



for the
LOVE of

NATURE

Photos by Patrick Bertalino



by **Ginny Eckley**
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*m*y passion for art is fueled by my love of nature.

Through my art, I challenge myself to learn new things, both artistic and academic. For example, I created a series based on ocean life and came away with a greater understanding of how various creatures survive underwater.

The focus of my current work is on diverse birds that flock together in the city. Grackles, crows, and blackbirds fly together, lining up on telephone wires or taking over city trees. They are adaptable, making nests in neon signs and eating food from garbage cans and parking lots. As a result, their numbers



Photo by Ty Eckley



aware
of nature's
delicacy

Environmental issues interest me, and currently I am working on a series of bird pieces. I began the series after visiting wildlife refuges and learning about endangered birds.

The golden-cheeked warbler, which nests only in Texas, has had 66 percent of its habitat destroyed. I feel that our encroachment upon the woodlands is done in such haste.



Photo by Ty Eckley



have increased by 20 percent, while the more delicate songbirds are being added to the endangered species list. As an artist and an educator, my goal is to make people more aware of the delicacy of nature and more conscious of their impact on the environment.

In my work space, I teach everything from painting to silk-screening and free-motion embroidery. I also have an online website dedicated to selling instant-set silk dyes and silk screens. My studio is used to make and ship these products.

Ample wall space and four large tables allow me to work on several pieces at

a time. Artwork needs time to develop, so I hang my work on the wall and leave it up for awhile. In doing so, I have discovered that I see my work differently over time and can often find small ways to improve it.

My favorite place to work is by the window, and my tables are placed so that I can see outside. I usually work standing up, so I use the space under my tabletops to store the cabinets we purchased from some retail stores that were going out of business. From those stores, we also bought wonderful wooden library shelving that is completely adjustable.

Photo by Ty Eckley



My husband designed and built this studio himself. While the large windows are my favorite part, he designed several key elements that are critical to creating great artwork:

- Natural light that is diffused through the trees
- The ability to walk 30' to 40' away from the design wall to view the art from a distance (this is especially important for architectural commissions)
- Multiple worktables at standing height
- A great sink
- A back porch
- Storage room and several cabinets



Photo by Ty Eckley



For studio storage, I highly recommend cabinets and drawers over open shelves! I have a storage closet, in which I keep my rolls of silk mounted on the wall with fabric over them for protection.

I also have clear drawers to store small fabric scraps that are sorted by color. For the most part, I use them to select colors for my borders. I can easily take

five or six pieces and lay them under my work to see what looks best. Then, once I have chosen a color and value, I dye my border fabric to match the scrap.

My studio is nestled in the woods and has many windows. So while I am protected by the weather, I can also enjoy watching the rain, birds, swaying trees, and amazing sunsets. With much

of my work focusing on nature, it's great to simply turn my head and be in it. ☺

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Check out Ginny's Quilting Arts Workshop™ video, "Surface Design with Silk Screens, Soy Wax Resist, & Fabric Manipulation" at shop.quiltingdaily.com.