

San Francisco Quilt Guild

Quiltmaker's History

Joyce Goode 2/8/1952-6/29/2016

interviewed by Jean Low on February 13, 2012

Jean: Tell us a little bit about yourself, your education, and so on.

Joyce: I'm originally from New Jersey. I went to college in Rochester, New York at Rochester Institute of Technology. It was a great school for me. I was in the graphic design department and my work there was just average.

I didn't go into graphic design because I felt that my work just wasn't good enough. So I went into other areas where I could use my artistic talent. I felt like I had more artistic talent than anybody in the room, and that was great. In New York I lived in Manhattan, and I was in the fashion industry for ten years. Then I moved to the West Coast and I went into the gift business. I was in the gift business for about ten years. I lived in Seattle for about two years and I really didn't like it. I didn't like the weather and I didn't like the atmosphere. It wasn't as far forward as they said it would be, and I felt uncomfortable with that. Then my friend and I moved to San Diego, and I loved it because it was an incredible beach town. It was a little boring, but my business was so excellent that I was enjoying it. I was in the corporate gift business at the time, so that took some artistic eye.

I moved to San Francisco because a company moved me here. I went to work for that company but it didn't last. I knew I wanted to stay in San Francisco. It's very much like New York but more civilized and tamer and easier to live in. I just love it here. I've been here for about sixteen years and I retired after I was married in 1997.

I've always been a needlepointer: I love to needlepoint and I like to knit. My husband was going to a conference in Pebble Beach, and he said "you know, there's this big quilt show in Pacific Grove and you should really go and see it." I went down and saw it and I was hooked immediately. I fell in love with it. I fell in love with the textiles, the fabrics, I thought "this would be great for me". I was a sewer in junior high. My sewing teacher was Mrs. Gardner (she's not living any more) and I think she was excellent for me. She was tough, but she recognized what you were doing. And when I learned to sew I found out that I really like singular activities. You would think that because of my personality, I'm so outgoing, that I would want to be around people all the time, but I don't. I really love being alone in my studio. I don't put the stereo on, I don't put a radio station on, I just love the quiet, I really excel in that space.

I think that my earliest memories of quilts weren't really that exceptional. I'd seen quilts for a long time that were either Amish or traditional patterns. And I wasn't really enthusiastic until I saw the quilts of Gee's Bend. That was really inspirational and inspired me to continue doing the kind of work that I wanted to do which was abstract work. Then there was another quilter who really inspired me, Rosie Lee Thompkins. She lived in Oakland for a long time. She's no longer living. But her work is very abstract and very spiritual in nature. And although I do not participate in a religion I feel as though I have a very good relationship with God. And I feel that it might show in my work, I'm not sure. But I feel that it does. It's an expression of my relationship with God.

I would say that I sew almost every day. So it helps me through good times, through bad times, tough times, it doesn't matter how I'm feeling that day, I can still sew. And that's what I like about it too. You don't have to be up for it.

I do sell my quilts. My business card says that I do commissions, which I have done recently. I made some quilts for girls who were getting married as gifts from their mother. That was really really fun. I am part of a small group, which consists of Kenan Shapero, Caroline Cory, Sheila Solomon and me. We have made large quilts for one of the moms to purchase for her home or for her son getting married. .e just finished that. We actually won a ribbon for that quilt, which was very exciting.

My favorite teacher of all time has to be Nancy Crow. She's exceptional, and I do exceptional work when I come out of her class. She's changed over the years: she's mellowed a lot, she's a lot warmer, a lot friendlier, a lot easier to deal with. I know she had a bad reputation for a while, but not with me. The last time I went to class with her, I had broken my finger and had a cast on. She was wonderful to me. I think she was amazed that I could produce anything with my hand like that. So it really worked out for me. I have taught, yes I have. I volunteered at Francis Scott Key (elementary School) in the after-school program, teaching sewing. We made a quilt each year and then we either hung it in the lobby of the building or they auctioned it off. And although it was difficult, the quilts came out beautiful. Sue Davidson was my assistant one year. She's such a doll! I got to know her really well during that time, so that's one benefit that came out of it.

I do show in the San Francisco Quilters Guild Show every two years and last year I won some ribbons. The first year I did it I won a ribbon too, which was very inspiring. It moves you to do more. It made me very excited to do more.

I invented a block recently, its called crosswalk. I showed it at the Quilters Guild meeting, and then it was put in for the general membership to reproduce and then the woman who won the blocks made a quilt of it and I have a photo of that, which is very exciting.

The advice I would give to future quilters is, stick with it, come to meetings every month and enjoy it. You don't have to be with anyone else, everybody loves to see you. I think that as a past president, I really am inspired by new faces, new people, new energy. I know that the Board is putting together something to welcome new members, which they've done in the past as well, but this time I have volunteered to be part of that group. I look forward to it.

Jean: Do you want to tell us a little about this new quilt?

Joyce: Yeah. It's just blue and orange. The inspiration to me is always just the fabric. I'll see fabric, and I'll put it together with other fabric, and that's the part I enjoy the most. This was inspired in Santa Fe.

Jean: What's the name of this quilt?

Joyce: It's called "Santa Fe Abstracted." I took a picture of something in Santa Fe by the International Museum and this is what came from it. Using this gradation fabric that I dyed myself and using some pieces in there for lightness and brightness because it's so bright there was very effective. This is just the fabric I love to use.

This other piece will be in a small show in March at the Sausalito Presbyterian Church for just four local quilters (not the same ones in the group I mentioned earlier). I had a solo show there a few years ago and I just really love that space. So when we decided we wanted to have our own show, I said well let's try that, and they had the space open for us. So that will be open Sunday March 4.

Jean: What is the logistics of a show like that? Do you have to bring stands in?

Joyce: It's a very interesting thing. We went and reviewed the space beforehand, the four of us, with the curator, Louise Forbush. She showed us, they hang from the ceiling on these picture things, and what you do is you put your sleeve on as usual, and I put a slat in, with two nail holes in the ends, but instead of putting a nail in there, I wire it and hang it off this picture hook.

When we got there, we had to decide whether to hang the show so each of us had her quilts all together, or to integrate all of our pieces together into one unified show. We decided to integrate it. I'm bringing the smallest works, Joe is bringing the biggest works, and Marie Claude and Barbara are bringing something in between.

Jean: I remember you were exhibiting at the Zeum gallery?

Joyce: No, that was here at the Sausalito Presbyterian Church.

Jean: Where did you get the fabrics for this new quilt?

Joyce: Well, there is a store on Hayes street called "No Troublo", and they have these screened linen fabrics. But this one is regular quilting batik, and that one is Marimekko that I got at Crate & Barrel. This over here is regular quilting fabric, and the other one is solid like a Kona cotton. The screened linens are something I really love.

Jean: When you buy the fabric do you already have a project in mind or is it going into your stash?

Joyce: No, it's going into my stash, but it doesn't stay there long because while I'm folding it and putting it away I'm thinking, "Oh no, I can't put this away, I love it, I have to use it." And I don't usually do blue. Green is my color, is the color I feel more comfortable with. Orange, I love, red and green together not like Christmas, but I do like red and green together. But when I saw these blues I thought "I'm going to prove that I can do blue."

Jean: Do you pre-wash all your fabric?

Joyce: I do. I wash everything except fabrics that are going to go in wall-hangings. Sometimes I don't feel that I need to do that. And these linens are so crisp, I really didn't want to fool with them. I do wash my cottons though, especially when I'm doing bedding quilts.

Jean: Are there any other types of fabrics that you are drawn to, such as graphics?

Joyce: I love batiks, I do. I love solids. I like solids in anything. I like silk, I like linen. I love linen. I like Indian shot cotton. And I do love to dye fabric, I just don't get around to it much anymore. What kind of dye? I think Tintex (?).

Jean: The liquid?

Joyce: No, the powder.

Jean: What kind of fabric stash do you have? Is it organized?

Joyce: It just got organized. It is so gorgeous, I have to tell you. The Secret Pal Tea, we went to Catherine Sherman's house, and her stash was so beautifully folded into bookshelves, that that day, Kenan told me she was doing it too, and I thought I had to do it. But I don't have a car anymore. So I asked Kenan if she would take me to IKEA. And the only qualifier was I had to have the least expensive bookshelf. And I got this bookshelf for \$50 that is so good looking, so fresh. My husband who is not mechanical put it together for me. I tried to help but he didn't want me to. Everything is folded now the way that speaker who told us to fold fabric told us to fold it. And I've gone through even a lot more fabric since then, because now I can find things. And I see that I'm very low on, like, persimmon orange and, marine blue or teal blue, so those are the colors I'm looking for now.

Jean: So how large is this bookcase?

Joyce: Its only about 4 feet wide by about 6 or 7 feet high. It's very high and it's not filled to capacity. I could use some more fabric.

Jean: When you buy fabric, how much do you buy?

Joyce: That's an interesting question. Depending on what it is, I mean if it's Marimekko fabric and it's \$40 a yard I don't buy a whole yard. If it's \$6 a yard, I do buy a whole yard. If it looks like its going to be

a great backing, I'll buy 4 yards. If all I can get is a quarter of a yard I'll buy that. I'll just buy whatever I can get, but I don't like to buy fat quarters any more. Because I understand the concept of repetitive cutting.

Jean: That's one thing about interviewing different quilters. I get to ask, "Oh, what's your secret?"

Joyce: Yeah, that's right.

Jean: You think you're done?

Joyce: I think I'm done.

Transcribed by Peggy Cleary 7/2/2018