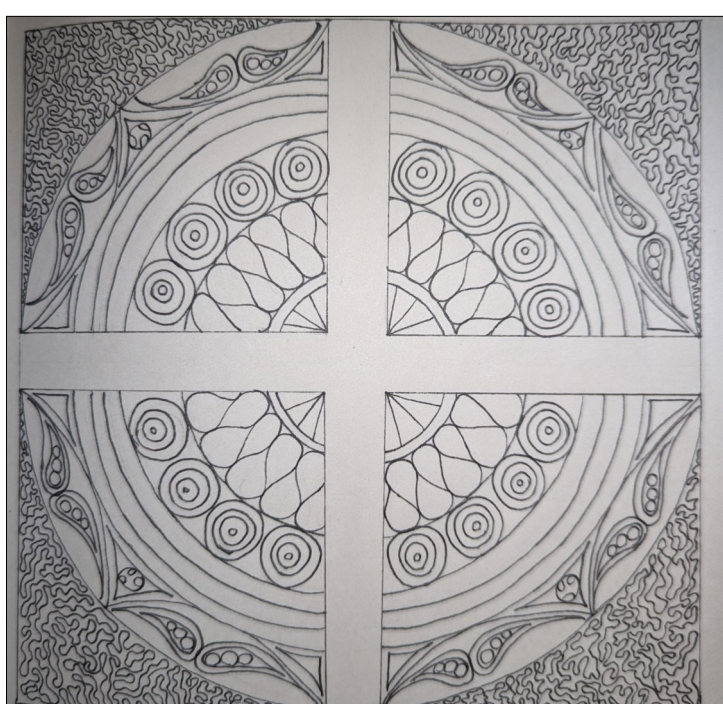


WHAT'S NEW

This month I have begun the wonderful creative labor of adding quilting to my art piece, *Shame and Redemption*. It is at once intensive and satisfying, exhilarating and daunting.

In the [June 2022 issue](#) of *Sew What's Different*, I discussed the work in progress on this complex piece about self-actualization. The central portion of the piece has 100 blocks: 50 with hand-stitched phrases (25 each of statements of shame and of self-redemption) and 50 squares in a gray scale gradation.

In the [December 2022 issue](#) of *Sew What's Different*, I discussed mandalas, their significance in general and to me personally and how they show up as a theme in a lot of my art. I spent some time researching mandalas so that I could gain a more grounded understanding of them. I then designed five of my own in a way that fit who I am as a person, as an artist, and for *Shame and Redemption* specifically.



Mandala #3

Now I am adding my mandala designs using free-motion quilting (on a domestic) to the 50 blocks of gray scale color. Using a thread color that matches the fabric color is important as I want to include the mandalas as part of the self-actualization journey without making them the central focus. The whole process is labor intensive and thus very slow work.

A TALE OF TWO ART PIECES

This is the tale of two art pieces. Both were similar in style, different in the creative execution, and significantly dissimilar in the result. Nevertheless, the relationship between the two was apparent.

One was an early attempt at becoming, but it became flawed in the process. So, while it was still cherished by its creative artist, it was set aside.

The second was a later work. The creative artist took a different approach, and the result was an incredibly beautiful piece of work. In fact, it was selected to be part of a momentous exhibit.

One day, a viewer was invited to stop by the creative artist's studio. The viewer was a creative in a different field and considered a friend by the artist. As expected, the two eventually began discussing the merits of their respective works. The artist, proud of the piece selected for the exhibit, showed the viewer the work, describing the amount of time and dedication it took to create it.

"Uh-huh," said the viewer. "That's nice." The artist thought there was a tone of dismissiveness in the viewer's voice but brushed the thought away. *Surely my friend is happy for my success and not trivializing my work.*

The viewer turned and uncovered the earlier attempt. "What's this?"

The creative artist chuckled and said, "That's my first attempt. See how it differs from the later one? I hadn't fully thought it through yet and I made some mistakes. I love that piece, but it is private and not for exhibit."

The friend said, "Yeah, there are a lot of mistakes on it. How did that happen?"

If it had been a stranger who had asked, perhaps the conversation would have gone differently. However, the creative artist didn't mind discussing the process of making mistakes and learning from them with a friend and fellow creative because the improved art piece was there to show the growth and difference: "Oh, that part? I had made a previous mistake here by using a technique that I thought would be useful. It didn't work so it left this big flaw. I tried to fix it by deliberately using this other technique. Unfortunately, it didn't turn out the way I thought it would. But it's all good because I remade it. That's what this later work is, and it is beautiful." The creative artist drew the friend's attention to the later work.

"Uh-huh," the viewer said, glancing rapidly at the later work, then returning the attention to the early piece. "But why is this piece so flawed? I mean, look at all these flaws! I can see them from across the room!"

The brow on the creative artist wrinkled briefly in confusion. "That's what happens with early works. This one belongs to me and will not be shown to others."

"I would hope not!" The viewer laughed. "But how did it happen? How did you get it to look like that? I mean, it's really unsightly. It's like you didn't know what you were doing!"

The creative artist smiled passively and said, "Let me store these away now and I'll get us both a glass of wine. Then we can keep visiting and you can tell me all about your work."

"Yeah, I'd like that," the viewer said.

After storing both beloved pieces away, the artist handed the friend a glass of ruby colored wine, and privately reflected on the focused attention that mistakes, whether minor or from years past, often receive, and the (sometimes contemptuous) dismissiveness the remedied, improved, or changed work gets in comparison.

Note: Sometimes people don't intend to be rude with their questions and instead are genuinely interested in the process of how we make something or how we solve a problem in our art work. However, the single-mindedness of how questions are asked can feel aggressive, judgmental, or unkind. It is incumbent on each of us to recognize how we speak to one another, even in the midst of excited curiosity. The perceived rudeness may not be personal, but it can come across that way, putting us on the defensive.

You can read this and other entries about my experiences as an artist [here](#).

INSPIRATION!



QUILTATIONS

You can always tell someone something, but you cannot un-tell them something. You cannot erase the knowledge of something from their mind.

-Emily Giffin

HINTS, TIPS, AND TRICKS

When you buy a new thread, cut a strand between 6"-12" long. Wind the strand into a circle so you can easily see any color variegation and add to a thread reference notebook. Include:

- the brand name
- code number
- color name (you might have to look this up based on code number)
- weight
- thread type (cotton, cotton-poly blend, rayon, etc.)
- and any other information you need (such as what you are currently using it for or planning on using it on, if you already have that worked out).

Make it your own: as mundane or fancy as fits who you are!

I learned to do this after I ran out of a particular thread color on an art quilt. I managed to finish it with a slightly different thread color and type, so it all worked out for me in the end on that occasion. Now, though, I am pretty meticulous about organizing my threads in my reference book when I purchase them.



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SEW WHAT'S DIFFERENT

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UNIQUE QUILTED
AND FABRIC ART

As an artist, my passion is to create unique quilted 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!