

Amazing Abstracts – Julia Graves, www.soquilts.com

Class Description: Create an abstract quilt that has amazing movement and drama, using the techniques pioneered by Ursula Kern. Go from inspiration to a simple sketch, then have fun “coloring” your sketch with bits of fabric to create a mock-up of your design – see before you sew! The design is gridded and blocks are foundation pieced using an easy sew and flip method with room for creativity and improvisation. Lots of discussion of design principles and how to use color and value to create the drama and desired effects.

Note: 1 day classes will use a basic angled shape as a starting point to design. 2 or more day classes will use the participant’s own design. On-line classes may be conducted in two parts – Part 1 will develop the design and Part 2 will focus on sewing.

Supply List:

- Pencil, eraser, fine tip Sharpie, dry erase marker (optional)
- Scissors for paper and fabric
- Paper to write on and draw on (with lines and without – just a few pieces)
- Sturdy paper to glue on (large index cards – 4x6 or 5x7 or card stock – just a few pieces)
- Double-sided tape or glue-stick to use with the sturdy paper to create your mock-up. Tape is preferred as glue stick sometimes dries before design is finished. An easier but more expensive option is Grafix doubletack mounting film.
- Long thin ruler for drawing lines with Sharpie
- Square rotary cutter ruler – 6 ½” square or larger; 8” square or larger gives more flexibility for block sizes
- Rotary cutter with new blade, mat
- Pictures for inspiration – color schemes, design ideas, etc.
- Clear plastic - at least one piece, such as plastic document protector sleeves (8 ½” x 11”), template plastic or large clear Ziploc bags (you will draw a grid over your design onto this clear plastic)
- Sewing machine and supplies (machine, power cord, foot pedal, needles, feet, bobbins, neutral thread (gray or beige), extension cord)
- Freezer paper or parchment paper, at least 12” by 12” (optional - to cover any sticky spots on your mockup)
- Tweezers (optional – for placing small bits of fabric on design)
- Portable light (optional)
- Portable pressing surface and iron (optional and if the room can handle multiple irons)
- Color wheel (optional; instructor has these for sale – see website, <https://soquilts.square.site/>)



Fabric Supplies:

- ½ yard (1 day class) or 1-2 yards (2+ day classes) foundation fabric (muslin, or white/cream fabric without pattern, as sometimes the foundation shadows through light colored fabric). This is enough for a small wall hanging or pillow.
- Fabrics in at least 2-3 colors for your chosen color scheme in a full range of value (light, medium and dark) and intensity (pure/clear colors and muted/grayed/toned colors), plus lots of neutrals (white, cream, beige, brown, gray, black & white, and black). Variety is better than yardage. Long narrow scraps work well (1-3” wide and 6”-12” long, but don’t trim if you have larger pieces). Think mostly tone-on-tone blenders vs multiple colored fabrics, though fabrics that have just the colors of your color scheme can also work well.
- Extra fabrics – if you have room, throw in small pieces of fabric in a wide variety of values and colors so you have more choices
- Avant-garde fabrics – the foundation piecing method lends itself to using fabrics that are not traditional quilting cotton, such as silks, drapery fabric, polyesters, etc. So – if you want to be adventurous, have at it! A woven fabric is easier to sew with than non-woven, such as knits. Use a ½” seam allowances vs the traditional ¼”.
- If using an inspiration photo, look closely at all the colors in the photo and bring fabrics in all the colors. The color effect of a photo is often driven by the colors that hide in the background as much as by the bright colors that pop.

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See examples of quilts made with this technique at <http://soquilts.com/amazing-abstracts-gallery/>.

Samples from One Day Class:



Other work by Julia Graves using this technique:



Flutterby by Julia Graves 2020



Spiral Expanse by Julia Graves 2019



Genesis 1:3 - Let There Be Light by Julia Graves 2020



Isaiah 43:2 – Your Troubles will not Overwhelm You by Julia Graves 2020



Me and Davey by Julia Graves 2020

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Sample design layouts – 1 day class

