



## Why Quilts Matter – Question & Answer with Joan Schulze



Joan Schulze

Next up in our series of Q and A from the *Why Quilts Matter Discussion Guide* is artist **Joan Schulze**. Widely recognized on the national and international scene as a teacher and lecturer, Joan is a technique pioneer who decades ago began to experiment with fabric dyeing, painting and using Xerox transfer on her fabric. We spoke about the challenges faced by artists working with compound media.

**As a mixed-media artist, what are the aspects of quilt making with which you most identify?**

Quilt making is an open-ended medium. The flexibility to create is there—fabrics can be altered to be unique to the artist; piecing which I relate to collage offers the possibility to fabricate something fresh and new; an additional layer of meaning can be introduced when quilting; and the bas-relief

quality of the finished quilt is unlike any other medium. All the characteristics of the quilt form - a top, batting and backing and the final act of quilting, appeal to my esthetics. On a practical note, and not a small consideration for an independent mixed-media artist, the finished art works can be easily transported, shipped and stored.



“Visitors” - by Joan Schulze

Do traditional quilt patterns limit creativity?



“Visitors” (detail) - by Joan Schulze

Quilt patterns can be used as a jumping of point for creating unique new designs. Using patterns would only limit creativity if they were presented as an end and not a beginning. Lessons in how patterns are created, color in all its complexity and how women have used patterns to talk about their contemporary concerns can be inspiring. The win-win here is putting stories and messages into new designs that will continue refreshing women's history as illustrated through their quilts.

## What is next for you?

Since the 70s, I have managed to carve out studio time while keeping a very busy schedule at home and away. I am choosing to end my teaching career of 55 years in 2013. Uninterrupted studio time is now my goal.

My first projects are already in motion. *Elastic Collisions*, a third book of poems and possible new series of quilts is progressing. I am planning a lecture series and small exhibitions of new work in my San Francisco studio.

## About Joan –

Joan Schulze's work is represented in the collections of the Museum of Arts & Design in New York, the National Museum of American Art's Renwick Gallery/ Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., and many other important public and private collections in the U.S., Europe, and Japan. To receive her occasional newsletter of events, email your request to [joan@joan-of-arts.com](mailto:joan@joan-of-arts.com). Joan is on the web at [www.joan-schulze.com](http://www.joan-schulze.com) and [www.joan-of-arts.com](http://www.joan-of-arts.com).