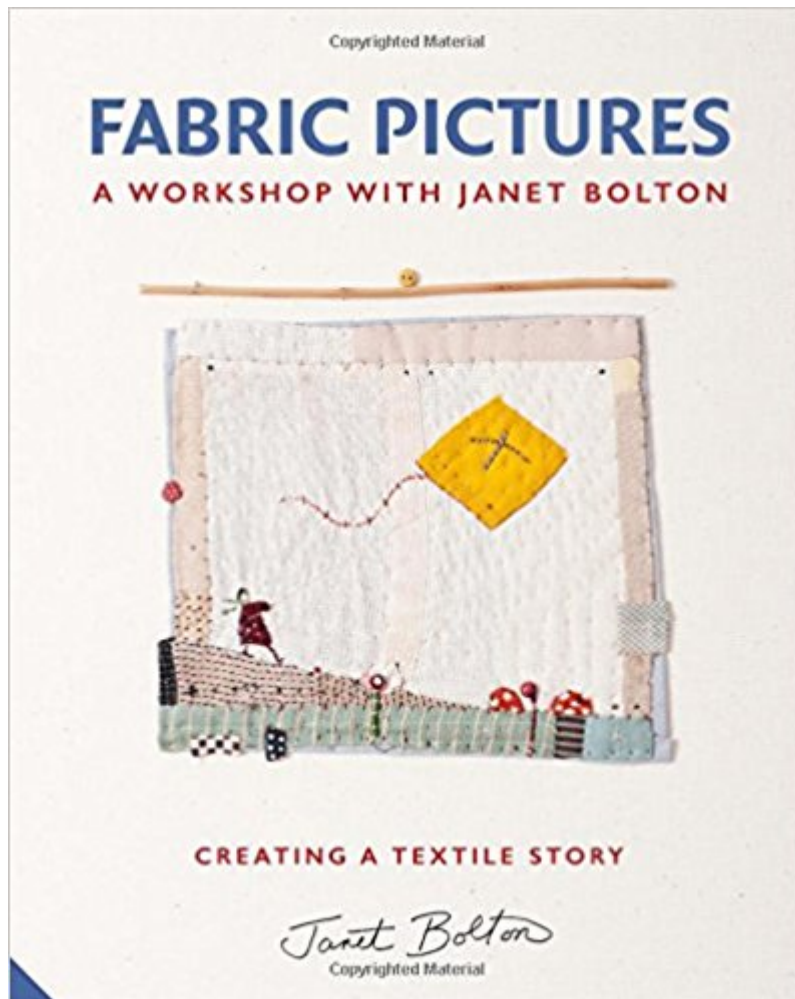


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Fabric Pictures: A Workshop With Janet Bolton - Creating A Textile Story



Synopsis

To call what Janet Bolton makes with fabric 'patchwork' doesn't do justice to her creations - hers are images, pictures that capture fragments of an imagination that can strike anywhere, at any time. In *Fabric Pictures*, Janet shows you how to create beautiful pictures on fabric. Taking you through her personal method, she will guide you to find the inspiration around you and teach you how to turn your creativity into a textile project and develop your personal 'voice'. The book is divided into two main sections - the first on how to find inspiration, the second on how to put your ideas into practice, complete with a step by step example that will show you every stage of construction from beginning to end. Just like in her workshops, Janet's guidance in the book is friendly, reassuring and inspiring - once you finish your first project you won't be able to wait to start the next.

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Inspiration Finding your own voice, looking for personal inspiration, is a lifelong and enriching experience. We may have no idea where an inspiration has come from. It could be something you've seen that sets you off, or something that pops into your head out of the blue; it could be a piece of fabric or a memory - any number of bits and pieces that you've noticed and that have somehow stayed with you. Ideas can come during the daily round or even in the middle of the night - a flash of inspiration when you're least expecting it. In this section I'm going to describe and illustrate the many ways that ideas for suitable subjects

have come to me, which may help you to decide what imagery you can use as your own starting point.

Selecting Materials Building up your own collection of materials is one of the most enjoyable aspects of working with textiles. Many people, including me, just can't stop buying fabric. Not only that, the material we've already collected can hold deep personal meaning: where did it come from, who wore it? Sometimes, working with a piece we've bought might trigger the memory of where we found it, who we were with – so many resonances.

Composition As you're working with cut-out pieces of fabric, it's simplicity itself to move these around when trying out different textures, colour combinations and shapes, as the pieces can be laid straight onto the background. This is such a direct process; no scraping off of paint to change a position or even slightly alter an angle.

Getting Started By following the Dragonfly step by step projects where all the compositional decisions have been made so you don't have to think about them, you can be confident that you'll have all the practical knowledge you need to complete a piece from beginning to end – but I'll lay my bets that you alter something! You've already introduced your own ideas when you selected your fabrics and decided what size you'd like your piece to be. I deliberately haven't included measurements here, so that you have a choice. If, however, you'd like to make your piece the same size as mine, the image of this step by step is to scale so you can easily trace it.

Stitch Even one small stitch can add immediate impact to your work. In this chapter I will show how integral stitching is to the whole, quite apart from being the basis of sewing the pieces down. In traditional appliqué, each shape is given a precise turning-under allowance. In my work, the opposite applies: the final 'drawing' of the shape is completed and refined at this stage.

The Canvas By now you'll have decided on your subject matter and selected suitable textures and colour combinations from your fabrics. You'll have chosen your background material, the heavier piece of cloth you'll be placing your imagery on to. Remember to allow the colour of the fabrics themselves to determine your choices. It makes life much easier if you use a plain fabric for your background; working on a highly patterned piece is very difficult as the shapes you're placing can easily be dominated by the pattern. A plain colour with an interesting weave would be ideal.

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