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Collage + Cloth = Quilt

The collage-to-cloth-to-quilt process offers experimental designing possibilities that can free you from predetermined assumptions and constraints. Instead of waiting for a design inspiration to appear on your bedroom ceiling at 3:45am, or working from a tiny ball-point pen sketch you've done next to the crossword puzzle, instead of pinning large pieces of yardage to the work wall (only to take them down and put up something else) you'll make preliminary design proposals, define abstract compositional options and find satisfying variations before you cut into the \$32.95 per yard hand-painted silk using photo elements to invent a "work wall on a small scale" color collage composition that will become the "map" of your quilt.

Helpful "Supply List" Information:

Finding Collage Sources: Your collage elements will come from no more than 6-8 of your own photographs selected because you love looking at them and because you love seeing them together. The content may or may not be thematically related; look for compelling colors, details of random and formal patterning, subtle and dramatic value contrasts, graphic design, man-made and natural imagery: things that catch your eye. Trusting your instincts, gather your photos in the same way as you might pile tentative bolts of cloth on the cutting counter at the fabric store. You'll make final choices by determining which images you love the most. In your collage, you'll be combining fragments of several varied sources, rather than working from a single image.

Don't base your choices on whether or not you already have a similar (enough) yardage! I've found that if I respond to the visual content of a particular photograph, it's possible that I have fabrics that reflect some of those same qualities because the same "instincts" are at work.

Finding Fabrics: that reflect the color/style/personality in your photographs. Since you won't know until we meet in class what the final visual content of your collage will be, you need to study all areas of each of the 5-6 photos and gather fabrics that have visual relationships to all major and minor elements in each one. You might need/ want to supplement your current stash with fabrics that relate to specific areas and elements or you might already have the perfect cloth, but not enough of it. So shop if you want to, but check your stash first!

Because very few fabrics exist that will be an exact color and style match or that will be large enough in scale, be aware of the elements that you know you will want in your collage and in your quilt so you can gather fabrics needed to "re-invent" any enlarged elements you'll need. For example, you might not have a mauve and blue textural fabric in the correct scale but you can piece mauve and blue fabrics in a similar pattern and larger scale. You might not have a pink and yellow-orange geometric or floral print that has large enough motifs but you can piece or appliqu  those motifs in a more expansive scale.

This class really could be titled "Collage + Cloth (+YOU) = Quilt because you (and your imagination and your willingness to experiment) will be the most important elements.

Supply list prep: What you need to do before the class

After you have read the above information:

Collect (and bring) at least 6 gorgeous photographs you have taken. Please see "Pre-workshop Information".

Make color-accurate copies of your photos on regular paper, 1 or 2 actual size, 1 or 2 reduced to 75% and 1 or 2 enlarged to 125%. Please see "Pre-workshop Information".

Gather (and bring) all potentially useful fabrics, as explained above. Whether your quilt will be small or large, CHOOSING YOUR FABRICS involves looking at every detail of every area of every photo to find fabrics that reflect visual content. Since you won't know yet which photo elements your collage will include, you need to prepare for all possibilities. Depending on the size of the quilt, you might need to create larger-scale 'yardage'; bring the 'ingredients' you'll need, in addition to fabrics that miraculously duplicate colors, content, scale and values.

Supplies: What you need to bring to the class:

Your photographs and enlarged copies, as described.

Your fabrics (and ca\$h for more fabric, and copying/enlarging (optional))

Optional: Pellon or Felt design-wall surface, blue tape/pins, etc. (**please note design wall will be provided by QBL**)

Glue stick and Scotch brand removable matte finish tape.

Pencil, pen to make notes with & a (new) extra fine black sharpie marking pen

2" x 18" gridded see-thru ruler with 8th inch and 16th inch markings

10 sheets 8 1/2" x 11" white copier paper

(2 or 3 pages) 8 1/2" x 11" 1/8 inch grid graph paper

2 large index cards

Paper scissors

(2 or 3) 8 1/2" x 11" Matte Acetate or clear frosted loose-leaf notebook sheet protector sleeves

Matte Acetate: Dick Blick catalog #H55508-1001

Sleeve protectors: most office supply stores. Clear/semi-clear/non-glare or frosted.

Ruby Beholder (red plexi value viewer)

3-hole folder with inside-the-cover pocket slots for storing hand-outs, sketches, ideas and notes

(5 or 6) 3-hole acetate/see-thru 'sleeve' pages for the master collage and proposals

2 small straight-edged mirrors IF you already own them. I will bring mine.

Optional: colored pencil set (12 colors)

Optional: White drawing pencil AND ebony pencil; pencil sharpener (optional/helpful)

Optional: 1 or 2 lines of type text (newspaper or magazine) chosen for style rather than content

For the enlarging of your design to quilt-size:

\$ for enlarging your design at a copy facility (fastest and most accurate method)

Or if you are a math whiz and want to do the enlarging yourself, and in case you need to make enlarged templates for irregular shapes, bring a few sheets of 18" x 24" (or larger) paper.

Newsprint is ok but poster board is sturdier. You can also bring regular template material if you like.

AND, of course, your sewing machine and ALL necessary tools and equipment, i.e.: thread, pins, ruler, rotary cutter and board, fabric scissors, high-intensity lamp, ETC.

In other words, ALL the STUFF you always use when you sew.

I'll be sending information to enrolled students who are interested in ordering copies of *Collage + Cloth = Quilt: Create Innovative Quilts from Photo Inspirations* in advance of the workshop.

Pre-Workshop Information

(Make yourself a cup of tea or a glass of lemonade and read these pages more than once. It will help!)

About your collage and the photos you'll be working with:

My theory: Your quilt will only be as intriguing as your collage/ your collage will only be as intriguing as the scrapes, details and fragments from your photographs.

If you love your photo swatches, you will love our collage.

If you love your collage, you will love your quilt!

The Workshop is about believing in your collage and letting that collage inspire a quilt.

The Quilt that comes from this workshop will be more abstract than pictorial. That does not mean you shouldn't consider including your favorite photo of a sunset at The Grand Canyon or the photo of the Chrysler Building that you took while lying on your back in the street and 'looking up'. It DOES mean that while you may use isolated DETAILS of The Chrysler Building, you will NOT be making a pictorial quilt. Although your quilt may include symbolic or pictorial references, these will be present in the form of abstract details and isolated views in combination with each other.

I want your quilt to be 100% "yours" and I believe it will be more personal if your "eye" is involved from the beginning in the vision, the details, the content and the themes. So: YOU WILL BE WORKING WITH **YOUR OWN PHOTOGRAPHS.** *

Finding and generating your photo sources:

Make a random gathering of your FAVORITE EXISTING photographs. They might (or might) not be thematically related. They might be landscapes, a close-up of the upholstery on your Grandma's sofa or the glaze on a ceramic bowl. Or your most artfully-composed photo from a very special trip or a collection of photos of your own quilts! As long as you like them TOGETHER, put them in a "maybe" pile.

Photos taken especially for the workshop:

Attn: the sooner you do the photographing, the more time you'll have to consider your choices. The sooner you've made your choices, the more time you'll have to gather fabrics, right?

Now it's you and your eye.

Consider the following list as only suggestions to get you started but don't be limited by the list! Use it to help you focus and to suggest your own additions to the list.

Look for details, close-ups, abstract views, colors, textures, patterns....

Themes for consideration:

Architecture and architectural details:

Not just "post-card" views, but unusual vantage points. Classic and contemporary landmarks, urban buildings. Not only a wonderful historical building or great architectural example or your cottage at the lake, but all the little details:

Hardware, door knobs and hinges, peeling paint, embellishments, decorative textures, neon signs, man-hole covers, cornices, pediments, grills, fences, graffiti, trellises, over-head electric wires, etc.

Also: window frames, gates, gazebos, electric meters, mechanics, graphics on buildings, billboards, etc.

NOT the Cathedral in Spain, but details of the black-and-white surface patterns.

NOT the Antique Jaguar, but the grill or the hub cap or the dash board.

NOT the dress in the Vintage clothing store, but the ruffles or the smocking or the buttons on the dress.

Interior Environments:

Shadows cast from sunlit windows, the embroidery on the pillow case, lace table cloths and curtains, upholstery fabrics, ornate furniture, antique silverware/jewelry, the contents of your bookcase and your closet.

Nature: think geographic locales, terrains, seasons:

NOT just the trees: the texture of the bark, the leaves, the branches and the twigs

NOT just the garden: the petals and stems and thorns

NOT just the meadow: the grasses/ NOT just the field of Queen Anne's lace: the blossom

NOT just the ocean: the kelp, the pebbles, the foam, the colors of the water, stones under the surface

NOT just the desert: the wind patterns on the sand

Sky color/ cloud formations

Rain

Snow: falling and fallen

OR:

Something botanical, something mechanical, a texture, a pattern, a landscape!

Your Ideas:

*Note: Please DO NOT bring photographs you may have taken of other people's art work; i.e. Art in public places, especially paintings and/ or sculpture by artists living or dead.

Preparing your photos for the workshop:

1. Gather some of your previously-taken photographs (several not hundreds!)
2. New photos: take 1 roll of 24 exposure color film or 24 digital images/subjects chosen with the workshop (and the quilt) in mind. When you're choosing your subjects, try to record stuff you "wish was available in cloth yardage". But don't select your final photos because you already have the ideal fabric in your stash. Choose them because they are gorgeous.
3. Lay all the photos out on a table or pin them to a work-wall. View the collection over a period of time. Choose 4 that are your favorites, both individually and together. These do not have to be thematically related: i.e. not all gray beach pebble images. Make your selections based on their visual appeal and because you love everything about them. Look for content: color, value contrasts, textures, patterns, variety of scale, etc.
4. Set aside 6 that don't seem promising. Don't throw them away/ just remove them from contention for now. DO bring them (and all the other 'rejects') to the workshop, just in case.
5. From the remaining choices, pick 3 or 4 more that complement and contrast with your first group. You now have 7 or 8 photos, portions of which will be the major elements for your collage.

6. Then using a color copier/ printer: Make COPIES ON REGULAR COPIER PAPER of each of your photos.
 - 1 or 2 in actual size (100%)
 - 1 or 2 slightly reduced (75%)
 - 1 or 2 slightly enlarged (125%)

BE THRIFTY: COMBINE PHOTOS ON A PAGE WHENEVER POSSIBLE. Just because you might be bringing 36+ images, you won't be printing onto 36+ sheets of paper!! BRING ALL PHOTOS and COPIES and REJECTS TO CLASS.

Finding your fabrics:

YOU HAVE SELECTED YOUR PHOTOS AS THOUGH YOU WERE CHOOSING BOLTS OF FABRIC. STUDY EACH PHOTO IN DETAIL FOR CONTENT, CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY. OBSERVE AND NOTE AREAS OF COLOR/TEXTURE/PATTERN CHARACTERISTICS.

Then, gather fabrics that express those same qualities:

- a. Either in ready-made and perfectly scaled cloth. **OR**
- b. The elements you need to recreate those qualities in a larger scale.

What will you need to bring in order to create large-scale yardage from small scale inspirations?
I can't wait to see you.....and your quilt!!