

Discovering Designs FOR Quilting

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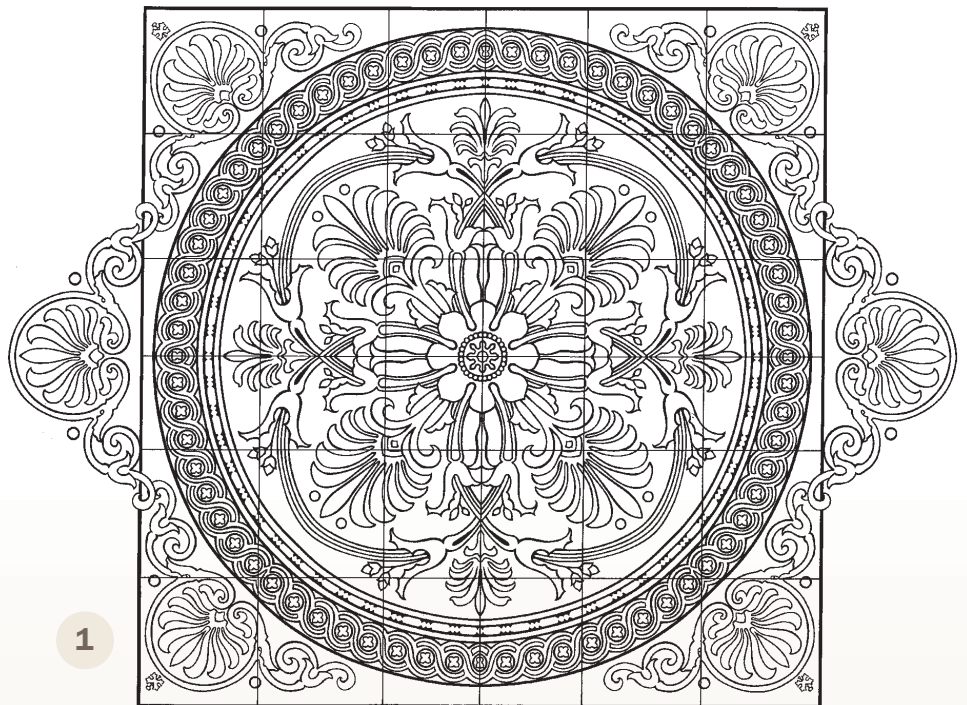
Designs for quilting are constantly evolving and emerging. Creative quilters can take comfort knowing there are plenty of untapped sources for designs all around us destined to reincarnate alongside thread. If you study certain designs there are often similarities amongst them with hints of yesteryear. Let's romance some of these designs from unexpected vintage sources.

Floors & Ceilings

When searching for designs to incorporate into quilting projects there are lots of non-traditional places to look! Floors and ceilings have showcased intricate and regional designs over the centuries. Several award-winning quilters have been inspired by artistic legacies adorned within ceilings, walkways, buildings, doorways, fencing, carvings, upholstery, textiles, wallpaper and carpets. The prospects are exciting and endless...

1 Decorative tiles generally have repeat design elements, which adapt readily to quilting applications, as I discovered. A classic motif like the "Victorian scroll" appliquéd in the corners has become more contemporary and stylized over time, originating from the Lotus flower's spongy root, believe-it-or-not.

2 When I was researching this 19th century tile design, a copyright free design from Dover Publishing, it became the basis for my 2009 CQA/ACC juried quilt entry *Casablanca*. I realized the motifs were not only symbolic to many cultures, they also resembled a slice of Lotus root—a typical ingredient used in Asian cuisine and often pickled pink! Both designs share the same origin. Who knew?



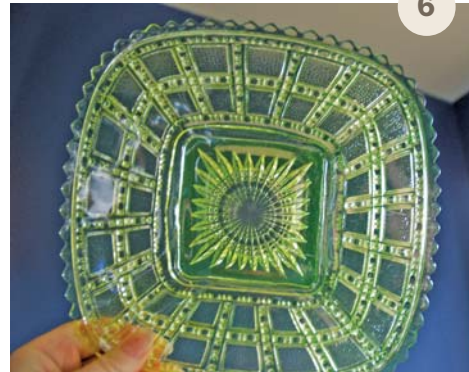


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3 Can you recognize this linoleum pattern, circa 1920-1930? Note the flowing lines resembling an “echo” quilt stitch. The dainty floral clusters could easily blend into an appliqué motif or a quilted border. (Photo credit: embroiderer extraordinaire, Bunny Goodman of Nanaimo, BC renovated her heritage home and shares this image.)

Depression Glass

6 Depression glass is defined as the coloured glassware made during the depression years in various colours. Some of you may recall pieces you received in cereal boxes and flour sacks, which encouraged customer loyalty. This green plate features beading, frosting and scalloped edges from the Imperial Glass Company 1927-1930 and later reproductions. Quilters have pieced similar “blocks”, which could have derived from this type of design.



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7 The geometric design represented in this pink vintage tray, from the Jeanette Glass Company 1936-1946, is adaptable to another pieced block method in ascending scales.

8 This delightful parrot pair, etched in time within a vintage sandwich tray, is patiently waiting to meet their new maker— appliqué anyone?



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Vintage Trays

4 This tray, now well used, was received in the 1970's as a gift from a girlfriend who traveled to Italy. It has a “square within a square” quilt potential and fleur de lys (iris) motifs in borders.

5 A circular and classic design with scalloped edges and swirled lines focus on the Baltimore-like basket motif.



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Next time you're looking for unique designs to quilt into a project, consider these untraditional sources without leaving your own home or kitchen! A continuation of this design process, which includes stitching the Lotus motifs and the threads that were used (as in photos 1 and 2), is available on my website within Cinderella's Blog archives.



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