



FRASER VALLEY
MODERN QUILT
GUILD

PRESENTS

MODERN
MADE SIMPLE



Welcome to Modern Made Simple!

My name is Lysa Mair and I am a co-founder and co-leader of the Fraser Valley Modern Quilt Guild.

On stage I have with me Cynthia Frenette, my partner in crime, co-founder and co-leader of our guild.

As well, we'd like you to meet Vera Swaren and Cathy Erickson. Vera attended some of our very first meetings back in 2010. Cathy found us after attending a Creative Stitches show a few year back and both ladies have been with us ever since. They will be creating a modern quilt for us as I speak.

MODERN

“Modern” quilting, “modern” quilting, this word “modern” keeps popping up everywhere!

I'm going to tell you about modern quilting, how it developed, how the Modern Quilt Guilds came to be, and how our guild, the Fraser Valley Modern Quilt Guild got started.

But first what exactly does **modern quilting** mean?

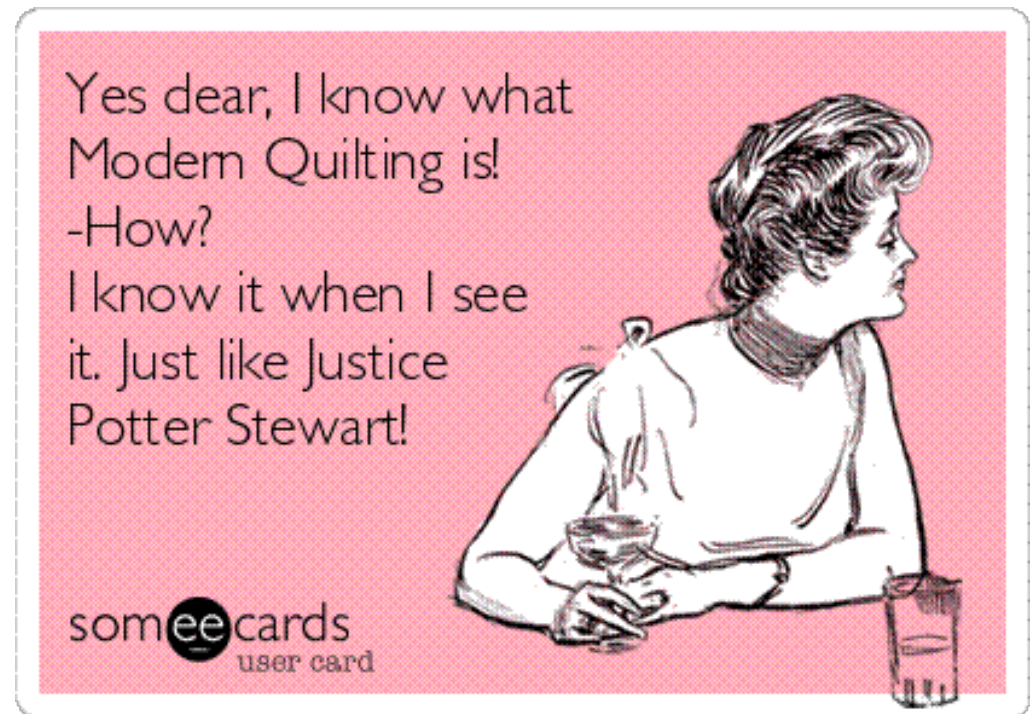
How is modern quilting different from traditional quilting, aren't modern quilters just trying to reinvent the wheel?

What's wrong with traditional quilting?

I heard modern quilters have no rules and you can do anything you want? In fact, I hear they just try to break ALL the rules!

How do you know if a quilt is modern or not?

For a while it was hard to determine what modern quilting was because it hadn't been defined yet and we had to rely on identifying it the same way as US Justice Potter Stewart when he said...





“I know it when I see it.”

~ Justice Potter Stewart, when speaking about defining hard core pornography

Except he was talking about hard core pornography.



Denyse Schmidt
Screen capture from Martha Stewart video

The good news is, we can answer and address all of those points today but like all things, we have to go back to the beginning to explain where all this Modern Quilting stuff came from...

and like all good things, we can thank, as always, Martha Stewart. She was the first to introduced a very important modern quilter and designer **Denyse Schmidt** to the world in 1998, describing her quilting as having a...

"chic modernist aesthetic."

There is that word "Modern".

You can view the video online at this address:

www.marthastewart.com/912100/quilts



This is of course Denyse Schmidt and one of her most popular first quilts called "Drunk Love in a Log Cabin."

And as you can tell, it's based on the traditional log cabin block.



Denyse Schmidt has since gone on to release all kinds of modern patterns, this one is called Single Girl, a modern interpretation of the traditional Double Wedding Ring design.



She also designs fabric for Free Spirit Fabrics.

So to recap, 1998- Martha Stewart proclaims Denyse Schmidt's Quilts as having a **"chic modernist aesthetic"**.

Around that time, or give or take a few years, a couple of other important things happened, one of them...



... digital cameras started to become affordable...



... the DIY, Do It Yourself movement began to gain momentum...





... computers were getting to be more user-friendly...



... and social media was starting to germinate.



Fabric by Amy Butler

In 2001, something else important also happened, ... AND, which was my entry to modern fabric a few years later, 2003. I remember being given a gift certificate to the Thread Bear, do you remember that store in North Vancouver? I walked in and saw it. There was one section, not too big, not too small, but when I saw it!





Amy Butler



Now don't get me wrong, I love fabric, all fabric and I've bought my share of Debbie Mumm, but this, this was so fresh and so new!

In 2001, Amy Butler released her first sewing patterns and quickly followed that up with her first fabric collection.

And it was this collection **Gypsy Caravan** that hooked me personally back into sewing and quilting again.



Some of the Quilters of Gee's Bend

In 2002, two more things happened in that were very significant to the Modern Quilting Movement.

The first one being a group called The Quilters of Gee's Bend had an exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston.



Gee's Bend is, and was, a group of women from the deep South that lived in a hamlet called Rehoboth, which is near Selma. And they've lived, and quilted, there for over two centuries.



Selma you might recognize since it was an area that saw a lot of visibility during the 1960's and during the civil rights movement.



Over these two centuries, this community of women developed a distinctively bold style. All of their quilts are remarkable for their geometric shapes and simplicity, mixed with their unique sense of flair.





By the 1990's, quilt-making in Gee's Bend had diminished as the younger people moved away.

About that same time, a man named William Arnett and his son Matt started to research and document African- American quilts, which lead to the show at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston in 2002.



Where did this style come from?

Maybe it was out of necessity,
sewing with what they had?



Or perhaps it was the influence
of from the three heritages of
the region, African...



Native American....



Or European heritage.



Either way, it also was
reminiscent of modern art.

For example, similar to the
modern paper cut work of-Henri
Matisse,

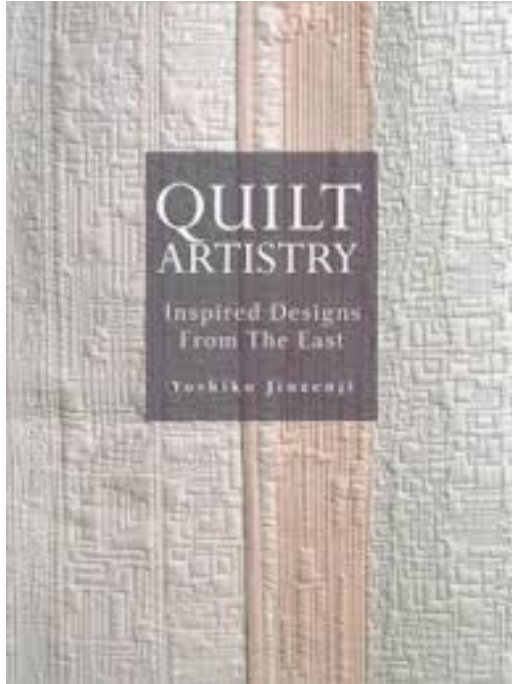


and the modern art of Paul Klee.

I think it's fair to say although perhaps unintentional by the Gee's Bend, modern art and design is something that greatly influences modern quilters.



Just as perhaps how the Gee's Bend Quilters have greatly influenced many modern quilters.



Okay, big breath...

I still haven't told you what else happened in 2002!

A quilter named Yoshiko Jinzenji published a book called **Quilt Artistry**.





This influential book provided a small but growing group of modernist-minded quilters with inspiration!

An interesting side note on Yoshiko Jinzenji's influence:

In the 1970's she met some Canadian Mennonite Quilters and in seeing their quilts, it was such a powerful experience, that it greatly contributed to her decision to devote her life to quilting.

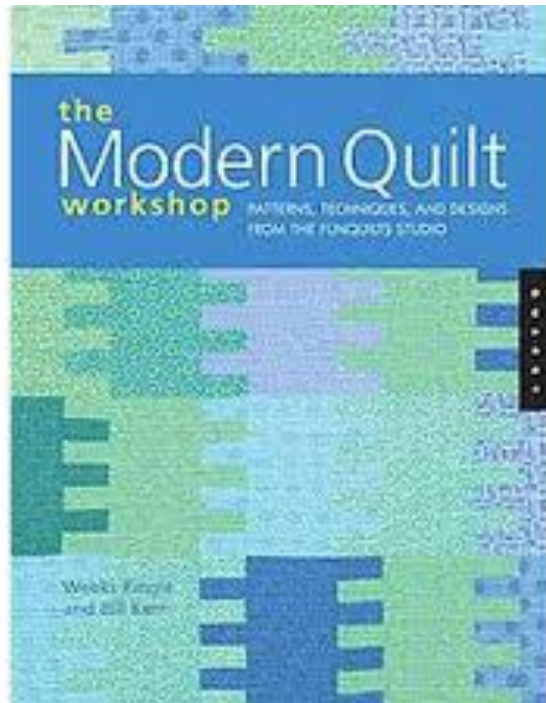


Skip forward a few years to 2005, and two more influential books were published.

The first one being **“Denyse Schmidt Quilts”**.

You’ll remember she was the modern quilter first noted by Martha Stewart as having a “Chic Modernistic Aesthetic”.





And the second influential book was called “**Modern Quilt Workshop**” by Weeks Ringle and Bill Kerr.



By this time, blogs were starting to appear and online quilting communities started to buzz around these two particular books.



In 2004, a photo-sharing site called Flickr became popular.

Flickr is a website for users to share photographs with each other, and also an easy, accessible way to host online groups and communities.

Quickly online modern quilting communities started to spring up on Flickr, with users sharing photos of the new modern style of quilting and sewing.



In 2008 one of those online a Flickr groups was established and called **Fresh Modern Quilts**.

With Flickr and many active blogs on the topic, awareness around Modern Quilting increased in the online world and it took off like wildfire.



AlissaHaight Carlton



LatifahSaafir

In 2009,
Alissa Haight Carlton and
Latifah Saafir
founded the
Modern Quilt Guild, based in
Los Angeles, giving the online
community a chance to form
in-person connections with
each other.



Since then,
Modern Quilt Guilds have
popped up all over
the world,
including in our own neck of
the woods...



In 2010, over the Twitter-verse,
I heard that there was a
Modern Quilt Guild forming in Vancouver, and that
their first meeting was going to be held in a new
modern fabric store just opening called



I must add, Cynthia, also a graphic designer, designed
Spool of Thread's logo



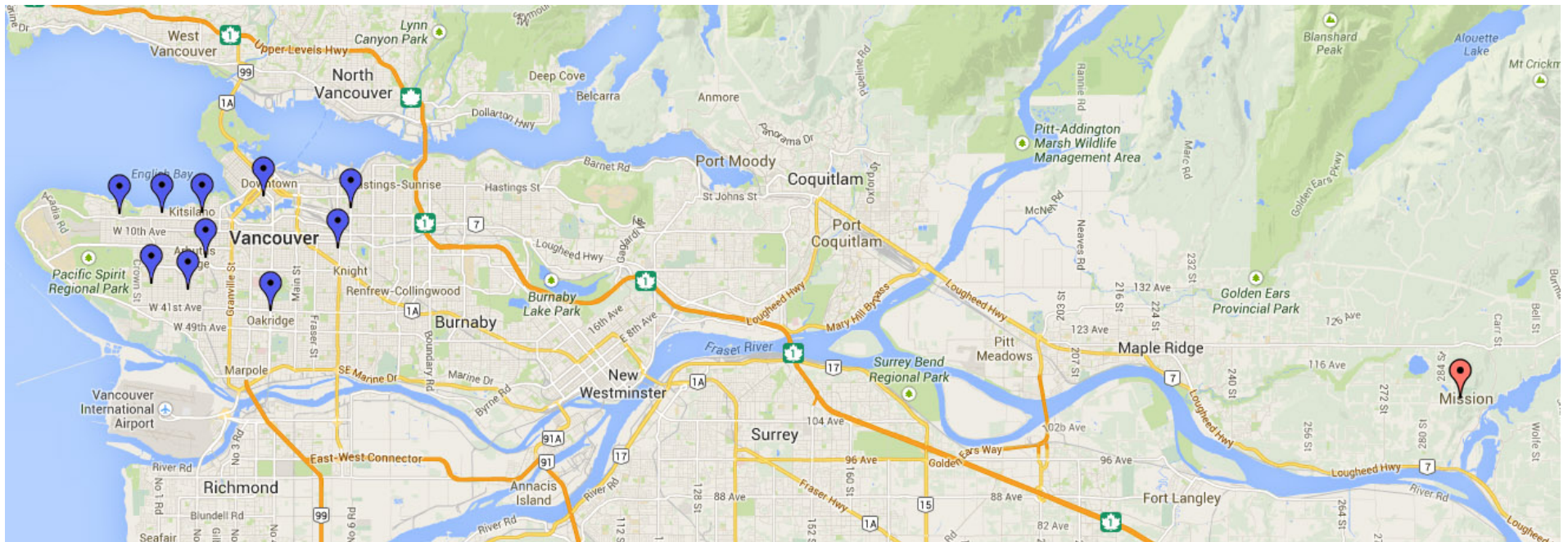
However, just before that, there was a call out over Twitter for a “keeners” meeting and anyone who was interested in helping with the planning and formation of the new Vancouver Modern Quilt Guild, was invited to Jericho beach one summer evening for a picnic meeting.

*(Twitter being an online social network that enables users to send and read “tweets” but the messages are limited to 140 characters)



Cynthia generously designed and donated their logo as well!

I went to that meeting and when Holly Broadland, the founder and now president of the Vancouver Modern Quilt Guild, asked us all to put a dot on a map showing where we lived, it looked like this.



Ah, yeah.

After that Jericho Beach meeting Holly emailed and introduced Cynthia and I to each other, and suggested we might like to car pool in to an upcoming meeting. Cynthia and I hit it off immediately but we didn't actually meet for a couple of weeks later until we were driving into Vancouver for one of their meetings.



Who knew when Sonja Callaghan took this photo of Cynthia and I it would be so poignant. This is us at the VMQG meeting. Keep in mind we had just met in person for the first time about an hour earlier!

On the way home we realized that our drive was as long as the meeting. Cynthia suggested we start our own guild. We figured we couldn't be the only two in the Fraser Valley that were interested in **Modern Quilting**, right?



And we were right!

Photo from one of our very first meetings held at the dearly missed Quilt Essential Fabric, Abbotsford.



In September of 2010, the Fraser Valley Modern Quilt Guild had our first meeting at Quilt Essential Fabric in Abbotsford. We held our meetings there during our first year, and since then (we will be 4 this September!), we've been meeting at the University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford Campus, every second Thursday of each month.

So that is our little story and we've been busy ever since!

So now you have a good understanding of where Modern Quilting came from. Next I think it would be easiest to show you some of the different characteristics of modern quilting. The examples I'll be showing you will be examples from our very own talented quilt guild members.

Please note that it's still important to modern quilters that they are making functional quilts. However they also place a large emphasis on the overall design and art of quilt making by using these features shown in these next photos coming up:

* And you will notice while seeing these next photos, that these design elements tend to cross over on a lot of these quilts...



Photos generously provided by
Carol Browne Photography.

**Use of solid colours and large
areas of solid colour**



Which is why I tend to drool over the Spool of Thread photos because they carry ALL of the Robert Kaufman Kona Solids line!





Use of bold, high contrast colours (this can include with graphic prints)- where there isn't necessarily a boss colour that dictates the rest of the quilt's colour choices.





Use of Improvisational piecing

-making a quilt block or full quilt starting without a defined or pre-determined or designed pattern.



FVMQG
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Quilters work quickly and intuitively, often cutting fabrics and blocks randomly and not measuring.



Use of expansive negative space

Using negative space as more of a feature allows the actual quilting to become an important part of the overall quilt design, and be more of a star!





Use of expansive negative space

Negative space is the space that is left all around the main “focus” of a quilt, usually the background.



Re-interpreted traditional blocks

Traditional patterns sewn with
modern fabric

**Also known as
Modern Traditionalism**







Asymmetry

A design that is not identical on both sides of a central line.



Asymmetry

A design that is not identical on both sides of a central line.



Asymmetry

A design that is not identical on both sides of a central line.



Less repetition

You don't see the same pattern occurring throughout the quilt





Less repetition

You don't see the same pattern occurring throughout the quilt



Simplicity and Minimalism

Keeping the design simple, with little to no embellishment allowing the quilting to take a forefront.



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Utilizing alternative block structures or lack of visible block structure

Playing with negative space you can lose the block structure

Playing with the block shapes themselves



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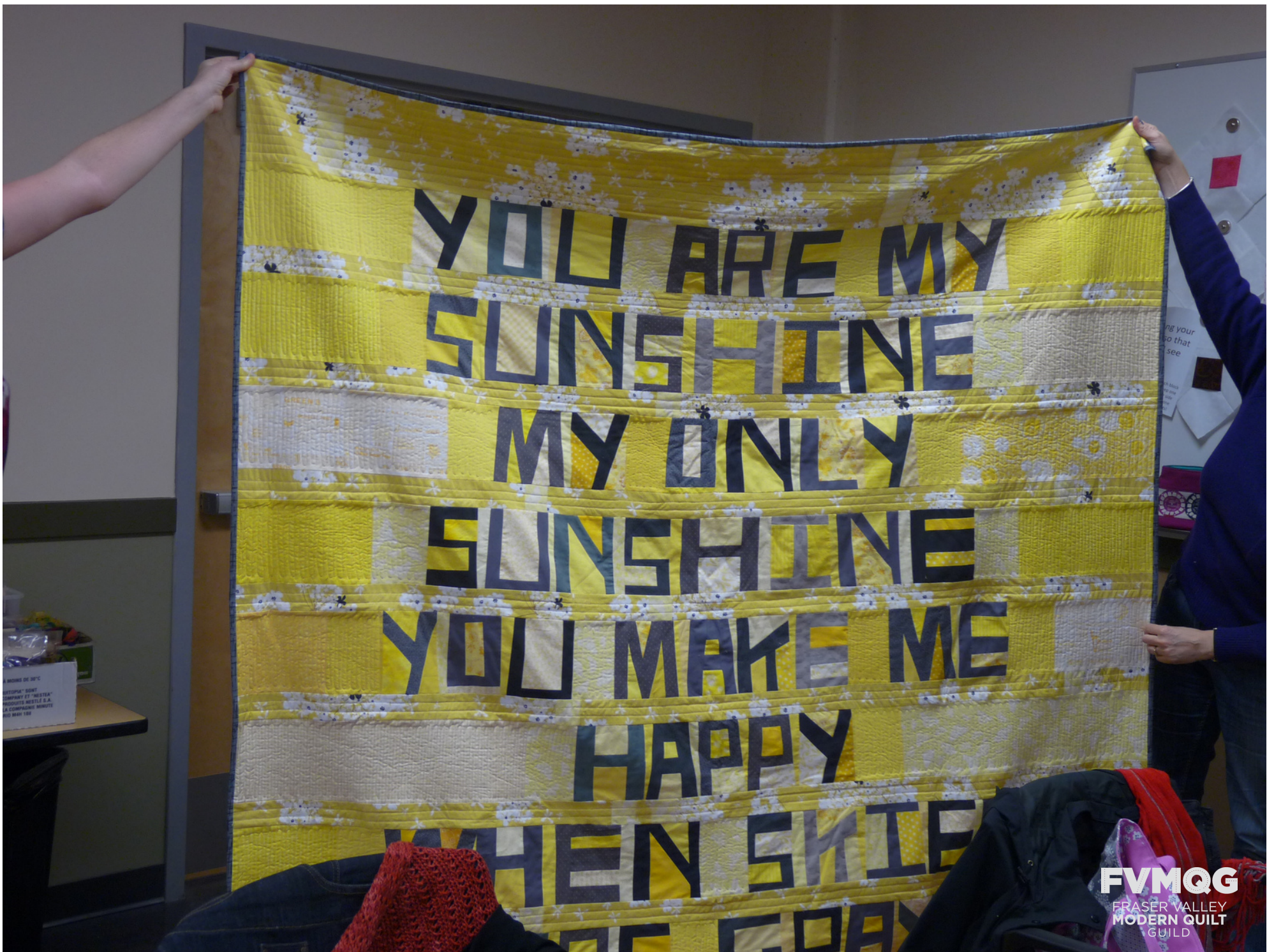




**Design inspired by modern art
and architecture**

Subway patterns, street patterns,
billboards







**Grey and whites as neutrals or
used as a background**



Grey and whites as neutrals or used as a background.

You'll also notice that not many of these quilts have borders either.





An interesting exercise done by FVMQG member Vera, two quilts, one traditional and one modern, using the same pattern.

I bet you've already figured it out,
Modern quilting is steeped in tradition.
Are modern quilters reinventing the wheel?

Maybe. My aunt owned a fabric store in Calgary, it was a pretty popular store but they had to close. They didn't really want to but in the mid-90's she told me, "My clientele is dying. Literally dying and I don't know how to get new people like you into the store."

Like all things, Modern quilting is just something evolved. It's based on a lot of the same techniques as traditional quilting.

In our guild we are lucky enough to be able to draw on our members that have a more traditional background and boy, **do they know stuff!**

As for rules, you can't break them if you don't know them, and if you want your quilt to stay together you gotta know those basic rules. However I think it's safe to say Modern Quilting has its own rules too, design-wise and colour-wise.

But not to worry, if you don't think you know the rules when it comes to Modern Quilting, don't worry!
Just like US Justice Potter Stewart,
"You'll know it when you see it!"



Thank you!

Interested in Modern Quilting?

Come visit us at an upcoming meeting!

Check out our website for meeting dates and information.

www.fvmodernquilt.com

Interested in Modern Quilting check out these must have modern quilting books:

- Denyse Schmidt- Modern Quilts Traditional Inspiration and Denyse Schmidt Quilts
- Elisabeth Hartman's "The Practical Guide to Patchwork"
- The Modern Quilt Workshop by Weeks Ringle and Bill Kerr

and these blogs will get you started:

- Oh, Fransson- Elisabeth Hartman
- Tall Grass Prairie Studio - Jacquie Gering
- Crazy Mom Quilts - Amanda Jean Nyberg

Fraser Valley Modern Quilt Guild (our website)
www.fvmodernquilt.com

Facebook

www.facebook.com/groups/fvmqg

Flickr

www.flickr.com/photos/fvmqg



Fraser Valley Members Blogs:

- Carol Browne www.carolbrowne.com
- Cathy Erickson www.cathy-blueberrypatch.blogspot.ca
- Amy Dame www.craftydame.blogspot.ca
- Cynthia Frenette www.cynthiaf.ca
- Kat Potter www.madkapquilter.blogspot.ca
- Lysa Mair www.lysaflower.com

Modern Quilt guild (Website)

www.themodernquiltguild.com

Fresh Modern Quilts (on Flickr)

www.flickr.com/groups/freshmodernquilts

Vancouver Modern Quilt Guild

www.vancouvermodernquiltguild.ca/blog

Spool of Thread

www.spoolofthread.com