

PHILIP MORTON GALLERY

Meet The Artist: BARBARA WARDEN

I am a painter. Since 1999, when I began working with fiber, the challenge for me has been how to make a painting using cloth and thread while staying within a venerable quilting tradition and a familiar process. Instead of using paint, I now use cloth (color) and thread (line) to convey meaning, emotion, and mood.

When I start work on a quilt, I do not begin with a preconceived design but rather choose colors that reflect my mood, a piece of music I have heard, or a book I have read. I cut many small pieces that I can move around randomly. These fragments gradually coalesce into larger modules with more structure and definition. This way of working allows me to be surprised by the unexpected and then to improvise by using my discoveries.

Redirecting an idea doesn't bother me because something new is developing and maybe I will be able to use that "new something". In the final stage of the quilting process, I use dense top-stitching so that the finished quilt is flat and resembles in physical weight the feel of a rug or tapestry.

There are many influences on my work. I love the brilliance and subtlety of the reds in Persian carpets. I have always enjoyed Native American weaving and Asian textiles. I listen to jazz a lot; and as a painter, I study contemporary abstract painting and drawing.