

## **The 2023 Journal Quilt Challenge – ‘Words’**

**by Alison Livesley**

I am delighted to be taking over from Glenys Davies as CQ’s JQ co-ordinator – you can read more about me on page xx. Glenys and I have worked together on the plans for next year and all CQ members are invited to take part in the 2023 Journal challenge.

The theme is ‘Words’. Those of you who went to Festival of Quilts this year may have seen the wonderful gallery curated by Judy Fairless and Heather Audin celebrating the use of text and paper in quilts in the QGBI’s collection: ‘Text and Context: Quilts and the Written Word’. (If you were not able to visit, see the article ‘The Quilter’, Summer 2022, page 30) The quilts on display either incorporated text in the body of the work as part of the design, or used paper and text in a different way. Many of the historic pieces constructed by English paper piecing use old letters and documents as backing papers, and where some or all of these remain they provide interesting historical context

The 2023 challenge is a chance to expand on these theme. You may already include text within your work and wish to explore different materials and methods. Some of the collection quilts include stitched or appliqued letters in their design. Others have text printed direct to fabric from a laser printer, painted directly with fabric paint, from a needle point bottle or using transfer paints. Screen printing or paper lamination are popular processes for contemporary quilters to explore.

You may wish to try it for the first time – and journal quilts are the ideal way to explore a new technique at a manageable scale or to try out working “in a series” . But if incorporating text in your work is not for you, how about a series of JQs inspired by text. A favourite book or poem? A play on words??

Words can be very powerful, and readily evoke an emotional or visual response. Are there any words that mean something to you – about your family, environment or make a social or political statement? Liz Howlett’s contribution to the next suitcase collection was inspired by #MeToo in the US and drew on the striking image of the pink crafted ‘pussy hats’ worn by demonstrators which have become a global symbol of support and solidarity for women’s rights and political resistance.

Please do think about giving it a go, even if you have never made a journal quilt before. 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. Please do join the Facebook group if you have not already. To find us, search on Facebook for Contemporary Quilt, request to join and give your membership number. Admin will get back to you.

The CQ website has a list of past JQ challenges and some examples of entries – do take a look for some inspiration and motivation!

## **The 2023 Requirements**

In 2023, the requirement is to make 12 journal quilts – notionally one a month – inspired by the theme ‘Words’.

That means your JQs could:

- include text as part of the design. The text could be stitched, appliquéd, painted, transferred, printed, layered, drawn...any method(s) you choose. You might want to explore a different technique for adding text each month.
- be inspired by text from a book or poem.
- reflect a chosen word or words.
- ...or in any way be inspired by ‘words’!

Each JQ must also have at least two layers, be stitched/quilted, and the edges should be finished appropriately.

JQs can be any shape or size, provided they are no larger than 12” x 12” (30.5cm x 30.5cm). There is no minimum size.

### **How to take part**

The arrangements are the same as for 2022:

Please register your interest by emailing the JQ Coordinator, Alison Livesley, address below. Just give your name – there are no other details required. This is so that we can know how many members are taking part. Ideally, sign up in January, but there is no formal time limit and please do join in during the course of the year if that works for you. Just send an email then.

If you decide to drop out or take a break for a few months there is no need to email me again. We realise life gets in the way sometimes.

It can also be difficult to keep to a monthly schedule so we relaxed that requirement last year. It is up to you to decide when to make your JQs within the year; all you need to do to meet the Challenge is complete 12 by the end of December (unless you only started part way through). That said, keeping up momentum is usually easier with a regular schedule and we do recommend this.

There will be a monthly Facebook Album as usual. If you would like to, do post a photo of each JQ in the appropriate album, together with a brief comment on why/how you made it. Don’t forget to add your name – unlike with a post, Facebook does not automatically include your name when you are adding to an Album.

If you don't use Facebook, please take a good, high resolution photo of each JQ and keep these in your own album until the end of the year. Please note, you no longer need to email your photos to me on a monthly or four-monthly basis.

In December 2023, we will be inviting everyone who has taken part (whether or not you use Facebook) to select their favourite JQ of the year and email a high resolution photo of this to me, together with a short statement. We will use these as the basis for the newsletter review of the challenge and to set up a website gallery. This gives members who are not Facebook users the opportunity to share their work.

### **Looking ahead to 2024...**

It is always hard to settle on a challenge theme that works for everyone. Next year we would like you to help decide. Do you have an idea that you think would work well? A challenge that has inspired and motivated your local group perhaps? We will be posting a specific request for suggestions nearer the time, but if something springs to mind, do share it with me.

I hope you enjoy this year's challenge and if you have any queries or problems (or suggestions for a future theme), do drop me an email.

**Alison Livesley**

[jq\\_contemp@quiltersguild.org.uk](mailto:jq_contemp@quiltersguild.org.uk)