

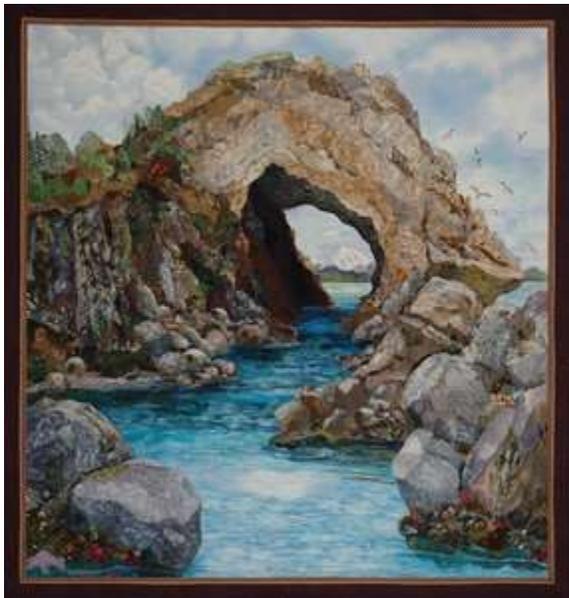
# Newsletters in November 2012

## Houston IQA show and free pattern

November 8, 2012

Happy Holidays to all of my friends;

It has taken me a few days to return to the planet after winning 1st place in Nature Quilts at the Houston IQA Show. Yea Natural Wonders. *When it happens "you just have to dance," as Ellen Degeneres would say.* This quilt has done very well in competition with a Best of Show at Road 2 California, but it is nothing that you can ever count on.



It did not win anything in the Paducah Show, but a 1st place at IQA. Audubon's Christmas won 1st in Paducah and nothing at Houston. That's because we are doing ART! Is it subjective? Yes.

When I am judging, I am looking at three things: Visual Impact, Mastery of techniques, Originality. Most quilts in these shows are master level quilts of original design. That leaves **visual impact**. Those of you who have been in my classes have heard me talk about the importance of design and composition. Let's look at an example.

Thank you to Marilyn Cawrse for sharing this wonderful quilt with us. "Casey" has been working on this tribute to her Russian Grandmother in several of my classes. It is based on a favorite water color image from a children's story book. We pulled out every trick in my box to construct her as a free object that was then sewn to a muted background. It was supposed to be like a portrait with maybe a hint of color around it and a small distant image of a Russian castle to set the mood. Casey did an impeccable job and then sent it off to her quilter. The quilter added her own spin to it and that's where things got complicated. The quilting is excellent; in fact *too*

*excellent* because it created a lot of dreaded MID GROUND. Bad things often happen in the mid ground. The foreground or focal area can have lots of interesting details, colors, textures or patterns. The background is just softly muted shapes and colors. What to do in that mid ground is always a dilemma. It's an area I try to minimize at all costs. The quilter decided to add a pebble like texture to the foreground and then used a contrasting thread and put in little hills in the back ground. The quilting in the mid ground is visually powerful too. So, in essence, she created mid-ground in what was supposed to be a portrait with a far distant image. What to Do ? What to Do?

**My August retreat seminar gals went to work brain storming ideas to save our Matruska!**

Here are the results. Casey brought the top and bottom borders in towards the center to better frame her and to bring the little building forward. If we had a mid ground... then we needed to do something in it. Little goslings and vegetation were added. The final result was so much better. It really focuses on our Grandmother instead of the big empty space surrounding her. Thanks Casey!



Next

**Stop** - I hope to see many old friends at Road 2 California. For new and returning students, be sure to e-mail me questions.

**This is the season to be thankful.** I have so much to be thankful for. I got to see so many of my students and friends at the Houston Show. Kathy Wylie is such a fun roommate. She is also the perfect contrast to me when we go look at quilts. She is all about symmetry and I am so random. We both judge, and sometimes we liked the same winners and sometimes we didn't. I learned a lot trying to see things thru her eyes. One of my favorite moments was coming back to our room. I looked over at her bed and she had fanned out all her new fabrics in a value run. Only quilters would get this. Do we pack away our new purchases. NO, we display them to make ourselves happy. To see Kathy's quilts and new pattern for her award winning quilt in Houston last year, see [www.kathykwylie.com](http://www.kathykwylie.com)

Quilting has given me so much happiness. Last month I decided to donate two of my quilts to organizations that do so much for animals.

I gave "**First Kisses**" to the largest Marine Mammal hospital and research center in the world. Go visit if you are in the S.F. Bay Area. They are so excited to have it and I was thrilled to get so many letters from their staff. [www.marinemammalcenter.org](http://www.marinemammalcenter.org)



My other quilt, "**Last Dance in the Arctic**," was donated to Polar Bear International. This organization is all about research and protection of these beautiful and beloved bears. [www.polarbearsinternational.org](http://www.polarbearsinternational.org)



Quilts are a wonderful art medium to work in. They inherently express caring, love, and a sense of community. I am thrilled that both centers will be displaying them.



**Now a free Holiday gift for all of you!**

Quilted cards are easy and fun to make. [Click here for the free pattern.](#)

It is 7 x 8 inches. Trace the pattern onto a white background fabric using a light box or window. (Use a disappearing ink pen). Now free motion quilt in the lines. *Good practice activity!* Remove the ink with water and let fabric dry. Now color in the image with ink-tense pencils. Slip a little loop into the binding and your friends will be able to hang them in their studios or from their tree. Here is a link to a free Youtube video showing you what I did and how to use them.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zy9OVIt-XY8&feature=youtu.be>

Ink tense pencils can be found at large professional art supply stores or on line at Dick Blick. Here is the link for individual colors and pencils.

<http://www.dickblick.com/products/derwent-inktense-pencils/?clickTracking=true>

**Finally - Audubon's Christmas patterns are available in my web store.**

The pattern does include the little village and bird house done in thread. AQS did a wonderful job printing them for me. Each panel is packaged and sold separately or the entire quilt pattern is available for a discount. Click here to link to my web store. It will be shipped to you by the 19th of November.

<http://www.kathymcneilquilts.com/shop/>



I wish you and your families a joyous and healthful Holiday Season.

Hugs Kathy