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## About the Class

Over the years I created several different ways of relating quilting and architecture within the context of classroom design projects. The parallels between two-dimensional design (the quilt) and three-dimensional design (architecture) formed the basis of the beginning set of design studio projects.

**Project One:** Students designed a "quilt block" and had to transform it into a three-dimensional space.

**Project Two:** Students used black and white fabric to create figure ground compositions (the relationship between shapes and background),



Margaret McCarty (left) and Anna McCarvey, Project Two.

**Project Three:** In 2003, the University of Nebraska hosted a student competition in conjunction with its First Biennial Symposium entitled *Wild by Design*. Michael James organized a juried student competition known as "New Design/New Dynamics: Quilt Concepts for the 21st Century." College students from around the nation were asked to take a new look at the concept of the quilt. It was open to students enrolled in a program of textiles, architecture or art/design study.

As part of preparing my students to enter this competition, I developed a two-week design project called

"Patchwork Constructions" during the Fall of 2002. Students who were enrolled in sophomore level studios—mine and those of two colleagues, Craig Huffman and Michael Wnuk—were asked to design "architecturally inspired quilts." They started by designing and making their own fabric, using heliographic paint, to demonstrate an understanding of pattern and texture. Then they looked at the concept of modularity, important in both architecture and quilting, by combining their fabric pieces with traditional architectural materials such as metals, wood, paper,

board etc. to design an architecturally-related three-dimensional piece. Eight students had work accepted and one got the juror's award. The work was exhibited at The Rotunda Gallery at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.



Student Darin Thorpe works on Project Three.

**Project Four:** Last spring, I began teaching a separate elective accredited class called "Cloth Constructions" where architecture students used fiber-related media to experiment with architectural graphics. Both male and female



Work of Todd Hinkle



Work of Judith Les Jones

students were enrolled in this class. One student is now doing her thesis on the relationship between weaving and architecture, with me as her advisor. I'll be teaching this class again in 2004.

**Valerie S. Goodwin** is a practicing architect and Assistant Professor of Architecture at Florida A & M University's School of Architecture. Her quilts have appeared in numerous publications and exhibitions including *Quilt National 2003*. She is available for lectures and trunk shows about her work. For more information, go to [www.quiltsbyvalerie.com](http://www.quiltsbyvalerie.com). Contact Valerie at [usgoodgood@hotmail.com](mailto:usgoodgood@hotmail.com).



**Organic Grid I**, 12" x 12.75". © Valerie S. Goodwin, 2001. Private collection. Photo by Richard Bruck



**Town Square**, 1'5-1/2" x 1'5". © Valerie S. Goodwin, 2002. Photo by Richard Bruck

of exercises that let beginning students investigate the parallels between architecture and quilting by getting them to think about composition, ordering systems, color and pattern.

My students' work made me want to learn more about quilting myself. This was in the late 1990s. One summer, I took class at a local community college and got hooked. I decided to explore quilting on my own as an artistic vehicle.

Like so many others, I first made a sampler quilt. After that I made a series of traditional quilts for family members. Then I took a class at Quilt Surface Design Symposium in Columbus, Ohio with Judy Hooworth, a very talented art quilter from Australia. The floodgates of possibility opened up for me. My palette of quilt making and designing techniques expanded as a result of this experience. It enabled me to realize my desire to express myself as an architect through fiber.

## How I Work

Usually, I start with a quick sketch, but let the idea evolve as I create the piece. I use nearly every quilting technique available to me at this point in my career—piecing, appliquéing, layering, and fusing. I don't dye or embellish, but I do "make my own cloth" by over-painting with Seta or watercolors or using pen and ink. I have quite a stash of sheers, solids and patterned fabric collected from many sources. Lately I've been layering semi-white sheers over strong colors to get a watercolor look. Most of my pieces are about 4' x 5' with some small foot-square pieces.

More and more of my work is being published and appearing in international, national and local exhibits. I almost wish I could

stop teaching and quilt full time.

However, if I weren't teaching, my work would not be the same. They go hand in hand.



**City Grid II**, 38.8" x 46". © Valerie S. Goodwin, 2001. Photo by Richard Bruck

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# “Real Architects Don’t Quilt?”



Valerie S. Goodwin

Who goes to a school of architecture and learns about quilts? Some students at Florida A & M University do!

**For** the last six years, I have been teaching beginning design to architecture students at the Florida A & M University's School of Architecture, using some of the design principles found in both quilting and architecture. Both use shape, composition, ordering systems, color, texture, and pattern. At first, I incorporated these ideas into part of a course that was required in the curriculum, but this unusual link became so well accepted that, starting in 2003, it is being offered as a separate elective.

From this unusual mixture of disciplines, you may think that I am an avid, lifelong quilter. On the contrary, I didn't make my first quilt until *after* I began using this approach in architectural design classes.

Back in the 1960s, my grandmother taught me to sew. She was a home-ec teacher in Tuscumbia, Alabama, a little town best known as the birthplace of Helen Keller. Mama Steele was an amazing woman who had returned to school in her 40s to get a teaching degree. Almost every summer, we drove down from Connecticut to visit her for two weeks or so. I owe my basic skills and my love for sewing to her.

It was exciting and fun to make clothes for three younger sisters, and myself, but when I got to high school, everything changed. Sewing was just not an acceptable pastime for college-bound women! As I became interested in the male-dominated field of architecture, I divorced myself even more from doing anything considered "women's work."

Ironically, I started sewing again in 1998 after I began teaching architecture at Florida A & M University. An article in the *Journal of Architectural Education* had caught my attention. Carolyn Senft, a female professor, described how her students designed a museum for quilts, using traditional quilt patterns for inspiration. I was intrigued and started developing a series of similar design projects for my own students. Prof. Senft's students were upper level, while mine were freshmen and sophomores, so I had to find a way of using this concept for the beginning level student.

What common elementary design concerns do architecture and quilting have in common? I decided they were: organizational systems, ordering systems, use of the grid, shape and texture, color, seams and joints/modular construction, the use of relief to create depth, surface manipulation and layering and transparency.

Quilters automatically use all these basic design concepts. I developed a series