



Meet Violet Craft: pattern designer, licensed designer for Michael Miller Fabrics, momma, wife, friend and a maker.

“I HAD JUST TAUGHT MYSELF THE TECHNIQUE AND FINISHED THE FIRST OF THE EIGHT TEMPLATES WHEN MY BRAIN EXPLODED WITH IDEAS.”

VIOLET CRAFT:

QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE



The sign of a true quilt designer might be someone who has already started planning her first quilt using a new technique before she's even learned it. Such is what happened when Violet Craft met foundation paper piecing.

“I WAS AT A PORTLAND MODERN Quilt Guild sew day and had just tried foundation paper piecing for the very first time,” Craft recalls. “I was working on a star block that took eight templates to make. I had just taught myself the technique and finished the first of the eight templates when my brain exploded with ideas. I immediately knew exactly what I wanted to do and how I was going to do it.”

THE REST IS HISTORY. A designer for Michael Miller Fabrics who also

designed some of her own quilts, Craft's foray into paper piecing has resulted in a match made in heaven. Her work in this style began with the Forest Abstractions Quilt (“my first foundation-pieced project”), a collection of paper-pieced woodland animals.

WHILE PAPER PIECING CAN BE A BIT tricky to learn, quilters love it once they've gotten the technique down. It results in intricately geometric patterns that are often quite graphic, and it affords better accuracy than traditional piecing usually does.

BUT CRAFT EXPLAINS THAT the design process can actually be quite complex. She feeds illustrations into 3D modeling software to transfer the animals into a “low-poly” style and manipulates their shape and position. Next, “I hand illustrate the animals again from this new



CREDIT: LINDA CHING

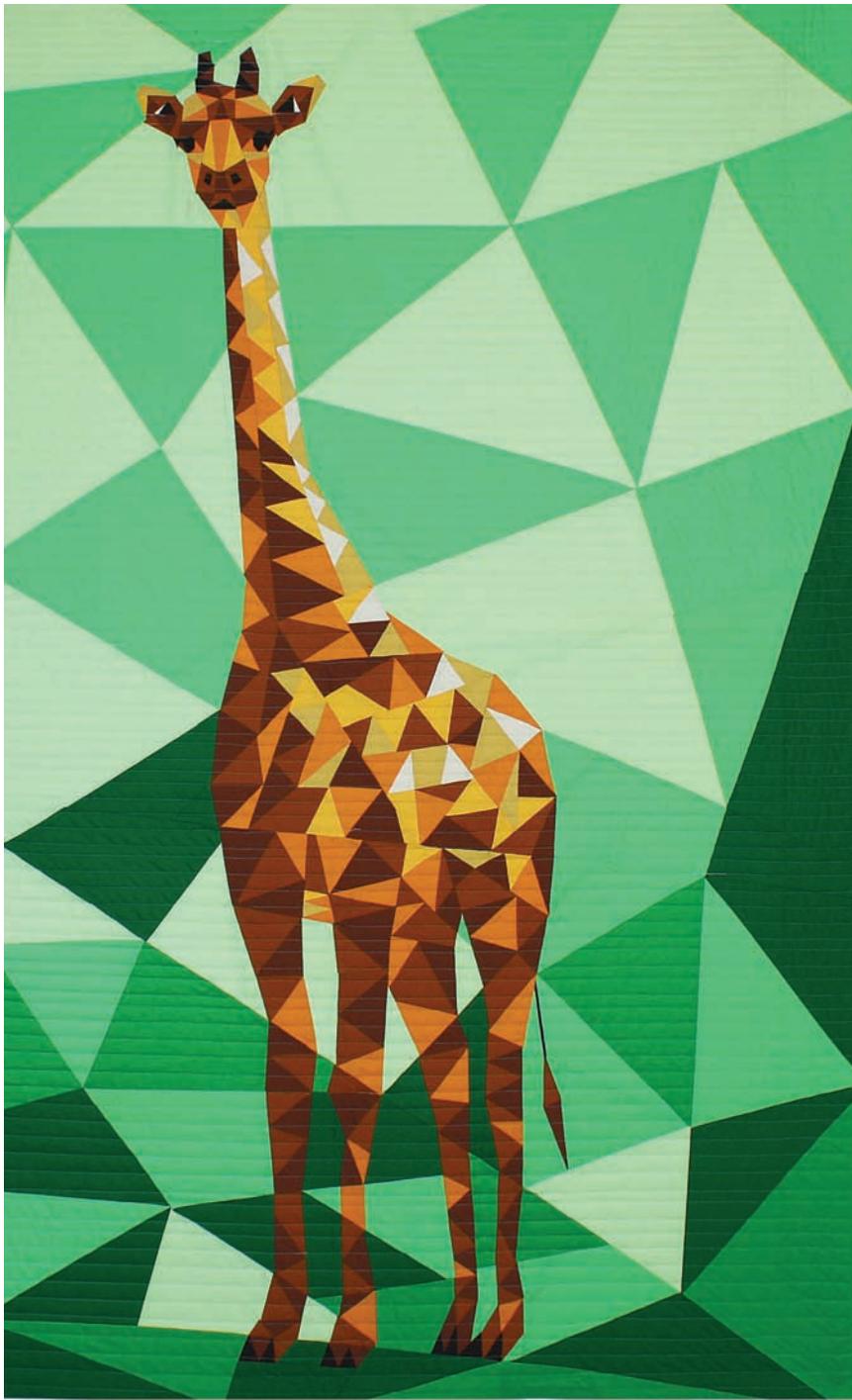
reference work. The final quilts look very little like the computer generated low-poly images I get from the software; it makes the animals too consistent and generated. I bring life back into the animals by changing the way the polygrams shape their bodies and I give them movement through different angles and inconsistent shapes."

BEGINNING WITH HER "FOREST ABSTRACTIONS," Craft's menagerie of patterns has multiplied—with stunning effects. *Jungle Abstractions: The Lion* was her first one-block quilt. "I knew I wanted to do an animal that would capture attention and roar from his wall at Quilt Market. I took a lot of time making sure that his personality was just right—approachable, lovable, but still fierce. When I

⚡ Behind the seams on *Jungle Abstractions: The Lion*.



⏪ *Jungle Abstractions: The Lion* was Violet Craft's first one-block quilt. (60" x 60")



“WHEN I DESIGN THE ANIMALS I’M ALWAYS TRYING TO CAPTURE A SENSE OF THEIR PERSONALITY AND MOST OF THAT IS IN THEIR EYES.”

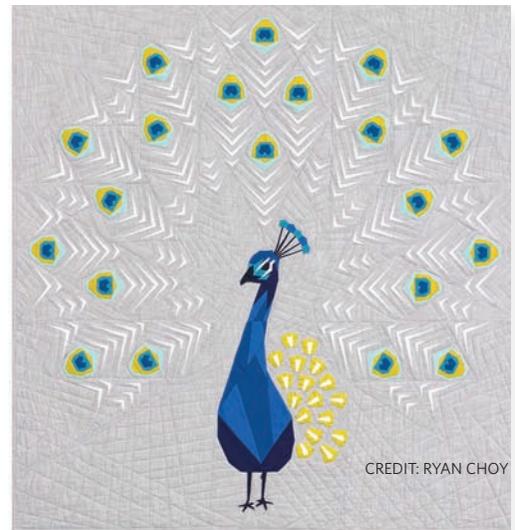


The Giraffe Abstractions was the second quilt in Craft’s one-block quilt series. Large shapes in the background suggest environment.

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GIRAFFE ABSTRACTIONS,

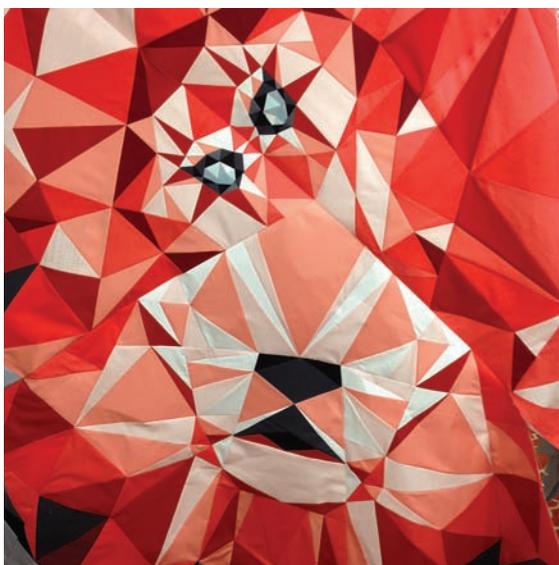
Elephant Abstractions and, most recently, Peacock Abstractions have followed the lion, and each is a stunning pattern that captures the light and geometric play of low-poly, but also displays an artistry and realism not common in quilting. The irony, Craft reflects, is that none of this was even supposed to happen. “I never intended to pattern this work for consumers. I honestly didn’t know others would want to recreate my art—I mean, I had ventured down a pretty crazy path to get here. I did the work as a gift of studio time to myself. I consider myself to be an artist *and* a



CREDIT: RYAN CHOY



In The Peacock Abstractions, Craft’s use of foundation piecing begins to play with the negative space in the quilt.



<< Even for the best of us, paper piecing takes some, um, focus. And a sharp seam ripper.

>> Forest Abstractions Quilt pattern and others are available at violetcraft.com



designer. I have just found a way to take my original art and turn it into commercial sewing patterns for my design company."

BUT EVEN AS CRAFT REFLECTS

on how foundation paper piecing has catapulted her into the future, she remembers its traditions in the past. "I love to learn traditional techniques and see how I can manipulate them using modern techniques and technology," she says. "I don't think I would have ever been the person to invent something like foundation piecing (which dates back to the 15th century!), but I love that I've taken it in a new direction. I appreciate every step that's been taken before me to get me to this jumping-off point—and now I know that my techniques have been a jumping off point for others, too."

>> In The Elephant Abstractions example here, Craft experiments with "unrealistic" color, to stunning effect.

