

Tulip

By Sarah Smith

“Tulip is a fairly small art quilt made for the SewBatik “Celebration” challenge that will hang in June at the Vermont Quilt Festival. We bought a kit at VQF in 2015 when I was a teacher there and it included two fat quarters of fabric and instructions to make a 20”x20” quilt using a recognizable amount of both fabrics.” - Sarah Smith



Here are the two fabrics from the challenge - multicolored red and multicolored yellow batiks. This was indeed a challenge for Sarah as she prefers to use hand-dyes and tone-on-tone batiks that don't contrast too much.

- SewBatik fabrics required for the challenge



Tulip

When the challenge was issued, Sarah had just come out of a brutal winter in Maine, with record snowfalls. Sarah immediately thought, what better way to celebrate spring than with tulips. Here are the tulips that inspired Sarah to make this gorgeous project. They are Orange Princess tulips in Sarah's own garden!



With those in mind, Sarah applied Mistyfuse fusible web to the challenged fabrics and pulled out her stash of pre-fused fabrics, picking colors that she thought would work. Sarah knew that she would need to modify reality to include the challenged fabrics, but figured the result would still say "Celebrate!". Sarah drew a full-size sketch based on a photo of just one tulip and used that to create each of the fabric petals.

- The petals are constructed and fused. Sarah notes that this was so visually busy, it made her eyes hurt.



Tulip

Once Sarah had constructed and assembled the petals, she realized that they blended into each other and needed more shading and highlighting than just thread would supply. Sarah then decided to add highlights and shadows with textile paint. She used both ProFab (from ProChemical and Dye) and Jacquard textile paints.

- In this photo, you can see that Sarah added highlights to some of the darker petals at the top.



In the next photo, you can see what a difference adding a bit of paint makes. All of a sudden there is depth and dimension and less work in terms of the amount of quilting that would be needed (which ended up being a lot anyway).

- In this photo, the highlights (lilac and yellow) are on and Sarah began adding fuchsias and plums to create the shadows. She needed to separate the petals so that she didn't get the dark paint on the edges that needed to be light.

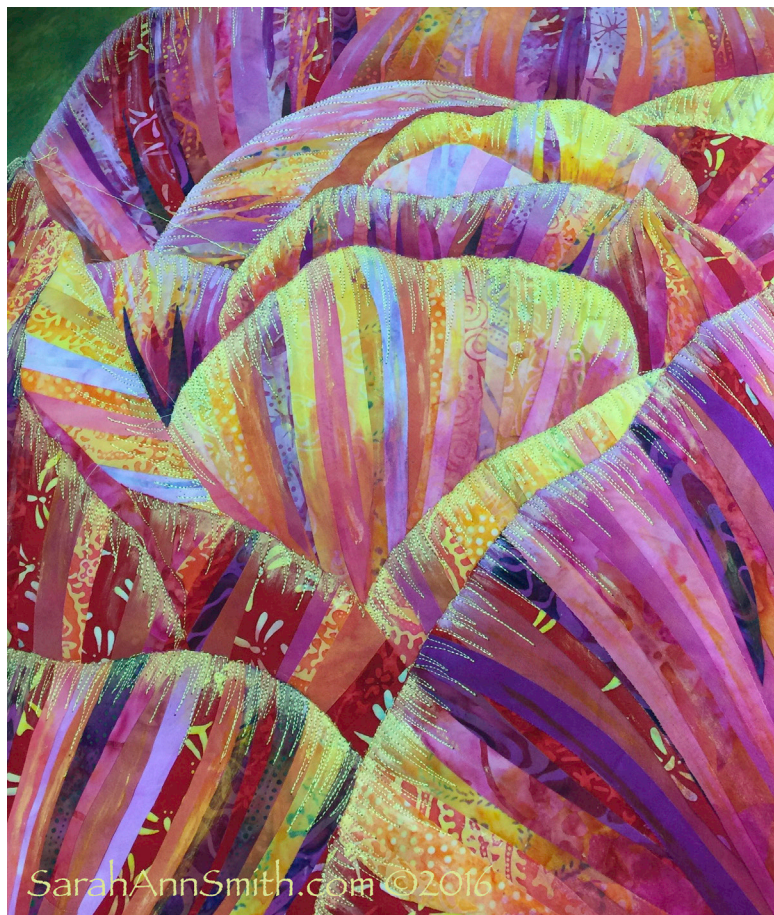


Tulip

Once the paint dried and was heat set according to the directions, Sarah figured out what fabric to use for the background, then layered up the quilt with a wool-poly blend batting. Sarah used Pellon 65 non-woven interfacing to stabilize the quilt since she knew she would be doing a ton of stitching. Sarah has an article on this process in the July 2015 issue of Machine Quilting Unlimited (<http://machinequilting.mqumag.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MQU-15-07-July-Cover-TOC.pdf>).

When Sarah does her intense thread-coloring, she tends to start with the light-lights and the dark-darks and then fills in the medium values. In the next couple of photographs, Sarah began with the light colored threads and then started in on the darkest shade.

- Since Sarah travels along the edge of a petal rather than stop and restart a thread color, she started with the next-to-lightest color of yellow thread. Sarah planned to finish the highlights with the lightest color only after all of the other stitching was completed so she could use that thread to cover up any traveling stitches.



Tulip

- Here is a detail photo of stitching with two shades of yellow to add highlights to the top edge of the petals, starting with the darks on the lower edge.



“Currently, I am lucky to be sewing on a Janome Horizon Memory Craft 15000. The tension was flawless despite having multiple layers of fused fabrics, basting spray, top batting, heavy interfacing and backing. The slide-out lightning really helps too. I have had the pleasure of working on the MC6500P up through the MC8900QCP and the MC15000. All of these machines are eminently capable of doing the heavy thread-coloring and quilting that I adore. I use Superior Threads 40-wt. polyester in the needle and the fine 60-wt. Bottom Line thread in the bobbin.” - Sarah

Tulip

- In the photograph below, Sarah shows the tulip being quilted on the MC15000.



Once Sarah completed the thread-coloring on the tulip and quilting a tone-on-tone design in the background, she squared up the top, selected fabric for the binding and sewed it using the machine. Sarah applied the binding to the back, then wrapped it to the front and used the single buttonhole stitch and Bottom Line (fine) thread in a matching color. The stitch Sarah's prefers is the fifth one in the Buttonhole menu on the MC15000, she mirror-imaged it so that it swings to the right. It is one stitch forward, a stitch to the side and then the back. Using the fine thread and a shallow swing (set to about 1.8 instead of the default 2.5) makes it barely visible, but you *do* have to pay close attention.