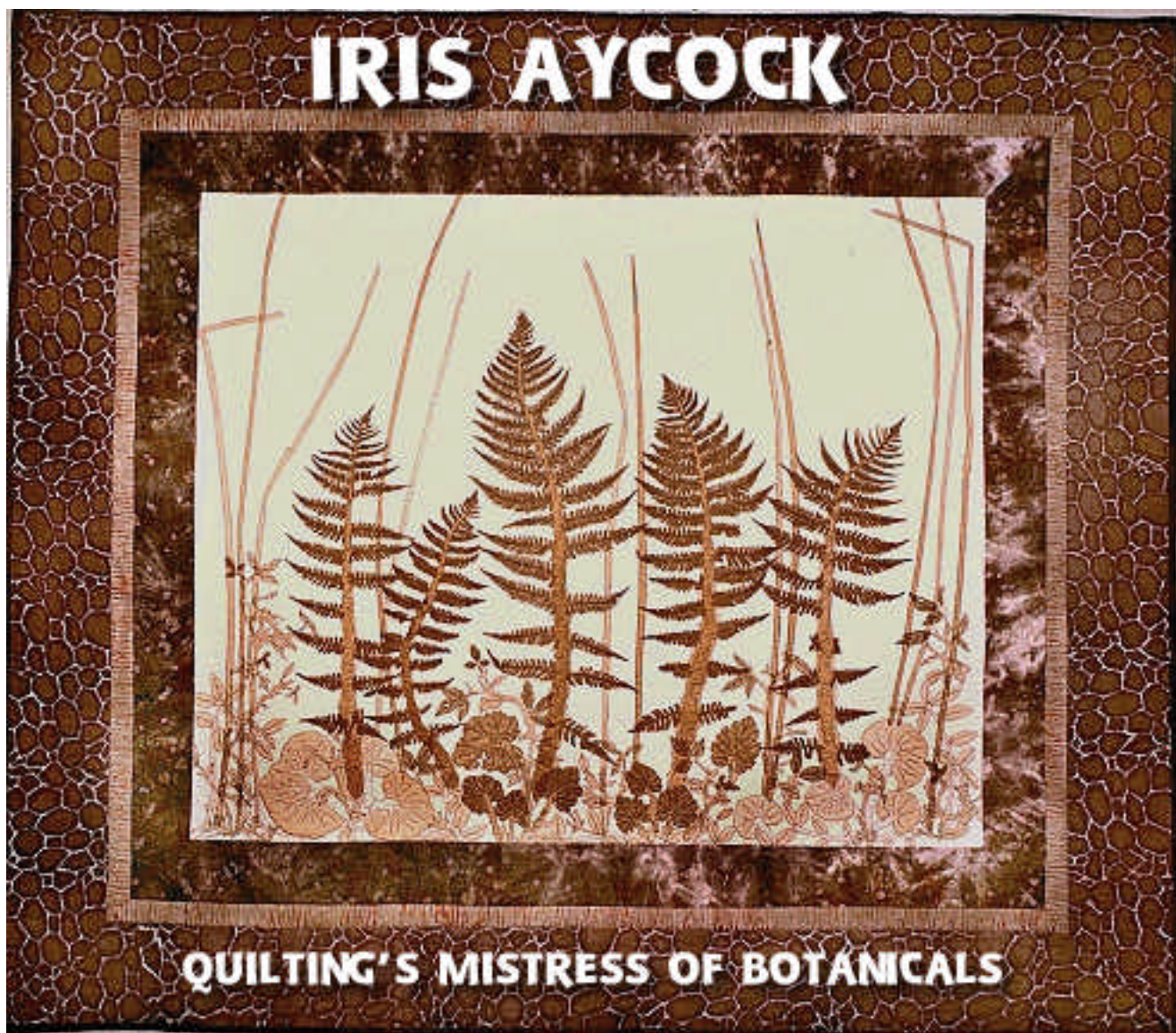


# The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for Online Quilters

Issue 31 • April 1999




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Book Reviews: [More on Paper Piecing](#)

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The rotary cutter brings you back here! 

# WILLIAMSBURG - A DIARY

## CHRONICLING THE MID-ATLANTIC QUILT FESTIVAL

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It's the day before the Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival, an event I look forward to all year, and I wake up feeling lousy. Doesn't it just figure? I baby myself all day but my nerves are on edge - all the weathermen are predicting snow, even the Weather Channel. We have had an exceptionally mild winter and my husband assures me that it will be "nothing." Worry anyway. This inflames my already nervous stomach.

I pack the car. I live only 60 miles from the show and prefer to drive back and forth each day, sleeping in my own bed and saving the money to spend on more important things - like fabric. I have a class on Saturday so I pack my supplies, show and tell for my Friday night dinner with my Compuserve buddies and snacks for the long drive back and forth. I run out and gas up the car.

Thursday morning: I wake before 6, too excited to go back to sleep and wait, yes, my stomach is still upside down. It reminds me of my college days when they would call up on the loudspeaker to tell you your date had arrived. Most of us were in the bathroom for those announcements. I drink hot tea and have some dry toast. Finally, I leave at 8:15. I want to be sure to get a good parking space.

It's my first trip down I-64 since a Christmas Eve ice storm. I remember clearly the reports of hundreds of trees down along the interstate but when I see the devastation, it comes as a shock. I rubberneck. In places, the highway crews have come and turned the trees into a stump and a pile of sawdust but for most of the journey, I am still witness to literally hundreds of snapped trees. It looks like a capricious tornado has whipped through the area.

I am coming up on the exit and suddenly there is tons of road construction. Disoriented (and let's remember my delicate condition and how early in the morning it is), I miss my exit. I go about 8 miles before I can get off and then can't find the "west" ramp to go back where I came from. Finally, after turning around several frustrated times, I get back on the highway, pointed in the right direction. All hope of being early is gone. Right now, I just want to find a clean



"Within Your Reach" by Julie Duschack

restroom to get rid of all that hot tea.

I approach Williamsburg once more and get off. The surroundings do not look familiar. I look across the railroad tracks and recognize the backs of the shopping center near the Marriott. I am, quite literally, on the wrong side of the tracks. I have to go several miles before I

ity is alive and flourishing in the quilt world.

My favorite overheard comment is while I was looking at a terrific piece - a still life of bottles about 7 feet tall - done in subtle colors, it looks like an oil painting. These two women come into the cubicle, glance at it and say "You couldn't use that on a bed, could you?"

Well, duh.

Last year's winner with "Petroglyphs," Patricia Styring, has another similar, but smaller entry - it also won a ribbon in its category. Judy Dales won for "Figments," one of her curved pieces. A fabulous mermaid "Within Your Reach" by Julie Duschack, was a top winner. A lovely blue applique quilt was a ribbon winner for applique. But the Best of Show totally perplexed me. It was a nice quilt - a log cabin design where she alternated 1" strips with 1/4" strips on each side - proving that her ability to sew straight seams was absolutely extraordinary. But the colors - shades of peach and brown - were muted and the set was



**"Greasy Grass" by Carol Ann Sinnreich.**

stop at a Hardees and humiliate myself to a couple of breakfasting seniors (who all give me different directions) before I am finally going in the right direction. The good thing is that the restaurant has a clean restroom.

I park in the last street slot, blocks from the door. It is disgustingly cold and I am too far away to leave my coat in the car. At least it is not snowing.

Once inside, all else is forgotten. I spot several friends right away. The doors open and we go in to look at the quilts. The theme for this year's show is "A Decade in Quilting." They could call this "These aren't your Grandma's Quilts anymore." What a wide variety of techniques people are using these days - fusible applique, snip and sew, voile overlays, embellishments, machine quilting, hand-dyed fabrics, hand-painted fabrics - you name it and people are making quilts with it.

I totally enjoy looking at all these different things - I am mystified by quilts with loose threads hanging off of them - and often equally confused by some of the color choices or subjects - but it is obvious that creativ-

ity is alive and flourishing in the quilt world. The quilting was technically proficient but nothing you would remember. I could think of 10 other quilts I would rather have seen with the ribbon - both traditional and innovative.

For example, there is a fabulous quilt ("Greasy Grass" by Carol Ann Sinnreich) about 7 ft by 7 ft of two Indian riders galloping on horses through a splashing stream with arms upraised and rifles pointed - the tree in the left background was terrific and the right hand background was a brown-on-beige traditional geometric block - laid on like wallpaper. It is breathtaking.

There is also a wonderful watercolor quilt, but not what you think when you hear the phrase. "A Woodland Sunrise" by Sally Rowe is comprised mostly of green and brown squares, laid out to be trees in a forest with the sun rising behind them and wonderful light streaming throughout.

One applique quilt, done with some raw-edge piecing is an African woman in tribal dress twirling around on a hill - her red skirt got nearly sheer near the edges -

then little elongated crescents of a lighter color were laid on as if vibrating away from the skirt. Viewed from 5 feet back, it looked as if the skirt were really moving - outstanding!

Remember the "First Saturday in May" quilt from 2 years ago? The horses crossing the finish line? Well, the artist did it again - only this one is nearly life-size and is beyond words - then she put a completely different quilt on the back.

None of those quilts have ribbons of any kind. I'd like to see judges' notes by the winners explaining WHY they chose particular quilts - I don't need to hear why the losers lost but it sure would be nice to understand WHY the winners won.

(I'll add an editorial comment here. A lot of people have complained that this show has become too contemporary. I realized afterwards that I didn't see very many traditional entries. I'm reasonably certain the Mancuso Brothers don't turn these quilts away so I can only deduce that those who make this type of quilt are not entering them. Are they put off by the tone of the show or are there fewer traditional quilts of show quality being made? I can't answer that, but I do think we should stop blaming the show organizers for the content.)

At lunch, my friends chide me for being purchaseless, so after eating, I set out to conquer the Merchants' Mall. I go first to My Hands to Thee, a vendor out of Pennsylvania. Collecting a satisfactory stack of totally yummy fabrics, I join a long line at the register. Imagine my surprise when the lady in front of me turns out to be my online friend from Scotland. We were supposed to catch up with each other later, but this serendipitous meeting is even better. Unfortunately, this means that she witnesses my panic as I realize I can't find my credit

card. I try to remember where I used it last and realize that it was on my gasoline run the night before. I stuck it in my coat pocket and it is not the coat I am wearing today. The booth owners kindly set aside my purchase.

(Note: the next day, this same booth is the victim of a brush shoplifter. She actually tries to steal an entire bolt of fabric, but they follow her and call security. To prosecute, they will have to come back from Pennsylvania to testify.)

With no money, I go back to the quilt show. I am



**"One Oriental Woman's Desire" by Mee-wha Kim**

looking at a display of antique tops when an older quilter remarks, "Gee, if I'd known they wanted unfinished tops, they could have had mine." I nearly lose it.

By 4, I am running out of energy and sit chatting with some friends before heading home. I hate the thought of driving through Richmond during the rush hour. By 4:30, I decide I better go or I will fall asleep in the lobby. Imagine my undelighted surprise when the radio immediately informs me that it is snowing in Richmond!! Within 10 miles, I see the first flakes and soon after, visibility drops to zero, especially when I come

anywhere near a truck. I arrive home safe but with fingers welded to the wheel.

Friday morning I am off early again, make all the right turns and get a parking space right outside the door. I know it is going to be a great day! I retrieve my purchases from Thursday, meet my friend from Scotland and began hitting the vendors in earnest. Our area has two nice quilt shops but the number of new fabrics every year far outstrips their ability to keep up, so this is my chance to find pieces not otherwise available to me. I do my level best to buy them all.

The hotel can't seem to get the hang of feeding us all at lunch. They set up an outstation with barbecue, chips and drinks or you can go through their cafe line - the drinks have vastly different prices in the two locations which kind of irritates me. Then there is no place to sit and no place to throw your trash. There are, however, great water stations all over, the restrooms stay clean and the staff is always polite and friendly.

The rest of the show is beginning to suffer from its own success. Thursday and Friday the place was totally mobbed and the heat in the small vendor mall was unbearable - literally. People were going in, staying 10 minutes and leaving. By Saturday, they finally got the hang of the environmental systems and cooled it down. You just want to scream. The show is in four hotels. I skip Vintage Clothing and Fiber Art. The shuttle buses were running very slow - it sometimes took 45 minutes to get around from one hotel to

the other - that's a lot of wasted time. (It's about an 8-minute drive - tops)

Wearable Art is at the Williamsburg Lodge. I hate to give up my space, but figure I would lose far too much time to the shuttle. I just plan to spend the rest of Friday afternoon over there. The clothes seem more normal to me this year. Am I being gradually brainwashed? I see several outfits I can actually picture someone wearing. I do wish the Hoffman Challenge fabric wasn't always so LOUD. It makes the pieces all look alike and the orange from last year

would be hard for almost anyone to wear. One clever contestant made a cape, subtle and turquoise on the outside, lined with the challenge and other spicy fabrics inside. Talk about a split personality!! But it worked.

The vendors - well, they were great as always in both locations (I don't do the other 2 shows). I just counted and I bought 46 yards of fabric - mostly in 1/2 yard pieces. One booth had this spectacular new Australian fabric line. I totally fell in love. It's cute rather than beautiful but WOW! It's so different - can't wait to figure out a special quilt for it. Never could find the Atlantis line by Rose and Hubble. But I certainly bought enough other things. It will take days to get it all washed and dried. No new



**"Something Wicked This Way Comes" by Carolyn Lynch**  
You have to look closely, especially in a photo, but all the "papercuts" are spooky - bats, skeletons, ghosts, spiders and even the Headless Horseman.

books or tools, but did get some new MQ stencils.

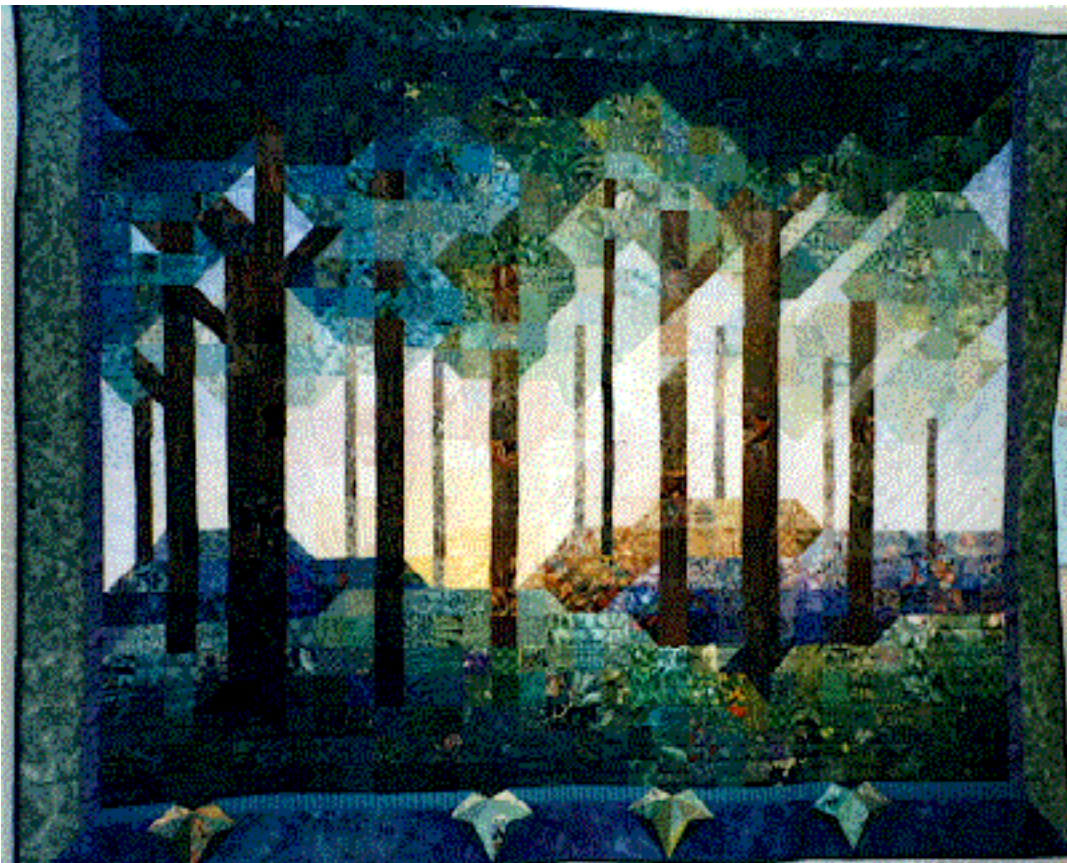
Friday night, I meet with my online friends at the nearby Chinese restaurant. We do more laughing than eating and I am totally, completely, tired by the time I pull into my drive at 9 p.m.

Saturday morning I have a class at 9, which means leaving my house even earlier. Unhappily, it is a disappointment. The teacher is charming, has a lovely accent and does beautiful work, but (a) her flowers are not, as advertised, all that realistic, and (b) her class teaching methods are disjointed and very hard for me to follow. Her sample in the Teachers' Hall has just the realistic look I had hoped to learn but that isn't what we do in class. I leave early with another friend. I may still try this on my own but not with her methods.

Left to my own devices, I would probably have gone home, but my friend has just arrived, so we go back to the main show. I manage to find a small number of ad-

ditional purchases. I like to think of it as my effort to keep the economy healthy. After two hours, I beg off and head for home. My trunk is nearly full and my wallet is empty. So is my internal gas gauge. But my mind - despite being tired, is awirl with colors and techniques. I can hardly wait to see what happens when these great inspiring quilts percolate in my subconscious.

*Carol Miller has been quilting since 1979. She teaches and runs the VCQ Online ([vcq.org](http://vcq.org)) site for her state guild. She can be reached at [webmistress@vcq.org](mailto:webmistress@vcq.org).*



"Woodland Sunrise" by Sally Rowe



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## BOOK REVIEWS:

# TWO MORE ON PAPER PIECING



### [It's Raining Cats & Dogs: 32 Paper-Pieced Quilt Projects](#)

Janet Kime

That Patchwork Place 1998

MSR: \$21.95

### [Paper Piecing the Seasons: Foundation Piecing from Easy to Expert](#)

Liz Schwartz & Stephen Seifert

That Patchwork Place 1998

MSR: \$24.95

### Reviewed by Christina Holland

"It's Raining Cats and Dogs" practically jumped off the shelf at me; as soon as I flipped through it I knew I wanted to read it and use it and write a review of it. I love cats. My family and my friends love cats, too, so there're any number of opportunities to make cat related patchwork pieces. And this is a truly excellent collection.

I approached "Paper Piecing the Seasons" with a little more caution, but it, too, is a superb collection of paper piecing patterns, well worth your attention.

I've now completed two miniature projects from "It's Raining Cats and Dogs": an adorable "Hanging BasKat" (a kitten hanging off of a basket), and a stately Siamese from the "Linus and Samantha" pattern. Of course, in making the Siamese, I forgot about how the pattern would reverse and the cat would be facing the other way. Luckily, it hardly matters. For the record, though, Janet Kime does point out



the facts of reversal in the very beginning of the book. I just have an unfortunate habit of doing before reading.

"It's Raining Cats and Dogs" and "Paper Piecing the Seasons" both have great color photos of the finished projects, so you should have no trouble deciding which to make first. In "It's Raining Cats and Dogs," there is a very nice photo gallery. In "Paper Piecing the Seasons," the photos are distributed throughout the book, right before each pattern collection. Also next to the project photos, Liz Schwartz and Stephen Seifert include a color diagram for each project, properly reversed from the photo, and with each pattern piece labeled.

Both books begin with a fairly good, but not overly complete, introduction to paper piecing. "It's Raining Cats and Dogs" lists some of the more common paper piecing mistakes, about half of which I had made that morning in my haste. It also includes general patchwork and quilting instructions, on topics such as sashing, borders, backing, and hand versus machine quilting, as well as some basic embroidery stitches for use in embellishing the projects.



"Paper Piecing the Seasons" has some of the above as well, and a good step-by-step instructional section complete with color photos of each step. In addition, it has a fabulous discussion of fabric choices - much more than you will normally find in a book of patterns. My only quibble with this book, and it's really

pretty minor, is in the bit on aligning seams from different pattern sections. The instructions say to look for the lowercase letters on the patterns, line them up, and sew. That's great, except that many of the patterns don't have any lowercase letters on them at all.

The two books have slightly different takes on the



**"Charlie's Cats" from Raining Cats & Dogs.**

whole ironing question. Both explain why you should use a dry iron, never steam, lest you wrinkle and deform the paper. The authors of "Paper Piecing the Seasons," though, also entertain the possibility of skipping the iron altogether, in favor of pressing with a wooden seam pressing bar. This endeared them to me; I hate ironing.

Okay, now for the patterns. "It's Raining Cats and Dogs" is a collection of whimsical cat and dog designs, for use as miniature quilts, in a vest or on a hat, or in a larger quilt project. I counted eleven distinct cat patterns, and four dogs, along with accessories: flowers, stars, a moon, mittens, mice, a bone, a ball, and four different dog houses. It's a little bit skewed towards the cat side of things, but I think that's okay. After all, your cat is probably going to sleep on that quilt more than anyone else, right?

I really love the patterns I've used so far. They're really quick and easy, too; I did two small projects on one Saturday morning.

I always especially love books

that give me something extra. I liked Sandy Bonsib's "Folk Art Quilts: A Fresh Look" because she included her favorite chocolate cookie recipe. "It's Raining Cats and Dogs" gives us the story of Charlie. Charlie is a cat who hunts. Only he seems to prefer tulips to mice and birds. The cats in "Charlie's Quilt," dedicated to Charlie, are made of striking tulip colored fabrics. The poem that accompanies the pattern is priceless - see page 39, next to the pattern. It gets the prize for atrociously punny poetry, though, for using the phrase "nipped it in the bud."

The patterns in "Paper Piecing the Seasons" are a little more time consuming. Each of the twelve is a miniature quilt, perfect for hanging on the wall. They're organized by the season they best represent, and some are occasion specific (Easter, Valentine's Day) while some are more general scenes.

I have to be honest; my first reaction to these patterns was along the lines of "Wow, these look hard!" On page five, the authors broach this directly with a short section entitled "The Intimidation Factor," in which they reassure us that any quilter can make any of the quilts in the book, and that "The first step to completing a quilt is having the courage to start."

I found the courage to start the "Country Cottage" pattern, which is classified as Easy/Moderate. So far, it's not too hard at all, and I really like the results. Of the twelve patterns, four are labeled Easy, three Easy/Mod-



**"Country Cottage" with some of my own color substitutions.**

pattern, which is classified as Easy/Moderate. So far, it's not too hard at all, and I really like the results. Of the twelve patterns, four are labeled Easy, three Easy/Moderate, and one each Moderate, Moderate/Advanced, Advanced, Advanced/Challenging, and Challenging. The book is weighted towards the Easy.

Oh, but when they say Challenging, they mean it! The last pattern in the book is "Holiday with Family," a charming scene with a house and a tree and a horse drawn sleigh. I would really love to make this quilt, but I'm still intimidated, I guess. It's a small quilt, only 42"x36," less without the border, but it contains 94 distinct foundation patterns. That includes 2 for the wisping smoke

from the chimney, and a scary 31 patterns for the horses. The smallest pattern, "BE" which is one corner of the house's roof, is just over 2 1/2" x 1 1/4," with the seam allowance, and it has 6 pieces of fabric in it. If I ever do make "Holiday with Family" (and it's inevitable that I will, someday), I won't be giving it away - it'll be displayed in a place of honor.

I have a feeling that both of these books are going to be used a lot. Some books only inspire you to do one or two projects and then they go on the topmost, and hardest to reach, shelf. These two, though, I think you'll be taking down again and again.



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# TODAY'S PLEASURES ... TOMORROW'S TREASURES VIII: QUILTS BY THE BAY

By Christina Holland

Members of the Suncoast Quilting Circle have been gathering every week since 1981 to learn and share and, most especially, to quilt. Some of their individual and collaborative efforts can be seen every other year at their quilt show.

The theme for this year's show, held the first week-end of March, was "Quilts by the Bay," and indeed many of the works featured there were reflections of life by Florida's Tampa Bay.

Actually, several of them would fit right in at a "Quilts Under the Bay" show. Among these underwater scenes was Betty Ferris' "There's Something Fishy about This," in which brightly colored tropical fish swim across, and straight out of, the quilted background. I also really enjoyed "Seahorse Sushi for Supper Again?" The artist, Virginia Robinson, says that the copper lame fabric of the title seahorses "screamed" at her. It certainly livens up the piece.

There was no shortage of avian representatives of the bay area, either. Ichabod Crane, who's actually a great blue heron that used to hang around Betty Ferris' yard, is immortalized in one of her quilts, "Icky." There were

many herons to be found, along with a great white egret ("Sentinel," by Evelyn Spillan) and smaller birds. Beth Frierson did double duty in "Little Shore Birds," piecing both the birds and their aquatic reflections.

Then there was Deb Kenneda's "Song of the Mockingbird," probably the only time I've seen someone try to capture the essence of music and commit it to fabric. She actually did pretty well at that, impossible as it might seem.

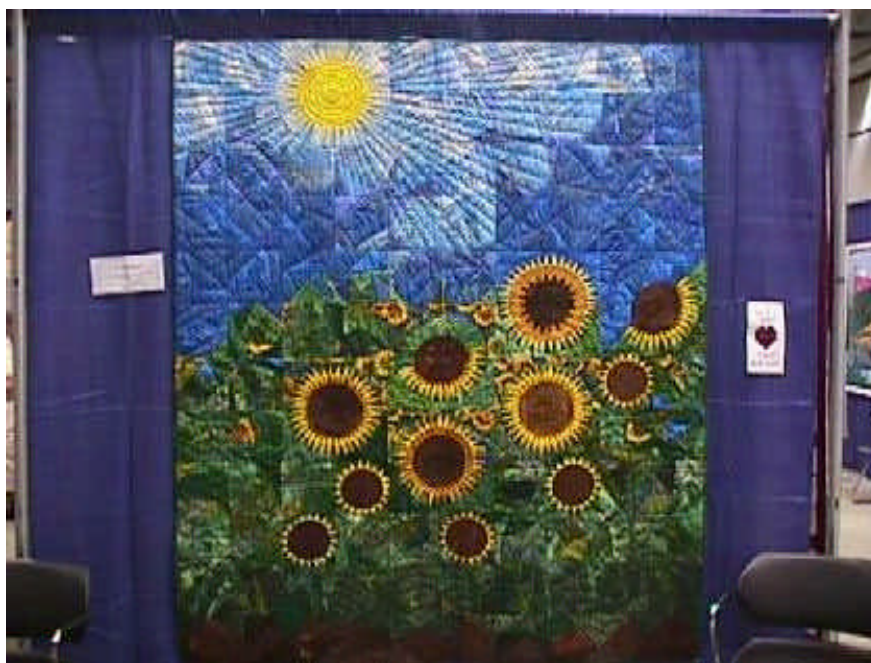
Speaking of Florida and its most commonly seen birds, though, one of the best had to be "Snowbirds," by

Pauline Salzman. This intricately pieced and quilted wall hanging portrays the annual migration from the cities of the frozen north to the hibiscus-strewn south. The large pink car in it is wonderfully rendered, and the whole composition speaks to us year-round Florida residents.

Of course this quilt show included more traditional quilt designs as well. There were

whole fields of stars and gardens full of every flower and a veritable army of angels. Definitely, there was something for everyone.

Actually, if I had any complaint about this show, it'd involve the way the quilts were grouped. I haven't been to many shows, I admit, but putting several similar



"I'll Follow the Sun" - Carol Betts

quilts (completed as part of a single meeting or class, I suspect in some cases) next to one another reduced the potential impact of each individual quilt. Often they would have made much more of an impression mixed up a bit more.

There were some quite unique quilts mixed in, although often scattered around the edges. The realm of the fantasy included "Knight's Crossing" by Lynn Nottke, which the artist made for her collegiate son. His college mascot is a knight, which she portrays fighting a very large, green dragon. As she explains it, "My son, the knight ... the dragon, college."

My absolute favorite work was Carol Betts' award-winning "I'll follow the Sun," an almost Van Gogh like impression of the sun shining down on a field of sunflowers. It didn't make me any less intimidated by compass designs, but it certainly provided a clear example of why they might be worth learning.

In terms of categories of quilts, I was especially impressed by those sporting three-dimensional effects. Besides the fish in "There's Something Fishy about This" mentioned above, there were many geometric objects rendered nearly solid to the eye. One of the best of these was Sara Jane McMillan's "Inner City"; another great one was "Diamond Cube" by Sue Wareham. My personal favorite in this type of piece, though, was "Perspective Piecing" by Elaine Haberman. When I first looked at it, I thought there were several miniature quilt panels hung at right angles, the lines are done so well.

In a similarly mathematical vein, several of the pieces incorporated tessellated shapes. Some were pure geometry, such as Mary Schatzman's "Spinning Stars." In "Oriental Lady," Pauline Salzman combined some of these same spun stars with a realistic human figure and a pair of antique (and broken) chopsticks, and Helen Rogers gave tessellating pinwheels a different feel with old-fashioned print fabrics and cavorting kittens in



**"There's Something Fishy about This" - Betty Ferris. The fish actually stand out three-dimensionally from the quilt.**

"Happy Cats and Tessellating Pinwheels."

"Quilts by the Bay" was held in the campus activities center of the University of South Florida, Bayboro, where I am a student. It was well attended but not unpleasantly crowded on the Saturday afternoon I attended. All of my favorite local quilt and fabric stores were represented, including Rainbow's End, The Sewing Circle, and Country Quilts and Bears. In addition, I was able to pick up business cards for a few new (to me) places to try out, such as The Quilting Bee in St. Petersburg, Patches Galore Inc. in Ellenton, and Willa Bee Studios ([www.willabee.com](http://www.willabee.com)). Also present was Ruth Carolyn Miller (Ruthie), along with several examples of her patterns. Her sea turtle looks especially fun, I think, although there are several nice ones to choose from.

The stores and such were set up along the edges of the hall, leaving the middle area entirely free for the quilts. This was a pretty good arrangement, from my point of view; it was easy to explore the quilts and get totally inspired and then mosey over to the sales booths to buy patterns, books, fabric and tools for that new project. Come to think of it, I guess that's a pretty good set-up from the stores' point of view, too.

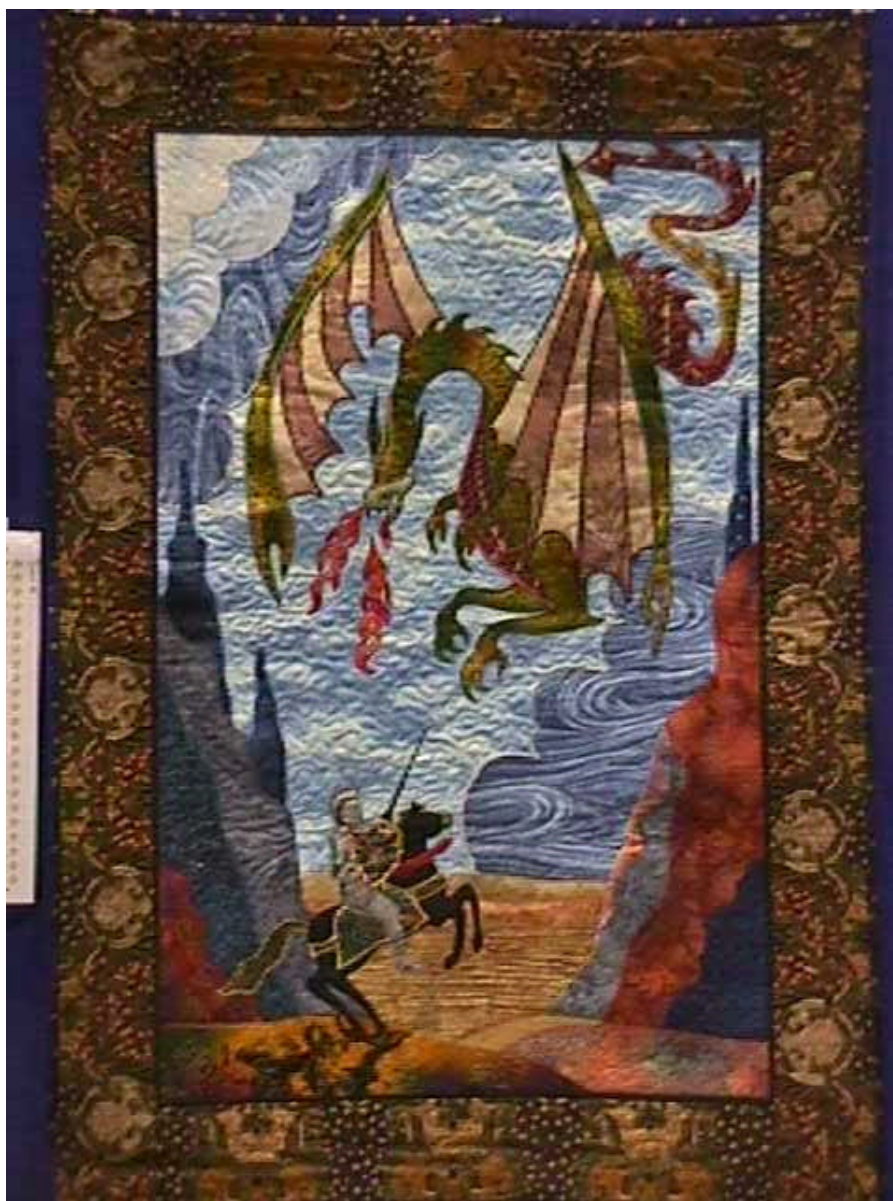
The largest sales area was the boutique organized by the Suncoast Quilting Circle itself. They were selling finished products of various types, supplies, and

materials. They seemed to do a brisk business. There was also a classroom area, where three different demonstrations per day were given in diverse subjects: cracked mosaic charmed crazy quilt, easy bias binding, snippets, taming the flannel quilt, stack & whack, and hand quilting. Unfortunately I was unable to attend these, but based on the quilts I saw displayed, I could learn a lot from these ladies. I'll have to plan better for their next show.

Somehow or other, the guild members also find time to quilt for charity. Each member makes at least three items per year: lap robes, booties and bibs for hospitals, nursing homes and infant and preschool centers. In ad-

dition, for each show they collaborate on a charity quilt. This year's quilt was a Baltimore Album. Half the proceeds went to Hospice, and with the other half they once again chose to help out the University of South Florida's Oceanography Camp for Girls.

I went to this show while in the middle of reorganizing my sewing area. I started out tired and preoccupied, and truthfully I didn't think I was in the mood for a show. It proved to be a wonderful time, and just the break I needed. Everyone I spoke with was pleasant and helpful, and the quilts themselves were a great reminder of why I took up quilting in the first place.



"Knight's Crossing" - Lynn Nottke.



# THE PATCHWORK PLANET: QUILTING IN TURKEY

I'm continually surprised and pleased by the e-mail I get from enthusiastic quilters in what might seem unlikely places. I received one such message on Christmas day last year from Gunsu Gungor in Ankara, Turkey, who asked me to visit her website (<http://members.xoom.com/gcpatchwork>). She proudly told me that her site had been designed and built by her 12-year-old son, Cemre.

It turned out that her site was not just a personal quilt page featuring her own work, but a business site for GC Patchwork Studio, which Gunsu owns and operates in downtown Ankara.

"I'm a business administration graduate of Bosphorous University in Istanbul," Gunsu says. "I moved to Ankara, which is the capital city of Turkey, after I got married in 1983. I learned the basics of patchwork at that



time from friends. My hobby made me the patchwork teacher of the Turkish American Association in 1991, and in 1995 I formed my own studio. GC Patchwork Studio is situated at the center of Ankara and I have around 100 students yearly. My students come to the studio once every week for two hours. They attend here for three-month periods and learn different techniques. Some of my students attend my classes for four or five years."

Besides being a center for quilting education, the studio is a vital nerve center for quilters in Turkey. Gunsu organizes a show of the work of studio members' work every year which has high visibility in Turkey, including participation by the Minister of Culture Istemihan Talay, who wrote the introduction to the show's catalogue. In it he said, "Patchwork, which is made by joining the geometrical shapes traditionally, has been introduced in this catalogue with the modern interpretation of Gunsu Gungor Group. This catalogue, which sets forth a different dimension of cultural heritage . . . shall be a cultural torch that will enlighten the future generations." The show is



not in a mosque people pray to God on special mats), bundles, etc., using these techniques. When making these the techniques they used resembled the modern techniques we use these days."

Gunsu owns one such prayer mat made by her grandmother nearly a hundred years ago, and displays it on the wall in her studio. "The puffs were filled with 100 percent cotton that she grew, and the thread used was also made by her from the cocoons she had," Gunsu said.

always covered by local newspapers and television.

Beyond their own local show, the group also participates in international quilt exhibitions. "Last year we applied and were chosen to represent our country at Quilt Show VI at Innsbruck," Gunsu says. "Two quilts and three vests (one belongs to me) were chosen. . . ." Encouraged by their success, Gunsu's group decided to compete in the American Quilters' Society annual show in Paducah at the end of April. Gunsu wrote me recently: "We are pleased to inform you that we will be participating in the American Quilters' Society 15th Show and Contest in Paducah next month. Two of my students and myself will take part in the AQS/Hobbs Bonded Fibers Fashion Show and two quilts from my students will be exhibited at the quilt show. We will be in Paducah in April."

Turkey's rich textile heritage is well-known around the world, but not so well-recognized is that patchwork quilts are a big part of it. In fact some Turkish quilt traditions are remarkably similar to other parts of the world: "Patchwork was in the past made in my country because of necessity," Gunsu says. "The people used to do these at the villages, for example 40 patches. When a girl was preparing for marriage she took 40 pieces of cloth from 40 happily married couples and made a quilt for herself wishing that she will be happily married. At old times they used to make bed covers, praying mats (if they are

As in most other countries with a quilting tradition, there are local organizations of quilters. Besides Gunsu's studio, there is an organization for quilters in Istanbul. A number of Gunsu's students teach quilting around the country as well. In spite of this, there is not the wide availability of some quilting supplies that can





be found elsewhere. Gunsu is trying to remedy that: "We import and sell some patchwork supplies ourselves because there are no shops round here selling these."

If the show catalogue is any indication, Turkish quilters are among the most sophisticated in the world. Techniques range from Hawaiian to Celtic knotwork to crazy quilting, along with many variations on traditional patchwork. Pictorial, paper-pieced, and contemporary quilts are also prominent, and some of the wearables are truly stunning.

Among their other sophistications, Turkish quilters are part of a highly wired culture. "The Internet is widespread in Turkey," Gunsu says. "It's used at the houses and businesses. Most of the companies have web pages and most of the kids start learning about these at school at early ages. As you know my web page is created by my 11-year-old son. . . the computer technology is so huge everything that you hear in the States is here in a couple of days."

Beyond quilting as a hobby and as a business, Gunsu is interested in another aspect of the craft, its spiritual and psychological value. This is clear from the definition of patchwork which is posted at her site:

"Patchwork is a combination of pieces of fabrics which are cut according to the colour harmony and the design planned before.

"Although forms vary depending on the countries and cultures, it is a way to express one's own self to the world with the help of different fabrics. For us, patchwork is a therapy through art. It teaches to get the utmost pleasure of the process without aiming the results, making the person patient, tolerant and more adaptable both to herself and others."



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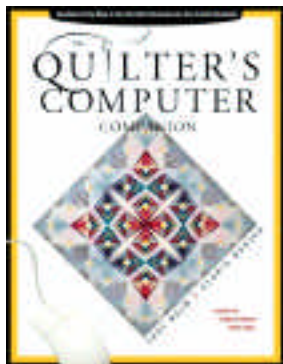
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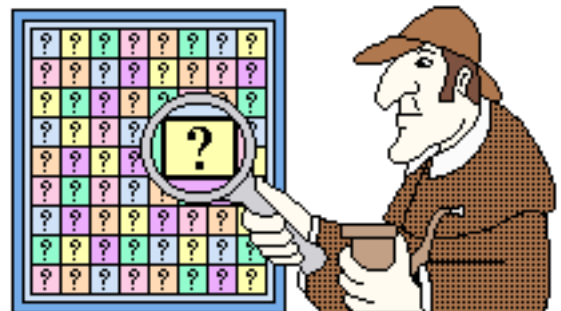
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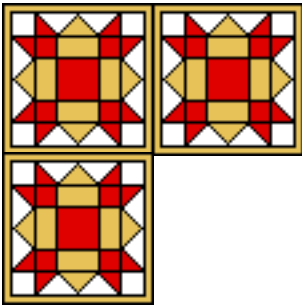


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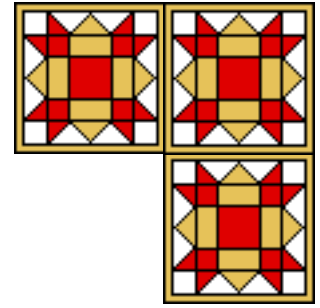
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# QUILTER PROFILE

## IRIS AYCOCK



Every January, usually over the MLK day holiday weekend, Lynn and I go to Asheville, North Carolina for a short getaway (well, depending on how many children we're forced to take with us). January is the dead off-season for Asheville, and there's not much going on, but that's how we like it. Motel rooms are cheap, the churches are lovely, and the Folk Art Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway is always open. We usually go there Sunday morning and wander through the galleries and the gift shop for a pleasant hour or more.

This last time, as we wandered up the ramp to the upper gallery, we encountered some small framed quilted pieces made from the prints of actual leaves. An elaborate process for transferring the plant dyes was detailed in the accompanying narrative, and the name of the artist was Iris Aycock, a name I knew -- from somewhere.

A few minutes later we spotted a gorgeous full-sized quilt on the far wall made from the same technique, and I remembered that Iris Aycock's name appeared in my subscriber database for this publication. She'd been a TVQ subscriber almost since the first issue, but this was the first time I had encountered her work. After returning home I e-mailed her (she lives in Alabama) and she agreed to assist me in doing a pro-

file.

"Quilting has been familiar to me all my life," Iris says. "Not the construction - but quilts have been part of my life. My grandmother made quilts perhaps because they were needed (she was not alive when I was born, so I didn't know her, but I slept with quilts that she had made when I was small). My mother made quilts as gifts for her children and others. Quilt making wasn't a

dominant factor in her life, as she also gardened, wrote, painted, and collected just about everything! I made quilts when my children were young - one for each - but am ashamed to say that I haven't finished the third one (almost 29 years after the start of it). I haven't spent those years in between making quilts, instead I have been involved in photography and weaving (amateur for both activities). My interest in weaving led me back to quilting."

Asked to characterize her quilting style, Iris says straightforwardly "I consider that



**Muscadine leaves. Approximately 18" square.**

I make quilted botanical prints. . . . One of my weaving magazines had an article on hammering leaves onto fabric. I tried their technique, wasn't completely happy with the results, but was intrigued with the idea of leaf printing. I researched all the books on natural dyeing I could find. I also read dye catalogs and wondered if products

that other people used as auxiliaries with synthetic dyes could help me do what I wanted to accomplish.

"Through much experimentation (several years of off-and-on trials) I came up with my own technique for making leaf prints on fabric. My technique is detailed (with many others) in Jean Ray Laury's *Imagery on Fabric*. I also wrote an article which appeared in the Spring 1996 issue of *American Quilters Magazine*.

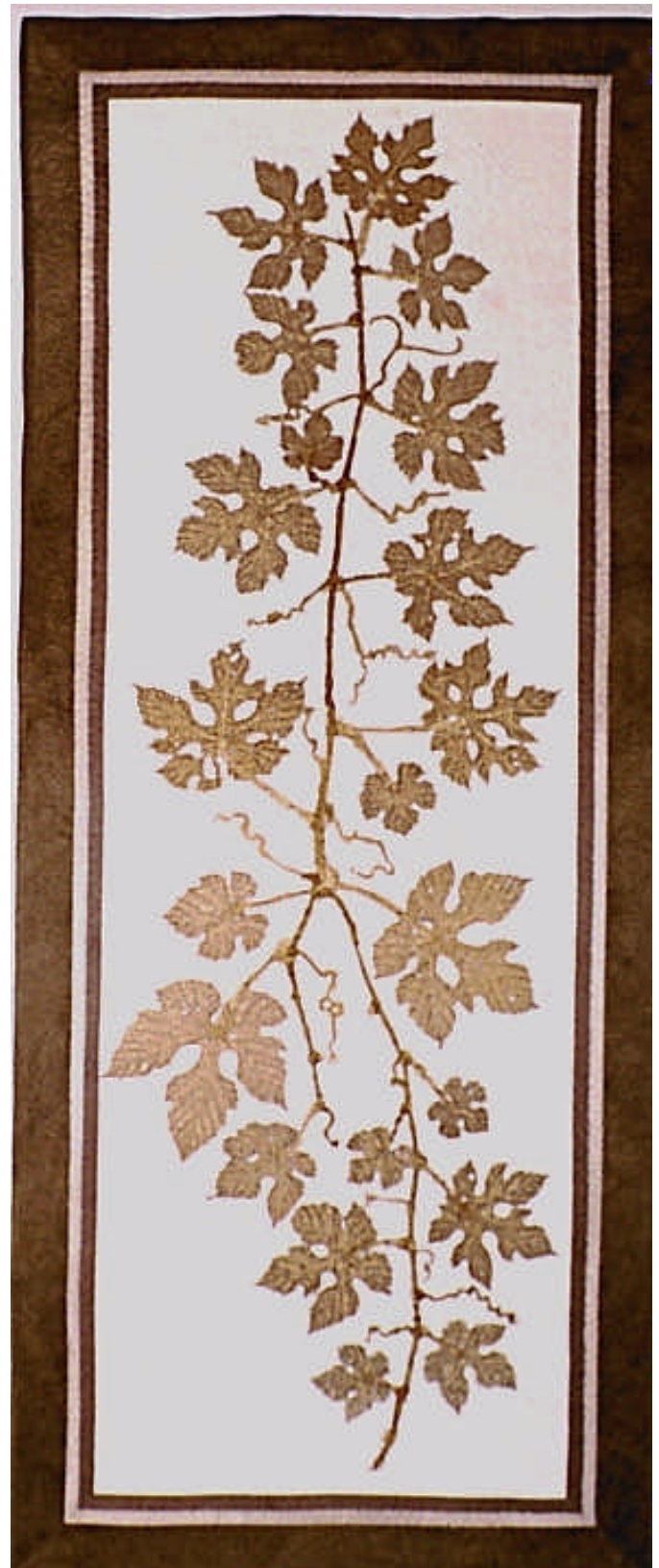
"I made a few leaf quilts (for my children and yes, the youngest who hasn't gotten her childhood quilt got the first one this time!) I decided to make one more for myself, felt so good about it that I entered it in the AQS show for 1994. At age 59, I entered my first quilt show and won the award for Best Wall Quilt. My quilt is now a part of the permanent collection of the Museum of the American Quilters Society in Paducah, KY.

"My next big challenge was to apply to the Southern Highland Craft Guild (Headquartered in Asheville). I was admitted to membership through a jurying process and was elated to make it in on my second try. I currently sell my work at the twice annual Fair of the Southern Highlands held in Asheville and through the Guild shops, (Allenstand at the Folk Art Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Guild Crafts in Asheville, Parkway Craft Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway and Arrowcraft in Gatlinburg, TN)

"I do whatever I can to enhance the leaf image. After acquiring the image, I add penwork to enhance veins and irregularities in the leaf (the imperfect leaves are the interesting ones to me). The quilting is done to add dimension to the leaves. I quilt the leaves using a smoke invisible thread; the background is usually stipple quilted rather closely to provide a textured setting for the leaves, not be a feature in itself. I quilt on a home machine; I wish it had an industrial motor.

"I'm not sure my quilts fit the current idea of art quilts - I'm certainly not a traditionalist - although I have made a few in a traditional style using leaves where antique quilts have used applied fabric.

"When I started making these leaf quilts it was a point of pride to say that all my border fabrics were dyed with plants from around my home. I have since begun to use commercially available dyes and paints for the border fabrics. I find I can achieve a more organic 'look' with these than I could with natural dyes. Besides, it is a lot more fun than standing over a hot stove in June or July when I have a deadline. The synthetics aren't seasonal; this lets me play around with fabrics and dye when



**This quilt is composed of wild grape vines and leaves and is 29" wide X 70" long. The borders were dyed with: wild ferns (inner border), ragweed (middle border), and goldenrod blossom heads (outer). These were given an afterbath with ferrous sulfate (iron). Photo: Vern Sawyer**

I have a lull in work.

"My weaving is one of those things that I will get back to - in the meantime our cats love the half-finished rug on the loom. It makes a great hammock for them."

Although her artistic technique is in many ways very "low tech," Iris does make use of a computer in her work. "I use my computer to do some of 'dog work' tasks for my work - making labels, keeping records, helping with border quilting designs. I like to work with real leaves to make quilting designs for my quilt borders. These are arranged in the space I have available for that border for part of the length of the border, then I trace off the dominant lines to create a design, scan it in, then I take in into PhotoPaint and use the symmetry filters to help with the corner designs and finally flip and flop the leaves to create the design for the whole border. I then have that file I can print out later to fill another size border."

Iris is also internet active, as her subscription to *TVQ* would indicate, but she doesn't complain that it keeps her away from her quilting. "I 'lurk' on a few lists online, but I read these slowly, usually a month or more behind. I spend just about all my time on some aspect of my work. I became focused rather late in life; I have so many things I have yet to try."

For someone so "late to focus," Iris has many honors for her unique quilts. In addition to her Southern

Highlands and AQS accomplishments, her quilts have been or are on display in a variety of places. "I have had quilts in the NQA show, was in a two-person show a couple of years ago in the Focus Gallery at the Folk Art Center; I have twice had quilts on loan to the Appalachian Regional Center in Washington, D.C. and currently have work included in the Art in Embassies Program of the U.S. Department of State. A quilt of mine is currently exhibited in the American Embassy in Canada.

My work was profiled in the Sept/Oct, 1996 *Fiber Arts* magazine and *A Quilters Gallery*, by Marie Salazar," as well as in Laury's book.

Asked if she ever teaches her technique, Iris says: "I have spoken to a few quilt guilds, but at present I prefer to concentrate on making work. I enjoy going to Asheville twice a year for the Fair. I talk to people in my booth all day, for four days, teaching if they are interested. I get to meet a wide range of people and I look forward to these trips."

So if you want to get to know Iris in person, and learn more about her technique, you'll probably need to go to Asheville in July or October. The motel rooms won't be at rock bottom, but the crafts will be on display and quilting's Mistress of Botanicals will be there to share her secrets.



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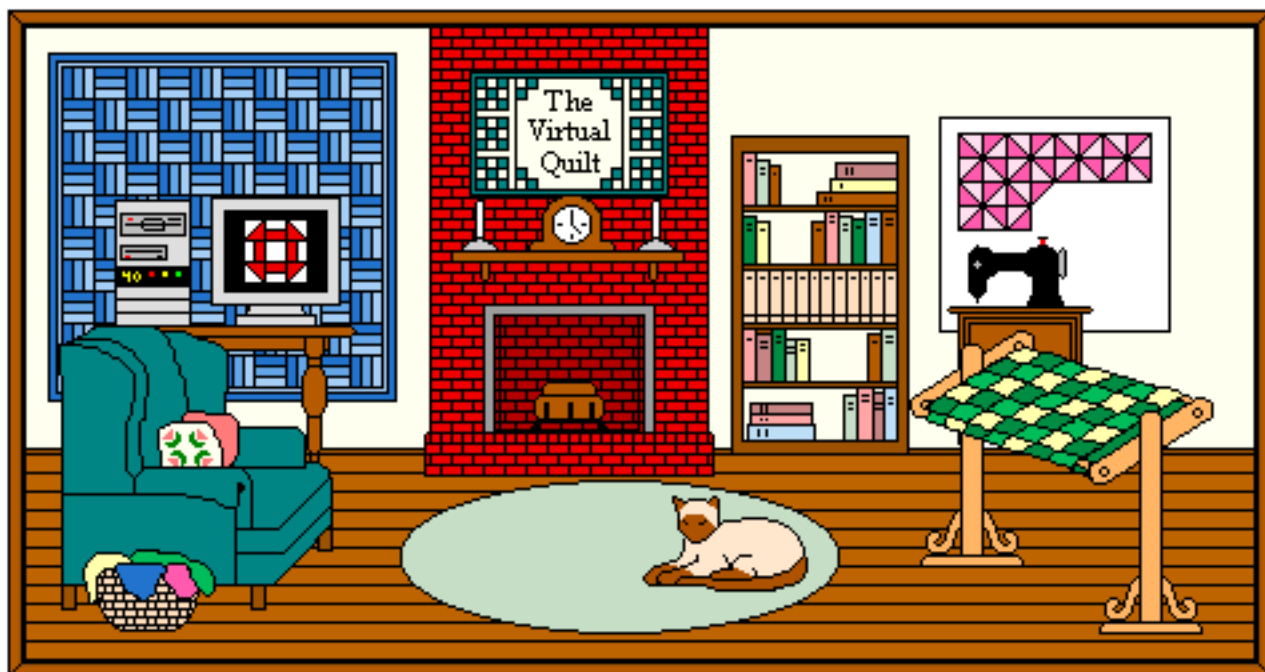
## The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for  
Computing Quilters

Editor and Publisher: Robert Holland, Decatur, GA

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