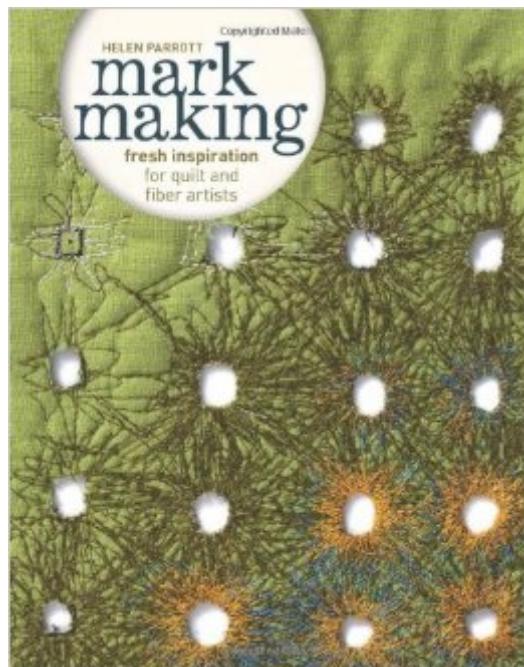


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# Mark Making: Fresh Inspiration For Quilt And Fiber Artists



## Synopsis

Discover how the simplest marks—“stitched lines and knots”—can be used to create graphically compelling art! In *Mark Making*, art quilter Helen Parrott, known for her strongly graphic and landscape-inspired textile art, demonstrates how marks can be used in textile work and explains the crossover between stitch and drawing. This fascinating book is divided into the different types of marks or lines that can be made on fabric varying in complexity, arrangement, and “feel.” You’ll also learn techniques in both hand and machine stitching, which offer limitless potential for surface effects. *Mark Making* aims to help you take inspiration from the world around you to create marks, develop your own mark-making skills, and strengthen your personal creative voice! This is an essential book for any textile artist.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What exactly is *Mark Making*? It's not really thread painting. It's not just surface embellishing. And it's not simply about adding texture and dimension. Helen Parrott thinks of it as adding pattern - repetitive points, irregular swirls, radiating dashes - to create something that is not exactly flat, but also not fully 3-D. It's kind of like sashiko on a green tea rush, but with fewer rules. Well, if it's so hard to describe, then what purpose does *Mark Making* serve? Maybe better questions to ask are "How do I want to be uniquely inspired?" and "How do I want to convey that inspiration in textiles?" Parrott very kindly makes her book YOUR book. Parrott's advice on the first question is to look around at just the surfaces everywhere, disconnected from what supports them and what we

assume about them. Disregard the background and imagine the surface image floating above its base. How would you draw it? If you draw it, you can mark it. And if you mark it, you can make something no one has ever done before, even though nature does it all the time. Parrott provides nurturing guidance on scouting and observing marks; she also emphasizes the importance of documenting them through photographs, journals, and sketches. As for how to transmute that drawn image into tangible art, Parrott uses both paper and textiles, though paper is really just an intermediate step toward ultimate expression in textiles. It starts with editing and selecting from your array of photos and/or paper incarnations, then previewing and experimenting with isolating parts from the whole. Finally comes the magical transcription to textiles. Just a few basic stitches and knots will literally make your mark on fabric. An example of how extraordinary Parrott's concept can be is the piece called "Surface Inventions". Here, a simple hand-made knot or tie is repeated thousands of times to create a black and white surface that looks faintly like Asian or Middle Eastern script. My favorite application is "Radiant Miniatures", with its wood-block-style rose petal unfurling. (And yet it also reminds me of water-blistered skin. Gross, I know, but that was my first impression. After reading *Mark Making*, I am totally at peace with water blisters as a source of inspiration.) It's simple yet made more complex as a series of tile-like squares. My only wish for improvement with the book is that Parrott would share more about each piece. I'd love to hear more about her own personal trek through each phase of creation and her thoughts on the finished works. *Mark Making* is surprisingly technical, though not exhaustively so. It includes block printing, monoprinting, and resists. The tools and resources are quite basic, yet are used inventively and lengthily. (Parrott states that such stitched projects can take MONTHS to complete.) If you've got a drawing pad and a few sewing notions, you can start today. A great deal of print is devoted to motivation and exploration, not just technique. Parrot even includes a brief section on "Health and Safety". This is not a project-oriented how-to book. It's a process and technique book, one that says not "How can I make the exact same thing?" but "OMG look at what I can do with this". And yet *Mark Making* is also not a pure gallery book, in fact, the finished pieces are not really the highlight. And THAT is what is astonishing, that works in-progress or samples made purely for illustration are so very breathtaking. Think of how amazing YOUR endeavor might be.

I am an art quilter. I like to learn new techniques, and this book intrigued me. I think it has some good ideas for adding texture and interest to quilts and fiber works, although you could also apply many of the ideas to other media. There are suggestions for finding and recording mark ideas, ways to combine techniques, for example block printing and resists, with stitching by hand and machine.

There are good sections on materials, lots of clear, good quality photos of examples, and illustrations of stitches. There are even suggestions for how to keep your creativity alive and well. I own many, many technique books and this is one of my favorites.

As a professional artist, painter, printmaker, and a lover of fiber, I find this book to be interesting not only in a visual sense but it is also well written. Helen Parrott speaks clearly about her approach and process, inspirations, experience, and motivations towards her work and takes you on her journey encouraging the reader to take their own journey while offering techniques ideas of some possibilities to encourage and inspire their own search. This is definitely one of the best books on this subject I have read.

If you want a book of gorgeous landscape photos, this is your book! As an art quilter, I want fresh ideas and innovative techniques. I am returning the book as a protest against what I see is a glut of fiber art glossy publications with no substance. To be fair, there are instructions in this book, but I don't see anything new that would warrant a new book. Just the same old stitches dressed up. It is a trend I see so often lately. I felt the same way about the Jean Wells books, tho I didn't return them. Any graphics dept can use landscape photos as filler and create so-called journal pages. Not all exquisite artists are teachers, and imho they should stick to art and let the teachers teach. The publishers are using them for name recognition and printing fluff. Very disappointing. Fortunately, I have a nice library of legitimate art quilt innovation. I don't know if I'll be updating it much, tho.

I just started making art pieces using textiles and stitch. I prefer books that take one down the path of a creative process over a book that is a series of copy this project. This is a creative process book. When I first got the book I was disappointed because the pictures made it all look simplistic. But I read through the text and found a lot of good content. I changed how I approached one of my pieces. Ms. Parrott takes you through the process of finding inspiration, designing marks using a variety of drawing and print techniques and translating it to stitch. Everything used in the book is easily accessible to the fiber artist. No fancy items one can only get in Britain. She presents about 3 or 4 basic, simple stitches and shows how different textures and looks can be created with variations. At the end of the book she walks you through her design process of one of her pieces.

Purchased this book on a whim and so glad I did! Definitely got the creative juices flowing and helped me take my art into another dimension with fresh approaches and designs. It's now my "go

to" book whenever I feel stuck or need a breath of fresh air. Thanks Helen!

A past comment was the lack of just exactly " how to" still holds. However, if you are really at this level of creativity your stitching and construction techniques should help down the " how to" path. I chose this primarily for some inspiration. It did give a different view of how deal creative stitching. I have a project in the works that just might incorporate some of these techniques.

A very beautiful book that inspires me to really think about the possibilities of meaning in the making of fiber arts.

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