

FRAAS - SLADE

GAYLE FRAAS AND DUNCAN W. SLADE

36 RIVER ROAD EDGECOMB MAINE 04556

FRAASLAD@GWI.NET

207-633-5329

WORKS ON FABRIC - PROCESS

Most of the work that we do is painted and printed with fiber-reactive dyes on cotton broad-cloth. Each is a single top layer of fabric, layered with batting and backing fabric; this type of structure can be referred to as a whole cloth quilt.

Widely used for commercial fabrics, fiber-reactive dyes, in our studio, are dissolved in water and mixed with a seaweed derived thickener, this allows us to paint, controlling the viscosity allowing for effects from painterly washes to clean sharp edges without bleeding. An alkaline chemical reaction binds the dye to the fabric, this involves pre-treatment of the fabric, painting and rinsing and repainting two to four times. Each time the fabric is washed the dye is 'set' allowing us to overlay color for desired effects.

Most of our work is completely painted on one piece of fabric...sometimes we screen-print some pattern elements, but the textile industry has developed inkjet printers that allow us to transfer our pattern elements directly to the fabric with the same fiber-reactive dyes that we have been painting with for 30 years. Much of this pattern work is then overpainted to complete an effect. Patterns are digitally printed from original works painted and drawn on paper with gouache, pastel and charcoal.

Works are machine and hand stitched. We consider a machine-stitched line a 'hard' line and handwork generally serving as a 'scrim' to view the painted work through, which also serves structurally to hold the layers together. Each has a layer of batting and backing fabric. The finished work is sewn to a stretched linen panel and framed and faced with Plexiglas creating an archival environment.

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