News and Reviews:

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Quilting Arts TV: Series 1200

I have watched about 400 episodes of QATV from its inception with Series 1000 to the latest, 1200. My assessment is that they have found a formula that works for the producers, host (the very bubbly Pokey Bolton), and the audience. They have tinkered with themes and format, but the general approach – intros by Pokey who acts as the novice but excited quilter and three to four guests remains constant. And Series 1200 remains true to that heritage.

So what did I like and other bits, not so much? If I watched the entire series just to be introduced to amazing surface designers/art quilters Linda McLaughlin ([www.lindamdesigns.com](http://www.lindamdesigns.com)) and Barbara Schroeder, it would be a success. I had seen Barbara’s leaves and reflections pieces before, but never been introduced to Linda. I am now a devoted follower of her blog. I also learned about converting designs from photographs to Photoshop to fabric through digital printing firms (read Spoonflower. They aren’t specifically identified, but if you look closely at the computer screen you can see the Spoonflower name.) This is something I have been interested in and just might give a try.

I also liked Sue Bleiswiess’s house themed table runner, but does the world really need an air freshener cozy? I was also startled to see that a whole episode (1203) and a portion of episode 1205 were repeats from series 1100. I am not sure what that was all about. I was also surprised to see a segment devoted to an infomercial for Therm-o- web, one of their new advertisers. At least in previous series when sponsors’ front people demonstrated “product” Pokey was around to act like she was learning something. This time it was just the front woman expounding on the product and its “special qualities”. Also, a number of the episodes’ themes weren’t reflected in the guests’ demonstrations, but that didn’t really detract from the shows.

I would give Series 1200 a good solid B+ and like the other 11 are all available through the Timberland Regional Library.

“Connected Cloth: Creating Collaborative Textile Projects” by Cas Holmes and Anne Kelley.

This is the second book Cas Holmes, English mixed media/art quilter, has produced. She co-authored the book with her textile partner, Anne Kelley. Although their styles are very different, they have found a way to support each other’s work and create art quilts and other textiles that complement each other. Both note that quilt making can be a solitary art form and that collaborating with others provides not only companionship, but also a safe environment to try out new things. These two are so accomplished that they have held numerous joint shows, but are clear that this isn’t the purpose of the book. Instead they give ideas on how to collaborate. For example, they suggest making pieces based on the same theme, color or style. They also recommend “days out” where pictures are taken or drawn and pieces made from their similar experiences. Another exercise is the exchange of a bag of fabric scraps and other finds in a selected color palette with the intended goal of creating complimentary pieces from these treasures.

Another section of the book includes a number of collaborative shows that they and other artists have participated in. I consider this section a mini-quilt show/inspiration chapter, rather than how to.

Although the book is aimed at art quilters, I think it would work equally well for traditional and modern quilt movement devotees. Working with similarly minded folks gives everyone an opportunity to try new things and grow.