

A Review of Sonnet 18

*A Themed Exhibition by Colour FX Textile Art ©
2006 by Linda Seward*

As I approached Gallery 47 on Great Russell Street in London, I could hear the buzz from inside and recognised several quilters greeting each other in the street. I walked in and the gallery was packed. Drinks flowed, conversation was loud and animated and the quilts glowed on the walls. What a wonderful exhibition and what a way to introduce it to the quilting world!

Colour FX Textile Art is a group of six committed textile artists and this is their second exhibition. The theme is Shakespeare's eighteenth sonnet, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" Each member interpreted the theme in her own way, and four of the quilters worked to a common size format, 46X122 cm (18" X 48"), which gave a sense of coherence to the show. The exhibition comprised stitched textiles, wall hangings, quilts, silk scarves and mixed media pieces.

Margaret Jarvie's large quilt, Summer's Lease, welcomed visitors at the entrance and artfully captured the essence of the sonnet. The graceful intertwining vines of the pieced work were

contained within an edging of stone coloured fabric, which worked well as a sort of asymmetrical border. Each of Stephanie Rickard's delectable silk scarves was an individual work of art. Some were pleated, which added an extra dimension.

Inspired by sonnet 18, as well as by art and by nature, many of these scarves wouldn't have been out of place in a frame. Claire Crocker's three-dimensional pieces were fascinating studies of fabric manipulation and judicious quilting. Her Eye of Heaven fairly vibrated in orange and gold. Alicia Merrett's five offerings featured vibrant colour combinations that made the pieces appear to shimmer. I spent a long time studying them to determine my favourite and couldn't pick one because I loved them all. Each reflected Alicia's inimitable use of colour and piecing and, viewed side by side, achieved maximum impact. I particularly enjoyed the stamped verses of sonnet 18 on each of the wall hangings and the way her quilting reflected the titles.

There was great variation in Christine Restall's work. Her exploration of fruit continues with Every Fair Declines #1 and #2 where she features a heavily quilted pear on painted backgrounds. Her triptych, Intimate Conversations, reveals a new departure in her work, with each of the pieced and quilted panels divided by an irregular gap that flowed across the triptych. But my favourite was her ethereal horizontal work In time thou growest. Coloured gauze was applied to a white background in sinuous vertical strips and then quilted with metallic thread.

Simple yet elegant. Marlene Cohen uses fabrics she has created herself, whether they are stamped, silk screened, painted or dyed. Her two works featuring

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thorny stems were appliquéd and pieced, using a fascinating array of fabrics. Calm prevailed in ...in eternal lines to time... where undulating horizontal strips in blue, peach and cream were heavily quilted. Wonderful vine and leaf quilting punctuated the calm green, brown and blue patchwork in ...thou wanderest in this shade... The back rooms of the gallery contained many more works, including *Brittany Shore*, a captivating piece by Christine. Most of the pieces were for sale and indeed, some had already been sold by the time I got there.

As I later reflected on the exhibition, I realised that the actual act of holding it must have sparked an enormous amount of creativity and freedom within each quilt artist. And while I sense that there has been a sharing of ideas and influences within the group, it makes for a stunning and significant display. It shouldn't be missed by quilt lovers, and does not have to be because it will move to Bath in October (11th—21st) and then on to Launceston in Cornwall from January 15th—23rd 2007. Details from info@colourfx.org.uk.

Linda Seward

The Secret Weapon — The Machine Quilting Frame

By Marlene Kleven

My jaw dropped as I inspected the quilt. How did the quilter manage to produce the intricate and delicate free motion quilting, with perfectly even stitches over the HUGE quilt that was hanging in front of me at Quiltfest 2006 in Seattle Washington? I've seen quilts that have been machine quilted by experts or professionally quilted with a "long arm" machine, but the style and density of the quilting did not remind me of anything I had seen produced by a "long arm" or an expert. As I moved to the next quilt in the show, I saw it AGAIN!! So, I began to wonder: either these quilters are actually from another planet, or they have access to something besides their humble sewing machines to produce this type of machine quilting. I went in search of their secret and found it a few yards away at a vendor's booth. It is called "The Machine Quilting Frame."

The basic idea for machine quilting frame is this: instead of moving your quilt sandwich through your sewing machine, you move your sewing machine around your quilt. It is similar to a "long arm" quilting system, the difference is that you can use a home sewing machine which makes the entire system more affordable and easier to use, set up, and store.

Here is how it works: your quilt sandwich is attached to two long poles that are attached to a frame. This system is similar to a traditional quilting frame and has the advantage of keeping your layers aligned and taught without basting. Your machine sits on top of 2 platforms called carriages. The bottom carriage sits on a track on a table or frame to allow your sewing machine to roll from one end of the table or frame to the other (length of the quilt). The top carriage sits on the bottom carriage and rolls on tracks. This allows the machine to go forward and backward across a table or platform (width of the quilt).

However, the distance the machine can travel from front to back is dependant on the throat space of your machine. The throat space is the distance from your needle to the inside part of the machine which holds the motor. Some of the newer machines have a larger throat space, and the current trend is to use a machine with an 8 ½ inch throat or larger. All the frames let you do "pantographs"—this is a type of quilting using a fixed pattern, and the frames have a stylus, either laser or fixed, that allow you to essentially trace the quilting pattern into the quilt. Free motion quilting can also be done, with the great advantage of not having the "drag" that you get when you are trying to move the quilt around through the sewing machine. There is also a wonderful attachment called "Cruise Control". When you are quilting, this device senses how fast you are moving the machine, and then regulates the stitches so they remain the same size, no matter how fast or slow you move your machine!

I have to admit when I first saw this "apparatus" I was intimidated. It looks complicated, but I decided to overcome my fears and take one of these "bad boys" for a test drive. The system I used was called a "B-Line Studio Model" and this model has a complete wooden frame. There were handles that

came out in front of the carriage that held the sewing machine, and the handles had several buttons easily accessed with my thumb. My co-pilot told me to touch the first button. This put the needle through the quilt sandwich, pulled the bobbin thread up and invisibly locked the first stitch. This feature also locks the last stitch and cuts the thread when you have finished quilting. She then said, "Push the second button and start quilting". OK, how hard could this be? Well it WASN'T hard. In fact I've never felt in such control over my machine quilting, nor as relaxed as I quilted. The machine simply glided over the fabric! Within minutes I was making tiny circles and stars, and beautiful loops and no matter what speed I moved the machine, the stitches were all the same length. I felt like my years of driving the "old Ford Truck" were over and I had just stepped into my new "Lamborghini!"

There are many other makes and models to choose from. Your old reliable machine that you love to sew on may NOT be the ideal machine to use in one of these systems. I love my Bernina, but I would definitely purchase one of the newer machines with a longer throat space to use in the system. Most of the systems break down for storage, and have options to easily expand the frames so you can accommodate larger quilts. The price of all of this quilting technology? The system I test drove was a top model and had a wooden frame, WITH a sewing machine and Cruise Control, and the package sold for about \$2500.00 (that is about 1300BPS). I've looked in the British quilting magazines and I have not seen these systems advertised here, but I'm sure they are available. I'll probably wait until I return to the USA before I purchase one, but until then I'm saving my pennies (or pence) and dreaming of the day I can once again go "DRIVING IN STYLE!"

A special THANK YOU to the wonderful ladies from the Bayside Quilting store located in Olympia Washington for allowing me to take a test drive.

*This article is Part II of the Pacific Northwest Quilters
Quiltfest 2006 item, LQ Newsletter Autumn 2006
by Marlene Kleven*



Chairman's Chat

Well, I thought, when I joined London Quilters, that the Chairman's Challenge was for members of London Quilters to produce a 'challenge item' that had been specified by the Chairman. Now I realise that it has changed and the challenge is for the Chairman to achieve... I do hope that our new venue meets our requirements and even succeeds them. By the time this newsletter has been published, we should be experiencing the Crossfield Hall and all of the ups and downs that it might provide. Let's hope that we have found a happy new home.

Now I will start this chat with how I had originally intended. When I joined London Quilters some years ago, I thought I would be meeting a group of quilters based in London. This is true and I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. But what I think makes London Quilters so unique is that it is not London Quilters but World Quilters. We are so privileged to live in an environment that brings together people from all corners of the world and all of their cultures and customs. And of course the richness of this is bringing to us their quilting expertise from their own country. We can learn from so many countries now such as the States, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Iceland, various European and Far Eastern countries plus many more. London Quilters is also a great 'comfort' to those coming to visit our country. They can quickly feel at home by making friends with people with the same interest. So, I feel it is a privilege to be a member of London Quilters let alone its Chairman. Thank you all for being such an interesting and stimulating group of people.

But now down to real work... I must get this quilt finished for the exhibition and this quilt for my friend and help with the group quilt and this quilt...

Don't Forget

A comprehensive list of LQ library books is available online at:
www.londonquilters.org.uk. Keep in mind about one third of the books are on loan at any given time.

New Library Donation

**Shibori for Textile Artists:
Janice Gunner**

Letters

I took this book home with some trepidation.....that Japanese navy and white stuff made with noxious chemicals (I have skin and respiratory allergies) and I tied and dyed in 1970!! What a revelation – Janice narrates the cultural traditions from various continents, although nothing about my Dylon efforts in Birmingham in 1970. Her diagrams and instructions are very clear – I want to dash off to buy a drainpipe tomorrow. The photography is stunning.

Janice gives gallery space to other artists and I was particularly drawn to the work of Jan Myers-Newbury who uses the techniques with Procion MX (marginally less toxic?) I felt I could sit on my desert island, forget the discs and just admire.

Then I saw one of Janice's Reflections series and remembered how often I returned to the one in the LQ Exhibition in my long hours of stewarding – restful, complex, textural, beautiful stitching etc etc – what else could one want, apart from a suitable Zen phrase to finish this review.....

My only criticism is the loose cover – I am contacting my local library for advice on covering it, as it is fragile and the underlying book cover looks really boring. (Anyone who remembers Valerie Singleton and her “Sticky Backed Plastic” is welcome to help)

Evelyn

Janice generously donated a signed copy

Personal note

*– Goodbye LQ Library –
I know it is left in safe hands, I am off to
Membership now*

Evelyn Hurst

Hi everyone,

Thought you might like to hear from me again after so long. We are doing fine in the US. I have been selling some work and right now have 3 pieces in Denver Children's Hospital as an artist who is said to be 'pushing the medium to create new Art forms'!!! not my words but those of the curator!!

I thought you might like to know about the following:

Ricky Tims has devised a new show which opened in his Art Studio Gallery Le Veta Colorado on September 20th.

He told me, saying it was a bit presumptuous but.., that he hopes it will eventually become as prestigious as Quilt National.

There are 63 quilts, some international, and the venue is wonderful. In fact there are so many that he is showing them in another gallery very near to fit them all in. Have a look at the quilts on show on www.rickytims.com I don't know if this will be a yearly event, the show will tour for two years after it leaves La Veta, but it will be well worth entering next time so look out for forms in the future.

Ricky has made his Gallery into a beautiful venue and people are starting to add La Veta to their tour of Art galleries when they plan to go to Santa Fe and Taos. I am thrilled to be included in the show.

Hope all is well with you all and hope to see you all next year.

Kate Cox

www.katecox-quiltartist.co.uk

Dear Jane,

How many, like me are spending Sunday afternoon making "Dear Jane" blocks for London Quilters latest quilt? How many are finding the "easy" foundation pieced blocks" that would only take 10 minutes or so" taking the best part of an hour? And how many husbands/partners are having to wait rather a long time for Sunday supper?

It really is good to be making these little blocks and anticipating how they will work together as a big quilt.

I have been pondering how Jane Stickle felt as she was making her original blocks and choosing fabrics from her collection. She had a hard time during the Civil War in the States and lost many members of her family to the War. It makes me think how lucky I have been in the times in which we have lived.

We grew up during the second world war but I was too young for it to have too much impact at the time but I'm sure others were not so lucky. A recent visit to Chartwell (the wonderful home of Winston Churchill) has prompted me to go down this line of thought along with the quilt blocks. We were so fortunate in our leaders then. I do wonder about many aspects of our changing life and wonder what the future holds for our grandchildren in this changing country of ours.

I would love to know what other thoughts go on in other heads as these little blocks are sewn.

This sounds like one big blog but it would be interesting to know what has happened to people around our "Dear Jane" quilt blocks.

A London Quilter



Dear LQs

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your tremendous support while I served as your 2006 News Editor. I could continue on as your editor, but my other duties are calling ... to a new baby in March and a new diplomatic posting for my family in Autumn (unfortunately, not a lot of quilting will be accomplished in the next few months!).

I enjoyed the position immensely and found it was a splendid avenue for meeting new people on a personal level. I appreciated your active involvement, your

appealing articles, enlightened perspective, tidbits of information and your enthusiastic interest in the newsletter's well being. If not for you, the LQ Newsletter would not exist.

I hope you will continue to share your passion for and knowledge about quilting through the newsletter. I am confident your new editor, Tricia Harwood (shipwreckbt@hotmail.com) will be most appreciative of your continued support.

My best to you in 2007 and all your quilting endeavours!

Best quilting

Andrea Taylor
nebraskanative@yahoo.com

Exhibitions

10-21 January 2007

Designer Crafts 2007, The Mall Galleries, The Mall, London. Details 0207 739 3663

12 January - 1 February 2007

Contemporary Art Quilts 2006. Morley College Gallery, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7HT. Details from Jennifer Hollingdale 0208 874 6314

1 - 28 February

Quiltfest 07 Exhibition

Open Mondays - Fridays only, 10am - 4 pm.

Admission and parking both free.

Royal International Pavillion, Llangollen. Website www.quiltfest.org.uk or email Val Shields ValatBrora@aol.com

2 - 4 February

Spring Quilt Festival. Norfolk Pavilions, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, Sussex. Quilt Festival Challenge Black and White. Details from Grosvenor Exhibitions 01775 712100/01775 722900 email: emma.cooling@btconnect.com

5 - 11 February

From Rags to Riches. Exhibition of Rugs and Quilts by Jackie Fry and Gill Turley. Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking, Surrey. Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 1130-4.

22 - 24 February


Stitch and Creative Crafts Show, Excel, London. Friday - Sunday 9.30 - 5. Details from www.nwe.co.uk

2007 Calendar of Events

- 15 January - Jennie Rayment**
“Magical Manipulations with the Muslin
Mistress”
- 19 February - Gail Lawther**
“Inspiration from History”
- 19 March - Susan Chapman**
“By Design”
- 16 April - Angela Maddon**
“Pictorial Patchwork from Family Photos”
- 21 May - Barbara Chainey**
“Tentmakers of Cairo”
- 18 June - Clare Benn**
“Cloth as a catalyst”
- 16 July - Sewing Evening**
August - No meeting
- 17 September - tba**
- 15 October - Sandra Meech**
“Journeys”
- 19 November - AGM with trader**
- 17 December - Christmas Party**



Meetings are held at 7.30 for 8pm in
Crossfield Centre Halls
8 Fairhazel Gardens
London NW6 3SG

 0207 625 4815

The hall is located between Fairfax Place and
Goldhurst Terrace.

If you are travelling from Swiss Cottage
station, there is an exit that will take you
down steps onto Belzise Road.

Internet Information

The London Quilters web site address is:
www.longquilters.org.uk

It is run and maintained by Tricia Revest
Email: p.a.revest@qmul.ac.uk

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A Hello from your Editor

I have been a member of LQs for just over a year and had my first quilting lesson in October 2004 whilst on holiday in South Africa. I am hooked although I have only made two items to date. I would say that I don't think I will end up being a traditional quilter as I love exploring different textures and shapes and want eventually to design my own patterns.

During the last six years I have had the opportunity to be able to live and work on St Helena Island, Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Island – all of which are in the Southern Hemisphere. Whilst on Tristan I set up a computer training suite and ECDL Centre and trained islanders to take over the centre when I left. It was during this time of my life that I learnt to sew and to paint fabrics, much to the delight of my family back in the UK, of whom many were professional seamstresses.

In January 2005 I moved to London with my partner, who as a diplomat, is on a home posting and took up an administrative post with the Royal College of Nursing after deciding not to pursue my career any further in lecturing whilst in London. I felt to keep a balance in life I needed to have an interest outside of work and what better than quilting, hence my looking on the internet to see which was the nearest guild to the Jubilee line (London is rather daunting when you have been used to living in a small community). We spend most weekends at our home in Norfolk, where I have 27 year old twin sons, elderly parents and many friends. Most weekends in the summer are spent boating on the Norfolk Broads in between my quilting and my partner building a replica model of The Bounty.

I very much look forward to working with you all to produce the LQ Newsletter.

Tricia Harwood, shipwreckbt@hotmail.com