

WHAT'S NEW

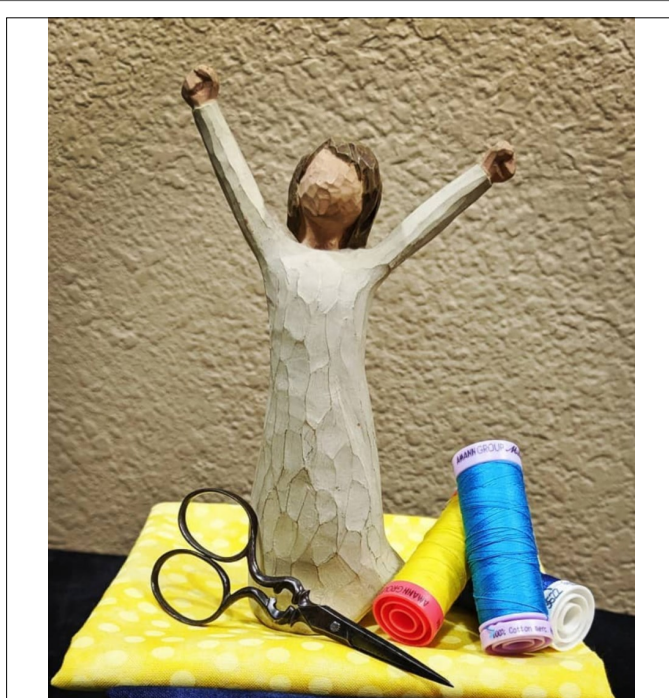
Well March indeed roared in like the lion it is and left like a lamb this year, at least in my studio! I had a great time participating in this year's IG Quilt Fest, sponsored by Amy Ellis of Amy's Creative Side. It has been a few years since I had last participated, so it was a great treat for me!

What is IG Quilt Fest? It is a quilt festival held on Instagram that celebrates quilters from around the world and the work we do! Amy provides photo prompts for quilters to post something each day in the month of March.

What is it for? Aside from celebrating quilters (whether traditional, modern, art, hobby, or exploratory) and what we create with fabrics and threads, it is also a way for us to learn new techniques, see the challenges and rewards of what everyone makes, find new tools that might work for us, share our mistakes and our successes. Essentially, it is a way to create a large and supportive online community of quilters and it's open to anyone.

Aren't there other online communities already? Yes!

Then why do you like IG Quilt Fest? Well, first of all, it's FUN! Second, the prompts are structured suggestions for sharing what you're doing and the process it takes to do it. There's no hard and



fast rule about the prompt, but staying in the wheelhouse is important. And third, participating in IG Quilt Fest by no means takes away from being part of any other groups. In fact, many people overlap, so I get to interact with online friends in a variety of groups. But in other cases, they don't overlap, so I get to meet new people!

When is IG Quilt Fest celebrated? Every March.

Check out my Instagram page [@artsewdifferent](https://www.instagram.com/artsewdifferent) to see all my IG Quilt Fest posts. I'll keep them up for another week. You can click on the [IGQuiltFest2023 stories highlight](#) in the bio section of my Instagram page and see a photo from each day. You can then click on the photo to get to the post and read more about it, or just go to my feed and scroll around!

TEXTILE TALKS: AMERICAN PIMA COTTON

Gossypium barbadense is the cotton plant that gave rise to American Pima cotton. It originated in South America and was domesticated in the coastal areas of what are now Ecuador and Peru between 6,000-7,000 years ago.

The Hohokam people of Arizona have grown cotton in the central Arizona Sonoran desert for over 3000 years. Their engineering brilliance developed irrigation in this arid landscape to make this crop (and others) thrive. Current day descendants of the Hohokam (the people of the Gila River Pima Reservation) still grown cotton on their land.

Dr. Carl Feaster was a research agronomist, geneticist, and plant breeder who developed modern-day Pima cotton in Arizona with the help of Gila River Pima Indians. It is in honor of their contributions that Pima cotton is named.

Commercially, Arizona has grown



Pima cotton since 1927, a lot of which is grown in the city of Goodyear and its surrounding farmlands.

American Pima cotton is also referred to as "Extra-Long Staple" (ELS) cotton because its fibers range in length from 1.1875" to 1.25". These extra-long fibers make it a superior cotton to others. It is also considered to have a greater luster and silkiness compared to other cottons.

Despite the desert conditions of Arizona, Pima cotton plants, if maintained under favorable conditions, can produce a very high yield. American Pima cotton is naturally deeper yellow in color than other cottons, so its color grade is classified by professional cotton classers.

So next time you buy or use a cotton thread or fabric, check to see if it is Pima cotton and if it is, thank the Indigenous people of the Americas!

Sources:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gossypium_barbadense
- <https://www.azfb.org/Article/Why-in-Gods-Name-Are-We-Growing-Cotton-in-the-Desert>
- <https://www.azfb.org/Article/Arizona-Agricultures-Fun-Cotton-Facts>
- <https://www.cotton.org/news/meetings/2010bw/cotgent.cfm>
- <https://www.cottoninc.com/>

WIPs



Work in Progress!

QUILTATIONS

There is no meal for a lazy fox.

THREADUCATION

Do you know about all the complex steps it takes to make the thread that we use? I didn't until I recently came across a few videos and posts that helped me to understand. I was impressed! Here are two terms related to the production of thread that I learned lately:

Mercerization: the process of treating natural fibers threads (cotton, cotton-wrapped, hemp, linen, etc.) with a caustic solution, typically sodium hydroxide or sulfur, to allow the small fibers

to expand in order to absorb more color (dyes). Additional results are threads with increased strength, luster, and vibrancy.

Double-gassing: the process of burning off excess lint from the thread by passing it between two flames. This creates a smoother thread and finish. Thread can then pass through the machine and needle easier leaving less lint to clog the machine and less strain on the eye of the needle.



NEEDLE KNOWLEDGE



We all know we should be changing out our needles every eight hours of sewing, and even more often if we are working with thick fabric, sewing over seams or other quilting, or sewing through many layers of fabric.

In a [previous blog post](#) I shared a set of photos of what happens to the tip of a needle

after using it over time.

In a [separate blog post](#), I shared an article on thread weights. Different needles should be used for different threads and weights.

I use the ubiquitous Schmetz brand needles, so the terminology I am using here is theirs.

My two go-to needle sizes are 90/14 ("topstitch needle") and 75/11 ("quilting needle"). In the photo here you can see that the eye of the needle where the thread passes through is a different size in each.

The 90/14 topstitch needle has a larger eye, thus I use heavier thread weights (40 and below) with this needle. I also use specialty threads such as the metallic threads with this needle because a smaller eye will strip the core thread of its wrapping.

The 75/11 quilting needle's eye is smaller, so I can use finer threads (50 and above) as well as rayons, silks, and other smooth and glossy threads if their weights are 40 and above.

Other needle sizes that I have in my studio are 70/10 ("jeans/denim needle") and 80/12 ("universal needle").

ARTSEWDIFFERENT, LLC

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!