

Quilt Visions 2020

Meet Karen Schulz
Silver Spring, Maryland



www.karen-schulz.com

Artwork on Display

Objects in this Mirror

The fiber compositions of Karen Schulz have been described as sophisticated, elegant, and lively with a notable attention to detail and craftsmanship. Her work references a careful consideration of line, shape, color and texture resulting in images which seem to issue an invitation to enter and linger. Schulz's work has been accepted into many national and international competitions, and has been exhibited widely in both solo and group exhibitions both in the United States and abroad. She has garnered many awards including most recently Best in Show at *Quilt National 2019 & 2015*, and *Quilts=Art=Quilts 2018*, Juror's Choice awards at *Quilt National 2017* and *Art Quilt Elements 2018*, Best in Fiber at the *Creative Crafts Council Exhibition 2015*.

Born, raised and educated in the Northeastern USA, Schulz has resided in the Washington, DC area for the last 45 years. While she has used a sewing machine since the age of 9 and created original, one of a kind quilts for the last 39 years, she came to artistic expression later in life and has pursued her art seriously and full time for the last 13 years studying with many notable artists in the field.

Artist Statement

My work is first and foremost a careful consideration of formal design elements. *Objects in this Mirror* represents a departure for me as I begin to explore various dye painting techniques. Having stepped into the use of mixed media on paper to delve into more expressive mark making, this fiber piece is inspired by a 10"X10" composition of acrylic on paper. While some of the surface design techniques are new to me, the shapes and lines are very familiar.

A note on form and content: While the major impetus for my work grows out of the formalist tradition, I recognize there can be no form without content, no content without form. Typically for me content seems to arise out of form.

Q+A

What inspires your work at this time?

Inspiration for my current work comes from a continued exploration of line quality and mark making. I am enthralled by the development of visual composition as shape, line, texture, and color interact to create visually compelling objects. I tend to work in a back and forth manner alternating between textiles (dye painting on fiber) and painting (acrylic and mixed media on paper). My current quilts result from efforts to understand a variety of surface design techniques in the service of abstract composition. My work is not concept or narrative driven. The particular meaning, for me, of any given piece is revealed over time only in the making of the work.

What was your route to becoming an artist?

As a small child, like most children, I was always making things- creating. Once I learned to sew, creative efforts were channeled into making my own clothes, which I did throughout high school and college. Five years after graduating from college I made

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my first quilt, a graduation gift for my sister. I was hooked. After years of making one of a kind original bed quilts as a hobby, I understood clearly the labor intensive nature of the work. With that in mind I began a course of study with Nancy Crow in 2007 so as to make the most visually "appealing" work I was capable of making. There is so much to learn and it has been quite a journey. I have been working in my studio as a full time practicing studio artist of the last 10 years.

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

I have no formal sketchbook practice, per se. Oh, I have sketchbooks and I keep notes in them from time to time, mostly from various classes I have taken. I do refer back to them often. There is usually some image arising out of prior work that will grab my attention. It might be a design exercise done in pencil on notecards, it might be a detail of a previous quilt or a hastily constructed small fabric collage. Any of these things can become the basis for a larger work. They are the images that are constantly arising, over and over, to the top of my consciousness. They literally are the images that demand to be made with serious concentration and effort.

What advice would you give to an aspiring textile artist?

DO THE WORK! But only if you love it. It will not bring you fame or fortune, but it will bring you a deep satisfaction and provide for you an arena where you can continuously learn and grow.

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

My camera is my constant companion. It has taught me a lot about composition, allowing me to see in grayscale, cropping and editing along the way. It also affords me the opportunity, along with my iPad, to import a work and draw on it with expressive lines that first introduced me to the idea of enlivening a work with mark-making.