**Mixed Fibers Quilting Notes I**

*Preamble*

The list is what I use for quilting. My basic approach is to use straight piecing, needle turn appliqué, mola, and/or reverse machine appliqué when constructing my designs. Many of my tools were gifts, while others I have bought at a cheap price. One of my best buys has been a Singer sewing machine from the 1960’s. I paid $10 for it including the case and feet. Working solely from donations and birthday presents does not always keep me busy. Sometime I have to buy notions, fabric, etcetera, because I cannot find or make a substitute.

I have one basic mantra when working. It adjusts as I come to understand my workflow ethics and method. My principles follow this way: Reuse. Recycle. Repurpose. Zero Waste. Conservation. Preservation. Economical. These six principles compliment a dedication to raw beauty and a ticklish whimsy. I like polish. I love variation. I swoon at 100% handmade. Sometimes the upfront work will cripple any spark of creativity. Still persevering through preparation and a handy sketchbook tend to counter the feelings of loss and a disappearing muse very quickly.

*Tools and Equipment*

1. A sewing Machine with straight stitch, zigzag stitch, and the ability to drop the feed dogs.
2. Sewing Feet – an all-purpose foot, a walking foot, a zigzag foot, a darning foot/free-motion quilting foot.
3. (Optional) Purple Thang – a tool for cleaning out the little spaces and curves. It is also useful for turning the fine point of a corner to scraping the stitched paper template from the fabric.
4. Scissors
   1. Embroidery - for fine clipping in small areas when using reverse machine appliqué, mola, or needle turn appliqué to clip away a fine seam allowance around sections on top and underneath the quilt top.
   2. Pinking Shears – for cutting through high or thick pile fabrics. They help prepare recycled fabric.
   3. Simple Fabric Shears – for all other uses in cutting template shapes, shearing selvages, cutting out shapes for needle turn appliqué.
   4. Rotary Cutter – for cutting strips, squares, triangles in a uniform manner. Using a rotary cutter consistently in construction also helps the person who may be quilting your finished top on a long arm. If all your shapes are cut by hand, there is a tendency for the top to shift underneath the needle even when secured on the sides to the machine.
   5. An Xacto Knife and size 11 blades – This is used for precision cutting and obtaining a clean edge when cutting shapes for machine appliqué.
5. Self Healing Rotary Cutting mat
6. A plastic quilt ruler 8” by 24”
7. A 12” ruler affixed on the bottom with a cork strip or a clear plastic ruler
8. Yard stick
9. Pattern Pieces/Easy templates
   1. Circles – think coffee cups, teacups and saucers, bowls (large, medium, and small), hardcover books with smooth edges, ovals – the bottom of teapots or items from a tea service. Think about using shapes easily traced onto cardstock or poster board.
10. Onion Skin (optional) – Use this for tracing patterns from magazines and other places that have a flat stable surface.
11. Spray water bottle as needed. You will be pressing more than ironing the fabric.
12. Can of spray starch
13. Pins
    1. Straight pins – used for holding pieces together before running them through the sewing machine. Pull the pins out before you pass over them. These pins are of great help to secure large sections of fabric to a bottom panel for mola or reverse machine appliqué.
    2. Butterfly pins – for pinning seams together so the finish will be faultless.
    3. Small White Headed Pins – used for securing fabric and turned seams for needle turn appliqué.
14. Thread – When hand sewing I tend to use 100% cotton for everything, even when I utility quilt I use 100% cotton in Perle 5, 8, or 12. For the toys, I try to follow a principle of cotton for cotton, polyester for polyester, etcetera. When I read a tutorial on line, written by a woman who makes vintage garments, I understood the need to keep similar threads with the chosen fabric. Yet, when told polyester thread is strong, sharp, and tends to shred through cotton, I backed off using polyester all together. To prevent a long term problem, the one solution is to quilt with 100% cotton or cotton wrapped polyester on the long arm is what I learned from a quilt shop employee who had a long arm business in the back of the store. Note: I compromise on the polyester thread every day. Some of the cotton threads are too expensive for my regular work so I have bought a box of polyester threads of various colors. It was a cost effective decision when it came to committing to needle turn appliqué. I needed that many colors. Buying cotton would have broken my budget.
15. Needles – I use Crewel and embroidery needles for utility quilting. I choose these because they have a wide eye and a sharp point. The rounded point embroidery needles do not make it through the layers when hand quilting. I also use long needles for hand sewing (Do not choose sharps as long as basting needles though.) In betweens for needle turn appliqué, fine hand quilting, and finishing the binding by hand. I have a package of two 6” needles I use when I tie quilts off.
16. A large working surface- You can use the dining room table or a picnic table, but you will need to lay a board across to have a flat surface to work on. I work in my bedroom and have several boards to paint, draw, or cut fabric. My self-healing rotary cutting mat is about 22” by 35”. I have two boards I use with that. One is 24” x 48” and 30” x48”. I had underlayment cut at the hardware store to those sizes. I lay the board across a made bed and pull my sewing chair over to the bedside when I have measuring, cutting, and xacto knife precision work to do. I also stand and bend a lot when cutting uniform shapes. Stretching out afterwards is more than necessary. Several big box-sewing shops may carry worktable for purchase. Before buying a table, consider the size of your work area and its storage capacity I slip my boards and the mat behind other furniture in my bedroom. It has worked for six years. So, I doubt that I will be giving up on the strategy just yet.
17. Washing Machine
18. Dryer
19. Iron
20. Ironing Board or table and towel.
21. Tackle Box – plastic or metal to store notions, thread, bobbins, needles, and miscellaneous items.
22. Eighteen pieces of paper, roughly 3” x 3”, with the numbers 1-18 written on them. Use these when you have several columns of blocks/sections to keep in order when you are sewing.
23. Two desk lamps with bulbs 40 watts or larger. I like a well-lit work surface that counters shadows that fall in one direction across my hands and work.

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