

THE VIRTUAL QUILT

A Newsletter for Online Quilters

Issue23 • April, 1998



ILDIKO FRANCAIS

A traveler and collector of fabric all her life, Hungarian-born Ildiko Francais has found her mode of expression in quilting in just the last few years. It was worth the wait!

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QUILT SHOW REVIEW:

MID-ATLANTIC QUILT FESTIVAL

By Carol Miller

Birthdays are nice, anniversaries are special and Christmas morning ranks first with the under-12 crowd. But for me, the last weekend in February, ah, that's the time I look forward to all year. That's when the Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival is held in Williamsburg, VA - only a brief hour from my door to theirs.

There are actually 4 shows - quilts, wearable arts, vintage clothing and fiber arts. Each opens on a different day and is held in a different hotel. The quilt portion is in the Marriott near Kingsmill, a hotel with conference center facilities. Accompanying a show which displays about 250 quilts is the merchants mall and assorted classes taught by nationally known teachers. The mall actually fills the ballroom, the small auditorium and part of another quilt display room.

Quilts are, unfortunately, hung in all the merchant mall areas and the shopping crowds sometimes make it difficult to see the quilts, especially if you are a picture taker, as I am. This year my classes were on Friday and Saturday, so I was able to run around with my camera first thing and get the photos before the rooms filled up. By Friday afternoon, I could hear a lot of complaints from others with cameras that you couldn't back up and take a picture. Then again, with years of experience, I have learned to point and shoot - no wasted time focusing, since I am pretty sure the quilts won't move.

As always, I was amazed at the quilts. You would think that after 20 years of quilt shows, I would begin to get that feeling of "seen it all." But quilters are a really inventive bunch and there were fabulous new patterns plus terrific new colorations of old designs. The Best of



Show, was an interpretive applique depicting Australian petroglyphs, the primitive cave paintings done by the Aborigines. Constructed of hand-dyed black, brown and gray, I found it to be a striking and original work.

Traditionalists were not so pleased. There were also people who were unhappy to see a lot of machine quilting on prize-winning quilts. I always want to ask those people if they churn their own butter. Is it less butter because it was made by a machine? And is it not quilting because hands guided it under a machine instead of picking out each stitch?

Last year, Judi Warren pointed out that in a medium that boosts over 3500 pieced blocks, we should be used to change and growth - yet this renaissance of quilting seems to have spawned many people who only want to repeat what has come before and get fairly incensed if we don't do it the "right" way. In my humble opinion, that's a shame. Change and growth are what makes our art form - or any art - vital and alive. The quilts hanging in this show certainly reflected that spirit of growth and adventure.

The wearable arts section showcases clothing. Held at the Williamsburg Lodge, the room has a level that runs around the outside edge and then several steps down

to a well area where there are more vendors. The balcony rail is hung with garments and there are more displayed on mannequins in the center of the well area. Outside in the hall there are additional garments and this year, as always, I felt sorry for the people whose work ended up in the hall - it is poorly lit and completely out of the main flow of traffic.

Mid-Atlantic is run by the Mancuso Brothers, who also host shows in Ft. Washington, PA, and California. They include the Hoffman challenge and the Fairfield Fashion Show as part of their shows. The Hoffman quilts and the dolls are displayed with the other quilts, usually in the main vendor hall. The fashion show is held at night. There are also previews of the two main shows, held the evening before they open, and lectures scheduled for evenings. I prefer to drive back and forth, rather than staying in the hotel, so I generally skip any night time events.

On Saturday evening, they hold the world's worst Show & Tell. I stayed for this on two separate occasions and was tremendously disappointed. They introduce each teacher and she asks all the people from her classes to stand up and show what they made. Well, I don't know about anyone else, but I don't usually finish much in my classes - and watching people hold up a block or two and line up across the room just doesn't do it for me. I would much rather see finished quilts brought in by people from home. Of course, these are allowed but they come after all the teachers - often as much as TWO HOURS into the program and by that time, I really don't care.

I should say at this point that I am lucky enough to

be retired at the ripe old age of 49 and while my day starts early with a trip to the gym, my afternoon almost always includes a nap. So on a day that begins at 6 a.m. with a drive down the Interstate, I am pretty exhausted by 8 at night - the start time for Show & Tell. By 10, I would need someone else to drive me home.

I choose to drive back and forth because I would rather spend the room and meal money on fabric. And I

will admit that I am a big baby and like to sleep in my own bed. I know there are lots of women who adore the dormitory atmosphere and share with 1-4 other people, but I really am pretty set in my ways and like having my own space. Knowing all this, I try not to complain about how tired I am from driving back and forth. In the last couple of years, a friend from New Jersey has come down and stayed at my house so I have company in the car.

Another thing I try not to complain about is how crowded the show has gotten. The Mancusos considered moving the show and we all prayed they

wouldn't. It is so wonderful having it here in Virginia and people from out-of-state like being near Colonial Williamsburg and the Outlet Malls.

The merchant malls are packed and vendors tend to keep their space forever. Judging from the bulging bags under every arm you see, they must do a pretty good business.

I certainly do my best to support them. This year I got John Flynn's new multi-frame quilting system. You can use it with a regular sewing machine and it bats the quilt as you sew. This is a fabulous idea and after trying it in their booth, I was sold. I can't wait to pick a top and



start quilting. Naturally, I also bought lots of fabric - you have to feed your stash or it gets grumpy. I prefer buying half yards, even in a regular store situation, and found that with the crowds, I didn't even bother looking at booths that had only bolts. It just wasn't worth standing in line waiting for things to be cut.

Books are another priority for me and I hung out at Dover Street Booksellers and Dover Books, both of whom have terrific selections. Other booths have books as well and I did hear of some dealers marking books up for the show. I also noticed one notions vendor who had marked those quilting gloves up to \$9.50!! I didn't buy anything at all >from him and warned off other people. I think it's a shame when vendors try to take advantage of our "fever" at shows. A ribbon vendor had marked out the prices she charges at home and upped her \$3 items to \$5. I would think the lost sales would more than counteract the extra she got from the people who bought anyway.

People are a big part of the show. I found them mostly to be friendly and polite. I certainly know enough of them, being from the area and having attended this show for about 8 years. My friend, however, said she kept running into rude people who stopped to talk in the middle of crowded aisles or pushed in front of her like she wasn't there. She said she kept feeling like she had become invisible. I am a little astounded when I see women with strollers in shows like this - there really isn't room for them and certainly it is asking a lot of the baby.

I have to admit that as I get older my ability to hold onto names has almost disappeared. I am better with faces, but not by much. This leads to lots of confrontations where someone comes up to me, all smiles, calling me by name, and I have NO idea who they are. Anyone registered for a class has on a name tag, but day visitors don't, so about half the time, I smile and pretend and am just as much in the dark when they leave as when they came. My friend was with me at lunch on Thursday but soon went her own way - "You talk too much" she told me later. When I got home, I asked my husband if he

had passed out flyers with my name and picture and the headline "Please speak to this lady. It makes her crazy." He denies it, but I am still not convinced.

Watching people and seeing all the great quilted clothing is great fun. The weather was unseasonably warm - in the high 60s and low 70s all four days - so we saw no coats this year. Vests were everywhere and you just wanted to run around taking pictures of people. The funniest ones were three women who dressed alike. In their mid-to-late 50s, they wore cowboy hats, fringed vests and cowboy boots the first time I saw them. Apparently they always go together and dress alike. I couldn't think of a nice way to ask "Why?"

I took two classes, tessellations with Christine Porter from England, and Threadplay with Libby Lehman from Texas. Both were terrific. In Libby's class, Bernina provided machines, a nice treat that keeps me from having to tote my machine. For Chris Porter's class, I took my old Singer, a machine I replaced two years ago with a Bernina. Now I remember why I bought a new machine. It may weigh less, but I spent too much time fiddling with the machine. I'm happy to report that I nearly finished both projects - a reflection on the teachers. Both projects were small and extremely well organized.

It's over now. I am finally beginning to decompress, catch up on my sleep and consider washing all that gorgeous new fabric. My film is ready to be processed and then I can drool anew on all the great quilts I saw. Best of all, it's only 360 more days before I get to go again.

Carol has been quilting since 1979, a real achievement since she hated calico fabrics but made several quilts from them anyway. Since then, she has happily collected fabrics, especially florals, abstracts, Modas and batiks, putting them into traditional quilts with a contemporary twist. Carol teaches and designed the Virginia Consortium of Quilters web page (<http://www.vcq.org>) which she hopes you will visit. She freely admits to a severe quilting addiction.



THE PATCHWORK PLANET: QUILTING IN FRANCE

On the World Wide Web, French quilters seem to be busting out all over. Several major new websites for French quilters have made debuts in the last several months, drawing our attention to the increasing importance of France in the international quilting community.

While the French quilting presence on the web is a relatively new phenomenon, quilting itself is quite well-established in France, and has its own traditions. The Quilt Expo in Lyon has become a quilting event of international importance (with large crowds to match!) and there is a growing number of other major shows and quilting publications sprouting up to serve the French quilter.

In preparing this profile, TVQ interviewed three French quilters, Cecile Yadro, who runs the prize-winning website Quilted Creations (<http://www.quiltcreations.com>), Odile Berget, webmistress of the site sponsored by the French National Guild (<http://www.francepatchwork.com/>), and Simone Struss, quilter, teacher, and creator of a delightful personal quilting website called "l'Atelier Patchwork de Simone" (<http://www.sdv.fr/pages/struss/>). While these three quilters agree on many things, they also display the diversity of point of view typical of a vibrant quilting community.

As in many places, the exact origins of French quilting are not fully known. Odile Berget points out that some fragments of patchwork from the 19th century exist in France, mostly in the form of "bedspreads with grandmother's flower garden blocks." Simone Struss points out that the Amish people originally came from France, and "since their art (the Amish quilt) has been recognized, every French quilter is claiming: at the beginning, quilting was French!!!"

Whatever its historical heritage, French quilting experienced a renaissance in the early 1970s: "The French people really discovered traditional American quilting in 1972," says Odile Berget, "with an important exhibition of Jonathan Holstein at the 'Musee des arts decoratifs' in Paris. For the first time, quilting was shown as a work of art."

In spite of being recognized as an art form, French quilting at the grass roots remains largely traditional. "Of course, there are some contemporary artists, but not

many," says Cecile Yadro. "In guilds, lots of people are still using templates, and drawing the pieces to be cut, and cutting with scissors, and sewing by hand. Nothing against this, of course, but at the same time, they think that if it is not hand-made, then it is not real quilting! This drives me crazy. Happily, it seems now that quilters



Brigitte and Cecile of Quilted Creations.

are getting younger and younger, and some want to use contemporary tools, like rulers, rotary cutters, and sewing machines. I heard two ladies looking at one of my quilts from far away: 'how gorgeous, what a delight...!', and then going closer: 'but look, it's machine sewing! what a pity....' Just to give you an idea. . . ."

Simone Struss also points out the tendency of most quilters to copy the designs of others: "They are just copying the American style. In comparison with the Japanese who also copy the American style but bring their personal touch. We have two categories of quilters in France -- those who make traditional American quilts and those who are making 'Provençal' quilts. But if you look closely, you will see they are just doing American quilts and patches with Provençal fabric."

If traditional quilting has a strong hold in France, it's also true that contemporary quilting has a healthy presence. "Every exhibition lets us discover contemporary works and artists," Odile Berget says. Indeed, the magazine "Les Nouvelles de Patchwork," sponsored by the National Quilt Guild l'Association Francais du Patchwork, features the work of such art quilters as Anne-

Marie Ollivier and Paulette Maisonnier among its many very interesting features. The Lyon Quilt Expo is known world-wide as a venue for the exhibition of creative quilting from all over Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

L'Association Francais du Patchwork is the larger of two national guilds, with some 15,000 members. Founded in 1984 to promote quilting in France, the organization is entirely voluntary, with 92 representatives from all regions of the country. It sponsors the quarterly full-color magazine as well as many local and national quilting gatherings.

In addition to the association's high quality magazine, there are three other quilting magazines published in France. The other national guild, Adepate, publishes a guild magazine, and out of Lyon a commercial endeavor, "Quiltmania!" has now published four issues.

"Quiltmania!," in the words of Cecile, has "lots of patterns, but mainly copies of American articles." "Magic Patch," a magazine aimed mainly at beginners, bases each issue around a theme and features only patterns.

If the French feel a lack in their quilting publications, it's in the area of quilting books. "The trouble is not much about fabric, because you can buy cotton almost everywhere, but more for tools, patterns, and BOOKS!" Cecile says. "We have the problem of English books. As quilters are mainly old ladies (about 60) they don't speak English, and want French books. But in French, we only have beginners' books. So when you want a special book and you don't have the internet, the only way is the English Bookstore in Paris, Brentano's. Happily, they have a huge selection of quilt books, and they have booths at fairs, and a mail order catalog."

Cecile estimates there about 100 quilt stores in France, with about another 200 fabric stores with quilting sections. "Quilt stores are very different from each other," she says. "In my town, we have one real one, and it has only Jinny Beyer fabrics, but we have a fabric store with 500+ different quilt fabrics."

Quilt Expo in Lyon is the French equivalent of Paducah, in more ways than one: "They had to close the doors because it was overcrowded," Cecile says. "Merchants sold TONS of supplies. I even saw a booth that



had sold everything at the end of the FIRST day!!! It was really something to see, all those quilters running here and there, with bags, cameras, exhausted, and soooooo happy."

Other major shows are also getting established around the country. "A new fair appeared last summer, which will be held every two years, in Saint Jean de Luz, next to Biarritz. It's in July, when people are supposed to be on holidays there. I worked in a booth there. All I can tell is that there were not many people, about 5,000 in four days. We had time to sew in the booth! Otherwise, you have another fair in Sainte Marie aux Mines, in September, this year will be the fourth one (or fifth maybe?). Last year, 10,000+ people came. And since last year, you have Simolia in Paris, which is a craft fair, with a quilt part, very attractive to quilters."

As for internet use, this is still in its infancy in France, but the quilting contingent is beginning to become visible, particularly among the younger generation. Cecile Yadro writes: "Just yesterday, I heard on TV that 15% of the French have computers, and that 2.5% are connected to internet, of which 2/3 are connected at work. Soooo... If you think that for internet you need to speak English, to have a computer, to be connected, and to want it... and that quilters are quite old ladies, non-English-speaking and without computers... Personally, I've 'met' exactly 12 French quilters on the internet, some on lists, some on my website. What I could tell you is my visitors counter: 3800 in English, and 263 in French! It just gives a good idea of the problem!"

"The French government is really aware of it, and is trying to expand internet use in France. I'm proud to say that I've been selected as one of the best personal websites in France. I'm one of the five best, and have to go to Paris next Wednesday to talk about my website in front of the jury."

Whatever limitations French quilters see in their quilting culture, or in their use of the internet, it is clear that they have created one of the most vital, eclectic, and sophisticated quilting milieus of any culture in the world. Fortunately for the rest of us, they are beginning to share it with the world through the magic of the web.

POSTSCRIPT: Cecile Yadro, who contributed so much to this article, did indeed go to Paris on March 20 to compete further for recognition of her website. And out of the five finalists, she was the winner! Here is her description of the event:

"It was very official, with lots of people from

internet world. The sponsors were here, of course: Netscape, Sun Microsystems, France Telecom, Internet Professionnel (an internet magazine), Club-Internet (French provider), Intershop. They all offered something to the winners, one in 'company,' and me in 'individual.' Francis Lorentz (former President of Bull) and author of a book to the Prime Minister about e-business in France, was the President of the Jury.

"They wanted a website that had created a job, was opened on the world, had a very precise type of clients, had a new product, and was attractive. They thought I had all this!!! I still don't believe it! I had an interview

on National TV, not yet on the TV, in two weeks, and an article in the newspaper, and on the radio. That's it!!!

"I won lots of things, and most of all, I'm really happy that some professionals recognized my work, it's important to me.

"In France the internet is really beginning, and it's a good publicity for me. Although I don't expect to sell more patterns in France with this, but who knows?" For more information about Cecile's accomplishment, go to <http://www.quiltcreations.com/press.htm>.



Quilt Shop Service -- Discount Prices

****New: Save on Fabric!**** PineTree is now discounting fabric! With more than 2000 bolts on the floor, more fabric goes on the website catalog each week, at prices 20% off retail. Don't miss PineTree's ****New**** Stash Stockers(tm), the exciting selections of six fat quarters from top manufacturers!

Shopping online for quilting supplies is now easier than ever! PineTree Quiltworks now offers a secure server for credit card transactions! Just scope out the website catalog at <http://quilt.com/pinetree> and place your credit card order from the **new** secure website order form. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover are welcome.

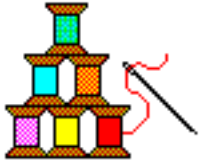
PineTree's your source for discounted quilting supplies and books! PineTree offers attentive customer service and prompt shipping, along with website convenience and 20% discounts! Be sure to check out the online catalog at <http://quilt.com/Pinetree> for **new, new, new** items and a partial listing of books!

You'll find a huge selection of batting, from Quilter's Cotton fine cotton batts to the full lines of Hobbs' and Fairfield's cottons, blends, and polys. Look for tools to make applique easier and more fun; fabric and hand care products; pencils and markers; templates and template plastic; needlecraft gloves; rotary cutters and related supplies; rippers, clippers, snippers, and scissors; machine sewing needles; seven (!) brands of hand sewing needles - including Jeana Kimball's renowned Foxglove Cottage needles; basting systems; thread, including Mettler and Gutermann cotton sewing and quilting, Tire silk sewing, and Sulky rayon, metallic, and sliver, and ***new*** Roxy 100% cotton thread on economical 1200-yard spools; patterns ... and more. There are many more books at PineTree than you'll find in the books listing online, so if you don't see what you want, ask for it! All books are discounted 20%.

Check out the catalog on the web at <http://quilt.com/Pinetree>. Free with each order: a hard copy of the catalog and a Mettler thread color card!

PineTree is online to answer questions about quilting products at pinetree@quiltworks.com





CHARMS & SCHNIBBLES: NEWS NOTES FROM ALL OVER

Art Quilts from Largest Quilt Collection on View

Contemporary Quilts from the James Collection, opening April 3, will present a dazzling sampler of works from the American Art Quilt Movement over the past 20 years. Twenty-seven quilts from the Ardis and Robert James Collection, International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska feature some of today's foremost quilt artists including Nancy Crow, Michael James, Jan Myers-Newbury and Faith Ringgold. Organized by Rebecca Stevens, Consulting Curator of Contemporary Textiles, the exhibition is based on an exhibit at the Museum of the American Quilter's Society curated by Penny McMorris with quilt descriptions by Ardis James.

Extraordinary for both its size (almost 1,000 quilts) and its diversity the James Collection began in 1979 with the acquisition of an antique Mariner's Compass quilt. A quilter herself, Ardis James bought the Mariner's Compass quilt on a kind of educated impulse. She knew it was a fine old piece and she wanted to acquire it. Her husband Robert, recalling fond boyhood memories of his mother's quilting, shared her interest in quilts. Soon they were shopping quilt shows together and buying quilts in numbers. Without losing any of their initial interest in the heritage of traditional quilts, the Jameses began to collect contemporary quilts in 1983.

Their first contemporary purchase was a group of six Art Quilts by Michael James (no relation), an artist who taught a workshop Ardis attended in 1975. Michael helped open the Jameses' eyes to the fascinating work being done by contemporary quilters. The Jameses learned that Art Quilts are built on past quilt traditions but they represent a transformation in the history of quilting. Quilts were not just bedcovers, they had become an art form. The Jameses quickly became champions of this new quilt genre.

The Art Quilt Movement traces its roots to the 1970s when a group of artists began to use fabric and needle instead of paint and a brush to express their ideas. Within a short time, a venerable medium became a new mode of expression. Traditional quilt blocks were reinterpreted, enlarged or diminished in size, and often abandoned altogether as in "Suspended Animation" by Michael James and "Opening Moves" by Linda MacDonald. Alternative materials and methods were used to construct Art Quilts. Paint, found objects, and machine stitching were no longer considered inappropriate but were embraced by the artists, as the work of Susan Shie, Patrick Dorman, and Therese May will attest. The movement was nurtured by "fine arts" interests in surface pattern ("#43" by Pamela Studstill), and social commentary ("The Happy Homemaker" by Wendy Huhn and "The Men: Mask Face Quilt #2" by Faith Ringgold.)

Ardis and Robert James's goal has been "to build a broadly-based quilt collection encompassing museum-quality specimens from all time periods." The Art Quilts in the James Collection definitively document quilting's transformation into an art form of our time.

1998 International Quilt Week Yokohama Contest

The International Quilt Week Yokohama '98 will be held from October 22-24 at Pacifico Yokohama Exhibition Hall. This event is organized by the Quilt Week Executive Committee consisting of 8 quilt-related companies.

With this event, the Quilt Week Contest is annually held and it's open to quilters from around the world. The Grand Prize is 500,000 yen (approximately US\$3,880) and the top winner of category 1-6 will get 200,000 yen (approximately US\$1,552) each. There are many other prizes and total prizes would be worth 4 million yen. The

winning quilts will be exhibited at the International Quilt Week Yokohama '98 and may be published in our magazines.

The Quilt Week Miniature Quilt Contest is also held. The size of the miniature quilts for this contest is 50x50cm.

To request the rules and entry forms, please write to: Quilt Week Contest '98 c/o Patchwork Tsushin Co., Ltd. 5-28-3 Hongo Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033 Japan fax:+81-3-3815-7662 e-mail:patchwork@viq.com

NEW TEACHER'S RETREAT FROM C&T PUBLISHING

C&T Publishing of Lafayette California has announced a new Teacher's Retreat to take place at St. Mary's College in Moraga, California, June 23-26,1998.

The C&T Publishing Teacher's Retreat is open to teachers, shop owners, and anyone interested in becoming a quilting teacher. "This Retreat aspires to make the knowledge and expertise of authors available to teachers," said Todd Hensley, Publisher. "It also aims to encourage fellowship and goodwill among teachers and to build a greater appreciation for the art of quilting."

The Retreat will be facilitated by Diana McClun and Laura Nownes. According to Diana and Laura, "The C&T Retreat will promote good teaching skills, which the participants can take back with them to further the education of other quilters." Scheduled to teach at the Retreat are Jean Wells, Harriet Hargrave, Joen Wolfrom, Diana McClun, Laura Nownes, Hari Walner, Sally Collins, Alex Anderson, Gai Ferry, and Judy Mathieson, with a special evening lecture by Candace Kling.

The cost of the Retreat is \$575.00 and includes three one-day workshops with your selected instructors, three evening lectures, and optional breakout sessions. Price also includes all meals and lodging at the beautiful St. Mary's campus nestled in the Moraga hills of the San Francisco Bay area.

Registration is accepted by mail or fax only. To register please contact Teacher Development Seminars, 130 Byron Drive, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523-4138, or phone/fax 510- 944-6428.

Oakland County (Michigan) Quilt Guild Show

Location: Lutheran High Northwest

Rochester Hills, Mi The school is on Livernois / South of M 59

Dates: Friday April 17th 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Saturday April 18th 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Admission: \$5.00

Over 40 Keepsake Quilting Challenge quilts will be exhibited. We will have a merchant mall, refreshments and raffle a quilt made by Oakland County Quilt Guild members. For more info e-mail dbrill@teleweb.net.



THE TRAVELING QILTER: QUILT STORES IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

By Lynn Holland

When most people think of Orlando, Florida, Disney World is the first thing that comes to mind. However, for fabriholics, no out-of-town trip is complete without a visit to the local quilt shop. Finding ourselves going that way recently, we decided to scout out the available fabric sources so that we could share this information with those of you who will inevitably be headed toward central Florida someday soon.

Our first stop was in Orlando proper, in the College Park neighborhood. This upscale shopping district houses lots of specialty stores and eateries, which made it a perfect lunchtime stop. Featuring the only bay window on the block, Patchwork Cottage has a spacious, high-ceilinged area with a bright, airy feel. Just two years old, Patchwork Cottage favors traditional patterns in bright "Florida colors" interpretations. Some nice antique quilts decorate the store along with bright shop samples. Despite its traditional style leanings, Patchwork Cottage seems to be aware of all the "bells and whistles" that modern innovations offer the quilter. The shop offers a good book selection for its size, including some computer-oriented quilt and paper piecing publications that you don't see everywhere. The owner also offers some nice quilt-related pins and a lovely selection of other paper goods that make great gifts, even for non-quilting friends. They also sell several different quilt design software selections.

The newsletter is apparently still in its infancy stages since it is just a list of available classes, mostly taught by a single person. However, the selection ranges from English paper piecing to a variety of log-cabin-based projects.

On display in the shop the day we visited was a dollhouse replica of a quilt store, complete with miniature rotary cutter and mat! It was designed and executed by members of the Central Florida Quilt Guild as part of

a fund-raising raffle. The daughter person was especially enamored of the perfect replicas of fabric bolts, ninepatch blocks and the tiny design wall.

The lunch selections in this neighborhood are vast and range from an elegant bistro to quickie sub shop to fancy tearoom to neighborhood café. We opted for the Edgewater Café



Rainbow's End is just that!

since we were accompanied by finicky progeny. A long-time resident of Edgewater Drive, the Café offers an extensive menu, fresh flowers on the tables of diner-type booths, and a counter for those who prefer to sit on stools. The food was very fresh and obviously homemade -- a wonderful respite from the oversalted and high fat content food one frequently consumes on the road.

Fortified by our fine lunch, we ventured toward Lake Buena Vista, and after having another of our "this can't be the place" experiences, we discovered that indeed it WASN'T. Set back off International Boulevard, which can only be described as the bargain and discount headquarters of the world, was supposed to be Yesterday's Quilts. Although the center sign still listed the shop, we

found only a vacant store, its fabric racks still intact. There was no indication that the store had relocated, and when we called the phone number, it was disconnected.

Discouraged, we then began a tortuous ride to Kissimmee which is roughly six miles away but took about one hour to navigate in bumper-to-bumper traffic. As the clock edged toward 5 p.m., we began to fear that we would only be able to peer through the windows of Queen Anne's Lace. However, secondary luck was with us and the store was open until 6 that evening. And, talk about the magic kingdom - this is it! Featured in the

1996 BH&G Quilt Sampler magazine, QAL is a spellbinding shop. Every nook and cranny of this double-sized store in a strip mall is packed with goodies for textile lovers of all obsessions. There are bolts of fabric everywhere, dollmaking supplies, embellishments, silk ribbon goodies, wearables, paper-making supplies and decorative items.

Everywhere you look; a new surprise awaits you, be it a huge soft sculpture teddy or a lovely Victorian doll. Particularly remarkable is the range and depth of supplies in stock. Lucky are the locals and vacationers who have an opportunity to take a class in one of the two huge classrooms and who can shop there whenever they take a notion to! For those wanting a cute souvenir to take to friends, QAL offers mini tote bags with the shop logo into which several fat quarters can be tucked. The shop newsletter is lively and features information of upcoming quilt-related events throughout central Florida, as well as the usual new stock and class information.

The staff of this shop is upbeat and helpful. They pulled out maps and helped us figure out an alternate route back to the expressway so that we would not have

to venture back the way we came. To be sure we were getting good advice, our salesperson consulted one of the regular customers for a second opinion. We left the store convinced that Queen Ann's is among the royalty of quilt shops we have visited.

Our quilters'-overload high was almost good enough to keep our mood happy during a rain-soaked, construction-ridden I-4 trip thorough Tampa in Friday rush hour traffic. Now that's a great store.

The next day we continued our tour of stores by driving to Dunedin to visit the fabled Rainbow's End!



Florida colors!

When you enter the door of RE, the fantasyland of over 5,000 bolts spread before you is truly breathtaking. There is a huge selection of solids, a whole section of batiks and balis, a separate alcove for Christmas fabrics and projects, lots and lots of darling doll kits, a whole wall of fat quarters and a sizeable assortment of ready-made wearables intended for silk ribbon em-

bellishment.

Other notables about Rainbow's End: The children's area is a sizeable separate little nook. It has really decent toys, and is situated near the bathrooms. Outside the main door is a nice bench where non-quilt fanatics can sit and enjoy the Gulf breezes. There is a MAN who works there, who capably cuts fabric and seems to enjoy it. The classroom space is huge, and appeared to be large enough to accommodate lecture type classes. The day we were there there were two classes going on simultaneously with a huge room divider separating them.

After visiting Queen Ann's and Rainbow's End within twenty-four hours of each other, we probably could have ended our quilt tour happily. However, we had Christina, the new quilter DIL with us, and we felt we should visit just one more local shop. We almost had another vanishing store experience. Pulling up to the

quaint house, which the Yellow Pages had listed as the address for Country Quilts and Bears, the shop formerly housing the quilt store was empty. Luckily, we asked at the stamp store a few stores down and they directed us to the new and enlarged location.

Run by a husband and wife team, this store is a charming eclectic mix of quilts, soft sculpture, and friendly people. An overhead train runs throughout the store and a five-foot tall bear (lovingly named "Brownie") stands at the counter to greet you. Among the cool bear stuff is a bear nativity scene, a mink bear and a bearmaker's cookbook.

Their taste in quilts runs to the folk, with lots of nice flannels and sensational Seminole projects. Our scientist DIL was enamored of a fabulous Christmas tree skirt that featured crabs and other sea creatures in shades of turquoise and magenta. It was Valentine's Day the day we visited and we were invited to help ourselves to a super spread of goodies (including the best strawberry covered pretzels I've ever tasted and lots of chocolate.) These people know what quilters like. Going on at the time was a Val-

entine bearmaking class, full of laughing, talking people (including a man). Among the classes listed in the newsletter is one designed to help you turn that old fur coat into a furry friend just like the mink one on display. Again, the staff at the store seemed genuinely pleased to

be there and happy to share their enjoyment with the customers.

We were very impressed with all the shops we visited during our trip, and especially interested in the number of men that patronized these particular shops as active customers, not just tagalong spouses or children. Is Florida more advanced in promoting the male realization that quilting is a great creative outlet for persons of all sexes and ages?



"Brownie" offers a bolt.

A postscript to our visit: About twenty miles out of Orlando, DD decided that she just HAD to have some fabric she had seen at Patchwork Cottage. When we returned to Atlanta, I called the shop and gave a vague description and approximate location of the desired bolt, recited my VISA number and three days later we had gratification in the mail.



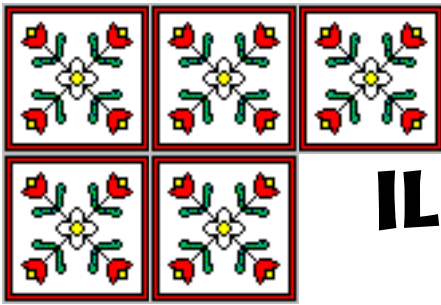
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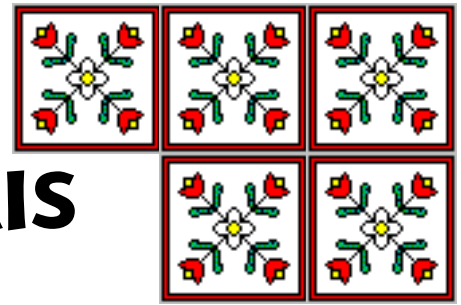
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QUILTER PROFILE



ILDIKO FRANCAIS

In the last couple of months it seems I have been bombarded with many good Gallic things. French quilters began appearing on the Quiltopia and Info-EQ maillists, and e-mail appeared in my box from French webmistresses, telling me of their new sites, and offering to trade links.

It was no surprise to me, then, when I got a note from Christine Sylvestre, a resident of the French Riviera recently returned there from Dallas, Texas, offering to assist in doing a profile of Ildiko Francois.

Christine described herself as an "unconditional fan" of Ildiko, of whom I had never heard, and her enthusiasm proved to be infectious, as well as well-founded. With the help of Ildiko, a neighbor and friend, she prepared the material used in this profile.

As it turns out, Ildiko is not French. She was born in Hungary and was pre-destined to travel. As a young child she fled from her country with her parents before the Russian invasion. She spent some years in Germany, and did all her studies in England and Scotland. Before the age of 18 she married a well-known Scottish artist who greatly helped her develop her talent as a painter. Later she met her second husband, Jean Francois, in Kenya whom she married in 1964.

Jean Francois was in the French diplomatic service and thus she continued on her travels, changing countries every two or three years. This enabled her to indulge in a passion for fabrics and gather an exotic collection from such places as Nepal, India, Indonesia, Africa, South America and the United States. Little did she know at the time that all those scraps of lovely silks



and cottons left over from dressmaking, as well as those bagged from friends, would one day serve a fascinating and useful purpose.

"In fact I had never even heard of the word 'patchwork' - and all those years spent moving from one country to the other and helping my husband, left me little time for any personal activity," Ildiko says. "I had continued to draw and to paint on silk. So I painted scarves, Sonia Delaunay-type dresses or silk jackets with VanGogh-like irises, not to mention my own designs."

Her introduction to quilting came through her daughter Frances, on the other side of the Atlantic, in Canada. "Frances, while working for a large company as a translator, became a passionate quilter and a very active member of the Mississauga Quilting Guild, where she conducted many workshops.

"It was while visiting her in the winter that I watched her working in a wedding present for her elder brother, a 'Hawaiian Snowflake,' pattern, that I began to be interested. One day we went to town to buy a few yards of fabric which she cut into strips with a rotary cutter - my introduction to this wonder tool - and sewed it together again, thus making a nine-patch bedcover for my grandson. While she was showing me all the techniques of strip-piecing and assembling, I suddenly knew how I could at last put to use all those bags full of wonderful scraps from around the world."

After other travels, where she visited the Vermont Quilt Festival and took classes in paper-piecing and optical illusions in quilting, Ildiko "gathered a suitcaseful of books and magazines and came back to France. Like Karen Combs I have a degree in Library Science from Cambridge University and am a great believer in research. Unfortunately, while the French Riviera is a lovely place to live, it lacks large libraries like the ones I knew."

To broaden her resources she joined the French Patchwork Association. "It was thanks to the Association that I was able to attend a five-day seminar given

by Michael James in Grasse. His workshop on Design and Composition and all the wonderful slides he showed about contemporary Quilts, made me realize how my interest in painting, painting in silk and my collection of wonderful fabrics, could be useful in this new venture.

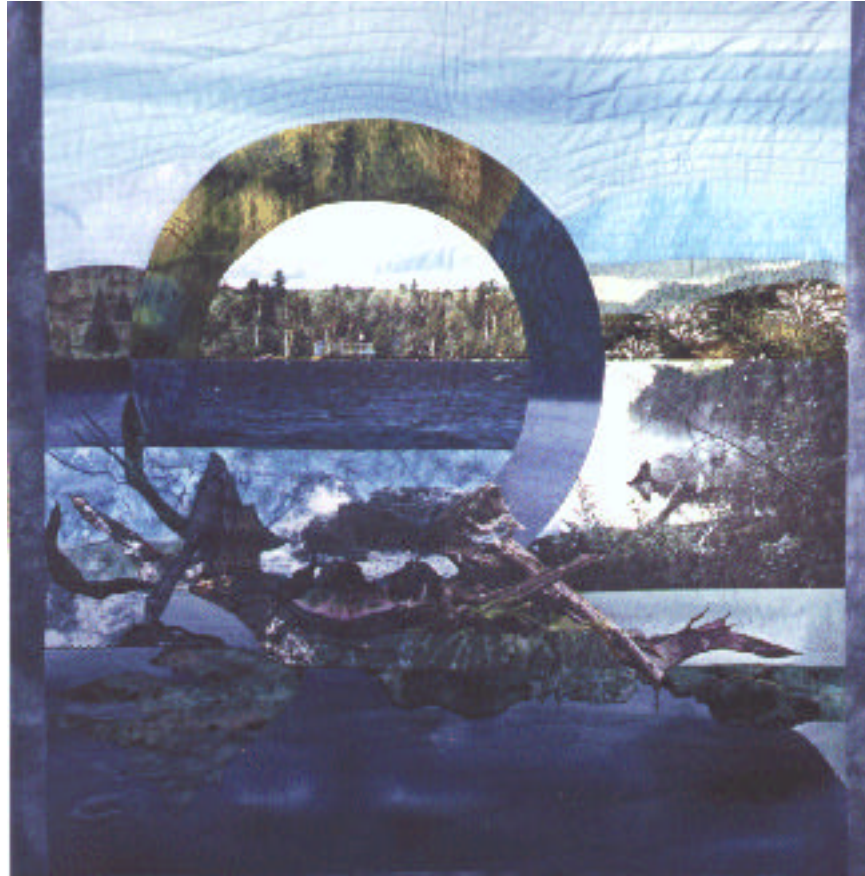
"Following those five stimulating days, I threw myself into the construction and finishing of my first large quilt. It was based on a technique I discovered in one of my favorite quilting books: 'Strips that Sizzle,' by Margaret J. Miller. In fact it shows you the genius of Margaret Miller, that a complete novice could turn out a quilt that later won a silver cup, at the French Exhibition of Patchworks, in Dijon, simply by following her very clear explications." Ildiko of course gave credit to Margaret Miller for the inspiration.

Ildiko claims not to have a clearly defined style. "My inspiration for my quilts is mostly dictated by the subjects that the different competitions impose. Therefore I do not really have a coherent style. Each theme requires a different interpretation with its own technique to render to the best of my ability the subject. As much as my early quilts followed certain blocks, I now work entirely after an initial sketch in which I am more concerned to indicate values rather than color. Often my fabrics dictate my composition."

Having placed herself squarely by temperament and earlier painting experience in the camp of contemporary quilting, Ildiko continued an extensive education in modern design and technique, sometimes with great difficulty. Ildiko writes about her attendance at the Quilt Surface Design Symposium produced by Nancy Crow

in Columbus, Ohio.

"You have no idea how lucky I was to be able to attend. I have a serious problem with my back. After spending 35 days in bed, unable to move, while in Caracas we went to the seaside to visit friends. I was literally carried into the house. During dinner everybody is talking saying I should try and sleep in a hammock. It would help my back, an assertion supported by all sorts of anecdotes. Like everywhere in South America, they have hammocks all over the place in their patios. After



trying to sleep all night, I finally crawled out of bed to a hammock on the patio. I struggled, not without hardship, into one of those 'matrimonial' hammocks. They are very large and you sleep cross-wise in them, completely straight, not at all bent. Believe it or not, next day I could walk. It was a pure miracle! I have been sleeping in a hammock ever since 1981. A great specialist explained, instead of thinking that I was crazy, that this position allowed my vertebrae to get back into

place instead of being jammed. As soon as I spend one night in a bed, I am in agony.

"So poor Nancy had to be told about all these complications. Luckily we had some wonderful friends who came to set up a hammock in my room on the Campus of Pontifical College Josephinum. As these were rooms for the monks, I did not really have enough room (we had turned the bed on its side) and I was lying in my hammock like in a shroud, literally dying of heat!!!

"However, it was well worth it. What a wonderful friendly atmosphere. Nancy Crow and her sister Linda did everything to make you welcome and we had even

good food (which is not always the case when attending workshops!) Everywhere you turned, you met a famous personalities from the quilting world that up till then I only knew about through books and magazines!"

An important influence of Ildiko's visit to the Surface Design Symposium was her discovery of the work of Emily Richardson. "I had not come across her quilts until Ohio and was amazed at the affinity I had with her techniques, like layering my hand-painted silk organzas to create transparency similar to glacia in oil painting."

As she was continuing her quilting education, Ildiko began to enter shows. "Another debt I owe my daughter was her advice to enter my work in important shows. This forces you to work for deadlines and compels you to finish a quilt once begun. It makes you strive for greater accuracy, original ideas for subjects as well as challenging and stimulating creations with a final result of passing close examination by an interested viewer.

"What could be more encouraging that Richard L. Cleveland's words at the 1994 Vermont Quilt Festival, as he handed me my award: 'If this is your second quilt, I foresee a great future for you in quilting.' I got a blue ribbon and 'Best from outside USA' award for a small miniature quilt based on the offset pineapple block of Mary Ann Rush. The outside row was already my own design and most of the reddish silks were my own handpainted fabrics.

"I made two more miniature wall hangings with the offset pineapple in blue and white and then my 'Fountains in the Jardin of Armide' for the International Concours of Chassy d'Or and was awarded a prize for Harmony and Composition. I also obtained with an overwhelming majority the 'People's Choice' award. The theme for the concours was 'Imaginary Gardens.' I chose the gardens of Versailles with all the fountains and flower beds in perspective.



It took me two whole weeks to do the drawing by placing my vanishing points on the floor of my living room, fortunately big enough and with marble flooring. I had to keep the family from walking on my full-size drawing. It was really hard work.

"Later I discovered a much easier way: a smaller drawing that I get enlarged, or I get one of my sons to try and do it on the computer. But the result is not the same! I was still respecting the traditional patchwork blocks, like the log cabin or mariner's compass in the center, but re-drawn in perspective, it became a personal interpretation. My husband found the title: in my quilt he saw the enchanted garden of Armide that kept Renaud from joining his army during the Crusade. This was a great help to keep him occupied in various exhibitions by giving details of the title to the curious."

Painting has been an enduring influence on Ildiko's quilting even as she has incorporated a variety of other techniques into her quilts. "With my quilts for the Quilt Expo V in Lyon, I really had a wonderful time. Artistic Expressions, sponsored by Quilter's Newsletter, asked us to create original quilts inspired by a master artist, an artist's palette, or create our own artistic expression. I chose one of my favorite surrealist painters, Max Ernst. I was able to 'let go' and use many methods to interpret my subject. Layers of silk organza helped to create transparency and some of my son's photos were transferred to fabrics used for presenting a surrealistic landscape.



In my interpretation of the red woman in a grotto, strange birds, trees and the moon I paid tribute to Max Ernst by thus including some of his favorite totems.

"My other quilt was quite different though it also used some of the same techniques. This one was a concours about orchids and was to illustrate what could be done embroidery-wise on a sewing machine. It was sponsored by Husqvarna and my quilt won second prize. I mostly painted the flowers on silk and included in the front some three dimensional orchids that could be turned one way or another."

Like all true artists, Ildiko is restless and anxious not to repeat previous accomplishments. She is also undeterred by even the most difficult of obstacles!

"The next big landmark was a one-week workshop with Nancy Crow when she came over to Holland. Hildegard Stadler-Gotze organizes every two years one-week design Workshops in the Monastery Rolduc, near Aachen in Holland. My friend Christine Sylvestre and I decided to go, especially as Hildegard very kindly had found a solution to my 'hammock' problem. In the topfloor rooms they had beams on which I could hang my hammock. In fact, as I was trying to get there, after I got completely lost I was rushing to unload something from the car and I fell, breaking my ankle (though I did not at the time know that it was broken!). As no way

was I going to miss Nancy's workshop I refused to consult a doctor. Only once I drove us home again, (1300kms) did I consult. Of course it had to be set in plaster straightaway. My ankle still hurts!!

"Nancy's workshop opened whole new horizons to me. Whatever my quilting style, it will never be the same again. I keep hearing her comments as I work, her insistence about 'floaters' to create a profondeur. Loosening up and leaving straight lines, letting go of a ruler, following a natural rhythm etc. The only difficulty lies in doing one's original work

instead of 'imitating.' My quilt that I made following this week is called 'l'Enigme du Lac.' I made it while looking after my father in Canada, in January (sometimes 35 degrees below zero) who was very sick. I was really a prisoner, anguished and yet there was hope and this fantastic beautiful blue sky and the frozen lake. The theme was 'Chaos, arhythmie, fractal.' There had been a tornado on the lake the summer before and hundreds of trees had been uprooted, so there was this chaos still around us. I composed the quilt entirely on the wall with some fantastic hand-dyed fabrics (that I had dyed in the microwave oven), lots of curves and a vigorous composition. So far as I am concerned this is my most individual quilt. It was given first prize at the Chassy d'Or Exhibition in 1997. But it had not received one single vote from the public unlike 'Jeux d'Eau dans le Jardin d'Armide,' two years ago. This just goes to show something!"

Ildiko is not yet a computing quilter, and doesn't participate, except through Christine Sylvestre, in the online quilting community. Nevertheless, she has found ways to use the computer in her work:

"I have three sons. Each is an expert with his computer. So far I am dependent on them for any help. My latest quilt has a large section based on the pavement of Santa Maria della salute, Venice. I had my eldest son

David draw it for me on his computer. It was an awe-inspiring experience and far >from being as easy as I imagined it. David is a structural engineer, thus he works on a computer the whole day long. He even got his first job thanks to his handling of a computer. Even so it took few hours to come up with my design. But what fun, when he had drawn it he put it on a disk and we went to his office where he had it printed for me in every pos-

sible size, right up to a one-meter circle. The only trouble is that he lives in Vermont and me in South of France. My other son is studying International Law at McGill University and has his computer in Canada and my youngest and his computer are in Germany. But one of these days I hope to be initiated myself so as to communicate with all those quilters all over the world. WHAT FUN THAT WOULD BE!"



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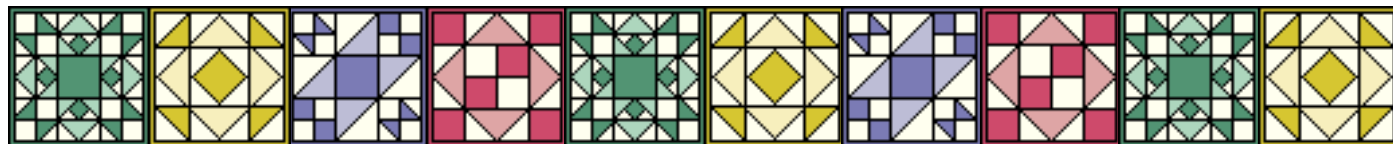
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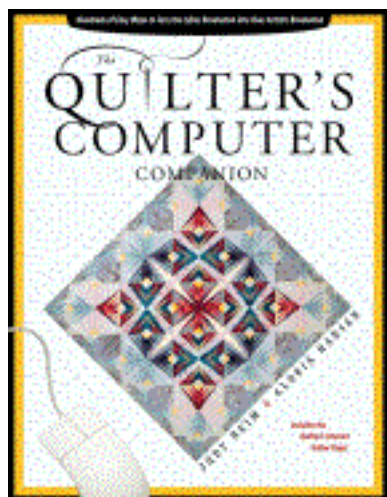
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The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for
Computing Quilters

Editor and Publisher: Robert Holland, Decatur, GA

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