

Journal Quilts for 2021: Joined Up Quilting!

by Glenys Davies

Way back before the world changed, we set the JQ Challenge for 2020: every JQ should include at least one element that has had a ‘former life’ of any sort. Somehow, that phrase seems to have a slightly hollow ring now but, positively interpreted, we were hoping for a lot of good ideas for recycling and, if possible, some intriguing and imaginative inclusions, things no one would expect to find in a quilt!

103 members registered to take part in the 2020 challenge. A small number of people have formally dropped out and it’s clear that the pressures of 2020 have affected quite a few others. Nevertheless, nearly 60 quilters submitted journal quilts for August and, as can be seen on Facebook, the standard of work is as high as ever. And there have been some really intriguing themes and ideas! I shall be reporting back in full after the 2020 Challenge has finished, but as a taster, some of the more adventurous inclusions have been suitcase keys, pieces from a plastic milk bottle, coffee stirrers, chocolate and sweet wrappers, sheet music, seed heads, leaves, twigs and bark, and the weight from a helium balloon.

The 2021 JQ Challenge

You are now invited to take part in the 2021 Journal Quilt Challenge. Please do think about giving it a go even if you have never made a journal quilt before. It’s a great opportunity to try out new ideas, techniques and materials, to experiment and have fun without committing yourself to a huge project. You don’t have to submit the actual quilts, just a photo and a brief comment on inspiration and method, either by email or by posting into an album in the CQ Facebook Group.

The 2021 Requirements

This year we would like you to make 12 JQs, one for each month, as follows:

- To a theme of your own choosing. The quilts can be seasonal or reflect ‘your year’ in some way, but they don’t have to.
- Of fabric/materials and using techniques of your own choosing, but please note that each JQ must be a quilt in that it should have at least 2 layers, be quilted, and the edges should be finished neatly and appropriately.
- There is no set size but each quilt must be not less than 6” (15 cm) and not more than 12” (30 cm) in any dimension
- In a shape of your own choosing. Some interesting variation would be welcome here – squares, rectangles, circles, hexagons, or stars, in fact any shape at all would be acceptable, and the quilts don’t have to all be the same shape and size either.

- **BUT – and this is the key requirement for 2021 Journal Quilts –** however different or similar each quilt is, we would like them to be made so that at the end of the year you can join them together in some way, perhaps on a backing or with some sort of linking mechanism, so that they form a single unit. So, for example, you might make 12 square or rectangular quilts that you can mount on a backing to form a larger rectangular quilt, or 12 circular or hexagonal quilts with tape ties so they form a row or a long vertical hanging, or maybe 12 differently shaped quilts that somehow fit together like puzzle pieces. The possibilities are many and the choice is up to you as the quilter. All we ask is that they work together as a joined up set of quilts, and can take a hanging mechanism or stand up in a 3D form, for possible exhibition at a later date.

How to Take Part

Here are the timings for taking part in the 2021 challenge – please note there is also a new, dedicated, JQ email address.

- Please register your interest in taking part in this challenge by 28 February 2021. (Yes, that's an extra month!)
- You can do this by emailing the JQ Co-ordinator, that's me, Glenys Davies, at JQ_contemp@quiltersguild.org.uk. Please do not just start posting quilts without registering as it means I won't know who you are and will have no easy way of contacting you.
- When you register, all you need to tell me is your name, whether you will be posting on Facebook or emailing me your quilt images and, if you would like to, your theme.
- Images of each quilt and a brief comment about inspiration, materials and techniques should be posted on Facebook in the appropriate album or sent by email to the JQ Co-ordinator either:
 - Once a month, ideally in or just after the month it's named for.
 - Or, in groups of four, by the end of April, August and December.
 - Please label the image files with your name and the JQ month, eg Jane_Browne_January20.
- An image of the final set of 'Joined Up JQs' should be posted/sent by the end of January 2022.

If you have any queries or problems just drop me an email at JQ_contemp@quiltersguild.org.uk. You don't need to tell me if life gets in the way and you start running late, but it would be good to know if you decide to drop out completely. Thank you.

The best of luck and good quilting! I look forward to seeing the first quilts in January 2021.

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