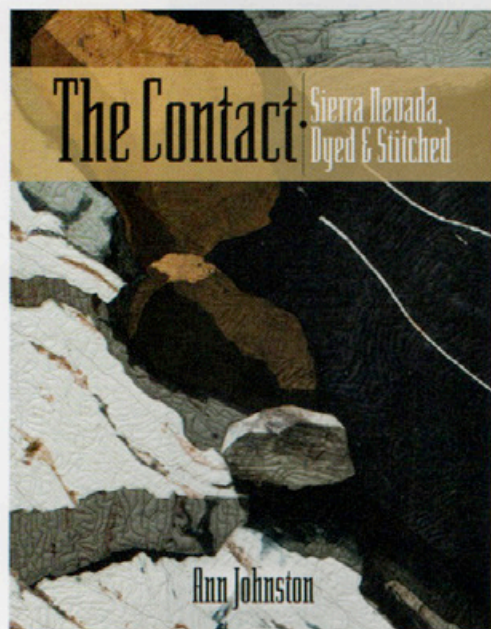


# the collector's bookshelf



## **The Contact: Sierra Nevada, Dyed and Stitched**

by Ann Johnston

ISBN 978-0-9656776-6-0

146 pages, paperback

\$35.00

Reviewed by Patricia Kennedy-Zafred

Over the past six years, Ann Johnston, a highly regarded quilt artist, instructor, and prolific author, has created a series of 32 quilts inspired by the mining land held by her family since the early 1800s. Johnston's love of and connection to the exquisite beauty of this area is expressed in grand scale and subtle detail throughout this lavishly illustrated catalog.

"Contact" refers to a place where geologic units touch each other, but also relates to the human influence on the landscape. Johnston's process for creating the work involved both looking at what exists on the land and also attempting to imagine unseen events.

Although certainly a book relevant to any artist working in the quilt medium, this catalog also conveys the personal story of Johnston's

connection, memories, and exploration of this area of California's Sierra Nevada range. The pages are filled with vibrant inspirational images, as well as professional photographs of the quilts, with overall and detail views, and in some instances, the perfection of the reverse side.

The gallery pages of the book are as compelling as the pages of Johnston's process, with images of surface design, layout, construction, and technique. Although not a how-to book, the publication includes images that would inspire any artist: Johnston at work painting, dyeing, and assembling these seven-foot works. Photos of Johnston on ladders arranging cloth on design walls, or piecing and quilting the work, reinforce the physical challenge this series demanded and the artist's unwavering determination throughout its development.

Creating the colors of the rock, patterns, and detailed tones and textures required Johnston to expand her highly developed surface design skills. Each piece of fabric is a unique combination of techniques, including mono-printing, resist dyeing, and hand painting, all on voluminous pieces of cloth and silk, some resulting in whole-cloth works. The quilts of *The Contact*, although abstract, thoughtfully represent clearly recognizable geographic areas occasionally mixed with pieces that are more imaginative remembrances of light and color.

Johnston has previously published several books that continue to guide quilt makers in their endeavor to expand artistic boundaries, including *Color by Accident: Low-Water Immersion Dyeing* (1997), *The Quilter's Book of Design, 2nd Edition* (2008), *Color by Design: Paint and Print with Dye* (2001), and her recent DVD, *Color By Accident: Low Water Immersion Dyeing* (2013). All are available through her website, [www.annjohnston.net](http://www.annjohnston.net).