



QUILT

# Quilts Past and Present

## An Interview with Kaffe Fassett

Kaffe Fassett is an American-born quilter, knitter, artist and designer who settled in England in 1964. He is internationally known for his work in the textile arts, has published many books and is the patron of the Quilters' Guild of the British Isles.

**How long have you been quilting and how did you start?**

I was encouraged into quilting by an American friend Liza Lucy. I was busy designing knitting and needlepoint but she felt I had something to offer the quilt world. With my use of bright colours and pattern. That was in the late 80's.

**Why do you think there aren't more male quilters?**

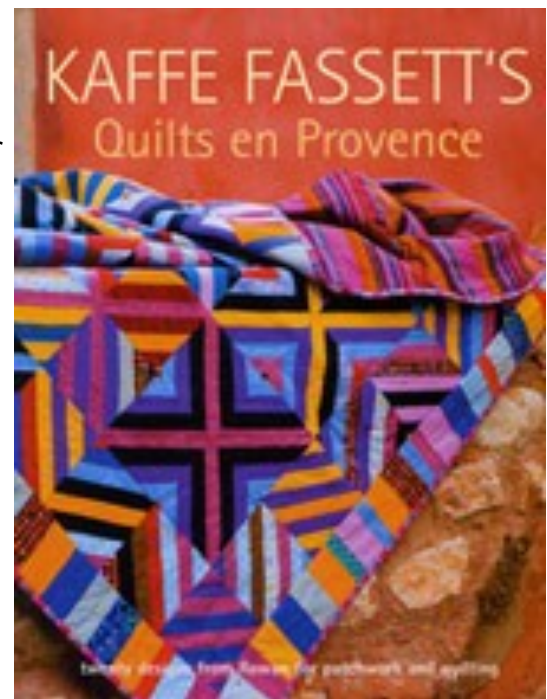
For some reason, a lot of people feel the needle arts are a feminine occupation. I myself feel they are just artistic mediums as legitimate as painting or music. I wish more men would enter the field.

**What inspires you to make a new quilt?**

Usually I am inspired by fabrics that are available, but sometimes I will spot a structure of an old quilt or tile panel etc That will start off a quilt idea.

**What are your favourite things about quilting and patchwork?**

I love the way patchwork grows so quickly. Also it is a great way to showcase colour and good fabric designs.



Images courtesy of Kaffe Fassett. See [www.kaffefassett.com](http://www.kaffefassett.com) for more.

Continued.

[www.quiltmuseum.org.uk](http://www.quiltmuseum.org.uk)

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## Interview with Kaffe Fassett continued.

### How and where do you work?

I usually sew on a low chair surrounded by threads, fabrics and idea pictures. I arrange my pieces first on the design wall (flannel in a grey or beige tone) that the pieces I cut stick to. When its right, I photograph and sew it together by hand.

### Which other quilt or textile artists do you admire?

I like traditional quilt designers who use colour well. So people like Karen Stone, Mary Mashuta, Pauline Smith and Liza Lucy.

### How do you start thinking about a new quilt book?

My books usually start from fabrics available at the time. Once quilts are made we think of a colourful location to shoot it in. It has to be a location that offers a variety of colour moods in good light.

### If you were a textiles teacher what would be your first lesson with a new class?

Colour is the single most important aspect of all my work and is sadly lacking in many quilts I see made today. I'd start with a walk through a garden or museum of decorative arts to stimulate the artistic possibilities of colour.

### What are you working on now?

I'm designing needlepoint cushions to be sold in conjunction with a retrospective show of my work at the American Museum in Bath. They depict appliqué quilt images.

### How can we encourage more young people to try quilting?

Show slides of exciting vintage quilts and teach the sewing in a fun, non dictational way until they find their voices. Give them good colours to play with and encourage expression.

For more information about Kaffe see his website: [www.kaffefassett.com](http://www.kaffefassett.com)

The Quilters' Guild shop stocks Kaffe's latest books. For details of his recent publications visit: [www.quiltmuseumshop.org.uk/](http://www.quiltmuseumshop.org.uk/)

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