

THE EYE GOES TO CONTRAST

And it's not all black and white

What is Contrast?

Something that is different, curly-straight, Busy-calm, Warm-cool, Bright-dull, Print-solid, etc.; the greater the difference the greater the contrast. There is a greater contrast between small and large as opposed to small and medium.

How does the eye work?

The brain is the computer and the eye is the mouse. The eye is always searching for something to lock(click) onto and send the info to the brain. This gives the eye the momentary rest that it needs. If it can't click on something, it just keeps moving. When you give your computer too many confusing commands at once, it shuts down. So does the eye and the brain.

What is a Focal Point?

What your eye sees first becomes the focal point whether you want it to or not.

How does this info apply to your quilting?

Put your greatest contrast where you want the focal point to be. Keep in mind what is most important in your quilt. Don't upstage the star. There is but one top billing and all others need to support it in varying degrees.

What are some of the other things the eye does?

1. *First and foremost it goes to contrast.*
2. *It looks for more of the same.* This really comes into play in border choices.
3. It will follow a line
4. It will find eyes
5. It will follow a line of vision or applied action

The magic number is three because it cannot split the eye, which is uncomfortable. Use uneven numbers for numbers greater. With four you can take one out, make another or put two close together to read as one. The eye likes to look 1/3 of the way down on the left side first so that is a good place for your focal point.

The magic shape is the triangle because it gets the eye moving around the quilt and can be used for balance.

How can you use this information?

Look at lots of quilts and learn to read what your eye is feeling. This is just one part of designing but a very helpful tool. *If you can develop the ability to feel what your eye is doing* you can use that to make the *eye see what you want it to*. Look for different kinds of contrast in quilts, it's not all value. Ask yourself, "Why did your eye go where it did?"

Here's to happy quilting,
Thelma Moyer