



Sarah Yetman's biggest cheerleaders when she won second place in the Canadian Quilters' Association's 2017 National Juried Show were her family: husband Randy, and children Perseus, left, Charlie and Quentin. - submitted photo

Sarah Yetman has always had a passion for creativity.

"I was deemed the craft monster as a kid," she said with a laugh.

When Yetman's first child, Quentin, was born, she decided to try her hand at quilting.

"It had always been a fascination for me. They looked so complex, like a challenge to figure out how to put them together, but an exciting challenge," she said. "Fabric became a medium that I understood."

The Waterford native, who now lives in Brantford, joined the Brant Heritage Quilters' Guild right away.

"I didn't know anybody who quilted, and I knew I couldn't find all of the information online."

Yetman is now the group's program committee chair.

"The guild is so supportive. There are so many techniques you're constantly learning," she said. "I credit a lot of my inspiration to them."

She strongly recommends that anyone wanting to learn how to quilt get connected to a local guild; she noted that there are several in the Brant area, as well as Haldimand, Norfolk and Hamilton.

As a 35-year-old mom of three young kids, Yetman knows she doesn't fit some people's expectations of the "typical" quilter.

"There is definitely an ageism thing with it," she said.

However, just as do-it-yourself home decorating and knitting have experienced upticks in popularity in recent years, Yetman sees more of her contemporaries embracing quilting as their creative outlet.

"I think all the crafts go through (trend) cycles," she said. "I'm told I'm lucky to have found this at my age, because I have so much time to play with it."

Yetman sees her quilting style as being a blend of old and new.

"I tend to do traditional techniques, but I use modern colours and fabrics," she said.

It was this unique stamp that Yetman put on her work when she decided to enter a quilt in the Canadian Quilters' Association's 2017 National Juried Show.

"I wanted to push my own boundaries and do an original design," she said.

While Yetman was working on the quilt, "my aunt (Linda Webber) fell ill with cancer. The project really helped me manage my grief."

Sadly, the quilt ultimately became a memorial project for Webber, who died of a brain tumour.

Another person whose memory is honoured in the quilt is Patricia Ryckman Fleming, a fellow guild member who was an expert at appliqué.

“The quilt has 600 appliqué circles, all hand-stitched. The fabric I used for them was from her stash.”

Yetman says the quilt took her about 150 hours to complete.

“It was the biggest quilt I’ve made, and the first one I’ve designed ... It’s certainly a labour of love.”

Her quilt, *Dreaming Dahlias*, ended up taking second place in the show’s traditional category.

“It was a huge honour to get in, let alone to place,” Yetman said, noting that this year, there were a record number of entrants in the show — about 300 — with 125 being accepted for review. About 50 of them were first-time entrants.

As much as the craft has become a central part of Yetman’s life, both as a hobby and as part of the family’s livelihood — she backs quilts in her home with her long-arm machine through her business, Spooled Rotten Quilts — it’s also something she shares with her loved ones.

“It’s a kind of journey all of us are taking. (My kids) all want to be near me when I’m sewing. It’s something that I can pass down to them,” she said.