

## YEAR IN REVIEW

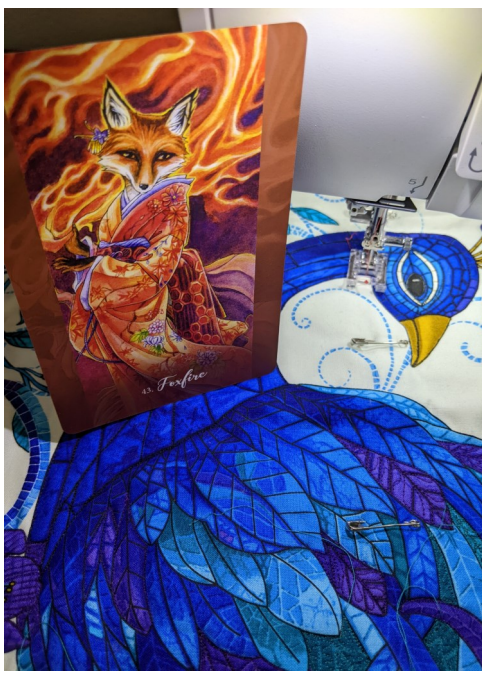
It is always good to celebrate what we *have* accomplished and not just worry about what hasn't been done.

This year has been a phenomenal year for me, both in the studio and out of it!

I made major progress on one of my technically and subjectively most difficult quilts yet. I had wanted to finish it earlier this year, but it was more complicated than I had originally thought it would be. Hopefully next year will be its year to show itself to the world! (You can read more about this piece as a work in progress in June 2022, Vol II, Iss 11 of this newsletter.)

In August I released my new logo that had been in development for several months. I love my original one, which has not completely retired yet. I have some inventory that still uses it, but as those reduce, the new logo will appear more frequently!

I had a lovely vacation this summer. First, my husband and I had some wonderful summer days together just "chillaxing!" Then, I got to travel to Puerto Rico with my daughter for a couple of weeks, visiting family and the island. When I got back, I helped my husband in the



research field, which included getting to go hiking in the pine forest. I am truly blessed!

Practice makes perfect! I have been working on some skills and techniques in the studio this fall. I have been developing those skills on small, crafted items that will debut in my online store next year. Of course, these skills and techniques will be incorporated into the art quilts later.

My 2023 calendar, art mugs, and greeting card sales were better than expected! I will definitely be adding those to my store again. Stay tuned!

## CULTURAL CATCH-STITCH

A recurring motif in several of my art pieces has been the mandala.

The word mandala comes from Sanskrit meaning "disk". A mandala is a geometric shape (circle or square being the most common) with symbols and is used for meditating or to focus one's attention. It is often used as a grounding tool for guiding one's inner spiritual journey. A mandala has several doors or openings (generally on the cardinal directions: N, S, E, W), and concentric layers indicating the layers within ourselves, starting from the outer social layer to the innermost self.

While most people are familiar with Hindu or Buddhist mandalas, they are found in many distinct cultures, and of course are known by their own cultural names.



In Mesoamerica, mandala-like designs are seen in Maya and Aztec cultures. The Mayan calendar and the Aztec Sun Stone have structures, important designs and other communication symbols that are distinct from, but reminiscent of, Hindu or Buddhist mandalas. (Much like writing developed independently in many human cultures, connectors to the spiritual worlds also developed independently around the globe.)

In Christianity, mandala-styled motifs have been a part of understanding the spiritual relationships and connections of humans to God through archangels for many centuries. Mandala-shaped stained glass art can be seen in many cathedrals, churches, and other places of Christian spiritual worship.

There are many other places that mandalas and mandala-like structures can be seen: in art, architecture, psychology, and more. The common theme in all of these seems to be a meditative pathway to approach the complexities of our inner spiritual selves, and how to journey between that core and the social world we maneuver through in a healthy manner.

My use of mandalas in my art has been both deliberate and unconscious. I am attracted to their shapes and the way the designs can be simple or intricate, or even a combination! Several years ago, I started doodling mandalas with thread on fabric, playing with the shapes and their intricacies. Including them in my art just came naturally to me. My unconscious awareness of what they symbolized was no surprise to me once I knew what they indeed signified. When I began to study them more, I was delighted to discover that these mandalas were a natural expression of myself in my art.

## QUILTATIONS

*Our future depends on what we have learned from the past.*

-Flaminia's Treasure Chest



*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year  
from all of us at  
Art Sew Different, LLC!*

## HINTS, TIPS, AND TRICKS

Here are three common ways to baste your quilt before quilting. In all cases, your backing fabric should be taut (whether weighted or taped down). Remember the goal is to have a smooth, wrinkle free quilt!

**Easiest: basting spray.** This is a temporary fabric adhesive that will lightly adhere the fabrics to the batting. Best use is to spray on batting, not on backing or quilt top. It washes out.

This is not a product review, so I do not feel comfortable stating which basting spray is better than another at this point. However, my studio experiences have been that some basting sprays are cleaner or more effective than others. Some leave stains, and others are noxious in odor or aerosolization. I tend to use basting sprays only under the following conditions: it is a small piece, the piece is washable, and there is minimal to no white fabric in it. Be aware that sometimes your machine needle can get gummy from the basting spray.



Basting spray (temporary fabric adhesive). Not a product endorsement. This is just what I happen to have in my studio right now.

**Most Common: pin-basting.** This requires using safety pins to pin through all three layers of quilt to hold it together before quilting. Curved quilting safety pins are best. They tend to be sharper (especially if they have not been used for anything else), and the curve in the pin makes it easier to slide the pin down and back up through the layers.

Pins should be placed every 3" – 4" (8 cm – 10 cm). Leave the pins open until all pins are in place. This way, you can look on the back to see which ones didn't go all the way through. Once all pins are in place, secure them shut. Some people use a "Kwik-Klip" tool to close the safety pins. I don't use one, but apparently it saves

sore fingers and reduces pin stabbings, especially if you make many, large quilts.



Pin-basted and being quilted.

**Professional: hand/thread basting.** Originating from the atelier/tailor/fashion world, this type of basting is a modification of what tailors use for basting suits, for example. This works well on larger pieces that have complicated or intricate quilting, and especially if you don't want to start quilting in the middle and work out from there. This technique holds the three layers more sturdily than the previous two. Unlike with pins, the layers won't slip along the basting threads, so movement is minimal. An advantage to this style of basting is you can start quilting anywhere on the quilt! Just snip out the basting in a 6" area, quilt, and continue.

I use a heavy pearl cotton thread to baste in a herringbone fashion. This way it is easier to pull out the basting as I quilt. If your quilt will be washable, you can use a water-soluble thread for basting. However, those tend to be thinner than the pearl cotton.



Thread-basted using pearl cotton thread

(To see a good video tutorial of this technique, click here: <https://youtu.be/bhwNylePFAA> )

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UNIQUE QUILTED  
AND FABRIC ART

As an artist, my passion is to create unique and fabric art. I was always drawn to sewing as a child, and now I am able to live my dream of artistic creativity through fabric. I am inspired to use materials and techniques that range from the traditional to those I make up as needed.

That's what makes it ArtSewDifferent!