

Artist Statement, 2024  
Susie Monday

What grabs me are conversations between color, shape and texture, and the drama of pattern in everything I see around me: wind in the cypress trees, ripples in the lake, huipiles and saris in my studio bins, the angels who come to me as I work. Working with improvisation as my partner, I make art quilts and art cloth, stacking up short stashes of the latter in order to make the former.

My art quilts tell the spiritual and metaphysical stories that are unfolding in my life and the lives I observe of other women around me. These goddesses, saints and angels are less about religion than they are about everyday occurrences: our hopes, dreams, frustrations, foundations and the resources we call upon in the secret spaces of the heart. The landscapes Big Bend, Spain, Italy, are the landscapes of my heart.

I have come to this work after decades of teaching and learning. Like most women, I haven't chosen a linear path though life or career. As a young art student, I sewed paper bags into installations. As an arts educator, I made banners, flags and costumes with children as my audience, collaborators and inspiration. As a newspaper journalist I practiced the art of storytelling and listening, in words rather than images. As an exhibit designer, I filled space with layers of meaning and experience. Throughout all these incarnations, I've had to be a maker-- putting my hands on "stuff" and turning it into something new. I hope the work I do now puts all those years to good use.

I want what I create to have consistency of style, to share a personal vision, and to inspire others to find their creative voices. I like working within the world of fiber arts because that world, more than any other, allows me the use of many of my interests and acquired skills: painting, printmaking, embroidering, building, layering, embellishment and collage. My work includes digital design, hand-dyeing, stenciling, stamping, screen-printing, fusing, machine and hand stitching and quilting. Rather than take a purist's approach, I will cut up and use anything that comes to eye -- recycled skirts from the thrift store share space with Indian silks, dye-printed damask tablecloths, pieces of Oaxacan huipils, baby clothes and designer scarves. Nothing is sacred and everything is.

Working in fabric and working with images of sacred women and nature bind me to generations of other women, literally and figuratively, and to my home here in the Borderlands. These are the connections I honor and celebrate in both content and form.