

The Quilter's Book of Design

Ann Johnston



The Quilter's Book of Design

Ann Johnston

GIFT OF THE ASIA FOUNDATION
NOT FOR RE-SALE

QUÀ TẶNG CỦA QUỸ CHÂU Á
KHÔNG ĐƯỢC BÁN LẠI



THE QUILT DIGEST PRESS

NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Johnston, Ann.
The quilter's book of design / Ann Johnston.
p. cm.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-8442-2660-2
1. Quilts—Design. I. Title.
TT835.J637 1999
746.46'041—dc21 99-25210

CIP

*TO MY PARENTS, EDWARD AND MARION DOHERTY,
AND TO MY BROTHER, FRED DOHERTY*

All the fabric in *The Quilter's Book of Design* is hand dyed by the author. The techniques she uses are thoroughly explained in her two books about dyeing fabric: *Dye Painting!*, 1992, and *Color by Accident*, 1997.

Editorial and production direction by Anne Knudson
Art direction by Kim Bartko
Project editing by Nicole Adams
Book design by Hespenheide Design
Photography by Bill Bachhuber, unless otherwise credited
Manufacturing direction by Pat Martin

Published by The Quilt Digest Press
A division of NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group, Inc.
4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood (Chicago), Illinois 60712-1975 U.S.A.
Copyright © 2000 by Ann Johnston

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group, Inc.

Printed in Hong Kong

International Standard Book Number: 0-8442-2660-2

00 01 02 03 04 05 WKT 19 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2



Contents

PART 1

Design Principles

Preface
Acknowledgments

ix
xi

CHAPTER 1

BALANCE

Visual Weight	4
Horizontal and Vertical Balance	4
Four Kinds of Balance	5
How to Change Balance	9
We Look for Balance	10

CHAPTER 2

UNITY

Unity Through Proximity	14
Unity Through Repetition	15
Unity Through Continuation	18
Achieving Unity	20

CHAPTER 3

VARIETY

Variety Enhances Unity	26
Variety Creates Focal Points	27
Ways to Achieve Variety	28
Too Much Variety	32
Variety Is Essential	32



Design Elements

CHAPTER 4

SIX DESIGN ELEMENTS

Line	38
Shape	38
Value	39
Color	40
Pattern	41
Texture	41

CHAPTER 5

LINE AND SHAPE

Line	44
Shape	50
Line and Shape Work Together	55

CHAPTER 6

VALUE AND COLOR

Value	58
Color	61
Value and Color Are Relative	68

CHAPTER 7

PATTERN AND TEXTURE

Pattern	72
Texture	77
Pattern and Texture in Quilts	83

Making Design Decisions

CHAPTER 8

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Observe, Question, and Learn	88
Practice One	89
Practice Two	95
Practice Three	96
Ask Questions Continuously	99

CHAPTER 9

ONE QUILTMAKER'S DECISIONS

An Evolution	102
How One Quilt Leads to Another	104
One Quilt's Progress	108
There Is No End	112

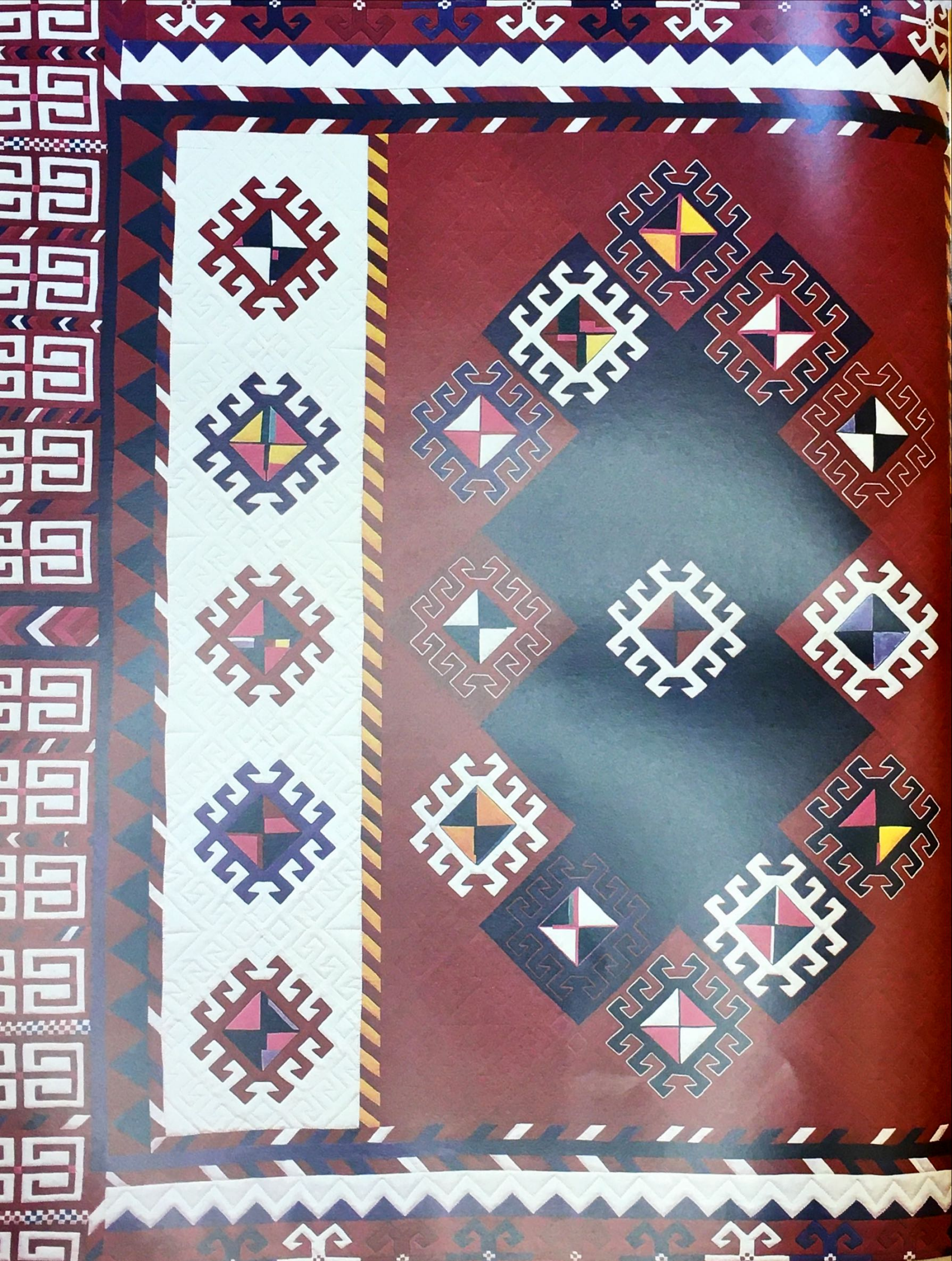
CHAPTER 10

STARTING PLACES

Where Did I Start?	116
Before You Start	121
Five Places to Start	124
One Step Leads to Another	134

Definitions	137
References	141
Index	143







P r e f a c e

As I write this preface, after the quilts, the writing, and the photography are all done, I am wondering why I took on a project like this. It has been such a long process that my plan for the book, like each of my quilts, has evolved in the making. *The Quilter's Book of Design* is twice as long as I originally intended, it took twice as long as I thought it would, and it was twice as hard to do. I think that I must have wanted to do it because I knew it would be good for me, that I would learn a lot. I was right: I learned at least twice as much as I thought I would.

Although the plan for *The Quilter's Book of Design* changed over time, the goals for the book have remained constant. I want to involve readers in basic design concepts by looking at a variety of approaches shown in my work. I want to build reader confidence in making design decisions by sharing some of my design choices. I also want to encourage quilters to start exploring for themselves by offering ideas and techniques to use as starting places.

There are as many sources of inspiration and as many ways to approach design as there are people. I think that understanding the principles and elements of design will help direct your practice and experience toward designs that better allow you to explore your ideas. Whether for quilts or for any other kind of art, understanding the functions and relationships of the elements in a design will give you more choices as you work. The knowledge will help you ask and answer questions like these: How do I emphasize or deemphasize part of the design? How do I give it more or less movement? How do I set or change the mood of the design? I hope that you will take with you the excitement of discovering some of the many possible answers in your own work.

Ann Johnston