

What is Modern Quilting and What is a Modern Quilt?

The Merrimack Valley Quilters provides this information to encourage guild members to venture into the world of modern quilting. A quick look through websites will provide many examples of exquisite modern quilts along with many suggestions for how to venture into the world of modern quilting. We'll start with a definition from the Modern Quilt Guild website:

This definition provides a foundation from which we can begin to educate about modern quilting. While these characteristics can be a common thread among many modern quilts, this list is not comprehensive of every attribute in modern quilting, nor is it a constraint to what can be in a modern quilt.

Bold use of color
High contrast and graphic areas of color
Improvisational piecing
Minimalism
Maximalism
Expansive negative space
Alternate grid work
Modern traditionalism"¹

So many words and what do they mean?

Improvisational piecing: working without a plan, just putting fabric together without relying on specific blocks, specific colors or specific placement.

Minimalism: a quilt technique characterized by sparseness and simplicity. Think less is more.

Maximalism: the use of bold colors. The use of contrasting colors to create visual appeal, including in negative spaces.

Expansive negative space: a single color around other pieced or appliqued areas. This negative space is often heavily quilted to provide interest and a place for the eye to rest.

Alternate grid work: a term that means arranging the quilt in unconventional or unexpected ways. Examples include staggering blocks arranged in rows and columns, center placement of blocks and leaving space where a block could have been.

Modern traditionalism: this approach changes the scale or shape of a traditional block for a new look.

¹ Modern Quilt Guild website