

A Journey Retold

Do you think growing up in an art studio makes you an artist? I grew up in my mother's studio, and I seem compelled to create. I was introduced to my medium when I was nine. My mother instructed me how to carve a linoleum block for a Christmas card. The next time I worked in this medium was in a Textile Design class at Western Kentucky University. I was introduced to batik, tie-dye, silkscreen, and block printing. I loved it all. I even taught a Basic Design class at Western after I graduated. Later, in graduate school at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, I minored in Textile Design. Batik was my thing then, but when I almost set my house on fire and nearly destroyed all the automatic dry cleaning machines in town, I changed to block printing. I became a full-time instructor at Miami University of Ohio in the fall of 1975, but I continued to experiment in my printing and even took more design classes. I started designing vests and kimonos that I had printed with my newly carved spiral designs. Ironically, they were showing in an art to wear boutique in San Francisco. After three years in Ohio, I made a paradigm shift, quit teaching, moved back to Kentucky, and had my first child in 1978. However, this change gave me time to work on my printing techniques and design motifs. I had two one-person shows in Owensboro, Kentucky, worked summer fairs, and began to show nationally my quilted, linocut printed garments. Following that, I was asked to teach the Textile Design class at Western Ky. University which had originally inspired my artistic direction. By this time I have two children under four, and in 1983 my husband and I had the bright idea to move to Santa Cruz, California. Finding that the streets are not paved with gold, it got harder to keep my art going. A third child arrives. I teach Beginning Clothing Construction at Cabrillo College, but my Textile class is cut due to an economic downturn. I had hoped to bring a Textile, Clothing and Merchandising program to Cabrillo, but times were tight. Again, I have another shift. I decided that my art needed a message. I started studying symbols across the world and across time. I created story blocks that reflect birth, marriage, journey, death, creation, bliss or, in other words, basic archetypes of human experience. This cemented me as an artist. Later, in 2000, I started printing on silk scarves and placing them in local galleries. I became an Open Studio artist in 2003. Today I print my simpler designs of flowers, shells, and geometric motifs for art to wear, and I print my more detailed story blocks on paper, matted and framed. My art continues to evolve, but I have not wavered from my original linocut medium, and I still use that first linoleum block.

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