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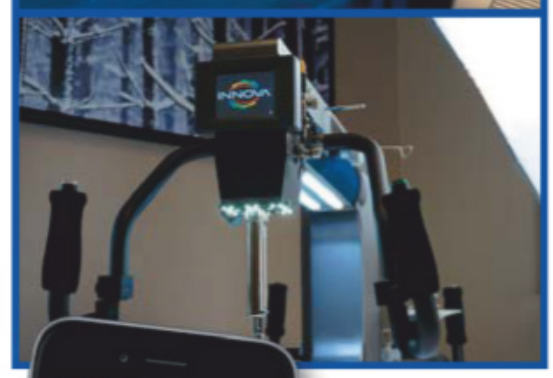




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# Quilting Arts MAGAZINE

JUNE/JULY 2019 | ISSUE 99

## *Appliqué* *with* **Abandon!**

## Raw-edged & Reckless

p. 40

## Art to Share

- Mixed-Media Milagros
- Pincushions with Panache
- Amulets, Talismans, and Charms

+

## Boost Your COLOR CONFIDENCE

*with* Lea McComas

p. 28

*artwork by Jean Impey*

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# *editor's* note

THE CAR IS PACKED, THE MAIL HAS BEEN PUT ON HOLD, THE WEEK AT THE BEACH IS BOOKED, AND THE COOLER IS OVERFLOWING WITH SOFT DRINKS AND SANDWICHES. BUT THE BIG QUESTION STILL REMAINS: WHAT WILL YOU PACK IN YOUR PROJECT BAG?



For me, that is always a dilemma.

I have no problem setting aside a novel or two for a vacation getaway. In fact, my reading list is always longer than I have time to complete on a trip. But I find it much harder to hone in on a take-away project that fits all of my criteria. Although I always have a small knitting project ready for long car rides, I also want something fun to stitch. Like most people, I am not a "monogamous" quilter: I have many projects in various stages of completion but I seriously doubt any of them will find their way into my project bag this summer. Most of my fiber art is either not portable because it is too large or impractical because it has too many bits and pieces.

In my opinion, the perfect take-along project must be:

**Compact:** It has to fit inside my purse. Luckily, I carry a sizeable bag in the summertime with lots of pockets for everything from sunscreen to scissors.

**Creative:** It has to allow some room for my own personality to shine through. Although I've tried stitching 1" hexagons on a past road trip, I didn't find the repetition all that inspiring. I have to be able to put my own stamp on each project, no matter how small.

**Mindless**: Ok, that might be the wrong adjective, but what it can't be is overly complicated, requiring full concentration, or containing loads of small pieces. Here's where I'll rule out hand piecing a Mariner's Compass quilt or embellishing prayer flags with thousands of seed beads.

So you can see, while this list may limit the project size and scope, it in no way limits the possibilities for creativity. Not every piece of art we make needs to be a prizewinner, but it does need to be able to stand on its own merits. My creative pursuits—no matter how small—are a reflection of my soul, so I choose wisely.

This issue of QUILTING ARTS has several techniques and art quilting projects that would be perfect seaside companions and meet every one of the criteria listed above. I can't wait to try them all—but none are so inviting as Susan Brubaker Knapp's amulets, talismans, and charms (p. 56). Not only are they unique, they are also the perfect canvas for meditative stitching. And if I need further distraction, I can always work in my sketchbook designing a new Milagro (p. 17) or drawing fresh ideas for embellishing pincushions inspired by Enid Gjelten Weichselbaum's wooden spools (p. 78). And if time permits, I might even do all three.

Now I'm getting excited! I've packed a few scraps of hand-dyed linen, several skeins of embroidery floss, my sketchbook, and a drawstring bag stocked with sewing supplies. I plan on beachcombing and looking for shells and other ephemera along the way to embellish my amulets, and hope that the final pieces will be ready to wear by the end of my trip. What better way to relax and recharge?

So what's in your project bag? I hope whatever you pack brings you joy and relaxation …

Best,

Vivika

Vivika Hansen DeNegre, *Editor*

**We need to hear from *you!***

Please take this survey and let us know what surface design, mixed media, book art, and hand stitching techniques you want to know more about.
**surveymonkey.com/r/QA-Reader-Survey**
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*Cover art by Jean Impey*









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# it's your *turn*

Dear Quilting Arts,

Perfect timing! I received my April/May issue yesterday and last night I read Lea McComas' article on "Using Color with Confidence." I'm making a toddler quilt for a little girl who loves purple and pink. I knew I had to add another color to give it some pop and had chosen yellow, but I didn't want it to become the focus. The article gave me good insight on how to accomplish that. As always, your articles are educational whether I use the skills and techniques in my art quilts or traditional quilts!

Thanks,

*Stacey Cummings • Inman, South Carolina*

Dear Quilting Arts,

I loved the different textures in Libby Williamson's work (April/May 2018 issue) and the juxtaposition of the mixed-media elements. With quite a collection of fabric scraps in my cupboard, I thought that this would be an opportunity to create a collage series. I made some of the felt circles and, by arranging and re-arranging them over pieces of background fabric, came up with a theme for each color spectrum, adding more circles and bits of ribbon and netting as I went. Although I didn't use other materials in the same way as Libby had, I was pleased with my own interpretation of her stimulating work.

Sincerely,

*Jacqui Bradburn • Colerne, Wiltshire, England*



*Artwork by Jacqui Bradburn, who was inspired by Libby Williamson's work.*

Photos courtesy of the artists



*Ann Ward's hearts inspired by Valerie Komkov Hill.*

Hi Quilting Arts!

The day after I received your magazine, we got a lot of snow, for us. I got busy making the hearts by Valerie Komkov Hill from the February/March issue. Since I didn't have any polyfill, I made them without but they are still cute. Thanks for the great timing!

Yours truly,

*Ann Ward • Beech Grove, Indiana*

## We *love* to hear from you, our readers.

What are you working on now? How has Quilting Arts inspired or educated you? What new techniques or influences are you exploring?

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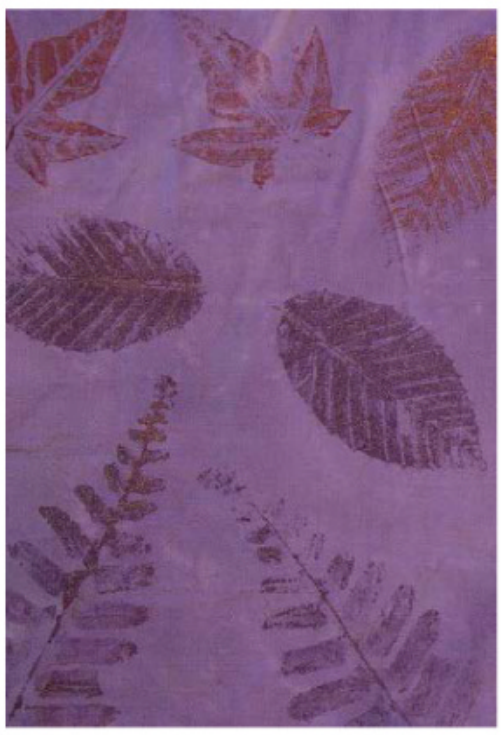





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# about our *contributors*



**Carol Dickson** lives in southern Oregon with her husband and pets. She is a retired police officer and is active in her community.



**Karen Ponischil** is a fiber artist by day and nurse by night. She has been stitching in some form as long as she can remember. Her studio is in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she lives with her husband and pets.

**karenponischil.com**



**Lorraine Turner** is an author, teacher, and motivational speaker who strongly believes in moving thought into action. She uses her textile art to raise awareness and funds for endangered animals. A commercial artist for 40 years, she had her first solo textile show in 2018—a 26-piece special exhibit at International Quilt Festival, Houston. She works from her studio in Clearwater, Florida.

**calicohorses.com**



**Jean Impey** is a committed textile artist and national quilt teacher who began her creative journey at the age of nine. In 2007, Jean discovered quilting and became passionate about quilting and teaching. Jean's creative style blends a variety of quilting techniques. She lives with her husband and pets in San Juan Capistrano, California.

**sewjean.com**



**Susan Brubaker Knapp** is a studio artist who loves art and traditional quilts. She is the author of two books, has produced five video workshops, and is the host of "Quilting Arts TV." Susan lives near Charlotte, North Carolina, with her husband and two daughters. She teaches internationally.

**bluemoonriver.com**

**Cate Coulacos Prato** was formerly an editor for Quilting Arts and Cloth Paper Scissors® magazines. She is the author of Mixed-Media Self-Portraits and Inside the Creative Studio. Cate writes in central Massachusetts, where she shares a home with her husband and a vast collection of fabric.



**Lea McComas** is an acclaimed fiber artist, teacher, author, and founder of the Border Wall Quilt Project. Her work has been exhibited around the world and featured in numerous publications. Lea shares the knowledge and techniques behind her award-winning pictorial quilts in her lectures, workshops, online classes, and her book, Thread Painted Portraits.

**leamccomas.com**



**MJ Kinman** was inspired to create by the image of an unusual gem. As a new quilt maker, she was determined to find a way to transform it into a quilt. Since then she's made dozens of giant gem quilts, many housed in public and private collections. Her "Bourbon Diamonds" series celebrates Kentucky's iconic spirit. Her current series is inspired by the Smithsonian's National Gem Collection.

**mjkinman.com**

**Martha Sielman** is the Executive Director of SAQA, a membership organization dedicated to advancing art quilting as a fine art medium. She is co-author of Art Quilts Unfolding: 50 Years of Innovation as well as the author of Masters: Art Quilts Volumes 1 & 2, Art Quilt Portfolios: the Natural World and People and Portraits, and Art Quilts International: Abstract and Geometric.

**marthasielman.com**



**Geri Patterson-Kutras** is an accomplished artist whose work has been in national and international exhibitions and is in private and public collections. Her work is noted for use of color in architectural, landscape, and figurative compositions. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Studio Art from San Jose State University and is a Juried Artist Member of Studio Art Quilt Associates.

**geripkartquilts.com**



**Enid Gjelten Weichselbaum** is an avid maker. As a child, she was always making something from salvaged fabric, paper, string, wood, or interesting rocks. She is still happiest when creating. Art quilting is Enid's third career. She loves colors, textures, fibers, and interpreting experiences and images into quilts. Her design book is full of inspiration for the projects to come.

**enidgjelten.com**

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Photos courtesy of the artist

# MJ Kinman

## Louisville, Kentucky

For some artists, 'multi-tasking' does not suit their creative process. But for artist and quilter MJ Kinman, multi-tasking is essential to her work, life, creative business, and studio space. MJ's "quilt cave" is perfect for all of those pursuits.




"The best thing about my studio? It's where our family spends most of our time together. It's not just a working quilt studio; it's also our family room, home office, napping space, and—since my pattern business has taken off—a fulfillment warehouse. It's the place where my husband Joe and I and our three dogs can hang out together while I create."

MJ and Joe realized 13 years ago that the house they were viewing would become both their home and a perfect place for MJ to work. In fact, MJ says the studio is an integral part of their home and family.

"My favorite thing about my studio is how it has become a collaboration between my husband and me. All the conveniences of the studio—the raised work table, giant thread rack, shelving, lighting, quilt-hanging system, and computer/printer area—are Joe's ideas and handiwork. Without his inspiration and initiative, my sewing machine would likely be perched on a piece of plywood laid over two sawhorses with bad lighting. I create; Joe keeps me organized. It's a great partnership."

MJ also credits the views of her yard she sees from her studio as inspiring her work, both visually and audibly, and she sometimes brings her work outside. Flowing water and a lily pond create soothing sounds and attract song birds. She is also inspired by friends and family, living and passed, and keeps pictures of them and their artwork near her sewing area. "It's important to me to be physically surrounded with joyful memories when I quilt."

Known for her gem quilts, MJ uses every inch of her studio space to maximum efficiency. There is an ample design wall for keeping her intricately pieced quilts organized during creation. A curtain rod runs the length of the room from which she hangs a tarp when she is painting fabric. A nearby table is the perfect height to reduce fatigue when cutting.







"It's important to me to be physically surrounded with joyful memories when I quilt."

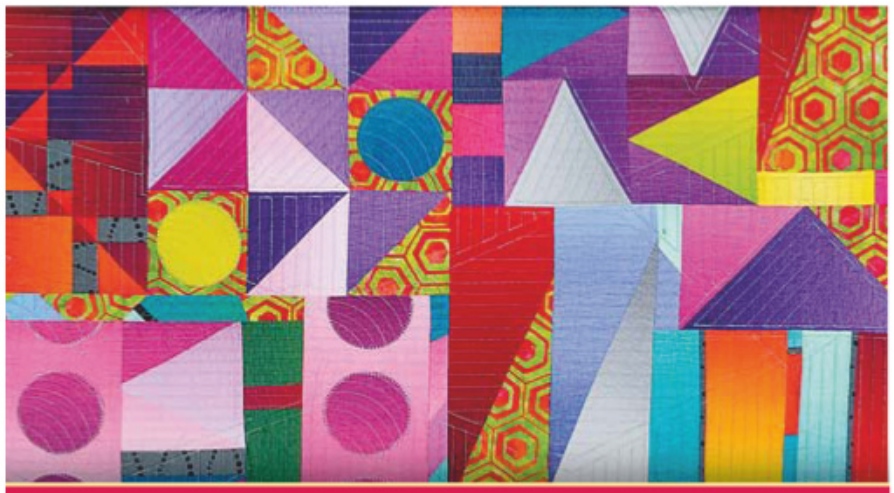
A favorite feature in the studio is MJ's sewing table. Its large size supports almost any size work—she is currently working on an 84" x 100" quilt featuring a faceted dove holding an olive branch and machine quilted quotations from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela. The sewing table is positioned away from the wall so she can move around all four sides when working.

"Last year when it became necessary to find space for my pattern inventory, Joe converted our bookshelves to storage and installed new wire shelving to house the overflow. My sewing table now also doubles as the work space for Joe when he's acting as CPSO (Chief Pattern-Stuffing Officer)."

The studio also holds a computer workstation, which MJ uses for the business side of her art and other administrative tasks. Whether responding to emails, sending contracts, checking her teaching schedule, or working on a teacher-certification program she recently created, having her office conveniently located only steps away from her artwork saves time and keeps her organized.

As organized and efficient as this space seems, MJ confesses not everything is perfectly placed or tidy all of the time. "The corner of my studio that didn't get photographed would give you a clue why I'm not a person to give advice about storage. Do you see that gold fabric draped around my sewing table? You definitely don't want to know what's underneath."

**mjkinman.com**



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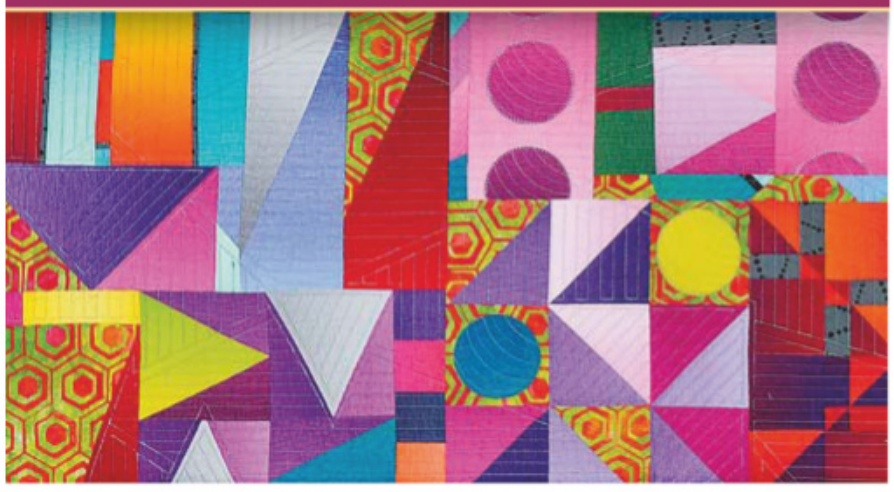

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# STRETCH *the Possibilities*

## PAINT CUSTOM CLOTH FOR PIECED ART QUILTS

*by* MJ Kinman

Most art quilters know this instinctively: they should refuse to let materials drive inspiration. Instead, we use our inspiration to drive the search for new materials.

For many years, I used solid fabrics to create my gem quilts. I also experimented with prints, but wasn't satisfied with the way they distracted from the focal point of the quilt and the overall design. I then turned to batiks, hand-dyed fabrics, and gradations, but all had their limitations.

I realized reluctantly that I was going to have to paint my own fabric to get the effects I envisioned. Despite my hesitation, I bought supplies, dove in … and loved it! In stark contrast to my quilt construction process—that is otherwise premeditated and precise—painting is wildly gestural, instinctive, and provides immediate gratification. And it yields gorgeous fabric!

I hope the steps below give you the confidence to create painted fabric to achieve your own inspiration.

Photos by HornickRivlin.com unless otherwise noted

# Directions

## Create the frame

1. Assemble the stretcher bars by inserting the ends at right angles. Place 2 staples spanning the mitered joints on both the front and back of the frame.

2. Place the frame on a table with the flat side of the stretcher bars facing up. Drape pressed fabric loosely over the edges making sure the shiny side of the sateen faces up. On 1 side of the frame, staple the fabric onto the edge in 3–5 places. Move to the opposite side of the frame, pull the fabric taut, and staple the fabric again in 3–5 places. Repeat on the remaining sides, and again on each of the corners.



Process photos courtesy of the artist

## MATERIALS

- 1¼ yards 100% cotton sateen or prepared for dyeing (PFD) fabric, at least 44"-wide (I use cotton sateen from Jacquard®.)
- 42" canvas stretcher bars, set of 4 (Find these at art supply stores.)
- Staple gun
- Fabric paints (I use Dye-Na-Flow® from Jacquard.) (See note.)
- Paintbrushes, 2"–3"
- Plastic bowls dedicated to non-food use
- Paper towels
- Large tarp
- Drop cloth
- Plastic tablecloth or small tarp
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Vinyl gloves
- Hairdryer

**NOTE:** My color choices are dictated by the gem images I work from—with poetic license. The yellows, oranges, and more are specifically for bourbon-inspired gems but I use other colors based on whatever gem I'm inspired by—be it diamond, aquamarine, ruby, or other.

*A detail of a gem quilt made with custom painted fabric.*



*"Copper Queen" • 67" x 44"*

# Painting Tips

**To achieve a wash from a pure color to a tint** Feather the color across the fabric in short, overlapping, vertical and horizontal strokes. As the color lightens, dip the brush into clean water to remove excess pigment and dab it onto the paper towel to remove the water.

Spray the lighter area of the fabric with the water and continue to feather the paint across the fabric in horizontal and vertical strokes until it is almost transparent. If small water drops appear in the painted areas, feather them out with the brush. Remove excess paint that the brush has picked up during this action before continuing to work on the wash.

**To prevent drips** Loading the brush with lots of paint can result in unwanted drips. Instead, add small amounts of paint to the fabric in rapid succession. Don't slap the paint onto the fabric surface. This may also result in small drops of paint bouncing onto areas of unpainted fabric. But if you do get drips, go with it! Blend these little inclusions into the overall design.

**To blend several colors** Apply the first color on the fabric and spread it over the desired surface area. Pour a small amount of the second color into the first color's bowl. Mix with the paintbrush and apply this blend next to the original paint. With short, overlapping horizontal and vertical strokes, work the color between the 2 areas to blend. Mist as needed. You may need to remove excess color from the brush to mix the colors effectively. Add successive colors to the bowl and apply to the fabric until you've achieved the desired blend.

**To create pools of dark color** Add the darkest hue (rather than black) and blend it into the surrounding area.

**To create black** It is difficult to achieve a deep black with this method. Either apply black paint on dry fabric or purchase commercially available black fabric.



*This large piece of stretched and painted fabric rests on a drop cloth and is leaning against a tarped wall.*

## Preparation and painting

1. Place a large tarp against a wall so the top edge is at least a foot above the top edge of the frame. The tarp should drape down the wall and 'puddle' onto the floor. This tarp will protect the walls and floor from splatters.

**TIP:** I installed curtain rods over my design wall and threaded clips to secure the top edge of the tarp.

2. Place a drop cloth over the tarp that extends across the floor. This provides extra protection for the floor and prevents the frame from slipping. Cover your work table with the plastic tablecloth to protect it from spills.

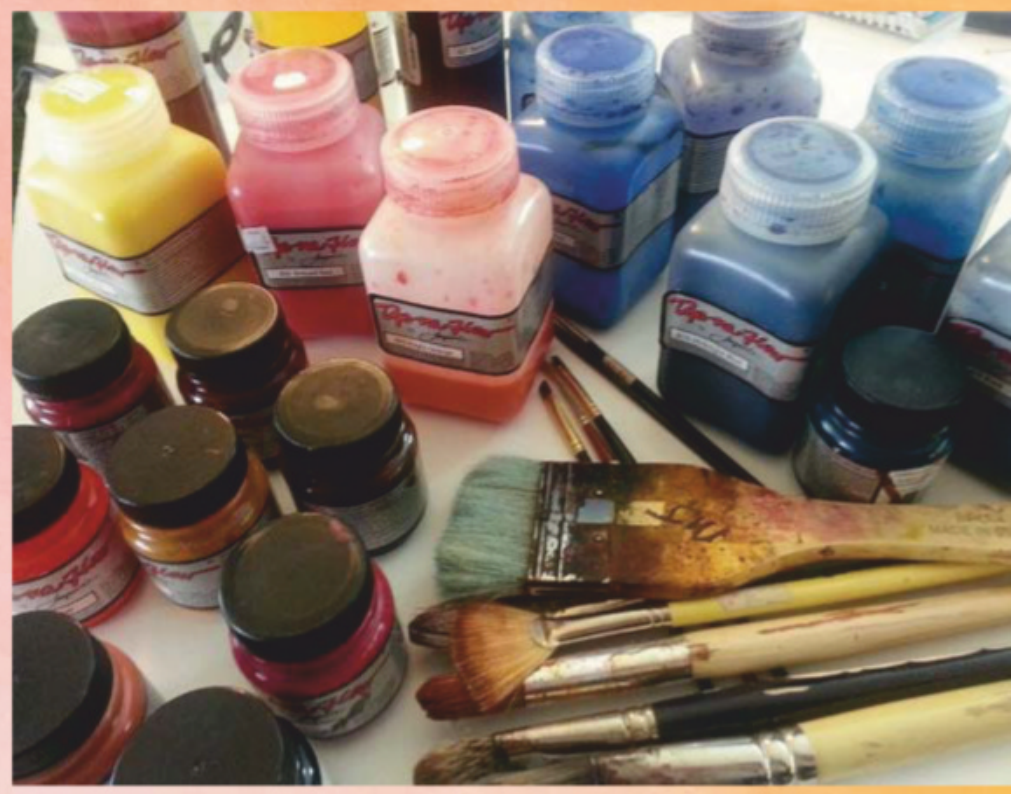
3. Lean the frame against the tarped wall and on top of the drop cloth, and mist the surface with water. Fill plastic bowls with water for rinsing paint brushes. Set several layers of paper towels nearby for drying the brushes. Arrange the paints on the work table in the order in which you'll use them. I typically apply the lightest color first.

4. Wearing gloves, pour the first color of paint into an empty plastic bowl. A little paint goes a long way, so start with 5–6 teaspoons of paint in the bottom of the bowl. Recap the bottle to prevent spills.

5. With a spray bottle in 1 hand and a brush in the other, brush the paint on the fabric. Mist as needed to push the color around and to facilitate blending.

6. Once you've filled the frame with color, dry with a hairdryer. This also impedes the downward flow of paint. Alternatively, allow the fabric to air dry. Once dry, gently remove the fabric from the frame and heat set with a hot iron.

With this simple and freeing painting method you can create a unique palette of fabrics and use them in your art quilts.



## Where I Stand

I prefer to paint fabric while standing in front of the frame because it gives me more control. Usually, the frame is on the floor, leaning against a tarped wall, but I sometimes prop the frame on an easel.

If you prefer to paint the fabric on a table, protect the work surface and area around the space accordingly—this can be a very wet process—and raise the frame several inches with blocks. If the frame is not raised high enough, the wet fabric will sag and touch the surface below. This will hamper your ability to control the flow of paint and result in unwanted 'inclusions.'



Photos by HornickRivlin.com

# Little Miracles

## MIXED-MEDIA FOLK ART

*by* Vivika Hansen DeNegre

Sometimes inspiration for a project comes from a variety of cultural sources. That is the case for my mixed-media Milagros. I was recently gifted a small stash of fancy fabrics—gorgeous sheers, silks, beaded trim, and colorful snips of Indian saris—that were just itching to be used in fiber art. But they had me stumped: the beads and bangles needed to be kept intact and the sheers would look best if they remained sheer. I knew I'd think of something.

## MATERIALS

- Neutral, midweight background fabric
- Fanciful fabric scraps
- Hand-dyed cheesecloth (I used cheesecloth from Fiber on a Whim.)
- Lightweight fusible interfacing
- Glue stick
- Paper-backed fusible web (I used Wonder-Under®.)
- Milagro pattern components
- Template material
- Tissue paper
- Painter's tape
- Vintage book pages and maps
- Ink pad (I used Tim Holtz' Distress Ink™ in Fired Brick and Dusky Concord.)
- Cosmetic sponge
- Sewing machine with free-motion capability
- Rayon thread

**Optional**

- Graph paper
- Pinking scissors
- Metallic thread
- Watercolors or Derwent Inktense blocks

Then the notes of a Mariachi band drifting through the window of our local taco truck started me thinking about the Milagros I'd seen at the California missions. Milagro is the Spanish word for "miracle." These religious folk charms have their roots in Spanish and Latin American culture. Each tiny charm has a different meaning, and is offered to a saint as a prayer for a specific need or carried in gratitude as a reminder of prayers answered. As the concept of gratitude is important to me, I knew I wanted to interpret these symbols in my own artwork, and the fancy fabrics were a great place to start.

## DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare a fabric background for the Milagro. Choose light- or neutral-colored fabric with a bit of weight and texture, but not too much pattern or it will compete with the focal image. Determine the size of the finished piece, and then cut the fabric 1" larger on all sides. Consider grouping smaller Milagros together on 1 piece of fabric. My background is cut 9" x 9".
2. Following the manufacturer's instructions, fuse the background fabric to a piece of fusible interfacing cut the same size, creating a sturdy surface on which to work.
3. Trace the individual Milagro components onto template material and cut them out.

**TIP:** I cut my templates from sturdy cardboard so they can be reused indefinitely.

4. Choose several of the templates and design your own combination.

**NOTE:** I started with the central image of a heart and traced it onto graph paper. I then auditioned wings at various angles and a variety of leaves and flames before deciding on the final design. The empty heart reminded me of a frame, so for one version I sketched a bluebird in the center. For other versions, I filled the frame with fabric collages.

5. If you are adding a sketch to the piece, trace the sketch onto tissue paper to create a pattern.
6. Trace the templates onto the paper side of the fusible web, and cut them out adding ⅛" margin.

**NOTE:** When using fusible web, keep in mind that you fuse the webbing to the back of the fabric and, therefore, directional pieces will be backward if you don't plan accordingly. If the templates are directional, trace them in reverse.

7. Position fusible web on the back of the fabric scraps, using the prints of the fabric to their best advantage, and fuse. *(figure 1)* If fusing to sheers or cheesecloth, protect your iron and board with a sheet of parchment paper above

## What does it mean?

When researching the symbolic significance of the charms, I found a variety of meanings for each shape. Here is just a sampling:

- **Hearts** represent love, joy, longing, and worry, but also the sacred heart of Mary and Jesus. **Hands** stand for friendship, strength, creativity, and creation. All of these images are often paired with **wings** (angels) and **flames** (the Holy Spirit), and sometimes topped with a **crown**.
- **Eyes** symbolize watchfulness, yearning, and watching over loved ones.
- **Animals**—such as sheep, pigs, and horses—represent community, abundance, work, and travel.
- **Arms and legs** symbolize strength, support, movement, and a warm embrace.

Of course, each of these shapes can be reinterpreted by the maker to carry their own special meanings.



figure 1



figure 2




figure 3

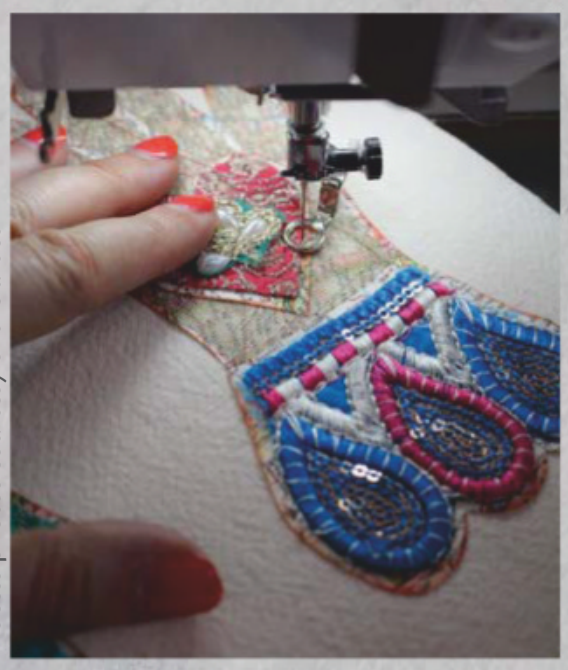


figure 4

Process photos courtesy of the artist

and below the fabric. After the fabric cools to room temperature, cut around the shape on the drawn line and remove the paper backing.

**NOTE:** If the fancy fabrics are embellished with sequins or beads, the fusible web will help anchor the threads. You might have to be creative in cutting around them to avoid ruining your scissors.

8. Remove the paper backing and fuse the shapes to book pages, maps, or other paper ephemera. *(figure 2)* I like to arrange the pieces so the text is at an angle and is unreadable but adds a design element. Trim around the shape with straight or pinking scissors, leaving a small margin of text showing. To add a hint of color to the paper's edge, load a cosmetic sponge with ink from an ink pad and drag it across the edge of the paper. Create all of the collage elements in this manner. *(figure 3)*

9. Position the collage elements onto the background fabric in a pleasing arrangement. Once you are happy with the composition, lightly glue the pieces in place with a glue stick.

10. Set up your sewing machine for free-motion stitching. The bottom and top threads should match. Choose the spot where you will start sewing (a straight edge that catches both the fabric and paper is best) and pull the bobbin thread to the top of the piece. Hold both threads and sew around each of the design elements. *(figure 4)*



**TIP:** I use rayon thread primarily because I like the sheen and it shows up well, especially against the paper and dyed cheesecloth. Metallic thread is fun, too.

11. To add a sketch in the frame of the heart, position the tissue paper pattern with the sketch and hold it in place with painter's tape. Thread the machine with a darker thread and stitch over the drawn lines. Try making minimal stops and starts for a truly free-hand look. *(figure 5)* When you are happy with your machine stitching, remove the piece from the machine and trim the threads. The tissue paper will tear away easily from the stitches, leaving behind the sketch.

12. To add a bit of color and depth to the sketch, consider painting it. I used a small amount of water and added color with Inktense paint blocks.

**TIP:** Use very little water to avoid the colors seeping beyond the stitched line. *(figure 6)*

13. Cut around the completed Milagro, leaving ⅛" of the base fabric. Using gel medium, glue the Milagro to a piece of painted board and add a ribbon for hanging. ✸

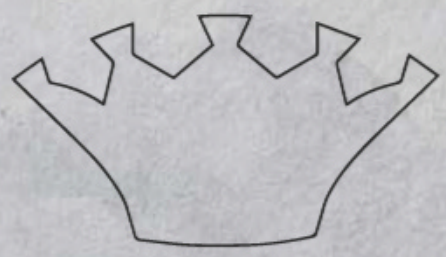


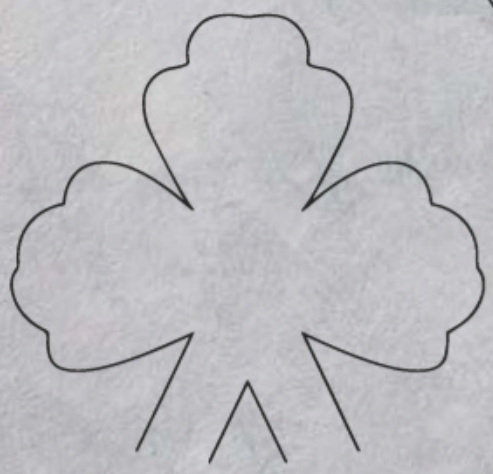
figure 5



figure 6

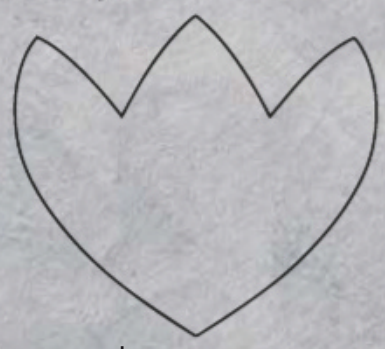
*F+W Media, Inc. grants permission to photocopy these patterns for personal use only. Print at 200%.*

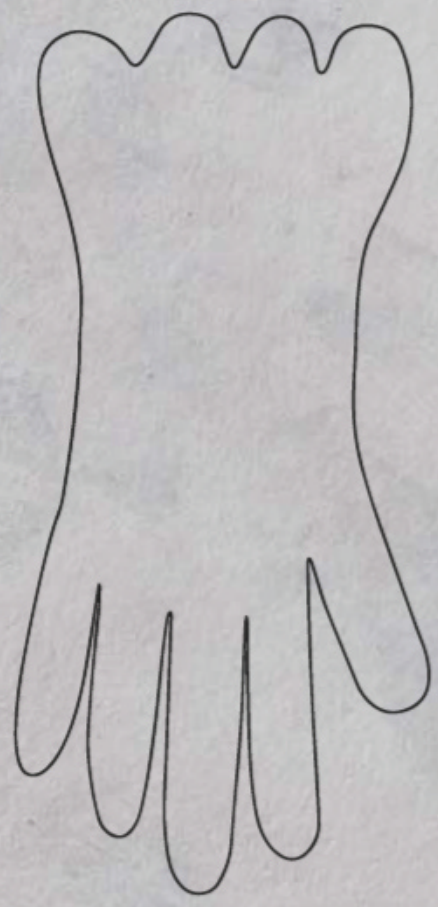












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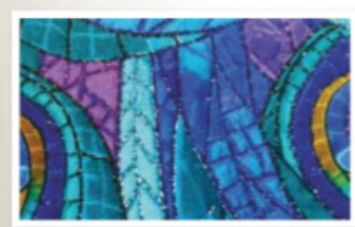







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## A SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

# SAQA celebrates 30 years




Photo by HornickRivlin.com

## SAQA MILESTONES

ESTABLISHED: ***1989***
Founding membership: 34
Original Yearly Budget: $700



*SAQA founder Yvonne Porcella*

*by* Martha Sielman with Lucy Shaiken

Where were you in December 1989? I was living in Marlborough, Connecticut, with a young toddler and another on the way. I was reading Quilter's Newsletter Magazine and making traditional quilts. I wouldn't make my first art quilt for another five years, and Quilting Arts wouldn't be founded for another 12. But there was a group of artists experimenting with a new art form, and they came together to start an organization focused on art quilts. The rest is history.


NEWSLETTER
STUDIO ART QUILT ASSOCIATES

Newsletter Premiere: ***1991***

Trunk Show Established: ***2009***




Art Quilts Unfolding: 50 Years of Innovation Published: ***2018***
*Edited by Sandra Sider, contributing authors Nancy Bavor, Lisa Ellis, and Martha Sielman*

Martha Sielman/ Executive Director Hired: ***2003***

National Endowment for the Arts Exhibition Grant: ***2010***

First Conference (Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts): ***1995***

Website Created: ***1996***

First Exhibitions Initiated: ***2006***

Publication of Art Quilt Quarterly Magazine: ***2017***

***2019*** Current Membership: 3,536 and growing

First International President: Lisa Walton, ***2017***


*Current SAQA President Lisa Walton*

This year, Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) celebrates its 30th anniversary. This milestone has prompted us to look back on our history and set goals for the future. SAQA is the world's largest professional organization devoted to the art quilt medium. Its mission remains to promote the art quilt through education, exhibitions, professional development, documentation, and publications.

And our vision is that the art quilt will become globally respected as a fine art medium.

## SAQA's founding

Quilt artist Yvonne Porcella founded SAQA in 1989. Her gallery representative told her that art quilters needed a professional organization to make it easier to sell their work to collectors. Yvonne began corresponding with other quilt artists, and together they envisioned the organization that would eventually become SAQA. The founders organized a meeting during Quilt National to hammer out details. Barbara Oliver Hartman said, "I remember that day in 1989 in Nancy Crow's studio. In addition to Nancy and myself were Sue Benner and Marty Bowne. There were a couple of others (Nancy remembers Yvonne and Katie Pasquini Masopust attending).

Photos courtesy of the artist unless otherwise noted



*"Breaking Ground, the Hoggs Hollow Disaster, 1960" • Laurie Swim • 2000 • 20' x 7' • Collection of City of Toronto, Canada*



Photo by Eric Kievit

*"Girl Combing Her Hair" • Leslie Gabriëlse*
*1967 • 96" x 70" • Private collection*



*"Moonlight" • Jane Burch Cochran • 2007 • 61" x 77"*

It just seemed like brainstorming with some wishful thinking mixed in. It would have gone nowhere without Yvonne. It hit her at the right time and she got it going. She had been involved with the 'Great American Quilt' event and became excited about the possibilities of a real organization. I do not believe that any of us thought it was going to be what it is today."

In the end, 34 artists each provided $20 in seed money, and SAQA was born.

Early on, SAQA's founders made clear they were not interested in creating boundaries or limits defining what an art quilt was, or who was an art quilter. Yvonne wrote, "It was agreed that we tentatively call the group the Studio Art Quilt Association.* All aspects of the name were discussed and it was decided to include the word 'quilt' although this does not mean that we are all 'quilters.' Although we all follow the historical tradition in that we embellish, piece, stuff, tie, and layer in creating our art, we do not all traditionally hand quilt the finished product." This message shows SAQA's desire to represent a variety of artists and forms of art quilting. SAQA celebrates the diversity of the art form, and is open to everyone who quilts—not just those who use traditional methods or quilt as their main profession. SAQA is for everyone who loves the art quilt. Its members include professionals whose art hangs in museums, collectors and appreciators of the art quilt, hobbyists, dabblers, tinkerers, and those who simply love textiles, colors, beauty, and art.

**The legal name of the group was later changed to Studio Art Quilt Associates.*

## Growth and commitment

By the end of 1991, SAQA grew from 34 to 195 members. That growth was a testament to the efforts of its founding members and volunteers whose accomplishments are even more impressive when we consider the limitations of the time.

When the first newsletter was sent in 1991, its production was a study in teamwork and patience. Yvonne wrote the content and then mailed everything to Texas, where Libby Lehman edited and retyped the copy. The master was mailed back to Yvonne in California for photocopying. A team of volunteers gathered around Yvonne's kitchen table where they collated, stapled, stuffed, and labeled each newsletter sent to SAQA members.

The 1990s brought a series of firsts for SAQA: The first conference was held in 1995 and a website went live the next year. Over time, quilt images could be shared online as a way to publicize member art to galleries and museums.

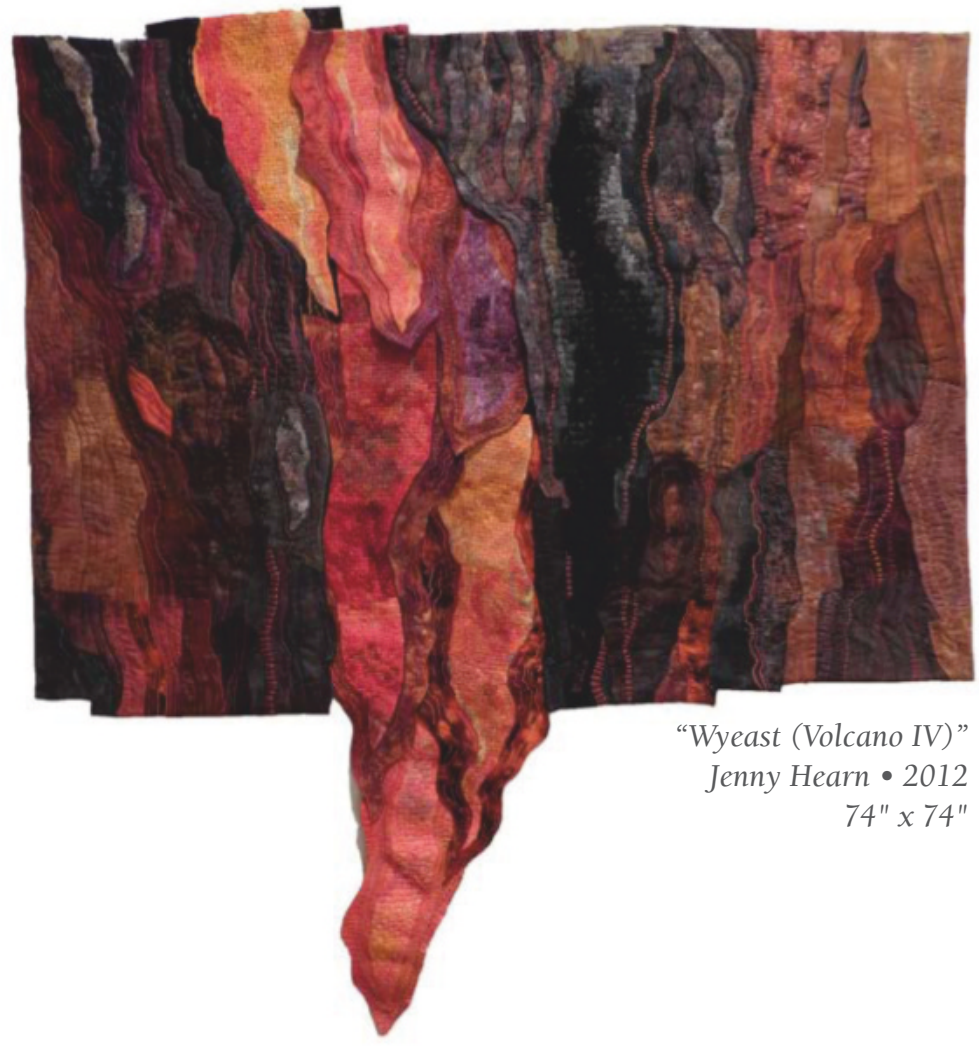
By the next decade, SAQA had grown enormously. When I was hired as Executive Director in 2004, the organization boasted 804 members and an operating budget of $75,000—a far cry from the $700 SAQA began with 15 years earlier. Growth brought more updates to the website and additional opportunities for members such as the PORTFOLIO, a print publication of Professional/Juried Artist Member work.

## Sharing quilts through showing art

Realizing the need to show more art quilts professionally, the Exhibition Committee formed in 2006 and organized SAQA's first exhibition at



*"New Dawn" • Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry • 2000 • 63" x 78"*



*"Wyeast (Volcano IV)"*
*Jenny Hearn • 2012*
*74" x 74"*

Photo by Dion Cuyler



Photo by Gregory Case

*"No Room at the Table" • Annie Helmericks-Louder • 2010 • 80" x 80"*

International Quilt Festival, Houston. Today, the committee oversees the creation of 4–6 new global exhibits each year and regions create their own local traveling exhibitions. At any given time, there are up to 16 global and 20 regional exhibitions actively showing members' artwork.

Ten years ago, the first SAQA Trunk Show was launched, sharing a traveling collection of over 400 small art quilts worldwide as a way to educate others about the art quilt medium. Since then, numerous trunk show quilts have traveled to museums, schools, and guilds.

SAQA recently sponsored Art Quilts Unfolding: 50 Years of Innovation (published by Schiffer) in order to document the entire art quilt movement. A companion exhibition, "Layered & Stitched: 50 Years of Art" premiers this year at International Quilt Festival, Houston, and then will tour several museums.

## 30 years and counting

Now is an exciting time for SAQA with over 3,500 members from 39 countries. Current President Lisa Walton lives in Australia—a reflection of how this has become a global organization. Vice President Deborah Boschert agrees: "Members from all over the world are more and more connected through our educational projects, regional activities, and online communities. Our exhibitions are shown in galleries, museums, and quilt festivals including several international venues. We're excited about giving our members more opportunities to grow and introducing more people to the art quilt."

Here's to many more years of promoting the art quilt and supporting quilters everywhere!

To learn more about SAQA, visit **saqa.com.**

# CHOOSE YOUR OWN PALETTE

## INTRODUCING OUR NEW READER CHALLENGE



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

Everyone has personal preferences for color. These preferences take shape in the clothes we wear, the décor in our homes, the cars we drive, and, yes—the art we create. Color preferences are so individual and often reflect the spirit of the person who loves them. We invite you to create a quilt using your own preferred color palette. Use at least three colors to create a quilt that expresses your artistic color story.

Join fellow Quilting Arts readers and create an art quilt based on the theme, "Choose Your Own Palette." Share your quilt with us and we'll publish a selection of readers' artwork in the December 2019/January 2020 issue.

## Rules

1. Create an art quilt based on the theme, "Choose Your Own Palette." The quilt must be 9" x 9". Embellishments must not protrude more than ½" from the surface of the quilt. The quilt may be made with any materials, but it must be quilted (by hand, machine, or both), consist of three layers, and closed along the edges.
2. Your entry must be free of any text or images protected by copyright, unless you have the expressed written permission from the person or institution that holds the copyright and you provide that permission with your submission.
3. To be considered for the challenge, attach two jpeg images of your completed entry to an email—one of the entire quilt, including all of the edges, and one of a detail of the quilt—by **August 4, 2019** to challenges@fwmedia.com, with "Choose Your Own Palette" in the subject line. Please include your name, email address, title of the quilt, and a brief statement about your piece in the email. You may submit more than one quilt, but each entry must be in an individual email.
4. To learn tips for photographing your Reader Challenge submission, visit **quiltingcompany.com/photographytips**.
5. On **August 7, 2019**, we will post the finalists at **quiltingcompany.com/palette-reader-challenge**. Please check this post, as artists will not be notified directly.
6. Finalists' artwork must arrive in our office by **August 23, 2019.**
7. Be sure to put your name on your artwork, and mark the top. For safety, place your entry in a plastic bag before packing it for shipping. We reserve the right to keep and possibly display your "Choose Your Own Palette" quilt until January 6, 2020.

**NOTE:** *By submitting your Reader Challenge entry, you are authorizing F+W to publish your project in upcoming publications and promotional materials, on our websites and in other e-media, as well as possibly display it at shows. F+W will not be held responsible for loss or damage due to circumstances beyond our control.*

## Shipping address

Quilting Arts/F+W Media
Attn: Choose Your Own Palette
2 Mill & Main Place, Suite 610
Maynard, MA 01754

If you have questions, contact Katie at **katie.chicarello@fwmedia.com**.

We look forward to seeing your work!

## mark your CALENDAR

**AUGUST 4:** Emailed submissions are due with jpeg photos.

**AUGUST 7:** Names of finalists will be posted at **quiltingcompany.com/palette-reader-challenge.**

**AUGUST 23:** Finalists' quilts must be received in our offices.

**DECEMBER 2019:** Look for a gallery of "Choose Your Own Palette" quilts in the December 2019/January 2020 issue of Quilting Arts Magazine!

USING COLOR WITH CONFIDENCE

# TAKE YOUR *Color Temperature*

## MATERIALS

- Color wheel
- Colored paper or fabric, approximately 5" square (solids or very subtle prints work best)
- Background paper or fabric
- Camera or smart phone

*by* Lea McComas

Some colors may run hot while others run cold, but all colors have a temperature. An understanding of color temperature can be used to create a sense of depth within a composition. The general rule: warmer colors will seem to come forward and cooler colors will appear to recede.



Photos by HornickRivlin.com

Generally, yellow and orange are considered to be the warmest colors while blue and violet are considered to be the coolest colors. And every color has a warmer and cooler neighbor. Green, for example, can be found on the color wheel between a warm yellow-green, and a cool blue-green. Also, it is possible for a single color to have warm and cool versions of itself.

Color study exercises with a focus on temperature are an important way for the artist to gain a deeper understanding and confidence in using color. However, in this lesson, because we are trying to enhance a sense of depth, we will also employ overlapping edges to establish what objects are closest and farthest away.

These exercises can be done using paper or fabric—whichever medium helps you feel experimental and learn best.

## Exercise 1: Creating depth with temperature

1. Choose or draw a simple composition with 3 similar elements such as a group of flowers.
2. Choose a focus color for one of the flower elements, such as red.
3. Next, refer to the color wheel and choose a warm and cool neighboring color. In this case, we chose orange for warm and violet for cool.
4. Cut a flower from each color and arrange them in various ways to see how those colors play together.
    a. Place the coolest color in the center, with the focus color next to it and slightly overlapping, and the warmest color slightly overlapping the other two. Take a photo for future reference. *(figure 1)*
    b. Next, reverse the placement, putting the warmer color behind and the coolest color overlapping the other 2. Again, take a reference photo. *(figure 2)*
    c. Try other placement options, photographing each. *(figure 3)*
5. Review your photos, taking note of how you react, or how you feel about each option. What is pleasing? What is disturbing?

For most people, the first placement is most pleasing, and here's why. The overlapping edges communicate that the violet flower is farther from view. The cooler color also communicates this, so the brain is receiving two consistent messages.

However, when the orange flower is placed behind the violet flower—warm behind cool—conflicting information is sent to the brain, making this a less desirable composition. The effect can be very subtle. Often, when presented with both arrangements side by side, the viewer prefers one over the other, but can't identify exactly why.

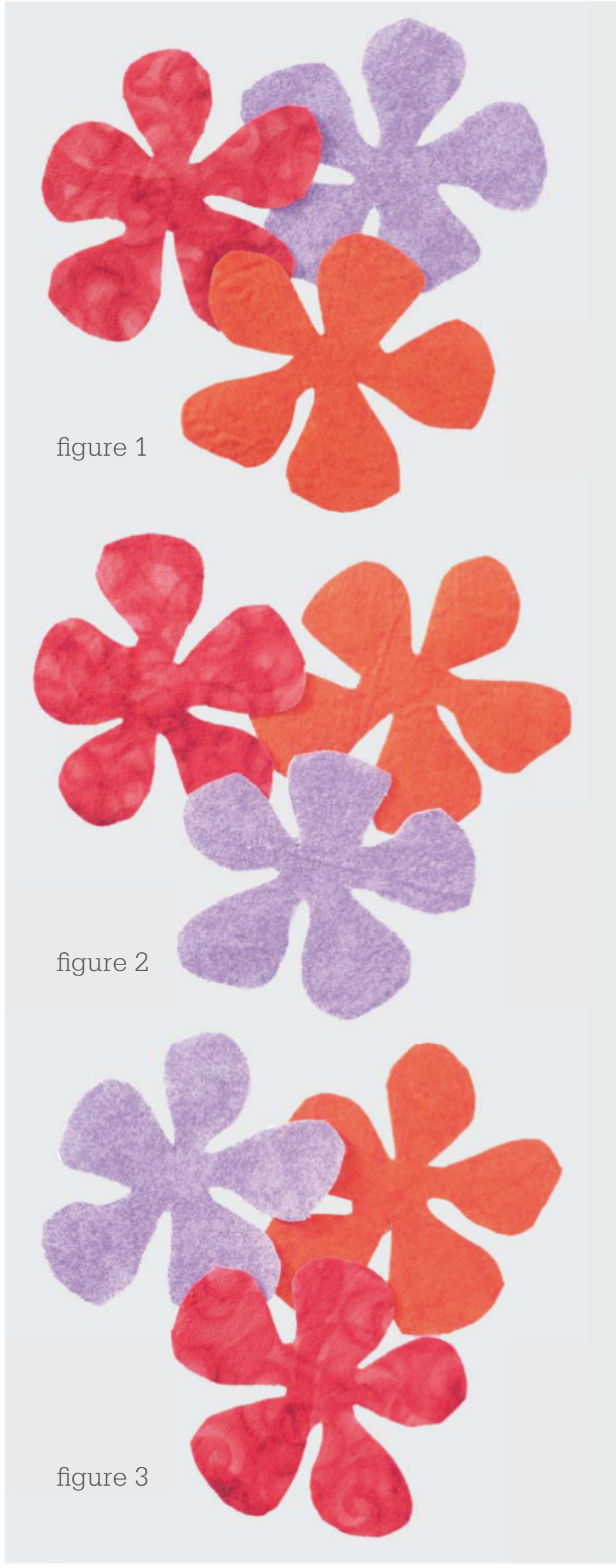


figure 1

figure 2

figure 3

## Exercise 2: Temperature and value

Previously in this series on using color with confidence, I've made an effort to focus on a particular concept in isolation to facilitate understanding. But, the reality is that there are always multiple concepts or principles at work in any composition. So, it's time to broaden our focus and look at how temperature plays with value.

In a composition such as a still life, lighter or brighter objects appear to come forward, while darker objects tend to recede, as if in shadow. (It's important to note that the rules of value change when applied to landscapes, but that is a different topic.)

To demonstrate this further, let's look at several versions of a more complex arrangement: flowers with leaves in a vase.

1. In the first example, **value** is the focus. *(figure 4)* The flowers have all been cut from the same color, red-violet, but are of different values. Likewise, the leaves are all the same color of blue-green, but of differing values. The darker values appear to fall back while the lighter values come forward.

2. In the second example, **temperature** is the focus. *(figure 5)* The flowers are cut from fabrics of the same value, but have different temperatures. Although each fabric is considered red-violet, one has more red than violet and reads as warmer. Another of the flowers has more violet than red, and reads as a cooler color.

The same principles of temperature were used when choosing fabrics for the leaves. Although they are all blue-green fabrics, one is bluer and another is greener.

3. In the third example, **value and temperature are working together** to create a sense of depth. *(figure 6)* It is here that I have to admit to the reader that this composition wasn't working as well as I thought it would. Upon further reflection, I realized that my attention was so focused on the flowers and leaves that I wasn't paying attention to how they played off the background. The background fabric—fairly light in value—was fighting to come forward and competing with the flowers.

4. In the final example, *(figure 7)* I placed my vase of flowers on a gray background that wouldn't compete for attention and fight to come forward.


figure 4


figure 5


figure 6


figure 7

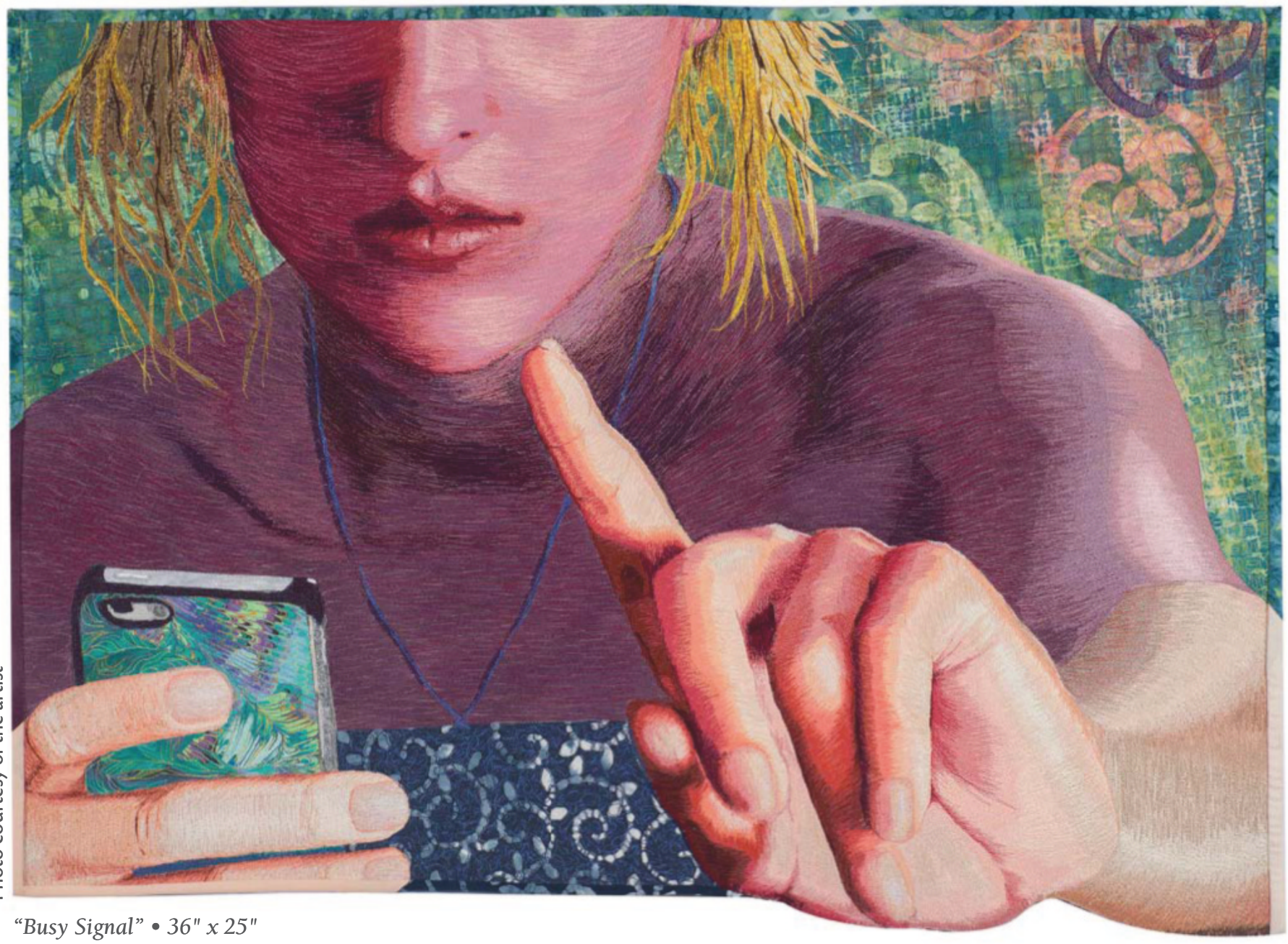


Photo courtesy of the artist

*"Busy Signal" • 36" x 25"*

*The use of temperature is seen in the body that appears in three planes. First, the hand is created with the warmest colors to help it appear in the foreground, or closer to the viewer. The face is done is slightly cooler tones to help it appear further back from the viewer. Finally, the shoulders are created with the coolest tones to help push them even further back than the face. This also creates great temperature contrast between the body and hand, accentuating the forward position of the hand.*

I'm happy to share these less-than-perfect examples of how to play with color. It serves to show that color really *is* complex and there is always more to learn. For the inquisitive mind, this is both a challenge and a blessing. I hope your journey is filled with the frustration and joy of discovery.

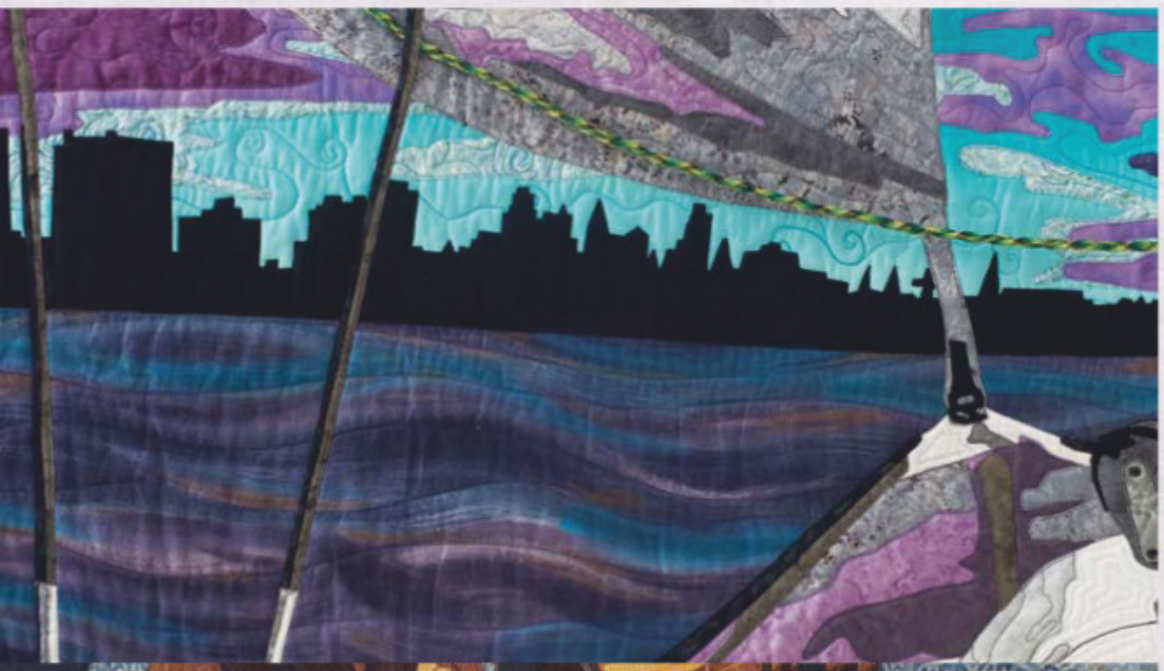


## Want to learn *more?*

Watch Lea as she shares her knowledge about color temperature and value on "Quilting Arts TV" Series 2300 available at **quiltingartstv.com** or your local PBS station.

# *Local Color:*
# *Inspired by Science*

## A regional exhibit of Studio Art Quilt Associates





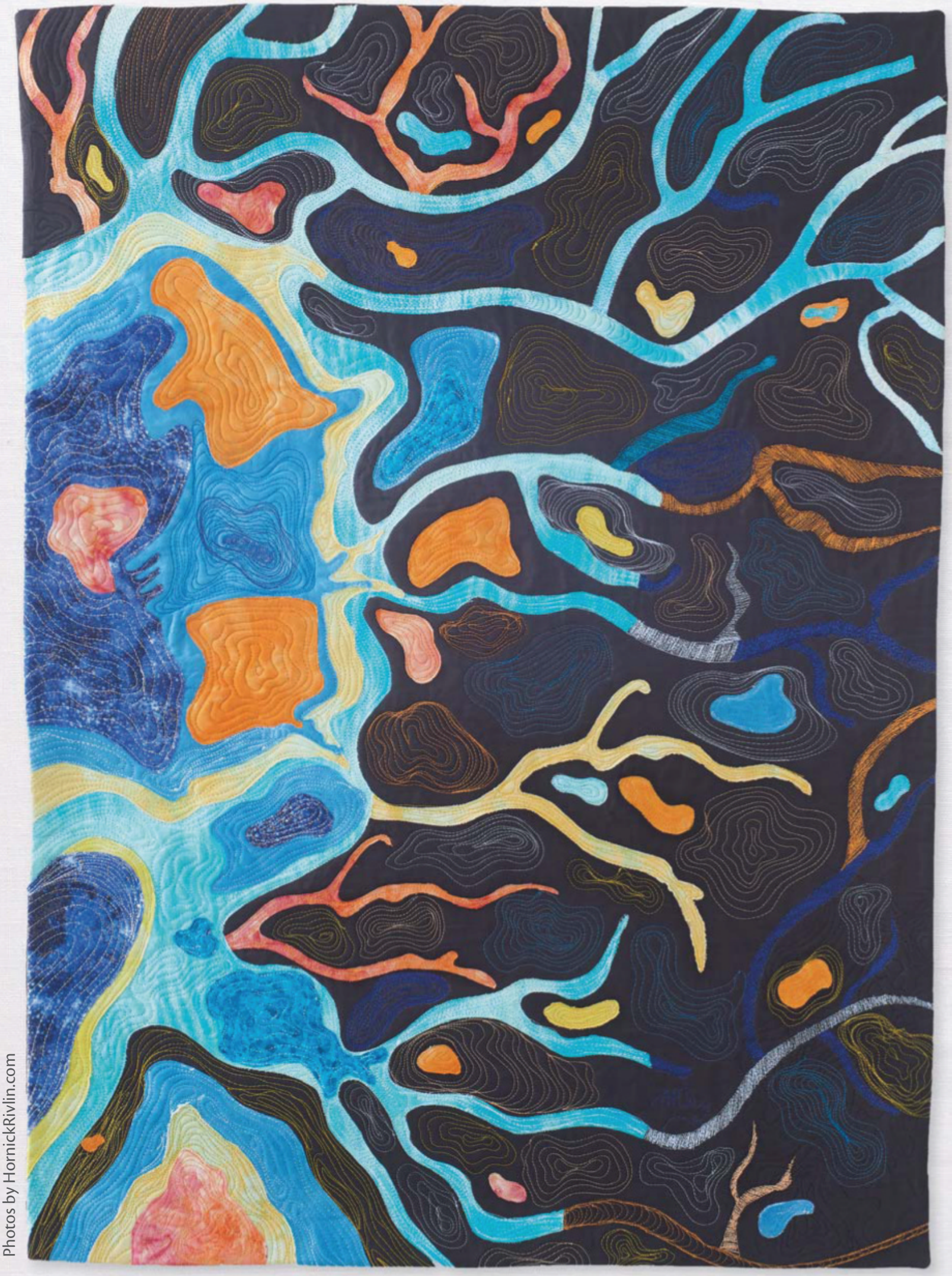


*Curated by* Clara Nartey

Drawn from artists in Connecticut and surrounding areas, the works in "Local Color: Inspired by Science" expand on the narrative of science intersecting with art.

Science and art often seem to be mutually exclusive topics. We expect people to be either scientifically inclined or artistically talented. The connections between science and art can seem inconceivable. However, there are many connections between the two disciplines. Be it nautical instruments, diseases and viruses, the inner workings of the human body, nature, or natural disasters, the featured artists interpret one of the most vital aspects of modern societies—science—in their own unique and individual styles.





Photos by HornickRivlin.com

## "Under the Microscope #2"

CLARA NARTEY • WEST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT • 24" x 34"

"In our technologically advanced world, I found it interesting to discover an equally advanced—if not more superior—information network in the human body. A look under the microscope at this intricate information network is the inspiration for my piece."

## "Leaves Turning Brown"

CATHERINE WHALL SMITH
CHAPLIN, CONNECTICUT
34" x 29"

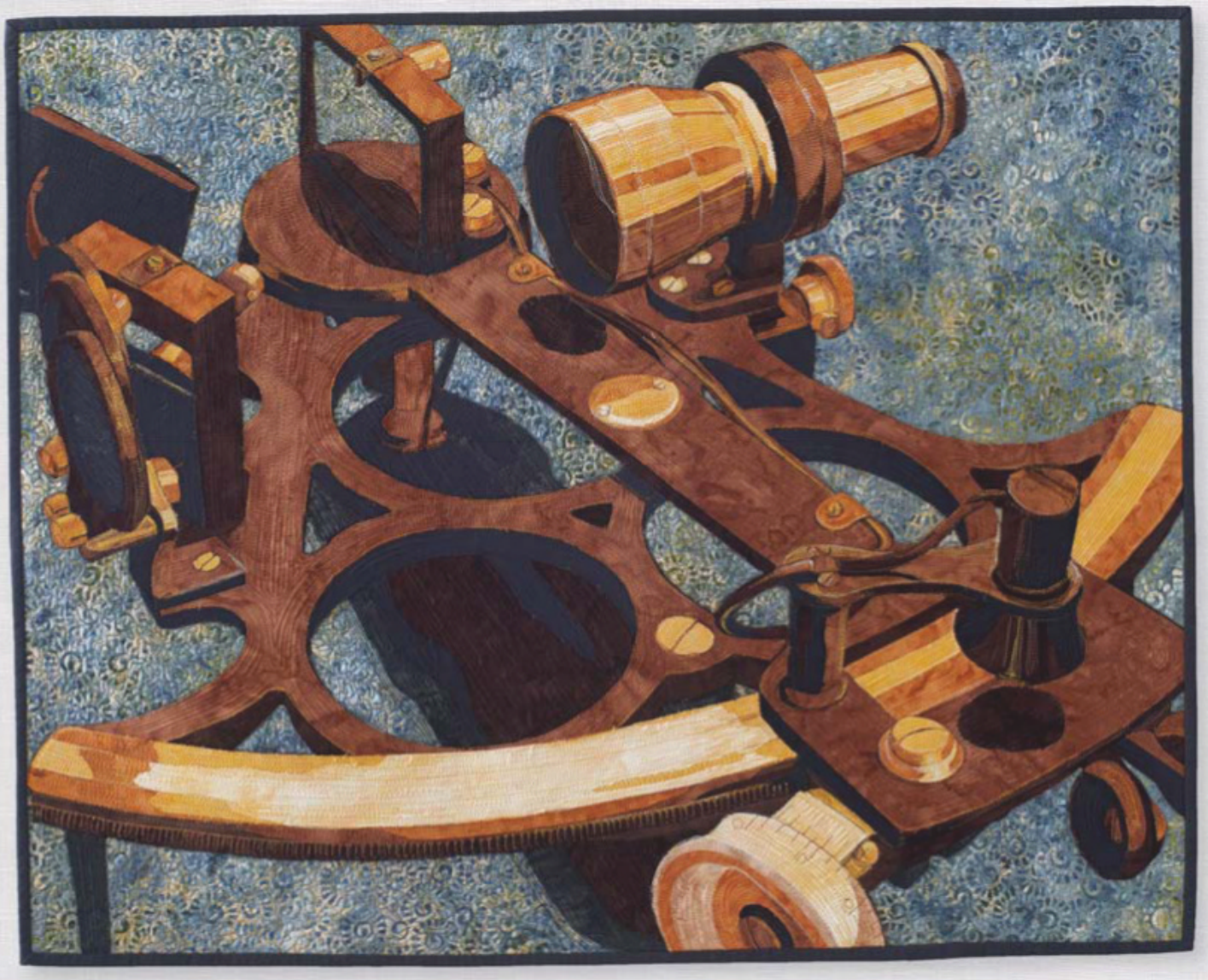
"This quilt was inspired by the science of the seasonal changes that occur around us throughout the year. Because of the changes in the length of daylight and temperature in fall, the leaves stop their food-making process. As the chlorophyll breaks down, the green leaf color disappears. My photo image in this piece was taken on an autumn day just before we pushed back our clocks to get ready for the next season."

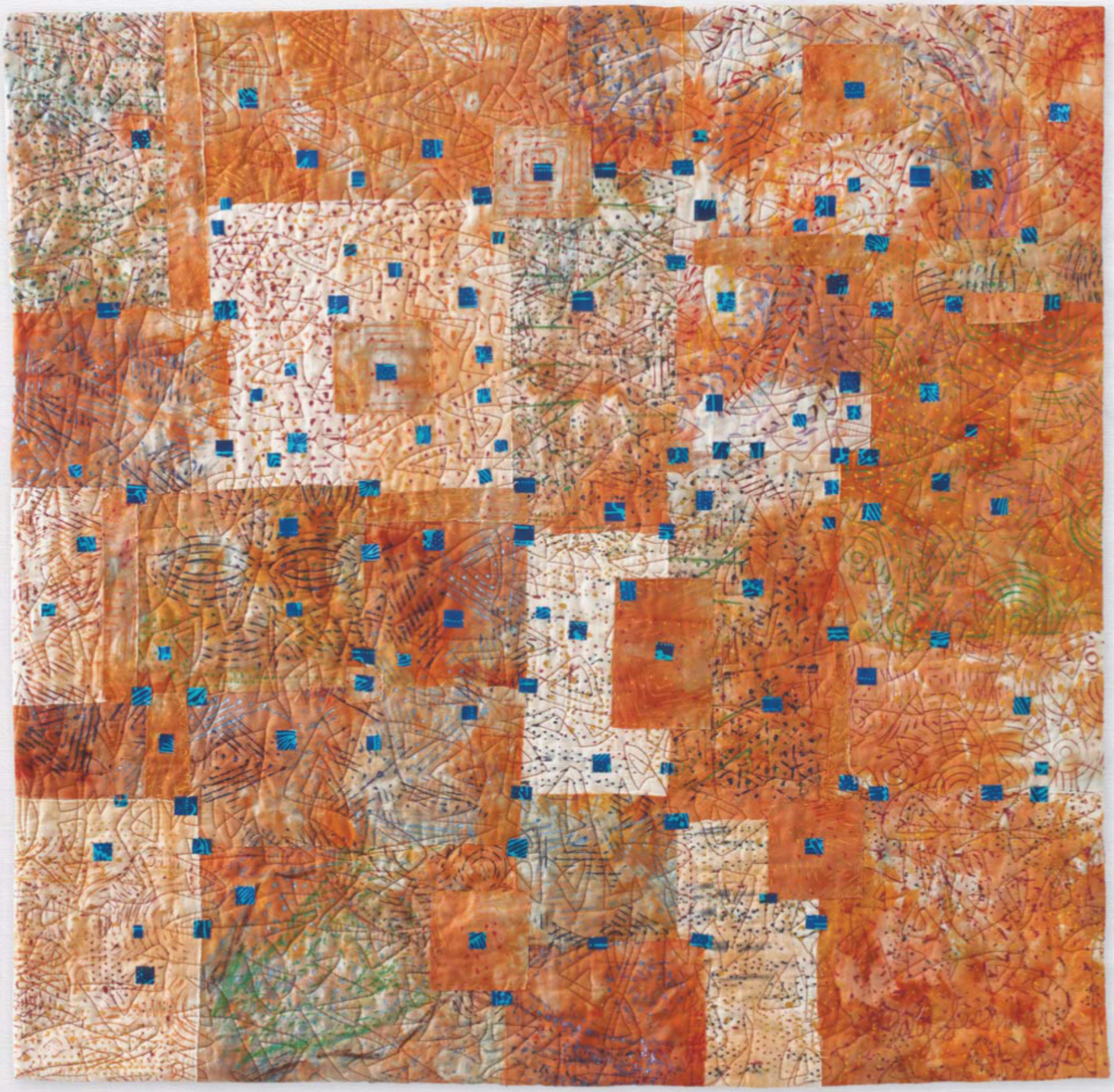


## "Stars Not Included"

KATE THEMEL
CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT
31" x 21"

"Sailors have used instruments like this sextant for centuries to navigate the seas. Borders, governments, ships, and even sea temperatures have changed through the years but the mathematics and geometry behind this ancient tool have remained reliable and perfect."





## "Into the Cosmos"

MARY LACHMAN • BETHANY, CONNECTICUT • 36" x 36"

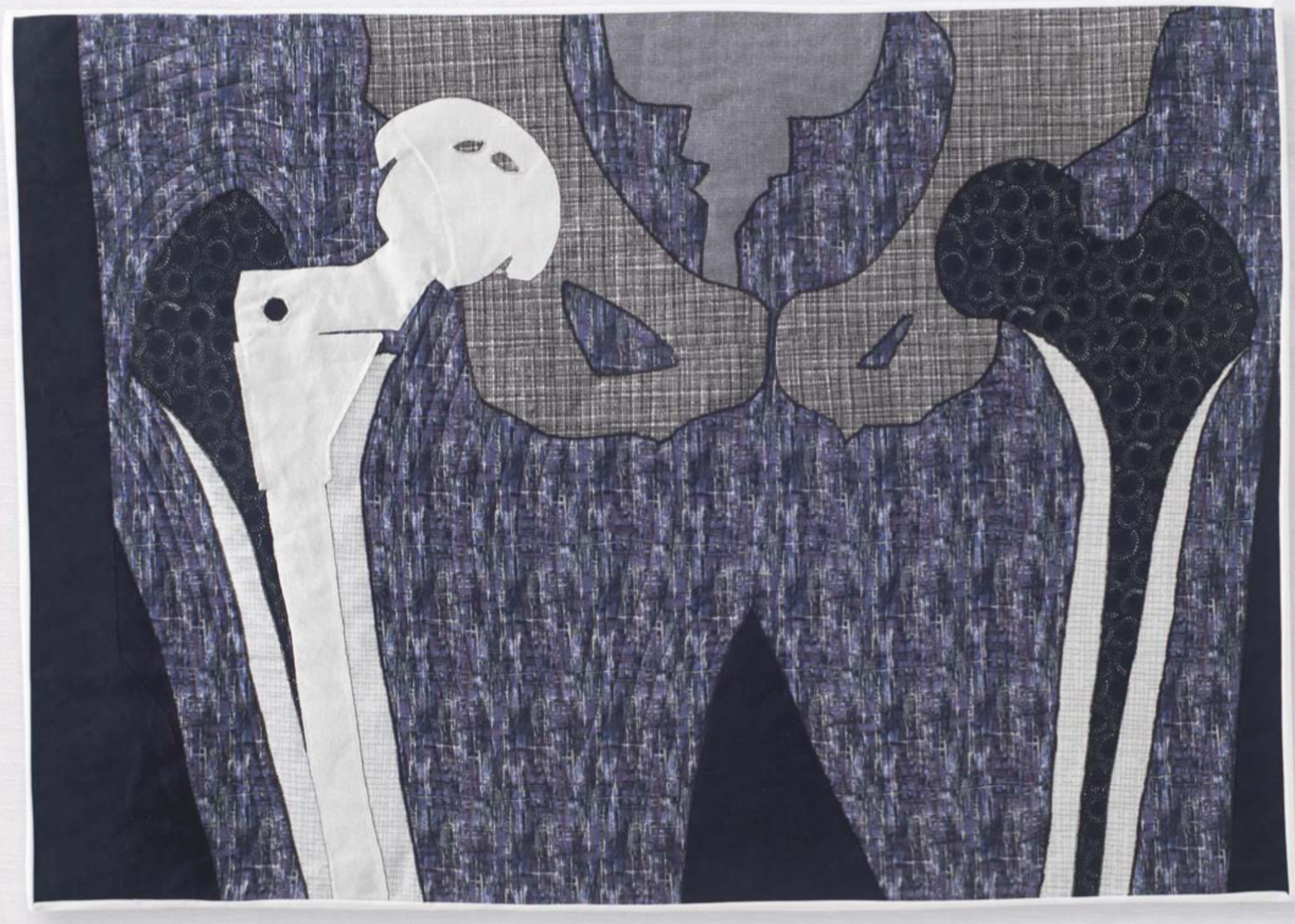
"My abstract textile art is inspired by the places I visit, the patterns I see, and the colors I love. It is informed by my fascination with biology and microscopic forms, geometric designs, and the natural landscape. Each piece is a new adventure."



## “Moonstruck”

CHRISTINA BLAIS • STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT • 32" DIAMETER

“I sought to represent the divine in this piece. This composition is both simple—repeating motifs and symmetry—and complex; each circle made from a square of improvised fabric, cut into a circle and then wedges, rearranged, re-assembled, and sewn.”



## “X-ray Vision”

EVELYN OLIVER KNIGHT • WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT • 35" x 24¾"

“This quilt was inspired by modern medical science that enables hip replacement surgery. This X-ray depicts the mechanical right hip (composed of metal, ceramic, or a plastic called polyethylene) juxtaposed to the biological left hip. The mechanical device is inserted deep into the femur (thigh bone) and, like a ratchet, can be adjusted to ensure proper fit.”



## “Wind in my Sails”

JUDY ROSS • AVON, CONNECTICUT • 40" x 30"

“I am intrigued with the idea of interpreting photographs in fiber art. The photograph that inspired this piece was taken by Kate Hummel while she was taking sailing lessons in Philadelphia Harbor and was used with her permission.”

---

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TEXTURAL APPLIQUÉ

# Whimsical, Reckless, & Raw-edge



*by* Jean Impey

Creating art quilts with reckless abandon is one of my favorite ways to make whimsical appliqué. I have been teaching this fast and fun technique for about six years now. What makes it different from the rest? It allows everyone to be a successful artist by combining a wide variety of fussy-cut botanical fabric motifs with free-motion threadwork. After all of the design and stitch work have been done and before the image is appliquéd to the background, it is manipulated with water and friction to make each individual element "bloom."

This technique is fun, whimsical, improvisational, and even slightly imprecise—in a good way—allowing your inner designer to shine.

Photos by HornickRivlin.com

# Directions

1. Place the muslin on a work surface. The muslin acts as a base for the collage, and will be barely visible in the final piece.
2. Create the vase. Find a shape you like and cut it out of fabric. For example, a 6" circle or square vase can easily be cut from a fat quarter or large fabric scrap.
3. Sew around the edge of the vase fabric, attaching it to the muslin.

**TIP:** I sew several horizontal lines across the vase to secure the fabric and allow it to recede in the composition.

4. Create the flowers by fussy cutting individual blooms from a variety of floral fabrics. Consider adding other aspects of nature you see in the fabrics such as leaves, animals, birds, and insects.

**NOTE:** It is important to have a wide selection of flowers that are different styles and sizes. This variety is what will make your piece special. I cut out lots of options from different fabric lines when making my compositions. More is better.

5. Play with the placement of the flowers and greenery as if you were arranging a bouquet of fresh flowers. Use a camera or phone to take photos along the way for a 'second opinion.' It's amazing how clearly you can see what works and what doesn't when you look at a photo of your work.

## MATERIALS

- Fat quarter* muslin
- 10" square or large scrap vase fabric
- Floral or novelty fabrics to fussy cut—many different sizes and designs
- Neutral and black thread
- Fat quarter background
- Sewing machine with free-motion capabilities
- New kitchen-type sponge with an abrasive side
- Spray bottle of water

**Optional**

- Camera
- Quilting gloves

* Fat quarter = 18" x 20"



*25" x 31"*



*17" x 22"*

6. Once you settle on your final design, attach each flower, leaf, or element with a single pin. *(figure 1)* Don't use glue! You actually want the fabrics to bunch and move a bit when you 'recklessly' stitch the project.

7. Prepare your sewing machine for free-motion sewing. Attach a darning foot and use light neutral thread. I like to sew with my feed dogs up—it provides me with more control—but lowered feed dogs work well, too. Starting in the center of the arrangement, sew down the flowers and elements in a casual manner—no need to fret about folds or overlaps—and follow the outlines or designs within each one, removing pins as you go. This process will be messy and reckless. This is exactly what creates texture and dimension in the design. *(figure 2)*

8. Change the top and bobbin to black thread and free-motion sketch the outline of the flowers, greenery, and vase. The black thread unifies the design by adding detail. Be random and reckless with your stitching: it is ok to go over an element more than once and to add stitching that does not follow an edge or line precisely. The key is to think like an illustrator, as if you are outlining and sketching with a permanent black marker. *(figure 3)*



figure 1



figure 2



figure 3

9. Spray the project with water and use the abrasive side of a clean, wet kitchen sponge to 'scrub' the top of the piece. This will encourage the raw edges to fray and stand up away from the floral elements, and the piece will bloom with texture when it has dried.

10. After the piece has dried, trim away the muslin base leaving ¼" around the outer edges of the entire appliqué.

11. Place the appliqué onto your chosen background (no pins are needed). Using black thread, sew around the perimeter and a few of the flowers to attach it to the background, but don't overdo it; sew as if you were attaching a patch. See "Options for Finishing" to complete your work.

## Options for Finishing

- To create a pillow cover, arrange the muslin appliqué on a background. Quilting with batting is optional but will add wonderful dimension. Sew a second piece of fabric to the appliquéd front, turn right sides out, and stuff the cover with a pillow insert or fiberfill.
- To make a framed piece of artwork, the appliqué can be mounted on a textured background or directly on to stretched canvas.
- To use the appliqué as an embellishment, sew it onto a piece of clothing or accessory. It will look fantastic on the back of a denim jacket or on a tote bag.
- To complete as a quilt, add batting, backing, and binding.
- Embellish your design with additional background quilting or thread-sketched elements. For example, consider adding outline-stitched dangling flowers and leaves or a thread sketch of a bird or butterfly.



**Want to learn *more?***

Watch Jean demonstrate her 'reckless' appliqué on "Quilting Arts TV" Series 2300, available at **quiltingartstv.com** or your local PBS station.





# HEAT WAVE

## RESULTS FROM THE 'HEAT IT UP!' READER CHALLENGE

In the December 2018/January 2019 issue we asked our readers to make a 7" x 7" quilt using an element of heat—be it from an iron, fire, or the ever-popular soldering iron. We received many entries with disparate techniques—from melting acrylic cloth to burning to creating intentional holes—and the results were breathtaking. This gallery of our readers' work is a testament to creativity and ingenuity. Enjoy the following pages, and if you decide to try any of these "hot" techniques, don't forget the ventilation!



## "I am Really Steamed"

CAROL CHURCHILL • SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA

"Eco-dyeing occurs when silk or cotton fabric is treated with mordant that promotes color transfer from plant material to fabric with the application of steam or boiling water. The plant material is soaked in rust water to encourage color transfer. Plants are placed on fabric, rolled into a tight roll to force the fabric onto surface of plants, and then steamed. I used paper bark tree flower pods as the organic material."

18+

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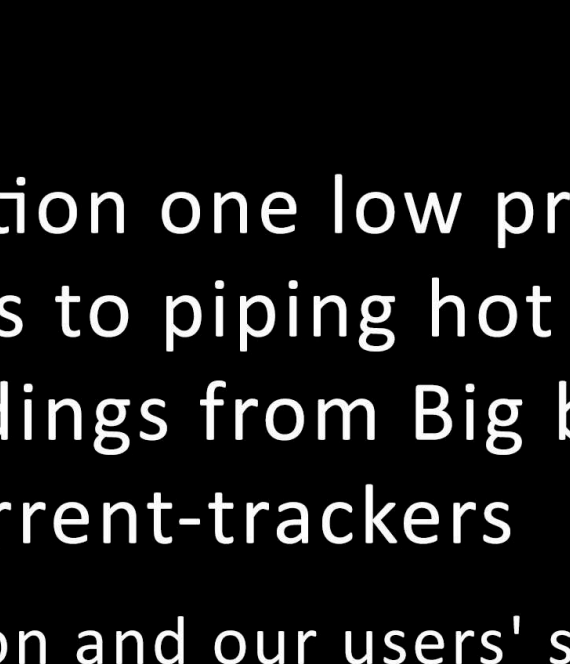

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## "Pele's Arch"

LINNAE COSTELLO • BOISE, IDAHO

"I saw this copyright-free image on Pixaby and thought it would be a good subject for a heat-related challenge. I printed the photo on Lutradur® and used a soldering iron to cut around the lava and rocks. I created the surf using a heat gun on Lutradur and then used the heat gun on a used dryer sheet to create the clouds."



## "Circuits"

JOAN DELONY • SAINT AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

"This piece was made with two processes. First, I built the center by fusing three to four shaped layers of polyester velvet to a piece of polyester felt. I then stitched the fused design together with cotton thread using free-motion quilting. After stretching it on a wooden frame, I burned holes through the layers of polyester velvet with a soldering iron and I burned the polyester felt backing away with a heat gun leaving the design in the finished piece. I mounted this on a square of grunge fabric that was machine quilted. I finished the piece using a facing to close the edges."



## "Falling Leaves"

LYNNE GETTELFINGER • MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA

"My quilt is made from painted pieces of Tyvek® that were manipulated with a heat gun until they wrinkled like the leaves that dry and draw up as they fall and die, providing the miracle of nourishment to the environment on the ground below. I stitched the leaves onto a background of fall colors."



## "The Sun's Flowers"

JAN GEZON • LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA

"This challenge provided an out-of-the-box opportunity. I saw a technique using a soldering iron on non-woven materials to create organic elements. I was intrigued, but had not had a chance to play with it. The flower elements were created on a poly non-woven using heat to create the spore holes in the center and burnished petals. I added fabric paint, water, and sun (and some sparkle) to bring the flowers to life. I consider this my first mixed-media experience."



## "Plant Series 2"

PAT PASTEUR • LINCOLN, MAINE

"The background of this piece was printed on an inkjet printer and enhanced with oil paint sticks. It is accented with machine stitching, beads, and painted and heated Tyvek® for embellishments."



## "California Burning"

JANET ROOT • KENDALL, NEW YORK

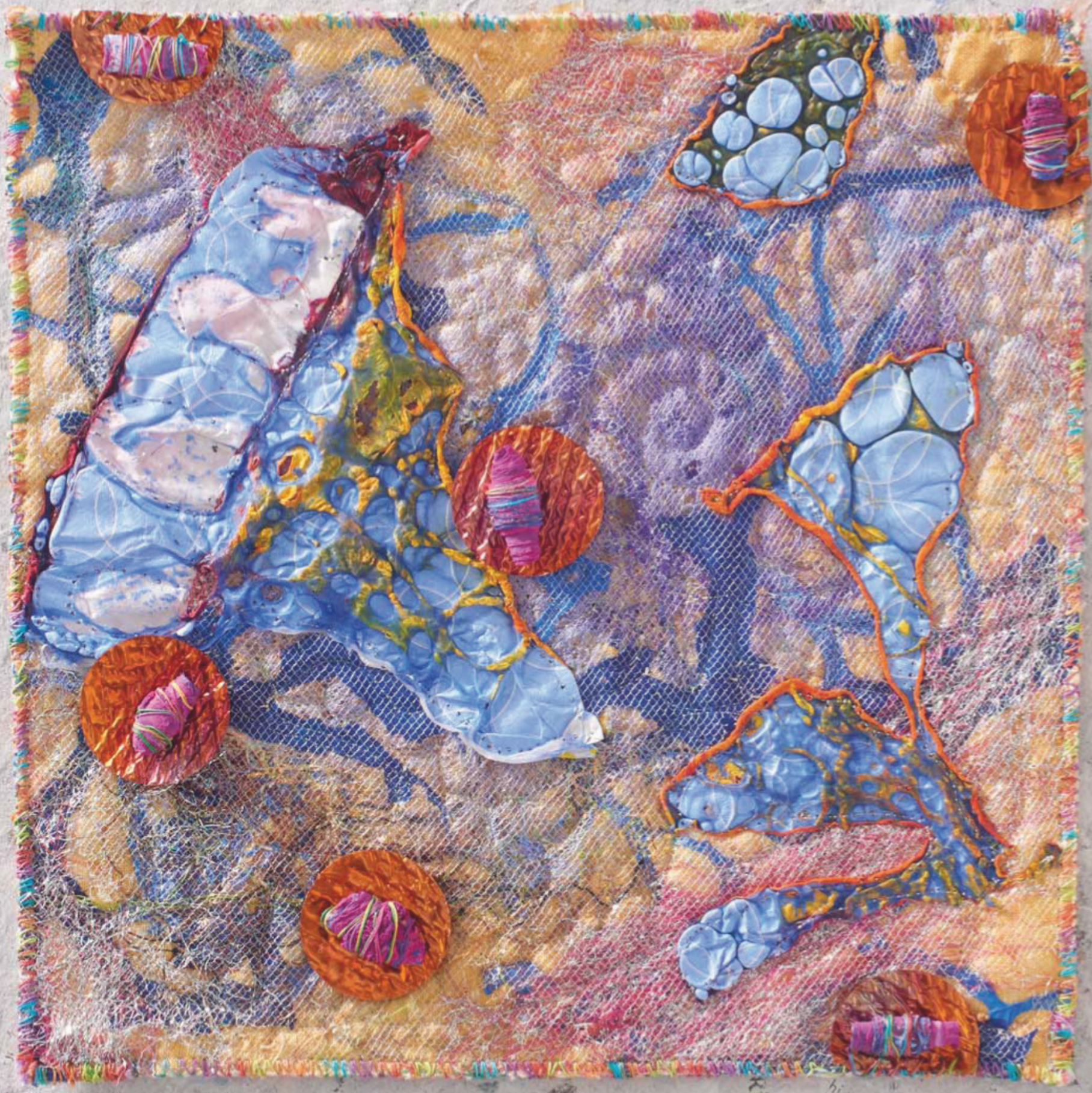
"I used three methods of heat in this quilt. The cotton fabric's edges were burned in a candle flame, the polyester organza was cut with a soldering iron, and the yarn of the binding was Kool-Aid dyed in the microwave."



## "Pele's River"

CARROLL LEE STOLZ
WASHINGTON, UTAH

"This piece was inspired by the latest volcanic eruption of Mt. Kilauea on the Big Island of Hawaii, beginning in May 2018. The widely publicized videos and photos were stupendous, and the fury of Pele, Hawaiian Goddess of Fire, quite evident. The fire portion was achieved by removing black dye from the fabric using a heat-activated color discharging paste. The dye was replaced with paint, inks, and dyes. I sealed the edges by carefully burning them over a flame, and then pinched the melting polyester content of the batting sandwiched between the two layers of cotton fabric. I sprayed a coat of matte fixative to prevent the burnt edges from disintegrating. The piece is machine embroidered and machine quilted."



## "Bubbling Enthusiasm"

KAY SUTT • SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

"I love 'melting' into my quilts! My heat gun and iron are second only to my sewing machine among my favorite quilting tools. I love the wabi-sabi, unexpected quality of working with heat on a variety of materials. This challenge gave me the opportunity to play in a toy box I haven't opened in a few months. This piece contains: commercial cotton substrate, Angelina® with trapped fibers, melted plastic bag strips, partially melted tulle, painted/melted Tyvek®, heat colored copper 'buttons,' and painted/melted Tyvek beads."

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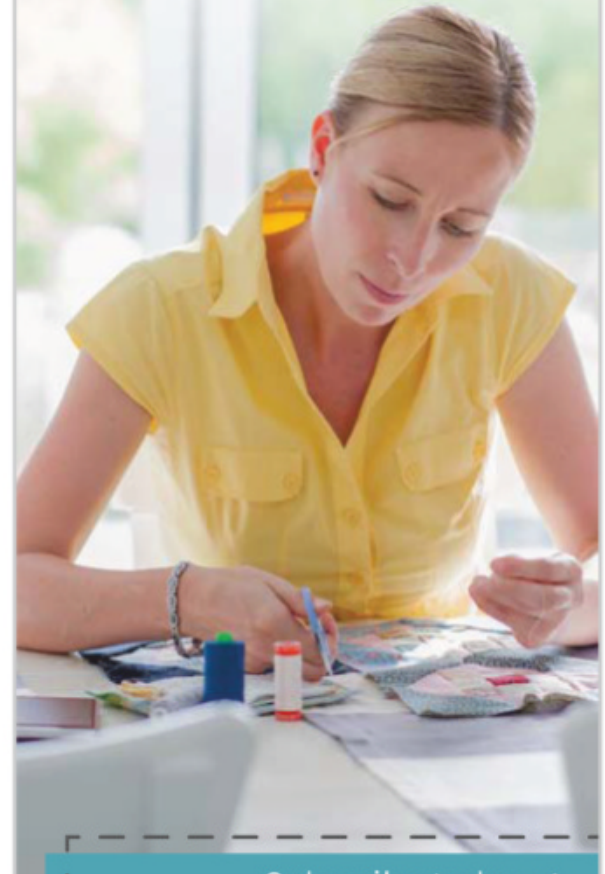

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- Attach up to three low-resolution jpg photos of your art or process to your email, and don't forget to include your name, website, and contact information.

NOTE: *We work far ahead in the year and sometimes can't fit a piece into the magazine right away. Our editorial review process may take up to 12 weeks, but in many cases, we will respond to you much sooner. No phone calls or follow-up emails, please.*

## In addition ...

- Most of our artist profiles, media and product reviews, and reader challenges are written by our staff.
- We do all our photography in-house. If accepted, your work must be available to be shipped to our offices.

Check out this and other Reader Challenge 'Heat It Up!' quilts on page 45.

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# Talismans, Charms, & Amulets

## FIBER ART TO WEAR AND SHARE

*by* Susan Brubaker Knapp

People of nearly every culture create talismans, charms, and amulets. They are small pieces worn to protect against evil or danger, to bring the wearer good luck, or to endow the owner with an ability or power (such as courage or speed).

Since childhood, I have collected small objects, both natural and man-made, that I love; I have several large jars filled with special shells, stones, beads, metal charms, and bits of wood. These objects bring back powerful memories and seem infused with meaning.

I recently realized I could enjoy these items more if I used them in small pieces of art I could wear as jewelry.

Photos by HornickRivlin.com unless otherwise noted

## MATERIALS

- Fabric scraps in cotton, linen, osnaburg, or silk
- Stuffing such as wool roving, shredded wool batting, or polyester fiberfill
- Thread or floss for embellishment
- Embellishments such as beads, buttons, or charms
- Leather cording, silk ribbon, or chain plus metal findings
- Chalk pencil
- Pattern, provided
- Freezer paper
- Skewer or chopstick

**Optional**

- Natural materials infused with scent (I use cedar, rosemary, and lavender.)

# DIRECTIONS

1. Make a pattern. Consider the size; you don't want to wear something too big or heavy around your neck. Draw the pattern onto freezer paper and cut it out. If using the 2-piece pattern provided, note there is an extra flap (created as a separate piece, then sewn on the back, turned to the front, and stitched down a few times) that gives the illusion that it is a little purse.
2. Prepare the fabric. For each piece, cut 2 pieces of fabric slightly larger than the finished amulet size.
3. Iron the freezer paper pattern (shiny side down) onto the wrong side of 1 of the fabric pieces. Trace around it, using a chalk pencil or other marking device. *(figure 1)* Remove freezer paper.
4. Pin the front and back pieces, right sides facing.
5. Stitch the 2 pieces together on the drawn line, leaving a small opening (at least ¾") for turning right side out. *(figure 2)* Backstitch at the beginning and end.
6. Trim the seam allowance to a scant ¼" and clip the corners to reduce bulk, making sure not to cut through the stitching. *(figure 3)*
7. Turn right side out, using a skewer or chopstick to push out the corners.

figure 1

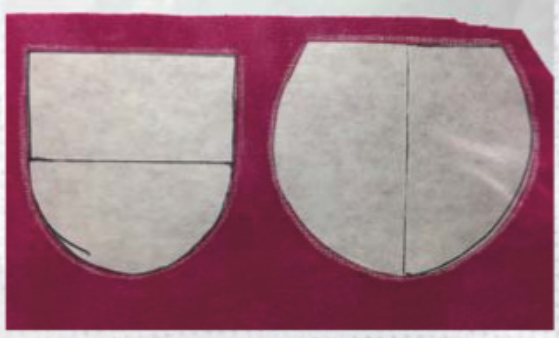


figure 2



figure 3



Process photos courtesy of the artist

8. Tuck the raw edges into the opening. Fill the amulet with your preferred stuffing. Hand stitch the opening closed, using thread that matches the fabric.

9. Add hand stitching over the surface of the amulet, as desired. *(figure 4)*

**TIP:** Stuff the amulet with a small amount of filling. I love the way wool stuffing compresses when heavily hand stitched. It creates a nice, firm surface for embellishments.

10. Embellish the amulet with meaningful objects, stitching them down with perle cotton or decorative thread. If using the 2-piece pattern, embellish both pieces. Fold the flap over the top of the body and sew it to the front and back.

11. Attach cording, ribbon, a chain, or other material so you can wear the amulet around your neck.

figure 4



## Suggested Embellishments

Here are some ideas for embellishments you might consider that fit with several themes

**Remembrance**

- Scrap of fabric from baby clothes, wedding gown, or work clothes
- Special bead
- Small brooch or earring
- Dog's tag
- Military dog tag
- Military medal or patches
- House key
- Scents: lavender or rosemary

**Forest**

- Pebble
- Piece of wood
- Feather
- Scent: cedar
- Stitching: tree branches, leaf veins

**Seashore**

- Seashell
- Driftwood
- Sea glass
- Sand (include as a vial or in a tiny plastic bag with the stuffing)





**"Aotearoa"**
(top right)

*Aotearoa* means "land of the long white cloud," or New Zealand, in Māori. I purchased the disk of *pāua* (Maori for what is called abalone in America) on a recent trip to New Zealand, and showcased it on a piece of hand-dyed linen in colors that remind me of the brilliant aqua and teal waters of that country. The shells are from an American beach and are a reminder that all of the earth's waters, and its people, are connected. The antique brass key is a symbol of doors opening through travel. The stuffing includes some sand. I attached metal findings to the top of the amulet and strung the piece with leather cording.

**"Be Mine"** (top left)

This amulet features a silver and red crystal heart and lots of embroidered "X" kisses. I added an extra flap (created as a separate piece, then sewn on the back, turned to the front, and stitched down a few times) that gives the illusion that it is a little purse. The silver chain runs between the flap and the base.

**"Matriarchy"** (bottom)

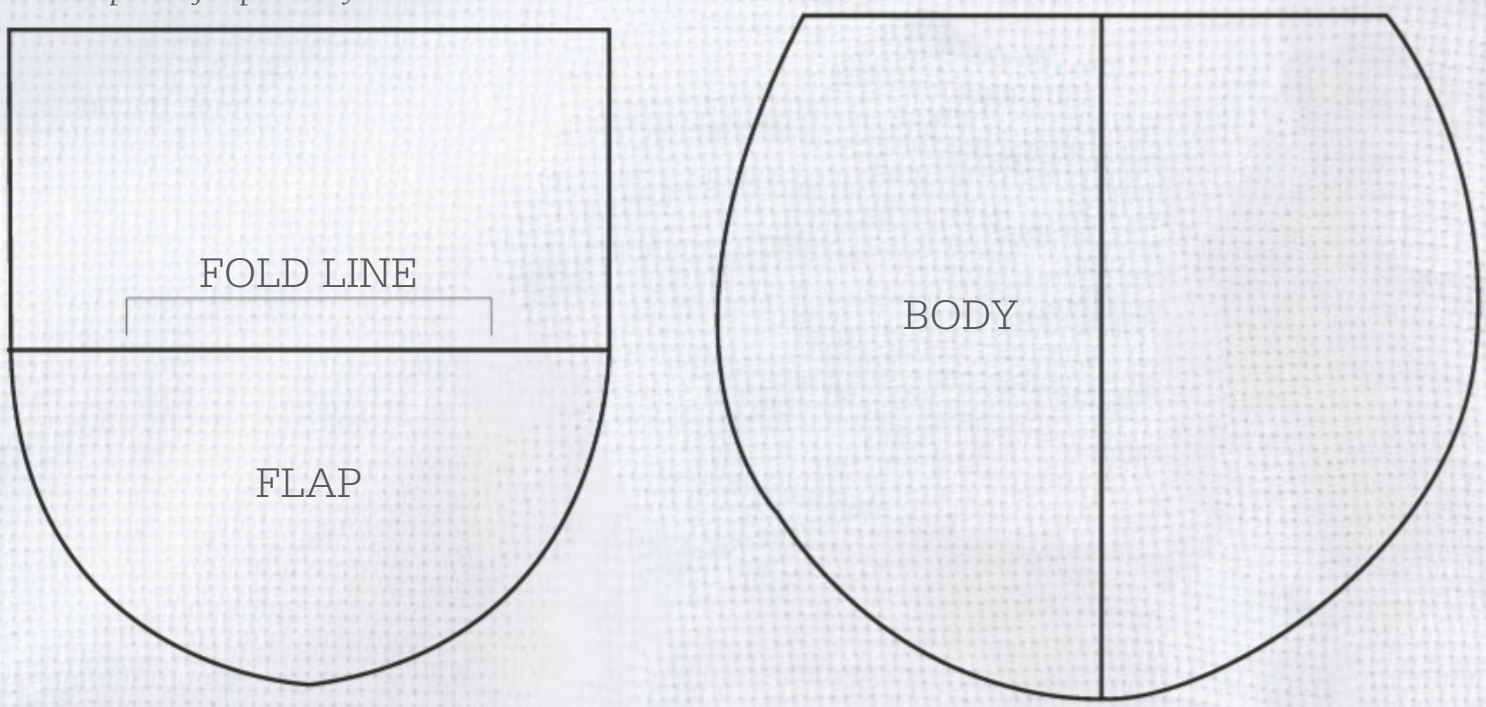
The focus of this piece is two lingerie pins I inherited. Lingerie pins were used during Victorian times, and slightly after, to hold the straps from bras and camisoles in place under dresses and blouses. This pair is quite elegant, made from engraved rose gold with delicate clasps. Too small to wear as a brooch, they were languishing in my jewelry box but here they take center stage and make for an interesting conversation starter. For the fabric base, I used hand-dyed silk/cotton blend that reminded me of lingerie, added some glass beads, and added a piece of hand-dyed silk ribbon for the tie.



## Want to learn *more?*

Watch Susan share these amulets and talismans on "Quilting Arts TV" Series 2300 available at **quiltingartstv.com** or your local PBS station.

*Pattern pieces for purse-style amulet*




*F+W Media, Inc. grants permission to photocopy these patterns for personal use only. Print at 100%.*

# FANCIFUL, FREE, *and Floral*



Photos by HornickRivlin.com

*"Don't Surrender" • 40" x 40"*

## QUILTING BOTANICAL FOREGROUNDS & BACKGROUNDS

*by* Karen Ponischil

For those of us who aspire to showing our work, it is thrilling to get an email from a favorite venue: "Congratulations! Your quilt has been juried into our show." All of our hard work has really paid off! Next, we complete the paperwork and ship the quilt. At the exhibit, friends take pictures and post them on social media. Everything is great.

Then the day arrives when the quilt is returned and you eagerly read the judge's critique and comments. Does your heart fall? Mine did recently.

I saw all the positive scoring and feedback, but the only comment I focused on was, "Using something other than meandering in the background would GREATLY add to this piece."

Criticism—no matter how constructive—can be a hard pill to swallow. So after I considered it for a long time, let the negativity go, and just finally just got over it, I thought, "Yep! The judge is right."

So, what could I have done differently? What background quilting motif could I have used that would have made the piece more interesting and enhanced the design?

As luck would have it, later that day I was dusting the frame of a favorite botanical print while still thinking about quilting motifs. I stopped and began to look closely at the illustration of a tulip and examined the lines that made up the drawing. I wondered if I could recreate this type of line drawing with my machine. This would definitely make an interesting focal image and, if replacing a meandering background, give the viewer something more to discover when examining the piece closely.

After researching botanical line drawings and illustrations,

## MATERIALS

- Copyright–free photo of a flower, leaf, or botanical shape
- Home décor vinyl large enough to cover the photo (I used 4 gauge.)
- Self-sticking plastic wrap (I used Glad® Press'n Seal®.)
- Fine-tip permanent marker (I used Microperm™ Ultra-Fine 05 by Sakura®.)
- Water-soluble ink pen
- White and black gel pens (I used Gelly Roll® 0.6 by Sakura.)
- Tape
- Light box
- 100% cotton fabric for top and backing
- Tweezers
- Spray basting adhesive or pins



Photo courtesy of the artist

*Inspiration photo of a ginkgo leaf.*

I felt confident I could create the same feel using my own photos as a starting point. I first practiced making a feature or foreground image to perfect my technique—which I later framed in an embroidery hoop—and then I moved on to adding a similar quilting motif in the background of a large quilt.

# Directions

## Working with light fabrics

1. Make a black-and-white copy of your image and enlarge it to the size you require. Changing a color image to black and white simplifies it, removing distractions. Look for an image like a leaf with a strong edge for your first exercise.
2. Cover the image with a piece of vinyl and trace the botanical shape using a fine-tip permanent marker.

**TIP:** Draw 2–3 internal lines of 'stitching' on top of the vinyl to note the direction of the veins or other details you want to create in stitch.

3. Place the vinyl tracing on a light box. Secure the vinyl with tape at the top edge.
4. Place a piece of light-colored fabric on top of the vinyl and secure it with tape. Trace the line drawing on the fabric using a water-soluble pen.
5. Layer the fabric with batting and backing. Baste with spray adhesive or pins.
6. Set up your sewing machine for free-motion stitching. Using contrasting thread, free-motion stitch directly over the water-soluble pen lines in the drawing. Stitch the outline first, and then fill in the veins of the leaves. (*figures 1 and 2*)
7. When the stitching is complete, follow the manufacturer's instructions to remove the pen lines.

## Working with dark fabrics

Artists don't always start with light-colored fabrics. Sometimes, only darks or black will do. If you want to create the same botanical inspired image on dark fabrics, follow these instructions.

1. Make a black-and-white copy of your images as above.
2. Place a piece of self-sticking plastic wrap over the top of the image. Make sure the wrap is secured by rubbing your fingers over it.
3. Trace the image onto the plastic using a white gel pen.
4. Make a quilt sandwich by layering a dark top fabric with batting and backing. Baste with spray adhesive or pins in the corners.

figure 1

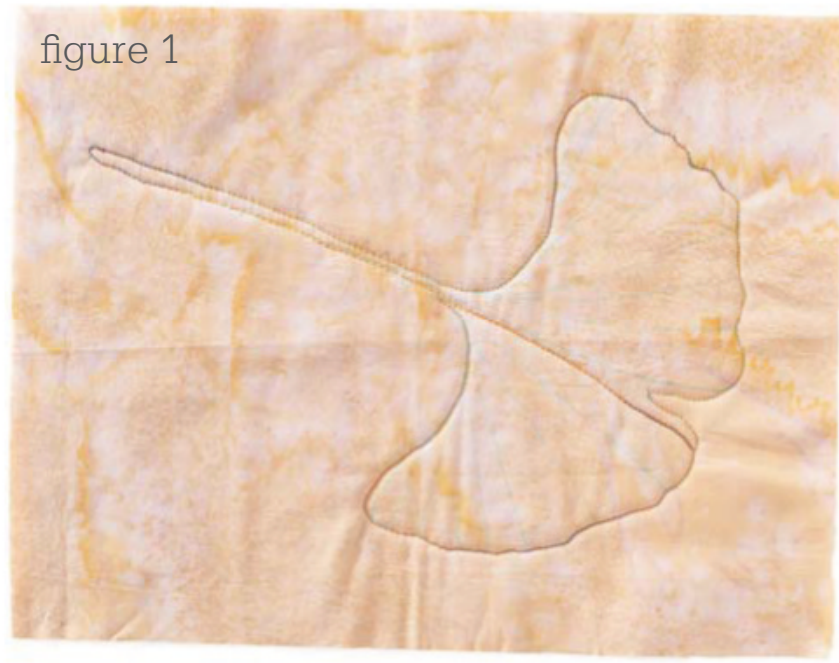
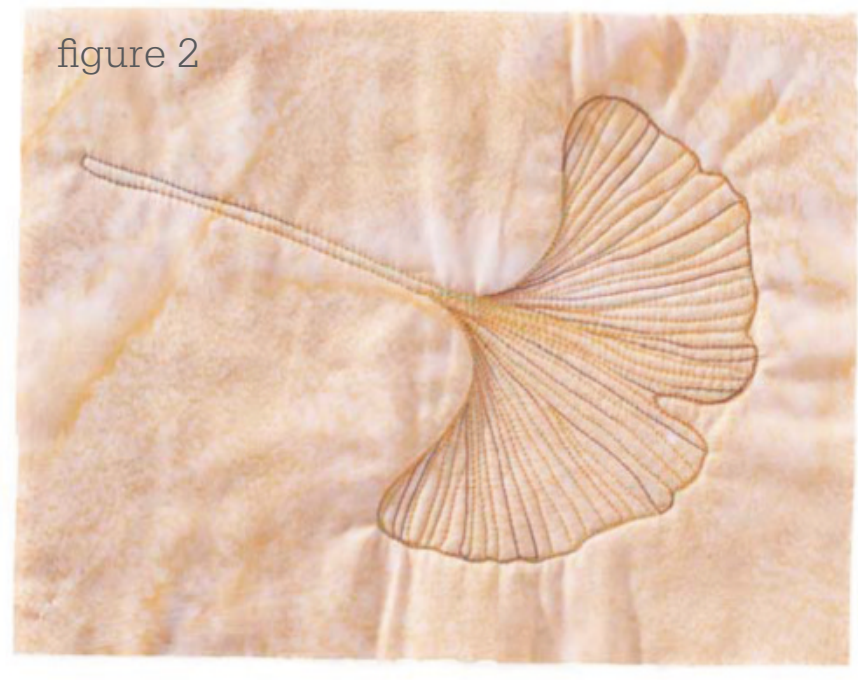


figure 2



5. Firmly apply the tracing to the quilt top. A distinct white outline should be visible on the plastic.
6. Set up your sewing machine for free-motion stitching. Free-motion stitch through the plastic wrap, following the white lines of the traced image. Take your time and go slowly when stitching.

**TIP:** The more stitching through the plastic wrap, the more difficult it is to remove when complete. Do the least amount of stitching to create the pattern.

7. When the stitching is done, remove the plastic wrap from the fabric. The plastic should tear away easily, but if there a few stubborn bits that won't budge, use tweezers to remove them.

## Background quilting

After experimenting with this technique and recalling the judge's comments, I was ready to explore integrating images and tracings into the background of a quilt. The

directions are similar to focal image quilting with a few exceptions.

Because the quilt top is layered with batting and backing and I can't trace directly onto the fabric, I make a botanical tracing on self-sticking plastic wrap and place it directly on the quilt top where the images will be quilted. I prefer to use thread that matches the background fabric for a more subtle look.

1. Repeat Steps 1 and 2 from "Working with light fabrics."

**TIP:** The extra step of tracing on vinyl allows you to reuse the same image—or selected parts of it—repeatedly with separate pieces of self-sticking plastic wrap.

2. Apply the plastic wrap to the top of the vinyl tracing and secure it by rubbing around the image and edges.

3. Trace the outlined image onto the plastic wrap using a white gel pen for dark-colored background fabrics and a black gel pen for light-colored fabrics.

4. Remove the tracing and firmly apply the wrap to the quilt top.

5. Free-motion stitch through the plastic wrap. Follow the outlines of the petals, stems, and leaves. Stitch the outside outline first and then add a few inside veins/details. Stitch over some lines repeatedly for a dark accent.

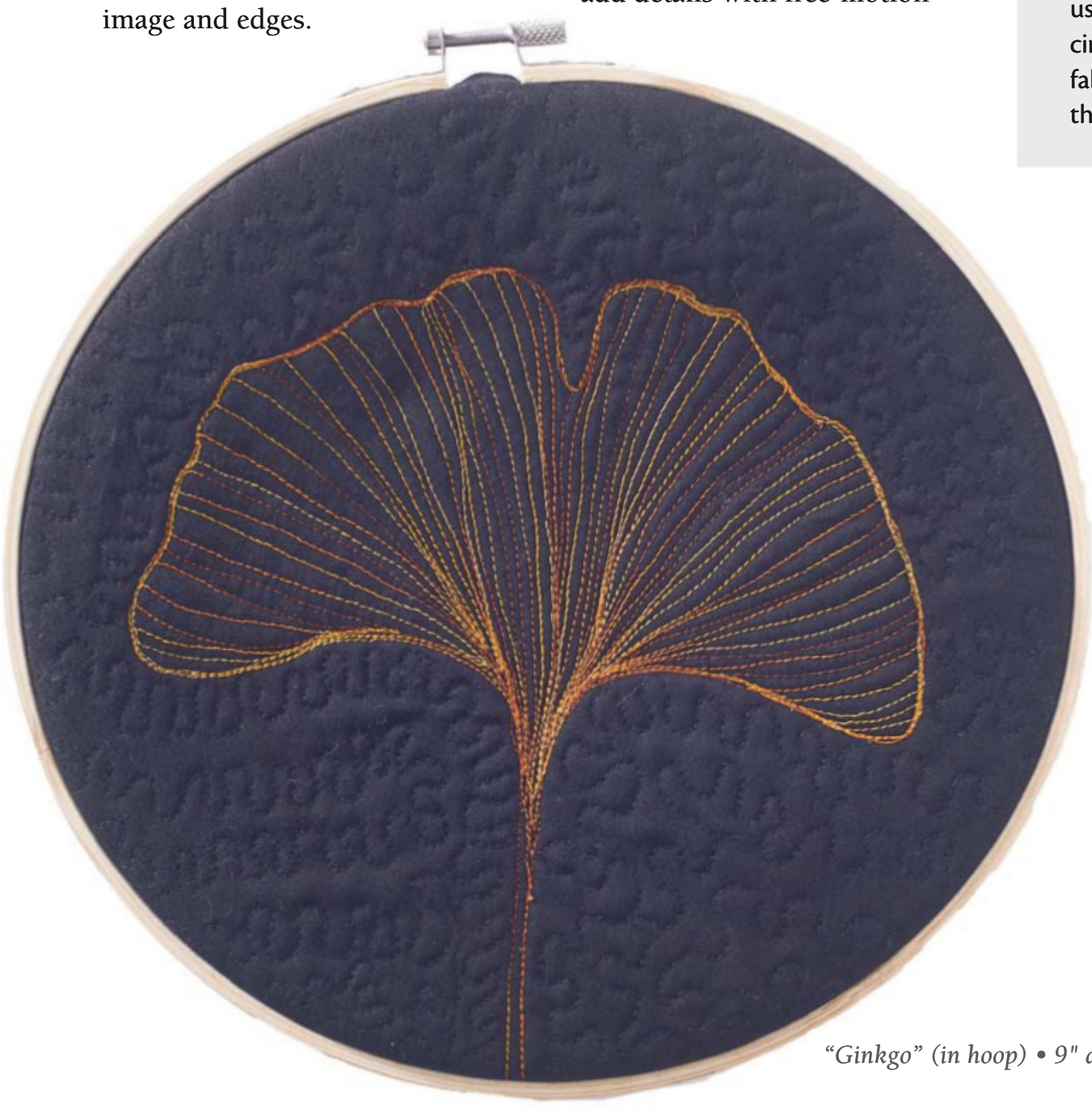
6. Remove the plastic wrap by tearing it away from the stitched areas, using tweezers if needed.

7. After removing all of the self-sticking plastic wrap, add details with free-motion stitching. Continue quilting the background with additional tracings, echo quilting, or complementary shapes.

## Try This!

This technique is addictive. Display a stitched sample in an embroidery hoop for a unique wall hanging.

- Start with a traced image on fabric, a few inches larger than the hoop, and layer it with batting. (To decrease bulk, work without a backing fabric, stitching the image through only a top and batting.) Stitch the image.
- Place the stitched image in the hoop. Trim the excess batting to the edge of the hoop. Leave at least 1" of the top fabric.
- With a heavyweight thread, use a running stitch around the circumference of the excess top fabric. Pull taut and knot, hiding this on the back side of the hoop.



*"Ginkgo" (in hoop) • 9" diameter*



*"Passage" • 2017 • 50" x 44"*

# Judith Content

## *artist profile*

PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

*by* Cate Coulacos Prato



*"Chalcedony Series III" • 2018 • 15" x 5" x 2"*



Photos courtesy of the artist

fiber artist Judith Content finds inspiration for her colorful shibori fiber art designs everywhere: in the changing ocean near her Palo Alto home, the marsh grasses of France and her native New England, geological formations on her travels to Colorado and Europe—even by what's on her dinner plate.

"I see color and I get a visceral reaction. My brain gets happy. We could be eating dinner and I look down at the lines and colors in a piece of purple cabbage—I have to stop everything and act on it. I can see shibori patterns in almost anything," she says.

Content's ability to translate inspiration into shibori- and discharge-dyed silk that in turn becomes painterly quilted wall hangings, small fabric sculptures, and distinctive wearable art, has won this modest artist accolades and a stellar reputation over her 40-year career. In 2019 alone, the former Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) president ('07-'09) mounted a solo exhibition at the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles (SJMQT), "Evanescence: Judith Content," and she will be featured in the upcoming QUILTS episode of PBS's "Craft in America," this time focusing on her shibori dye process, her solo exhibition, and her colorful and eclectic home and gardens. Her work can be found in many private and public collections, including the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City and the International Shibori Collection in Nayoga, Japan.

Content's creative synapses began firing when she was a young girl, growing up in New England in the 1960s and early '70s. She lived with her parents in a Shaker-style home where the family valued clean design. Early on, she was introduced to another culture that values simplicity: Japan.

"My uncle, who served in the merchant marines, brought back treasures from his travels. When I was 17, he brought me a beautiful wedding kimono, with leaves falling on the sleeves. I fell in love," Content recalls. Soon after, her family pulled up stakes and moved to northern California, where she was bombarded—in a good way—by new ideas, cultures, and diversity.

"Moving to California was probably the best thing that could have ever happened to me. Everything was new," she says.



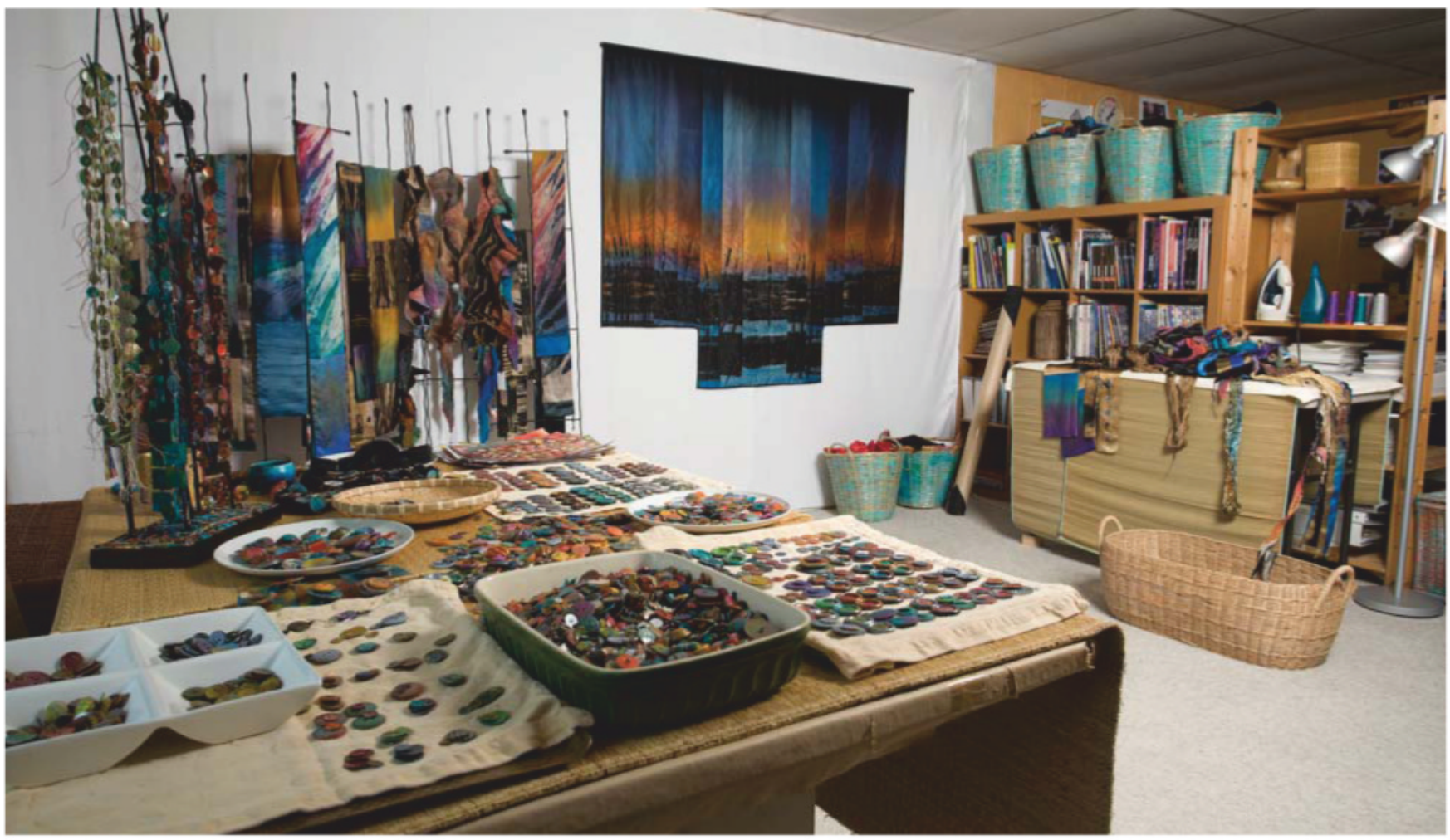
*"Spires" • 2017 • 63" x 41"*



*"Chalcedony Series I" • 2018 • 15" x 5" x 2"*

While her mother, also an artist, took up Japanese brush painting, Content studied art at San Francisco State University, discovering Japanese textiles in her last semester. The Japanese influence grew even stronger when she married a man whose parents lived in Japan before he was born, and the couple inherited Japanese textiles, tansu (chests of drawers), and other artifacts.

Content, who had been collecting Shaker pieces since she was 11, appreciated the resemblance between the Japanese and Shaker designs. And the similar aesthetics—as well as the geographies and cultures of the U.S. east and west—influence her work today. Take for example, the shibori-made lines in her paneled kimono-shaped wall hangings that come together to evoke the marsh grasses of Cape Cod or the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Or, her hand-dyed, pleated silk scarves that swirl around necklines, reflecting the sunset on the rippling waves of San Francisco Bay.



Content captures inspiration with her camera, snapping pictures everywhere she goes, from her own garden to the French countryside and beyond. She's particularly attracted to nature and geological formations, especially marshes. "We've traveled the world to search out the world's best marshes. I wouldn't turn down a trip to a marsh any day," she says. One of her favorite destinations is the La Brière Regional National Park in Brittany, France's second-largest marshland, where boats meander and homes are made from woven reeds and grasses. She also seeks out marshes up and down the California coast.

Content says she's fascinated by the form of the leaves and reeds of grasses, as well as the horizontal lines produced by the ocean. Then there is the phenomenon of the fog, when first the mist mutes the hues and blurs the horizon line, and then gradually the sun comes out and colors emerge. "I love to watch as the colors change and the water takes on an abstracted, abalone look," she says.

But her New England upbringing still influences her, too. "In Massachusetts, the season that interested me most was winter, with the bare trees and the shadows of the trees on the snow. My mother and I, being artists, loved watching the trees for first blush of pink that signaled spring."

Lately, she has worked on fiber art inspired by geological formations. Visiting the Boulder Flatirons, with their sharply vertical and diagonal angles, led to a piece called "Passage," which was featured in her SJMQT solo show. And she has created small, sculptural silk pieces that mimic agate and matte chalcedony glistening beneath the crystal clear waters of Fallen Leaf Lake near Tahoe.

Color is as important to Content as line, and her eyes are drawn to nature—and sometimes food—for inspiration there, too. On a recent visit to the ochre mines of Provence, the vivid shades of turmeric set her creative mind ablaze. Turning to her husband she said, "Welcome to my brain." The results of a shibori discharge dyeing session with deep brown silk brought to mind dark and white chocolate, leading her to create a series of small sculptural "truffles."



*"Sea Change" • 2018 • 22" x 55"*



*"Pinnacles" • 2013 • 90" x 42"*
*"Pinnacles" is in the permanent collection of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation.*

Content almost always begins from her own idea or is prompted by the theme of an exhibition, such as SAQA's "Shifting Tides: Convergence in Cloth" exhibit for 2019. Her piece, "Sea Change," addresses climate change and rising sea levels.

With her inspiration in her head, Content begins with the silk shibori dyeing process, usually tackling a series of three pieces at a time. She might start by exploring pure line on silk in black and white, through discharge dyeing. "It looks like you've taken a pen and ink to the fabric," she says. She spends a couple of days wrapping silk on a pole, pleating and securing the silk before it goes into the discharge dye pot. Next, she'll work with color, creating a variety of palettes over 2–3 weeks before starting a third dye session with just one palette.

Once Content's fabric is prepared, it goes up on the design wall. She covers the windows with blackout fabric, hangs white denim over that, and pins strips of fabric from one palette to the wall, starting with the center piece of multiple panels. The next palette goes on another area of the design wall, and so on, so she can easily move from project to project. From there, she relies on intuition and spontaneity, changing out the fabric pieces on each project until the composition satisfies her. "The composition is the hardest part to achieve," she says.

Content used to use quilting to help complete the composition. Now, she says, her quilting complements the composition by way of very dense stitching: 1/16" between quilt lines. Slowly but surely, she quilts on the multiple panels of each project separately. Once the quilting is done, she stitches the panels together. The quilt lines don't match up, but Content says that's a feature that gives the quilt a more interesting texture. Finally, she squares up and finishes the edges of each quilt—her least favorite part, she admits.

When a round of projects is done, she either starts over with new quilts or works on smaller pieces. Content says she never throws anything away and has "a lifetime" of scraps; they gather in baskets in her studio and provide inspiration for some of her small sculptural works or her wearable art.

In 2018, Content broke her arm, leaving her temporarily unable to use her sewing machine and other tools of her trade. She took the opportunity to learn new techniques, working in paper and some small-scale projects. It was frustrating, but the episode made her appreciate the return of her abilities and machine stitching all the more.

Content says she works so intuitively, she almost never knows what's around the creative corner. She's proud of achieving some of her goals, including being featured on "Craft in America" and having a solo exhibition. She says she plans to continue pursuing shibori in all facets so long as she can work freely and relatively free of pain. "I don't see an end to it."

To up and coming artists, she has this advice: "Be happy in the moment and take in your successes. Enjoy them in the moment and don't look too far ahead."

To learn more about Judith, visit her website at **judithcontent.com.**

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## Textile Tour to Japan in Spring With Carol Ziogas

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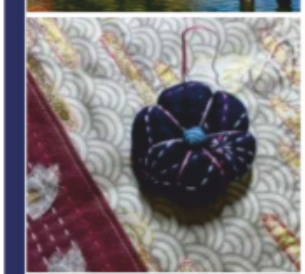

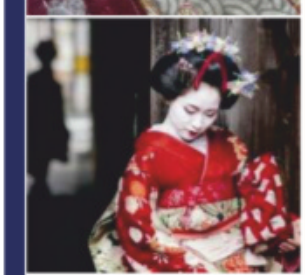

- From the modern hustle and bustle of **Nippori**, **Tokyo**'s famous "textile town" to the quiet, classical serenity of the **Ichiku Kubota kimono museum** in the **Kawaguchico Lake** region, let us guide you through Japan's fascinating textile culture.
- Bring your walking shoes and a good appetite! Wander the streets of **Old Town Takayama** and visit shops filled with handcrafted gifts, delicious treats, and beautiful sashiko crafts.
- Take a dip in the indigo at the **shibori museum in Arimatsu**, and explore the grand temples and neighborhood shrines of **Kyoto**.

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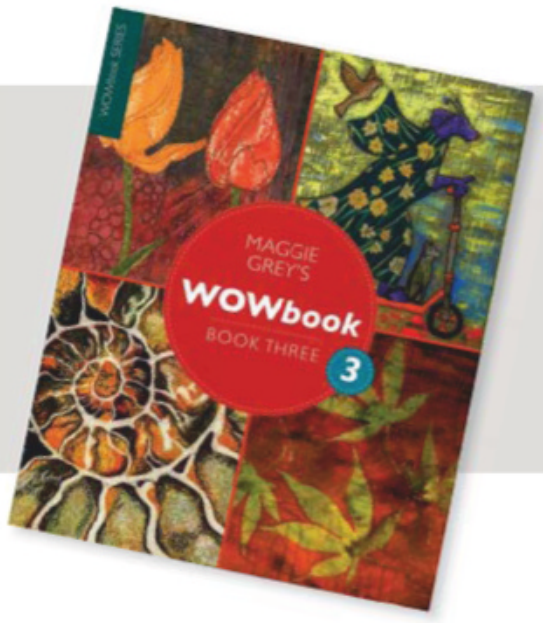
# studio style

## Add these items to your quilter's tool kit, stash, or library




### Maggie Grey's WOWbook: Book Three

MAGGIE GREY

Featuring work from 12 artists, this WOWbook is full of amazing textile artistry. From sun printing to needle felting to stitch from sketch this book has something for every fiber artist. A new section in this book explores five artists' sources of inspiration—something special to spark the reader's imaginative juices as they dive deep in their creative journeys. As always, purchase of this book allows you access to exclusive online bonus material, including courses with Maggie herself.

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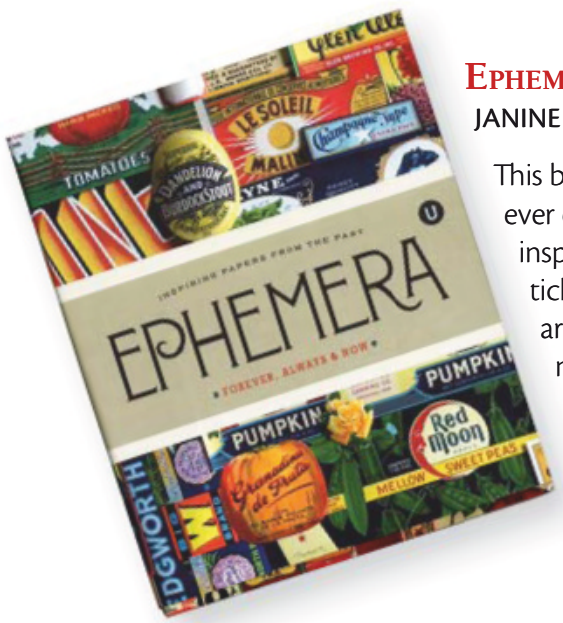


### Ephemera

JANINE VANGOOL

This book is a further entry into Uppercase's Encyclopedia of Inspiration series. In the now familiar but ever exciting dust jacket—that can be folded four different ways—the opening pages are exciting and inspirational. Merriam-Webster defines ephemera as "paper items (such as posters, broadsides, and tickets) that were originally meant to be discarded after use but have since become collectibles." The artists in this tome use these pieces of the past to their best advantage, showcasing paper art, mixed-media sculpture, and much, much more. Each page turn reveals a new delight or vintage find—leaving the reader to turn page after page in discovery.

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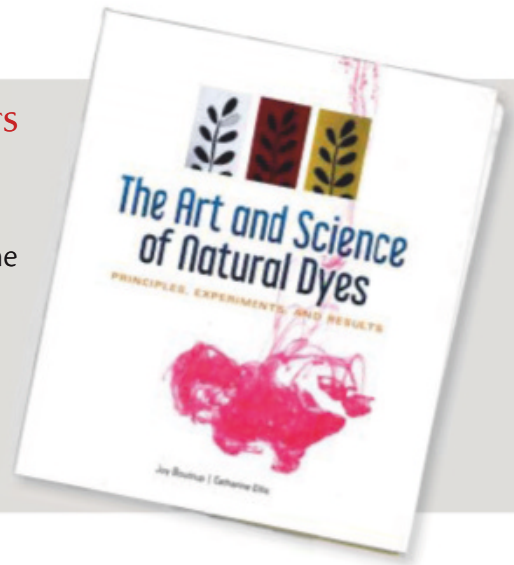


### The Art and Science of Natural Dyes: Principles, Experiments, and Results

JOY BOUTRUP AND CATHERINE ELLIS

Have you ever wondered about natural dyes? Does the process seem confusing, complicated, or both? Not anymore! Joy Boutrup and Catherine Ellis have teamed up to share their collective knowledge on the subject. Meant to be used as a workbook in the studio—complete with spiral binding—this book not only gives tried and tested recipes, but also carefully outlines the processes, tools, and materials needed for successful natural dyeing. The work pictured throughout is not only beautiful but informative. Because this book tells all, it's great for experienced dyers and beginners alike.

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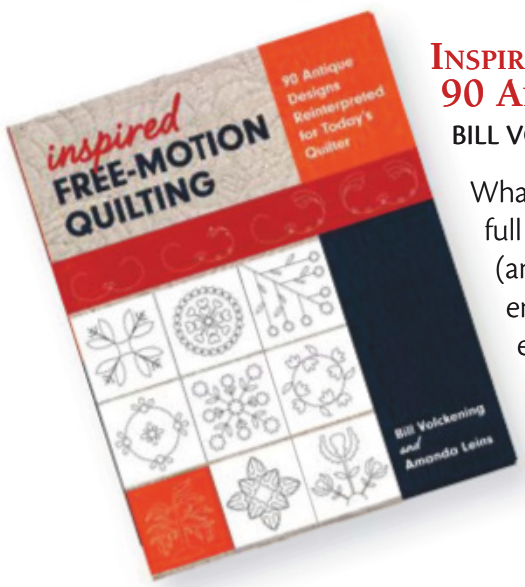


### Inspired Free-Motion Quilting: 90 Antique Designs Reinterpreted for Today's Quilter

BILL VOLCKENING AND AMANDA LEINS

What happens when a prominent quilt collector and a master longarm quilter get together? A book full of quilting motifs inspired by antique quilts, of course! Amanda Leins worked with Bill Volckening (and his collection of over 500 quilts) to create 90 quilting designs. The motifs pull elements from embroidery, trapunto, and block design. Photos and explanations of the inspiration quilts accompany each design—and history meets contemporary quilting in the best way.

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## Uppercase Volume 3: Circular Logic

JANINE VANGOOL

Inspiration can come from so many places—Janine Vangool was inspired by her publication, Uppercase Magazine, and its printing process. Catch a glimpse of printing rollers, registration dots, and more. In bright, retro colorways, watch how the electric prints work cohesively with variation in scale and shape.

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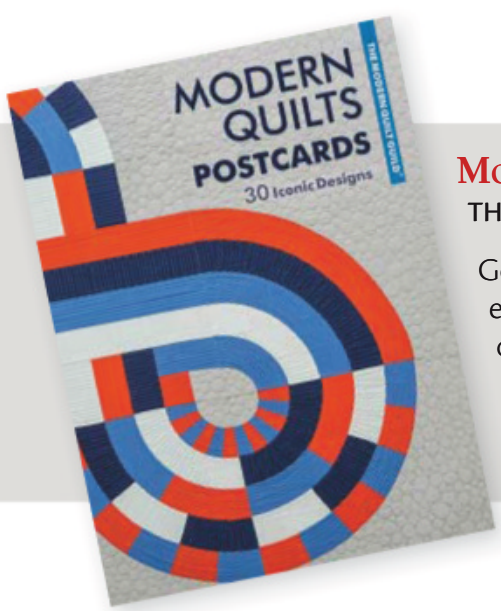


## Modern Quilt Postcards: 30 Iconic Designs

THE MODERN QUILT GUILD

Gorgeous quilts deserve to be celebrated and appreciated in many forms—especially when they've been expertly photographed to showcase their best features. Enjoy these lovely postcards showcasing some of the best of modern quilting, with photos from the Modern Quilt Guild's recent publication, Modern Quilts: Designs of the New Century. Send these to a friend or use them to decorate your studio!

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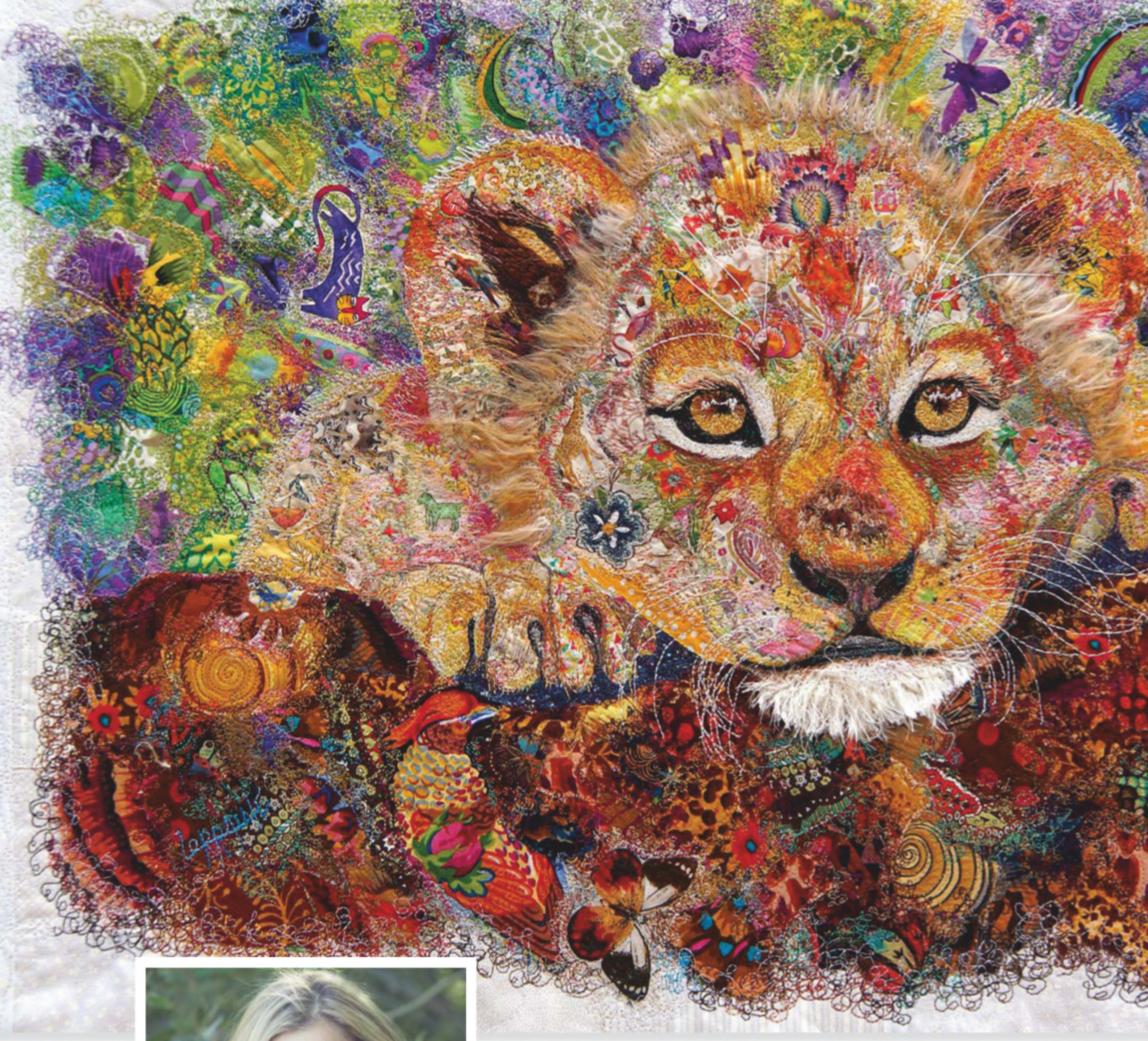




Photos courtesy of the artist

*in the*
SPOTLIGHT

# Lorraine Turner

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA



*"The Prince's Haven" • 25" x 18"*



*"Three Bankers" • 49" x 38"*

> *"What an incredible journey I'm on, and I greet it with gratitude and appreciation. Although I have been a freelance artist for four decades (and won two Emmy Awards as lead designer for the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers), I have only been a textile artist for less than three years. Sitting in my studio, surrounded by fabric and thread, I feel that I have truly 'found my medium.'*

*I became a fabric collage quilter in what could be called a peculiar way. During my busy career, I juggled so many creative projects that it affected my health causing chronic insomnia. So, in 2010 I set out to quiet my chattering mind and still my heart through silent meditation. I didn't realize how this would profoundly change my artistic journey, but what happened next was magical.*

*For 15 minutes daily, I would sit in silence with my eyes closed. I wasn't asleep; I was in a day-dreaming state. Over the course of several months, I experienced images, scents, feelings, and sounds that seemed to tell a story—always about animals. Some felt like live-action dramas, while others flashed for seconds like a snapshot. Through this meditation I began to connect with endangered animals. Just imagine how crazy this all felt. Eventually I studied to become a certified animal communicator. I am not a pet psychic; people sometimes get these confused. I am someone who uses meditation to connect with heart energy.*



*Above, "From the Bottom of Our Hearts" • 29" x 32"*

*Below, "Greeting Between the Lines" • 33" x 26"*



*It was on a visit to South Africa in 2015, as I communicated with a white lion living in a protected environment far from trophy hunters, that he showed me images of my own illustrations made out of fibers. All artists recognize their own work when they see it.*

*How remarkable to see my illustrations in a medium I had never attempted! He explained that I would blend my art with my heart's energy to help the animal kingdom … and that I was to never think of what will come back in return, as I can never out-give. So, I trusted the advice of my friend, the white lion, and gave it a try.*

*Back home, I dusted off my mom's old sewing machine, slowly built a modest stash, and started playing. As I discovered the joys of this wonderful new medium, I just experimented like a kid with a box of crayons.*

*I used everything I could get my hands on including new fabric, old jeans, ribbons, lace, beads … I approached it with laughter and joy. There were no mistakes, only lessons to be learned. Eventually I upgraded my tools, turned a spare room into my studio, and watched my stash fill more and more bins. I became more convinced than ever I would create art to help the endangered animals that visited me in meditation, tell their stories, and donate the funds to the non-profits helping them. I kept fiddling … with beading, ribbon embroidery, felting, machine embroidery, custom lace, and quilting. I must have been a good fiddler because the International Quilt Festival invited me to have a 26-piece special exhibit in November 2018. It was my very first quilt show.*



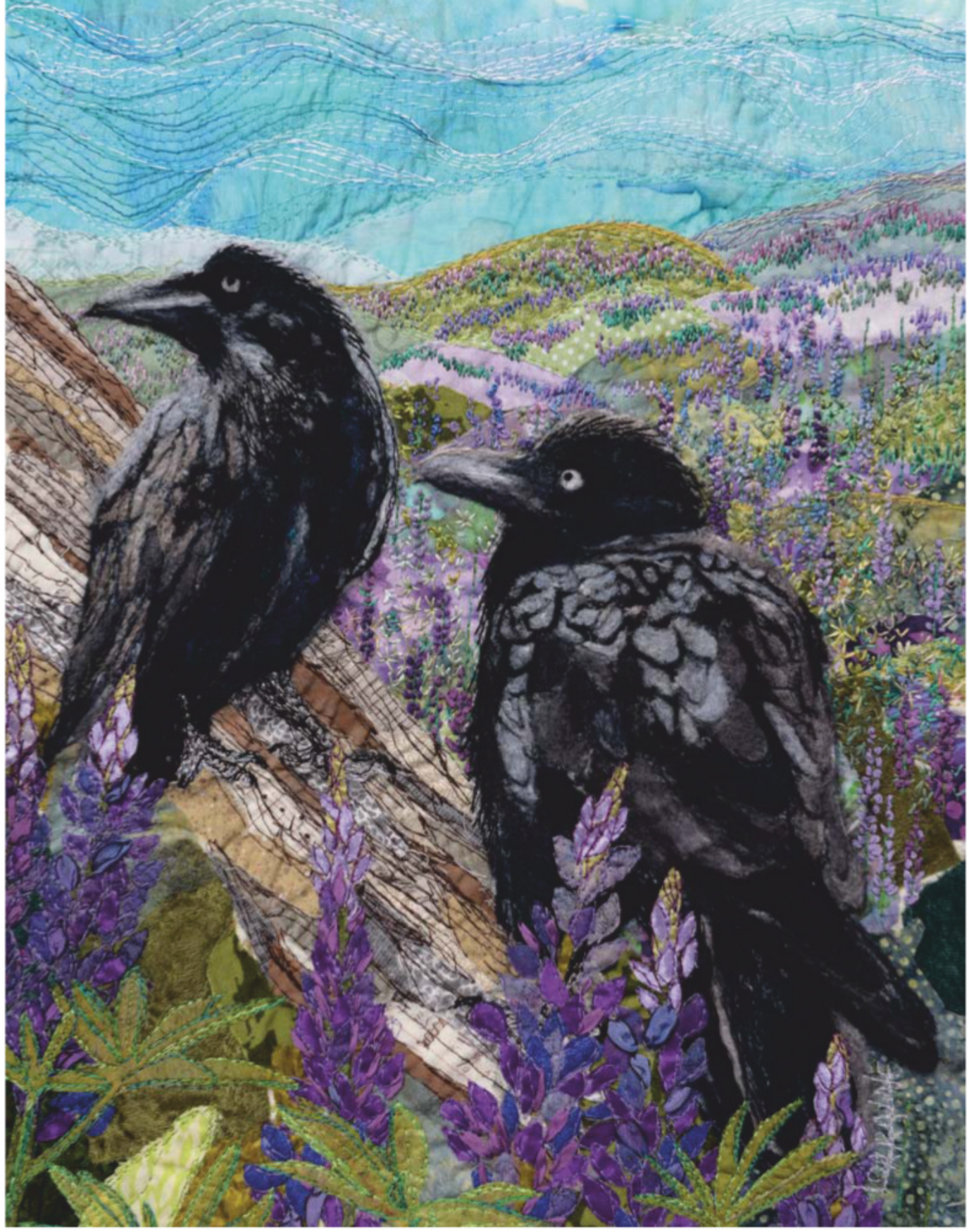
*"Within Her Embrace" • 28" x 28"*

*If you look closely at my work, you'll see that I incorporate elements that symbolize the relationships between the animal kingdom and our planet. Little icons of plants and animals are woven into my art as a reminder of this tapestry that creates our community. Their messages are always filled with urgency—we must be guardians of the natural resources we share. We are all one family living off the land. Helping animal sanctuaries opened my eyes to the needs of humans and animals alike, and how we can work as a team. I use many different fibers to represent this combined effort: vintage doilies, dyed burlap, lamb locks, tussah silk, dyed cheesecloth, and banana fibers, to mention a few. They're all so different and delicate, but together they are the foundation.*

*I'm known for my backgrounds and embellishments. In order to convey a feeling of ice, humidity, or wind, for example, I add elements to imply or suggest what I want the viewer to feel. For example, to invoke a feeling of dusk or dawn I choose colors that suggest the time of day.*

*Students ask me how I get the spirit to shine through the animal's eyes. I always take it back to the students' core energy. When you connect with your heart, it flows through your art. The closer we identify with the subject matter, the more rewarding the experience of creating it. Every choice I make is in service of telling the overall story given me by the animals.*

*It all begins and ends, however, by connecting with animals through meditation. For me, art quilts are the perfect medium for me to tell their stories.*



*"Messengers Amidst the Lupine" • 19" x 22"*

*Moving forward, I am planning a series of exhibits that will help non-profit animal sanctuaries. Their focus is to help veterans, troubled teens, and people seeking life-coping skills to partner with rescued and endangered animals. And what will my subject matter be for these exhibits? Each day I sit in silence and ask if there is an animal who wishes me to create their portrait and if they have a message for humanity. They always appear—always with open hearts and a willingness to help.*

*Details and method aside, my greatest hope is that viewers will see beyond the art, look into the eyes, and discover the beauty of the animals depicted. Look past the color of their skin, their fur, or their feathers. Each is beautiful and has a message to give to the world. They feel connected to each of us, as we all rely on the natural resources of our planet. We have a duty of care to be mindful of the future generations that will walk, swim, or fly upon this Earth. We are one.*"

**To see more of Lorraine's work, visit calicohorses.com.**



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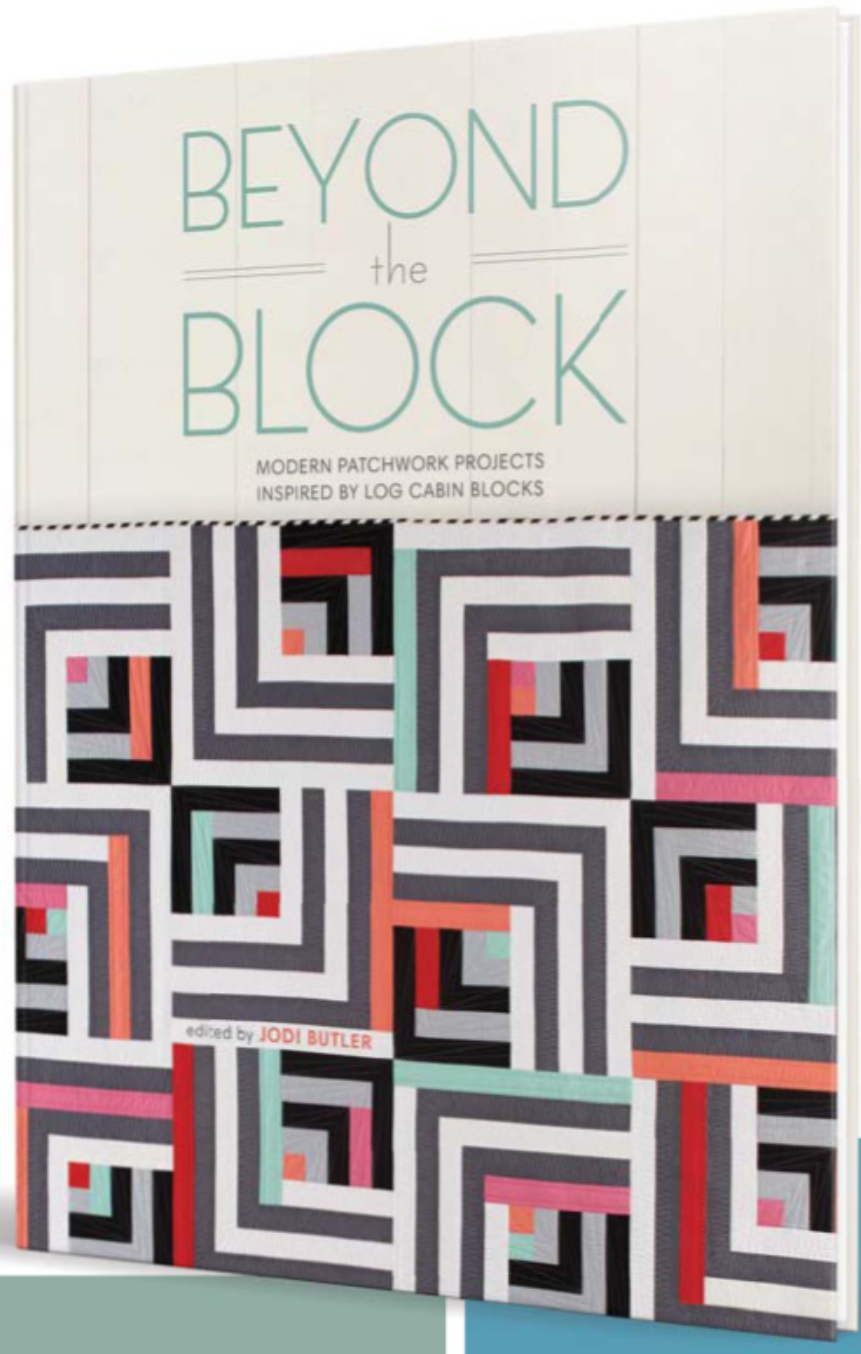




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# WOOD, WOOL, AND *WHIMSY*

## USE REPURPOSED WOODEN SPOOLS TO CREATE PINCUSHIONS

*by* Enid Gjelten Weichselbaum

I know I am not alone in collecting things that might be useful someday. For me, anything made of wood is difficult to throw away. You can paint it, or carve it, or cut it into pieces. Old wood is organic and interesting.



I was given empty spools to play with as a child. I stacked them. I strung them as beads. I carved them. As expected, I've accumulated some wooden spools through the years. They look pretty in a glass jar, but not as pretty as they do when repurposed as pincushions.

I like to use large spools for pincushion bases. I top them with woolen balls which can be quite hefty. The larger spool has greater weight to make the pincushion more stable. The simplest way to create this pincushion is to cut a large felt ball in half and glue it to the spool. But we can do so much more than that!

## MATERIALS

- Large wooden spools
- Acrylic craft paint and small brushes
- Poly-acrylic finish (I use Minwax® Polycrylic® clear gloss.)
- Wool felted ball about 2" in diameter
- Serrated knife
- Perle cotton thread size 8
- Large sewing needle
- Hot glue gun
- Heavy scrap of wool fabric large enough to wrap around spool
- Wood-burning tool and scrap wood for practice

# Directions

## Decorate the spool

My first try involved hot gluing the wool ball to the spool and calling it finished. But the constant artist's question—"What if I….?"—kept me going. I have a lot of spools, lots of wool balls, and lots of ideas. Select a large spool and, with a craft knife, remove the label so you have a clean surface for gluing.

## Painted spools

1. Using acrylic craft paint, paint the entire spool with a design.
2. When dry, apply a coat of poly-acrylic finish to the spool to preserve and protect the surface.

## Wooly spools

1. Apply a coat of poly-acrylic finish to the empty spool. Allow the paint to dry before proceeding with next steps.
2. Using a flexible tape measure, measure the circumference and height of the portion of the spool that holds the thread. Cut a rectangle of thick wool to these measurements.

**TIP:** I do not include a seam allowance as the ends of the fabric will butt up against one another.

3. Using contrasting thread colors and bold stitches, decorate the wool with simple designs. Even a blanket stitch around the edge will finish off the wool nicely.
4. Attach the wool to the spool with hot glue, pressing the end edges tightly together. If using thick wool, you can almost make the 'seam' invisible. Hot glue sets quickly, so work fast. *(figure 1)*

## Wood burner sketching and painting

I will admit to a current fascination with wood burning. Wood-burning kits often come with various tips that burn designs into wood. I like to use the pointed drawing tip for decorating spools.

1. Using a piece of scrap wood, practice drawing with the burning tool; make lines, circles, and shading before beginning to work on the spool.
2. With a pencil, sketch a design on the spool.
3. Hold the burning tool like a pencil and the spool in your other hand. *(figure 2)* Slowly and carefully draw your image with the tool. The lines should be dark so they are still visible after painting. *(figure 3)*

**CAUTION:** The wood-burning tool is dangerously hot. Be very careful while using it and when putting it down after use. Consider wearing a heat-resistant glove or mitt on the hand holding the spool.

4. When you are satisfied with the design, carefully paint the spool using acrylic craft paint. *(figure 4)*

**TIP:** I dilute the paint with a small amount of water to make it more transparent. I like to see the grain of the wood through the color.

5. When dry, apply a coat of poly-acrylic finish to the spool to preserve and protect the surface.

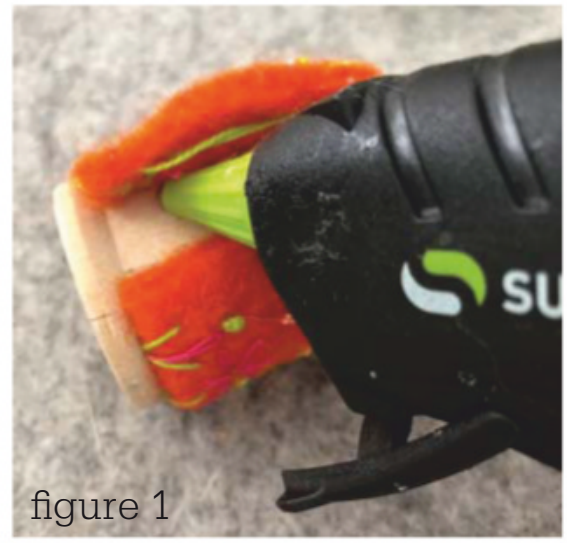
figure 1


figure 2


figure 3

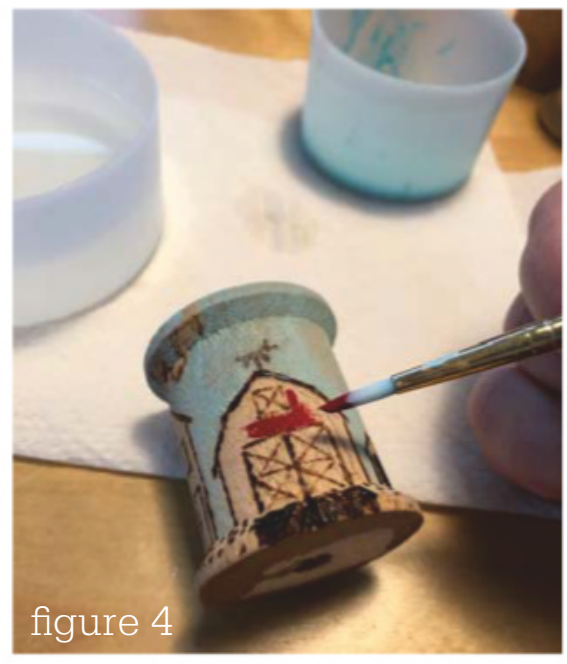
figure 4

Process photos courtesy of the artist


figure 5


figure 6

## Spool with thread on it

I have spools in my collection that still have their thread. The thread is not viable for sewing—it is old and brittle—but it can be used as a design feature and background.

1. Leave the vintage thread on the spool and embroider very simple designs over the old thread, catching strands to anchor the stitches in place.

2. Paint a coat of poly-acrylic finish to hold the stitches and thread in place, sealing everything to make it more permanent and to protect the surface.

## Make the pincushion

1. Cut a wool ball in half with a sharp, serrated knife. Each pincushion will use a ½ ball.

2. Once the ball is cut, the edges will flair a bit. In order to contain that flair as well as cinch the edges in—so the half ball fits exactly to the top of the spool—whip stitch around the edge using perle cotton or several strands of embroidery thread. *(figure 5)*

**TIP:** With each stitch I send my needle across the diameter of the ball and cinch the thread until the ball is the correct size. I continue these stitches across the cut surface like spokes on a wheel. The stitches, if pulled evenly, will control and tidy the cut edge as well as cinch the ball to the proper size. *(figure 6)*

3. Apply a generous amount of hot glue to the top of the spool. Place the flat side of the half ball on the hot glue, fitting and pressing the edge of the ball to the edge of the spool.

Your pincushion will be cute enough to use as a decoration and as a functional tool in your sewing kit.



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# The Artist Within



Photo by Gregory Case

*"Conversations with the Morning" • Geri Patterson-Kutras • 43" x 37"*

## A COMMUNITY EXPRESSES ITSELF THROUGH QUILTING

*by* Geri Patterson-Kutras

> "I am constantly surprised at how quilt artists—using primarily fabric—interpret events, thoughts, and images to create their unique vision of the world."
>
> *Nancy Bavor, Director*
> *San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles*

Each of us has a universal connection to cloth. Cloth protects our bodies from the elements and provides warmth and comfort in our homes. It surrounds us from cradle to grave. As quilters, we share a unique relationship with cloth. We are enticed by the ability to manipulate fiber using dyes, stitch, and pattern fulfilling our creative instincts. Joe Cunningham explains, "When I found the world of quilts, I felt welcomed and accepted, which gave me the idea that I could make anything I could conceive. I feel that when I am in my studio making quilts, I am doing the thing I was made to do." The desire to create unifies us all, no matter if we are traditional, modern, or art quilters. We are a community of artisans of cloth.



Photo by Henrik Kam

*"Crazy City: San Francisco" • Joe Cunningham*

Every time we begin a quilt we start by making the same decisions that artists of any medium make. We are lured by color, texture, and possibilities. To hone our skills, we seek out opportunities to learn about new techniques that provide us with the means to use our voices with greater clarity as we create statements of beauty, dialogue, healing, and political discourse. "One of the things I love most about being a quilter is that there is always something to learn," says Maria Shell. "Our medium is expansive in ways that keep me engaged on a variety of levels. Technique, craft, and history are always growing and changing in our art form."

Quilters have always been teachers. We have a rich history of passing along the art of the stitch, parent to child and in circles of friends. Today's quilters have access to a vast array of resources such as Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA), quilt guilds, and online classes which are catalysts for inspiring the imagination and enhancing our ability to communicate through art.

As quilters, we are the memory keepers. The stains, wear patterns, and fabrics of quilts are chapters in the life and times of not only

their creators but also those who received and use them. Quilts are legacies from one generation to another. You need only read statements at any quilt show to become aware of the powerful historic capacity of quilts; "I made this quilt to celebrate the marriage of my son and his spouse," or "I pieced this quilt by hand, working as I visited with my mother in the hospital." Ask any grandchild about the gift of warmth, comfort, and memory of the grandparent who made and gave them their first quilt. I'm reminded of my first grandchild whose 'Nana blanket' became so worn and thread bare that it was no longer usable, but he couldn't part with it. Our solution was to make a flannel pillowcase to safeguard the quilt.

Carol Larson, creator of the Tall Girl series, used her quilting talents to explore the healing properties of art. "In designing and constructing my 'Tall Girl Series: A Body of Work,' I was able to heal decades-old emotional scars from the barbaric surgeries, as well as threats of disinheritance from my father, if I spoke. After the series was complete and traveled to six exhibitions, I received the most unexpected reward. This art drawn from my own healing was making a huge impact on others. I healed myself and as a bonus gave permission to others to tell their own story. Art heals." Addressing our pain by telling our stories in cloth is a restorative process. It allows us not only to heal but connect with others who have faced adversity and find emotional comfort in shared experiences.

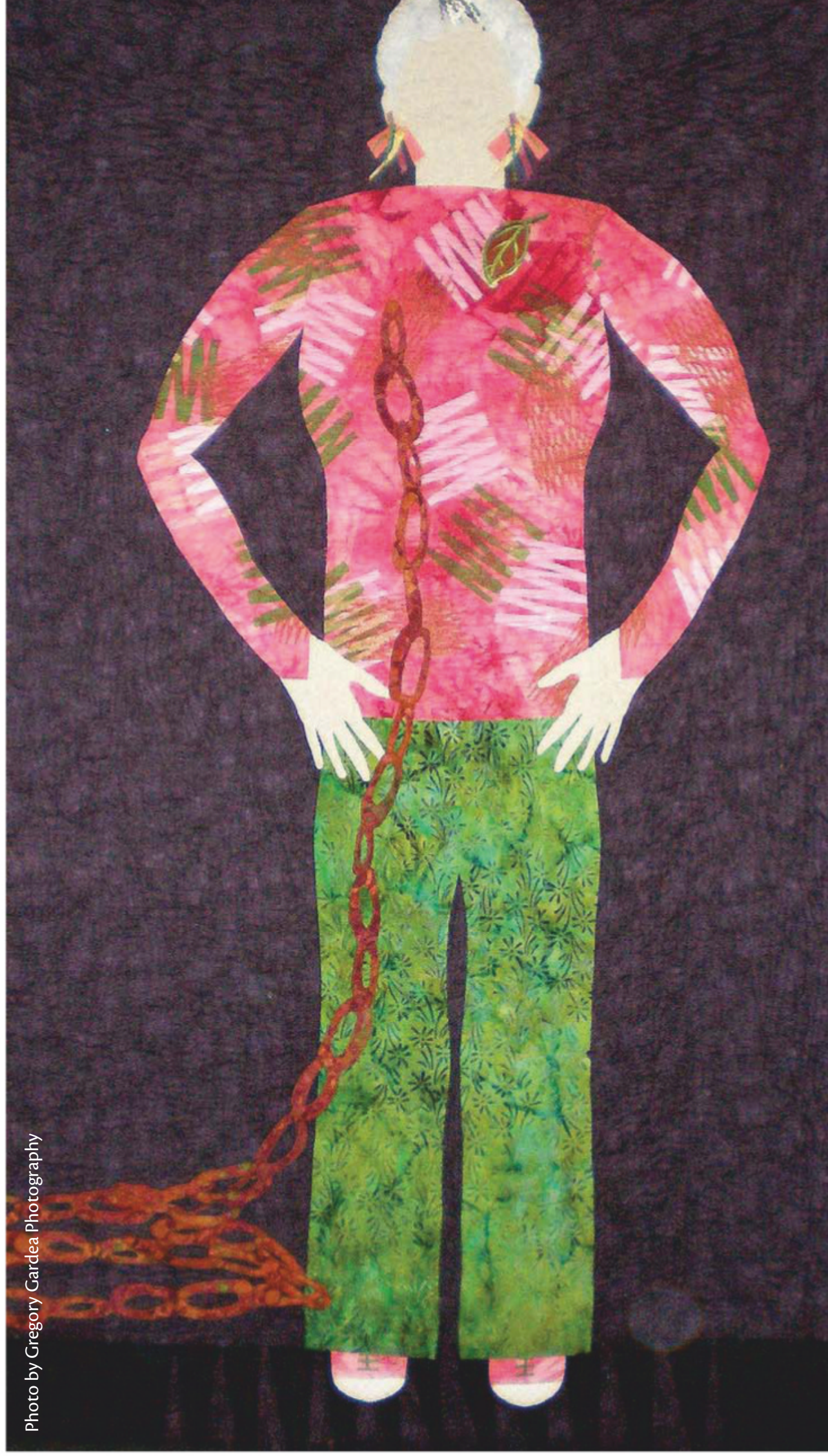

Photo by Gregory Gardea Photography

*"Coulda' Beens" • Carol Larson • 32" x 61"*



Photo by Chris Arend

*"Mosh Pit @ the Golden" • Maria Shell • 50" x 50"*

One of our greatest strengths as quilters is community, not only of art but also showing care and concern for those in need. Quilter Maria Strait experienced this firsthand. "Within three weeks of the massive Camp Fire, which destroyed the town of Paradise (California), my quilting community had gathered a van load of quilting supplies—I didn't realize how many kinds of rotary rulers there are!—more than 100 quilts, and four sewing machines that were delivered to replace what quilters in that area had lost. Along with supplies, more than $1,500 in cash and gift cards were also donated." Cindy Needham of neighboring Chico, California, opened her studio as a gathering place for the Paradise Quilters. In her studio they were able to select donated quilting supplies and come together to stitch and talk. Cindy even provided soup and sandwiches to the quilters and adopted a survivor dog. Her gift of caring created a safe haven where fellow quilters could take shelter for a few hours from the emotional toll of the devastation and begin to rebuild a part of their lives and community.

Quilters are artists! We respond to the artist within each of us to express beauty, find strength to heal our souls and the souls of others in need of connection, record history through pride of stitch, and pass our love of quilting on by teaching and inspiring others. We should never underestimate the emotional power and the far reaching voice of our quilts. 100 years from now our quilts will still be telling our stories and motivating new generations to find their own unique artists within. They will be artists just like us. Their voices will be heard and their stories told through the powerful medium of cloth and stitch.

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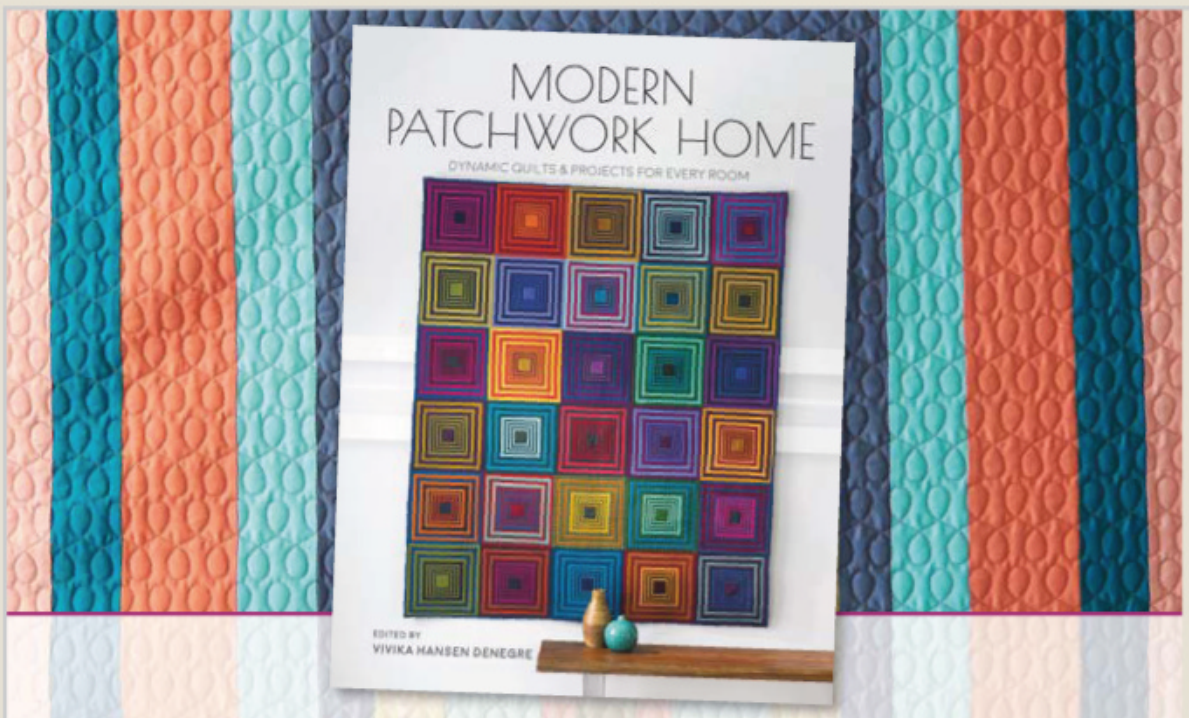


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# the last word.

BY CAROL DICKSON



**ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG, LONG AGO IN A FARAWAY PLACE** (rural southern Oregon), Picket Fence Fabrics—complete with the white picket fence—came to town. I, along with most every other woman I knew, sauntered in the front door at the grand opening. I wasn't yet a quilter but had sewn and done cross stitch, never wavering from the pattern.

The adorable shop carried the latest colorful fabrics. I found myself going back frequently and wondering aloud if I could make a quilt. On one visit, Barbara, the owner, asked if I wanted to make an art quilt with her. I knew nothing!

Along with no experience with quilting, I felt had no artistic talent. I barely passed one semester of art in school. I was a bit dubious when Barbara and I started making a small raw-edge appliquéd art quilt. I asked, "Can I make the mountains plaid?" and "Can the trees be blue?" Her response: "They can be whatever you want them to be." And the rest is history.

I began making quilts while putting my spin on patterns and fabric choices. While some were sweet prints, I also chose bold ethnic fabrics—sometimes shocking the instructor. One such interpretation earned me my first blue ribbon. That's all it took! I became obsessed.

Barbara's advice was clear: do what your heart and head tell you to do and don't worry about the rules or the quilt police. She never told me that I should have done something differently or that something was 'wrong.' In future judged shows, I would share critiques and she would say, "Take what you like and leave the rest."

I took classes, read books and magazines, and created quilt after quilt. I challenged myself and became locally known as the woman who is not afraid of color. I shocked a few traditional quilters, all the while being encouraged to do my thing.

Several years ago, art quilter Beth Nufer saw my quilt "Sylvan Sentinels." She overheard me say it was on my bucket list to someday get a quilt accepted into a national quilt show. Beth stepped up, introduced herself, and asked me why I wasn't going to enter that quilt. She spent time encouraging me. I followed her advice and it was accepted by the Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival, AQS Paducah, and Road to California. This small town girl was over-the-moon ecstatic! I am currently packing for a trip to see my latest art quilt, "Water Gatherer," hanging at additional shows.

Fast forward 12 years and I am now known for my art quilts and longarm quilting skills.

It took quite some time for me to accept the compliment, "you are such an artist!" I had a preconceived idea that an artist was born with talent. Didn't someone have to anoint you as an artist? Didn't you have to win some big award? Be published? I slowly began to realize that my art is my art—it doesn't have to be anyone else's.

I attribute most of my success to my mentor, Barbara, for seeing something in me that I didn't see in myself. She encouraged me with that ever-present reminder, "don't worry about the rules." She found something she liked in everything I did. She never criticized my work and never told me I couldn't do something.



*"Water Gatherer" • 34" x 40"*
*This quilt was inspired by a photo taken in Haiti by Xavier O'Brien.*

Photos courtesy of the artist

I had ZERO artistic talent before I found fabric, ink, and thread. My inspiration for writing this is to encourage quilters to be fearless. There are scary things in the world but fabric, thread, and color shouldn't be among them. Play, experiment, and don't listen to the negative critics. Do what you like to do, not what is expected. Maybe your current work isn't your masterpiece but it is honing your skills to make the next quilt better.

Learn from one another. Encourage your fellow quilters. Find something positive to say about their work. You could be mentoring the next great quilter. Wouldn't that be awesome?! It takes nothing away from one's own talent and abilities to be kind to another. Remember that one word of criticism can shadow paragraphs of praise. My hope is to inspire fellow quilters to pursue their passion—as Barbara, Beth, and others have done for me.

An eternally grateful artist, enjoying the journey, am I!

**Haven't you been quilting long enough to start thinking about your own creative legacy? Submit your complete essay (up to 800 words) along with a low-resolution image to qasubmissions@fwmedia.com with "the last word" in the subject line.**

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