From Photo to Fabric Lesson Plan and Teacher's Notes
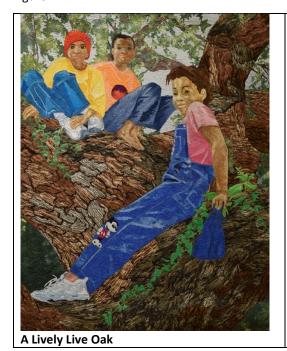
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The Photo -Visually Appealing to You and Target Audience   You can fix a lot about a photo except the key content.

The Design   Once you've chosen a photo – now you work on it to create art.

1. Choose Approach – realistic, stylized, abstract. I'll be using 4 examples to demonstrate during presentation: A Lively Live Oak, Egret in Courtship Display, Alsace Blue and Bewitched Bird of Paradise. (See Figure 1)
2. Design Principles – Rule of Thirds, Focal Point, Balance, Filling the Space   See Figure 2 below with Egret progression – Original Picture, Focal Point, Rule of Third (Egret's head is in first 1/3 of picture), Balance (light and dark to pop focal point – draw attention to head) Crop to fill space.
3. Decide on Size – crop photo to meet desired dimensions – Egret – square format of 30"
4. Draw Pattern from a copy of photo , sketch from photo or print photo on fabric – Staples Blueprint copy done to size you want in black and white (Lively Live Oak); Sketch – Egret using projector; Alsace Blue using Spoonflower website – print photo the size and on fabric you select – it is reasonable.
5. Create Shapes from changes in Value – draw on copy or your sketch – Your printed photo or sketch now become your pattern. ***Value is the key to the whole technique.*** See Figure 3 below.
6. Decide on colors -pick a theme (bold, tints, greys) to create the mood or pick colors using the color wheel – complimentary, primary, secondary, etc. Using black and white photo or sketch – color is now your decision. Background for egret was boring. Blurring in blues changing to greens adds excitement and interest.
7. Decide on Fabrics - For each color you've chosen – find fabrics that represent that colors different values. Choose fabrics that have a tight weave will help to avoid raveling on raw edge. Choosing fabrics that have small patterns and mixing it up adds interest. Also using different fabrics, silk, velvet, etc. Egret body and legs are all white silk that's been painted using Derwent Inktense pencils and fabric medium for locking the color (setting it) in.

Figure 1.

A Lively Live Oak

Egret in Courtship Display

Alsace Blue

Bewitched Bird of Paradise

Figure 2.   Design Decisions on creating Egret in Courtship Display from the Original Photo

Figure 3. Drawing Shapes onto the Staples Blueprint Copy based on Changes in Value.

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The Construction

<u>**From Photo Printed on Fabric:**</u> Alsace Blue is example.   When I got the printed fabric back from Spoonflower – I marked on the fabric where I saw the changes in value. I then

1. <u>Decide on thread thicknesses</u> you will use – 12 very thick, 100 very fine, 40-60- normal quilting weights – Alsace is mostly 30 weight thread.
2. <u>Decide on thread color</u> – remember you will need to pay close attention to having the right value changes in the color of your thread. Also, a shape may have multiple colors that create the right shade.   Different colors of blue and lavender
3. <u>Decide how thinly or densely you are going to lay down your thread</u> – (1/16 to ½ inch). The key is to try to stay consistent on how you are doing this to keep the quilt from bunching. Thread on flowers is about 1/8" or less apart. See Figure 4.
4. <u>Prepare your quilt sandwich and start filling thread</u> into your shapes that you've identified during the Design process. When you've completed filling in the shapes, your quilt is ready for blocking and turning the edges. Blocking is very important on this type of quilt because the density of quilting will warp your edges.

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<u>**From a Copy or Your Drawing**</u>:   I'm going to use a Lively Live Oak as my example to discuss this technique. I was fortunate enough on this photo to have pretty much the image that I wanted to create without any editing. So, I took my printout from Staples and started to:

<u>Break down your image into sections that you will construct as separate building blocks</u>. This allows you to focus on one piece of the puzzle at a time.   Build your focal point first! <u>This is important</u>, remember that as you cut your building blocks, you will need to identify which ones will be on top of the adjoining block and which will be

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underneath an adjoining block. When a block will be underneath, you will need a ¼" to ½" extension to go under the block that will sit next to it. The girl (with Mickey Mouse on her pants) was broken into 8 blocks. This allows you to work in sections and not be totally overwhelmed by the process. The head needed to go under the shirt block, so the head block had extra fabric to create the underlay portion. See Figure 5 below.

Audition your chosen fabrics as you build each building block and change out whatever doesn't work. Remember **VALUE** is the most important element of any decision and the value of a color is based on the colors that surround it. When you start with the focal point blocks – you might see the need to change the colors in blocks that surround it, so you get the right match of color and value. Remember to plan but proceed one block at a time and be open to change.

Create a copy of the building block with each of the shapes that denote a change in value or color. I use Golden Thread paper to trace the building block and its various shapes. I mark each piece with a number and a color-fabric id. This copy now becomes my pattern for that block. Golden Thread paper is soft tracing paper. Use Pant leg block as an example – whole block will be a medium blue and then shapes are D, M, L Blue. In the case of the children's skin – faces, arms, etc. – I decided not to try to use multiple fabrics to show the change in value and instead used Intense Pencils to dye the shapes. Show example of girl's face and what Inktense Pencils and crayons look like. See Figure 6.

Using this paper allows me to take my image; turn it face (front) down and then copy it onto the Shirtailor interface. I then decide what is the predominant color in this block and iron it onto the Shirtailor interface. Next, I cut out the block on the traced line remembering to leave additional edge if it is to go under an adjoining block. Show samples of Pellon Shirtailor interface and how you would trace back of Golden Thread paper.

Next, I take my Golden Thread block pattern, turn it face down and copy the shapes onto paper backed fusible. Again, remember to leave enough room between the shapes to allow for the additional fabric that will be needed to fit under the adjoining shape. After tracing a shape, I transfer the id# and color. I use Pellon's Wonder Under as my fusible of choice. I would not recommend a fusible with paper on both sides. Show the samples of Pellon Wonder Under and what the fusible looks like. Demo tracing a shape and marking with number and color ids.

Next, I roughly cut out the fusible shapes and iron them onto the back side of the correct fabric. After attaching fabric to all the shapes for a building block, I then cut out the fabric shapes – leaving on the paper back (it has the id number that I can match up with Golden Thread pattern.

Using the Golden Thread paper now, facing up, as a guide, I remove the paper backing on each shape, and place it in its correct position on the block. I then gently tap with the iron. Once the pieces are in place and look correct, I then firmly iron them to the larger piece. Figure 6 shows building blocks and shapes – point out shapes on girl's pants between pic 2 and 3.

As each building block is completed, I tape them together using blue painter tape until I've reached a major building block. The easiest way to do this is to set the pieces on top of your photo/drawing and then carefully line them up and tape them together. Pic 2 shows 6 blocks of the girl and 4 blocks of the tree.
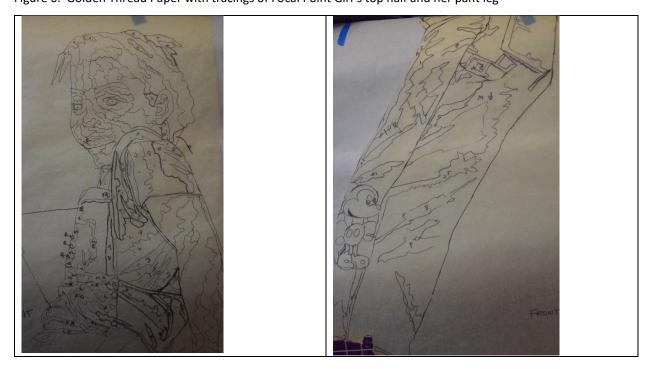
When I feel that the blocks are exactly where I want them, I sew the building block pieces together. Pic 3 shows girl and tree blocks in place and the blocks with the boy being positioned in place to make sure I was leaving enough room for the blue girl.

Figure 5. Progression of using Building Blocks to begin creating the quilt. ,

Figure 6. Golden Thread Paper with tracings of Focal Point Girl's top half and her pant leg

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The Quilting

The quilting design, the thread and the batting (or possibly trapunto) creates a 3-dimensional effect on your fiber art. I use free-motion quilting to show perspective, flow of water or sky, depth in stone or mountains. Quilting on tree bark is larger than on children and that on children is larger than on sky and trees leaves. The part of the tree trunk under the children's feet has trapunto to show depth as the tree bows out and lets kids sit on it.

 The Finishing

 To create a professional look, it is important to block your quilt. I wet the quilt by spraying with water and then place it on several towels sitting on a carpet. I then carefully, stretch it and measure it as I go.

Quilting will often leave the quilt's sides uneven. After blocking, I will cut the edges, to make sure all sides are straight and even. Hint: When you measure from the top corner to the bottom corner across the diagonal, the lengths should be the same from both the left and right side. This happens because each corner should be a right angle. If the sides are equal and the angle correct, the hypotenuse will be equal.

When you have a blocked quilt with right angle corners and even, straight sides, you have a choice on how to turn your edge. For me, this is often based on whether I plan to show the quilt in a quilt show or whether I will be framing it to be hung in home or a gallery. In the "Quilt World", the judges in a show want to see and judge the workmanship on the front and the back of the quilt. Also, there cannot be any frame or hanger attached to the quilt. In the "Art World", a gallery-wrap or framed piece of art is often more desirable since it is planned to have its back to the wall or the stretcher frame.

Quilt World Options:

1. Binding Strip – this is often used when you have a border around the quilt.
2. Flashing – a thicker strip that is attached to the front of the quilt on each side and then turned to the back.
3. A 4.5-inch sleeve attached to the back of the quilt. A rod is placed through the sleeve for hanging.
4. A label on the back, bottom left hand corner when the quilt is lying face down.

Art World Options:

1. Binding or Flashing strips – shows back
2. Pillow Case turn – hides back
3. Attach sleeve for hanging
4. Attach quilt to stretcher covered in fabric. Attach quilt without turning edges directly to a stretcher (this can be quite bulky at the corners).
5. Use a shadow box frame to enclose the quilt once it is attached to a stretcher.