

# Quilt Visions 2020

Meet Susan Willen  
Redondo Beach, California



[www.bentneedlecollective.com/susan-willen](http://www.bentneedlecollective.com/susan-willen)

## Artwork on Display

*Treasonous*

When Susan was in 7th grade, girls weren't allowed to take shop as an elective, so, given a choice between sewing and cooking, she chose sewing, and has been sewing in some form ever since. She has always enjoyed working with her hands, creating things from simple materials. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and working for some years in the corporate world, she returned to school and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, where she majored in painting. Perhaps it was inevitable that her twin loves for art and sewing would merge, as she began quilting in the mid-1980's when she was at home with young children. She soon discovered the nascent world of art quilting, after visiting the *Quilt Visions* exhibition in San Diego in 1990.

Since then she has studied improvisational piecing with Nancy Crow and dyeing with Carol Soderlund. She is currently investigating ways to use dyeing and screenprinting to give a softer look to her quilts, so that they take on the look of paintings in fabric. She takes full advantage of the rich opportunities to see contemporary art in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and has recently enjoyed viewing the work of Brice Marden, David Hockney, Mark Bradford, and a great favorite, the late Richard Diebenkorn.

## Artist's Statement

After receiving my BFA from Otis Art Institute, I worked in traditional fine art media for many years before moving to the medium of fabric in the 1980's. For me, working with fabric is a way of combining sculpture and painting, since the texture of the fabric adds 3 dimensional considerations to the process of composition. My work has two main threads. One is pure abstraction, in which I deal with concepts of color, line, and shape. The other is abstracting from nature, in which I try to convey to the viewer the feelings that come from a tangle of grasses or the sweep of the ocean on a summer day. Although I may begin a composition with the intention of focusing solely on one or the other forms of abstraction, the ideas present in the world around me, with all its problems, quandaries and complexities, inevitably intrude. Working with shapes, moving pieces of fabric around - the process of composition is a form of meditation. As my mind plays with the elements of picture making, it also tries to make sense of life. Each piece of art is a finite combination of elements drawn from a universe of infinite possibilities

My work is an effort to freeze time in a visual way and consider the moment, even as events whirl past, out of my control.