

Robin Tost: Sculptor of Quilts

Words from her website, reprinted with her consent

For as long as she can remember, Robin has been drawn to bits of trash. Her satisfaction in the variety of colours on discarded things (new, faded or scratched away), the found pieces of metal (bright, bent or rust eaten) and the shapes of broken manufactured bits (sinuous, circular or geometric) is only surpassed by the joy of combining all of these various treasures into something unexpected.

Robin grew up in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, and moved in 1985 to the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts. In 2008, while travelling around New England, she noticed all the closed factories and the implied loss of jobs and income. At the same time, there were signs in yards reading, 'Quilts for sale', a different source of income. The dichotomy sparked the idea of combining the 'masculine' industrial waste material that she had collected with the 'feminine' art of quilting.



Above:
**Random
blocks headin'
for the Light**



Left:
Sicilian

Using shapes of automotive scrap, shed tin, gutters, advertising signs, and other found material from roadsides and scrapyards, cut by hand, punched with a drill press and sewn with assorted wires in various quilting stitches, she recycles waste material into quilts. Although some of the patterns are free-form, she mainly uses traditional quilt patterns (see previous page and below) such as Tumbling Blocks, Star, Pyramid and Chinese Coins or bases the designs on patterns from historic tiled floors. The colours used in each quilt depend on what she has collected, so most quilts, as they progress, take on their own character. More recently, she has moved into 3D, sculpting metal quilted animals, (see photo right).

See more in the film *Transforming Scrap into Gold: The Art of Robin Tost – A tour of her studio*. This is on the very first page of her website:

www.robintost.com

www.youtube.com/watch?v=czl7E3Qd_JI

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Above: Robin with her dragon, **Cecilia**



Left: **Crazy Quilt**