

Sharyn Mellors Applique Quilt Story of Alma Dinnetz – part 1

I want to take you on a journey of creativity. There are those of you who have seen this quilt at the Houston show in 2018 as part of the Power of Women exhibit and other places. Many quilters have asked how it was done, because they have photos of relatives who they were inspired to create in a quilt. I documented the steps, techniques, my thoughts and missteps along the way. I would like to share them with you in a few posts to Facebook, the newsletter, and website with the permission and support of Anita M Smith and Eileen O' Byrne Keane. I will gladly answer questions or they may set some special question and answer thing as we go along. Any way here we go.



This is my Great Grandmother Alma Dinnetz a North Dakota Farm wife. We can go into more of her story later on. I have loved this photo for years and I have had stages of the patterning done for maybe 10 years trying to figure out how to best use it in a quilt. When I saw that the Power of Women challenge wanted quilts that were 24" x 72" my muse got really excited because I wouldn't have to make an

elaborate background. All my work is hand applique I would rather applique even a straight line rather than deal with my sewing machine (we have domestic squabbles) and I just had trouble finding a background that I thought was worth all that hand work.

The first photo is the original taken in 1945 that I had blown up to an 8" x 10" photo for reference. My original parameters were that she fit the size required by the challenge, she would be in black and greys except for her face and skin which I would paint and the hat.



The second photo is the finished quilt hanging in Houston.



Third photo: Back 10 years ago I took the original photo to a copy shop and had it made into a 40" long enlargement not an expensive photo but a copy machine rough grainy image but good enough and less expensive. (Later I will tell you how I do this now) I traced around all the edges and the approximate edges of value that I could see, right on the copy with a sharpie marker.



Fourth photo: When I turned over the copy that I had just traced there was enough bleed through of the ink that I could retrace a bit and there was my reversed pattern for the coat and basic image.

I cut the image out of the big sheet of paper she was copied on when I found that I needed to make it bigger for the challenge. This made it possible to fit it into my home printer by folding it and copy section by section and take it to the copy shop to get my final sized pattern. That pattern came back in sections that I needed to tape together to get the final full size I needed. This is only because she was so big, she is life sized. Then I made the marks on each section stating the value for that piece, the individual number of that piece and the marks across the edges between pieces so that I could put them all back together. At that point she was just like a pattern you would buy.

My muse (that voice in your head that keeps thinking about a project even when you have other things you need to do) was already excited about this project that had waited so long. I had taken parts of 4 original patterns to the copy shop to be enlarged. I had to go back the next day to pick them up. Like most quilters I would rather stay in my studio so I sent my husband to do that simple chore. The copy people messed up every pattern but ALMA. They gave me 4 copies instead of 400%. So I knew that this quilt had to be done NOW no matter what.

There will be more information and steps given so check out the TAS members only section on the TAS website for the full tutorial of Alma. I will be happy to answer questions you may have or suggestions for information you would like me to address as this journey unfolds.

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