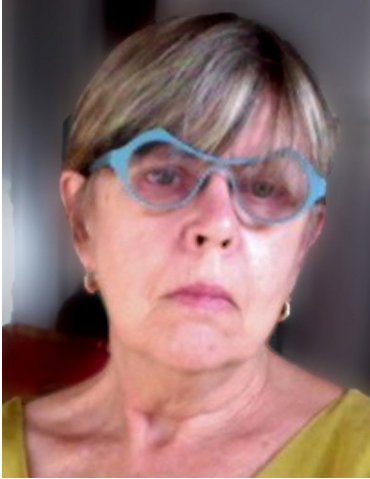


# Quilt Visions 2020

Meet Irene Roderick

Austin, Texas



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## Artwork on Display

*Drawing in Black and White*

My quilting activities are a mixture of discovery and elation. I have been an artist for most of my life (my parents gave me a set of oil paints in 3rd grade). I have painted and crafted for over 50 years, mostly in my home raising 4 sons and working in retail. I returned to school at the age of 46, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Texas at Austin and a Masters of Fine Arts degree from the California Institute of the Arts in 2001. My work has been exhibited throughout the United States and is included in private and museum collections. In 2019, I received the Emerging Artist Award at *Quilt National*, 2nd place finishes at QuiltCon2019 in the Improv category and in the 2-Color Challenge Category. I was awarded the first place award in the Improv category at QuiltCon 2020. I am currently retired and work in my studio 10-12 hours a day.

## Artist Statement

My artwork is currently grounded in the textile arts, focused on quilt making and fabric dyeing. I am trained as a painter and I have always been interested in pattern and color and how these elements can evoke emotional and political responses. A few years ago, I encountered modern quilting and loved the idea of making a "utilitarian painting." I learned to quilt and accidentally discovered improvisational quilting, an intuitive, spontaneous process I call "dancing with the wall." The technique opened up a new-found creativity for me. This work is entirely intuitive and visceral. I begin by placing a scrap of fabric in the center of my design wall and then grow the quilt one element at a time, responding to each "step" until it feels balanced, interesting and joyful. When I begin, I do not know what is going to happen but create through trial and error, literally dancing between the wall, the cutting mat, the sewing machine and the iron. Through this act of making, I have learned to embrace the joy of creative intuition, spontaneous expression, and a blind trust in process.

## Q+A

### What inspires your work at this time?

My process is entirely improv. I work intuitively and my inspiration is everywhere. I am taking on line Art History courses and seeing my favorite art in new formats and discovering new artists/art. I am teaching Zoom workshops and find my students and their work teach me in return. In an attempt to avoid the news, I play a lot of music and have added more music genres (especially international) to my playlist. By turning off the media-frenzy, I can immerse into rhythm and melody and I'm finding those influences emerge in my new pieces.

### What was your route to becoming an artist?

I have always been a "maker." I was given an oil painting set at age 10 and started my life-long relationship with art. Not only have I been painting for 60 years, I have always been drawn to functional art and craft. I have designed needlepoint, built and painted furniture, made sculptural pieces, delved deeply into beadwork, designed and constructed stained glass, and have now settled on fabric as my main medium. There is

## Meet Irene Roderick - continued

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not a craft that I haven't tried except welding. I earned my BFA at age 46 and went on to California Institute of the Arts for my MFA at age 50. Now that I am retired, I spend 10-12 hours/day, 7 days/week working in my studio.

### **Do you use a sketchbook? If not, what preparatory work do you do?**

I don't use a sketchbook. I don't do any preparatory work for my quilts. I just put a piece of fabric in the middle of my design wall and let a piece grow intuitively. This is not to say I don't study. I take classes and read to keep learning techniques and improve my skills. I love to hear how other artists make and think about their work. I try to keep increasing the "tools" I have at my fingertips to challenge myself and push my artwork in new directions.

### **What advice would you give to an aspiring textile artist?**

Learn everything you can from as many different artists as you can. Work every day in your studio. Set goals for yourself in each new project to push your work in directions that stretch your comfort levels. Don't be afraid. Listen to your own head. Make work that makes you happy and ignore all other critical voices.

I have found through the years that work that makes me happy, resonates with others as well. The most important advice would be to turn off everything when you are creating. Don't look at art or print media or digital media. Let these influences "fester/percolate" in your head but don't let tell you how to "make" while you are "making."

### **What piece of equipment or tool could you not live without?**

My design wall is essential to my process. I moved into a tiny house and the first criteria was to have an accessible 8' x 8' wall space for my design wall. Everything else had to be arranged around the wall.