

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE! CONTRAST IN COMPOSITION

Add vitality, variety and subtlety to your work by sharpening your understanding and use of the many forms of contrast, key to successful art and design.

Discover how to give your compositions a more dynamic and sophisticated look. In a series of short manageable exercises we will explore contrast of value, color, line, shape, texture, size, scale and mood.

Working with dark and light, big and small, hard and soft, warm and cool, straight and curved, calm and busy, rough and smooth, organic and curvy, you will find ways of adding visual impact and spark to your work.

The class is accompanied by exciting visual support with slides, books and actual textile examples. A short discussion will give a daily focus. You will be guided in making your own individual small daily paste-ups in fabric / paper. From these you will develop a larger quilt top.

VIVE. LA DIFFERENCE SUPPLY LIST

We will be working in various ways to create contrast, so you will need paper, and fabric supplies to work with by hand and machine. Bring whatever you can that will create contrast from the following list; Each day we will do a short paper exercise and then work in fabric.

1. Machine sewing supplies.

- Sewing machine, cleaned and oiled in good working order with knee lift (if you have one)
- Appropriate extension cord, multi plug / adaptor
- Normal sewing feet, including a 1/4 " foot.
- Optional: specialist open-toed embroidery feet, or any other you like working with.
- Machine needles: choose according to your fabric. Schmetz 80 for cottons, 60 for silks or fine fabric, 90 for heavier fabrics, and twin needles if you haven't tried them.
- Threads: neutral sewing thread for piecing, threads too match your fabrics, and also several contrasting threads of different colors or weights. Optional: a variety of metallics, embroidery or heavy threads.
- Rotary cutter and mat with **sharp** blades for fabric and paper.
- sharp scissors
- Fusible and stabilizer of your choice.

2. For hand sewing:

- Hand sewing needles that for fine and heavy threads. Include some nice big fat needles, as well as a couple of beading needles.
- A variety of threads both thick and thin including machine stitching thread, stranded embroidery thread, perle cotton, string, raffia or wire.
- sharp scissors

3. Paper supplies

- Bring a few pieces of different weight paper like tissue paper, corrugated cardboard, construction paper, metallic paper, textured paper, newspaper, magazine paper, cellophane, old photographs. Even pieces of plastic or bubble wrap could be fun. These will be used for a few texture exercises, so do not worry to bring colored paper. Plain whites, beiges, browns, greys, blacks will be fine. Also you will not need a lot and we can share in class too as I will also bring some.

- Some of the paper will be stitched, by hand and / or by machine and some will be pasted or glued.
- Glue of your choice.

4. Fabric supplies.

Remember the main thing here is **CONTRAST**. So bring fabrics that contrast in color, value, intensity, temperature and texture. For example, if you choose to bring reds, make sure you have dark and light, clear and murky, warm orange reds and cooler blue reds. This applies to whatever colors and neutrals you bring. Small pieces such as fat quarters will be fine, but make sure you have variety in your fabrics.

We will also have a Communal Class table so we can share pieces if you just have to have a bit of color you have not brought.

5. Also bring:

- a journal / notebook with writing and drawing tools for fabric and paper
- images and pictures as discussed below under '**preparation**'

PREPARATION:

Look everywhere at how objects contrast with each other and the effect of those contrasts. Start by looking at the food on your plate, the clothes you like, what you see in gardens, art work, buildings and structures. What do you notice about the colors, shapes, scale and texture differences? Take pictures and find images to bring to class to serve as inspirational jumping off points for your own original pieces.

Beauty, pleasure, and the good things of life are intensified, and perhaps only exist, by reason of contrast. (Walter J. Phillips)

Quotes on Contrast

Some forms in nature or in its states of transition are torn, others spongy, still others powdery... Take such varied contrasts and project them onto a flat surface, whether in a 'composition' or as handwritten notes accidentally jotted down. ([Julius Bissier](#))

Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate, are necessary to human existence. ([William Blake](#))

Contrast warm to cool. Make color sing, ring like a bell. Work from big to small. ([Sergei Bongart](#))