

Leilani Joy Purvis  
Create Whimsy Interview Answers

1. I've always enjoyed exploring various crafts and fine arts. Some of the art forms and mediums I have worked with include watercolor, acrylic painting, ink on fabric, wood burning on wood and dried gourds, dry needle felting, quilting, fabric collage, knitting, embroidery, and garment sewing.

2. In 2006, while living in South Lake Tahoe, California, I decided to take a class on making quilted placemats as a gift for my mother for Mother's Day. I loved the process and soon took several more classes in beginner quilting, exploring different patterns and techniques.

After moving to Bend, Oregon, in 2008, I continued quilting and had the wonderful opportunity to take classes at the Quilters Affair in Sisters, Oregon, as well as attend the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show. One year, I was thrilled to have one of my quilts displayed in a local quilt shop. It was a log cabin design with pinwheel blocks in all four corners and an added border. This was my first experience designing my own quilt, and I absolutely loved it!

In 2017, after moving back to Tahoe, I took a fabric collage class and was amazed by the creativity and freedom this technique offered. Since then, I have been designing my own quilts and fabric collage pieces, creating original patterns that reflect my unique style and artistic vision.

3. I draw inspiration from nature, particularly wild animals, birds, and landscapes, as well as from photos of other people's quilts and art pieces. Ideas also come to me during moments of relaxation or in the early mornings, which I capture in sketchbooks filled with drawings and notes.

4. I am usually a planner when it comes to my projects, carefully selecting photos for animal textile pieces and using sketches or grid paper for other designs. I also utilize photo apps to aid in the process. However, I sometimes create more spontaneously, working improvisationally on smaller projects to stretch my creative muscles and gain a sense of accomplishment.

5. In the past few years, I have made it a goal to complete my projects and meet deadlines. This dedication has paid off, especially this year, with several acceptances into major quilt shows, online exhibitions, and SAQA exhibits. However, like every quilter and artist knows, there are always plenty of UFOs (unfinished objects) lurking in the shadows—ha!

6. I'm very fortunate to have a dedicated studio in both my Oregon (summer) and Arizona (winter) locations. My workspace includes well-designed cutting and design tables that are 37 inches high—perfect for my height. I also have excellent lighting, with both LED lights and natural light from windows, which is essential for selecting colors.

To design my pieces, I use foam boards, securing fabrics and fibers with plenty of pins before attaching them to a background or backing. For all my projects, I rely on my Janome M7 domestic sewing machine, which I absolutely love.

7. I use plastic totes and bins for most of my fabric storage, while dressers with drawers hold everything else. My thread collection is organized in a three-tiered plastic drawer unit, which I can easily carry for sewing, designing, or classes.

For smaller items, I use 12 x 12 plastic craft totes to store samples or small pieces for classes and projects. My all-time favorite storage solutions are artist canvas bags, plastic zippered bags, and large soft square zippered bags, which are perfect for storing batting, lightweight wool, trims, and more. These oversized, flexible totes can be conveniently stored anywhere!

8. I love the 2' x 4' folding plastic tables with three adjustable height options. They are perfect as extra workspaces for sewing, designing, or temporarily holding materials.

I also use canvas totes printed with my own artwork in three different sizes for carrying supplies to meetings, shows, and classes. It's so fun to showcase my work on a bag for others to see, and they're also incredibly convenient!

9. I'm definitely a scrap saver since I use small pieces in most of my work. I have them roughly sorted by color and style in gallon-sized ziplock bags, making it easy to visually select what I need.

10. I usually have several projects in progress at the same time, and I find that I work well this way. I enjoy focusing

on one project, then letting it sit within view while I work on another. This allows me time to reflect and make decisions as new ideas and visions emerge.

Other times, I gather everything I need for a project and work on it straight through until it's finished—this is usually the case for smaller projects or ideas I want to explore.

11. When I create an animal (whether fiber art or an art quilt), I typically explore photos from various sources, which can sometimes take several days or even weeks. I'm looking for the right angle, lighting, stance or position, and overall appearance. I want all the animals to appear approachable, even the wild ones. I'm particularly meticulous when it comes to the eyes, as they need to convey the animal's mood or, hopefully, its inner essence.

12. I love the beginning of the design process—sketching, choosing reference photos, selecting fabrics, and so on. However, working on the project midway, when it sometimes looks messy or awkward, can be difficult for me. But I keep envisioning the finished piece, which helps me push through that stage. I don't enjoy the final steps, such as attaching the backing, binding, label, or facing.

13. When I travel by vehicle (sometimes while pulling a travel trailer), I bring my sewing machine and try to pack everything I need for at least a few projects. I'm not typically a hand stitcher, but I'd love to explore some small, enjoyable hand-stitching projects in the future.

14. I have an extensive collection of animal fabric collages and textile pieces that showcase my signature style. Additionally, I have many projects featuring whimsical designs, scenes, or color palettes that some people recognize as distinctly mine.

15. The best advice I follow for my art is to do what makes me happy and makes my heart sing. I also hope my art brings joy to others.

16. I've had three different instructors, designers, and artists who have significantly influenced my work. First, in 2017, I worked with a Laura Heine pattern for fabric collage, which sparked my personal creativity. Second, Lorraine Turner had a major impact on my development through several years of classes, an in-person retreat, and many Zoom and Facebook group sessions. I learned so much about animal textile art, fiber art, embellishments, and finding my own style. Third, I was influenced by Sophie Standing, who taught me the best way to create animal textile and fiber art pieces using templates and painted canvas backgrounds. I also learned thread painting from both Lorraine and Sophie through online classes and lots of practice!

17. I've been entering juried shows for the past few years. I approach my work differently when I know it will be in a quilt show versus a gallery. For quilt shows, I need to add a batting layer and backing, as judges like to see the quilting from the back of the piece. On the other hand, SAQA or gallery shows are more interesting to me because I have the freedom to create the piece exactly how I want—whether it's with a canvas or fabric backing, the embellishments I choose, and the techniques I decide to use.

18. I have a master list of my pieces, both on paper and in online folders, that includes my pieces, artist statements, and other details. However, I still need to organize all the information online in a format that works best for me. There are a few options I need to explore.

19. I have a website, **Leilani Purvis Art**, as well as a Facebook page under the same name. My Instagram handle is **Leilani Joy Purvis**, which is the same as my personal pages.