"Kala Sankara - a mixture of arts" by Soumya Lakshmi
FROM THE EDITOR

Issue 4 - What an issue this has turned out to be! It is loaded with some awesomeness, and I am so happy to bring you some more amazing artists featured through this issue.

As always would not have been possible without your contributions, help and support. I have come to love the 2-3 weeks that I spend putting Quilt Stories together. Listening to the inspiring quilting journeys of our contributors, admiring the beauty and creativity of their work, learning something new from the conversations - it has been hugely enriching. I have been asked a few times if creating this magazine eats up into my quilting time? No, it does not. Infact it has helped enhance my own creativity in many ways. It has been very, very inspiring; and I hope it has inspired our readers too.

The endeavour is to make Quilt Stories magazine fun, relevant and creatively stimulating for all our readers. If you have any suggestions or ideas that you would like to share, please do so. Do share your experiences if you tried making any of the patterns from our previous issues. I would love to see some more contributions from you too.

I hope you all will enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting this issue together. Thanks again for all your encouragement.

Stay safe. Keep wearing your mask, even when you work on your sewing machine. It really protects you from all the fabric dust too. :)

Thank you!

Diptee Raut

Do send in your write-ups, thoughts and ideas to quiltstoriesmagazine@gmail.com

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THE BARGELLO
Bargello is a technique normally associated with 17th-century Florentine needlepoint embroidery, consisting of upright flat stitches laid in a mathematical pattern to create motifs. The name originates from a series of chairs found in the Bargello palace in Florence, which have a "flame stitch" pattern. These flame-like, wavy patterns were created with stitches on canvas.

Bargello quilts in which the patterns used in Bargello embroidery are constructed with strips of fabric of the same height but different widths. Some complicated and visually stunning designs can be created using Bargello patchwork, and we will be looking at some in this article.

Quilters have interpreted these designs using ‘strip sets’ of squares and rectangles arranged in rising and falling patterns to create colourful designs full of movement. Careful colour grading is often a feature of the work. Today they are also used to create excitingly modern quilt patterns. Jyoti’s quilt above strongly resembles a typical Bargello embroidery.

*Jyoti Maddh Ahuja’s lovely Bargello quilt top*

*Rachna Gupta’s Bargello quilt top*
A Bargello quilt creates the appearance of movement or waves within a quilt. The long strips, or tubes, that make up a Bargello quilt are sewn together to form loops. These loops are manipulated so the design looks like it’s moving.

Though these patterns look complicated, they’re actually a fine fit for beginning quilters. If you can sew a straight seam, you can do this!

Even though the look of the finished quilt is full of curves and waves, there is no curved piecing at all in this technique.

To define the process a bit more, Bargello quilting, long strips of fabric are sewn together along their long sides. Then the first and last strip are sewn together, forming a loop. The loop is laid flat on a table, and then cut vertically (in the opposite direction from how the strips were sewn together) to make many narrow loops. The quilter then opens the loops by pulling out the stitching between two pieces of fabric, making a long, flat strip. Finally, all the strips are sewn together. By opening the loops in between different pieces of fabric (for instance, between the first and second piece on one loop, then the second and

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Ranj Gandhi’s ‘Earth, Air and Water wall quilt

Jaya Parker’s magnificent map quilt
third piece on the next loop), the artist can make the colors of the quilt appear to shift and wave. Slicing the loops very narrowly makes the waving and movement appear sharp and fast; cutting wide loops creates more gentle movement in the quilt. This can be clearly seen in Rachna Gupta’s lovely quilt.

The piecing of multiple squares and rectangles requires fairly accurate seam alignments for the best results. Strip piecing is one technique used to achieve this, but sewing individual patches together is also a common method. Although Bargello is visually striking on its own, it can also be embellished and worked in more decorative directions like the Earth, Air and Water, circular Bargello wall hanging made by Ranju Gandhi.

The Bargello quilt also can make a wonderful background. In Jaya Parker’s brilliant Map Quilt, The background was pieced in bargello style to get the day and night effect.

Bargello is also a great technique for using up spare fabrics. Batiks are a good choice as they usually have many variations of pattern and colour in each piece of fabric. Selecting fabrics for Bargello is fun, but may take time to achieve a pleasing balance. Kausalya and Charulata’s bright and happy quilt was made with hand dyed jelly rolls.

It’s also good to throw in some striking contrast like that in Ranju’s quilt.

Once you have learnt the technique, you can become more adventurous with your choices and introduce more than one range of colours. Bargello quilt is one versatile quilt and can be made to such amazing designs in just a little tweak.

Do give the bargello a try!

Hope you enjoyed the wonderful quilts in this article. You can click on the artist names below each picture to contact them and see more of their work.
We interviewed the amazing Paramjeet Bawa. What an inspirational lady! Read on to know more about her and applaud her gorgeous quilts.
How did quilting happen to you?
Oh, with great difficulty! I was always interested in hand work and textiles because as a child my mother was very particular about not letting us sit idle. The whole devil’s workshop story. So, I got enjoying hand embroidery, but I was never a machine person. I just did not find it comfortable. And then when we moved to Kuwait, out of boredom and not having any friends around, I joined a quilt group, thankfully! And it was the wonderful people I met there who generously helped me get into quilting. Just listening to them talk, learning the terminology, getting used to the instruments helped me. It took me two years to really get down to making a quilt though.

Tells us more about the first time.
I started with a charity quilt and if you are, like me, intimidated by machines, I would advice you to start with a charity quilt. It gives you a reason to quilt. And when you make just one block, and you realise that it is fast and easy. Just with a little care, when you get the perfect corners and the perfect lines, it motivates you to go on. Making blocks for charity got me going.

Do you have a favourite quilting technique?
I don’t think I have a favourite technique. I think technique must be appropriate to what you’re trying to create. I do enjoy quilting when I don’t have to follow a line. So I am quilting an art quilt top when it is ready and I have to quilt grass and trees and leaves, I have a rough pattern in my mind and I really enjoy quilting it then. It is the most enjoyable part of a quilt journey for me.

I am a very temperamental quilter. I prefer working on 3-4 quilts at a time and finishing them over a period of 2-3 years instead of finishing one quilt and getting on to the next. Filling the gap between the quilt making is difficult. If I get bored with a quilt it ends up getting shelved.
How do you decide on fabrics and colours that go into your quilt?

Selection of colours and fabric is fun. The whole house becomes a mess when I am choosing fabric. I take a long time to select fabrics and even then if something does not work in the quilt, I rip it out. And the seam ripper is a friend. I don't mind ripping. Thread and fabric need to be auditioned many a times. Threads, not as much because even if the threads don't match, to do add a different enjoyable dimension to the quilt.

Do you create your own patterns and techniques? When and how did that start?

Yes, I've been making my patterns all the time. I haven't designed any traditional patterns. My patterns are based mostly on pictures I have taken or some fabric that has inspired me or some element of nature that has intrigued me. Even when I teach, I ask my students get their own pictures that inspire them. There are no size restrictions either. I just help with the pattern making and help them with the technique. So, each student brings a different picture that must be delt in a different way and technique. Hence, this method of my teaching also helps me satisfy my creativity in a huge way. Even if a student comes with a difficult project where I may have to help with a technique, I have never used myself, I still take it up. It is a learning process for me too. Over the time whenever I look at a quilt, I automatically get thinking on how it could have been done.

You have been an inspiration to many, what inspires you?

Inspirations are there all around you. just take a picture of right what is in front of you and try to make a quilt out of it, it will be beautiful. I feel it's like watercolours. Whatever you paint with watercolour it is going to be charming. Similarly, you translate it into textiles it's going to be lovely. There is no dearth of inspiration it is everywhere.
Tell us about one project that you are really proud of?

I will give the cliché that every baby is precious. The fact is that I have never cherished a quilt once it is completed. I’ve always enjoyed the journey of making my quilts. There is however only one quite that I have made by foundation paper piecing. I had designed a kite flying in the sky quilt, and the paper piecing was such a struggle, It made me pull my hair. I just stopped paper piecing since then. That was one time I just did not enjoy the process at all. I make quilts because I love to enjoy the process. Not because I want to finish or sell it.

Saying that, I am very proud of my Istanbul quilt. I had a card of a Turkey mosque and basis that I did the project. It taught me a lot and the quilt does thrill me to this day when I look at it. Also, the recent project that I did on the covid warriors. It is about this migrant labour family walking from Bombay to their village. It really moved me. I enjoyed the process I did a few new things in it; I had no clue that I'll be able to get the effect that I got. I am not happy that I hastened a few steps in the quilt I wish I had taken more patience in handling it but overall, I'm very proud of that quilt. I felt attached to the family, feeling their pain and their heroism as I made this quilt.

So, what do you usually do with your finished quilts?

My quilts are like my photo albums, just taken out sometimes to enjoy them. Whoever wants to see my quilts I enjoy looking at them with them but that's about it. I have only sold on quilt of mine because my friend loved it and I wanted to gift it but she coaxed me into selling it to her.

What advice would you like to give other quilters?

Well, as an advice I would say enjoy the process of quilting and for that matter any hand. It has great therapeutic qualities. It has pulled me out many a times from my boredom. It has given me back my energy. The spirit, the happiness whenever I have a quilt under my machine is incomparable. I am never my happiest when I am between two quilts. I do not like the gap, but I still have that tingling feeling that I will be getting back to my quilt soon. Quilting is what will make you happy.

You can contact Paramjeet Bawa to take a workshop with her, see her work and know her more.
Facebook - @Paramjeetbawa
This cute cat quilt is named by my daughter and is fun to make for cat lovers in your life. It is super easy to piece as it is assembled only with squares and HST’s. You can never go wrong with it. You can also replace the cat block fabrics and use your scraps to make it.
Fabric Requirement

**Grey (Background Fabric)** - 2.5 metres
- 48 squares – 5.5”
- 23 squares – 6.5” (to make HST with given method)

**Pink** - 1.5 metres
- 38 squares – 5.5”
- 8 squares – 6.5” (to make HST with given method)

**Blue** - 1 metre
- 8 squares – 5.5”
- 16 squares – 6.5” (to make HST with given method)

**White** - 1 ¼ metre
- 32 squares – 6.5” (to make HST with given method)

**Yellow** - ¼ metre
- 4 squares – 5.5”
- 1 square – 6.5” (to make HST with given method)

**Black** - 1/8 metre
- 2 squares – 6.5” (to make HST with given method)

**Backing Fabric** - 70”X85” (approx. 5.5 metres)

**Binding Fabric** - ½ metre (7 strips of 2.5” width)

To make HST (Half Square Triangle), you will need to cut each square 6.5” size. I have separated them for you in above requirements.

Other requirements

- Batting 70”X85”
- Quilting pins for basting
- Rotary cutter/ scissors
- Quilting ruler
- Cutting Mat

All fabric requirements are based on 42” fabric width and have kept some room for errors. I would advise you to buy 1/8 metre extra to allow variations in cutting.

How to make HST’s for Cute Cat Quilt:

I am giving the simplest method to make HST (Half Square Triangle) with very minimal tool requirements. All you need is rotary cutter, cutting mat and 6 by 12/24 inches ruler. Quilters usually have these tools with them. If you want to follow any other method please follow as per your convenience. Make sure the HST unit measures 5.5 inches after trimming. This 5.5 inches HST unit becomes our unfinished unit for quilt.

Cut two 1” larger than finished size of HST unit (we need 6.5” square to make HST). We need 5.5” HST, so, make sure to cut at least 6.5” squares. Place squares right side together and draw a diagonal line from corner to corner (as per black line in below pic). Draw stitching lines ¼” on each side of centreline.

Stitch on each of the 2 stitching lines (in below pic highlighted in yellow).

Cut on the centreline.

Press open with both seam allowances to one side.

Trim to size, including seam allowance. i.e. Your HST unit should now be 1/2” taller and wider than the finished size of the patchwork. In this case your HST unit should measure 5.5” after trimming.

You get 2 HST’s with this method.

**Note:** It takes longer to make oversize triangle square units and then trim them back to their exact, unfinished size before assembly. But, trust me …the extra time spent making precise units often results in time saved when all patchwork fits together exactly as it should.
**QUILT LAYOUT (180 blocks):**

Once you have made HST’s and have cut squares, you are ready to assemble the quilt. I have given the layout below which should help you to assemble it quickly. Stitch each row separately and then stitch rows together. If you will keep this picture in front of you while sewing, you will not need to lay it out on floor/quilt board. I have quilted this with stitch in a ditch method.

**Eye Shapes:** Cut the eye shapes from leftover fabric white and black and place it on cat’s face and stitch it with any decorative stitch or you can hand stitch as well.

You can contact Aparna Shenolikar via her Facebook - @Aparna

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**DON’T MISS!**

Don’t miss the amazing activities happening at the Desi Quilter’s Facebook group.

The current activity was a #loveandhealing pouch swap. With over 90 participants creating gorgeous pouches to share with each other, this was a definite brightener in the general gloomy atmosphere of the pandemic. Truly loving and healing as the name!

If you are not already a member of the Desi Quilters group, do join NOW! It is a non-commercial space with lots of fun and loads to learn.
There are some quilts that make you smile; they make you happy; they make you remember childhood. Here is one such lovely quilt. Let’s hear the story behind Kalindi’s award winning — Who will Bell The Cat?
I am a professional fine artist, graduated from the renowned “Abhinav Kala Mahavidyalaya, Pune” and specialized in “Portrait painting”. I conducted my first individual quilt exhibition and workshop in Pune, Maharashtra in 2011, after I returned from China. In 2016, I started my own studio and brand named “Kalindi Quilts”. At the same time, I started my own line of hand dyed fabrics, of which the 72-color wheel fabric set is popular amongst quilters in India and abroad. In the same year, I became Bernina India ambassador.

This all started at certain point in 2007, I changed my medium of expression from paper, brush, paints to fabrics and threads. In 2008, during my stay in Shanghai, China, I got formal training in patchwork and quilting techniques from Japanese Quilt Association. After constant experimenting with the quilting techniques, I could make some quilts which were acclaimed internationally. One of such quilts is “Who will bell the cat”, for which I won 1st place in The World Quilt Festival of Shanghai (2010) in China.

“Who will bell the cat” is a picturesque representation of the story about mice trying to put a bell on the cat to save themselves from being eaten. The entire story was hand drawn by me with my imagination. This quilt is 3D with a unique shape. It is an unconventional quilt with embossing effect all over. Totally hand pieced, hand applique and hand quilted.

The idea of this quilt came from baby quilts which I used to make in Japanese style (SUE). From there I wanted to use the Japanese style and make my own design and story to make a quilt. I thought of how I could depict a story in quilt form that the children would love. An idea of depicting the “who will bell the cat” story came to my mind, which I used to hear from my grandmother when I was young. Then I started working on the design through drawing and painting. While drawing, I thought of making 4 sections of the story to simplify the design. The first section contains the mice having the best time of their lives; the second section is about how the cat attacks the group of mice for a meal
while they were relaxed. The third section tells us that the mice are having a meeting on how to tackle this situation with the cat, so they can live peacefully. And the fourth section talks about their solution and the main question; “who will bell the cat?” Since the entire story’s focal point was the bell, I got the idea of changing the quilts shape to a mouse and bell who is the main character in the story.

To make this quilt I used 100% cotton fabrics; a few from Chinese local markets for the base and backing, and a few Japanese style fabrics for the all the characters and their clothing. The Japanese style fabrics used for quilting are really unique, which I had been using for most of my quilts and bags. The character’s faces were made using the finished curve applique piecing; using a freezer paper to cut the fabric in shape by ironing on it. The eyes, glasses, moustache were embroidered completely as well as partially on it. The clothing of all characters was made using the traditional fashion clothing technique by making clothing drawing template, then cutting the fabric and stitching them by hand. The only difference was to make these clothes in a very small size and then I partially appliqued them on the characters. I have also used actual buttons to give it a realistic feel. To give the entire quilt a 3-dimensional effect, I used a lot polyfill to make it like a soft toy. For this big mouse, I used the same technique as I used for making the clothes; by putting the right sides together, I hand stitched all sides and left a little opening to fill the stuffing (polyfill) in the mouse and then stitched the little end using the hand blind stitch.

In the end the expressive faces of the characters, the story ideation and the 3D unique shaped quilt was the reason I got 1st prize award.

Kalindi Hambir has her own studio and brand named “Kalindi Quilts” where you will find various art quilts and where she also conducts various workshops. Visit her Facebook page - @KalindiQuilts to know more
Whenever we use our hands to create something beautiful, we end up revealing our soul in that creation. And when this creation is made by the nimble hands of children with special needs, it calms them, and this serenity shows in their art. It works like therapy and happiness for them.
V-Excel Educational Trust is a lifespan organisation that enriches lives of persons with special needs and empowers them for an independent and dignified living.

Three unique and exquisite quilts were designed and created by students and teachers from V-Excel education Trust and exhibited at IIQF 2021.

Gita Bhalla, of V-Excel Education Trust tells us that the finger dexterity, concentration, and attention needed for completing a simple sewing task is not only an accomplishment of the physical body but also works deeply on the soul of a child. This invisible realm of the child gains the soul capacity of bringing into raw materials of cloth and thread something as profound as truth, beauty, and goodness – the three concepts that V-Excel works on. Quilting fits in beautifully because it has only a simple running stitch and once the children with autism master it, they are able to do it quite perfect.

On the Founder’s Day, V-Excel students do a big piece of artwork. This was once seen by Varsha Sundararajan, and she was impressed. Later she did a workshop with the teachers on various ways in which they can work with fabrics and stitches. She taught them raw edged applique with simple straight stitches. The students had started learning this technique and then covid happened.

It was during the peak of the lockdown when the institution was functioning remotely that the students were asked to create 24-inch blocks of whatever they wanted by using whatever fabric was available at home. At the end they received 30-40 different blocks designed and created by the children which the teachers then put together. The beauty of this community quilting project was that despite the social distancing, it brought the students, teachers, and parents together to create these three masterpieces.

We wanted to know what the students felt about this experience, and they had some beautiful words for us.

One student said about “Waters in a Still Storm” - This piece came together during the rains and cyclone, threading different currents, stitches, waves into a tapestry of calmed chaos. It also reminded us that the sun will still shine, and a boat can ride any storm if
you keep trying.

About “Surprise in the Savannah” another student said - This piece emerged out of one simple, sweet, shy giraffe asking to be seen. In supporting and honouring this one central theme, this piece reminded us that communities are sometimes formed simply to serve one person’s destiny and that is itself is an honour- for you never know- you might be proving food or shelter or even covering up an inadequacy of the community just by your presence.

“Within the Diamond” is a beautiful quilt and one of the students who worked on it, says - This piece was rather easy to create, simply because the foundation stones were symmetrical, ordered, and paired. It reminded us that order brings peace and even stars need a space of nothingness to see their form and shine their light.

An amazing thing to happen was that a philanthropist bought “Waters in a still storm” at an auction and that really boosted the morale of the children. It was a joyous moment for V-Excel.

V-Excel Educational Trust is committed to helping people with special needs fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives . To know more about them, visit their website - V-excel.org.

To visit the online store and buy lovely art pieces made by the children - Click on the link - Crafts2020.
The Hearts Together is inspired by traditional kolam designs as well as Celtic designs. In the last several months, most of us have been working and studying from home. Being home all day with the family is both challenging and rewarding. Hearts Together represents the four of us in my family spending every hour and every meal together.
Fabric Requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Yards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yellow (including binding)</td>
<td>1 yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey</td>
<td>1 3/4 yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backing</td>
<td>1 1/2 yard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This design works best with solids, blenders, or small-scale prints.

WOF: Width of Fabric. The fabric requirements and cutting instructions assume WOF is at least 40”.

Cutting Chart: This table shows the number of pieces of each size needed for the quilt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Yellow</th>
<th>Grey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4” x 4”</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5” x 4.5”</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2” x 3.5”</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2” x 2”</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5” x 3.5”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5” x 12.5”</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5” x WOF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5” x WOF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cut one 3.5” x WOF strip. Sub-cut this strip into sixteen 2” x 3.5” rectangles.
Cut one 2” x WOF strip. Sub-cut this strip into sixteen 2” x 2” squares.
Cut two 12.5” x WOF strips. Sub-cut each strip into three 12.5” x 12.5” squares.
Cut one 4.5” x WOF strip.
Cut one 12.5” x WOF strip.

Making half-square Triangles (HSTs): For this project, the HSTs will be 3.5” square (unfinished).

Start with need two 4” squares - one yellow and one grey. Draw a line from corner to corner on the wrong side of one of the squares. Place the squares right sides together. Sew a scant quarter inch away on both sides of the line. Cut along the drawn line. Press open and trim them to 3.5” x 3.5”. You will get two HSTs from one yellow and one grey square.

Use eight yellow and eight grey squares to make sixteen HSTs.

Making partial quarter-square triangles (pQSTs): The pQSTs are 3.5” square (unfinished).

Step 1: Start with two 4.5” squares - one yellow and one grey. Draw a line from corner to corner on one of the squares. Place the squares right sides together. Sew a scant quarter inch away on both sides of the line. Cut along the drawn line. Press open. This will make two HSTs that are slightly larger than 4”. No need to trim these squares now. Proceed to step 2.

From eight yellow and eight grey 4.5” squares, make sixteen 4” HSTs.

Step 2: You will need one HST made in the step above and one yellow 4” square. Draw a line from corner to corner on the back of the yellow square. Place the 4” yellow square centered on top of the HST from the step above, right sides together and the diagonal line opposite to the seam on the HST. Sew a scant quarter
inch away on both sides of the line. Cut along the line and press the triangles open. Trim to 3.5” square.

Use sixteen 4” yellow squares and the sixteen HSTs from step 1 to make thirty-two pQSTs.

Heart tops:
Step 1: This is a commonly used stitch and flip technique. You will need one 2” x 3.5” yellow rectangle and one grey 2” square. Draw a line along the diagonal on the wrong side of the grey square. Place the grey square at the corner of the yellow rectangle. Sew along the drawn line. Cut ¼” away from the seam. Press open the triangle. For each heart block, you will need two units with the grey triangle to the right and two with the triangle to the left.

Step 2: Sew a 2” x 3.5” grey triangle on top of the unit from above.
Make thirty-two heart top units. Half of them will have the grey triangle to the right and the other half to the left.

Corner triangles:
Draw a line along the diagonal of a yellow 3.5” square. Place it at the corner of a 12.5” grey square. Sew on the drawn line and cut a quarter inch from the seam. Press open.
Make four such squares with corner triangles.

Heart Block Layout:
Each heart block uses eight pQSTs, four HSTs and four heart top units. Refer to the layout diagram and assemble the heart blocks.

Quilt Layout:
First assemble the center with the heart blocks. Then sew the 4.5” grey WOF strip to one side. Trim the strip to the size of the center. Then sew the 12.5” grey WOF strip to the top of the center section. Trim away extra fabric.

Quilting:
Baste and quilt as desired. Here are some quilting ideas and suggestions:

If you have enough contrast between the hearts and the background, you can use any all-over design for quilting. Straight lines, wavy lines or all-over stippling will look good. If you want to emphasize the heart blocks, use straight lines to trace the “lines” of the heart design and use a different filler, preferably a free motion design, for the background.

For my quilt, I wanted to try something different. I quilted a swath of swirls, feathers and pebbles going from one corner of the quilt to the opposite corner and filled the rest of the background with straight lines. Using contrasting designs gives it a dramatic look.

Vasudha’s quilts have been displayed at the International Quilt Festival in 2019 and QuiltCon 2020 and 2021. She can be reached on Instagram @storiedquilts314 or via her blog https://storiedquilts.com/.
Creating Unique Art Quilts:
How do people come up with new ideas is a burning question in every beginner quilters head. The intermediate and advanced ones experience a mental block as they are stuck with a particular kind of thought, a set standard and cannot get out of it.
**Relearning is the Mantra:**
The surrounding all around us has so much to offer that you don't need to get inspired from anywhere else. ‘What you need is an open mind, desire to be ORIGINAL in whatever you do, and a bit technical know-how thrown in by taking a few courses from experts.

**Hurray you are ready to go.**
The most imp thing is “Let go” don't think you need to do what others do. Free the mind, no need to copy as copy is always looked like a copy and you may have better ideas of your own and don’t spoil that. Keep the mind open, think afresh.

**Planning and ideas**

**Theme Quilts** A theme is given, and this makes it easier, but it is equally challenging to do an out of the box idea quilt

**Your own ideas:** Here you have all the freedom to choose whatever you please but, this is where you usually get lost and stuck.

**Surroundings as a savior:** The surrounding around us has a lot to offer in both situations. The sky, water, sunset, flowers, buildings, man-made and God made structures and natural lay outs has lot to copy from with just a smartphone camera.

The newspapers and local magazines have images you can copy with credit, the family photographs, the photos taken on tours, architectural and natural things around you the list is never ending. There is no copy right issue here and that will be your original creation.

**Techniques:** There is no hard and fast rule that you should stick to one single technique in one quilt. You can mix and match, but whatever you do see that your basics are good enough.

**Few useful basic techniques:**
Fusing, appliqué, foundation paper piecing, applique piecing, thread painting and sketching, painting using ink-tense pencils, traditional blocks, embroidery, fabric portraits all of these or a select few can be combined in a single quilt. Just need to keep it balanced.

You can also do it using a single technique. It is always easy to make small pieces to try before you venture on a full-size competition quilt,
Examples:

**ReLeaf:**
This is one of my quilts I had created as a tribute to the very few greeneries found in a desert country. Over a period of 15 days, leaves from different plants locally found were gathered, dipped in fabric paint, impression taken by pressing them on a white fabric, shapes cut and appliqué on a background and pieced traditionally. The idea and execution made it a winning quilt in an art category.

**Arabic Tiles:** A theme quilt, that needed to represent something Arabic and looking around for an idea tumbled on a tile lay out in a public place, took an image, and decided to piece it in traditional way, by thread sketching few images connected to the area on the empty blocks. That made it another original winning piece.

**"The great migration"** This is one of my favourite journal quilts (A4 or A3 Size) as I recreated my tour to Massai Mara Kenya. The wild beast migration is world famous and standing there and looking at it I knew I will recreate it at some point. The images taken by self-provided as the subject, photo printing, fusing, fabric, painting, thread painting techniques are used.

**Unconditional love:** This is done for a black and white theme. Reverse appliqué, thread sketching, foundation paper piecing, resulted in a piece that shows mother love.

**A birthday gift:** A birthday month birthstone set in silver is placed in a cane basket wrapped in a paper. I wanted it as a tribute to cane weavers of India. Aside from the financial benefits that the work brings them, women benefit from the sense of community their work brings them. The stems of giant variety of bamboo are used for making the baskets. Reverse appliqué, thread-painting, ink-tense pencils, and free motion quilting brought this to life.

Visit Shyamala Rao’s blog - **BanyantreeQuilts** - to learn and know more.
Ludo is a classic dice-and-race game and is derived from the Indian game Pachisi, but simpler. The game and its variations are popular in many countries and under various names. Though Ludo game boards are available in the market, wouldn’t it be a great idea to construct this game board with fabrics. Ok, Let’s get going with a patchwork and quilted game board.

Finished Size - 28” x 28”
Difficulty Level – Intermediate
Fabric Requirements
Back Ground (BG) Fabric - ½ meter,
Light, Pastel shade
Red - 1 Fat Quarter
Green - 1 Fat Quarter
Yellow - 1 Fat Quarter
Blue - 1 Fat Quarter
Back ing Fabric – 35” x 35” square
Batting – 30” x 30” square
(Felt can also be used, as it will lie Flat)

Cutting Instructions

BG Fabric
6 ½ ” x 6 ½ ” squares - 4 Pieces
2” x 2” squares – 48 Pieces (Cut 3 strips of 2” and sub cut)

Outer Border
3” x 23” – 2 Pieces
3” x 28” – 2 Pieces

Red, Green, Yellow, Blue Fabrics
Cut from Red, Green Yellow & Blue color as mentioned below
2 ” x 6 ½ ” - 2 Pieces
2 ” x 9 ¼ ” - 2 Pieces
2 ” x 2 ” - 6 Pieces
5 small rounds - ¾” diameter

Center Piece
6 ” x 6 ” square - 1 piece each from the 4 colored fabrics

Construction of the Game Board

We will do the construction in 3 Stages. The 4th stage will be to assemble the blocks. The 5th stage will be to add the final border.

Will first construct the RED block, and the same instructions to be used for the construction of GREEN, YELLOW & BLUE blocks.

STAGE 1 - BLOCKS

Step 1 – To one 6 ½ ” x 6 ½ ” BG square, attach 2 ” x 6 ½ ” red strips on opposite sides. Press the seams to the red strip.

Step 2 – Next attach 2 ” x 9 ½ ” red strips to the other 2 side. Seams to be pressed to the red strips.

Step 3 – Divide the center area into four blocks using a fabric marking pencil.
Applique 4 red rounds in the center of each of the block.

This block to measure 9 ½ ” square.

Repeat the above 3 steps for the construction of GREEN, YELLOW & BLUE blocks.

Wasn’t this construction very easy?? Now let’s move to the next stage.

STAGE 2 - SIDE BARS

We will chain piece the 2 ” squares as three lines vertically and then join the 3 lines to form a block, to be called Side Bars

Step 1 – Chain piece six 2 ” BG squares – To look like # 1 in the photo.

Step 2 - Chain piece five 2 ” red squares. Attach a 2” BG square to one end. To look like # 2 in the photo.

Step 3 - Chain piece four 2 ” BG squares. Next to attach a red square, followed by a BG square. To look like # 3 in the photo.

Step 4 - Now to join the above 3 lines, join the above pieces in a sequence as indicated in the picture, ensuring that the points dotted as in the picture are matched. You can press the seams towards the red block.

This Side bar to measure 5 ” x 9 ½ ”.

Repeat the above 4 steps for the construction of GREEN, YELLOW & BLUE Side Bars.
STAGE 3 - CENTER QST BLOCK

I am sure you have enjoyed the construction of the previous 2 stages. This 3rd stage is slightly tricky. You can construct this block in alternate methods too, but I am going to demonstrate a method where you will have less of bias to handle. You will end up making 4 QST blocks, but you will use only one QST block for this quilt. What to do with the other 3 QST’s, and surely that is not going to be a problem as we will have many projects where we can use them.

Kindly follow the steps & placement as per the photos to get the center block as illustrated.

Half Square Triangles Construction

- **6" x 6"** square of all the 4 colors are to be used. Make 2 sets as illustrated.
- 1. Right sides together, place the red square on top of the blue square. Draw a diagonal on the red fabric. Stitch a ¼" line on either side of the diagonal.
- 2. Right sides together, place the yellow square on top of the green square. Draw a diagonal on the yellow fabric. Stitch a ¼" line on either side of the diagonal.
- 3. Cut both the stitched pieces on the diagonal lines to make it to half.
- We have now constructed 2 half squares triangles (HST) for each combination. {Do not cut the dog ears}

For the 1st block, finger press the seam towards blue fabric.

For the 2nd block, the seam is pressed towards green fabric.

Quarter Square Triangles Construction

Next is the construction of QST. We will be using only one HST of each combination. Place the Green / Yellow HST, on top of the Red/Blue HST, right sides together. The seams will nest well, and the dog ears to be in the corners in 90° right angles. (have marked for easy reference)

- Draw a diagonal on yellow /green HST as illustrated, and stitch a ¼" line on either side of the diagonal.

- Cut at the center line and you will get the two QST’s as illustrated.

Notice the different fabric placement of Green / Blue in both the QST’s.

In this pattern, I am using the QST block marked 1. Our next step is to square up the QST block to 5" x 5", using a square ruler.

STAGE 4 – JOINING OF ROWS

Now that we have finished the 3 stages of blocks construction, we are going to join them in rows.

Row 1

Start with the Red Block. Attach the Green Side Bar, to the Red Block, pressing the seam towards the Red Block. Finally attach the Green Block and the seams to be pressed towards the Green block.
**Row 2**

To the Red Side Bar, attach the QST. Make a note of the placement of the QST block. The red side of the QST is attached to the side bar block and the seams pressed towards the red side of the QST. To this new Unit pieced, fix the yellow side bar, and the seams are pressed towards the yellow side of QST.

You can applique the blue and green circles in the 3rd BG square in the side bars as shown in the above picture. Ensure that the dotted points match well while the blocks are joined.

**Row 3**

Start with the Blue Block. Attach the Blue Side Bar, to the Blue Block, pressing the seam towards the Blue Strip. Finally attach the Yellow Block and the seams to be pressed towards the Yellow block.

You can applique the yellow circle in the 3rd BG square in the side bar as shown in the above picture. Ensure that the dotted points match well while the blocks are joined.

Next is to join all the above 3 rows, ensuring that the points all matches well.

**STAGE 5 – FINAL CONSTRUCTION**

To complete the Ludo Game Board Construction, we must attach the Outer Borders

Step 1 - Attach 3” x 23” BG strips on opposite sides
Step 2 - To the other 2 sides, attach 3” x 28” BG strips

**The Final Block to measure 28” x 28”**

**QUILTING & BINDING**

The final Ludo game block may be basted either with Cotton batting. Using a Felt as batting is also a good option as the block will lie flat. I did stitch in the ditch with black thread to give the board effect, hand quilted the colored blocks and the QST, completed with a binding and my final block looks very inviting. All I need to do now is to play a game of Ludo!

Do visit Meera Venkats Facebook page - QuiltEssence to see more of her wonderful quilts.
There are many art forms that go hand in hand with quilting. They are all soul sisters. So from this issue we have decided to add a little about these soul sisters of quilting. Here we have a wonderful introduction to chikankari by the talented Saba Asim.
The art of Chikankari, by all normal estimates, is about 300-400 years old. It was brought to India by the Mughal Empress Noor Jahan, the wife of emperor Jahangir.

Legend has it that Noor Jahan was an accomplished Seamstress and embroiderer. Both husband and wife were fond of this form of embroidery. Done mostly on clothing on soft mulmul cotton, it looks like delicate lace, and was ideally suited for the hot and sultry North Indian climate. The patterns are all derived from Persian and Turkish motifs.

Noor Jahan taught this embroidery form to the local women around Delhi and as it spread, it moved to the city of Lucknow.

Lucknow, the state of Uttar Pradesh became the hub of Chikankari embroidery in the years to come. I belong to this beautiful city of gardens. I was taught to do needlework early in life, like most girls of my generation. And Chikankari was the art passed down from grandmas and mum along with dress making and other forms of embroidery.

Now I am a bug for all things creative, so over the years I learned all that I could. Crochet, knitting, tatting, beadwork being some of them. An incredibly lucky pattern book find at a local bookstore during my college days, led me to quilting, that remains my first love to this day. The book was all about scrappy. And this inspired me to make use of Mum’s sewing scraps and turn them into quilts and quilted projects.

However, I think, as you grow older and when you have roamed the world and learned all that you possibly could, you start getting this urge to go back to your roots. And hence, the inclination towards a revival of this gorgeous art form that is comparable to no other.

But why revival? You might ask…

Chikankari is all around us. Everyone buys and wears it. I have seen machine work being sold to tourists in the name of Chikankari for measly sums in the bazaars of Lucknow! They can’t make out the difference. Designers are having fun creating Chikankari dresses that sell for thousands of dollars around
the world. And this, at the expense of artisans in the villages around Lucknow who still earn a scant income.

So, I move forward with the dream of bringing the very authentic Chikankari back to life, while also being able to give back to the original embroiderers back home in the villages. The plan is to incorporate it in textile art projects and quilts without diluting the beauty of the embroidery in any way.

Also looking forward to sharing the skill with eager learners. My on demand

This is your Chikankari girl, signing off for now!!

Saba’s Chikankari workshops are coming soon. Visit Instagram: Sew_Saba and Facebook: Sew_Saba for more details
Who does not like a fun trendy bag? And it is better when it made by you too, is it not? Learn to make this gorgeous bag by Madhavi Mukherjee.
Finished Size:
- Top Length: 12”
- Bottom Length: 14”
- Base: 5”
- Height: 9”

Skill Level: Beginner

Points to Remember:
Seam allowance is 0.5” and included in the measurements
Always backstitch at the start and end of the seams
Ironing after every step is highly recommended (if making a completely fabric bag)

Materials:
- 1 ½ yard exterior fabric
- 1 ½ yard lining fabric
- Medium weight fusible interface
- Sew-in foam interfacing / bag fleece / bag foam
- One Zipper 18”
- Two Faux Leather straps 32” or if you are making fabric straps then cut two fabric strips measuring 3”x33” and fusible interface 2”x32”
- Rivets to secure the straps
- Additionally measure, 15” x 15” for an inner slip pocket and corresponding fusible interface measuring 14”x14”

Pattern:
Draw the pattern on a chart paper or card paper with the measurements given below
Fold the paper in half and then draw out the pattern.

Making the Bag:
Cut 2 exterior fabric, 2 lining fabric, 4 fusible interface and 2 bag foam
Fuse the woven interface to all the exterior fabric and lining pieces

Attach the foam to the exterior fabric pieces and quilt them in any way you prefer, freeform or wavy lines, straight or zigzag.
Mark center points of the exterior pieces, and then mark 3” on either side
Mark 1” down and then attach the straps from there with the rivets coming down 1” from the top.
Keep the exterior pieces aside.

Inner Pocket and Lining
Now mark a centre point in one of the lining pieces
Take the piece that measures 15” x 15” for the inner slip pocket
Attach the fusible interface to it, fold it in half, matching right sides together
Sew along all sides leaving 3” gap to turn the pocket inside out
Once you have turned the pocket inside out, iron the pocket and top stitch on the opposite side of the opening
Now neatly close the opening and pin it and lay it on one of the lining pieces, 3” down from the centre
Sew along the sides of the pocket, attaching it the lining piece

Attaching The Zipper
Prepare the zipper tape by tucking the head in and sewing a couple of tacks to keep it in place
Now place your lining piece right side up.

Then place the zipper on top of it, right side up, with zipper pull to your left. Place the exterior piece on top of the zipper, right side down, sandwiching the zipper in between the two pieces. Mark one inch at the end of the line. Pin the sandwiched zipper till the one inch mark

Then tuck the zipper in away from the line in a right angle inside the bag, bending it away from the edges, out of the way and just the pin the fabric layers together.

Please do not cut the zipper end at all. Leave the extra bit tucked in, on the pieces. Use a zipper foot to sew over the sandwiched layers, removing the pins as you go.

Now flip the inner lining and exterior side, wrong sides together and top stitch. Lay the remaining Lining side up, then place the zipper with fabrics attached on top of it and then place the remaining exterior side, right side down.

Tuck in pull side zipper end, just bend it 90 degrees, just like before, making sure the metal bit of the zipper is just over 3/4" away from the right edge this time.

Pin and sew just like before, stopping one inch before the end.

Then pull the zipper away from the seam, bending it down, in towards the fabrics. Continue stitching along the fabrics until the edge. Flip so that the fabrics are wrong sides facing and press.

Top stitch again on the other side.

Completing The Bag

Line up exterior side pieces right side together and the lining pieces right side together as shown above

Sew along the dotted lines as marked on the picture above

Leave about 4” gap in the lining pieces to turn the bag inside out

Be mindful to tuck the straps in so that you don’t sew over them while sewing up the sides.

Open and Align seams of the bags at the cut corners (as marked in the circle.)

Reach into the corner and open. Bring the sides and the bottom seams, matching the seams. Stitch closed to box the bottom corners.

Stitch through all layers along the cut edge to close the corner. Backstitch at the beginning, where the seams match and at the end.

I usually stitch double stitch to reinforce the seams here.

Trim the extra fabric to reduce bulk. Remember to box the bottom corners of the lining, too.

Ta-Dahl!!!

Finally, turn the bag inside out through the gap in the lining pieces. Poke out the corners gently with a knitting needle. Sew the opening close with a blind stitch or slip stitch. Complete the zipper tab with the padded round zipper tab (tutorial by @chezvies)

It’s my favourite way to make zipper tabs now... it’s so cute... do try!

And Ta-Dahhhhh!!!!! Revel in your lovely Vertex Shoulder Bag.

This bag is super adaptable. I just added one slip pocket inside, but you can add inner zipper pocket or outer zipper pockets.

Visit Madhavi Mukherjee on her Instagram - @thegreenslateonline She also sells fun stuff at her Etsy store - The Green Slate
Few years back I saw a beautiful, breath taking performance by Rukmini Vijayakumar and team at Kedareshwara temple. My very dear friend Uma Vaijnath had captured it beautifully on her phone camera.. it had been on my mind to capture a moment from it.. but I wasn't confident enough of my skills.. finally I pushed myself to do it.. The Kedareshwara temple known for it realistic sculptures and Hoysala architecture (built around 900 years ago), the beautiful sky and semi arid conditions with such beautiful, rustic looking dancers.. uff.. I have tried my best to capture it..

Here is my labour of love of 3 months..

"Kala Sankara - a mixture of arts"

A full fabric art quilt.. with raw edge applique on the temple area, 3D applique for the dancer (Vadhani Asokan), confetti appliques, thread painting and intensive quilting. I have used poplin, hand dyed cotton fabrics( temple area) and silk cottons(dancer's clothes). The dancer is constructed by a doll making methodology and appliqued to give a 3D finish.

Thequilting designs are of designs from the sculptures of Jambukeshwara temple Trichy (built by early Cholas about 1800 years ago). I had photographed the designs on the pillars as they were so interesting and amazing. Have used them on the temple area quilting. Threads of various weights have been used to finish this quilt.

The whole process has been very enriching.. blending different techniques, ideas and arts.. I always make it a point to learn the history of every aspect involved, from the place to process and geography and its influence.. so its been a complete learning process. My immense respect to sculptors of ancient times for such precision on rocks. It has been so tough on fabrics and they managed on rocks.. Art is the highest form of civilization.

Sowmyalakshmi is a wonderful 3D fabric artist. Follow her on Instagram to see more of her amazing art - @sowmyalakshimi
It’s like a piñata burst open in the far right corner and there’s confetti raining down….now all we need is a party and some kids and some gifts and some food and …bummer…social distancing – need that too.

Yes, the Rainbow Pockets quilt was a COVID-time quilt, bringing in the much needed distraction from the horror outside, and a healthy dose of bright colourful cheer during the pandemic times. A queen size version of my original Rainbow Pockets quilt, this is a perfect example of a simple block making a big impact. Does an HST even count as a block ? cause that’s all it is …HST’s in many many colours all arranged like this. Though I am a spontaneous quilter, some planning had to be done to ensure pockets of colours appear throughout the quilt , and for the colour gradation. Eight HST’s at a time, this quilt grew and took over my entire bedroom for a couple of weeks! The quilting was a very simple stitch in the ditch, since I wanted the quilt to be soft and fluffy.

Engaging with this creative side of me provides a sanctuary in times such as these. Any creativity, however fruitful it may be, however small it may be, has this profound effect. I urge everyone to spend sometime making something, every week if not every day. Find your inner sanctum!

Read more about Sindhu’s quilts at the Creative Clutter Room
You can visit her on Instagram too - @Creativeclutterroom
Thank You

Wasn’t this a super fun issue of Quilt Stories! Hope you really enjoyed it and hope you have been inspired immensely.

Thank you again for all the love and hope you all have showered upon Quilt Stories Magazine. It means so much!

Keep contributing and sharing ideas to help make Quilt Stories Magazine a success.

We would love to hear from you. Drop us an email at quiltstoriesmagazine@gmail.com