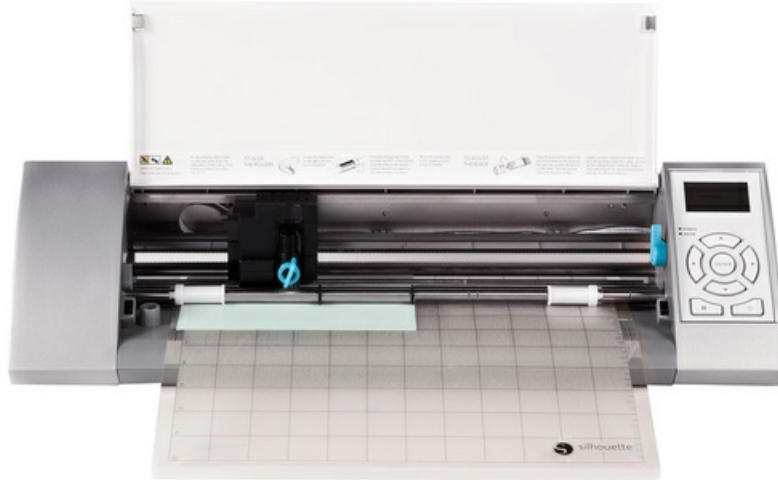


Your local Artistic dealer is likely to carry both ends of the spectrum as well as offer several package options in between. The Artistic website has a handy dealer locator to find a retailer in your area.

So, there is a little money involved in this technique, which is why we wanted to approach our series as a business opportunity, and show you how you could make an Artistic system pay for itself.

The basic steps of design and application

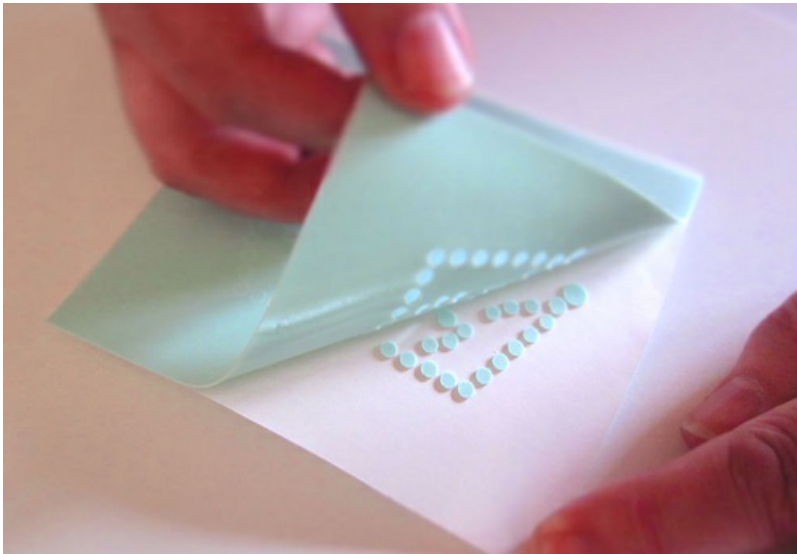
1. The design you use can be selected from within the image library in the software itself, purchased from one of several sites dedicated to crystal application (such as the [Silhouette site](#) from which we purchased ours), or brought in from another source as a graphic file. This third option means you can hand draw something completely custom.
2. Once you have your design selected, bring it into the software. This is where you can make fine adjustments to crystal placement, re-size, duplicate designs, etc.
3. When the design is just as you'd like it, the finished file is sent to the digital cutter into which a sheet of template material has been inserted.



4. The digital cutter makes perfect little holes in the correct size to form your chosen design.



5. Remove the paper backing from the template material.



6. Place the template onto the backer board. This will hold the template steady while you fill it with crystals.

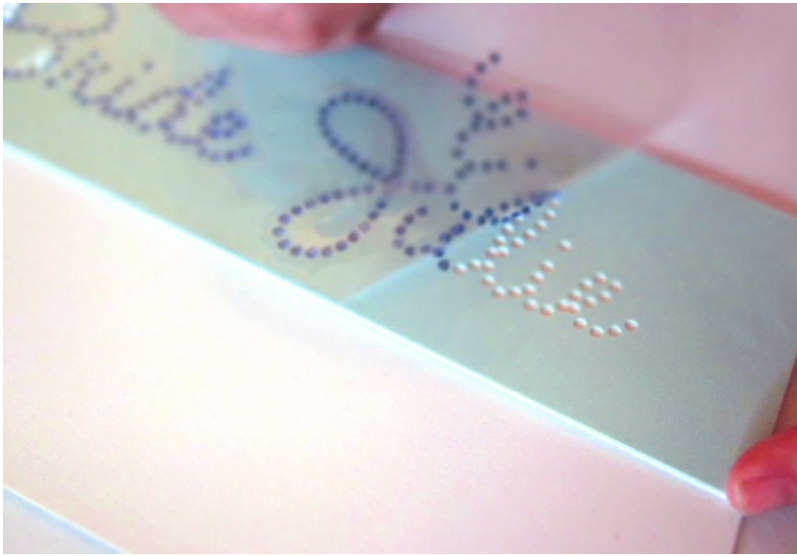


7. Brush the crystals into place.



8. Cut a piece of adhesive material to size and place it over the top of the template with all the crystals in place.

9. Smooth the sheet to insure a strong bond with the crystals, then peel back the adhesive transfer sheet, carrying the crystal design with it.



10. Place the crystals into their final position on your project. Press lightly but firmly to adhere so the design stays in position and can be easily moved to the ironing board or press.



11. Heat set the design using an iron or an Artistic press. A pressing cloth is used in all instances, and for some projects with two layers, such as a t-shirt, an additional silicone sheet can be used between the layers to prevent them from sticking together. The heat setting takes, on average, only about 45 seconds.
12. Remove the adhesive transfer sheet from the set crystals. Ta-da!



13. The above steps are a condensed overview, but you can see it is a very easy process.

The ideas and inspiration we have in store

Our upcoming DIY Wedding projects are structured to provide inspiration rather than act as full software tutorials. Each of our articles will describe the basics of how to make the base project (the sewing end of the story if you will) and, of course, we'll have beautiful photography of all the finished pieces with their crystals applied. Once you're hooked on the idea and have your very own Artistic System, you'll be able to visit the [Artistic website](#), where detailed step-by-step application tutorials will be available as free downloads for all eight of our project ideas. These free .PDF files will be posted to the [Artistic website](#) at the conclusion of our S4H series.

With Artistic Crystals, you get a system that will allow you to create unique products to sell. Once a custom template is created, it can be used over and over, allowing you to easily and economically produce multiples of any given product. We also found the adhesive material could be used several times.

After extensive research within the world of DIY weddings, we came up **eight** project ideas we know will be best sellers.

Flower Girl Overskirt with Rhinestone Border

Put the littlest members of the wedding party in simple dresses, even off-the-rack frocks, then customize the outfits with crystal encrusted overskirts that act like pretty aprons. Each one could feature a different color of shimmering fabric, but the beautiful sparkling border would repeat the bride's theme and coordinate the entire look.

Bejeweled Buttons

Beautiful buttons down the back are one of the most popular accents for gowns. After all, it's the ~~the~~back of the dresses the audience is looking at throughout the ceremony! By adding crystals to a simple covered button, you create instant dramatic flair. We show you ours as a feature strip on a sheer over-the-shoulder capelet, but they'd be equally beautiful on dress closures or even as matching accents on the groom's and groomsman's vests. Beyond the world of weddings, these buttons would fly off the virtual shelf as all-occasion fashion accessories.

Bride & Entourage Sparkle Tees

Inspired by some of the best selling garment specialties we spied, our Sparkle Tees are perfect for showers, bachelorette parties, spa days or any other occasions where the wedding party is traveling together. We show you how to create personalized tees for the Bride and her entire Entourage.

Bridesmaid Clutches

This is one of the hottest trends out there right now: matching clutches for the wedding party. Just the right size to carry a few important items to the wedding and reception, many brides are also using these little purses to hold special wedding day gifts for their girlfriends. We have a simple envelope design with a crystal monogram on the outside flap - so all the purses can match the bride's color scheme yet each one will be easily identifiable by its owner.

Napkin/Flatware Wraps for the Reception

How to set a beautiful table without breaking the bank is always a wedding challenge. We've designed a fast and easy embellished band that, when wrapped around plain linens and flatware, turns ordinary into extraordinary and gives each place setting the perfect dash of glittering style.

Candle Wraps in Lace and Crystals

Continue the offerings for a terrific tabletop with our centerpiece candle vases. Thanks to their super tough adhesive, crystals can be adhered on almost any fabric or paper surface... even lace! We started with simple cylindrical vases from the Dollar Store and ended up with vintage style stunners that will set the entire table aglow.

Embellished Paper Fold-ups for Tabletop Souvenirs or Birdseed Boxes

Digital cutters are designed to work on a variety of materials, including heavy paper stock. There are numerous websites offering very inexpensive cutting templates (ours was just 99 cents!) for pretty fold-up boxes and sleeves. This would be a lovely way to incorporate a bride's thematic emblem, such as a star, flower, crown or flourish on beautiful paper that matches the other accessories.

Ring Bearer Pillow with Embroidery & Crystals

At the top of the learning curve is the ability to combine machine embroidery and crystals. With Artistic Suite, the process is an easy digital overlay. The result is an intricate composite design of heirloom quality.

Ready. Set. Sparkle... Sell!

Tags:

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[DIY Wedding Sparkle with Artistic Crystals: Bridesmaid Clutch with Crystal Initial](#)

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