

Technique and Artistry of Set-in Circles – Two Days

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Title: Technique and Artistry of Set-in Circles – Two Days

Description:

Set-in circles are scary stuff to many experienced quilters. As a result, many hesitate to undertake making a quilt that uses set-in circles as part of the design. Truthfully, there is nothing to fear.

With instruction in some simple techniques and a bit of practice, anyone can learn to easily cut and sew blocks with set-in circles. Beyond the technical skill is the art of using the design of background blocks to create a sense of movement and flow that enhances the drama of the circles which form a focal point for the quilt. This workshop builds on ideas presented in Reynola Pakusich's "Circle Play" book, and adds a number of practical techniques for both design and construction.

In this workshop, we will learn to:

1. Cut and sew plain blocks with set-in circles
2. Cut and sew blocks of half squares, and of quarter squares with set-in circles
3. Use colour value to create a sense of movement in quilts composed of blocks with set-in circles.

Fabric requirements (for a 5 x 7 block quilt, about 8" finished blocks):

For each of two colours, bring about 6 cuts of ¼ meter ranging from very light to very dark in that colour

For one accent colour, bring 4 cuts of ¼ meter ranging from medium to very dark

About 1 meter of a focus fabric in colours that are harmonious with the other two colours you've selected (for the circles)

Supplies to bring to the workshop include:

Sewing machine in good working order, with a presser foot that has a ¼" seam marking

Extension cord and task light

Cutting mat, rotary cutter, 6" x 18-24" ruler

A "framing window" of light cardboard with a 6" or 7" circle cut out of the centre

Piecing thread, straight pins (small appliqué pins (optional) and longer quilting pins)

A design wall of some sort: flannel sheet, Styrofoam, batting – **must be at least 60 x 60**

Lots of pins for pinning blocks to the design wall

A personal ironing station, or shared with a friend taking the workshop

Circle-cutting rulers and quarter triangle rulers will be available for class use in the workshop. A handout will be provided. The book by Reynola Pakusich, and appropriate rulers, will be available for optional purchase after the workshop.

Duration:

This workshop will run 2 days from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM, with a 45 minute break for lunch. Set-up of working stations will take place from 9:00 until 9:30, at which time instruction will begin. Take-down of working stations will be from 3:30 to 4PM.

Fabric Selection Review (or Purchase) Opportunity:

If you would like assistance with your fabric selection, I have set two drop-in days at my studio/shop for class participants. Irene and I will be there at those times for you to bring along the fabric you intend to use, to get our thoughts on whether it will produce a quilt you'll be happy with. Or you may choose to have us help you select some or all of your fabrics from those for sale at my studio. The drop-in days are: **Saturday April 11, 10 AM to 5 PM, and Monday April 13, 10 AM to 5 PM.** Address is 2726 W 38th Ave.,

Vancouver, BC (between Trafalgar and Mackenzie). Phone is 604-250-8698. *Alternatively, you may email me photos of your fabric choices and I will respond with any suggestions I have.*

Alternate Design Option

It has become clear to me through discussion with some participants that the “learning outcomes” I aim for in this workshop can still be achieved while choosing a design approach that is simpler than the half-square triangle based design which is shown in the photo on the first page. This simpler design approach would yield quilts like these:



Both of these designs are characterized by more subtlety in the movement because there are not clear lines created by the value play in the background block design. They are also, in my experience, somewhat easier to design and faster to construct.

If your preference is to construct a quilt using one of these design approaches, here are your fabric requirements for a quilt that is about 52” x 70”.

Fabric Requirements

For a quilt design such as the one on the left above, *select 12 fabrics for background blocks*. *If you want high contrast* as the leftmost quilt does have, these fabrics should range from very light to very dark... about 3 very light, 3 quite dark, and 6 in between those in value. Bring ¼ M of each of the 12 fabrics. Also bring 5” x WOF strips for 4 fabrics that will be your quarter-circles... these colours are intended to be in clear contrast to the background fabric tones. Finally, for 8 of the 12 background fabrics, bring an additional 5” strip x WOF for the colourwash border. *If you want low contrast* such as the quilt on the right above, but want to use the design approach of the leftmost quilt, make all your fabric selections lights to mediums... including the accent fabrics for quarter circles.

For a quilt design such as the one on the right above, *select 11 fabrics*. For this quilt design I recommend staying with a low contrast palette, so make your fabric selections range from lights to mediums only, in a harmonious scheme. Bring .6 M of each of the 11 fabrics. This quilt requires more fabric because there is a lot of lost fabric due to the size of the circles relative to the size of the blocks.

Please don’t hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions about any of these, and please run your fabric selections by me so that you don’t find yourself disappointed with the design you are able to create in the workshop. Thanks!

Pre-Cutting Instructions for Two Day Circles Workshop

I am now sending pre-cutting instructions for the workshop. This is a design workshop, predominantly, and therefore I really want the participants to be able to spend their time designing on the first day... not cutting fabric. So I request that they **come with their background block fabrics (not the feature fabric circles or half or quarter circles) pre-cut.**

Note that since this is a two day workshop, I've reordered some of the material so that sewing machines are required on the second day ONLY. I think that will make it easier for everyone and will work just fine.

Your design wall must hold your complete quilt, and must be portable to the extent that you can pack up your design wall with fabric attached to it to take home. ***Design walls held to walls with tape tend to fall down as the tape doesn't stick well to the fabric... this is not good:/).*** So, if your facility doesn't have another means of attaching design walls to walls, I suggest hand sewing duct tape along the top of your design wall, so that you can then duct tape the duct tape to the wall when you arrive at the workshop.

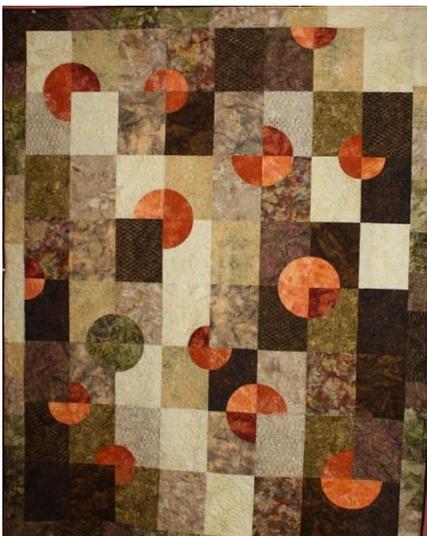
OK... here are the pre-cutting instructions... These instructions are for the size of quilts described in the workshop description. If you are choosing to make a smaller quilt, I suggest making a quilt with a similar number of blocks, but with smaller blocks. This will give you the chance to work with value much better than if you use the same size blocks and just use fewer of them.

If you are making the quilt with half-square triangle background blocks...like this quilt...



There are 35 blocks, each using at least two half square triangles... some using quarter square triangles. So you want to come with about 90 pre-cut half square triangles... You have two main colour runs from light to dark, and one accent colour run from dark to medium. I think 40, 40 and 10 is a good number of pre-cut triangles to come with... 40 from each of the two main colour runs, and 10 from the accent. I recommend starting with 10" squares, and cutting them in half along the diagonal... cut slowly to make sure you are starting with 10" blocks. You don't need to, and please don't, do any pre-cutting of the fabrics you will use as the circles... we will do that at the class.

If you are making the quilt with the quarter circle combos on it and rectangle background blocks... like this quilt...



This quilt background has 64 blocks, each of which is 6 1/2" x 8 1/2" before you sew it in. Again, I like to come with some extra cut, but coming with 72 background blocks is good. So... you have 12 fabrics from dark to light... cut strips of 8 1/2" of each, and sub-cut each strip into 6 blocks of 6 1/2" x 8 1/2"... This will give you 72 background blocks. You don't need to, and please don't do, and pre-cutting of the quarter circle fabrics... we'll do that at the class.

If you are making the third quilt option, the one with a low-contrast background and half-circles positioned to form circles... like this quilt...



Here are the pre-cutting instructions for this quilt. You should have about 11 fabrics, lights to mediums, in some pleasing colour scheme. This quilt has 48 background rectangles, each of size 7" x 13 1/2" before they are sewn in. So cut 16 strips of 7" (1 from each of the 11, and 1 more from 5 of the 11), and subcut each strip into 3 rectangles of 7" x 13 1/2". This will give you 48 background rectangles. The remaining fabric can be cut into 7" strips and will be used for half-circles, but need not be (and please don't) cut any further than that... you will have about 17 more strips that will get used to cut semi-circles and the side borders.

Please come to the first day with:

- **all the fabric you intend to use in your quilt** (also bring uncut pieces you think might possibly be used, but which are not in your "current plan")
- your design wall big enough for your complete project **and** a means of attaching it to the wall or making it free-standing... If you are using tape to attach your design sheet to the wall, bring duct tape so the sheet doesn't fall... masking tape won't hold well enough.
- pins to attach the fabric to the design walls -- in a pincushion you can have attached to you if possible -- because people walk by, create drafts, and fabric pieces go flying
- a cutting mat, 6" x 24" ruler, rotary cutter (at least 45mm, and a 28mm if you have it), any circle cutting device you have and want to try (I'll bring the circle cutting rulers and 28mm rotary cutters I recommend and you can use my sample ones to do your cutting of circles, and quarter circles). I'll also have a supply to sell in case you decide you want them, but I'm perfectly happy to bring them all home with me so absolutely no pressure to buy tools that I happen to like
- an ironing station for when you decide you want a bit more of some fabric
- binoculars or peep holes if you have them, digital camera (phone is fine) if you have one
- **for those of you who are doing the first quilt**, your circle hole viewing cardboard and also quarter square triangle ruler if you have one (I'll bring a supply to use if you don't).

OK... I think that's got it all covered. If anything is unclear about these instructions, please feel free to call me at [604-250-8698](tel:604-250-8698).