



quilting

THE QUILT

BY Dawn Cavanaugh.

Quilts in Motion

To keep the viewer's attention focused on your masterpiece longer, use one of the following techniques to add movement to your work.

Imagine waking up one morning, opening your front door to greet the day, and finding that everything you see is at a perfect standstill. Not a single leaf is rustling on the trees, and your neighbor jogging past your house pauses in mid-step! As your eyes scan the scene in front of you, it doesn't take long for you to lose interest. There is nothing to keep your attention other than the magic of the moment.

A quilt is much like a "snapshot" that captures a moment in time. It may be fabulously splashed with color or feature exquisite appliqué, but these are "static" images that focus attention on a specific element. Viewers must move their eyes around the quilt to capture the full effect of the piece.

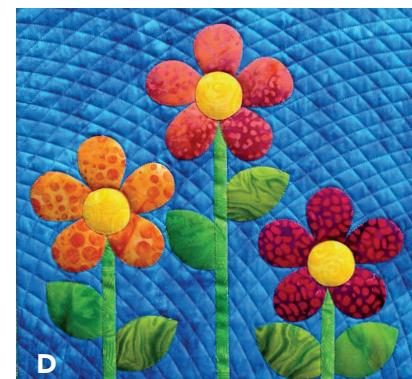
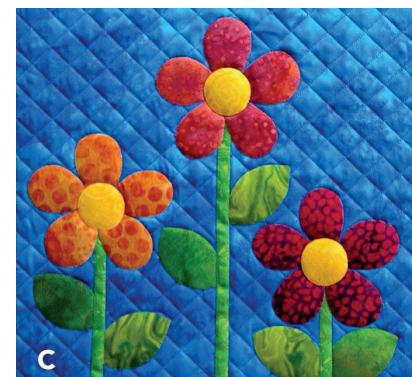
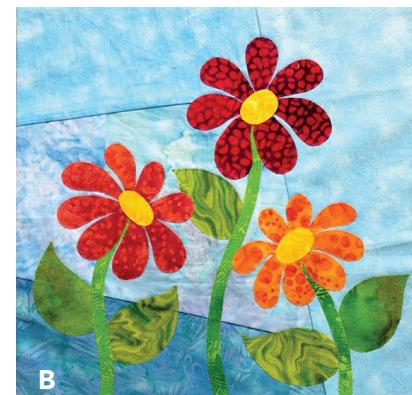
To keep the viewer's attention focused on your masterpiece longer, use one of the following techniques to add movement to your work. Color placement and value can



imply movement. When fabric values range from dark to light, our eyes interpret the gradations in a way that implies depth of field. We see darker colors fading into the

background and lighter colors move to the foreground.

Careful fabric placement can add light reflection and luminosity that makes an image appear more



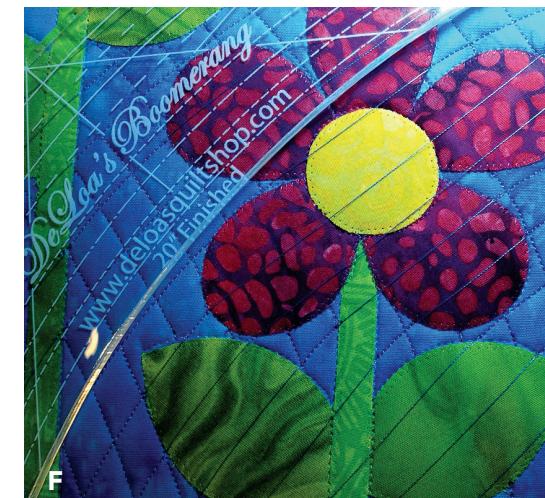
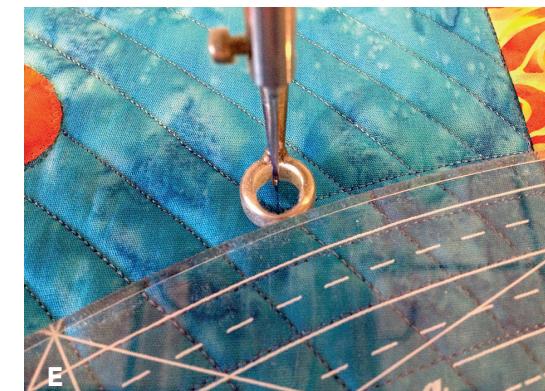
real and three-dimensional, adding to the sense of movement. While the single fabric selected for the background in *Photo A* provides some interest, it doesn't hold your attention for long. The flowers are also placed symmetrically, creating a very static image. Now look at the flowers and background fabrics in *Photo B*. Do your eyes wander around the background fabric, taking in the richness of value and contrast between them? The flowers are also asymmetrical, implying that the wind is blowing or the flowers are leaning ever so gracefully toward the sun.

Quilting designs can add motion to a quilt, even when the color selection or piecing designs are very symmetrical. Examine the quilting lines in the block in *Photo C*. The crosshatching, a very common quilting design for appliqué blocks, offers some contrast between the appliqué patches and the background, but doesn't really invite the viewer to look around the rest of the quilt. Notice what happens when the crosshatching lines are an asymmetrical curved crosshatch pattern as in *Photo D*. Now your eye wanders across the block, and the curves invite you to explore other parts of the quilt beyond the central image they surround.

There are tools to help you mark and quilt both straight and curved

crosshatching lines for machine quilting. Look for rulers with clear marking lines at $\frac{1}{4}$ " intervals to make placement simple (*Photo E*). If you use a longarm for your quilts, be sure to select a ruler that is also at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick to prevent your machine's foot from sliding on top of the ruler.

To make crosshatching lines easier to execute by machine, consider using "jump stitches" to move from line to line as shown in



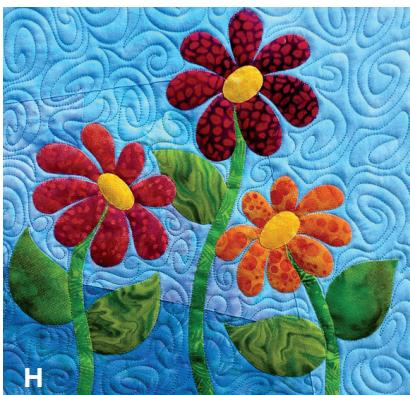
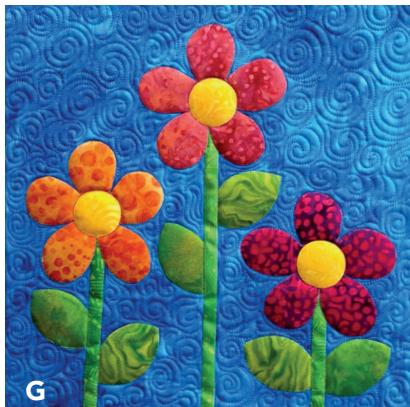


Photo F. This technique is borrowed from machine embroidery. It allows you to keep your ruler placed correctly across design elements and helps create the illusion that your crosshatching lines travel continuously underneath your design elements.

If you are using a stitch regulated machine, turn your regulator off as you approach your design element, and finish the line with several very small stitches to secure your thread. Pull your quilting machine (or your fabric if using a domestic sewing machine) across your appliqué patch, and begin with tiny locking stitches again before engaging your stitch regulator. To prevent threads from snagging on your machine,

trim the traveling threads on the top and bottom before stitching in the other direction.

Use asymmetrical quilting lines, changing the lean of a curve or the angle and spacing of a line, to guide the viewer across your quilt. Since both the pieced background and swaying flowers in the block shown in *Photo B* already convey some movement, you could choose a more symmetrical design for the background quilting just to provide the eye a place to rest. The blocks in *Photo G* and *Photo H* both have swirls and hooks that are NOT symmetrical, but the line spacing in *Photo G* looks more symmetrically placed. *Photo H* illustrates how just a slight variation in a curve can make a huge impact.

Compare the quilting styles in the four appliqué blocks shown in the photo on page 88 to understand this concept more fully. Don't be afraid to explore design asymmetry in your projects, especially with your

quilting lines. Many quilt patterns are symmetrical in both color and design, but that doesn't mean your quilting must also match. In fact, you'll soon discover that straight lines on top of more straight lines can be boring—not only to look at but to quilt! On many antique log cabin quilts, you'll see curved Baptist Fans. This contrast between pieced and quilting lines makes the quilt more interesting.

When you get ready to quilt your next project, study the quilt top from a different perspective. Where do you want to focus the viewer's attention? Use asymmetrical quilting designs that lead the eye right to that spot, and then introduce symmetrical designs to keep their attention right where you want it. You can even use asymmetrical quilting designs to pull the eye away from areas of the quilt that aren't so spectacular, such as a cut-off point or an out-of-square block. With a little practice, you'll soon learn how to become a maestro with your quilting!



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