

A Visual Palindrome: Squares

From *Fabricadabra—Simple Quilts, Complex Fabric*
By Paula Nadelstern

Class Description:

This design class takes a traditional quilt pattern and gift wraps its simple shapes with intricate fabric. Along with many other design strategies, students will explore the possibilities offered by charismatic textiles and the magic of symmetry. Learn to make see-through templates leading to unique and enhanced design options and varied effects, including seamless connections. The takeaway is how quilts made of simple shapes can be transformed into visual spectacles that read as complex, thoughtful acts of creativity.

The quilt showcased on p. 24 is appropriate for advanced beginner to advanced quilters

Class Length:

This works as an all-day design (no sewing) workshop.

Why take a design workshop? Without the pressure to sew, time is provided for design setbacks, which often turn out to be the takeaways, the lessons that occur when a misstep needs to be fixed. Editing skills get cemented and integrated, making the process richer and layered. Consider that time and space to create among like-minded peers a rare gift to be much appreciated. In the classroom context, seeing what others make is almost as good as making it yourself.

Class Supply List:

- Required text: *Fabricadabra—Simple Quilts, Complex Fabric* by Paula Nadelstern
- Visi-GRID Quilter's Template Sheets (C&T Publishing)
- Extra fine-point black permanent marker that dries quickly and is extremely visible on template plastic
- Method to mark dark fabric (My preferred pen is the Uniball Silver Gel Pen)
- Fabric scissors (My preferred scissors are Karen Kay Buckley's Medium 6" scissors)
- Template/paper scissors: Template scissors should not be the discarded kitchen shears or shaped for a five-year-old's hand. It is the essential, indispensable tool from which all other acts follow. (My preferred scissors are Olfa sCS-1 multipurpose scissors)
- Rotary cutter, ruler, and mat
- Clover glass-headed, extra-fine pins

Classroom Preparation:

Provide each student with the quilt layout on p. 25.

- Ample space for each student to spread fabrics and cut.

- Design wall space for each student
- Raised tables for some students to stand at

Class Agenda:

1. Begin by having students make six 4" x 4" see-through templates with seam allowance and center axis marked. Students will make more templates as they need it, but this will help them get started auditioning the first patches. Show students top right image on p. 15, which shows how many patches were auditioned but not included in the final quilt on p. 14.

REFERENCE: How to make a see-through template. Templates chapter, pp. 84–85, 87, 90–92.

2. Define and show shop examples of 3 types of patterns: Prima Donnas, Directionals, and Allovers.

REFERENCE: Fabric chapter, p 65.

3. Explain how to create seamless connections. Have students look at quilt detail on p. 25.

REFERENCE: Design Strategies chapter, pp. 56–58.

4. Begin designing from the center out with Patch 1, then Patch 2, etc.

5. Have students read the Introduction on p. 5 during a critique break. Advise them that everyone should work at their own pace; some students will get further than others, and it is not a contest. Refer to paragraph 6 in the Introduction. Explain that the author, Paula, would be the slowest in the whole class and would take at least two days to get this 36" quilt designed and on the design wall.