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JUNE/JULY 2015 | ISSUE 75

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Hand-stitched Souvenirs
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TRY THESE NEW
techniques

- Wet felting p. 80
- Mixed-media collage p. 41
- Hand-lettering on cloth p. 84

Reader
Challenge
results:

14 amazing
FLOWER
QUILTS
p. 46

1 new fabric collection
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editor's note



New England summers always are ablaze with flowers. We're so excited to share our flower-themed Reader Challenge with you (p. 46) and know you'll love the blossoms and blooms as much as we did. This quilt, "Black-Eyed Susans" by Susan Price of Springfield, Virginia, reminds me of the wildflowers that border the highways in Vermont.

WELCOME SUMMER. That's all I can say. After a never-ending winter that overstayed its welcome followed by a half-hearted spring, it is finally time to celebrate all that is right in the world. Let vacation season begin!

Most years, my family piles into the minivan for a few long weekends in Maine and a trip or two to the Green Mountains in Vermont. We enjoy taking family photos at waterfalls, browsing antique stores for vintage records, sampling local cuisine, and even walking through an art gallery or two on the way to our destination. Over the years, those trips that at times seemed intolerable (don't make me pull over!) have become much more fun. Our oldest son and daughter now share in the driving and help plan the trips. The younger two have learned to sit side by side without invading the other's precious backseat space. And I have learned to ignore their occasional bickering. How? By doing handwork.

On any given drive, you can find me sitting "shotgun" up to my elbows in stitching. I always have at least two projects going at once: mindless knitting that I can do while gazing out the window, and appliqué, piecing, or embroidered embellishment that takes a bit more concentration. Lately I've actually spent more time preparing my projects for the trip than packing for my family. I enjoy those long hours in the car with the people I love most, doing the handwork I love most. And along the way, I end up with a lovely souvenir from my trip!

When I saw Leslie Tucker Jenison's compositions (p. 41) while taping "Quilting Arts TV," I knew they would inspire me to collect materials for yet another project bag to bring along while traveling. This summer, I'll pack my collage materials and make postcards to send back home. The cards will then be cut up and stitched to fabric fragments, creating a visual journal of our travels. I can already imagine the bits of paper, shards of sheer fabrics, and other travel ephemera combined in a beautiful composition.

And when I get tired of glueing, coloring, basting, or knitting, I can always pull out the baggie with my three-year-old stash of English Paper Piecing hexagons and work on that quilt!

Wherever your travels take you this summer, have a wonderful and relaxing time. And don't forget your handwork!

Best,

Vivika Hansen DeNegre

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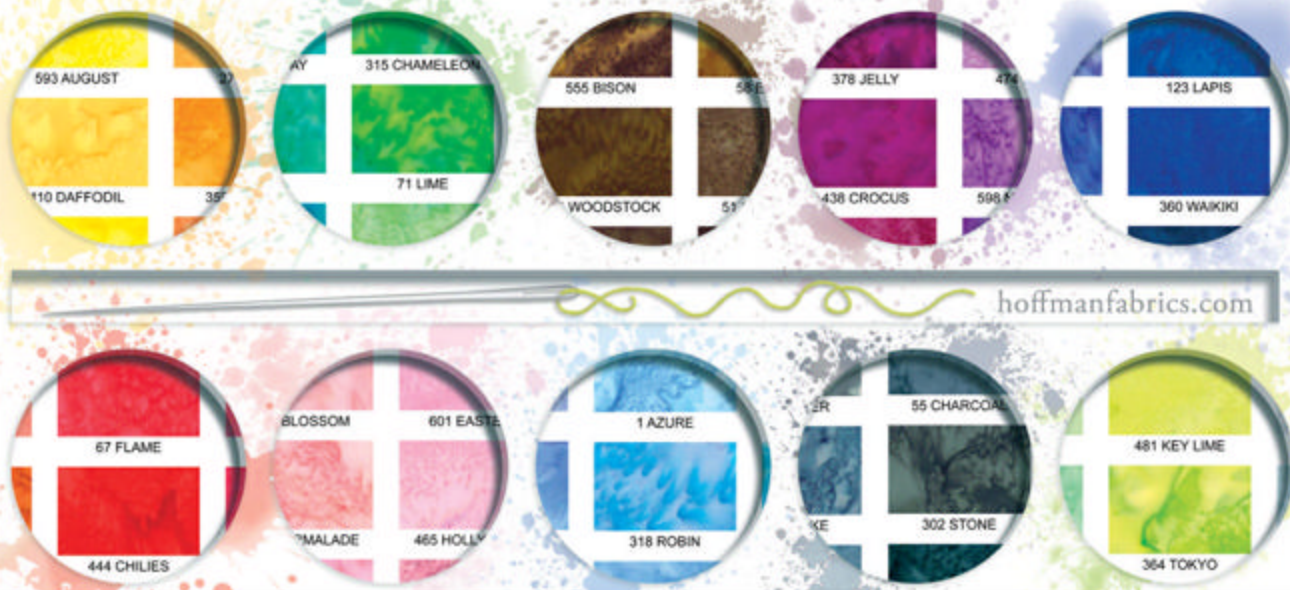
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it's your turn

Dear QUILTING ARTS,

I very much enjoy your Reader Challenges and find them a great place to start developing ideas for larger works. When my magazine arrives these are the first pages I head to—it is fascinating to see how others interpret the theme. Many thanks for including this feature.

Claire Passmore, Cape Town, South Africa

Dear QUILTING ARTS,

Thank you for explaining how the magazine cover is chosen in the Editor's Note. I always wondered about the process.

I still remember the first issue of QUILTING ARTS I read—I was waiting in line at the fabric store and I picked it up because I saw a magazine with an interesting cover. It was a face and I was intrigued by it. I am an art quilter now!

*Margarita Koriath
Collierville, Tennessee*

Dear QUILTING ARTS,

I want to convey how much I enjoy QUILTING ARTS! Yes, I'm old school and do prefer holding and reading a printed item so am also happy you continue to send this to press. I've just finished reading the April/May issue—the front cover is beautiful!—and am so inspired by the articles, how-to steps, and the amazing quilts! I've seen installations of Dale Chihuly's glass so I was especially appreciative of Melissa Sobotka's quilt "Chihuly's Gondola"—simply amazing and inspirational!

Penny Adam, via email

Upon hearing her quilt was chosen for the cover of QUILTING ARTS April/May, Sara Sharp wrote:

What an honor from my favorite magazine. I put a lot of work and passion into this quilt, and I am pleased that it has been so well received.

It was because of reading an issue of QUILTING ARTS MAGAZINE years ago that I was first inspired to create art quilts. I worked as a painter for many years, and had made some traditional quilts for fun. When I picked up my first copy of QUILTING ARTS, it was a revelation. I realized I could apply the skills I developed as a painter to create my own unique quilts. I loved combining my knowledge of color and composition with the many techniques I read about in the magazine. Before long, expressing my vision in fabric and stitch became my sole artistic endeavor. I delight in the challenge of bringing each new concept to life.



Dear QUILTING ARTS,

I have a tip to share. When making pincushions or needle books, always use pure wool stuffing—your pins and needles will never rust.

For needle books, use doctor's flannel for the pages. (Editor's note: We understand this to be a 100% lightweight wool.) For stuffing pincushions, use unfelted wool fleece—or even an old pure wool (sweater) or blanket minced with your rotary cutter.

Believe me, I live in the wet tropics of Australia, so I know about rusted pins!

*Jenny Armour, Palmerston,
Northern Territory of Australia*

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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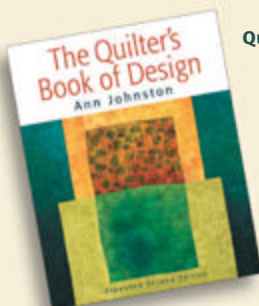


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Thread Stories Jennifer Day

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about our contributors



Sue Bleiweiss is a full-time fiber artist living in Massachusetts. Working with her own hand-dyed

cotton, she creates vibrant, colorful art quilts intended to delight the eye of the viewer and make them smile. Sue has appeared on "Quilting Arts TV" and has a new Quilting Arts Workshop™ video, "Coloring Book Fabric Collage: Dyeing, Fusing, Designing, and Quilting." Her latest book, *FUSIBLE FABRIC COLLEGE*, is now available.

suebleiweiss.com



Julia C. Wood is the president and founder of *HEXIE LOVE*, the digital magazine for hexagon quilt

lovers, and the author of three quilting books—two of them on hexagons. In the evenings, you'll find her in a recliner with dogs and hexies in her lap. Julia lives with her husband of 30 years, Mark, in Auburn, Alabama.

hexielove.com



Jane Dávila is a fiber artist, media mixer, and collector of found objects. She is the author of *SURFACE DESIGN*

ESSENTIALS, and the co-author of *ART QUILT WORKBOOK* and *ART QUILTS AT PLAY*. She has appeared on "Quilting Arts TV" and has a Quilting Arts Workshop™ video, "Mixed-Media One-Page Book." Jane lives in Ridgefield, Connecticut, with her husband Carlos, an oil painter and sculptor.

janedavila.com



Jane LaFazio, a full-time artist since 1998, truly believes she is living the life she was meant to live! In that time,

she has cultivated a wide range of skills as a painter, mixed-media and quilt artist, art teacher, and blogger. She teaches workshops online and at art retreats internationally. Jane has written numerous articles for *QUILTING ARTS* and *CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS®* magazines, has appeared on "Quilting Arts TV," and has a Quilting Arts Workshop™ video, "Layered & Fused Appliqué Quilts: From Fabric Scraps to Recycled Circles."

janelafazio.com



Jane Dunnewold is a professional artist and teacher. She is the author of *COMPLEX CLOTH: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO SURFACE*

DESIGN and *ART CLOTH: A GUIDE TO SURFACE DESIGN FOR FABRIC*, as well as several other self-published books. She has appeared on "Quilting Arts TV" and has two Quilting Arts Workshop™ videos, "Design & Print Your Own Fabric" and "Screen Printing Sampler." She teaches internationally and in her personal space, Art Cloth Studios in San Antonio, Texas, and is the former president of the Surface Design Association.

janedunnewold.com



Mark Lipinski is an internationally known lecturer, teacher, fabric and quilt designer, video personality,

magazine editor, and former network television producer. He launched The Slow Stitching Movement and related retreats in 2014.

marklipinski.com



Susan Brubaker Knapp is the new host of "Quilting Arts TV." She is a studio fiber artist, author,

and teacher. Susan lives near Charlotte, North Carolina, with her husband and two daughters. She teaches internationally.

bluemoonriver.com



Vivien Zepf feeds her muse by learning about art from as many perspectives as possible. She is a quilt artist

and photographer whose work has been exhibited nationally. She's a museum docent, writing for the museum's education department and leading tours. Vivien also enjoys promoting fiber art as the co-director of the juried exhibition SPUN.

vivienzepf.com



Leslie Tucker Jenison is a quilt maker and mixed-media artist from San Antonio, Texas. Her award-

winning quilts have been juried into national and international exhibits. In addition to writing, Leslie teaches a variety of workshops and is one half of the Dinner At Eight Artists curating team.

leslietuckerjenison.com

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NORTH CAROLINA

artist Q&A

A conversation with Priscilla Bianchi

with Vivika Hansen DeNegre



Photo courtesy of Priscilla Bianchi

Guatemalan artist Priscilla Bianchi's work is a study in vibrant colors, challenging patterns, and pure joy. As a quilt artist, designer, and international teacher, Priscilla creates one-of-a-kind quilts that meld the richness and ethnic appeal of her homeland with the tradition of American quilt making. In her work, brightly colored textiles and Mayan symbolism are intertwined with contemporary quilt designs and high contrast. Once known for using primarily handmade Guatemalan ikats, Priscilla's newer work combines rich colors, bold contrasts, and a variety of commercial fabrics along with traditional textiles. This evolution in artistic style makes for a fascinating story.

Vivika: You come from a country with a rich textile tradition, but not a history of quilting, per se. I think of Guatemalan textiles as being mostly woven, with saturated colors and bold texture. Tell me about how you came to embrace quilting as an art with these influences.

Priscilla: I've been surrounded by bright colors since birth: from fruits and flowers to textiles. My mom taught me to sew on a machine when I was four years old, and I haven't stopped since. I come from a very artistic family, so learning about art, enjoying and appreciating beauty, experimenting with different mediums, creating original things and ideas, and working with my hands have all been an important part of my life.

Vivika: Tradition plays a huge role in quilting—even contemporary quilting. Whether it is a recognizable repeating pattern in a bed quilt or a specific type of appliqué, the legacy of quilters from the past lives on in the



Photo by Andrés Asturias
All quilts quilted by Laura Lee Fritz

"The Big Huipil" • 77" x 50" • 2011



"Mayan Kente" • 56" x 50" • 2013



"Typography with Green" • 26" x 22" • 2014

work we create today. How has this influenced your work? Are you more influenced by the tradition of quilting or by other traditional textiles from your native country?

Priscilla: When just starting out, I fell madly in love with the medium. I realized that quilting had absolutely everything I loved—colors, fabrics, sewing, art, and design—in one package.

From the start I knew I would become a quilt artist, but I had to be honest: I never lived the (American) quilting tradition so I couldn't become a traditional quilter. Instead, I used the same materials and techniques, and added different elements and principles of design. This became my new preferred medium, my new way of expressing myself artistically, and my spirit had a new voice. My color sense is definitely influenced by living in Guatemala with all those bright, beautiful colors. From the very beginning, I used Guatemalan textiles in my work. That in itself made my quilts look very different from traditional quilts.

Vivika: Did you learn from books or from classes?

Priscilla: One day I found a book on charm quilts by Beth Donaldson. I hurriedly started pulling fabrics from my cupboard to make my first quilt—which was finished in about a week—and got started. I couldn't finish it fast enough just to get it out of the way and start working on a second, third, and fourth. Six months later I quit my day job so I could quilt full time. Each quilt I made was



Photo by Andrés Asturias

"Spelling A-R-T in Symbols" • 28" × 74" • 2011

an 'excuse' to learn something new, and each new quilt was better because of the one preceding it. As a result, the more I learned new techniques, the more I departed from tradition. Nowadays I only create original artwork which is vibrant and contemporary.

Vivika: Your professional background includes a degree in Industrial Psychology, and you spent much of your professional career working in Human Resources. How did those skills influence the work you do artistically?

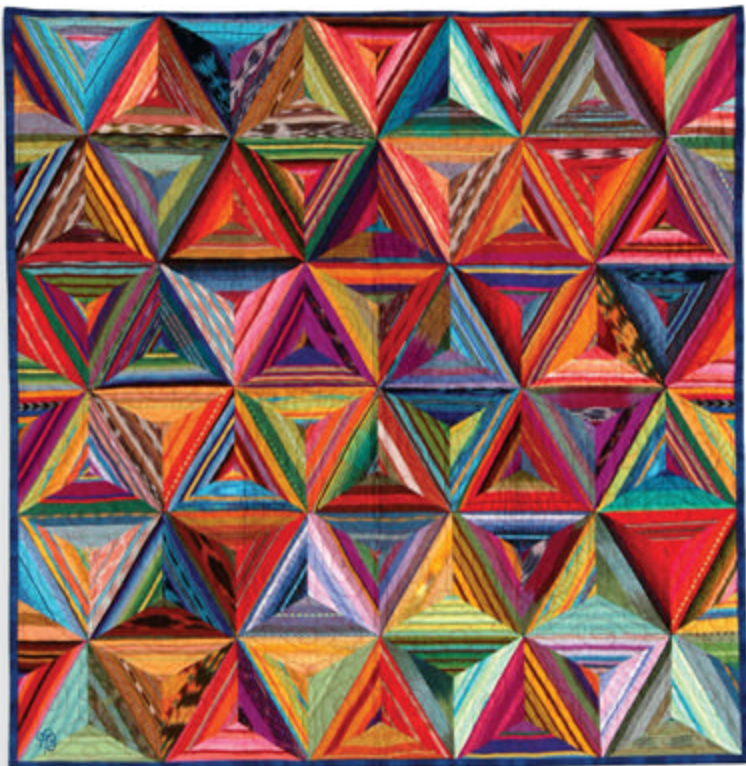
Priscilla: I'm blessed with being a people-person who also enjoys the solitude of my own studio. I find both situations to be comfortable and enjoyable. Not only has quilting been life changing, but it turned out to be very spiritual, and it has helped me grow as a person.

The skills I learned while working in HR were indeed very helpful for my quilting career. When I travel the world to teach and exhibit my work, I enjoy meeting people. While working in HR I also had a lot of experience with marketing,



Photo by Rod Cortés

"Diamonds of Nebaj" • 36½" × 36½" • 2014



"Aguacatan" • 37" x 36" • 2009

and that has been invaluable to promote my career and artwork.

Vivika: The journey of an artist takes many twists and turns. Your earlier work is quite recognizable, not only because of your strong artistic voice, but also because of the textiles you use and your warm color palette. Lately, your work has taken a new turn, with more negative space and an improvisational feel. Tell us about how that transition took place.

Priscilla: I'm a perfectionist and very good at piecing, so at the beginning of my career I truly enjoyed piecing with precision and creating grids in perfect balance. I guess I had a lot of "order" to get out of my system.

The more I quilted and got to know the techniques and materials, the more I started listening to what the fabric was

telling me about where it wanted to go and what it wanted to do. Little by little, my process departed from precision and became more and more spontaneous, more and more intuitive, and more impromptu.

Vivika: Your newer quilts have big impact and are quite different from your precisely planned quilts from a few years ago.

Priscilla: My "Typography" quilts are inspired by the letters found on many native textiles. The letters are not there for their meaning, but for their aesthetic and the negative and positive spaces created unexpectedly when positioned side by side.

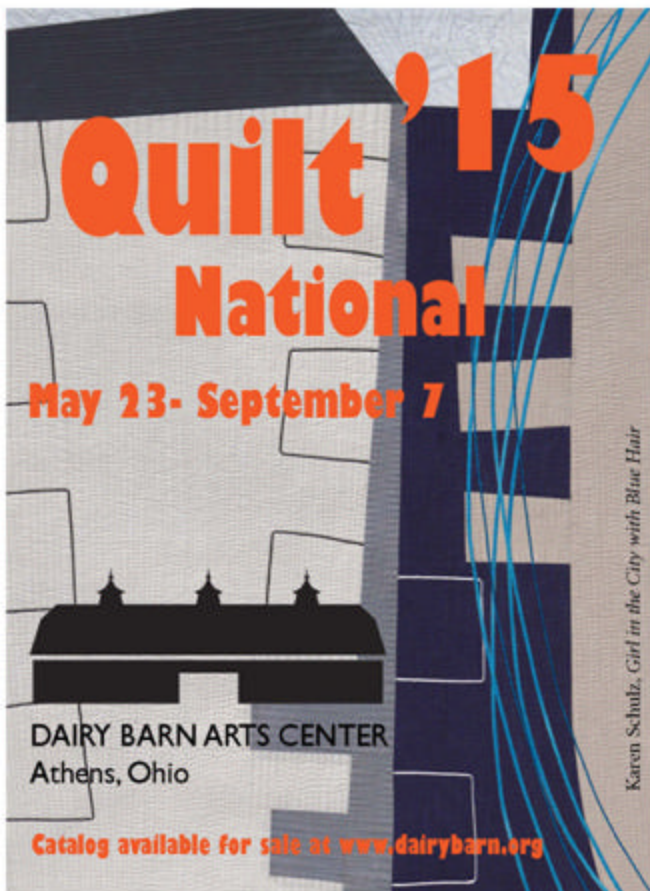
I start by cutting freeform shapes that resemble letters to create blocks. Sometimes I make a rough

sketch, but mostly I just start arranging the blocks of letters and pieces of colorful fabrics on the design wall. This part of the process goes quickly, and I don't overthink it. I work spontaneously and improvisationally, and almost never know what size a piece will be until I'm finished working on it. I let it tell me when it's done.

Vivika: Your artistic career has taken you many places. Your artwork has been acquired by numerous collectors and even the Museum of Arts & Design in New York. You've written books, designed fabric, and even been honored with a stamp collection from your native Guatemalan postal service. Now that you've made an artistic leap to this new style of art quilts, tell us where you are going next.

Priscilla: I'm writing a third book about my artwork and artistic career. It will be published locally and distributed internationally. As to my work, I'm creating a new series of quilts based on our native huipiles (wee-PILLS), the Mayan woman's blouse which is the most distinctive and adorned element of the traditional indigenous costume. I'm not sure yet, but this new series may turn out to be a mixture of my previous precise geometric piecing and my new liberated style. ■

To learn more about Priscilla Bianchi, visit priscillabianchi.com.



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maximizing YOUR CHANCES

by Vivien Zepf

TIPS FOR SUCCESS ENTERING A JURIED EXHIBITION

It's an exciting day when you've created artwork you're proud of. You may choose to show your piece to friends or your critique group or exhibit it in your quilt guild or artist cooperative show, but what if you'd like to share your art with a broader audience? In that case, consider submitting your artwork to a juried exhibition. Here are some tips and suggestions to maximize your chances of being accepted.



"Joy" • 16" x 20"

Find the right exhibition

The first step is research. It's important to select an exhibition that's a good fit for the art you make. If you create woven artwork out of pipe cleaners and duct tape, a show with a more traditional focus isn't a good match. Reading the rules of eligibility and description of the exhibition will help you decide if your type of art is appropriate for a particular show.

Looking at the jurors' artwork might give you an idea of their personal preferences, but it's not a reliable indicator of what they'll select for an exhibition. "Don't bend over backward to please particular jurors. Make what you want and make it the best you can," advises artist Kristin La Flamme.

Check your calendar

Be sure to check all the dates in the prospectus. Can you meet the entry deadline? If selected, can you deliver your quilt on time? Is your quilt available for the duration of the show? You must be able to answer yes to all these questions.

Take good photographs

Since most exhibitions are juried using digital images, excellent photographs are essential. Artist and director of SPUN, an annual fiber art exhibition, Jane Dávila, agrees. "The only thing the organizers and jury have to determine whether to select your work or not is the image you submit. Put in the time that your work deserves."

What does that mean? Snapping a quick photo on your cell phone isn't your best option. Instead, use a digital camera to photograph your work straight on, in good light, and against a neutral background. Use a tripod to minimize blurriness. (Figure 1) Make sure your quilt and its colors are accurately represented. Be extra careful if you use materials that have a



Process photos courtesy of Vivien Zepf

Figure 1

sheen, such as silks or metals. If your work is small, consider scanning it.

Photo-editing software allows you to resize and name your image files. Always keep two photographs of your piece: one image that can be manipulated and resized to meet entry requirements and another high-resolution image—your "original"—that's ready for potential promotional or print needs.

Don't fret if you can't get a good picture; many quilt artists hire professional photographers. The most important thing to remember is to show your art well. In the digital jurying process, "Your artwork is only as good as the images you provide!" says artist and Dinner at Eight Artists co-curator, Leslie Tucker Jenison.

Follow the rules

You must take the time to carefully review—and then follow—all the entry guidelines. Failing to follow the submission directions usually disqualifies your quilt from consideration and wastes your entry fee. Every curator and exhibit organizer I interviewed emphasized the importance of following the rules.



Figure 2

So, before you submit your work, determine if your work meets all the requirements. Check size and age (when the quilt was created) restrictions. Resize and name your photos according to the prospectus instructions. Being organized is key.

If you're unsure about something, the very best thing to do is to ask for clarification. Once you have your answers, re-evaluate whether your quilt is still an eligible entry. Please don't debate the guidelines with the organizers. If the exhibition requirements don't suit you, move on to something else. Following the guidelines is part of being a professional entrant.

Make it easy on organizers

Your job isn't done once you've been accepted. Ensure your artwork arrives on time, in good condition, and that you've signed all necessary paperwork. Label everything, from your quilt to the hanging device. (Figure 2) Include your contact information—and that of the venue—with your work to minimize delays in the event of a shipping snafu. Use sturdy shipping materials that will survive trips to and from the venue, and also protect your work. Always send your artwork with a tracking number. Do everything you can to make the receipt, installation, and return of your artwork as simple as possible for the

organizers. "All these things will help the organizers show my work in its best light," says artist Kate Themel. Remember, this isn't just a chance to show your work; it's also an opportunity to develop a positive relationship with other art professionals.

Take decisions in stride

"If your work isn't accepted, don't take it personally," says Jamie Fingal, artist and co-curator of Dinner at Eight Artists. The reality is every work can't be accepted into a show. Brenda Gael Smith, curator of Living Colour!, a well-respected traveling textile art exhibition, describes the role of a juror as "making a work of art out of works of art." Many wonderful pieces are declined simply because they don't fit in with the rest of the submitted quilts. But, as Leslie Tucker Jenison reminds us, "It takes incredible courage to put your work out into the world. Each artist who does it should congratulate themselves regardless of the outcome."

Entering an exhibition is a fun and exciting step in your artistic journey. Be fearless, but deliberate and thoughtful, when you submit your art for consideration. Don't limit your exhibition chances by being careless—after all, we do want to see what you've created! ❁

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"Tree of Life 2" (detail) • 34" × 40" • Niki Bonnett

Photos courtesy of Niki Bonnett

unBound

Thoughts on making

Go big or go bigger

Photo by Zenna James



Lately I've been thinking about the "wow factor" as it applies to making. You know what I mean—when you look at something you've never seen before and your first reaction is WOW! I wanted to figure out why the "wow" happens, so I've been looking for clues.

It's easy to like certain styles of composition—gorgeous colors and appealing visual elements. I knew an artist whose entire career was spent composing pleasing collages. His work sold well and, if asked, he would have said he had a satisfying studio practice. But Henry's work never elicited a "wow," at least not for me.

by Jane Dunnewold



Photos courtesy of Mary Ruth Smith

"Our Independence" • 9" × 9" • Mary Ruth Smith

By the way, a disclaimer: Personal preference must be acknowledged.

Thinking about Henry's pieces, which were always small, led to wondering whether size plays a role in the "wow factor." Do small pieces risk feeling unresolved—merely studies—if resolution isn't handled deftly?

I tested my theory by thinking of small artworks I could recall that would have been better if they'd been bigger. Could size change the dynamic? My conclusion: Sometimes, yes. Certain small works would definitely be more compelling made bigger. Then I had another realization: Lots of people are impressed by big work.

So one way to get the attention of galleries, juries, and curators is to work big.

However, just because a work of art is big doesn't make it good. There are plenty of humdrum big paintings. But size does get attention. And size can be linked to a big theme—and then it really works. Anselm Kiefer's magnificent compositions would

probably not have garnered acclaim if they'd been less than three feet in either direction. Subject matter influences scale. Scale can make or break subject matter.

But that's not the end of it. It turns out working big isn't always best. Not long after analyzing size, scale, and impact, I reviewed images as an exhibition juror. Midway through image selection—a new revelation. Work that blew me away wasn't huge; although there were a few wonderful large pieces among the submissions. It was the small pieces that wowed—like Mary Ruth Smith's work—which is always under 24" and extremely compact.

Was her work strong? Check. Focused? Check. Resolved? Check. Small? Definitely.

Why were the pieces unforgettable? Obsession.

Works of art elicit a "wow" when our first response is one of the following:

- How long did that take? (Unfortunate, but true.)
- How did she do that?
- Or simply, WOW!

Smith's pieces take hours and involve thousands of hand stitches. Hers is not the only work in the category of obsessiveness. The American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore overflows with obsessive art work—from a 3-D diorama made with toothpicks, to a bra ball created by rolling 18,000 bras into a bundle that would mow you down if it got onto a decent hill.

So now there were two choices. Work big or work obsessively. But, of course, I discovered more to the story.

While choosing to work big or obsessively may generate an audience, working to a formula either way (as if you could cultivate it) isn't really the answer. What if



"Media Interplay" • 8" × 8" • Mary Ruth Smith
Repurposed and new fabrics, mixed media.

you love clean and simple? Or small? It's not one size fits all.

The deeper truth? Good work can't be hurried. Whatever it requires of you is what you do. The lesson is learning not

to whip something up just to be done with it. There's no race. How much work I produce, and whether I intend to show or sell it, has nothing to do with the present moment—of being engaged by the process at hand.

Making a piece big or being obsessive are only two avenues to creating art that impresses. Putting heart into work, never rushing, and doing whatever needs to be done, is the third path to creating work that sings. It requires patience, turning inward, and listening. To do so allows space for a work's qualities—whether big, obsessive, or thoughtfully rendered—to effectively manifest.

Making time and taking time are two halves of the equation that builds creative stamina and allows artists to engage authentically with issues of size, obsessiveness, and process. Making time has a rebellious

Exercise: Learning to Make and Take Time

Making time

Will you do it? Will you turn down one invitation this week to go to the studio instead? Will you forgo one errand in order to work on your art? Give up one day of strength training at the gym in order to strength train in the studio?

If you answer no to the above questions, it's ok. There is no right answer. There is only your answer. Accept your answer, whatever it is. Your studio practice should revolve around that answer. Because a major life goal—not just an artist's goal—is to make peace with choices. Acknowledge your choices and make peace with them now.

The key to eliminating internal conflict is to know thyself.

Strategies for making

Identify what is needed to support practice—whether a few hours a week or several hours every day. Even if you don't have optimal amounts of time now, you have a goal to work toward. Which is encouraging.

Taking time

How will you gently and consistently encourage yourself to take time—for glueing, stitching, ironing, painting, mending, researching—whatever is needed to maintain the connection between who you are and what you want to make?



"Tree of Life 2" • 34" × 40" • Niki Bonnett

Floor cloth, individually hand-cut fabrics applied as collage, layered with gel medium.

time to play

Use these exercises to settle the mind while engaging the hands. No goal. Just playing. Want to try on Obsessive for size? Consider using:

1. Your age. Find enough bits and pieces to add up. In whatever way adds up for you. Permanent or impermanent? You decide.
2. 100 anything. 100 black beans? 100 strips of paper? Do you have 100 of something on hand? If you do, how can those become something bigger than 100? Glue, embed, string. Find 100 things and combine them.
3. Stitching. Can you/would you begin stitching (or drawing or collecting, or fill in the blank...) until an entire paper or cloth or wall is filled? Start with a small piece of paper. Sew it to another one. Or sew leaves together. What else? What if?
4. Have enough space to go big but haven't tried it? Or would working big really just be working bigger? It's relative. And might depend on the weather. In any event, look at the average size of what you create and then triple it for starters.

These are stretching exercises. Do something you haven't thought about doing before, in an open-ended way. Make time to explore more than once. Increase your flexibility. Practice is good.

Let me know how it's going!

component—because sometimes finding time is a battle. Engaging your Rebel Artist when you seek time to do your work may be helpful.

The other half of the equation is the need to take time. This is a gentle action. Not rushing, but rather slowing the pace. Taking time means breathing into process. In this sphere, we are removed from issues of scale or obsession. A piece may unfold quickly or slowly. Either is good. The gift of taking time is the opportunity to be lost in time or for time to stand still—even while studio hours surge forward. The poet Rumi said it perfectly in one of his poems:

Creation unfolds like calm breakers.

Constant, slow movement teaches us to keep working

*like a small creek that stays clear,
that doesn't stagnate, but finds a way
through numerous details, deliberately. ■*

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Artist Profile

Elizabeth Barton

ATHENS, GEORGIA

by Rosemarie DeBoer





Elizabeth Barton is known for her art quilts of strong cityscapes, buildings, and industrial landscapes. Underlying the intrigue of the color, mood, and sense of place is a mindfulness of purpose

and composition. Starting with an inspiration—be it a photograph, a beloved painting, or simply a collection of colors—Elizabeth pulls both the physical and the emotional essence of the inspiration and translates it into fabric and thread. As she says to her students, “You are not reporting facts; rather you are expressing the truth about something as you see and feel it.”

Growing up in England, Elizabeth attended a convent school that has been teaching girls since the late 17th century. Embroidery was taught starting in kindergarten, and students were encouraged to create their own designs. In fact, in second grade, she won a prize for her original work.

As all her aunts and her mother were knitters, she learned knitting—first on a “spoolie,” and then, as she says, proper knitting with two needles. Her mother made all her clothes, many of them hand smocked, so she grew up with a great tradition of handwork. In time, she started sewing her own wardrobe. She attended university in Leeds, Yorkshire, England, a wonderful textile town.

Elizabeth and her fellow students had access to both wonderful wools and the Liberty of London fabrics that were printed nearby. She confesses to driving with her friends “to buy yards and yards of it.”

Her first impressions of quilting, however, were not so positive. Upon arriving in America, she thought of quilts as “ancient, fuddy-duddy things.” Nevertheless, she signed up to take a class simply to meet new friends. After the first lesson, she was hooked, and within just a few classes, she led the class when her instructor took time off following surgery. Elizabeth’s first book, *THE NO GUILT QUILT BOOK*, was written and self-published with her first quilt instructor. (She believes that there is one library in Georgia that might still have a copy!)

After eight years of traditional quilting, Elizabeth began her journey into art quilts. Her quilts are often inspired by photographs of specific locations in her personal history, which are then abstracted to bring out the essence of the experience. To create her strong, visual images, the main shapes and values are simplified to the extreme, and then balanced within the composition. “Pump



“Pump Court” • 48" × 35"

Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Barton

Court” is based on an alley in her hometown of York and was used for the cover of her book *INSPIRED TO DESIGN*.

To solidify her ideas, her first step in translating the image into an art quilt is to write a short paragraph about the main idea—sounds, mood, colors, patterns. By expressing in words the ideas behind the inspiration, she finds it more likely that the design will stay true to the original purpose of the art quilt as the work progresses.

As Elizabeth says, “Whatever the art form—a quilt, a piece of music, a book, a plan for a building—you need to know what your main focus is, what it is that you want to communicate. We’ve all seen those houses that are a ranch style gothic with a Spanish roof and Japanese gateway. It really doesn’t take long to decide what you want a quilt to be about—and if you physically write it down, there’s a chance you’ll stick to that. I have seen a lot of quilts that are the equivalent



"Tona" • 26" × 46"

of a Chopin waltz with a bit of reggae added 'for impact.' Yes, the reggae surely would do that, but it is probably not a good idea!"

A lover of the outdoors, Elizabeth continues to explore both the natural world and the grim beauty of industrial landscapes. "Tona" interprets a serene, commercially untouched island off the west coast of Scotland. In contrast, "Strange Beauty" remarks on the industrial—the unpredictable shapes and colors created by steel mills along Lake Ontario.

Of her nearly 300 art quilts, more than 100 of them have been cityscapes, and of these cityscapes, several have been part of a series of quilts to further explore a theme. Working in a series "gives me the feeling that I'm really getting somewhere with a subject," she says. "Diving in deeper and deeper,

and really getting to know it. There's a great calmness to that, and a feeling of purpose."

Her book, *VISUAL GUIDE TO WORKING IN A SERIES*, explores the many benefits of making more than one quilt within certain parameters. In addition to some of the more obvious advantages—such as the ability to thoroughly explore specific ideas—working in a series also allows the artist the opportunity to think about the subtlety of the subject, time to develop an individual style, and perfect techniques through practice. "In fact," says Elizabeth, "I can't think of any disadvantages at all to working in a series."

"Where Bong Trees Grow" is one of a series of ten quilts, all the same size, which were displayed together at a show in Atlanta. The original inspiration was the city of

Durham, England. The title comes from the Edward Lear poem, "The Owl and the Pussycat," because, as Elizabeth says, "I thought of portraying the city as a magical place with a golden castle. 'Ferrybridge' is the last quilt I have left of that series. The giant cooling towers were a landmark on my way home to York from southern England."

Elizabeth uses her own hand-dyed, screen printed, or shibori fabric. "Although many art quilters fuse, I prefer to piece wherever possible. If I can't piece, then I machine appliqué on the raw edges—although they are not all that raw by the time I'm done stitching!"

It is difficult to talk to any artist for long before finding out that they are dedicated to the discipline of daily practice—and Elizabeth Barton is no different. She believes



"Strange Beauty" • 40" x 55"

in pursuing art in some form every day—whether in real life, virtual interaction, or reading. She loves art books and is passionate about studying art in diverse artistic disciplines. Her studies about relatively unknown—but remarkable—women artists both inspire and inform her design aesthetic. She adds to that pursuit the artist's need for "daily observation."

Elizabeth is a dedicated workshop instructor who teaches extensively. "In my previous career, I sat in an office all day with four gray walls around me. Teaching has enabled me to visit some absolutely gorgeous parts of the United States

developing a vocabulary

When Elizabeth began to teach classes in designing art quilts, she quickly realized that she lacked a specific vocabulary to explain why things work and why they don't. Without the words, it was difficult to describe to students why some parts of their composition were successful—and to give some options of what to do to rework an unsuccessful design.

Having taken workshops from quilters she describes as "big names," she realized the frustration of receiving feedback that the quilt either "knocked my socks off" or "didn't work." Without an explanation of why, the assessment didn't help at all.

To develop the vocabulary to both critique her own work and to help her students assess their quilt designs, Elizabeth went to the art department at her local university and showed several professors her art quilts and asked them: "Why? Why does this work? Why doesn't that one work?" They recommended several design textbooks—and she read each one. Gradually she developed a language of design theory that enables her to discuss her own quilts and to clearly communicate useful guidance to her students.



"Where Bong Trees Grow" • 60" × 60"

and Canada, as well as in England and France. Wherever I go I ask if I can arrive a day early to see some of the local scenery. I have been so fortunate. People have been incredibly kind and shown me such wonderful things."

In addition to traditional workshop settings, she now teaches online. "I

originally resisted teaching online, thinking that I wouldn't be able to make a real connection with students. But I very quickly realized that I do connect. The person is right there, both in their words and in their artwork. I appreciate that online workshops are affordable and accessible to people who live in remote areas. I also find that with

the online classes, students have more time to think through the processes as they make their quilts.

"Teaching has helped me sharpen my own artistic eye. With every design that I critique, and every student I interact with, I continue to develop a language and theory for the 'why' of a successful quilt.

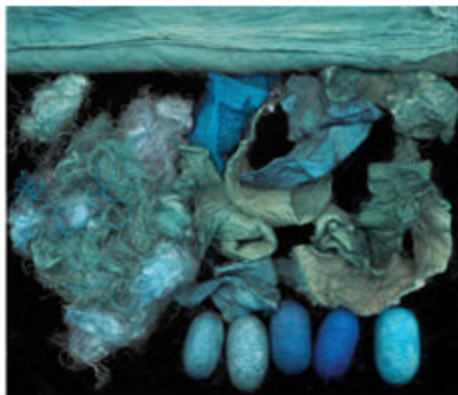


"Ferrybridge" • 60" × 60"

"When I'm teaching I try to assess whether or not a person wants to be more adventurous—many don't and there's nothing wrong with that. But if they do, I look for a way that they can take a few risks. Without a doubt, you won't progress if you don't take risks—and that's true for many kinds of art, science, and probably life as a whole."

By combining the discipline of design, the passion of idea and form, and the willingness to take risks, Elizabeth Barton has created a world of meaningful interpretation in art quilts. We can't wait to see what else lies ahead in her journey. ■

To learn more about Elizabeth Barton, visit elizabethbarton.com.



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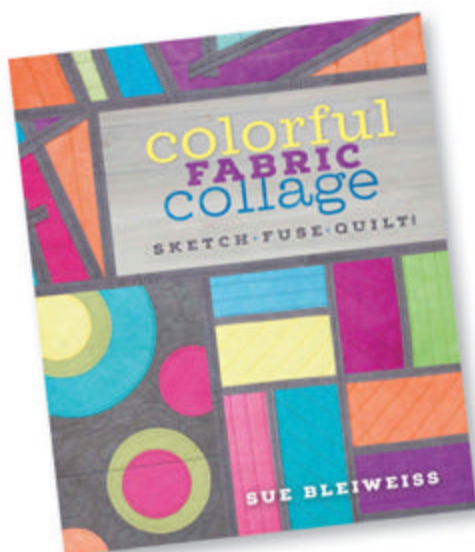
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fuse it!

Fusible web isn't just for adhering appliqué shapes to your quilt tops. You can use it in your sewing in many different ways: to interface delicate fabrics, baste a quilt easily and efficiently, create color shading effects and textures, and more.



Basic Techniques

FOR FUSING FABRICS

When cutting out shapes to appliqué to a quilt, everyone reaches for fusible web. But if you use a lightweight web, you can use it for all aspects of your art quilt. You can make interfacing for delicate fabrics, baste a quilt without getting poked by sharp quilting pins, and even add subtle shading effects with delicate fabrics.

I use Mistyfuse, a particularly lightweight, solvent-free fusible web, for all of these techniques (and more). It stays soft and creates a strong bond. (If you use a different brand of fusible web, then your results may differ from mine.) Because I use fusible web in almost every step of making a quilt, I apply it to my fabrics before I embark on a new project.

Pre-fuse Fabric Pieces

I like to pre-fuse all of my fabrics so that when I'm ready to start creating, I can just grab the fabrics and start cutting without having to stop and add fusible web to a piece that I want to use. The most important thing to remember when fusing web to fabric is to never touch the surface of the iron to the web. It will melt onto the surface of the iron and make a mess.

FUSING TIP *If you melt fusible web onto your iron plate (and trust me, it happens to everyone at least once!), run the hot iron over an unused dryer fabric softener sheet. This will help clean off the surface of the iron quickly.*

Place the fabric on your ironing surface wrong side up. Place a layer of fusible web on top of the fabric, cover it with either a

piece of parchment paper or a Teflon pressing sheet, and press with a hot, dry iron (no steam). It's important to iron the entire area thoroughly; otherwise, the fusible web will pull away from the fabric.

Allow the surface to cool for a moment, and then peel back the parchment paper or remove the pressing sheet. Set the fused

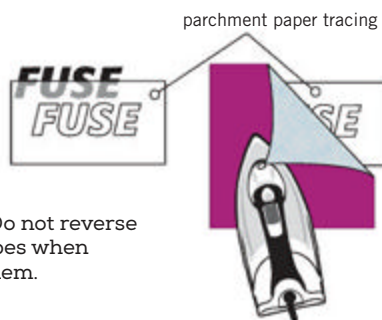


figure 1: Do not reverse your shapes when tracing them.

figure 2: Use a hot iron to transfer your design from parchment paper to fabric.

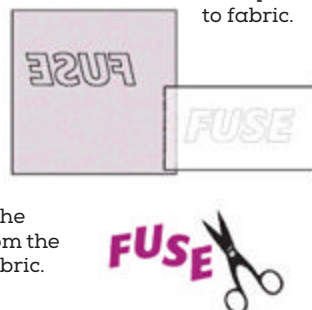


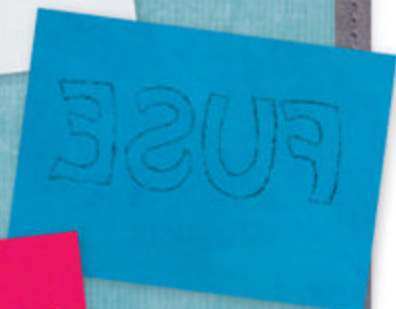
figure 3: Cut the design out from the back of the fabric.

MAKING MISTYFUSE NO-REVERSE APPLIQUÉS



Step 1: Trace your design into parchment paper with a pencil.

Step 2: Place fabric on the tracing, Mistyfuse side down, and iron to transfer the design.



Step 3: Cut out the design and fuse it to your quilt.

MAKING TRANSFER PAPER NO-REVERSE APPLIQUÉS

Step 1: Trace over the design to transfer the chalk to the back of the fabric.



Step 2: Reveal the chalk design transferred to the back of the fabric.

fabric aside to cool completely; then you can fold the fabric up and store it just as you would any other fabric. If the fused fabric is still warm, the fused surface will stick to itself.

If the stored, folded fabric wrinkles, just press the wrinkles out with a piece of parchment paper or Teflon pressing sheet against the fused side.

FUSING TIP *If you are using baking parchment as your pressing sheet, clip a small piece off the lower right hand corner and, whenever you use it, make sure that the clipped corner is always in the lower right hand corner. This ensures that the same side will always be against the fusible web.*

No-reverse Appliqués

If you've experimented with appliqué, you might remember the chore of having to reverse your pattern shapes before cutting them out of fabric, else they end up backward. This can be especially tedious and confusing when working with text. But with my work forward technique, you'll eliminate the need to have to reverse your designs.

Begin by tracing your design onto a piece of parchment paper using a pencil - do not reverse the design (**figure 1**). If you are going to cut your design out of a dark piece of fabric, use a white- or yellow-colored pencil.

Fuse a layer of Mistyfuse to the wrong side of your fabric. Place the fabric on top of the parchment paper, taking care to lay the fusible web side down against the parchment paper. Iron with a hot iron on a firm surface (**figure 2**).

When you peel the fabric off the parchment paper, you'll see that the design you traced onto the parchment paper has been transferred to the back of the fabric. Now you can cut your pattern piece out of the fabric along the transferred line and fuse it to your quilt (**figure 3**).

Some materials in your art quilt might not react well to heat, but you want to add an appliqué anyway. When you can't use fusible web, you can use a transfer paper technique instead to transfer your design to the backside of your fabric without having to reverse it.

MAKING TEXTURED FABRICS

Step 1: Fuse crinkled fabric to muslin.

Step 2: Baste fabric.

Step 3: Paint the top layer.

Step 4: Press and paint again.

Several different brands of transfer paper are on the market, including graphite-based and wax-based products. But my favorite type is a chalk-based transfer paper called Transdoodle. Unlike wax or graphite, the chalk cannot be made permanent by heat and easily brushes off the surface of fabric.

To use Transdoodle to transfer your appliqué design to fabric, place the paper on your work surface with the chalk side up. Put your fabric on top with the wrong side against the transfer paper. Place your design on top of the fabric, and then use a blunt pencil to trace your design. The chalk from the paper will transfer to the wrong side of your fabric.

Add Unique Texture

I developed this technique while searching for a way to make a permanently textured silk surface that I could paint. You can use this technique with colored or printed fabric. My favorite way to use it is with white fabrics that I then add layers of paint to. The resulting fabric is a one-of-a-kind surface rich with texture, dimension, and color.

To create a textured surface, you'll need two fabrics: the top layer that you'll steam and wrinkle, plus the bottom layer that you'll fuse the top layer to. The top layer can be anything you want—I like to use a very lightweight silk Habotai (5mm). An inexpensive muslin with two layers of fusible web already applied works best for the bottom layer.

This is one of the few times in my studio when I use a steam iron; if you don't have one, you can do this technique by misting the silk lightly before you crumple it.

Crumple your top layer fabric up into a ball and then crush it with an iron set to steam. While pressing the iron onto the crumpled ball of silk, press the steam button on the iron. Set the iron aside, open the fabric, and then crumple it up again. Steam press the crumpled ball again. Depending on the fabric that you're working with, you may have to repeat this process several times to get the amount of wrinkling that you want.

Next, lay your muslin with the fusible web side up on your ironing surface. Open up the crumpled, wrinkled fabric and lay it on top of the muslin. Spread the wrinkled fabric out loosely on the muslin. Use a very hot iron to press the wrinkled surface onto the muslin, using an up and down pressing motion. Fusing the wrinkled layer to the muslin layer preserves all of the interesting, textured lines made by the wrinkles.



FUSING TIP *It's very important to use an up and down pressing motion to preserve the wrinkles. If you drag the iron across the surface as if you were ironing a shirt, you'll iron out all of the surface wrinkles.*

After I've completed pressing and fusing the wrinkled top layer, I turn the piece over and iron the entire surface from the back.

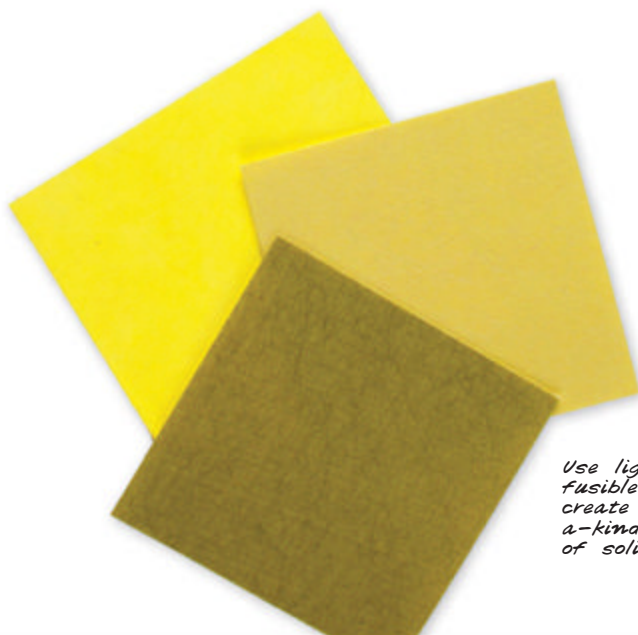
Press the entire surface, then run a basting stitch around the edges with your sewing machine before you paint the fabric.

Paint the surface of the top layer. You may find that the moisture from the paint loosens the fused bond of the fabrics. Once the paint is dry, just re-press the surface with a hot iron using a piece of muslin or parchment paper as a press cloth. Add many different layers of paint, and after each layer dries, press the surface before adding more paint. After adding many layers of paint, you may need to use steam to get a good press once the piece is finished.

Shade with Fabrics

The more you heat Mistyfuse, the more translucent it becomes, so it's possible to use it with delicate, sheer fabrics such as polyester organza and toile if you are careful. After you add the Mistyfuse to a piece of sheer fabric, you can fuse it to your quilt to create shadowing or to tone down a too-bright fabric.

The fusible web will still be on the surface of the cloth, but with enough heat, you won't really see it, as long as you use parchment paper as your press cloth. If you use a Teflon pressing sheet, then you'll notice that the surface has a shine to it.



Use lightweight fusible web to create one-of-a-kind shades of solid fabrics.

Create Unique Interfacing

If the fabric that you want to use for your project is too lightweight or too sheer, you can create interfacing to stabilize it. Simply fuse a layer of Mistyfuse to a piece of plain white or neutral lightweight cotton, silk, or other material that, in turn, can be fused to the backside of the fabric you want to stabilize.

I often apply this technique when I'm working with a light-colored fabric, such as yellow or peach, that will be fused on top of a darker color. The lighter colored fabric becomes more opaque and obscures the darker color beneath it.

Baste Quilt Layers

Basting your quilt layers together with Mistyfuse avoids the use of pins, making it easier to quilt. Keep a basket or shoebox near your pressing station and toss in the bits of fusible web you've trimmed off of your fabric pieces. Fuse them in random spots on your quilt top and backing. You can then fuse both of them to the batting. If you have no bits and scraps on hand, just cut or tear strips of fusible web to use.

Coloring with Metallics

You can also easily add textile foil or metal leaf to the surface of your quilt using a lightweight fusible web. Textile foil comes in a variety of colors, which you can buy by the sheet or yard. Unlike metal leaf, textile foil doesn't require a delicate touch to use and tends to be less expensive. Whichever one you use is a matter of personal preference.

Textile foil is a layer of foil attached to a clear film. When the foil is bonded to a surface, the clear film is lifted away and the foil remains on the surface. It's usually marketed with a liquid adhesive, but I prefer, instead, to use Mistyfuse to bond it to the surface of fabric projects.

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For more great tips on fusing, over a dozen projects, and much more, order **COLORFUL FABRIC COLLAGE** by Sue Bleiweiss at **shop.quiltingdaily.com**.

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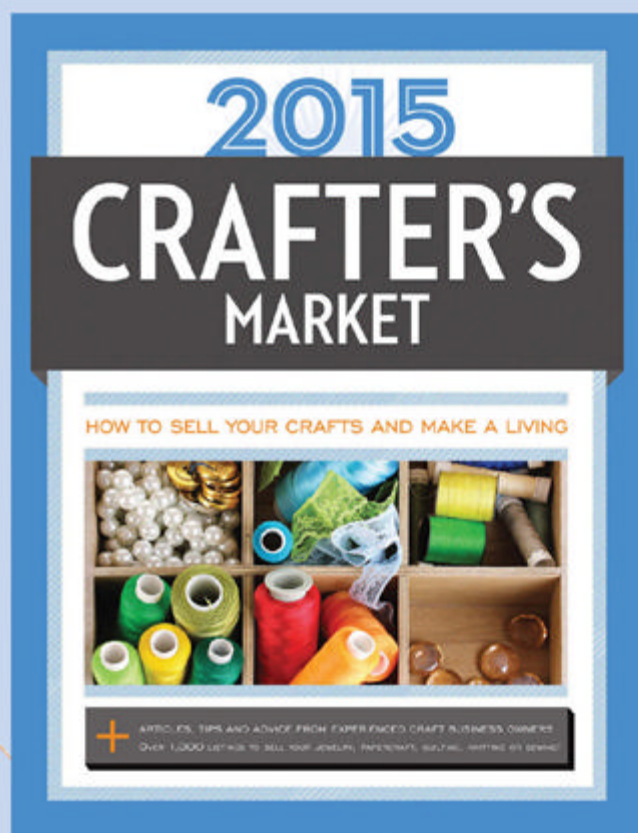
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ART ON THE GO

sweet little somethings

A MIXED-MEDIA TAKE-ALONG PROJECT

by Leslie Tucker Jenison



MATERIALS

- Small pieces of cloth, paper, and trim (This project is an excellent way to use remnants. Consider including sheers, art paper, and ephemera.)
- Embroidery threads
- Embroidery needle
- Scissors
- Water-soluble stabilizer
- Monofilament thread
- Warm water and container to dissolve the stabilizer

Optional

- Buttons, beads, or other embellishments

We artists are always fiddling around with something—our hands need to be busy! Like me, you may need something artistic to do when you travel. “Sweet Little Somethings” are small collaged bits of cloth, paper, and trim that are stitched together by machine, by hand, or both. These assemblages are perfect to take when traveling or anywhere that you might have a little time to do a bit of stitchery.

I carry two small bags of art supplies when I travel—and I do mean small, as I rarely check a bag. One plastic zipper bag contains my tiny set of watercolors, a small sketchbook, a pen, a brush, watercolor postcards, and some stamps. The other bag contains the ingredients for my sweet little somethings. This includes a small collection of funky pieces of cloth—such as silk organza, vintage kimono silk, and leftovers from printing or dyeing projects—several large-eye needles, some embroidery thread, and a small pair of TSA-friendly scissors. (Note: At the time of this writing, a scissor with a blade 4" or less will pass through security but double check before you fly.) I think of these bags as an updated, grown-up version of those “goodie packs” I parceled out to my young kids to keep them busy in a car or plane.

I was reawakened to the joy of hand stitching several years ago while attending a workshop with Mary Ruth Smith, a marvelous embroiderer who chairs the fiber department at Baylor University. I was further inspired last spring during a workshop with Cas Holmes, who adds to her own work with found cloth and trim, vintage handkerchiefs, and more. Although their work is quite different in approach and appearance, these artists share a love of spontaneous embroidery work that has impacted my own point of view.

DIRECTIONS

1. Arrange small pieces of cloth, paper, and bits of trim to create a collage for a base.
2. Before you travel, sandwich the collage between 2 sheets of water-soluble stabilizer and pin lightly. Machine stitch the layers in place using monofilament thread. (Figure 1)



Figure 1

3. Remove the water-soluble stabilizer by immersing the stitched collage in warm water and gently rubbing the stabilizer.

TIP: It is sometimes necessary to rinse more than once to fully remove the gelatin product.

4. Place the collage on a flat surface to dry.
5. Once dry, this collage may be further stitched by hand or embellished with buttons, beads, and other ephemera.





"Delicate Remnants" • 10" × 10"



TIP: When finished, these small “somethings” are lovely framed or mounted on paper. I like to mount the collages by stitching them onto a backing—a small stitch with monofilament thread in each corner works well.

These “somethings” have no lofty purpose beyond pleasing me as I create them. Truly, it is the process, not the product, that most delights me. Some of these works may become part of a larger piece, but that is not my purpose. I simply appreciate their non-precious nature.

Quite frequently the bits of cloth combine with some travel ephemera, which I may attach to my sketchbook. The same is true of my travel paper collages. I frequently mail them to my home—a lovely reminder of the trip when I find them in my mailbox!

While many of these constructions are set aside and never finished, others become little compositions that are charming mounted on a piece of watercolor paper and framed.

These “sweet little somethings” are a form of meditation, a slowing down, a mindful pursuit of the rhythm that is stitching. ■





NOW AVAILABLE!



your favorite flowers

Results from the 'Blossoms, Buds, and Blooms' Reader Challenge



A photograph inspired four artists to collaborate, each making a 10" × 10" art quilt of a quarter of the image.

all right, we'll admit it—flowers make us happy! We can't resist the first crocus of spring or a field of poppies in summer, the lone majestic orchid on a side table or a giant bouquet of fragrant lilies. And our readers love them, too! Flowers are cheerful, comforting, just plain lovely, and enjoyed by just about everyone.

In the December 2014/January 2015 issue, we challenged readers—some of them quite winter weary!—to represent their favorite blossom, bud, or bloom in a 10" × 10" art quilt and we received almost 150 entries. We hope you enjoy this gallery of our readers' work.



“Giant Russian”

DEBORAH WIRSU
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

“A few years ago I grew a crop of Giant Russian sunflowers in my garden in Melbourne. Their dinner-plate-sized blooms greeted me every day for weeks with a cheerful countenance, bringing joy to all who witnessed the display. Even at the end of their life cycle, the increasing size of the seed head in the center of the flower brought the promise of new life in the next season, provided the parrots didn't get to them first! This quilt was created from a photo I took and is machine appliquéed and quilted using my hand-dyed and batik fabrics and fabric paints. The seed head is enhanced with extra batting to create a trapunto effect.”

“Sunflower” (opposite page)

TOP LEFT: ROBERT HARTLEY, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
TOP RIGHT: ELAINE CHARLAND, PEWEE VALLEY, KENTUCKY
BOTTOM LEFT: MARILYN FOULKE, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
BOTTOM RIGHT: GORDON VOGT, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

“As a quartet of art quilters, we found inspiration in a picture of a sunflower which we divided into quarters and made art quilts representing each section. Through this collaboration, we raised the artistic bar for one another, enjoyed the camaraderie of working together in eager anticipation of what the final results might be, and came to recognize that the whole was in fact greater than the sum of its parts when the project was at last in full bloom.”

“Tiger Eye”

SUSAN BIANCHI
SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA

“Call it a Brown Betty, Gloriosa Daisy, Coneflower, Black-Eyed Susan, or a Brown-Eyed Susan, it’s still a *Rudbeckia*. It’s a cheerful scrappy little flower that needed to be made into a cheerful scrappy little quilt. I like working with buttons and beads to make mosaic-like quilts. The process and outcome make me happy.”



“Summer Windowsill”

JILL KERTTULA
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

“This is a sunflower I purchased at our local farmer’s market last year, awaiting a vase to be filled with water.

This quilt is based on my original photograph printed on fabric. It was then free-motion machine stitched and couched yarns, beading, and dryer lint were added as embellishments.”





“California Poppy Remembered”

CAROLYN SKEI
MCKINNEY, TEXAS

“Oh, the colorful, simple, and elegant California poppy! During 30 years of living and working in California, I photographed many of these lovely wildflowers. Now, years later, the image has been transformed into a fiber art collage that incorporates everything from commercial cottons and polyester sheers to ice-dyed cotton and years-old, microwave-dyed cloth. No new supplies were purchased in the making of this quilt!”



“Little Mum”

MARY ANN ZOLKA
NAZARETH, PENNSYLVANIA

“Chrysanthemums come in an almost endless variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. They bloom late in the growing season and color the garden long after other flowers are gone. This piece is a photo transfer wholecloth quilt from a snapshot of a chrysanthemum.”



“Clematis”

TRACIE L. MARYNE
ANMORE, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

“Spring brings flowers and with them an abundance of color, taking away the winter grays. This piece was inspired by one of my many flower photos—a clematis bud opening itself to the sun—and was machine appliquéd and thread stitched.”

“Electric Sunflower”

CHRISTINE KENWORTHY
HILLSBOROUGH, CALIFORNIA

“This quilt is a modification of a drawing of a sunflower I created and had originally silk-screened. I enhanced the sunflower with fresh, bright colors of batik and marbled cotton fabric and used free-motion stitching on my sewing machine to achieve a textured effect.”



“Floral Fantasy”

PATRICIA COOK HAAS
PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA

“I created this daisy using bright red and orange fabrics and helped them pop by using a 30wt. Sulky® thread in various shades for the veins. Most of the petals are flat on the quilt surface but I made a few of them dimensional by backing them with a similar fabric and only tacking them down near the center and at the outer edge. I then complemented it with the dimensional center. The green background was free-motion quilted in a variety of circles.”





"My Garden"

GUDRUN KIEL-BULLOCK
PROVIDENCE FORGE, VIRGINIA

"My favorite garden flowers are purple coneflowers (*Echinacea*). My quilt is reminiscent of a garden I planted when I lived in Michigan. I had tons of purple coneflowers and purple gayflowers (*Liatris*) planted together and it was truly beautiful. My quilt has machine quilted stems in the background. The petals of the coneflowers are individually needle felted. The gayflowers are needlefelted as well and are also embellished with embroidery thread."



“Colorado Coneflowers”

CHERYL GEBHART
STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA

“I love the yellow cone-flowers (*Rudbeckia ampla*) of Colorado, which must be why I take so many pictures of them. I manipulated the photo in Photoshop® Elements, printed it on an EQ Printables inkjet fabric sheet, and then thread sketched and quilted it. I’ve been wanting to do this for several years—I took the photo in 2009—so this challenge was just the push I needed.”



“Forsythia: Yellow Start of Spring”

LYA GEVEN
HARKSTEDE, THE NETHERLANDS

“This quilt is made with cotton, organza, Tyvek®, branches made with cord, and hand-dyed threads and it is hand- and machine-quilted.”

“Purple Hibiscus”

SANDRA SCOTT
GIRTON, CAMBRIDGE, UNITED KINGDOM

“‘Purple Hibiscus’ is a wholecloth painted quilt created on cotton fabric. It was painted using Derwent® InkTense block color and Jacquard® Lumiere® paint. It was quilted using free-motion machine embroidery. The design was developed from a pencil drawing cropped to create an unusual composition.”



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Happy Birthday to QA!

CELEBRATE WITH OUR NEW READER CHALLENGE

How can it be that QUILTING ARTS MAGAZINE is about to celebrate a milestone birthday? This December marks the 15th year of this wonderful publication. From the very first issue, QA has encouraged quilt artists to push the boundaries of creativity, learn new techniques, and embellish with abandon. From dyeing to discharge, from beading to binding, and from free motion to felting, we've covered it. This has been quite an "artful adventure"!

You are invited to join us in marking this festive occasion by creating a small art quilt depicting your own artful adventures inspired by the magazine. The subject matter and implementation are up to you, but we encourage you to use at least three different techniques you've learned from QUILTING ARTS in the making of your quilt.



mark your CALENDAR

AUG. 2: Emailed submissions are due with low-resolution jpeg photos.

AUG. 5: Names of finalists will be posted on the Reader Challenge blog at quiltingdaily.com.

AUG. 28: Finalists' quilts must be received in our offices.

DECEMBER 2015: Look for a gallery of "Artful Adventure" quilts in the December 2015/January 2016 issue of QUILTING ARTS MAGAZINE!

Here's how to enter

- Create an art quilt based on the theme "Artful Adventure." The entire quilt must be in portrait orientation and measure 8" (width) x 10" (height) including the binding. Embellishments must not protrude more than ½" from 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 be either bound or closed along the edges. Although we encourage you to use at least three different techniques from QUILTING ARTS, it is not mandatory.
 - Label your quilt on the reverse with your name, email address, and title of the quilt. On the back of the quilt, please mark the top. A hanging sleeve is not required.
 - 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 written permission with your submission. (It's a good idea to steer clear of commercial imagery.)
 - To be considered for the challenge, attach two low-resolution images (each less than 1MB) of your completed entry to your email—one of the entire quilt including all of the edges/binding and one of a detail of the quilt—via email by **August 2, 2015** to **challenges@interweave.com**, with the words "Artful Adventure" in the subject line. Please include your name, email address, phone number, title of the quilt, and a brief statement about your piece in the email, including the techniques you used and what issue(s) of QUILTING ARTS you learned them from. You may submit more than one quilt, but each entry must be in individual emails.
- NOTE:** Please do not "zip" your files and be sure to send jpegs.

To learn photo tips for shooting your Reader Challenge submission, check out page 6 of the December 2014/January 2015 issue or search for "7 Tips

for Photographing Your Art Quilts for Challenges" at quiltingdaily.com.

- On **August 5, 2015**, we will post the finalists on the Reader Challenge blog at quiltingdaily.com. **This is the only notification that will be made.**
- If accepted as a finalist, your artwork must be in our offices no later than **August 28, 2015**, along with a shipping and handling fee of \$10 (U.S.), \$20 (Canada), or \$30 (all other international). This fee, which must be paid in U.S. dollars, covers the shipping costs, packing materials, and handling for the return of your entry. Only cash, checks, or money orders can be accepted. Checks or money orders should be made payable to F+W.
- The entire piece and all of its packaging must weigh less than 3 lbs. and fit inside a standard shipping/mailling box or padded envelope for return shipment.

Finalists should mail their entries to:

QUILTING ARTS MAGAZINE/F+W
Attn: 'Artful Adventure' Reader Challenge
490 Boston Post Road, Suite 15
Sudbury, MA 01776

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 to possibly display it at shows. F+W will not be held responsible for loss or damage due to circumstances beyond our control.

We reserve the right to keep and possibly display your "Artful Adventure" quilt until the week of Jan. 11, 2016.

If you have questions, contact Kristine Lundblad at kristine.lundblad@fwcommunity.com.

We look forward to seeing your work!

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Transform prints, paints, & photos into vibrant art quilts

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Join award-winning quilter and surface design expert Sue Reno as she demonstrates four unique surface design techniques: Thermofax®, cyanotype, collagraph, and heliograph printmaking. With Sue's expert guidance, you'll learn how to use paints, photographs, pretreated fabric, and more to add custom images and botanical prints to your fabrics.



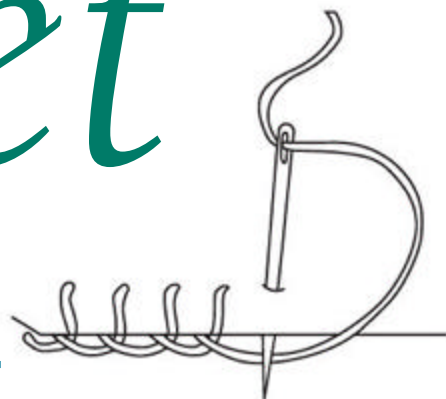
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 INTERWEAVE

blanket STITCH

by Jane Dávila



Often overlooked by many fiber artists as too traditional, folksy, or whimsical, the blanket stitch—a variation of the buttonhole stitch—can add delightful texture to fiber art. It can be a versatile addition to your mark-making vocabulary of stitches, as it offers much more variety than appears at first glance. Historically, the blanket stitch existed as a way to finish the edges of blankets, hence the name. Over the edge of a thick, sturdy blanket of wool or linen, it looks the same on the front and the back, and stops an edge from raveling. As a hand embroidery stitch, it is often used for appliqué.

Many hand embroidery stitches have a typical style, the one we are used to seeing. In the case of the blanket stitch, that is usually a regular pattern with the width and the length of the stitches being equal. But there's more to this humble stitch than you may think!





How to blanket stitch

The blanket stitch consists of two parts—the “leg” stitch which is perpendicular to the “traveling” stitch that forms the straight line as the stitch moves along. Blanket stitch is often created with embroidery floss or a similarly heavy thread.

I asked three artists—Laura Wasilowski, Lorie McCown, and Jane LaFazio—to share their thoughts on this stitch, as they each use it frequently.

Laura uses her own dyed perle cotton thread, in sizes 8 or 12, to blanket stitch. Laura notes that her color choice depends on the effect she’s seeking. “If I want the shape to really pop from the surface, I’ll use a thread color that is complementary to the fabric shape I’m outlining,” she says.

Lorie uses mainly 2–3 strands of embroidery floss, but will sometimes use regular sewing thread to achieve a very refined stitch.

Jane also uses perle cotton—in sizes 5, 8, and 12. (Perle cotton ranges from the heavier size 3 up to size 16, which is fine enough to use in a home sewing machine.) “And I love variegated thread!” she says.

Complete the machine stitching before the addition of any hand stitching to avoid flattening the hand stitches or diluting the effect of the hand-stitched lines. Jane adds, “Beads or embellishments come last.”

When to blanket stitch

Use a blanket stitch to encircle a shape, to add texture and interest across open areas, and to create pattern and design. Lorie says, “I try to incorporate stitches that seem relevant to the work. Folksy stitches are a special challenge, and I like to use them with a different sense of what they can be. The sketchy, spiky blanket or buttonhole stitch is a great way to add texture and movement to a piece. I like and use free-



“Dreaming Tuscany in May” • 12" × 9" • Jane LaFazio (detail opposite)

form stitchery often, so my work always has a painterly, unplanned look to it.”

Jane uses the blanket stitch as texture and to outline shapes, noting, “The blanket stitch can be the perfect accent around a circle. I love how it can make a simple circle take on the appearance of a sun or something you’d find under a microscope.”

She also uses the blanket stitch as a horizontal stitch, to add the feeling of a landscape to her work.

Laura uses the blanket stitch to outline the various elements in her pictorial designs. The stitch finishes the edges of fused shapes and gives them a defined outline to set them apart from background fabrics. “Usually, I space it evenly and occasionally add a French knot to the blanket stitch



"Hearts and Flowers #3" • 14" × 14" • Laura Wasilowski (detail right)



Figure 1

'legs' to add even more texture. Sometime I orient the blanket stitch so it extends into a shape and sometimes so that it extends away from a shape—sort of an 'innie' or 'outie' version of the stitch. (Figure 1)

When I want more than just a line around a shape but want to add more texture to the piece, I use a blanket stitch to outline shapes rather than using a stem or outline stitch."

A blanket stitch is also a wonderful way to finish off the outer edges of a quilt, harkening back to its original purpose. Jane often uses the stitch this way saying, "It's my go-to stitch for finishing the edges of many of my quilts. (I'm not into binding.) And the blanket stitch, with beads, makes the coolest finish on a quilt or book edge!"

Modernizing a traditional stitch

Certain stitches, and the blanket stitch is definitely one of them, have a bit of a stodgy reputation. They can look very traditional and when you're working on an art quilt that may not be the look you're after. So how do you bring an old-fashioned stitch into the modern age? How do you take something that looks folksy and give it some edge?



"Butterfly Garden" • 14" × 9" • Laura Wasilowski



"Calming the Storm" • 21" × 27" • Lorie McCown

consider this! a dozen variations of blanket stitch to use in your art

Use several colors of embroidery floss twisted together for more depth of color.

Vary the lengths of the "leg" stitches for a spontaneous result.

Vary the spaces between the stitches for more movement.

Combine the blanket stitch with beads or French knots.

Add a second row of blanket stitches, with the same or a different thread, just slightly offset from the first row.

Create a regular pattern by alternating long and short "leg" stitches.

Stitch in a spiral design or on a curve, instead of a straight line. Add a second line of stitching going in the opposite direction for more interest.

Make the spaces between the "leg" stitches very short for a fuzzy or hairy effect.

Occasionally flip one of the "leg" stitches to the opposite side of the "traveling" stitches for variety.

Alternate the angle of the "legs" of the stitch to form Xs.

Sew the stitch in a tight circle with the "legs" facing in to create an eyelet effect.

Sew the "legs" of the stitch in increasing and decreasing lengths to form scallops.



"Approaching Babylon" • 54" × 19" • Lorie McCown

Start by breaking the stitch down into its basic parts and then analyze what can be altered, skewed, or twisted to make it unexpected. For example, a blanket stitch is made up of two parts, what I call the traveling stitch (the continuous straight line that's formed between stitches), and the legs (the stitches perpendicular to the traveling stitch). By varying the length of one of those stitches, the stitch becomes less regular, and truly irregular spacing in these stitches can result in a very organic effect. Varying the angle of the leg stitches can achieve a lot of movement and action. Flipping the leg stitch from one side of the traveling stitch to the other can really add edginess and unexpectedness to your work. Next, think about the ways that a particular stitch is traditionally used or applied and do something different. The blanket stitch, for example, is often used to edge elements or appliqué pieces onto a background, but it can be used to create texture, lines, and marks across the surface of a piece. Rows of blanket stitching could look like grasses or fences, or add strong geometric lines and forms to your work.

Consider approaching any stitch with the idea of using it in ways that are atypical, unusual, or unexpected. By distilling a stitch down to its essence and discovering ways to slightly or radically change it, you can give it new life and a place in contemporary mark making. Challenge yourself to radicalize a lazy daisy or a split stitch next! ■

featured artists

Jane LaFazio

janelafazio.com

Lorie McCown

loriemccown.com

Laura Wasilowski

artfabrik.com

Is your die cutter still in the box? Then it's time to get cutting!



Join quilter and award-winning die-cutting expert Ebony Love as she demonstrates her methods for using a die cutter to create fun and unique quilts, all while minimizing waste and maximizing results. Whether you are new to die cutting and have yet to take your machine for a spin or are a seasoned pro, find tips and tricks that will make using your die cutter easier and more enjoyable.



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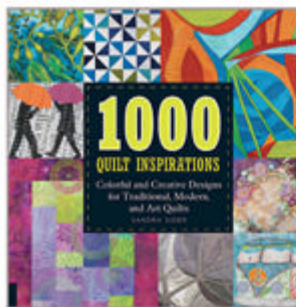


"My goal is to help people sew simple, artful stuff. My whole life I have heard people say, 'My aunt was an artist, but I can't even draw a stick figure,' and the like. Phooey, I say. Think of me as your inner-artist enabler!"

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 INTERWEAVE

media we like



1000 QUILT INSPIRATIONS

COLORFUL AND CREATIVE DESIGNS
FOR TRADITIONAL, MODERN, AND
ART QUILTS

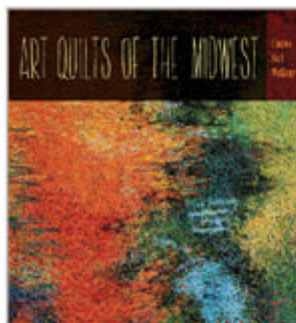
Sandra Sider
Quarry Books, 2015
320 pp., Paperback
\$24.99

Separated into four sections—
traditional designs, modern
designs, pictorial art designs, and

abstract and conceptual art quilt designs—this book will envelope readers in fiber art made by over 300 quilt makers from around the world. All of the sections provide page after page of inspirational art; plus, the traditional section includes two mini galleries of antique quilts, one from the collection of International Quilt Festival (mostly 19th and early 20th century examples) and the other of the Gundersheimer Collection (mostly 20th century).

Sandra Sider's thoughtful introduction provides most of the words contained in this book. The remaining pages contain quilt after innovative quilt, expertly photographed, each page more inspiring than the last. Get lost in the four sections and spend time with each. Then look at the selection of quilts as a whole and marvel at their harmony and mastery, blurring the lines between the classic bed quilt and a work of quilt art. Delightfully, the book ends with a gallery of almost 30 works by Sandra herself.

This beautiful book is a valuable reference tool that belongs in every quilter's library.



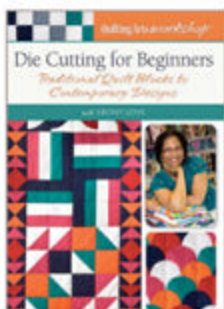
ART QUILTS OF THE MIDWEST

Linzee Kull McCray
University of Iowa Press, 2015
81 pp., Paperback
\$24.95

"Rather than repeat bibliographical information, my goal was to learn how these artists do what they do and the ways the Midwest affects that." With these words in the introduction, writer and

artist Linzee Kull McCray succinctly captures her goal in writing this thoughtfully curated and inspiring book. Included in the pages are 20 quilters and their beautifully photographed quilts plus Linzee's insightful essays on each artist's motivation, inspiration, and style.

This book is not just an ode to Midwestern art and values but a comprehensive snapshot of what is going on in art quilting across the country and around the globe.



DIE CUTTING FOR BEGINNERS

FROM TRADITIONAL QUILT BLOCKS TO CONTEMPORARY DESIGNS

Ebony Love

Quilting Arts Workshop™/F+W, 2015

DVD/video download

Run time: 70 minutes

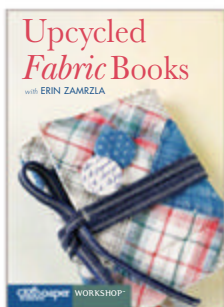
\$24.99/\$19.99

Quilter and author Ebony Love is a die-cutting expert and in this video she shares tips and techniques for using die-cutting

machines accurately and efficiently. She demonstrates how to cut fabric quickly and with minimal waste. She also shows more specialized techniques using strip dies, geometric dies, and shapes for appliqué. With Ebony's help, you'll be die cutting like a pro in no time!

Ebony offers helpful hints to make cutting and sewing geometric shapes, curved piecing, English Paper Piecing, and clamshells a snap. She demonstrates the versatility of the strip-cutting die and its many uses, cutting squares, diamonds, continuous borders, and even bias binding. She wraps up this informative video with tips on die maintenance and care.

Many art quilters have resisted moving toward the use of the die cutting process. Ebony's tips and encouraging teaching style may open your eyes to new possibilities in your quilt creations.



UPCYCLED FABRIC BOOKS

Erin Zamrzla

Cloth Paper Scissors Workshop™/F+W, 2015

DVD/video download

Run time: 64 minutes

\$24.99/\$19.99

Turn quilt pieces, fabric scraps, or outgrown baby clothes into a unique handmade journal perfect for sketching, drawing, or writing. Erin Zamrzla takes you through every step of this beginner-friendly project,

from choosing fabric for the cover to sewing the no-stress binding. Create bookmarks and a closure from scraps or ribbons, and embellish the book with covered buttons for a fun accent. Erin, author of two books on bookbinding, shows how easily a book comes together with a just a few tips and tricks. Add this project to your repertoire and you'll never buy a pre-made journal again.



To purchase these and many more fiber art and mixed-media items, visit shop.quiltingdaily.com.

Learn about our newest Interweave books and videos on pages 40, 55, 73, and 83.



MAKE YOUR QUILTING IMPROVISATIONAL!

Join author Alexandra Ledgerwood to learn about improvisational quilting. Through full-color step-by-step illustrations and the 18 inspiring quilted patterns, you'll learn to embrace spontaneity with confidence as Alex demonstrates how using strip piecing, strata piecing, and slice-and-insert techniques to make improv quilts that are totally one of a kind—even when working from a pattern.

Add this book to your library at shop.quiltingdaily.com/ImprovTradition



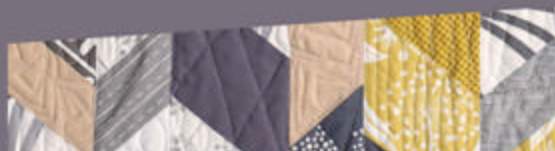
Improvising Tradition

18 Quilted Projects
Using Strips, Slices,
and Strata

By Alexandra Ledgerwood

144 pages • 8½ × 10¼ • \$27.99

ISBN 978-1-62033-532-1



STUDIO ART QUILT ASSOCIATES'
'Celebrating
Silver'



“Upward and Onward”

67" x 35"

BONNIE SMITH

San Jose, California

“The good is always worth celebrating. SAQA’s 25th anniversary is definitely one of those occasions. I wish our organization the best, and may we move upward and onward!”

Cotton, acetate, and wool fabrics; machine appliquéd and stitched.

The quilting community has benefitted this last quarter century from Studio Art Quilt Associates, the non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of art quilts and those who create them. As part of SAQA’s 25th anniversary, the organization is “celebrating silver.”

Silver is indispensable. From industrial use to decoration, technology, photography, and medicine, its unique properties of strength, malleability, reflectivity, and conductivity make it an irreplaceable force in the global market. In addition to its physical properties, silver is recognized as a symbol of love and commitment.

It is universally accepted that the gift for a 25th anniversary is silver. This gallery, juried by SAQA founder Yvonne Porcella, provides an opportunity to reflect on the history of the organization as well as to allow the artists’ work to shine.



“Silver Birch Grove”

70" × 40"

SANDRA POTEET

Grass Valley, California

“My birch grove presents two forms of silver: the precious grayish-white metal element with atomic number 47, and nature’s remarkable gray-white trees.”

Paint on batting, sheers, synthetics, and ink; photo printed on fabric, painted, paper laminated, and silk screened.



“Reflection—
World Trade Center”

50" × 35"

JEAN RENLI JURGENSON
Walnut Creek, California

“Silver... shiny; architecture;
glisten; perspective; reflective;
WTC; iconic; tridents; stylized;
simplicity; introspection;
meditation; serenity; calm...
reflection.”

*Silk, cotton, silver synthetic fabric,
and paint; hand appliquéd,
machine pieced, hand painted, and
machine quilted.*



“Silver Cake”

51" × 40"

JEANNIE PALMER MOORE

Escondido, California

“To keep with the silver 25th anniversary theme, I used 25 slashed squares for the background and decided to ‘bake’ a whimsical cake on top.”

Inks on white cotton, silver fabric, and artist-made fabrics; painted with inks, newspaper transferred to organza, hand-dyed organza, hand appliquéd, and free-motion quilted.



“Embracing the Silver Years”

46" × 32"

JAYNE BENTLEY GASKINS

Fernandina Beach, Florida

“I find great beauty in women who embrace their age and proudly display their hair in its natural silvery color.”

Cotton broadcloth and inks; digital art, thread painted, trapunto quilted, and machine quilted.



“Jubilation”

57" × 40"

KATHLEEN MCCABE

Coronado, California

“I try to create a three-dimensional effect using only light and shadow. I chose monochromatic silvers and grays to honor SAQA’s 25th anniversary.”

Commercial cottons; fused, machine appliquéd, and machine quilted.



“Rusted Silver”

44" × 32"

LYNN KRAWCZYK

Plymouth, Michigan

“As a third-generation automotive worker, the color silver will always conjure images of metal in all its forms—from shiny new to beautiful rusted orange.”

Hand printed fabric and commercial fabric; machine stitched, Thermofax® screen printed, monoprinted, and painted.

get more *online*

To learn more about this and other exhibits from Studio Art Quilt Associates, visit **SAQA.com**.

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to write
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your
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What are we looking for?

- Sketchbook-inspired quilts for our Off The Page series.
- Artists with inspiring portfolios of work to be featured in our In The Spotlight, Artist Profile, and Q&A articles. Show us your work and tell us your story.
- Essays for "the last word" (up to 800 words).
- Unique techniques, new ways to use existing tools and supplies, and ideas we've never featured before.
- If you are teaching, blogging about, or exhibiting your art quilts, you probably have great ideas to share!

How to submit

- Write a brief description of your idea and email it to submissions@quiltingarts.com. Your submission should give us an overview of what you are proposing to write with enough detail and supporting information for us to carefully consider your idea.
- Attach up to three low-resolution 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 ...

- 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.

get more *online*

Visit the submission guidelines for QUILTING ARTS® MAGAZINE, MODERN PATCHWORK®, and related titles at quiltingdaily.com.

We look forward to
hearing from you!

Enjoy hand sewing with tips from
Julia C. Wood on page 88.



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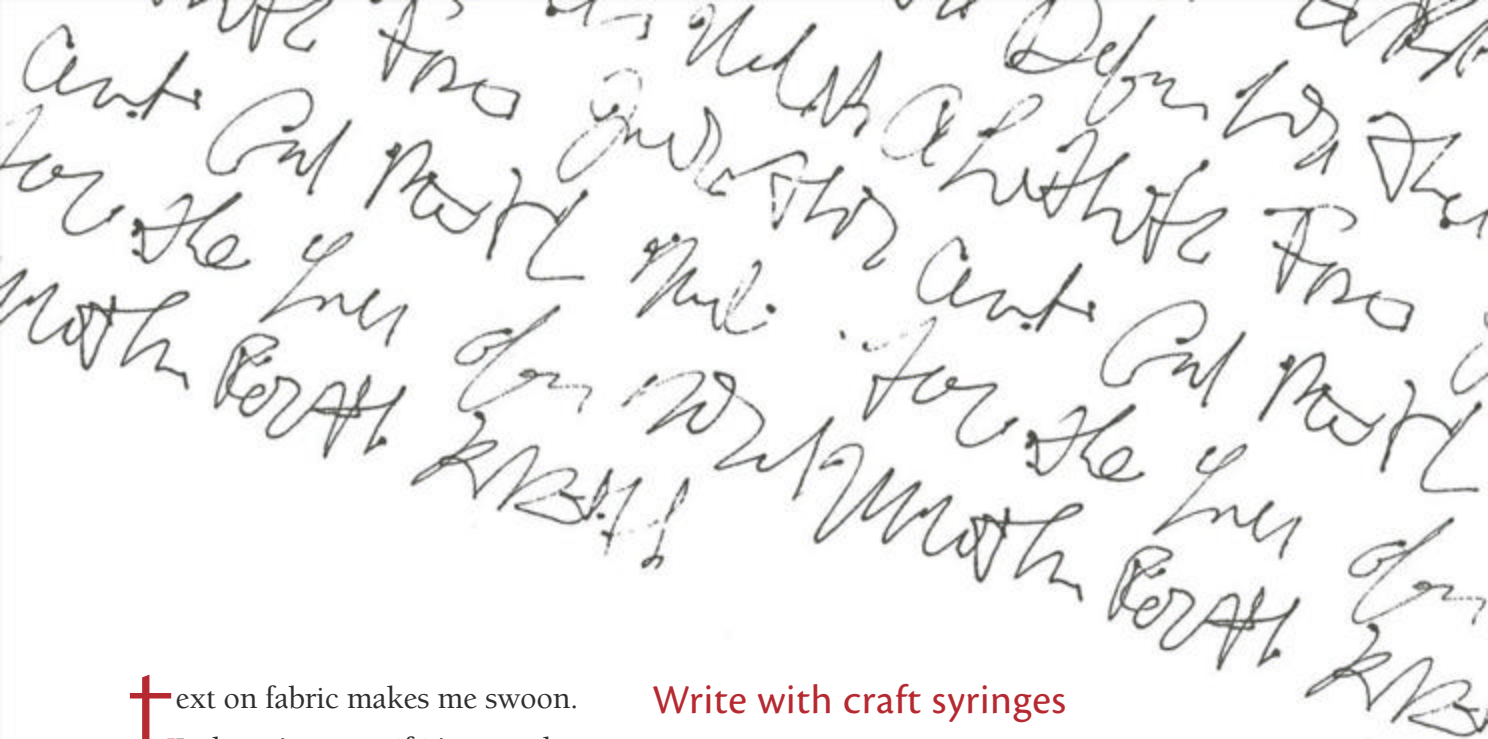
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write on!

*Adding text
to fabric
three ways*

by Sue Bleiweiss





text on fabric makes me swoon. It doesn't matter if it's a word or a single letter; I am drawn to take a closer look.

Adding text to your art quilts directs the viewer to a particular focal point and helps them understand your underlying theme. You can invoke a mood or feeling with one meaningful word intended to make the viewer stop and think for a moment or use illegible text to add an air of mystery.

Write with craft syringes

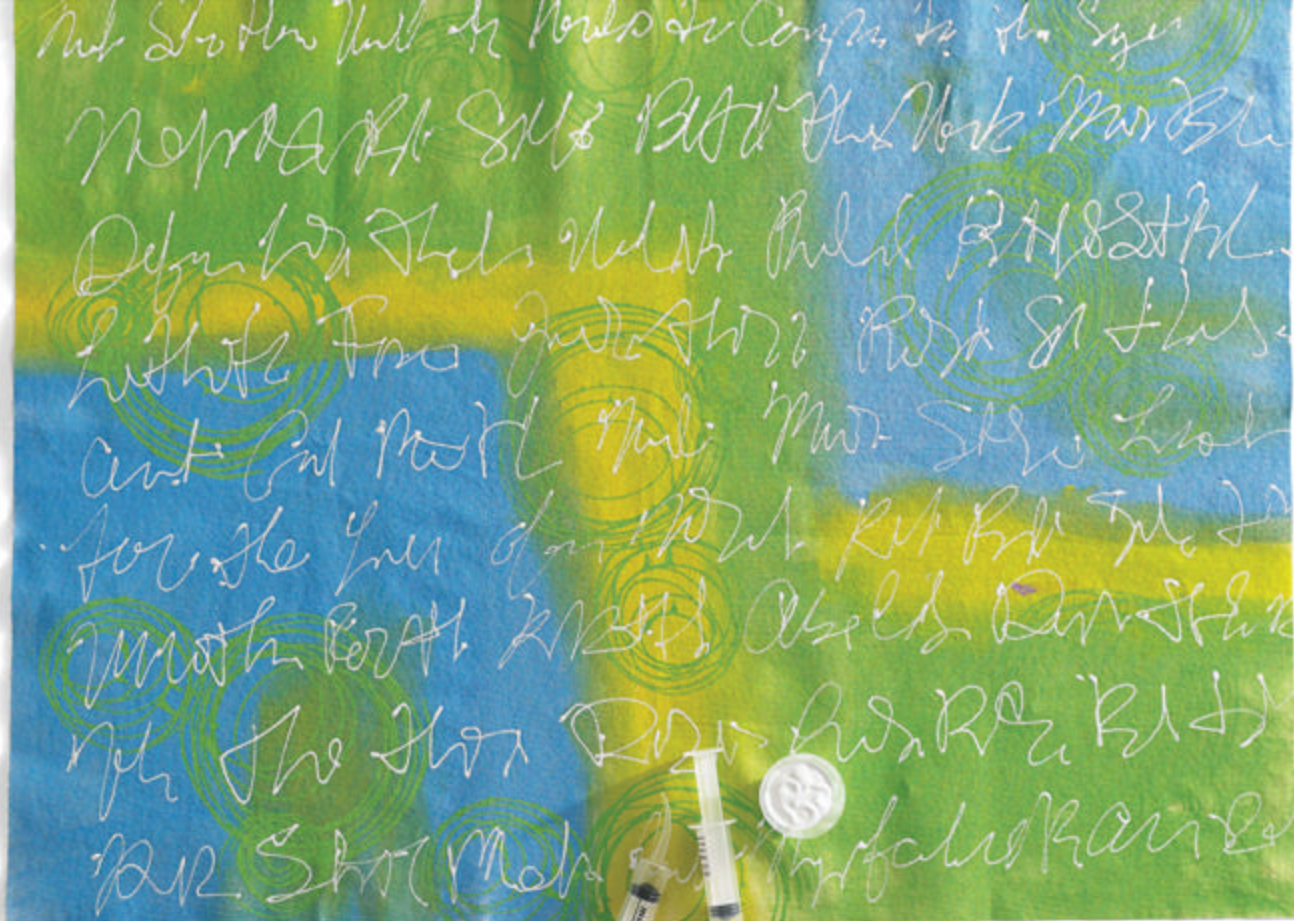
Craft syringes come with curved or straight tips—I prefer the curved tip ones—and using them is one of my favorite ways to add text to fabric. The organic, uneven nature of the writing appeals to me.

Fabric preparation is important when writing with paint—you need to stabilize the fabric so it doesn't shift when you are writing. Place a piece of canvas or scrap fabric on a worktable and secure it in place using painter's tape. Then place the fabric on it and tape the edges down.

TIP: Don't place the fabric that you're writing on over a piece of plastic because any paint that seeps through the fabric will pool on the plastic underneath and bleed back up onto the fabric.

MATERIALS

- Canvas or muslin scrap fabric
- Painter's, masking, or low-tack tape
- Cotton fabric
- Textile paint (I use Jacquard® Screen Printing Ink, textile, or Neopaque® paints or PRO® Chemical & Dye PROfab paints.)
- Craft syringes
- Stamp carving supplies
- Printing blocks (I use E-Z-Cut Printing Blocks from Dick Blick.)
- Stamper or lino carving tools
- Printed letters for tracing
- Tracing paper
- #2 pencil
- Spoon
- Brayer or foam brush
- Markers (I use Sharpie®, Zig®, and Fabrico™.)



Photos courtesy of Sue Bleiweiss

Figure 1

To fill the syringe, have the plunger pressed in completely and then insert the tip of the syringe into the paint. Fill the syringe by slowly drawing up on the plunger. Resist overfilling the syringe as the plunger will be too far out and therefore too hard to hold. Filling the syringe about a third of the way works well.

The key to syringe writing is to use a paint that is not too thick or too thin. A really thick paint will be hard to draw up into the syringe and won't flow smoothly out of the tip when you begin writing. A paint that is too thin will run out of the tip too fast. Metallic paint may clog the tip of the syringe, as will any paints with textural additives in them. Always test the paint that you're going to use on a sample cloth.

While writing, hold the syringe so the plunger is against the palm of your hand and the tip is just above the surface of the cloth. (Figure 1) Move the syringe over the fabric, adjusting the pressure on the plunger depending on how fast the paint runs out of the tip. It pays to practice on some scrap fabric before doing this on your final project!



Print with hand-carved stamps

Hand-carved stamps are another way to create text on fabric. Make your own letter and word stamps with a soft carving surface—like Blick E-Z-Cut Printing Blocks—or purchase precut stamps. Handle these blocks carefully: the soft, easy-to-carve surface can be easily marred by accidental marks from your fingernails or other sharp objects and these marks will show when you ink the stamp.

Remember, you must carve text in reverse in order to have it appear correctly when stamped on fabric. Copy your word onto a piece of tracing paper using a soft pencil and then place the tracing, pencil side down, against the carving block. Burnish it with the back of a spoon and then lift the tracing paper to reveal the word on the block.

Carve around the letters with the carving tools. To make a stable stamp and one that won't fall apart after carving, leave some of the block surface around the edge of the stamp. Be sure the extra block material is below the level of the letters so it won't be inked when it comes time to use the stamp. Take your time or you may find yourself carving off more of the block than intended.



Figure 2

Use a brayer or a foam brush to apply paint to the stamp (Figure 2) and make a test print on a scrap piece of fabric before using it on your final project. This gives you an opportunity to make sure that there is no excess stamp material that needs to be cut away. It also allows you to gauge how much or little paint you need to add to the stamp to get a clean print. When you are finished stamping, clean off any residual paint otherwise it may clog your design and make it hard to get a clean print the next time you use it. Store your hand-carved stamps flat with a piece of parchment paper between them so they don't stick to one another.

CAUTION:

Stamp carving tools are sharp so use care when handling them. Be conscious of where your free hand is—never rest it in front of the carving tool—and always use a pushing motion, not a pulling motion, when carving.



Write with markers

Take a trip to your local craft store and you'll find a huge variety of markers available for writing on fabric and paper. A marker designed for use on paper can be used on fabric but if you intend to wash the fabric the marks may not be permanent, so test them before using them on a finished project.

Writing on fabric with a marker can be challenging—unlike writing on paper, the tip of the marker doesn't glide smoothly over the surface of fabric. Stabilize the fabric to keep it from shifting and bunching while you're writing on it. There are a few ways you can do this:

- Press the fabric well before using. The fabric must be free of any wrinkles, puckers, and creases.
- Tape the fabric to a worktable to keep it from shifting. Use enough tape to make sure the fabric is stretched taut.
- Stretch the fabric in an embroidery hoop.
- If you're working with an especially thin piece of fabric, give it more body by

fusing it to a piece of cotton or iron-on interfacing.

To write evenly on the fabric, make guidelines with either painter's tape (or low-tack masking tape), iron-away chalk, or disappearing marking pens.

Experiment with a variety of markers on a piece of test fabric—each marker not only gives a different result but will feel differently when used on fabric. Some glide smoothly across the surface and some, especially ones with fine points, will catch and drag on the surface making them more challenging to use. No matter which one you use, always practice first.

The type of fabric you use will also affect your result. Cotton with a smooth, tightly woven surface will be easier to write on than looser weaves, and fabric with rough surface texture will offer the biggest challenge to achieving a smooth, consistent line.

Whatever method you use for adding text to your textiles, you can be sure it will add interest and excitement to your finished piece of cloth. ■

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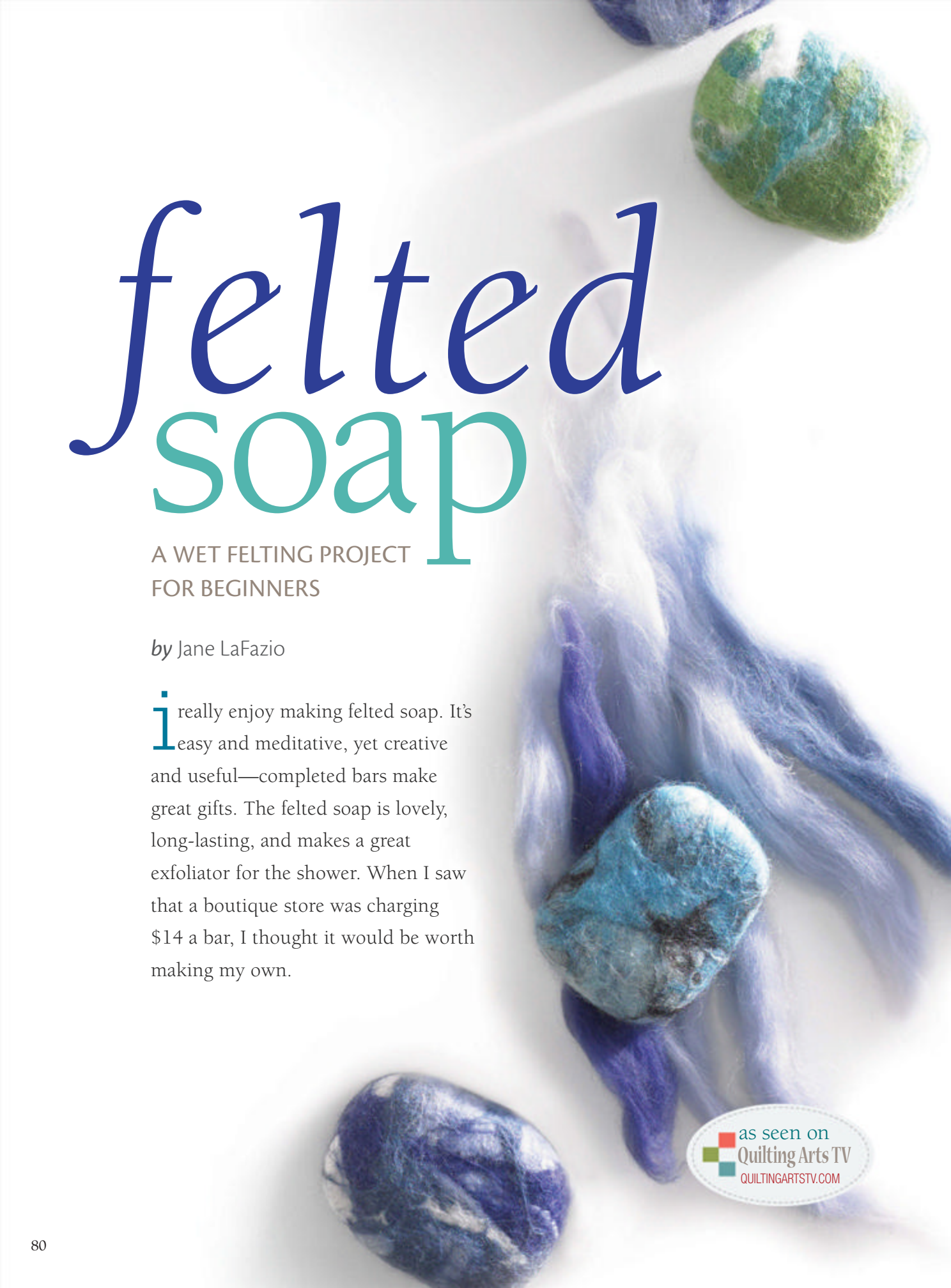
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SEW IT ALL

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of various wool and felted soap items. In the top right, there's a small, round, green and blue felted soap. Below it, a long, thin, light blue wool strand is draped. In the center, a larger, irregularly shaped, blue and white felted soap is visible. At the bottom left, there's a small, round, dark blue felted soap. The overall aesthetic is soft and crafty.

felted soap

A WET FELTING PROJECT
FOR BEGINNERS

by Jane LaFazio

I really enjoy making felted soap. It's easy and meditative, yet creative and useful—completed bars make great gifts. The felted soap is lovely, long-lasting, and makes a great exfoliator for the shower. When I saw that a boutique store was charging \$14 a bar, I thought it would be worth making my own.



A few years ago, I made 15 bars of felted soap as gifts for a group of my students. As I was making them, I thought it would be nice if my husband helped. I pictured him and I standing at our kitchen sink together, chatting warmly and lathering soap. Not so much. It seems he was completely uninterested in palming soap for 15 minutes at a time. Oh well. Now I do it alone, with a podcast or music for company.

DIRECTIONS

1. Begin with a bar of hand soap. I prefer glycerin soap.
2. Pull a 2" or so wisp from the roving (Figure 1) and place it horizontally on the bar of soap. Cover 1 side with a thin layer of roving in a vertical direction. (Figure 2) Turn the soap over and do the same on the other side.
3. Cover the bar horizontally with a thin layer of roving wisps.
4. Continue, covering the bar of soap evenly by alternating the direction of the wisps of roving. Four layers of roving work well. (Figure 3)
5. Holding the bar of soap and the roving with both hands, thoroughly wet the roving under hot water from the faucet. (Figure 4) Don't let go until the roving is completely saturated. Turn your hands and lift your fingers to get it wet but don't let go. You don't want to disturb the roving or have it fall off.

Note: This is the fun part—just before it starts to felt!

MATERIALS

- Glycerin bar soap
- Wool roving, 2–4 colors (I used merino wool from New England Felting Supply.)
- Hot water



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Process photos by Jane LaFazio

6. Once the roving is thoroughly saturated, press evenly all over by squeezing the bar with your hands. Don't move the roving, just press it to compress the roving and activate the lather from the soap. The felting process has begun. (Figure 5)
7. Once the roving begins to felt and stays in place, gently begin lathering the bar of soap in both hands. Lather evenly on all sides of the bar. (Figure 6)
8. After about 5 minutes of lathering, re-wet the bar with hot water and continue lathering.
9. Lather the bar for 5–10 minutes. Re-wet it in hot water 1–2 more times.
10. When the roving feels tight around the bar of soap, rinse it in cold water and set the bar of soap to dry.
11. Pile them in a soap dish for a lovely display or give them as gifts. ■



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



want to know more?



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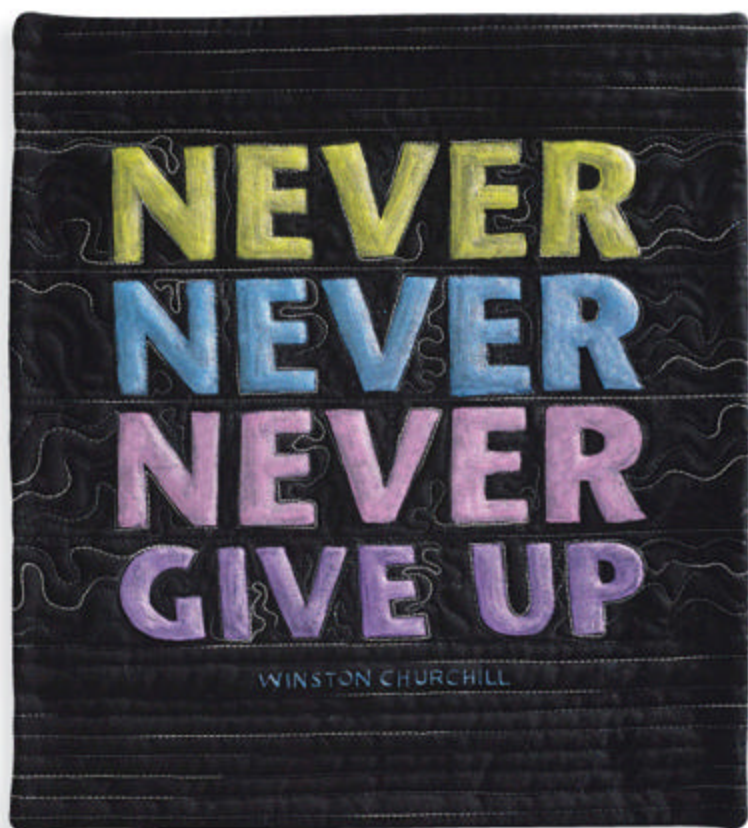
LETTERING

with Acrylic Ink

by Susan Brubaker Knapp

I've always loved quotes. Starting in my childhood, I collected them in journals, copied them into photo albums as commentary on the photos, and sent them in cards and letters. When I considered using quotes as the focus for art quilts, the main problem was how to render them at a small size. I use textile paint in a lot of my work, but it is difficult to do fine lines in paint. Acrylic ink fit the bill.

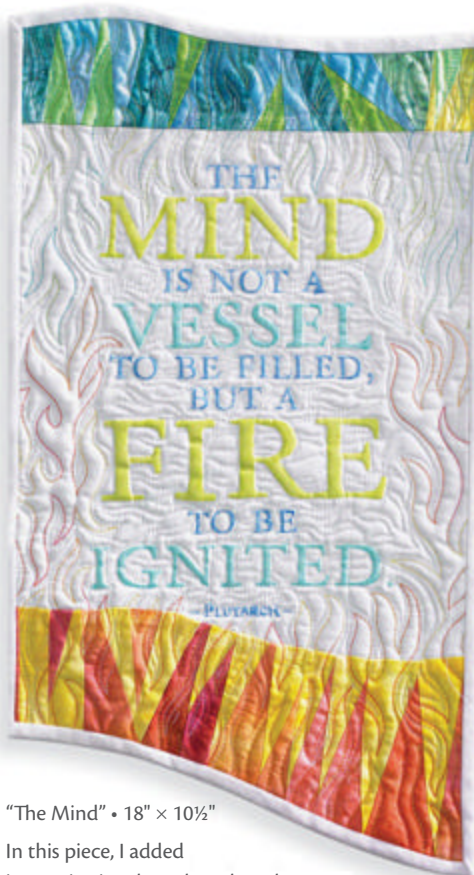
Acrylic inks are actually extremely fluid acrylic paint. Most inks are dye-based, but acrylic inks are pigment-based. They are billed as being water resistant (but not waterproof), and more resistant to fading than dye-based inks. They can be diluted to achieve watercolor effects, and are fluid enough to be used in airbrushes, technical pens, and calligraphy pens. Colors can be mixed together to produce custom colors.



"Never Give Up" • 10½" × 9½"

Pearlescent or metallic ink glows on dark fabric.





"The Mind" • 18" × 10½"

In this piece, I added improvisational patchwork at the top and bottom to build on the theme of fire, suggested by the word "ignited" in the quote.

Daler Rowney FW Artists' Acrylic Ink comes in 38 colors, including a wide range of metallics they label as pearlescent. Liquitex® Professional Acrylic Ink! comes in 30 colors, including several that are iridescent and metallic. These are the two brands I've used. You can usually find acrylic ink at art supply stores and some well-stocked craft stores.

When choosing fabric, look for lightweight 100% cotton cloth with a high thread count. I started out using Robert Kaufman's Pimatex Prepared for Dyeing (PFD) fabrics, but through my experiments, I've decided that having the sizing on fabric actually helps. PFD has no sizing. (The chemicals are put on the surface of most fabric before it is sold to help resist stains, including the oils from fabric lovers' fingertips as they

put a quote into your work

- Try free-form lettering using a brush to draw letters—or numbers or doodles—on fabric. Acrylic inks are fairly transparent, so you can create interesting depth by layering marks.
- Consider adding borders or patchwork around the quote, as I did with "The Mind."
- Enhance the quilt with your thread choice. On "The Mind" and "Look for a Beautiful Thing," I used very lightweight white thread (Aurifil™ Cotton Mako 50wt) that matched the background to stitch around the letters, so that they would pop out but not be overwhelmed by heavy stitching. On "Never Give Up," I used a variegated black-gray-white 50wt thread to add interest to the black background.

fondle fabric before they purchase it!) So for best results, don't wash the sizing out of the fabric you purchase before lettering with acrylic ink. It makes the fabric smoother, and will help keep the ink from bleeding into the cotton fibers.

Before beginning a project, test the ink on a small piece of the fabric you want to use. If the fabric is stretching or pulling, use a hot iron to press a piece of freezer paper to the back of the fabric to add stability while you work.

You can load the pen's nib either by using the dropper from the ink bottle or pouring ink into a palette or small bowl and dipping the pen in. Don't overload the ink in the pen. Shake it lightly to make sure you don't have too much ink or test out your stroke on a piece of scrap fabric. (Figure 1)

Use a light hand. If you are experienced in lettering with a calligraphy pen, you will find that working on fabric is very different than working on paper. Even with very fine fabric, the pen catches in the fibers and can splatter the ink where you don't want it to go.

I used a basic, inexpensive calligraphy pen and a very narrow-pointed nib to first outline my letters and work on the most delicate lines. (Figure 2) To fill in the bigger



Process photos by Susan Brubaker Knapp

Figure 1



Figure 2

MATERIALS

- 100% cotton fabric with a high thread count, unwashed
- Acrylic inks (I used pearlescent inks in my projects.)
- Calligraphy dip pen with a variety of nibs, including one with a very fine point
- Small paintbrush (I used a brush with short, stiff bristles for more control.)
- Foam core/foam board, slightly larger than the quote
- Lightbox
- Artist's tape
- Freezer paper

letters, I poured ink into a small bowl and used a brush.

Beware of big clumps of metallic bits that can clog the pen and cause splotches. (Figure 3) Pearlescent inks seem to bleed less than the regular acrylic inks, but occasionally they produce blobs of the metallic bits and this can cause problems. Shake the ink very well to distribute the metallic bits throughout the ink. (There should be none sticking to the bottom of the bottle.) Every so often, close the ink bottle tightly and shake it up again. Don't let the ink dry out in the nib. Cleaning the pen's nib often can also help reduce clogs. When you are done, clean all of the acrylic ink off of the nibs or they will clog. Rubbing alcohol (70% isopropyl alcohol) works well.



Figure 3



Figure 4

DIRECTIONS

1. Create the quote by typesetting it on a computer and printing it at the actual size you want. Or letter by hand in black ink on white paper.
2. Cut a piece of freezer paper the same size as the fabric and, with a hot iron, press the shiny side of the freezer paper to the back of the fabric.
3. If you are working on a dark fabric or if you can't see well through lighter-colored fabric, tape the quote to the

wrong side of the fabric and do the inking on top of a lightbox.

4. If you are working on a light fabric and don't have a problem seeing the quote through it, tape it to foam core, then tape the fabric down on top of it.

TIP: I like to work on foam core rather than a table top because I can turn it in any direction to work without dragging my hand through wet ink.

5. Using a fine-point nib in the calligraphy pen, outline the letters.
6. Fill in larger letters with a brush. (Figure 4)

TIP: When using a brush, it is sometimes easier to put a small quantity of ink in a bowl and dip the brush into it.

7. Allow the ink to dry thoroughly. Press the piece from the back. Do not iron directly on the ink. ■

recommended reading

MODERN CALLIGRAPHY & HAND LETTERING by Lisa Engelbrecht includes an excellent chapter on "Lettering with Fabric and Stitchery" using acrylic ink, with examples of some of the author's beautiful art quilts. Lisa, who died in late 2014, was an amazing artist and calligrapher whose work was featured on the cover of QUILTING ARTS MAGAZINE's Winter 2004 issue.

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you can TAKE IT WITH YOU

APPLIQUÉ ON THE GO

by Julia C. Wood

as seen on
Quilting Arts TV
QUILTINGARTSTV.COM

I adore hand appliqué. I know many quilters shy away—even run as fast as they can!—from the “A” word. I can hear them now, “Hand appliqué? Not me! That’s why I have a sewing machine—to speed things up!”



But I see it differently; I'd rather slow down and enjoy the process. And I can take my hand-sewing projects with me when I'm on the go.

My favorite quilts are hexagon quilts. And, yes, the tops are all done by hand. I make hexies many ways including from circles of fabric and using English Paper Piecing.

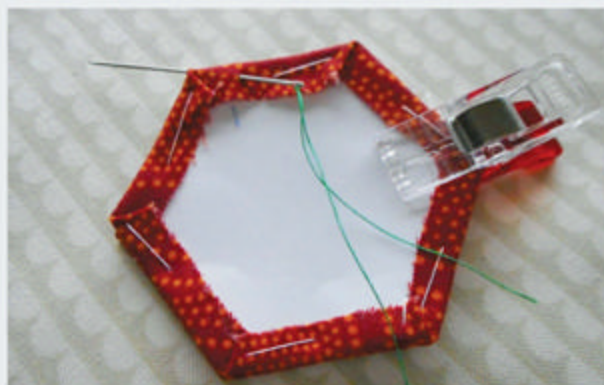
I feel a sort of ethereal connection to my work when it is created with my hands rather than by machine. I love the feel of the fabric between my fingers, a thimble ever present on my right hand, and that slick needle pulling thread. Hand sewing is the definition of relaxation in my life. I can park in front of the television, listen to a good book, or take a trip via airplane or car, all while enjoying my craft.

Hand sewing is a great conversation starter, too. I've had strangers ask about my hexies

hide those knots

Dealing with knotted thread ends can be a challenge when appliquéing hexagons to a background fabric. They always seem to be in the way. I solve that problem by hiding the thread ends as I stitch the hexagons together.

1. Place 2 basted hexagons right sides together and secure them together with a small clip—I like Clover Wonder Clips. These work better than pins as you do not have to stab through the papers.
2. Knot the thread and insert the needle at an angle from the inner seam allowance out toward the corner of the hexagon. (*Figure 1*) The knot and thread end will remain on the back side of the hexagon and away from the seams.



photos courtesy of Julia C. Wood

Figure 1

- To finish, end the row of stitching with a small knot at the corner of the 2 hexagons. Run the needle through the seam allowance on the backside of the hexagon before clipping the thread. (*Figure 2*) The thread end will remain on the backside of the hexagon and away from the seams.



Figure 2

Note: I used green thread in these photos for emphasis. In my projects I use a neutral or coordinating thread.

ten tips for hexies on the run

- Plan ahead. Keep a project packed and ready for your next trip.
- Pack your sewing kit in a bag small enough to fit in your purse or tote. An eyeglass case contains my current sewing kit. (Figure 3)
- Sandwich bags keep on-the-go projects clean and organized. Take along an extra baggie for stowing your thread snips and fabric bits.
- Instead of carrying a bulky pattern, snap a photo with your phone for easy reference.
- Always take more supplies than you think you'll need.
- Pre-thread a few needles—threading a needle in a moving car can be a challenge.
- Wind thread on bobbins for your sewing kit—they take up much less space. I use a piece of comb binding or a binder ring to keep my bobbins together. (The office supply store is a quilter's friend.)
- If carrying more than one project, keep them in separate plastic bags.
- If traveling by plane, make sure your scissors are small and blunt so they don't get confiscated. Or replace your scissors with some dental floss—the cutter can be used to cut thread.
- Keep small scissors on a retractable badge reel (hello again, office supply store) so it can be clipped to your clothing for easy access.

Julia's sewing kit must-haves

1. **Four bobbins of glazed cotton thread:** white, light gray, dark gray, and black. I find these neutral colors blend well with the fabric I use. Glazed cotton is sturdy, yet fine, and it doesn't fray on the ends. (My favorite is YLI Glazed Prime Piecing Thread.)
2. **One bobbin of any brightly colored thread for basting.** A bright color is easier to see when it's time to remove it.
3. Small, very sharp scissors
4. **Thimble**
5. **Needles** (Quilting between work well for me.)
6. **Clover Wonder Clips** or small binder clips—great for clipping papers or fabric together.



Figure 3

7. **Hexagon papers**—either pre-cut or cut with a die cutter.
8. **Fabric** that is cut and ready to go. I cut mine with a die cutter.
9. **Telescopic glasses**—these help to illuminate my work when lighting is not optimal for sewing.

in airport terminals and doctors' waiting rooms. The process spurs conversations about mothers, aunts, or grandmothers who quilted. I always have a spare needle available for an impromptu lesson.

As much as I love hexagons, I rarely make a quilt that is what I term “wall-to-wall” hexies, meaning the entire quilt top is made of hexagons. I typically make hexagon motifs that I appliqué to a background fabric. I machine piece the background so I can appliqué the hexies whenever I have the time.

I've been designing and making hexagon quilts for more than five years. I've sewn literally thousands of hexies on dozens of quilts! In that time, I've learned some tricks and tips that help me achieve a professionally finished top.

As much as I love hand sewing, I often machine quilt my quilts. I stitch in the ditch along the seam lines and free-motion quilt the background. After the machine quilting is complete, I then add touches of hand quilting with colorful perle cotton threads. If the quilt is not too large, it becomes another take-along project at this point.

Many quilters are looking for fast quilt patterns, making an entire quilt in a week or less. These days, I prefer to take my time, focusing more on the process. Once the quilt is spread over one of my beds, it brings back memories of all the places where I stitched, wonderful memories sewn in every hexagon. ■

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Below: Art by Roxane Lessa

Susan Brubaker Knapp on set with guest Angela Pingel



Art by Jamie Fingal



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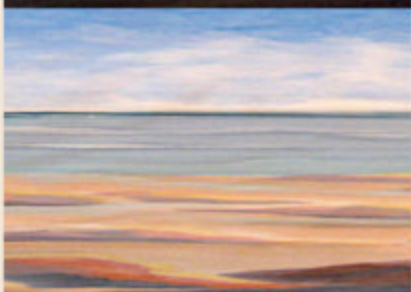


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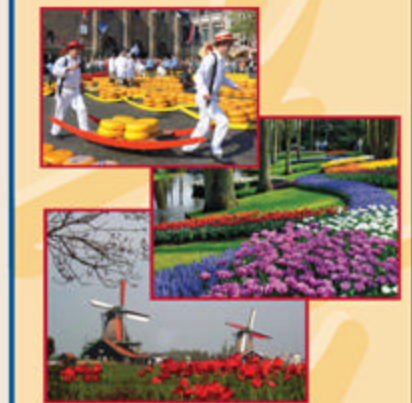
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the last word.

BY MARK LIPINSKI

Photo by Jeffrey Turner



OUR QUILTING LEGACY

Staring blankly at piles of my quilts while packing for a trunk show, I realized there was no great cosmic connection between these sewn together pieces of fabric and me. Yes, they had all been published over my quilting career, which gives them some veneer of value, but to me they were missing soul. It's not that each of these quilts hadn't been beautifully pieced, thoughtfully designed, and replicated by quilters around the globe. It's just that my stacks of quilts felt empty and, frankly, like just a bunch of—God forbid—blankets.

Nothing in this hoard excited me or would tell future generations who I was, what was going on in the world when I designed them, or even why they were made. These were simply quilts that had been quickly constructed for fast magazine turnarounds and book deadlines, hasty class samples, or as fabric company showpieces for trade shows. Even the quilts I made for family and friends weren't masterpieces. Sure, they were “by me” but I wasn't “in” any of them.

After decades of quilting, shouldn't I have made at least one worthy quilt? Shouldn't the thousands of hours and gazillion dollars I have invested in quilt making render at least one piece of patchwork that would be of value for the world—or at least the future generations of my family?

I was well aware that these quilts, scattered around my living room like an open air Marrakesh market, weren't cutting it and I know I am not alone.

Visit any antique store or yard sale and you will find a bevy of quilts that no one wants. No one kept these quilts because no one felt attached to them, they didn't say anything, and, in the scheme of things; they weren't tugging at anyone's aesthetics.

Truth be told, I'm freaked that our families might pack our quilts in big,

black, plastic trash bags, and drag them to the side of the road sometime after our last breath and before rigor mortis sets in. Why would they do this? Because they have no connection to the dozens of quilts we made without leaving behind any of our creative DNA. Just maybe, we have been so focused on our results we've invested little time in our process and haven't taken enough time in the plotting, designing, creating, and executing of our ideas, or sharing our creative journey to make a difference. Without some kind of personal connection—a story—there is little sentimental or heartfelt bond to our work.

Since starting The Slow Stitching Movement, I have become obsessed with what my quilting legacy will be. Yet, in a patchwork world of quick-and-easy, even dreaming of making a legacy quilt is daunting and there are reasons for my reluctance. Many of us have stopped taking classes and we've gotten too comfortable with our skill level (or lack thereof). All of our quilts begin to look alike—we can't seem to break out of our overused color palette, we're a little bored, we no longer stretch our creative muscles, we deny our innate creativity, we won't take a risk, we need approval, we convince ourselves that we don't have what it takes, and on and on.

This is all a distraction. We can create exactly what we want to create, when we're ready to create it. We have only to commit to something wonderful, and then purposefully construct it, piece by imaginative piece, for however long it might take.

Creating a legacy quilt is not just about leaving behind a patchwork of color and pattern; it is leaving behind our lives and artistic experiences. Our legacy quilts are the interpretation and the sum total of our creative views. They tell future generations what fabrics were available, what trends and techniques captured our interest, and also demonstrate our proficiency in our craft.

As our legacy quilts are passed into the future, they will continue to impact people (even if they only glimpse them from their flying Jetson cars!). It's hard to imagine now, but grabbing the creative bull by the horns and beginning a legacy quilt can influence future generations of artisans, historians, and family. Long after we've gone to that quilt shop in the sky, our work will continue to inspire and arouse the imaginations of those who will pass along our legacy through their creative or quilting work.

Haven't you been quilting long enough to start thinking about your own creative legacy? Submit your completed essay (up to 800 words) along with a low resolution image to submissions@quiltingarts.com with “the last word” in the subject line.



Photo by Mark Lipinski

Mark's Legacy Quilt is a slow-stitching work in progress that documents his life through graphic images and words.

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