

What Inspires you?

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Inspiration is a curious thing. Sometimes it arrives quietly, sparked by a familiar fabric pulled from a shelf. Other times, it arrives in a rush – bold, unexpected, and full of possibility. And sometimes, inspiration is driven by motivation: the theme of a guild challenge, a looming deadline, or that familiar, persistent urge to finally finish the project waiting patiently in the studio. However it arrives, inspiration has a way of nudging us forward, inviting us to begin – or begin again.

For me, few things ignite my creativity as powerfully as textiles and travel. Around the world, cloth tells stories – of place, tradition, innovation, and identity. When you step into an international quilt festival or a textile museum, you're not just viewing fabric; you're witnessing ideas stitched into form. Each piece reflects a maker's voice, shaped by culture, history, and personal expression.

International quilt festivals are especially inspiring spaces. They bring together artists from across the globe, each offering unique perspectives and techniques.

One moment you might be admiring intricate handwork rooted in centuries-old tradition; the next, you're captivated by bold contemporary fibre art that pushes the boundaries of what a quilt can be. These experiences stretch our understanding of quilting and remind us that creativity knows no borders.



Travel deepens that inspiration in unexpected ways. Colours appear richer when seen in context – the soft neutrals of European stone buildings, the vibrant hues of Australian landscapes and sunsets, the layered textures found in historic British textiles. Patterns reveal themselves in architecture, nature, and everyday life. Even a simple walk through a local market or village can spark a new design idea or colour palette.

I've seen this kind of inspiration take root in powerful ways. After our recent Australia tour, a traveller shared how the experience stayed with her long after she returned home. She told me that while she wasn't a quilter when she joined the tour, visiting Kathy Doughty's (Material Obsession) workshop (Organic Applique) lit a spark she hadn't expected. Kathy's appliqué work and fearless use of colour lingered with her, inspiring her to order Kathy's book *Organic Appliqué* to learn more. Before long, that inspiration turned into action – she bought a sewing machine and began creating for herself. She later reflected that without the creative experiences of our Newfoundland and Australia tours, that new outlet for creativity might never have found a home.

When inspiration truly takes hold, it carries a momentum of its own. It reminds me of a quote I learned from my mother, one that always rings true when creativity is fully awakened: *"There's no force greater than an idea whose time has come."* In those moments, ideas don't need to be pushed or forced. They arrive ready, urgent, and eager to be brought to life.

What I love most about travel-inspired creativity is how it follows us home. We return with fresh eyes and renewed curiosity, eager to try new techniques, mix unexpected colours, or experiment with

new things we've learned while away. Inspiration doesn't mean copying what we've seen; it means allowing those experiences to evolve our own creative voice.

And of course, you don't need to travel far to find this kind of spark. Local quilt shows, guild exhibits, museums, and artisan studios offer powerful opportunities to see work through a different lens. Even paging through a favourite book or revisiting a treasured quilt can reignite creative momentum.

When we ask ourselves, what inspires you? we're really asking how open we are to curiosity, experimentation, motivation, and discovery. Inspiration thrives when we give ourselves permission to explore, to learn, and to be moved by the creativity around us.

Because inspiration isn't something we wait for – it's something we welcome in, one curious step, one motivating nudge, and one inspired stitch at a time.

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