



The Quilted Garment Challenge

Refreshing takes on
a traditional technique

BY CAROL J. FRESIA

As part of our annual design challenge to the Association of Sewing and Design Professionals, *Threads* asked: What do you get when you sew two—or more—fabric layers together? We wanted to see how this group of talented designers would interpret an age-old sewing technique in modern, stylish garments. The association's members provided us with many answers, revealing the depth and breadth of their creativity.

The challenge *Threads* laid out was to create an ensemble with at least one major quilted garment. “Quilting” was defined as joining two or more fabric layers with stitching, by hand or machine. Twenty-five ASDP members took on the challenge, impressing us with their design innovation and technical skill.

Joyce Hittesdorf, ASDP's challenge coordinator, guided the designers through the entry process and the judges through the evaluation process. Joining me as judges this year were 2015's Best Overall winner, Tricia Crockett, and British Columbia-area fiber artist Nell Burns.

Based on artist's statements and photographs of each entry, we narrowed the field to 14 finalists whose work we assessed at the ASDP annual conference in October 2016 in Vancouver, British Columbia. It is always exciting to examine the garments up close and to see the designs modeled on the runway. The winning garments are sure to inspire you, too.

Carol J. Fresia is Threads' senior technical editor.

Designers explored the possibilities of quilting silk, wool, cotton knit, jacquard, and tulle, with stunning and innovative results. Find out more on the following pages.



web extra

To see more details from these winning garments, visit ThreadsMagazine.com.



Artfully applied hand and machine quilting enhances the components of a shibori-dyed silk ensemble.

Best Overall

Debby Spence, *Shibori Jacket*

Debby Spence of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, created a three-piece ensemble that embraces the beauty and utility of quilting in multiple ways. Her shibori-dyed russet silk dupioni jacket includes hand- and machine-stitched quilting in different sizes and threads, to add structure and texture to the lightweight fabrics. The stitching lines also accentuate the fabric's one-of-a-kind shibori-dyed motifs. She chose a polyester knit for "batting" to maintain the garment's soft drape. A coordinating washed-silk charmeuse top and dupioni pants continue the theme with decorative quilting stitches.

The judges were impressed with Debby's use of quilting to unify the garments' designs, as well as the impeccable craftsmanship revealed upon close inspection; the jacket is so cleanly finished inside it could almost be reversible. The outfit is luxurious, sophisticated, and original.

- Debby used large sashiko stitching, smaller hand quilting, and free-motion machine quilting to control, enhance, and embellish fabrics.
- Three thread types were used: a thick thread for the sashiko stitches; a medium thread for the hand quilting and some machine quilting; and silk thread for the free-motion stitching.
- All edges are bound with bias strips of hand-dyed kimono silk.
- The blouse is constructed with bound or French seams.
- Debby quilted through two layers of the orange charmeuse to create the blouse's front panel.
- The pants (not shown) are made of silk dupioni, underlined with silk organza, and lined with Ambiance Bemberg rayon.
- Subtle quilting adorns the pant waistband, slash pockets, and vented hem.



A quilted silk jacket remains fluid and supple with the use of a soft jersey knit for "batting."



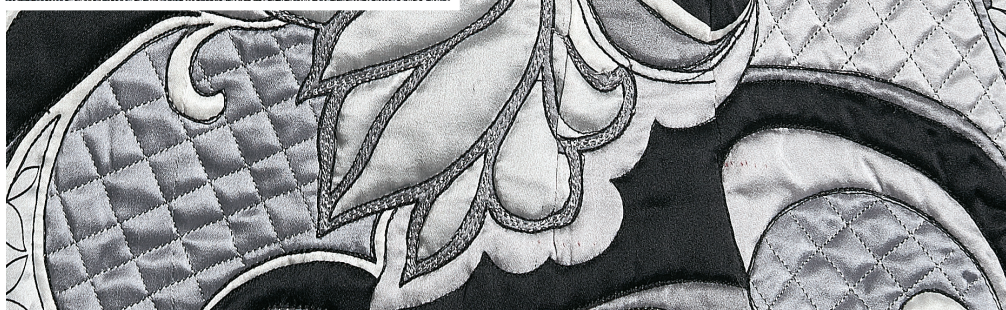
Best Construction

Gayle Moline, *Blooming at Twilight*

Gayle Moline of Manson, Iowa, says her design was inspired by a prize-winning monochromatic quilt. She admired its elaborate threadwork and Florentine trapunto. She chose a salt-and-pepper wool tweed for her jacket and skirt and a bold black-and-white printed china silk lining. Using the lining's print as a guide, she quilted large-scale floral motifs through all layers of the jacket body and sleeves. Metallic threads, along with hand-sewn beads, add a subtle sparkle.

Gayle planned the quilting motifs so they flow across the front opening and the pocket opening edges. Although there are a number of style lines and darts to shape the jacket, they are beautifully camouflaged by the quilting.

- A double bias binding trim finishes the jacket edges and conceals a center-front zipper.
- All the quilting was sewn as bobbinwork, with the printed lining used as a stitching template.
- The skirt is fully lined, with seam and hem allowances bound in bias strips of the lining fabric.



Metallic-thread bobbinwork follows the motifs on a floral silk lining to create a trapunto effect on wool tweed.

Most Successful Use of Hand Quilting

Bonny Carmicino, *Cotton Jersey Couture Deconstruction*

When Bonny Carmicino of Cold Spring, New York, read the challenge, she wanted to make a garment that responded to the casual world of T-shirts and jeans but that also showed off her sewing skills. The “deconstructed” work of the Alabama Chanin studio came to mind, with its layered, hand-stitched cotton jersey fabrics. Bonny adapted this idea in her V-neck princess-line dress with a matching shrug.

The ensemble is made of contrasting layers of organic cotton jersey—gold under olive—joined with motifs hand-embroidered in buttonhole twist. The garments are constructed with a hand-worked running stitch, with exposed seam allowances creating a piped effect. Double-layered binding at the dress neckline and shrug edges echo the effect. At the dress shoulder seams, Bonny clipped the seam allowances so they form a rosette.

- The bindings are sewn with a feather stitch, evoking antique crazy quilts.
- The construction threads are knotted on the garment’s right side as a decoratively—and deliberately—“unfinished” motif.
- The hem is faced with an extra fabric strip to enhance the drape.



Constructed and quilted entirely by hand, this organic cotton jersey ensemble brings a basic T-shirt dress to a new level.



Most Creative Use of Materials

Linda Stewart, *Silk Splash*

The word “quilting” doesn’t usually evoke thoughts of free-flowing fibers and transparent overlays. However, Linda Stewart of Bristol, Virginia, was inspired by brightly colored silk roving, shimmery tulle, and glistening metallic threads to create this party dress. In her eyes, the roving strands looked like a splashing waterfall. The roving is sandwiched between a tulle overlay and crinoline base, and it is hand-quilted with stitches that follow the flow of colors. The bodice was quilted in the round, so the fibers wrap around the body in a three-dimensional, swirling design.

Linda chose plum-colored silk dupioni for the flared skirt and for the bias binding that edges the neckline, armholes, and peplum hem. Matching china silk was used for the dress lining. Although the garment appears highly structured and has considerable texture, it is lightweight and supple.

- The hand-sewn quilting is executed in six different threads of various colors and weights.
- The tulle overlay’s seams and darts are nearly invisible.
- A wide facing gives the skirt hem structure and body.
- Silk-covered snaps form a flexible closure at the bodice center back, with an invisible zipper in the skirt.



An unexpected combination of tulle, silk roving, and metallic quilting yields a nearly weightless, painterly, and unique party dress.

Audience Choice

Amanda Madden, *Diamonds and Pearls*

Amanda Madden of Brooklyn, New York, united two seemingly unrelated ideas in this fit-and-flare dress with matching cape: the Prince song “Diamonds and Pearls,” and the classic style of Hollywood icon Audrey Hepburn. Amanda began her design with a black jacquard fabric woven with squares that appear dimensional in shifting light. Following the woven squares’ edges, she machine-quilted her custom-drafted dress and cape. Then she hand-beaded the dress with hundreds of faux pearls in graduated sizes, placed at the quilted grid intersections. The cape is embellished with heat-set crystals.

In addition to creating surface interest, the pearl beads weight the flared skirt, giving it remarkable, slow-motion movement when it’s worn. When Amanda stepped onto the runway at the ASDP fashion show to model her ensemble, the audience gasped at the cinematic effect.

- The fabric’s square pattern served as a quilting grid and guided the placement of pearls and diamonds.
- A strip of crystal trim forms a narrow belt to define the dress’s waistline.



A simple concept—grid-quilted jacquard with bead and crystal embellishment—produces a remarkable dress and cape ensemble.

