

Selwedge

DESIGNER EDGE



become her signature style.

The process begins by enlarging the botanical photo to the finished size of the quilt. She has two different ways of making the appliqués, using the mirrored, enlarged image as the master pattern. One technique is to use templates to cut out fabric shapes and then assemble them, like a puzzle, to create the flower design. The other method, which Andrea has been practising for the past few years, is painting the flower design on silk charmeuse. She starts with outlining the petal edges and veins, then filling each petal with very light layers of paint

ANDREA BROKENSHERE

Flowers are at the very core of American artist Andrea Brokenshire's life. Big, beautiful blooms! Even as a child, she was drawn to them. When her mother was shopping for fabrics with her daughters, Andrea's sisters chose pale, quieter designs, while Andrea made a beeline for the brightest bolt in the store – designs alive with colour and florals. The running family joke was, "What kind of crazy fabric is Andrea going to come home with next?"

Funny, but that laughing has stopped now that she's grown up and turning her passion into spectacular works of art – glorious, intricately worked art quilts that combine her love of flowers with her acquired sewing skills. "When I was young, I used to get so excited when I worked on a garment sewing project; I just wanted it to be done so I could wear it. The result was a lack of quality. Now, I still have all the excitement but I take the time to enjoy the minutiae," she says.



Andrea attributes the realistic look of her designs to her time working outdoors as a field biologist and naturalist, studying different species of plants and animals. She photographs flowers and enjoys the challenge of making her fabric versions look as close to the

photograph as possible – albeit in an oversized form. Magnified flower appliqués on mottled backgrounds have now

to gradually build up colour. The "confetti" background is made from small, overlapping pieces of batik fabrics. "This effect creates a beautiful, almost blurred background with incredible texture. I think it is the perfect backdrop to contrast with my realistic floral designs," she says.

The work is free-machine quilted, using an all-over quilting design for the background and highlight stitching for the flower. "I love the process of creating my art quilts. From



conception to completion, each step of the creative journey holds my attention. For me, the creative process is a journey as essential as breathing."

Andrea's love of flowers 'stems' from her mother, who is a skilled gardener. But the "grubbing-in-the-dirt" green thumbs did not survive the generational flow, since Andrea admits she didn't inherit her mum's talent for keeping plants alive. "I have no patience or desire to garden. My quilts have become my flower garden," she says.

To find out more about Andrea, of AMB Fiber Art and Design, visit www.ambfiberartanddesign.com. For enquiries, including purchasing her work, email ambfiberartanddesign@yahoo.com.

– Janai Welz