Donalee Kennedy

DONALEE DESIGNS
Columbus, Ohio · donaleedesigns.com · donalee@donaleedesigns.com

Bio

Donalee Kennedy is an abstract art quilter, surface designer and teacher based in Columbus, Ohio. From 1989 to 2012 she owned and ran DONALEE DESIGNS, a retail and wholesale jewelry business in Bayfield, Wisconsin, where every piece was made by hand in her own studio. Before that, she was a department store buyer. In 2012 she turned to art quilts and spent the next ten years studying composition and color with some of the country's best teachers. Her quilt *Reaching Out 8* won the Quilt Surface Design Symposium Award at Quilt National 2021, and *Whirling Dervish*, made with Diana Fox and Beth Schillig, took third place in the group category at AQS QuiltWeek Paducah 2025. She has taught on Quilting Arts TV. Through her program SEE Like An Artist, she teaches quilters and mixed media artists to see composition and trust their own eye.

Awards

- Quilt Surface Design Symposium Award, Quilt National 2021. *Reaching Out 8*, 2020, cotton, machine pieced and quilted, 63" H x 57" W, quilted by Jane Williamson.
- Third place, group quilt category, American Quilter's Society 39th National QuiltWeek, Paducah, Kentucky, 2025. *Whirling Dervish*, 2024, cotton, commercial and hand dyed, 46.25" H x 66" W. Designed by Diana Fox, Donalee Kennedy and Beth Schillig; machine pieced by Diana and Donalee; machine quilted by Beth.

Exhibitions

- Hope & Healing, Art Quilt Alliance, Riverside Methodist Hospital, Columbus, Ohio, 2026. *Haiku*, 2020, 38.5" H x 38.5" W.
- If I Were an Emoji, special exhibit sponsored by the Art Quilt Alliance, AQS QuiltWeek 2026: New England, Paducah, Grand Rapids and Columbus. *Zany Big Yellow Bird*, 2024, 24" H x 24" W.
- Divergence, Art Quilt Network traveling exhibit, Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival and Pennsylvania National Quilt Extravaganza, 2026. *Tumbling Boxes to Organized Chaos*, 40" H x 29" W.
- If I Were an Emoji, Art Quilt Alliance, Grandview Heights Public Library, Grandview Heights, Ohio, 2025. *Zany Big Yellow Bird*.
- AQS QuiltWeek Contest, Paducah, Kentucky, 2025. Juried semi-finalist, Small Wall Quilts. *Amalgam Eight*, 44" H x 37" W.
- Three Prompt Challenge, Art Quilt Alliance, Northwood Art Space, Columbus, Ohio, 2025. *I Love Green*.
- Flights of Fancy, Art Quilt Alliance, Grange Insurance Audubon Center, Columbus, Ohio, 2025. *Bob*.
- Speaking Volumes, Art Quilt Alliance, Columbus Main Library, Patrick Losinski Gallery, Columbus, Ohio, 2025. *Tumbling Boxes to Organized Chaos*.

- Here and Now: Art Quilts from SAQA Ohio, juried exhibition, Studio Art Quilt Associates, Ohio Region, 2024. *Tumbling Boxes to Organized Chaos*.
- Quilt National 2021 at the Riffe Gallery, Ohio Arts Council, Columbus, Ohio, 2022. *Reaching Out 8*.
- Quilt National 2021, The Dairy Barn Arts Center, Athens, Ohio, and touring. *Reaching Out 8*.
- Sacred Threads 2019, Eye Contact: Creating a Connection, International Quilt Festival, Houston, Texas, 2019. *Through My Eyes*, 5" H x 23" W.
- Best of 2019, Ohio Craft Museum, Columbus, Ohio. *Brisk Fall Day* (sold).
- Circular Abstractions: Bull's Eye Quilts, Decorative Arts Center of Ohio, Lancaster, Ohio, 2017. *Which Path at Sunrise*.

Teaching

- Quilting Arts TV, three teaching segments, aired 2021.
- SEE Like An Artist, live online composition courses, 2026.
- Critique Club, live online critique group, 2026.
- Three-day workshop, Art Quilt Network, 2026.
- Improv Machine Piecing, one-day workshop, Decorative Arts Center of Ohio, Lancaster, Ohio, 2017.
- Workshops, Duluth Modern Quilt Guild, Duluth, Minnesota.
- Studio workshops in her own studio, Bayfield, Wisconsin.
- Online class, Skillshare, 2018.
- Trained jewelry apprentices who went on to run their own businesses.

Lectures, Talks and Demonstrations

- Artist talk on *Reaching Out 8*, Riffe Gallery, Ohio Arts Council, 2022.
- Invited demonstrator, improv quilt making, opening of Material Pulses: 8 Viewpoints, Riffe Gallery, Ohio Arts Council, Columbus, Ohio, 2016.
- SEE Like An Artist: 3 Composition Tips, free live online classes, 2026.
- Gelli Printing on Fabric, free live online class, 2026.

Exhibition Organizing and Service

- Hope & Healing, Art Quilt Alliance, Riverside Methodist Hospital, 2026. Organized the exhibit: call for entry, intake, hanging plan, install, poster, postcard, web page and artist reception. 21 artists, 34 quilts.
- Contemporary Life, Art Quilt Alliance, Chaos Contemporary Craft Gallery, Columbus, Ohio, 2026 to 2027. Ran the call for entry.
- Built the Art Quilt Alliance online call for entry and image upload system now used for every exhibit.

Press and Publications

- Quilting Arts TV, three segments with host Vivika Hansen DeNegre, aired 2021: Series 2700, Episode 10, “Useful Items”; Series 2800, Episode 4, “Charming Details”; Series 2800, Episode 10, “A Different Vision.”
- AQS 2027 Engagement Calendar, American Quilter’s Society. *Whirling Dervish*, with Diana Fox and Beth Schillig.
- Quilt National 2021 exhibition catalog, The Dairy Barn Arts Center. *Reaching Out 8*.
- Here and Now: Art Quilts from SAQA Ohio, exhibition catalog, 2024. *Tumbling Boxes to Organized Chaos*.
- Sacred Threads 2019 catalog, page 107. *Through My Eyes*.
- WOUB, “Talking thoughtful improv with artist Donalee Kennedy,” 2017.

Study

- Ten years of intensive art quilt workshops in composition and color, 2013 to 2022.
- Color class, School of Visual Arts.
- Mud resist (dabu) block printing, Bagru, India, 2026.
- Also: fabric dyeing, drawing, hand stitching, silk painting, watercolor, acrylic, stamp carving and printing, and surface pattern design.
- Evening art history courses, University of Minnesota.

Professional Background

- **DONALEE DESIGNS**, owner and CEO, 1989 to 2012. Retail and wholesale jewelry, designed and made by hand in her own studio, Bayfield, Wisconsin. Sold to Dayton’s, Marshall Field’s, Macy’s and Saks Fifth Avenue, plus galleries and shops across the country, with trunk shows in major department stores.
- Owner of retail businesses in Minnesota, including the first DONALEE DESIGNS, a bath shop in Edina.
- Children’s socks and sleepwear manufacturer, nearly a decade in sales to major stores.
- Dayton’s, about seven years, working up to buyer, including the store’s first female furniture buyer, 1980s.
- Surface pattern design: collections Tierra and Aerie.

Memberships

- Art Quilt Alliance, venue committee
- Art Quilt Network
- Studio Art Quilt Associates, Ohio Region