

THE ART of the HEXAGON

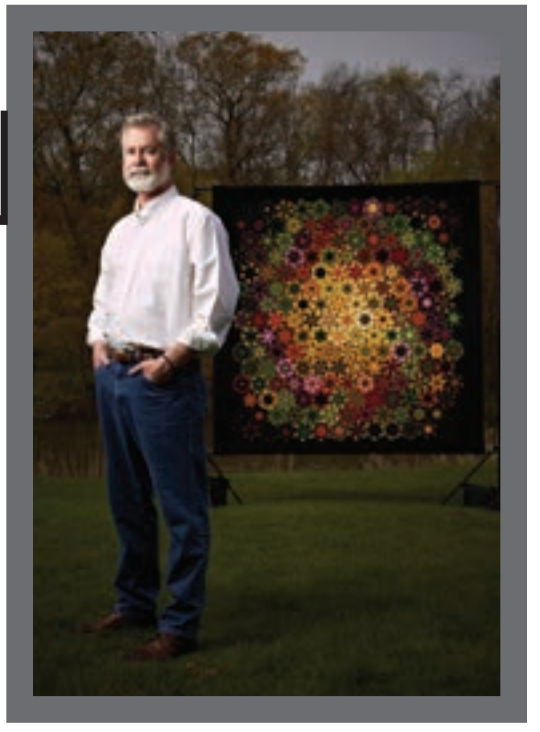
Anything hexagon has always stopped me in my tracks. I even chose the hexagon to frame the design for our Farmgirl Sisterhood badge. The hexagon, a shape that speaks the zen of the busy beehive or the wired manors of chickens (the first domesticated animal on Earth), symbolizes the unity and structure of the farmgirl life—a framework for the proper order of things, a pattern for life. In unwritten feminine language, it is a standard for farmgirls, or for that matter, the ordinary honeybee or the hen, rank and file workers that move the work along. It says that all things are to be done decently and in order, and that small things add up.

So, you can imagine my delight when I discovered the magical hexagonal quilt work of Bruce Seeds.

Stunning!

A man of many talents, Bruce left the confines of a conventional career to dive headlong into the astonishing art of textile mosaics.

“I’m originally trained as an architect,” admits Bruce, who specialized in computer-based architecture in Texas before moving back to his home state of Wisconsin. “With the economic



downturn in 2008, I decided to try my hand at the mosaic quilt style I found in Maxine Rosenthal’s book, *One-Block Wonders* (C&T Publishing, 2006, \$23.95). And there was no turning back.”

Rosenthal’s manual offers a simple method of quilting from a single fabric piece. Anyone who can cut and sew can create a quilt using her one-block technique. However, not everyone can elicit pure magic from the material.

After making his first quilt and posting photos on a social media site, Bruce received an inquiry from a potential buyer about purchasing several quilts for high-end Christmas presents. But Bruce was only midway through his second quilt. He set a goal for himself to make 10 completed quilts the next year in case a similar opportunity arose. He made 12. Any quilter can tell you what an accomplishment that was.

Bruce’s quilts are kaleidoscopes of color, resulting from a process, he says, not a pattern. (continued)



photo of Bruce courtesy Dan Bishop



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“You could say that these quilts are my latest attempt to marry my love of color, form, and artistic discovery with my natural tendency towards precision and detail,” Bruce explains. “The kaleidoscopic part of each quilt is cut from a single bolt of fabric. When I buy the fabric, I have no idea what the resulting quilt will look like.”

He looks for inherent motion in fabric patterns to achieve dynamic results in his finished quilts. Bruce then creates his patterns by cutting about nine yards from a single bolt of fabric into smaller panels, stacking them, and cutting the layers into equilateral triangles before arranging them into hexagons. Seems simple enough ...

But, wait, magic is in the making.

Bruce mounts his hexagons—hundreds of them—on black fleece ... switching, swirling, and squinting until the design POPS.

“The process moves in steps. Each step involves exploration and discovery, and each step builds on the previous one. It’s only when I get to the very end that I can see each quilt for what it wanted to be. It forces me out of my Type A ‘control everything’ behavior. It forces me to stay in the moment.”

The entire process, from the first cut to the finished masterpiece, usually takes about eight weeks. And his finished art quilts sell for thousands of dollars. But wait ... Bruce also sells cards, posters, mouse pads, and mugs of his dazzling designs at www.zazzle.com/bruceseeds.

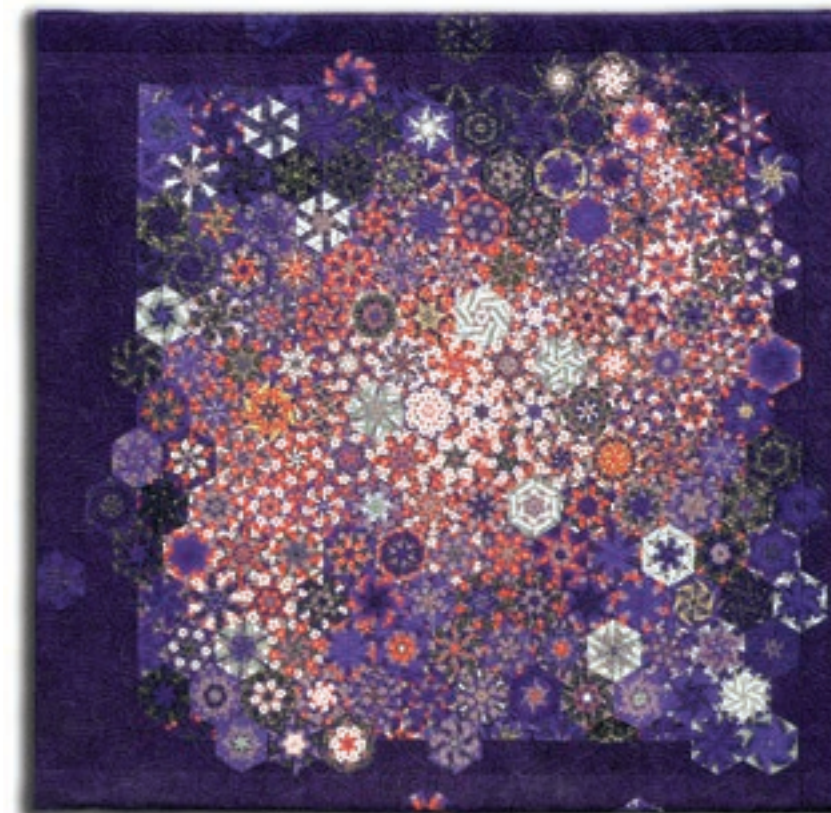
Of course, we’re all wondering ...

How did this magic man learn to sew?

“My mom taught me to sew when I was a kid, and gave me a sewing machine when I was a young adult, but I never did much with either the knowledge or the machine until now.”

After sewing a complete design on his own machine, Bruce sends the unfinished piece to a shop where it is quilted with a computerized long-arm quilting machine. That way, he can move on to his next effort. “I get my joy out of designing,” he says.

If you’re hankering for more of Bruce Seeds’ hexagons, from full-fledged quilts to marvelous mouse pads, visit his website, BruceSeeds.com



Above: quilt detail. Bruce creates his patterns by cutting about nine yards from a single bolt of fabric into smaller panels, stacking them, and cutting the layers into equilateral triangles before arranging them into hexagons.

BETTER HEXAGONS

Love to quilt, but hate to cut? So do the folks at AccuQuilt. At last year’s Quilt Market in Houston, Texas, I ran into Lynn Gibney, who was marketing a handy little gadget called the GO! fabric cutter from AccuQuilt. It’s portable, requires no electricity or batteries (you know my love for hand-crank devices!), comes with a cutting mat and fabric cutting dies in different shapes and sizes, and cuts up to six layers of fabric at a time, 90% faster than traditional cutting methods. My life will never be the same. Now my hexagons are perfectly cut, and that makes for a better quilt.



It is said there’s a story in every quilt, and there’s certainly a story in this quilting company. In 2008, AccuQuilt (www.accuquilt.com) branched from its parent company, AccuCut, to cater exclusively to quilters. They wished to create a company culture that truly reflected the diversity of quilting. AccuQuilt employees were part of this creative movement. Many were seasoned quilters, and if not already bitten by the quilting bug, they soon would be, as employees were asked to quilt for two hours each week. They followed by offering educational resources and quilting events. AccuQuilt continues to spread the joy of quilting by offering friendly and knowledgeable customer service, educational opportunities, facility tours, events, and a line of quilting products that help customers make truly magical creations. As long as there are quilters, there will never be an end to the story. AccuQuilt ... quilting happily ever after.

MaryJane

P.S. Precut hexagons in an array of solid colors are available from Moda Fabrics (find a store near you at unitednotions.com).

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