

Curatorial Statement

The work in *Elemental* represents the wide array of quilted art being created today, which contains elements of painting, pastels, printmaking, photography, and sculpture as well as the folk-art quilt from which it takes its name.

Despite its diversity, three elements hold the quilted form together: layers, stitching, and sensuousness. The complexity and versatility these elements allow has lured many formally trained artists away from their original mediums and has inspired many quilters to break free of traditional boundaries.

Photography, digital manipulation, and photo transfer are hot trends in contemporary quilted art. The photographic elements, piecing, and the fine stitching in Barbara Martinson's "*Tree of Life*" mingle so successfully that it may be difficult to determine where one ends and the next begins, but the piece would be seriously lacking were any of them absent.

Several artists use the quilt as a foundation for "painting" with fabric. In "*Transition*" Eileen Lauterborn's "brush strokes" are created by heavily laying on and stitching in place long slender strips of fabric to create a subtle, tactile surface with great depth. Other artists incorporate acrylics and watercolors in their work, such as Jane Davila with her "*el crisantemo*" and "*la primavera*."

Many of the artists in *Elemental* explore transparency, both actual and virtual. Perhaps the most adventurous in this group is Sylvia Weir with "*Adagio*," in which the traditionally quilted element is only a small part of the whole. Despite this, the entire work is layered and fastened through all its layers with bolts rather than stitching.

Liz Axford actually turns the quilt inside out in "*Lost in Thought*," felting wool, a traditional quilt batting, to create the foundation for her work, embedding screen-printed sheer silk in the process, and adding stitching to enhance the overall effect.

Several *Elemental* artists manipulate the sculptural qualities of fabric and fiber, such as Margit Morawietz with her "*Magenta Mood*" and "*Frazzled*" and Cindi Huss with "*Stream of Consciousness*." And Susan Sontag has moved fully into the third dimension with her quilted, ruched, and painted work "*Safehaven IV*."

We hope you enjoy seeing how today's quilt artists exploit the possibilities of the medium, creating depth, texture, and warmth that would be difficult to achieve with traditional fine art media alone. Thank you.