

## **Denise Labadie**

### **– Art Quilt Design Intensive Workshop –**

#### **Description**

Denise makes contemporary art quilt portraits of megalithic Celtic “stones” and monoliths, and their landscapes, and more recent (though still centuries old) monastic ruins. She handpaints most all her own fabric, and uses varying combinations of reverse appliqué, turned edge appliqué, raw edge appliqué, inseting, free-form strip piecing (and optional couching), and “thread shadowing” (a variation on thread painting) to achieve her trademark quilt top textures, lighting, depth of field, and shadowing and perspective. Denise has been a featured exhibitor and instructor at multiple major U.S. and international venues (see [www.labadiefiberart.com](http://www.labadiefiberart.com)).

Denise uses a wide variety of hand-painted fabrics, threads, trims, and twisted yarns in her work, constructing her quilts the same way as a stone mason builds a wall – individually selecting, sizing, cutting out, piecing, and appliquéing (or inseting) each stone, one by one, working from the bottom up. In contrast to the realism of her stones, her landscapes (and skies) are quite abstract.

Denise's sewing and quilting experience and knowledge (which includes both contemporary art quilting and traditional patchwork) is both deep and wide-ranging, and she has proven to be uniquely capable of helping her students better understand and use both new and traditional (though oftentimes repurposed) fiber art and quilting techniques. Her Art Quilt Design Intensive workshop focuses on teaching her approach to composition, to fabric painting, and on helping her students gain a hands-on understanding of the comparative effects, strengths, benefits, and use – basically, the “what, why, when, and how” – of alternative quilt top construction and finishing techniques.

Each participant is asked to bring an enlarged quilt size photo (or large sketch) to act as a quilt or project template to help focus and personalize their compositional, fabric painting, and construction techniques instruction.

Denise's workshops are highly interactive and very hands-on, and are focused more on the development of participant creativity, confidence, and experiential exploration and learning than on rigid, one-size-fits-all lesson plans or patterns – her goal is to teach re-useable and replicable techniques and “lessons learned” that each participant's own creativity can confidently expand on once away from the classroom. Denise is an accomplished quilter and instructor who enthusiastically, energetically, openly, and warmly shares her knowledge, and her design and color sense, without reservation. Denise's classes are fun.

The workshop's format and schedule are designed to maximize opportunities for individualized and focused one-on-one teaching and student feedback.

Note that the workshop is not specifically about stones, or even landscapes, but instead on fabric painting and construction techniques capable of dramatically improving overall quilt design and composition, messaging and storytelling, color and texture, dimensionality, and craftsmanship and design integrity, regardless of quilt theme or focus.

Participants need only have basic sewing and sewing machine operating skills, plus prior (even minor) experience in quilt development.

## **Schedule**

### **Fabric Painting**

Denise is constantly asked about the "stone", landscape, and sky fabrics that she uses in her quilts. There just is not much commercial fabric with the types of colors, textures, depth, and complexity that many quilters are looking for. So Denise – and participants – create their own!

#### **Day One and Two:**

Explore (some rather surprising) techniques for using sun-reactive transparent color paints to create uniquely textured and individualized fabrics. These initial (hands-on) two days are focused on how to best use and layer paint, how to use various resists, and – depending on desired results – how to most successfully induce (and control) desired layer-by-layer differential paint absorption, diffusion, blending, and/or mottling. Resulting fabrics can be remarkable.

Each participant's fabric painting is guided by their specific project needs – using the photograph or sketch that they bring to the workshop – and ends with the completion of a range of their own newly painted fabric in the colors and textures that they themselves desire and create. The two day schedule ensures plenty of time for in-depth hands-on "guided experimentation" and techniques exploration.

### **Working with Photographs**

Participants use their own project photo (or sketch) to both inspire and help guide their fabric painting (desired colors, textures, etc.) and to serve as a rough template for follow-on quilt top design (color, texture, proportioning, perspective, shadowing, etc.) and construction. Working with Photographs – using photos as guides in quilt composition and creation – is interweaved throughout the training.

### **Construction Techniques**

Depending on the desired effect, Denise's quilts often use and blend multiple quilt construction techniques. The workshop thus next focuses on those techniques central to Denise's quilts, and their varying (design and compositional) use and application:

#### **Day Three:**

Reverse appliqué, turned edge appliqué, raw edge appliqué, and inseting.

Participants will learn and explore (using their project templates, as applicable) the comparative use and characteristics of reverse appliqué, turned edge appliqué, raw edge appliqué, and inseting, and become confident in their ability to consistently produce predictable, desired results.

#### **Day Four:**

Free-form strip piecing, couching, "thread shadowing", and quilt finishing.

Similar to Day Three, participants will learn and explore the use of free-form strip piecing, couching, and “thread shadowing” (again, using their own project templates, as applicable), and will learn techniques for professional-looking quilt finishing.

#### Day Five:

Denise will begin the day by giving a presentation highlighting her work over the years, and showing her integrated use of the workshop’s many techniques. This is then followed by addressing any outstanding questions; reviewing or revisiting select techniques; and continuing with per-participant hands-on techniques practice, experimentation (either painting and/or construction), and additional instructor guidance and feedback. The day will conclude by refining any participant-specific quilt project compositional and design decisions, and finalizing project completion plans.

### Supply List

#### Fabric Painting (not Dyeing)

##### Provided by Hosting Organization:

Worktables – one per student (a minimum of 30” x 72”, or larger), plus two for the instructor  
Chairs – one per worktable / student  
Good lighting (plus additional natural light if possible)  
Water source, large sink, and (two) ten gallon (or larger) plastic buckets  
Ironing boards and irons (preferably one set for every six-to-eight students)  
Fabric drying racks or (preferably) a nice, accessible sunny (!) area for drying painted fabric

##### Provided by Denise:

Setacolor Transparent (sun-reactive) paints

Please note that there is a per participant additional paint surcharge fee of USD \$25 to cover paint, plastic (mixing) bottles, plastic sheeting, several brushes, etc., and associated shipping costs. This incremental mandatory fee (which is typically not included in the registration fee) is collected by Denise at the beginning of the workshop (check with your organizer, though, for specifics).

##### To Be Brought by Participants:

Approximately 1½ yards each of a variety of different white cotton fabrics, the minimum size per piece being a fat quarter (approximately ¼ yard).

Participants can supply their own (white cotton) fabrics, or Denise can provide an optional (and recommended) Fabric Kit (made up of five different fabrics) – sold at Denise’s cost (including shipping). The kit includes 1½ yards each of (very high quality) white cotton Kona, Pima, and Sateen (all from Robert Kauffman); white cotton-linen blend (again, from Robert Kauffman); and white silk organza (from Dharma). These are the same fabrics that Denise uses for her own quilts. The kit also includes thread clip scissors. The additional cost of this optional kit is USD \$65, and can be purchased from Denise at the beginning of the workshop (please let the organizers know of your intentions several weeks before the workshop).

Several bristle and foam paint brushes (1" to 3") plus anything having interesting textures that can be used to apply paint, e.g., sea or dish sponges – a couple sizes – with lots of holes, etc.

Foam core or cardboard (or the like) boards (for moving wet fabric), 20" x 30" each – 2x

Small plastic containers (for mixing paint) with lids – 8 to 12x

Spray bottle (for water)

Permanent medium-tipped black marker

Clothespins

Clear (washable) school glue

White baking flour (1 pound), stirrer, and small container / bowl

Salt crystals (different sizes)

Sand

Weeds, rocks, feathers, etc. (i.e., things to lay over the paint for texture)

Container for water (1 liter)

Color wheel

Optional:

Clothes that you don't care about !!

Rubber or disposable gloves

Mickey Lawler's "Skydyes"

## **Working with Photographs**

### To Be Brought by Participants:

An enlarged landscape or rural photo (to serve as a rough quilt or project template), or any other photo that both inspires and which can be used to help guide quilt top composition, layout, and construction. The photo should be printed – in B&W – at the desired final quilt top size. Denise typically accomplishes this using local (architectural) blueprint companies; they're used to this type of printing, and are typically far less expensive (typically less than USD \$10) than Kinko / FedEx and the like.

In addition to the above enlarged (quilt-sized) B&W print: the original photo, any size, in color (note that additional photos of the same location can help provide incremental information useful in perspective development and shadowing).

Paper scissors

Tracing paper

## **Construction Techniques**

### Provided by Hosting Organization:

Worktables – one per student (a minimum of 30" x 72", or larger), plus two for the instructor

Chairs – one per worktable / student

Power – a minimum of one outlet per table

Good lighting (plus additional natural light if possible)

Ironing boards and irons – preferably one set for every six-to-eight students

Sewing machine for Instructor

To Be Brought by Participants:

Sewing machine (and please don't forget the power cord and foot pedal !!! )

Basic sewing (machine) supplies and notions (including new sewing machine needles)

Design board, approximately 3 x 4 feet, covered with batting, flannel, etc. (set up for push pins)

A variety of contrasting or coordinating fabrics that will work well with the selected (photo) composition, anticipated color palette, and the fabrics each student plans to paint during Days One and Two (the fabric can also be used as a background fabric, or be used for over-painting)

Neutral color sewing thread

Invisible or bottomline thread

Fabric scissors

Quilter's ruler(s)

Rotary cutter (e.g., Olfa) and cutting mat

Acid-free glue stick

Push pins

Optional:

Appliqué scissors

Top stitch or metallic sewing machine needles

Yarns and trims (for couching)

Decorative, variegated, metallic, rayon, etc. threads

Small pressing mat and wee-little iron

Walking foot; couching foot; free motion quilting foot

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Contact Denise (please, don't hesitate) if you have any questions:

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