

Denise Labadie

- Five-Day Art Quilt Design Intensive Workshop -

Denise is known for her contemporary art quilt portraits of megalithic Celtic “stones” and monoliths, and more recent (though still centuries old) monastic ruins. Her quilts feature her one-of-a-kind hand-painted fabric along with the assertive use of texture, perspective, and overall dimensionality. The many techniques that she uses in her art quilting are the focus of her Art Quilt Design Intensive workshop.

Denise's sewing, quilting, and compositional knowledge – art quilting as well as traditional patchwork – is both deep and wide-ranging. Her workshop reflects this depth of experience and interests, with the workshop moving from quilt design and finishing, to fabric painting, to working with photos, to fully exploring the comparative strengths, benefits, effects, and use of key foundational compositional and texturing art quilt top construction techniques. In addition to two days of fabric painting, particular emphasis is placed on each student developing a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the “what, when, why, and how” of raw edge appliqué vs. turned edge appliqué vs. reverse appliqué vs. inseting; free-form strip piecing; and the use of couching.

Denise’s workshops are very hands-on, and are strongly focused on helping develop individual student confidence and technique-related experiential exploration and learning. She does not use instructor-provided templates or “copy me” patterns – her objective is to instead teach re-useable and replicable techniques and “lessons learned” skills that students can both personalize and confidently and creatively use and expand on once away from the classroom.

Denise’s workshops are also not about stones, or landscapes per se (though she's more than happy to discuss her stone and landscape techniques in detail, as may be desired) but rather about generally applicable fabric painting and construction techniques capable of (sometimes dramatically) improving overall quilt composition, color and texture, dimensionality, and craftsmanship, regardless of quilt theme or focus. Denise’s classes are also fun.

Denise is an accomplished quilter and instructor who enthusiastically, energetically, openly, and warmly shares her knowledge, and her design and color sense, without reservation or restriction. Her workshops are applauded by experienced as well as new art quilters (see <https://labadiefiberart.com/workshops-and-lectures>).

Summary

A five-day workshop focused on art quilt composition and design, fabric painting, quilt top texturing and construction techniques, and quilt finishing. Only basic sewing and sewing machine skills required.

Paint and supplies (mandatory) surcharge (payable to Denise at the workshop): \$50.00 (as of 1/2025)

Fabric kit (optional) surcharge (payable to Denise at the workshop): \$75.00 (as of 1/2025)

Schedule

Denise begins the workshop with an in-depth slide presentation (along with showing some of her actual quilts, if available) highlighting her work and quilting style, introducing and providing examples of the use of the upcoming workshop's many techniques, and providing needed context for the coming week's instruction and focus.

During the workshop each student will work on creating (though likely not finishing) their own quilt top. Students are thus asked to bring an enlarged quilt size photograph (or sketch) – hopefully of a scene or theme of particular interest or passion (it need not be of stones or a landscape; instead, whatever currently intrigues or speaks to each student) – to inspire and help guide their fabric painting (desired colors, palette, etc.) and to serve as a rough template for quilt top composition and construction.

Quilt composition, working with photographs, and extensive per participant on-on-one instruction and coaching – is interweaved throughout the workshop.

Day 1 and 2: Fabric Painting

Day 1 and 2 focus on exploring (some rather surprising) techniques for using sun-reactive transparent color paints to create uniquely textured and individualized fabrics. Denise uses her painted fabrics in her stones, landscapes, and skies. Topics include how to best use and layer paint, how and when to use various resists, and – depending on desired results – how to most successfully induce (and control) desired layer-by-layer differential paint absorption, diffusion, blending, and/or mottling. Resulting fabrics can be remarkable.

Each student's fabric painting is guided by their specific project needs – using the enlarged photograph or sketch that they've brought to the workshop – and ends with the completion of a range of their own newly painted fabric in the colors and textures that they themselves desire and create. The two day schedule ensures plenty of time for in-depth hands-on experimentation and techniques exploration (students can also continue to paint on subsequent days should they so choose).

Day 3 and 4: Construction Techniques

Days 3 and 4 focus on the use and comparative benefits of the key quilt top construction techniques central to Denise's own quilting, ensuring that each student becomes fully confident in their ability to consistently and reliably use each technique to produce predictable, desired results:

Day 3: Reverse appliqué, turned edge appliqué, raw edge appliqué, and inseting.

Day 4: Free-form strip piecing, couching, and quilt finishing.

Day 5: Individual Exploration and Coaching

Day 5 focuses on addressing any outstanding questions; reviewing or revisiting select techniques; continued quilt top composition and/or construction (it is not expected that students will complete their quilt tops during the workshop); additional techniques practice and/or experimentation; continued fabric painting (if desired); additional one-on-one instructor instruction and coaching; and/or go-forward post-workshop quilt completion planning.

Supply List

Fabric Painting (not Dyeing)

Provided by Denise:

Setacolor transparent (sun-reactive) paints
Plastic bottles, plastic sheeting, brushes, etc.

To Be Brought by Each Student:

A minimum of 5+ yards of a variety of white (plain, smooth, perhaps some textured) fabric, each piece being approximately a fat quarter or so (¼ yard) in size.

Alternatively (or in addition to), Denise provides for purchase an optional – but recommended – Fabric Kit. The kit includes 1½ yards each of very high quality white cotton Kona, Pima, and Sateen (all from Robert Kauffman); white cotton-linen blend (again, from Robert Kauffman); and white silk organza (from Dharma). These are the same fabrics that Denise uses for her own fabric painting and quilting. Kits can be purchased from Denise at the beginning of the workshop; if you want to reserve a kit, please inform Denise (contact information is below) as early as possible to ensure that enough kits are shipped.

Several bristle and foam paint brushes plus anything having interesting textures that can be used to apply paint, e.g., sea or dish sponges – a couple sizes – with lots of holes, etc.

Foam core (or the like) boards (for moving the above sized wet fabric) – 2x
Small plastic containers (for mixing paint) with lids – 8 or so (e.g., small Glad or ZipLock containers)
Spray bottle (for water)
Permanent medium-tipped black marker
Clothespins
Clear (washable) school glue
White baking flour, stirrer, and small container / bowl
Salt crystals (different sizes)
Sand
Weeds, rocks, feathers, etc. (i.e., things to lay over the paint for texture)
Container for water
Color wheel

Optional:

Clothes that you don't care about !!
Rubber or disposable gloves
Mickey Lawler's "Skydyes"

Note:

If flying to the workshop, and you have no way of getting everything into your luggage, contact Denise re: sharing items with other students.

Working with Photographs

To Be Brought by Each Student:

An enlarged quilt-sized paper copy – preferably grayscale (though color is also fine, just much more expensive, and it will likely not be as high contrast as grayscale) – of a photo or sketch of a scene or theme of particular interest to each student.

The (original) photo, and enlargement, is used to inspire and help guide each student's fabric painting (desired colors, and textures, etc.) and to serve as a rough template for both quilt top design and technique selection; it also provides Denise with an understanding of each student's specific workshop objectives.

Note that although Denise's own focus is on stones and landscapes, the various techniques taught during the workshop are applicable across most any subject matter or thematic focus. Lots of students have certainly chosen photos of varying styles of stones and landscapes (the U.S. Southwest, for example), but other students have instead chosen photos of old rusted cars, beached fishing boats, coastlines, flowers, forests, you name it. A good photo composition-wise is one with hopefully interesting textures and colors and contrasts, isn't overly complex in terms of the number of individual elements (unless they can be easily grouped or abstracted), and perhaps includes some degree of perspective, if desired.

Denise typically starts by making a somewhat larger (say 8" x 10", or 20 cm x 25 cm) paper color copy (basically, a slightly enlarged inexpensive color Xerox) of her original photo, on which she then uses a contrasting colored (white, black, maybe silver) medium width felt tip pen, wax pen, or colored marker pen to highlight – again, in a contrasting color – all the pertinent edges (i.e., the edges of rocks, streams, the sides of buildings, what have you). The goal is to have the edges show up well on the final enlarged print.

Creating this interim slightly enlarged paper color copy is an optional step, but it typically helps better detail and highlight all the important edges. Optionally, if so inclined, you can just highlight key edges on the original photo (though that might irreparably damage it).

Denise then uses the above edge-marked (interim) paper color print to create the final fully enlarged B&W "quilt-sized" paper photo template. For the workshop most folks opt for somewhere around 18 to 30+ inches on a side for handling ease and convenience, but the main objective is that the resulting enlargement be printed at more or less the desired final quilt top size.

For this final enlargement do not get an actual photographic color enlargement (which would be hugely expensive), but rather just get a simple enlarged plain paper (non-photo) B&W (grayscale, actually) Xerox (or blueprint machine-created) print (on thinnish, inexpensive, matte, roll paper). Denise typically uses a local PostNet shop (or maybe Kinko / FedEx), or for super large enlargements she might use a blueprint company; just specify what size you want (usually telling them the desired length of the longest side), and they'll oftentimes just print it out on the spot. It should cost less than \$10.00 or so (depending on size; FedEx is usually the most expensive).

Also, ask them to make the print as high contrast as possible. Using the interim slightly enlarged edge-marked paper color print helps further ensure this final full quilt-size blowup retains as much visible detail as possible.

In addition to the above enlarged (quilt-sized) B&W paper print, please also bring the original photo (marked up or a clean copy), any size, in color (if possible).

Paper scissors
Tracing paper

Construction Techniques

To Be Brought by Each Student:

Sewing machine (and please don't forget the power cord and foot pedal !!!)

Basic sewing (machine) supplies and notions (including new sewing machine needles)

A small variety of contrasting or coordinating or textured fabrics that will (likely) complement (in addition to your Day 1 and 2 painted fabrics) your planned quilt top.

Neutral color sewing thread
Invisible or bottomline thread
Fabric scissors
Quilter's ruler(s)
Rotary cutter (e.g., Olfa) and cutting mat
Acid-free glue stick
Push pins

Optional:

Fusible webbing (e.g., MistyFuse, FlexiFuse, Wonder Under)
Parchment paper or teflon sheet (for fusing)
Water soluble stabilizer (e.g., Solvy)
Appliqué scissors
Top stitch or metallic sewing machine needles
Yarns and trims (for couching)
Decorative, variegated, metallic, rayon, etc. threads
Small pressing mat and a wee-little iron
Walking foot; couching foot; free motion quilting foot

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Contact Denise (please, don't hesitate) if you have questions or wish to order either an optional Fabric Kit or ask that Denise bring extra supplies (she is happy to sell any leftover paint or extra fabric):

Email: denise.labadie@gmail.com
Voice and/or text (cell phone): +1 720-352-0973
<https://labadiefiberart.com>

