

Syllabus

CAT 302

Patchwork: A Quiltmaker's Look at the World

Prof. Bacci and Prof. Rabinowitz

<http://users.bloomfield.edu/facstaff/bacci/martiequilts/>

Course Description

A hands-on quilting bee and a global look at women, past and present, as artists and workers in fabric.

Course Outcomes:

An appreciation for women as artists, textile industry workers and income providers.

An understanding of the time, persistence, ingenuity, imagination and resourcefulness that goes into the creation and completion of everyday objects.

An understanding of the artistic value quilts have, beyond affording comfort, and how they transcend the boundaries of culture, geography and era.

An understanding of design techniques and how various construction methods, such as the quilt block, can aid in deciphering the visual complexity of the finished quilt.

An understanding of the psychological principle called Gestalt - where the total is greater than the sum of the parts.

Last and most important, understanding how limited means can facilitate invention and originality.

Competencies: Multicultural awareness and aesthetic appreciation.

The Art and Craft of Quilting:

1. Students will learn basic quilting techniques, produce a quilted, pieced sewing project and create a block for the class friendship quilt.
2. Students will be taught basic design elements and principles.
3. Students will be shown how to use digital technology to aid in design work, and produce a digital record of journal work.
4. Students will be taught alternative photographic techniques to produce their own fabric for use in their quilted project.
5. Students will create their own fabric using dyes and fabric paints.

Class Activities

1. Hands-on designing, piecing, sewing and quilting.
2. Graphics Lab for digital images, drawing program, and journal archiving.
3. Poetry, literature, oral histories, guest lecturers and readers.

4. Using personal journals as a vehicle to reflect on class and to create a visual response to the class.
5. Enjoying each other's company and the food of different cultures.

We will be visiting a museum once during the semester on a day other than the scheduled class.

Schedule

Class

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| 1 | Introduction to Patchwork. Historical look at quilts. Gees Bend quilting community video. Look at Nancy's family quilts. Scrounge and beg for fabric! |
| 2 | Women pioneer settler's oral history (<i>The Quilters</i> , Texas and New Mexico), reading and slide show; project – creating quilt designs with limited materials. Quilting lesson with quilt expert. Start work on sewing kits. Journal introduction. |
| 3 | Patchwork design blocks, an historical survey of designs and how they vary over time and culture. Creating digital quilts in Illustrator or making collage quilts, scanning fabrics in Photoshop. |
| 4 | African-American quilts and traditional African art motifs; Video and reading from <i>Flash of the Spirit</i> ; quilting practice. |
| 5 | African-American quilts and their influence on modern African-American artists. Class trip to a quilt supply shop. |
| 6 | Comparisons of quilts to modern art and design. Creating a quilt face and putting it on a quilt frame. Practice quilting. |

Spring Break

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| 7 | Creating neighborhood patchwork blocks for a class quilt. |
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Midterm Grades

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| 8 | Finishing neighborhood blocks for class quilt; piecing them together. |
| 9 | Stretching class quilts onto frames. Crazy quilts and embroidery lesson. |

- 10 Designing photo/drawn/painted images for alternative photo transfers to fabric. Creating negatives. Printing on fabric and using fabric paints to create patterns.
- 11 Arrange class photo blocks and painted blocks into a large quilt face. Stretch on quilt frames.
- 12 Work in class. Special guest presenter.
- 13 Work in class. Special guest presenter.
- 14 Work in class. Special guest presenter.
- Final Exams Exhibition and critique. Quilts on the Quad.

Assignments (subject to revision)

- Class 1 Make first journal entry, including a picture or magazine reproduction that looks like a quilt (some type of journal entry to be done each week).
- Class 2 Finish sewing kits at home. Finish the accordion quilt design project with cut-out colored paper. Make journal entry.
- Class 3 Finish digital quilt files, print on Xerox printer. Scan in 4 favorite design motifs, or create sketches; Journal entry.
- Class 4 Practice quilting on sampler. Journal entry.
- Class 5 Go for a walk in your neighborhood, listen to the sounds around you and take snapshots. Make notes on what you see and hear, thinking about shapes and colors and rhythms that might inspire your quilt designs. Design a quilt block based on this walk. Journal entry.
- Class 6 Write a short paper comparing a quilt and a piece of artwork. Journal entry.
- Class 7 Finish your neighborhood block. Journal entry.
- Class 8 Listen to your favorite music and interpret the music using color, shape and rhythm. Journal entry.
- Class 9 Border mania, design a border for your quilt. There are borders that we put

around quilts, there are frames that we put around artwork, there are painted and paper borders that we put around rooms. We do this for definition, we do this to contain larger elements. We do this to keep a variety of elements unified, and to keep us focused on the entire design. Journal entry. Visit the Met online to see Italian wood inlay borders in the Studiolo from Gubbio:
<http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/studiolo/studiolo5.html>

- Class 10 Do quilting on photo block. Bring to class to be arranged in class Friendship Quilt. Journal entry.
- Class 11 Research paper (2 pages) on women and fabric. Can interview family member or acquaintance/friend. Journal entry.
- Class 12 Finish class work. Journal entry.
- Class 13 Prepare for exhibition and critique.

Grading

Journals 30%
Homework 30%
Quilt projects 40%

Attendance

You are allowed 2 excused absences for a course that meets once a week like ours. You will be withdrawn on your 3rd absence. Keep going to class and make an appeal to Dr. Rabinowitz, in order to be allowed back into the course.

Reference

The Met's online decorative arts collection:
<http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/>

Books (*available on request*)

Safford, Carelton L. and Robert Bishop. *America's Quilts and Coverlets*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972.

Fry, Gladys-Marie. *Stitched from the Soul, Slave Quilts from the Antebellum South*. Chapel Hill, NC and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990, 2002.

England, Kaye and Mary Elizabeth Johnson. *Quilt Inspirations from Africa, A Caravan of Ideas, Patterns, Motifs, and Techniques*. Chicago: NTC/Contemporary Publishing, 2000.

Tobin, Jacqueline L. and Raymond G. Dobard. *Hidden in Plain View, A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. New York: Doubleday, Random House, 1999.

Wahlman, Maude Southwell. *Signs and Symbols: African Images in African American Quilts (2nd Edition)*. New York: The Museum of American Folk Art and Penguin USA, 1993.