

## Wilderness House Literary Review 18/1

**KATHY FORD** grew up in Rochester, New York, graduated from Hobart & William Smith Colleges in 1980 with a major in design theory, and after receiving her Masters in Architecture from Harvard University in 1985, moved to New York City to begin her career. She practiced architecture in New York and Massachusetts for the next thirty-five years.

Her life as a quilter began shortly after becoming a mother in 1991. She has exhibited and sold her work, taught classes, and written a book about her adventure with quilting. Her quilt 'Celestial Twins' was selected to be part of the Quilt National 2019 exhibition.

Ford Fiber Art Studio is located in Worthington Ma, now home to a full range of creative fiber endeavors, including quilting, fabric collage, rug making with discarded clothing, and wearable knitted art wraps, and has been featured as part of the Hilltown Open Studio Tour for the past four years.

*There is a particular place on the path to a brook near my home, a very precise moment, when a ping ping ping in my body magically morphs into exquisite sensation. It feels like the tissue that occupies space between my heart and*



Meadow Drift 72.5h x 68w

*solar plexus is expanding. My breath catches. It stops me in my tracks every time. It's not always the exact same place when this happens, it's like there is a clear line, not straight or identifiable by sight, that marks just where the edge of very old meets new, where what has always been meets what is always possible.*

*I approach my work as a textile artist with this energy, interested in the tension between what can be planned and what flows intuitively as a basis for design. With a leap of faith, I begin a process with the presupposition that order and beauty is THERE, that I just have to be open to seeing it.*

*Staying open is a moment by moment practice. In my thirty years of quilting I have mastered many skills and love learning new techniques, but my daily work is grounded first in this practice of staying present and allowing what is there to flow through me.*

*My mother taught me to sew at a young age though I am a self-taught quilter, fascinated with crazy quilts and the piecing of random shapes*

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*into something substantial. To this, my work is improvisational. I love to use scraps and discards of all kinds of commercial cloth and cut up clothing in collaboration with one of a kind hand-dyed pieces. I am drawn to making fabric with simple shapes of bits and putting them together with the barest notion of structure, waiting to see what happens. Contemporary designs are built from blocks of either abstract geometrics or representational collage, seeing relationships between the blocks as they are developing. I often use and re-use the same piece of fabric over and over. Like the lightweight wool with periwinkle blue morning glories on a rich black background, or the wavy tiger stripe cotton in black, white, yellow, green, and red, both of which you will find in many of my quilts, in the tradition of a way of making that uses what is closest to home. I love everything about the process of constructing*



Winter Woods 50h x 32w

*a quilt, finding and making fabric, piecing, appliqué, hand and machine stitching, basting, quilting, and binding. In each step there is an opportunity to observe the emergence of something mysterious and archetypal and accentuate its presence.*

*Years ago I had a vision to balance creative life between quilting and writing. Now, it will sometimes be years after finishing a quilt that through writing, I can see the thread to what was there in life at the time of making it. "Adding Wood To The Fire, A Quiltmaker's Way" was published in 2017 as testimony to this process. A story emerges. Everything is connected.*

*I have been dancing on the edge of very old meeting new for a long time. Seeking places where the possibility of movement from a ping ping ping to a heart opening presence has become a way of life. Some people call it balance. But I think it could be called love.*

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Heron 43h x 34.5w



Elemental 56h x 56w



Forest Bath 31h x 66w



Becoming One 55h x 59w