

Memory jar quilt Class description

Originally Memory jars were brought to this country by slaves from Africa. They were 3-d jars with artifacts embedded in them to carry a memory and were placed on grave sites. My grandparents had a small one in Lenoxburg Kentucky when I was little. (They were not black) I can remember trying to pry the trinkets from the plaster. The memory of the memory jar inspired me to make my first one as a quilt, which is now in the James collection in the International Quilt museum. That one has all the stuff from my childhood, like my girl scout pin, and other favorite now useless things you might accumulate on your dresser top. Later, after Ardis James passed, Robert James sent me a box of her things and I made a special memory jar quilt with her fabrics, rings, necklaces, little flying geese pieces left over, etc. When I made this quilt I learned things about Ardis I did not know before, like she skied at one time...

This is a hand stitching class in which the student will create a simple composition with fabric with the intention to sew on embellishments, embroidery details, and possibly paint.

The intention will be to make a little quilt that memorializes someone, or some experience.

We will discuss scale of imagery, meaning of the embellishments, expression of idea, color and balance, value and balance, scale and balance, texture, and how one moves the eye around the composition. The techniques taught will be hand reverse applique, hand applique, hand piecing, hand embroidery, shisha mirror application with button hole stitch, stitching on of beads and other embellishments, large stitch quilting, and binding application.

Supply list:

cotton fabrics, (I find batik fabrics challenging to hand stitch through)

optional: Recycled fabrics that carry a memory, very small photo imagery

Embellishments: should be variety of color and size: buttons, trinkets, old costume necklaces and earrings, beads, award pins, political pins, gemstone nuggets, pearls, any pins that help tell the story seed bead flowers, little crocheted flowers, old rosary, tiny silk flowers, religious medals

beading thread (Becky has it at ST. Theresa Textile Trove in Cincinnati)

beading needles, or #10 straw or milliner needles

size 8 seed beads (Optional)

Embroidery needles size 7,8

Embroidery thread

sharp fabric scissors,

small sharp scissors with good point for reverse applique

sewing thread for hand piecing

bring several cookie tin lids, or plastic plates, to lay out your trinkets, beads, buttons

hemostat (can find at medical supply or flea market)

thimble for hand stitching

pins, thin ones, like silk pins

optional: sewing machine