

create a portfolio of my first thirty pieces. Then I made a list of fiber-friendly galleries and museums in the U.S. where I would like my work to be displayed. One of my portfolios went to the American Craft Museum in New York City. They replied they were very impressed with my work and eager to show what was being done in Central America to the New York public. It took a few years, but in 2002 they accepted one of my pieces, "Guatemalan Blocks." Currently, mine is the only piece by a Central American artist in their permanent collection, a great honor and accomplishment. "Guatemalan Blocks" was included in their traveling exhibit, "Six Continents of Quilts."

When I first started quilting, I regretted not having a family quilting background. It seemed a great loss. Then I encountered members of the "quilt police," those experts who insist

that things must be done only one way—their way. How fortunate I am to be free of that! I have no boundaries, no limitations. I can experiment and try a lot of new things. No one is peering over my shoulder, criticizing the dopey, creative, or experimental things I am doing "wrong."

Although I've studied drawing, painting, plastic arts, interior decorating, graphic design, and, more recently, quilting, I consider myself to be self-taught. My studies and travels have taken me to the U.S., Europe, Japan, Costa Rica, and other places.

My work is a fusion of cultures. I use purely American quilting techniques, patterns, and designs, combined with my own native Guatemalan textiles—many of ancient Mayan origins. But I don't limit myself just to Guatemalan textiles. My work mixes-and-matches Indonesian batiks, native African cloth,

hand-dyed and hand-painted cottons, shibori—any fabrics that have the same rustic, hand-made quality, that complement each other in a harmonious, effective way.

I've been fortunate throughout my life because I have loved everything I've worked at. I'm good at what I do because I enjoy it so much. I'm so grateful that I can choose.

The work of quilt artist and teacher Priscilla Bianchi has appeared in *FiberArts* magazine, *American Quilter*, *American Airline's Nexos* magazine, *Spirit Maps* by Joanna Arettam, and *The Designer's Sourcebook No. 15*. She is about to design her first line of fabrics for the Erlanger Group, Ltd.

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"Guatemalan Blocks," 2001, 77" x 70". Machine pieced and quilted. Permanent collection of the American Craft Museum, New York City. The dramatic look was achieved by the exclusive use of Guatemalan hand-woven textiles and plaids. Quilted by Beverly Rodgers.

"Rainbow Oranges," 2001, 59" x 55". Machine pieced and quilted. Traditional "orange peel" design with a twist. Multicolor Guatemalan fabrics were used over a dark navy background to create contrast and drama. Quilted by Beverly Rodgers.

