



NANCY CROW is widely acclaimed as the world's foremost artist making quilts today. Her work has been instrumental in moving quilting from traditional craft to art medium in its own right. Her quilts are in the permanent collections of world-class museums,

including The Renwick Gallery/National Museum of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution, The Museum of Arts & Design, The American Folk Art Museum, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Her work has been included in almost every major exhibition of contemporary quilts over the past thirty years from London to Auckland to Tokyo to Strasbourg to New York.

Nancy Crow is a Fellow of the American Crafts Council, a recipient of the prestigious National Living Treasure Award, and an inductee into the Quilters' Hall of Fame. As an advocate for quilting as an art form, she originated Quilt National, Quilt/Surface Design Symposium, and the Art Quilt Network, all of which have become acclaimed venues for those interested in contemporary quilts. Her previous books include *Nancy Crow: Quilts and Influences* and *Improvisational Quilts*. She maintains a large studio on her farm near Baltimore, Ohio. For more information on Nancy Crow, visit www.nancycrow.com.

Cover and author photographs by J. Kevin Fitzsimons
Jacket design by Kim Bartko

"It's impossible to measure Nancy Crow's impact on the evolution of today's innovative quilts. Her example and encouragement have nourished the creative spirits of countless artists."

Hilary Morrow Fletcher, Quilt National Project Director

Breckling Press

For more premium-quality books on arts and crafts, please visit
www.brecklingpress.com

"SYMPHONIES IN CLOTH" FROM NANCY CROW

"Nancy Crow is a pioneer of the modern art quilt movement . . . an accomplished artist and an ambassador for the world of fiber art."

Paul J. Smith, Director Emeritus, The Museum of Arts & Design, NY

"Nancy Crow's symphonies in cloth defy gravity, confound expectations, and expand the realm of the possible."

Eli Leon, quilt curator, author, and scholar

"Rarely does a book come along that illustrates an artist's creative process with such depth and clarity."

James Bassler, Professor Emeritus, Department of World Arts and Cultures, University of California, Los Angeles

"Nancy Crow is often called the 'founder' of the contemporary art quilt movement. . . . Her work is the standard against which all other art quilts are measured."

Rebecca A. T. Stevens, Consulting Curator, Contemporary Textiles, The Textile Museum, Washington, D.C.

"Based in strong tradition, Nancy Crow's work is ever evolving and continues to challenge, inspire, and excite."

Roderick Kiracofe, author of The American Quilt: A History of Cloth & Comfort, co-founder of The Quilt Digest Press, art collector

"Nancy Crow's originality and her strong sense of color and design have resulted in a body of work that is innovative and visually compelling."

Niloo Imami-Paydar, Curator of Textile and Fashion Arts, Indianapolis Museum of Art

"Nancy Crow? Shall I praise Nancy Crow, the artist, the quilter, the mover and shaker in fabric art? The answer is an emphatic yes! And her latest book certainly proves it."

Ora E. Anderson, woodcarver

"Over many years I have seen Nancy Crow spread the joy of using color and designing with cloth, honoring both early traditions and contemporary innovations."

Dorothy Gill Barnes, sculptor/basket-maker

"This book bears witness to Nancy Crow's restless spirit, constantly in search of the perfect marriage of color, line, pattern and form. The direct, organic freedom of these quilts is a joy to behold."

Robert Shaw, author of The Art Quilt

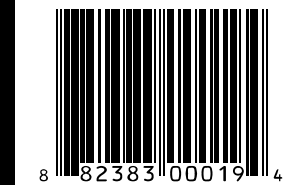
"Nancy Crow's work serves as that cornerstone for all great collections of contemporary quilts, from the Museum of Arts & Design to the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Museum of American Art. Nancy Crow and her work have become a significant part of American history."

Bruce Hoffman, Director, The Snyderman Gallery

"Nancy Crow's textural fabric constructions engage a visual language that is at once unique and classic. Her evocative geometric abstractions are a celebration of our primal urge to pattern, brought to a level of beauty and perfection."

Janice Lessman-Moss, Professor, Head of Textile Art, Kent State University

Breckling Press



NANCY
CROW

Bp

NANCY CROW

FOREWORD BY JEAN ROBERTSON

"As an activist, teacher, and curator, Nancy Crow was a catalyst and prime mover of the art quilt movement. . . . Today, she stands at the forefront of innovative quilting and she is one of the premier colorists in contemporary American art, no matter what medium one surveys. This new book, a chronicle of Crow's work after 1988, shows her transformation."

Jean Robertson, The Smithsonian Archives of American Art



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PREFACE

I HAVE MADE MORE THAN 300 QUILTS. The purpose of my quilts is to make something beautiful but, at the same time, my quilts are a means of expression, representing my deepest feelings and my life experiences. In addition, my quilts are all about how I see color and color relationships, how I see shapes, and how I see line and linear movements. They are also about complexity, sadness, and hope.

My style of quilting is contemporary, in that I want to express my experiences NOW and not copy old quilts. They are traditional only in that they are machine-pieced and hand-quilted.

I work in a 2,400-square-foot studio that is attached by an enclosed walk-through to my house on an 90-acre farm east of Columbus, Ohio. The studio represents the environment in which I want to be, in that I have large open spaces, large walls on which to work, many, many tables, high ceilings, excellent lighting that is color-corrected, a great stereo system, wood floors, enough large windows to give me a sense of the out-of-doors, wonderful storage for finished quilts, a bathroom, several different offices, and an archival storage room for photography and collected textiles.

When I work on a quilt, I put away all thoughts that are not helpful and channel my energies towards relaxing and becoming one with my fabrics. Since I work intuitively, this is absolutely important. I begin to see shapes in my head and think about how to cut them out of my huge palette of solid colors that I have hand-dyed in my basement dye studio. Never, ever do I think about what others expect or want or what will sell, but rather I look at my time in my studio as a PROCESS OF DISCOVERY. I love being inside my brain and pushing myself to think in ever more complex ways, because I know the ideas are there for the taking. It's all about being focused and disciplined, and making use of one's abilities. And about being alone, in solitude, so one can think and feel deeply, without interruption. I have definitely grown closer to myself rather than to others because I see my quilting as MY EXPERIENCE, which has nothing to do with other people.

I identify who I am with my art work . . . in other words, I love the work, the experience of making each quilt. It's my life, my life's work! I feel lost not doing art, unsatisfied, anxious, bored. Everything else in comparison seems not terribly important. That is not to say I don't love my two sons or my husband. I love them dearly, but I cannot live through other human beings. Rather, I feel I can live only through using the talents I was given and, to that end, I have always had a SENSE OF TIME RUNNING OUT. I believe in just doing it and not looking for excuses because who really cares in the end? No one but oneself.

Nancy Crow



1993 TO 1995

LINEAR STUDIES



Linear Study #1, ©1993.
24" × 24". 100 percent
cotton fabric hand-dyed
by Nancy Crow with center
square resist-dyed by
Lunn Fabrics. Fabrics cut
into directly and machine-
pieced by Nancy Crow.
Hand-quilted by Marla
Hattabaugh with pattern
denoted by Nancy Crow.

In Linear Studies I wanted to draw lines with intent. I wanted to draw with a sharp blade and create an authentic edge along narrow widths of fabric. I am still learning.

Linear Study #2, ©1994.
26" × 26". 100 percent
cotton fabric hand-dyed by
Nancy Crow with center
square resist-dyed by
Lunn Fabrics. Fabrics cut
into directly and machine-
pieced by Nancy Crow.
Hand-quilted by Marla
Hattabaugh with pattern
denoted by Nancy Crow.



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

LINES. MY EYES FOLLOW lines with the fervor of addiction. Lines can push all my buttons, rush my senses into overload. Lines flood my mind with imagery . . . winds caressing branches or slamming them together . . . electric cables pulled and dumped into great swirls onto the pavement . . . dead brambles, fallen down, randomly overlapping one another . . . long, crooked branches, silent and graphic, elegant in the chill winter air . . . crab apple branches curving, creating a row of five pronounced parallel lines . . . narrow stems, so delicate, supporting their own shimmering flower heads . . . stands of grasses silently guarding the hills near the place where I grew up . . . cornstalks whispering to one another in our October fields.

Lines calm me down when they arrange themselves into rows, make patterns . . . make sense. Lines arouse anticipation when they swirl into energetic abstract elaborations. Lines become hypnotic when they are laid down in beautiful figure/ground relationships. Lines in nature form endless variations. Lines made by man do, too . . . but nature always wins!

I had always wanted to draw lines of my own in a masterful way; now I wanted to do so using a rotary cutter. To gain the control I needed, I had to practice cutting toward myself so that I could watch the edge of the razor-sharp blade as it sliced through the fabric. This became a form of drawing for me. My hand, wrist, arm, and shoulder muscles had to learn. They had to strengthen to draw well, and they had to cooperate with my eye. In *Linear Studies* I wanted to draw lines with intent. I wanted to draw with a sharp blade and create an authentic edge along narrow widths of fabric. I am still learning.



OPPOSITE, LEFT Crab apple with five
branches forming parallel curves.
OPPOSITE, RIGHT Apple trees in early
spring. Notice the angular lines.



SKETCHBOOK NOTES



5

▼ JANUARY 7, 1995

This morning, everyone in this household is in such a bad mood. I love the quietness and spirituality of my studio—a world to escape to. It seems we are all trying to do far more than is possible, and we get grumpy. I have to clean the second studio so that Kevin can do photography tomorrow. I have saved so many cardboard boxes. I hate to burn them, but they are filling up the room.

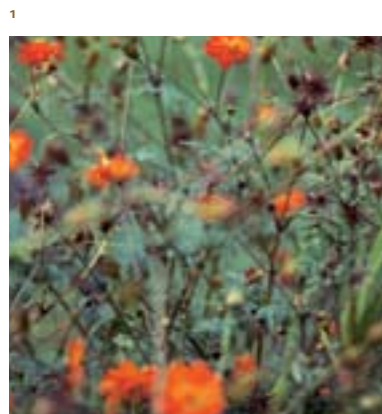


PHOTO 1 Dried stalks. PHOTO 2 Lines of stems. PHOTO 3 Poison ivy twines up a telephone pole.
PHOTO 4 Stalks of field corn. PHOTO 5 Dried stems.



Linear Study #4, ©1995.
15¾" × 53½". 100 percent cotton fabric hand-dyed by Nancy Crow. Fabrics cut into directly and machine-pieced by Nancy Crow. Hand-quilted by Marla Hattabaugh with pattern denoted by Nancy Crow.

QUILTING PATTERN

orange area CONSTRUCTIONS #27

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