

# Abstractions From Nature

## Supply List (2 pages)

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Creating a beautiful design involves assembling forms into a pleasing arrangement, considering aspects such as balance and composition. This is true of any design, whether representational or abstract, geometric or organic. Some people have an intuitive sense and skill for combining shapes and lines into lovely compositions. Still, for many, the distractions of image identity and lack of 'drawing skills' may interfere with the creative process. My college art professor used to tell us: the moment you decide to draw a fish, the fish is dictating what it should look like. He taught us a process of abstraction by isolating and simplifying a portion of an image to its basic elements of visual interest and balance. He called this process' Discovery Designs'. In this class, I will teach you this method for 'discovering' an abstract design from a representational image and creating your own unique quilt pattern.

**Please be courteous to others by arriving for class with the correct supplies. Contact me at (503) 888-9784 or [helene.m.knott@gmail.com](mailto:helene.m.knott@gmail.com) if you have any questions.**

**A Note to Students:** Many students do not realize that once the teacher is paid, the shop offering a class makes little if any income on the class itself. The shop is relying on product sales to continue offering quality classes to you. Therefore, I urge you to patronize this shop when buying your supplies for this class as much as possible and remind you that big chain stores do not offer the variety of classes that the smaller shops do. Keep quilt classes alive by supporting this shop.

Thank you, Helene



## MATERIALS/TOOLS:

### Session #1

- **A magazine or book with lots of photos of natural scenes:** National Geographic, Architectural Digest, Outdoor Photography... one of those large format coffee table nature photography books is a perfect choice. Not all photos or images will contain good design elements so you may want to bring a variety of sources to choose from, this will allow you a lot of options to find the perfect design. Choose publications with lots of photos (preferably printed as half or whole page pictures) that are high quality printing. Magazines with heavily pixelated cheap printing are hard to use for this process
- **X-Acto or craft knife and a small cutting mat:** make sure the blade on the knife is fresh and sharp.
- **Cutting Ruler:** a 4" – 6" squaring ruler will be perfect.
- **Drafting or Post-it™ Tape:** Ultra low adhesion drafting tape or paper Post-it™ tape will allow you to tape your 'lens' to a magazine or book page without damaging the picture.
- **Clear sheet protectors or Grafix Matte Acetate:** Use you can buy frosted acetate available at art and office supply stores; you can also use clear sheet protectors though for those you will need an ultra-fine black Sharpie™ pen as a Pigma pen will not work on the slick surface without smearing.
- **Tracing paper:** Bring an 8 ½" x 11" pad of artist's grade tracing paper; make sure it is very smooth and transparent, cheap low grade tracing paper is too opaque to get good results; alternatively, you can use Golden Threads Quilting Paper.
- **A pencil and a good art eraser:** Do not rely on the eraser on the pencil, they wear down too quickly and don't do a good job of erasing, choose one of the rectangular white 'plastic' erasers made by Staedtler or Pentel.
- **Black Pigma Micron Pen:** preferably a .01 or .02 size. The tracing lines can become surprisingly bulky when the artwork is enlarged and a fine line will be easier to retrace to make adjustments and clean up the master pattern.

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- **Colored Pencils:** You will need to play with some color schemes to decide on for your final project. I recommend an extended set of 36 or 48 colored pencils for the widest subtle coloring options but a basic 12 color set will do for a preliminary design.
- **Light Box (optional):** A portable light box may be handy for retracing your pattern to fine tune and make changes. HINT: If you don't have a light box but do have a tablet you can purchase low cost apps to make your tablet into a light box.
- **Compass (optional):** This will be useful if you have chosen to format your design into the shape of a circle.
- **Golden Threads™ Quilters' Proportional Scale or similar scaling tool (optional):** This nifty little tool takes all the guesswork out of enlarging drawings with precision. It is optional for the class but a very nice tool to have if you do a lot of resizing of patterns on your home copier. Available at some quilt/craft shops and online.

## Session #1

- **Fabric for your quilt**
- **Muslin base or a product like Pattern Ease® (optional):** For some designs, building the quilt top on a muslin or Pattern Ease® base may be an option, this will depend on the design you create and will be discussed in the design session.
- **Fusible web/adhesive:** Unless you want to hand or raw edge appliquéd by machine, you will probably want to fuse your quilt design. The amount of web you need will vary based on your design, alternatively you may decide to use a basting spray or fabric glue stick (see notes below)
- **Sewing machine:** You may need a free motion foot for some designs, it's best to have one handy even if you end up not needing it.
- **Thread:** in a variety of colors to match your fabrics.
- **Scissors:** I find smaller craft type scissors work better than large shears for cutting detailed pieces; you might need utility scissors for cutting paper also if you opt to use freezer paper templates.
- **Rotary cutter, mat and rulers:** The sizes that will be most useful will vary depending on your design and may not be needed at all.
- **Freezer Paper:** This will be useful for making templates if you opt for raw edged machine appliquéd or hand appliquéd.
- **Fabric marking tools (optional – depending on design)**
- **Flannel for Design Surface:** It is doubtful you will finish your quilt in the second session; having a sheet of flannel large enough to arrange the in-progress project on will allow you to take it home protected and intact.

**Notes:** If you want to skip permanent fusing and use another type of adhesive to attach your appliquéd until it can be stitched, you can use a neutral fabric glue stick to tack pieces in place or spray adhesive (I recommend Sulky KK2000 as it is non-flammable). For spray adhesives, you will also need a product like Best Press to starch your pieces, a 'spray box' (a box with high sides large enough to hold your pieces flat while applying the spray to keep the over-spray contained) and possibly bridal veil tulle for the final stitching if your pieces are small and numerous. The color of the tulle will vary depending on your quilt fabrics and can be provided later after the composition is done.