

“In the Boro Spirit”

By Lisa Binkley • www.lisabinkley.com

Class Description: Boro mending, kantha cloth, the Quilts of Gee's Bend. Each of these evokes images of old, worn fabrics, simply but beautifully stitched out of need and worn fabrics. Born of necessity in diverse cultures worldwide, contemporary fiber artists can learn much from these traditions both technically and aesthetically. In this workshop we explore the traditions that created these textiles and then look to them for inspiration in creating new works of fiber art.

Beginning with pieces of old fabrics—vintage linens, pieces of worn jeans, even bits of blankets or tattered garments—we select, curate, layer, and hand stitch them into new looks and new life. Techniques explored include non-traditional hand piecing and applique, hand quilting with heavier threads, as well as design considerations in creating our compositions. This two-day workshop is a meditative blend of history, hand work, repurposing, and art making.

This class is suitable for all levels of fiber artists. The \$25 class fee covers the detailed color booklet that will be provided to students on the first day of class as well a variety of fabrics and some threads.

Students should bring the following items with them to class:

- Batting & Backing:
 - Up to 1 yard of a thin cotton or other natural-fiber quilt batting (optional).
 - Up to 1 yard of fabric for the back of your work. This should be the thickness of a quilt top, shirt, or table cloth. (Follow the guidelines below for Fabrics.)
- Fabrics: Bring only old, used fabrics, especially fabrics with meaning to you. They can be the remaining scraps of beloved but tattered garments, thin blankets, or quilts; pieces of fabric left to you by a grandparent, parent, or friend; interesting pieces picked up at a thrift shop such as a vintage linen table cloth, tea towel, hanky, or doily; patches acquired on travels; labels from beloved cloth items; an old, stained garment you can't bear to throw away, etc. They can be any material and any design, you just need to be able to easily hand stitch through them including when layered with another fabric or two. They can be frayed or tattered. Pieces can be very small (an inch or so) though ½-yard. Bring 5-10+ pieces.
- Threads in colors that appeal to you. They may be solid, variegated, hand-dyed, etc.:
 - Required: 2 or more spools of pearl cotton in sizes 8 and 12. One color could blend with the predominant tone of the fabrics you're bringing, and one could be an accent color.
 - Required: Embroidery needles and/or milliner's needles in a few sizes to accommodate your various thread thicknesses.
 - Optional: 1-2 spools of heavy-weight sewing thread such as button craft thread, 12-weight thread on a spool, etc.

- Additional Supplies

- Embroidery hoop that can hold your stitching (optional)
- Scissors for cutting fabric and thread
- Straight pins (a small container of these)
- A thimble
- Thread wax/conditioner
- A pen or pencil for note taking
- Collected images of boro work that speaks to you from magazines, books, Pinterest, etc.
- Optional: Note/sketch pad (any size you like to use)