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MODERN LINES FOR MODERN TIMES

As the concept of “modern quilting” continues to blossom, I often think about the idiom “what goes around comes around.” I remember 1950s fabric and fashion, but grew up during the flower child 60s and disco fever 70s. Several design elements that modern quilting embraces today are strikingly similar to what we considered “modern” over 50 years ago.

According to the Modern Quilt Guild national website, modern quilts are typically characterized by “the use of bold colors and prints, high contrast and graphic areas of solid color, improvisational piecing, minimalism, expansive negative space, and alternate grid work.” Aha! That’s why I get such a feeling of déjà vu with modern quilting—and probably why I am so attracted to it. The graphic shapes, bold colors, and negative spaces provide lots of room for quilting, and give me flashbacks to the “modern” curtains that hung in our family room!

The modern quilting movement that’s been gaining momentum is inspiring quilters of all ages with a fresh perspective on what it means

to be “modern.” Lots of parallels are evident between vintage or retro fabric designs and today’s modern quilts. But you’ll also notice distinct differences; namely, the texture created by quilting, the minimalistic designs, and unique approaches to traditional patterns.

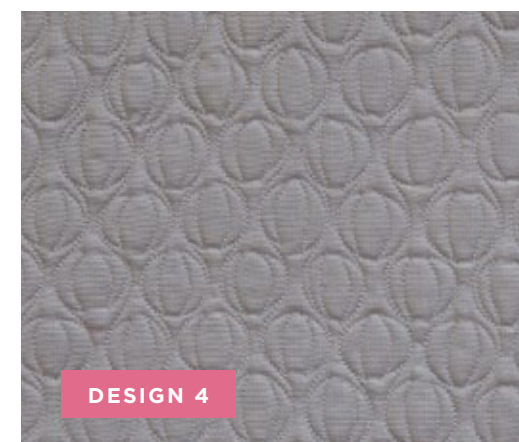
Since I’m a longarm quilter, lots of negative space on a quilt is like chocolate... I just can’t leave it alone! Modern quilts provide lots of room to use my quilting techniques. While quilting texture is a big part of modern quilt appeal, that texture is characterized by simple quilting designs instead of elaborate or ornate designs found in more traditional quilts. The expansive negative space can be broken up with quilting spacers to create room for

design variety, or you can fill it with one unifying overall design. Try to keep a minimalist feeling in mind when choosing your quilting designs. Some variety can be interesting, but adding too many different shapes on one quilt can make the quilt too “loud”—even with bold geometric shapes or busy prints.

During a recent quilt shop visit, I spied a roll of strips of Kaffe Fassett prints with bright, cheery colors that was just begging to go home with me. I obliged, adding some gray solid fabric to keep it company. I decided they could spruce up my kitchen table as modern placemats while letting me have some quilting fun, too! After I sewed the strips together and sliced them into sections for the placemats, I still had a large

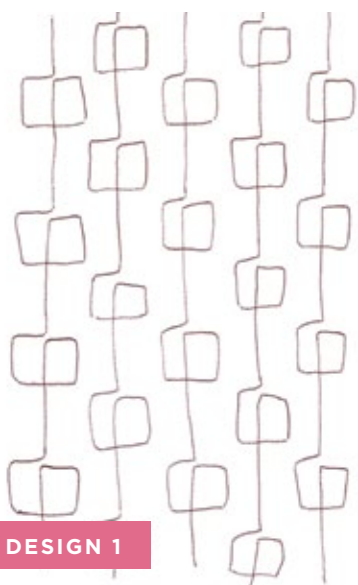


Load several small projects on the frame at once.

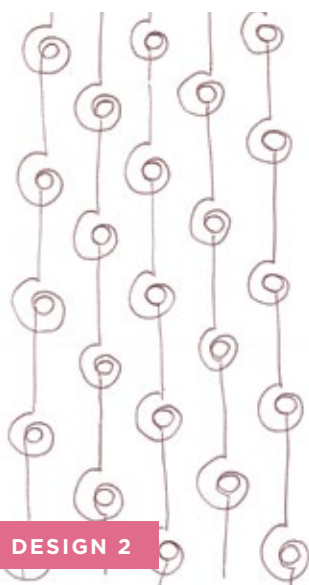


WEB EXTRA

To download free pattern for the placemats shown, go to FonsandPorter.com/ModernTimes



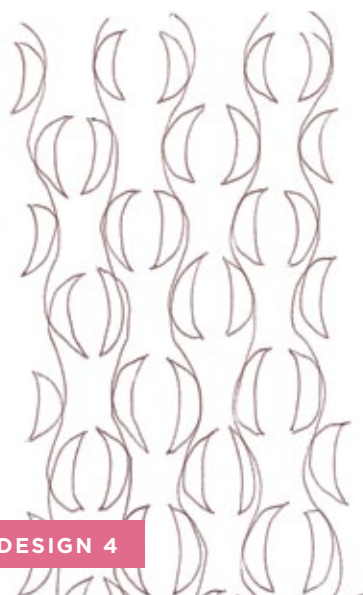
DESIGN 1



DESIGN 2



DESIGN 3



DESIGN 4

Try these filler designs to add texture to your next project.

section left over. In true quilter spirit, I couldn't let that go to waste so a table runner was born.

Since the projects were small, I saved time by using a common backing fabric and loading all four placemats on my longarm frame at once. I basted the top edge of each placemat to the batting and backing, then smoothed them out over the surface. I chose to baste the left edge of each placemat as well, but used pins on the right and bottom edges. This gave me the flexibility to readjust the edges to prevent pleating as my quilting lines approached them.

I quilted each placemat with a different design that flowed across the entire surface. Since each shape repeated over and over, it didn't take long to memorize the movement. I also staggered the designs as I stitched each row so that I wouldn't have to stress about perfect alignment and spacing like I do with more traditional quilts. Even when my spacing and designs started to wander a bit out of alignment, the repetition created by the pattern was more forgiving.

Try the designs shown here on your next "modern" project. Since you're going for texture, you won't need to worry about perfection. Stagger the rows if you like, or quilt them horizontally instead of vertically. Have fun, and create your own modern quilt design, and help usher in a new genre to the wonderful world of quilting (*Designs 1–4*).