

### Desiree's Birthday Quilt

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A friend of a friend, Desiree, had an idea for her 50th birthday. She would have her friends, family and co-workers decorate blocks and she'd make a quilt. She went to JoAnn's and got help estimating how much muslin to buy and picked out a couple of other fabrics. It took Desiree almost a year to get all the blocks back and by then, she had lost her nerve, having never made a quilt before. I met with her and gave her some tips about cutting sashing strips and sewing the blocks together in rows. Months later, I ran into Desiree who sheepishly admitted that she still had not done anything about making the quilt. I said "why don't you just let me make it for you?" She was happy and relieved. The first problem I had was that the blocks were so different! Some were heavily beaded and embellished. Some were stiff with paint. Desiree had not told them to leave seam allowance, so some of the designs extended right to the edges. One was simply a square of knitting. Some of them show things about the maker, others show things about their relationship with Desiree. A few contain photos. I decided that in order to sew them together, I would first have to applique them each onto another piece of beige fabric so that I would have seam allowance to work with. I had recently purchased a new machine and had fun experimenting with all the decorative stitches. I then sashed all the blocks with her fabrics and decided that it might look more interesting to tip the blocks and make them "wonky". I found a nice border fabric and got enough for the backing as well. It came together nicely but was quite a challenge to quilt, since many of the blocks were stiff and I had to quilt around the beads and charms. It's also quite heavy. Desiree has plans for a "reveal" party and she's going to have everyone sign the label for the back of the quilt. It was a lot of fun working on this for her and even though I don't know her well, I learned a lot about her and her friends from seeing what the blocks are. She plans on hanging the quilt on her dining room wall and is glad it only took 3 1/2 years to complete!