

Abstract Design

by Lyric Montgomery Kinard

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Quilt artist Lyric Montgomery Kinard and host Susan Brubaker Knapp

Materials

- Tracing paper (or regular paper and a light box)
- Pen or pencil
- Subject for sketches (I used pairs of scissors.)

• The blank page is a horror to any writer,
 • just as a blank canvas can be terrifying
 • to any artist trying to come up with
 • an original idea. The idea of creating
 • original abstract work can add another
 • layer of blockage to your creative self
 • but it doesn't need to.

• Many people think of abstract art as a
 • rejection of any literal subject matter. Or
 • they think of abstraction as the ability
 • to make art without needing to copy
 • a subject they are seeing in real life.
 • For me, "abstract art" has everything
 • to do with being inspired by the world
 • around me. It is more poetry than essay,
 • interpreting the world through the basic
 • elements in a pure way to reflect what I
 • love the most.

• There is also a continuum in
 • abstraction, as there are a million values
 • of gray between black and white. A
 • photo-realistic painting of a floral still
 • life might be the opposite of a total
 • abstraction, but that same still life can
 • be abstracted in many different ways.

• Simply remember there is no one
 • absolutely right or wrong answer that
 • works for every person all the time.


• This easy and concrete exercise
 • will help you create any number of
 • unique abstract designs and can be
 • a springboard for larger and quite
 • interesting abstract creations.

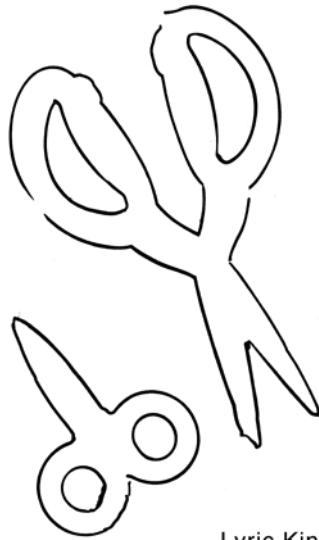
• Begin with a shape that everyone will
 • recognize immediately, a shape with
 • unmistakable meaning. I used a pair of
 • scissors. We will warp that shape, bit
 • by bit, until it no longer 'reads' as a pair
 • of scissors, until it is simply an abstract
 • composition. If you have another easily
 • traceable and recognizable object that
 • you'd like to use please do so, but I find
 • scissors to be a perfect balance between
 • complexity and simplicity, and they
 • come in a variety of shapes and sizes
 • all while still being "scissors" to pretty
 • much everyone.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the scissors on a piece of paper and accurately trace the outline(s). On the bottom right corner of the sheet write the number “1.” (figure 1)
2. Remove the scissors and place a second piece of paper on top of paper #1. Trace the design again but change something about it. Examples: lengthen, shorten, bend, straighten, twist, flip, rotate, expand, contract, duplicate, delete! On the bottom right corner of the sheet write the number “2.” (figure 2)
3. Remove the bottom piece of tracing paper (#1) and set it aside. Repeat step 2 at least 2 more times—abstracting the image more with each iteration—numbering the pages in successive order.

Note: As you progress through each tracing consider reevaluating the previous drawings, changing things to go in a different direction. You could also layer different tracings and combine them into 1 new composition. Be creative. Push yourself. Push your design and explore your options.

4. Create a fabric composition using your final design. Consider whether to piece or appliqué the image onto a background. Layer, baste, and quilt as desired. 



Lyric Kinard (1)

figure 1

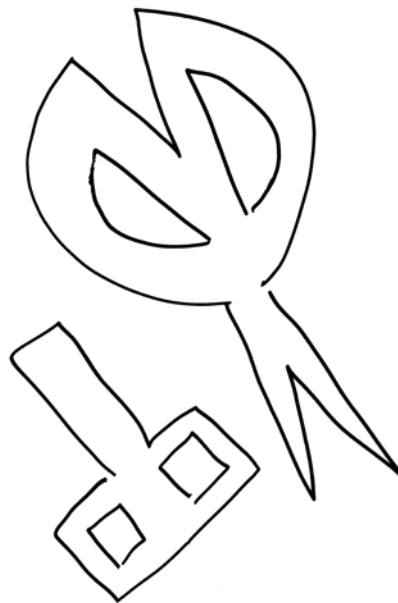


figure 2

Free Your Mind

The goal of this exercise is to end up with a pleasing abstract composition that looks nothing like a recognizable pair of scissors—or the original objects you are working with. Challenge yourself!

Think about balance and unity as you work and compose. Imagine that you will be using your favorite medium to translate this into a work of abstract art. What textures might you add? Where will you place it on the frame and will it need grounding or do you want to “float” the shapes? Most importantly, PLAY!