

Published September 25th, 2013

About the Artist: Crazy for Quilts

By Cathy Dausman



Artist Freddy Moran stands next to her self-portrait quilt. Photo Cathy Dausman

to make houses." They were intentionally "outrageous" - houses colored lime green, purple and orange. She showed them to her teacher, who pronounced them "sensational!"

That enthusiasm spurred her on.

Moran had her first solo show eight years after she started, and 23 years later said she's "going like a house afire!" In the intervening years, Moran purchased and taught herself how to machine sew and travelled the world teaching workshops on land and aboard ships on quilting cruises.

"With success goes responsibility to give back," said Moran, so she shared her tactile and colorful artwork designs with students at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School, taught for Lafayette Partners in Education and designed quilts for Children's Hospital Oakland. She still teaches along the west coast, "from Washington to Mexico," she said.

The woman with an art degree from Dominican University of California admitted she had little time to focus on art while raising her five sons. She dabbled in pottery, but explained that "60 years ago the glazes were all earth color." That was hardly a match for the artist who quilted a self-portrait using red as a neutral color.

Moran loves the quilting process because it offers "something for everyone," at every level. "You can use kits or freelance," she said. "Do not be afraid to break the rules," she counseled would-be quilters. "We're all entitled to make a really terrible piece of artwork," said Moran. Sometimes for her, that means using quilt "failures" as quilt backing.

For Moran, quilting is a happy blend of scales both small and large.

Looking ahead, Moran said if she still has her "marbles and enthusiasm," she plans to be quilting at 90. "I wanted my grandchildren to know I had walked this earth and made a difference," she said.

Workshops and Shows:

- Sept. 28, East Bay Heritage Quilters, Albany United Methodist Church
- January-February, 2014 Gallery show, Pacific Grove, Calif.

Books:

- "Freddy's House" (out of print)
- "Collaborative Quilting" (co-authored by Freddy Moran and Gwen Marston)
- "Freddy & Gwen Collaborate Again" (authors Moran and Marston)

"When you raise boys you don't sew," Freddy Moran explained. Those are strange words coming from an art quilter who reinvented herself at age 60 and has since designed over 500 quilts.

Moran has taught "all over the world," been the featured solo artist in quilt shows, attended and joined quilt guilds, written three books and still works full time daily in her home studio doing what she loves - designing brightly colored, high contrast quilts "big enough to cover you" in the collage style. She continually finds inspiration in African American and children's art.

One of her daughters-in-law signed up for a quilting class, she said, "... and dragged me with her. I went kicking and screaming." Although vowing "I don't 'do' thread," Moran also remembers stopping in at a Lafayette fabric shop and "instantly falling in love with the colors, feel and designs."

Being brave enough to take her first quilting class was only the beginning. Moran made just two quilt blocks in the traditional method, using dark colors and trying to align "perfect points." Feeling frustrated, and having hit a creative snag, Moran "got out a lot of fabrics" and decided "I'm going

Reach the reporter at: cathy.d@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA