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Build Your Library

When I took on the role of Artist in Residence back in May of 2011, I felt my job was to encourage, perhaps inspire, readers to explore and discover marvelous ways to create.

Being that this is my last article, I thought I would leave you with a simple exercise to help expand your abilities, while documenting the process. Begin by choosing an image or design, and then challenge yourself to see

how many different ways you could use it in your quilting. It does not have to be complicated; it could be a simple shape, a circle, a leaf, something you feel you can work with. Using that shape, make small samples using every technique you have learned along the way as well as new ones you have not yet tried. Play, experiment, have fun... you just may surprise yourself.

To give you an example of what I mean, take a look at the images shown on these pages, they are the same design, each created using different methods. I began by drawing a feather, then proceeded to use a wide variety of techniques, modifying the design as needed.



Original outline drawing



Simplified for hand appliqué



Modified for other techniques



- 1 was achieved by brushing discharge paste through a stencil resulting in colour removal
- 2 is hand appliqué
- 3 the image was sun-printed, then enhanced using trapunto
- 4 was pieced in a liberated style
- 5 is raw-edge appliqué
- 6 for this one, I free-motion stitched the design outline with black thread, quilted the piece and added textile paints
- 7 is Batik
- 8 is wool appliqué on cotton
- 9 again, I created a stencil, adding colour with dye sticks
- 10 is a dryer sheet, yes... a dryer sheet. Paper-backed fusible was ironed to a dryer sheet, the shapes cut out, and fused to cotton.

Using this feather as my starting point, when I have the sudden urge to give something new a try, provides a terrific way to build a visual and textural library of techniques. Each one is housed in the clear pages of a scrap-booking album, where I can also keep notes on what I liked about doing the technique, what I did not, what worked best and what I might do differently next time

We are so fortunate to have a vast array of resources to choose from when it comes to

learning. I am the sort who likes to experiment, to figure it out for myself, but there are great classes available locally, through your guild and, of course, at the CQA/ACC conferences. As always books, magazines and patterns are abundant. For those of you comfortable with technology, you have access to fabulous information online through blogs, tutorials, videos and more. Learn, create, enjoy!

