

## **BIG BOTANY—Abstraction through Color, Pattern, and Repetition**

Supply List

Maria Shell

website: <http://www.mariashell.com> Instagram @mariashellart  
[mariashell4@gmail.com](mailto:mariashell4@gmail.com)

This is a recommended supply list, if you don't have the EXACT ruler or supplies please don't stress about it. We will make it work! What is important is not the supplies, it is showing up and having a willingness to experiment with patchwork.

### **Supply List**

- Improv Patchwork: Dynamic Quilts Made with Line & Shape by Maria Shell <<https://tale-sofastitcher.com/improv-patchwork-dynamic-quilts-made-with-line-shape/>> If we are meeting LIVE, I am happy to bring you a signed copy for \$20. Just email me at [mariashell4@gmail.com](mailto:mariashell4@gmail.com) to request a copy.
- Sewing machine with a straight stitch and a quarter-inch foot and/or the ability to create a quarter inch seam. (A quarter-inch foot with a flange will NOT work for sewing curves.)
- Rotary Cutter with a sharp new blade—Olfa 60MM Straight Handle Rotary Cutter (RTY-3/G) is preferred <<https://olfa.com/craft/product/60mm-straight-handle-rotary-cutter-rtty-3-g/>>
- Rectangular Ruler—(Bring your basic medium-sized rectangular ruler, my favorite is the Omnigrid 4" x 14") < <http://omnigrid.com/quilting-sewing-supplies/rulers/omnigrid-standard-rulers/r14/>>
- Three Yards of Pellon 810 True Grid tracing paper, OR Pellon 830 Easy Tracing Material, OR some other sort of non-woven but stable pattern tracing material. <<http://www.pellonprojects.com/products/810-tru-grid/>>
- Practice Fabric—Approximately a yard or four fat quarters to use for experimentation or practice.
- Rotary Mat—Bigger is better
- Basic quilting supplies including straight pins, seam ripper, neutral thread, scissors, and snips
- Measuring tape
- Small sticky note pad
- Paper and/or notebook and/or draft paper for making notes, sketches, and drawings about your quilt.
- Calculator
- Design wall (a large piece of flannel or batting works fine)
- Digital camera or cell phone with the ability to take pictures
- Stiletto or Awl
- Gallon bag of small, medium, and large scraps that you would be willing to share with the class. Hopefully, everyone will bring a bag of fabric to share. Scraps should be 5" x 5" or larger. (This supply is for in-person workshops. If we are meeting virtually, we will not be sharing fabric.)

**Fabric**

Most of you will have several elements—stem, leaf, petal, flower center, and so on—each element will have its own 8-12 color palette. If we are meeting live, Please bring eight to 12 fat quarter to half yard cuts for each element. If we are meeting virtually, you will have your entire stash to select your fabric from. We will discuss this selection process during class. Please read the handout called BIG BOTANY Palette Building Exercise to help you understand the fabric selection process for this class. Please bring your questions to class as we will be discussing fabric selection as part of the first session. Fabric should be WASHED and folded. Washed fabric is easier to handle and frays less.

**Inspiration Sources**

Please begin collecting images of the plant life you would like to abstract. Photos, images from the internet, sketches and the like. These images will be used as inspiration for your quilt composition. Ideally, your plant life is an isolated concrete image—not a field of flowers, or a mountain side, or rocks covered in moss. Your image needs to be something that resonates with you, that you want to spend time with, BUT it should not be an image that you are dead set on replicating in fabric—THAT IS NOT ABSTRACTION, and we will be abstracting from your original images.

## BIG BOTANY PALETTE BUILDING EXERCISE

© Maria Shell

NOTE-We will cover this information in class. If you do have questions, please write them down and ask them during class time.

### SOLIDS OR PRINTS?

You can use whatever fabric you would like to use for your composition. I prefer solids because they create the strongest graphic impression on the viewer. Tonals and prints are perfectly fine but the graphic quality can become diluted. That said, I also prefer that you work from your stash. This will help you realize what you have on hand, and what you need to add to your stash.

### DETERMINE YOUR AREAS

For each AREA of your Big Botany composition, you will have a palette. That palette normally will have between EIGHT-TWELVE fabrics/colors. For example, your sky will have 8-12 fabrics and your petals or tree trunks will have 8-12 fabrics. The fabrics used in one area may or may not be used in another area. For example, you may repeat some colors that are in your stem palette in your leaf palette. So, first identify your areas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### SELECT THE PALETTES FOR EACH AREA

Please be creative here and willing to experiment. Approach your fabric selection with curiosity not perfection. We are here to learn. I HIGHLY recommend looking at several images of your area on the internet, through your own personal photos, or through real life examination of the “area”. For example, if your botanical image is a sunflower. Examine the petals. What colors do you see? Try to find 8-12 colors—orange, yellow, brown, neon yellow, pale pink, tan, white, medium brown, bolder orange, flatter orange and so on. THAT IS YOUR PALETTE FOR YOUR PETALS. Now match that list with the colors you have in your stash. Be flexible. If you don’t have a flat orange, maybe you have a flat red-orange.

### COMMIT TO USING NEUTRALS

Even though each palette represents a particular area and may predominating BE ONE color, we are going to try and use a WIDE range of colors. **I call this a pushed monochromatic palette.** For example, your sky is probably predominating blue, but it should also have ANY other color that is remotely there such as a pale blue gray or a white. Lots of COLORS have neutrals in them. You can USE these colors in your palette for dramatic effect.

1. Black—or the darkest fabric you have
2. White—or the lightest fabric you have
3. Grey—or something that reads as grey
4. Brown—or something that reads as brown

If you do not have a particular color in your stash, be creative with your substitutes.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS NOT THAT YOU HAVE A TURQUOISE IT IS THAT YOU HAVE BEAUTIFUL EXCITING PALETTE.

STRIVE TO HAVE—

1. A VARIETY of COLORS
2. A VARIETY of VALUES
3. A VARIETY OF INTENSITIES
4. EACH COLOR HOLDS ITS OWN

What does EACH COLOR HOLDS ITS OWN mean?

It means that no matter where that color is in the composition, it will not become lost and attach itself to another color. It is difficult to create a palette that does not have at least one color that gets lost when it is paired with another particular color. For example, if you have selected a medium value blue and a medium value purple, when they are next to each other they might not have good contrast and/or hold its own. That is okay. I call it a WEAK LINK. It is fine to have one or two weak links, but the rest of the palette should be STRONG!

VARY THE VALUES AND INTENSITIES OF YOUR COLORS

VALUE—Lightness or Darkness of Color. Think Baby Blue vs. Navy Blue. Your palette should have a range of values.

INTENSITY—This is the WOW FACTOR of a Color. Think about Neon Yellow vs. Mustard Yellow. All colors have a range of intensity. I also use these words to describe intensity.

HIGH INTENSITY

Glowing  
Vibrant  
Alive  
Pure

LOW INTENSITY

Flat  
Dull  
Dead  
Muted or Grey

REMEMBER

- Each section/area of your composition will have its own palette.
- That palette should be a pushed monochromatic palette that includes neutrals.
- Remember to vary the value, color, and intensity within your palette.
- USE neutrals.
- Just because a particular section/area of your composition is blue that does not mean that you should select 8 blue fabrics. LOOK to see what other colors are there even if they are barely there. TRULY when you look you will find that botanical images have HUNDREDS of colors in them. We may see it as a leaf as being green, but it is really black, grey, blue, teal, purple, yellow and green. TRY IT.
- There maybe over lap between one palette and another. Do this carefully and with intention.