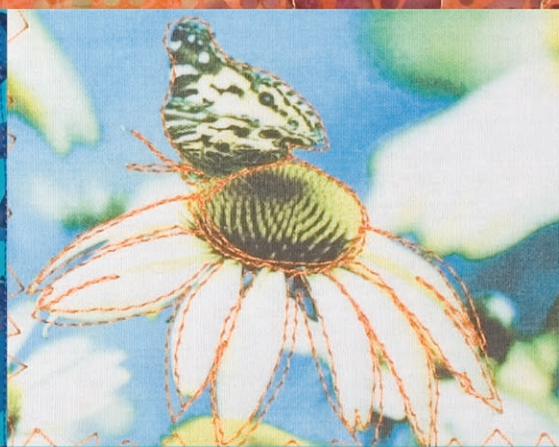


# Art Quilt Workbook

JANE DÁVILA & ELIN WATERSTON



BONUS GUIDE -  
EXHIBIT YOUR QUILTS!



EXERCISES & TECHNIQUES TO IGNITE YOUR CREATIVITY



# Art **Quilt** Workbook

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JANE DÁVILA & ELIN WATERSTON



## LEGAL PAGE

Art Quilt Workbook Download

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for Gram... Jane  
for my mother... Elin

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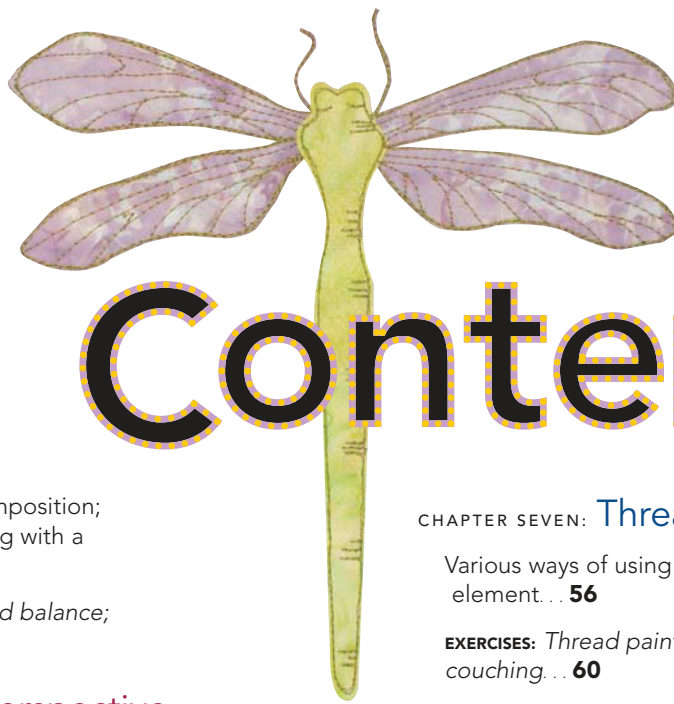
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*Mind & Memory (W 79th/N Main)*, by Elin Waterston



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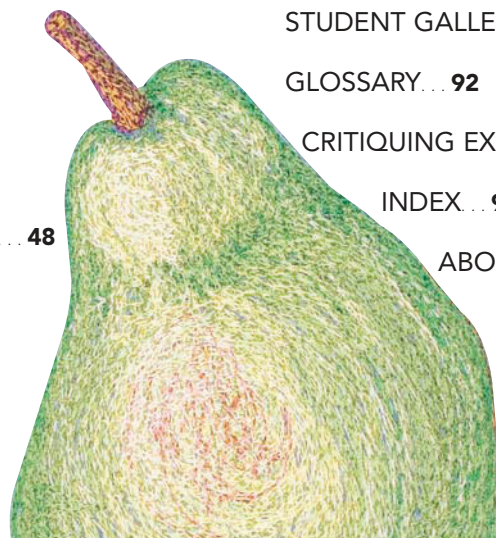
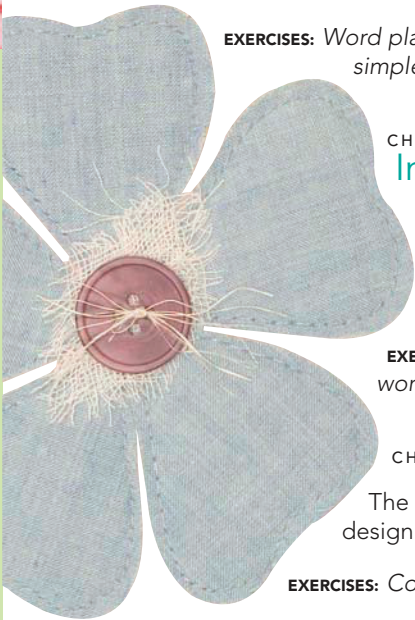
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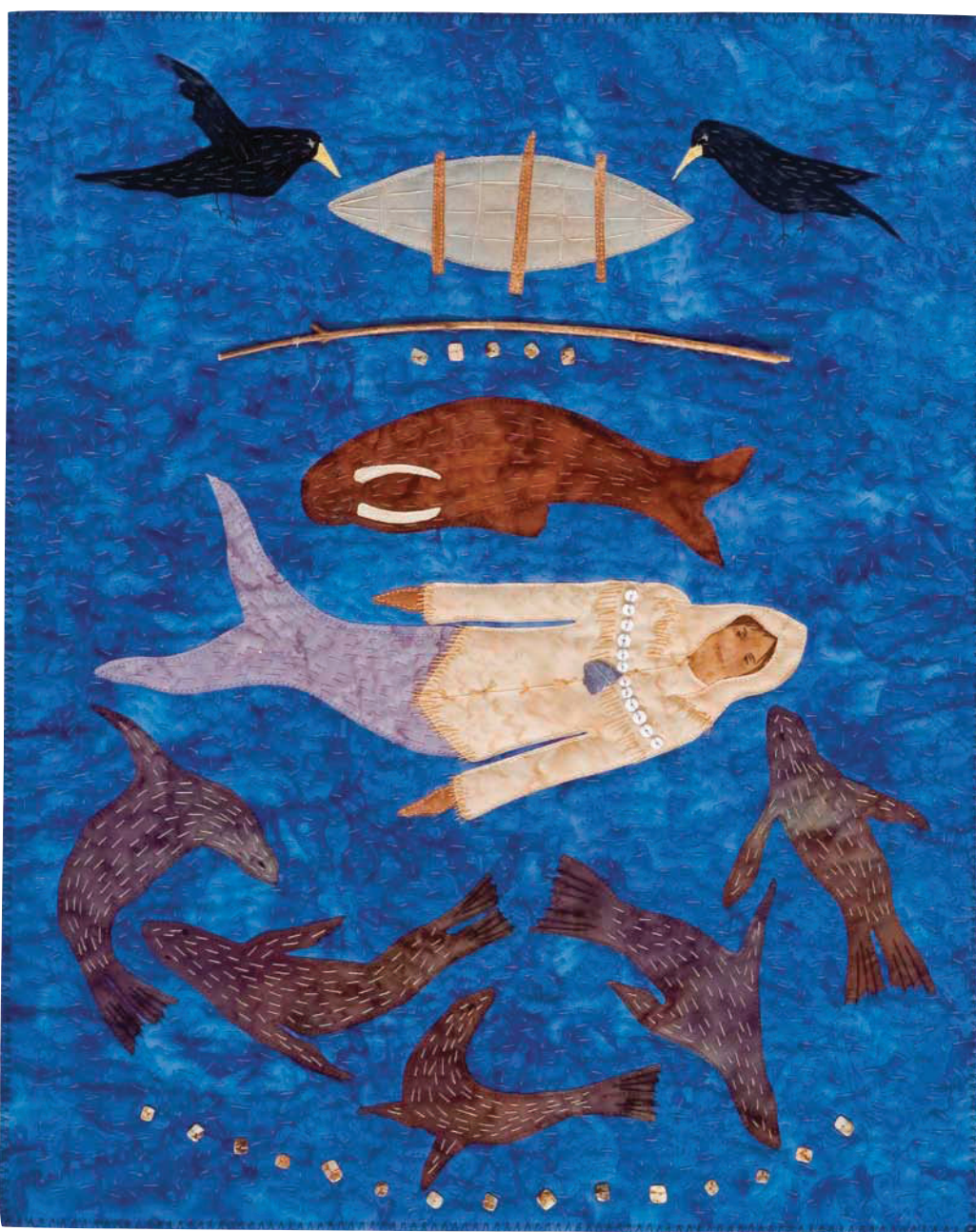
# INTRODUCTION

Within the last decade, the quilt industry has matured as people have mastered traditional skills and designs. Some quilters have begun to look beyond traditional patterns and techniques. Although there is nothing wrong with and much to be said for making quilts to cover beds, there comes a time to step outside the box and explore the convergence of quilting and art.

While technical workmanship and skills are important in art quilting, a good grasp of design is equally important,

as is a willingness to experiment with composition and materials. Art quilting is both art and quilting—both aspects should be balanced, and yet the definitions of each should be stretched.

We hope that this book will give you a foundation in the basics of good design, show you some techniques to use in your work, help you to develop a personal style, and show you what comes next in the process of becoming an art quilter. Take what you learn and make it your own.



*Sedna*, by Elin Waterston

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



## Goals

This book is as much about thinking and seeing as it is about fabric and sewing. We hope that you will use this book to begin a journey toward developing your own unique artistic style and finding your “voice” as an artist.

Start the process with us by creating a series of finished art quilts. You will learn specific techniques and design skills to use in the creation of these pieces. Although you may not incorporate every new skill into your personal toolbox, we do want you to try everything. Different people will love different aspects of each chapter’s lesson, but exposure to a variety of techniques will give you a range of tools to choose from when you create art quilts now—and five years from now.

The techniques presented here represent a small fraction of what is available, but they will be enough to get you started and open you to the possibilities that lie ahead. You should feel free to experiment, make mistakes, challenge yourself, and explore the potential of art quilts.

We will also provide you with the information necessary to exhibit your work. Whether exhibiting is an immediate goal or something that you haven’t yet considered, please remember that information is never wasted. In the future, you may find yourself ready to take the next step in your journey.



*Millie*, by Elin Waterston

## Basic Skills

This book addresses the **art** in art quilting and assumes a certain level of knowledge of and ability in basic quilting skills. Familiarity and competence in the following areas are expected:

- Basic cutting, sewing, and piecing
- Basic terminology
- Fusing
- Machine quilting
- Free-motion quilting

## Supplies

Although it's not necessary to have the latest, most expensive gadgets and supplies, it is important to find what works for you and helps you express yourself through your art. That said, the better your equipment is, the less frustrating the working process will be. A good sewing machine, well maintained and in good working order, is invaluable. High-quality fabrics, threads, and other materials are a joy to work with and will contribute to the longevity of your work. Sturdy, thin batting (like Warm & Natural) is a good choice for art quilts because it will give them body and will hang well.

### BASIC SUPPLIES

Many of these supplies will be needed for most of the exercises in this book. Some, while not absolutely necessary, can make a task easier or eliminate steps and streamline a process. Specific supplies will be addressed in each chapter.

- Rotary cutter
- Rulers in various sizes for cutting
- Cutting mat

- Scissors (for both fabric and paper)
- Sewing machine in good working order, with various feet (1/4" piecing, open-toe embroidery, free-motion/darning, walking)
- Sewing machine needles (75/11 universal, embroidery, and quilting)
- Pins
- Nonstick appliqué pressing sheet
- Pinking shears
- Sketchbook or journal
- Drawing pencils (color and graphite)
- Eraser
- Sharpie or Identipen marker, or Pigma marking pen
- Basic sewing kit
- Drawing rulers
- Freezer paper
- Tracing paper
- Fusible web
- Stabilizer
- Various threads, both regular sewing weight and decorative
- Iron and ironing board

### NICE-TO-HAVE SUPPLIES

These supplies, although not required for either art quilting or the use of this book, will allow you to explore more options and can expand your artistic horizons.

- Digital camera
- Computer with Internet access
- Scanner
- Color inkjet printer
- Design wall
- Lightbox



*La Libélula*, by Jane Dávila

## Process of Working

We strongly recommend that you follow this book chapter by chapter in consecutive order because it is designed as a course of study, with skill building on skill in a logical order. We also suggest that you complete at least one quilt based on each of the lessons in Chapters 2–9. At the end of each chapter, we give you homework that will encourage you to work on a small series of quilts. All the quilts are to be 9" x 12" in a vertical (or portrait) orientation. We chose this size and orientation requirement for several reasons:

- The quilts are small enough that they won't be terribly time consuming.
- The small quantity of materials involved will keep you from becoming too attached to the work (it is important to learn that it is okay to abandon a piece that isn't working).

- This size gives you freedom to experiment—again because of the quantity of materials and time.
- The size requirement will give you the experience of working with arbitrary rules imposed on you from without (a necessary, recurring, real-world art experience).

Many of the exercises call for a 9" × 12" background as a starting point. This requirement will get you familiar with the size in terms of design composition. However, the reality of art quilting is that there is quilting, which means that when making the pieces for your homework assignments, you need to work slightly larger to allow for shrinkage during quilting or for edge-finishing techniques that can affect the finished size of the piece. Using a mask with a 9" × 12" opening can aid you in planning your composition and in visualizing potential framing options when it comes time to trim the piece to size.



*La Avispa*, by Jane Dávila

## References for Further Exploration

At the end of each chapter, we list artists whose work highlights aspects of the chapter's lesson. The work of many of these artists may be relevant for more than one lesson. For example, we use Henri Matisse's later work to illustrate collage in Chapter 4 in terms of shapes, space, and color, but his work may also be useful for Chapter 2 (color) and Chapter 6 (paint). You will learn by studying the artists listed while looking for the connection to the particular lesson. The lists of artists are a starting point and are by no means meant to be complete. Look for the connection between Art (with a capital A) and art quilting.

### URLS

Website addresses (URLs) are offered because they illustrate aspects of a chapter's lesson. URLs are often transitory, so some of the listed URLs may no longer be valid. If you find an invalid URL, do an Internet search using the artist's name, or keywords from the chapter, such as quilt+art+series or quilt+art+collage to find your own examples.

## Some Thoughts on Copyright

- When in doubt about whether an image is copyrighted, ask permission.
- Never assume that an image is not copyrighted; always assume that it is.
- The fact that an image is old, or the creator is deceased, doesn't mean that the copyright has expired. If the heirs or the rightful owners of the copyright have renewed it, the image is protected.
- It's a myth that changing an image by at least 10 percent is a copyright loophole. Copyright law protects against derivative work as well.
- The website of the United States Copyright Office is an excellent source for definitive information regarding copyright law, <http://www.copyright.gov/>.

One of our main objectives is to encourage you to create your own art. Using someone else's art won't be necessary.



# CHAPTER ONE: THE BASICS



This chapter's lesson covers inspiration and creativity, working in a series and with a theme, and the elements and principles of design and composition.

“All real works of art look as though they were done in joy.” —ROBERT HENRI

**art, n.** The conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects (from Latin *articulus*: article).

**quilt, n.** A coverlet made of two layers of fabric with a layer of cotton, wool, feathers, or down in between held in place with tied or stitched designs (from Latin *culcita*: mattress).



*Anticipation*, by Jane Dávila