

Newsletters in March 2014

Yarn embellishments

March 15, 2014

Spring is on it's way!

Daffodils and flowering trees are making a brave start here in the N.W. The lack of sunlight all winter left me a bit deranged in February. My oldest daughter walked into my studio yesterday, looked at the Design wall and said "I like the back of your new quilt, Mom." My response, "Really, actually it's the front". (Never a good sign)

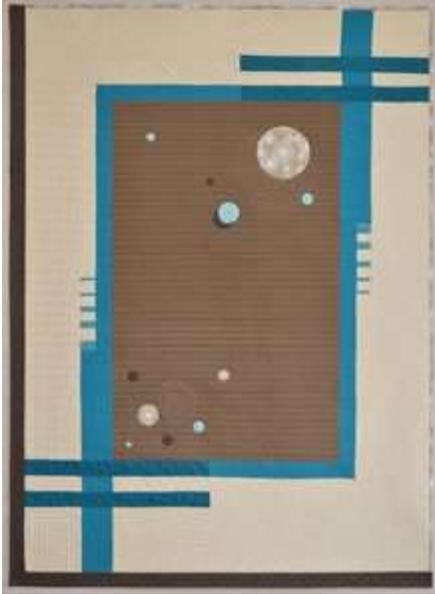
"OMG, seriously" she says.

At the last couple of quilt shows I admit to walking around mumbling, "I just don't get it. These modern quilts, whats with them?" *I'm not totally alone here.* Others have been heard to say the same. They seem to be in every magazine. They are bringing a new excited generation of quilters into our community and millions of dollars with them. But, I just didn't understand them or, I have to admit, appreciate them. Hmmm, not a good thing for someone who teaches design and is asked to judge quilt shows that have a seperate catagory for these quilts. "*When in France, learn French*", they say. I needed to learn more about this new style. So I read 3 books, all the articles about Modern quilts in my magazines, and a couple of blogs. What I learned is, there are some loose and general basic common qualities:

Large negative space. Nuetral colors accented with bold solids. Innovative piecing and more geometric quilting desigs than curveo-linear type designs.

You all have heard me say that I set myself one goal (and only one goal) for each quilt I make. Could I take what I know and teach about design, distill that down to line, color and shape, and come up with something 'Modern'? That said, "*I've never worked with a solid in my 17 years of quilting. My piecing skills are pathetic and neutral colors are not my thing*".

When the lady at the quilt shop said, "nice colors", my heart thrilled. I remembered then how much those encouraging comments meant to me way back when I started. With my design drawn out, I tackled the actual construction issue and realized there was no way I could figure out how to actually piece this thing. So it's appliqued. *I hear you laughing at me!*



Maybe I should just save it for the back!

Creativity requires that we step out of our box now and then. Push ourselves to take risks and try new things. I was out of my box (standing naked on Mars) and discovered that it was really a fun style to try. I don't speak Modern yet, but I do have a new appreciation for the quilters who do, and I won't be mumbling under my breath at the next show.

Ribbons and Things - Jingle Bells won Viewers Choice again, this time at the Mid-Atlantic show. So thrilling for me. I have three quilts going to Paducah, and I will be too. Find me in the Author's booth. Stop by and say hi. I'm not teaching in Paducah again till 2016 but will be teaching at AQS Grand Rapids this year.

Australia and New Zealand Cruise date change to April 2015 - Holland America took away the February dates from our group. I admit to being concerned that early fall was not going to be as nice as early spring. Then I heard from Carol Alanko who has been on the same cruise in April. The weather was sunny and clear. She is considering going again because there were so many locals on the boat then who said April was the clearest time of year to go. The royals, (William and Kate plus baby makes three) chose to go this year in April and surely someone advised them. It's going to be great after all, so please do join me!

Pelican Bay- Alabama, Colorado, South Carolina and Florida are all on my teaching schedule. I realized that I needed a good old Southern boy to round out my bird flock. [Meet Pete from Pelican Bay](#). This pattern comes with two pages of close up photos and instructions for details and tips on shading. Available in my web store. <http://www.kathymcneilquilts.com/shop/item/pelican-bay/>



The Mangrove roots are made with scraps of yarns. They look really cool. Tucked under the green foliage fabric, and then machine tacked in place. The feathery front of my Heron pattern is made with couched-on Eye-lash yarns. I love playing with embellishments! **The first ten Pelican patterns to go out of my store will have enough of the "Roots" yarn to add to your own quilt.**

Take care everyone. I will be in Alabama next week and at Empty Spools the week after. Hope to see you on the road somewhere too.

Hugs'

Kathy