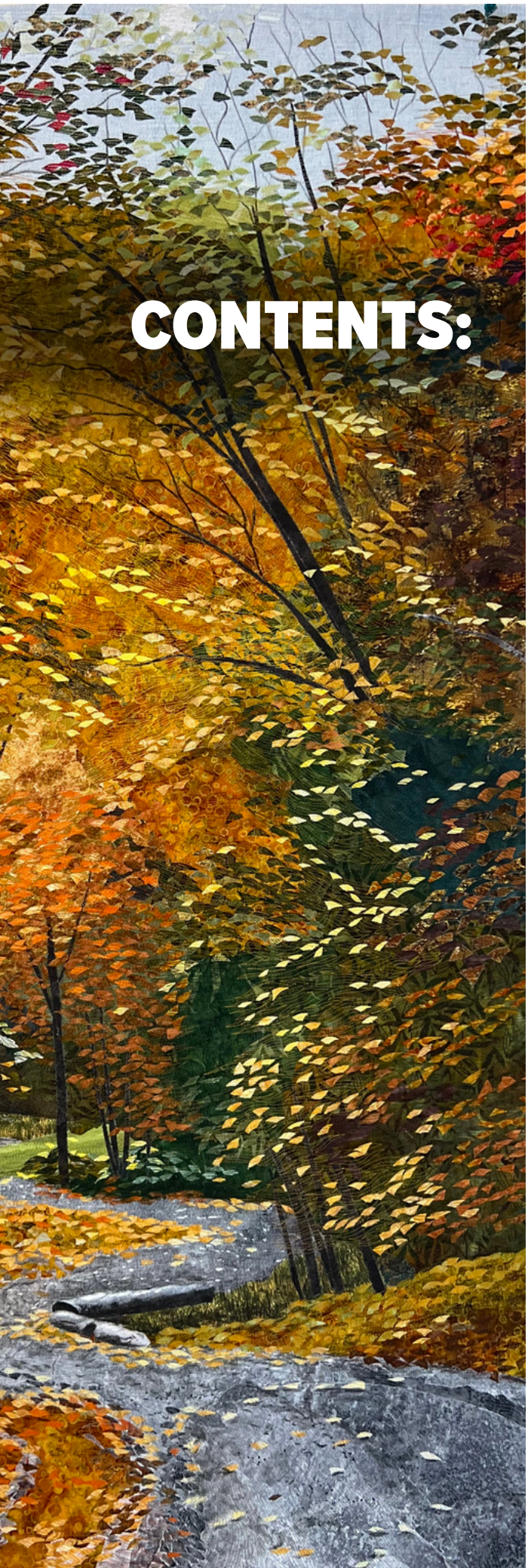
TURCHIN CENTER
for the Visual Arts
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Stitching the Natural World

Nancy Hershberger

BICKERS GALLERY

JUNE 5 - NOV. 21, 2026



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previous and left:
Little Stony Creek, 2023
Nancy Hershberger
Courtesy of the artist

October Standoff, 2024
Nancy Hershberger
Courtesy of the artist

EXHIBITION SUMMARY

Stitching the Natural World invites viewers on an immersive journey into the heart of the natural environment through the eyes and hands of fiber artist Nancy Hershberger. With a passion for interpreting the natural world in fabric and thread, the artist transforms landscapes into vivid textile pieces. Her process, rooted in raw edge appliqué, incorporates inks and paints to create detail, while intricate free-motion quilting brings movement and depth to each scene.

Stitching the Natural World showcases Hershberger's distinct vision, weaving a cohesive narrative celebrating the wonders of our environment. From tranquil ponds and cascading waterfalls to expansive vistas and stormy skies, every piece offers a unique perspective on the beauty and diversity of the natural world.

Yosemite, 2020, Nancy Hershberger. Courtesy of the artist.

Yosemite. 2020, Nancy Hershberger. Courtesy of the artist.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Nancy Hershberger lives in rural Breezewood, Pennsylvania, part of the Appalachian Mountains. The exquisitely detailed art quilts she hand-crafts are uniquely her own yet part of the rich tradition of Appalachian quilting influenced by many of the peoples who call the Appalachian Mountains home—the Indigenous communities, Amish, Quaker, Scottish, Irish, and German inhabitants all bring their quilting styles to the conversation of family, of community, of home. Hershberger's quilts are anything but traditional; they are designed to hang on the wall. At first glance, her quilts resemble landscape paintings or still life photographs; on closer inspection, however, the meticulous stitching and fusing she uses becomes apparent. The artist uses a thoroughly modern constructed technique pushing beyond the expected to create narratives exploring "memory and place." The artist wants viewers to know it's possible to convey a landscape with fabric in a work of art. She is inspired by nature—walking, looking, photographing–taking time to recreate what she sees as a material metaphor for her relationship to the lands she loves. We are richer for seeing both quilting and the land in a new way.

– Mary Anne Redding, Senior Curator

ARTIST STATEMENT

As an art quilter, my practice is rooted in a deep reverence for materials and a passion for the landscape. I am drawn to the tactile nature of fabric, where each stitch and layer holds the possibility of evoking emotion and memory. Working with textiles allows me to bridge tradition and innovation, transforming familiar fibers into visual narratives that invite contemplation and connection.

From an early age, I have been captivated by the subtle interplay of light and shadow, the silent language of color, and the narratives hidden in ordinary moments. Growing up surrounded by nature, I observed the changing of seasons and the intricate dance of life on the farm. These early impressions instilled in me the conviction that beauty and mystery reside not just in grand spectacles, but in the humble details often overlooked. My art is rooted in this belief: that the everyday holds infinite potential for wonder.

My home and travels provide vital sources of inspiration. Encounters with familiar and unfamiliar landscapes and cultures expand my vocabulary and challenge my assumptions. I seek opportunities for dialogue and exchange, recognizing that art is never created in a vacuum but emerges from a web of relationships and shared histories.

– Nancy Hershberger

October Standoff, 2024, Nancy Hershberger. Courtesy of the artist.

ARTIST PROCESS STATEMENT

Yosemite II, Half Dome, 2020
Nancy Hershberger. Courtesy of the artist.

Nancy Hershberger's process begins with inspiration from the natural environment. A walk down the driveway or hike through a national park fills the well. She keeps her phone on hand at all times, taking photo after photo. These images serve as jumping off points for her work. The riparian zone provides endless inspiration. In 2019 while serving as artist-in-residence at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Hershberger began her *Water Dance* series, interpreting the creeks and waterfalls of the Smokies. The series continues with pieces inspired by Shenandoah National Park and Washington Jefferson National Forest.

The artist describes her process as incredibly easy. There is no freezer paper or tracing or fusing on muslin. Her quilts are created by drawing a grid on the batting. She simply cuts shapes and fuses them on the batting. To "punch up" areas in her quilts, she uses Tsukineko inks, acrylics, and oils. It does not take much because the fabric does all the heavy lifting. Inks and paints add subtle emphasis. Once the top is complete, she only needs to add the backing, then quilt. Her quilting is very dense, as she loves the look and considers thread as much a part of the composition as the fabric. 50 weight Aurifil thread is subtle and adds texture.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

A distinctive voice in the art quilt world, **Nancy Hershberger** weaves together tradition and innovation. Her artistic journey began after a sudden loss that changed her world. Several years of work in traditional quilting was transformed when she began studying color, form and the natural environment. Hershberger's work invites viewers into vividly constructed landscapes that evoke emotion and wonder.

Developing a unique style characterized by dynamic compositions and meticulous attention to detail, Hershberger’s portfolio spans a variety of studies, including portraits and still life, each piece reflecting exploration of memory and place.

Hershberger has exhibited in galleries and museums both nationally and internationally, earning recognition for technical mastery and innovative approach. Driven by a desire to challenge conventions and connect with audiences, she continues to push the boundaries of her craft, ensuring that each creation is both deeply personal and universally resonant. Her art stands as a testament to the enduring power of creativity—celebrating the complexities of experience and the beauty found in nature.

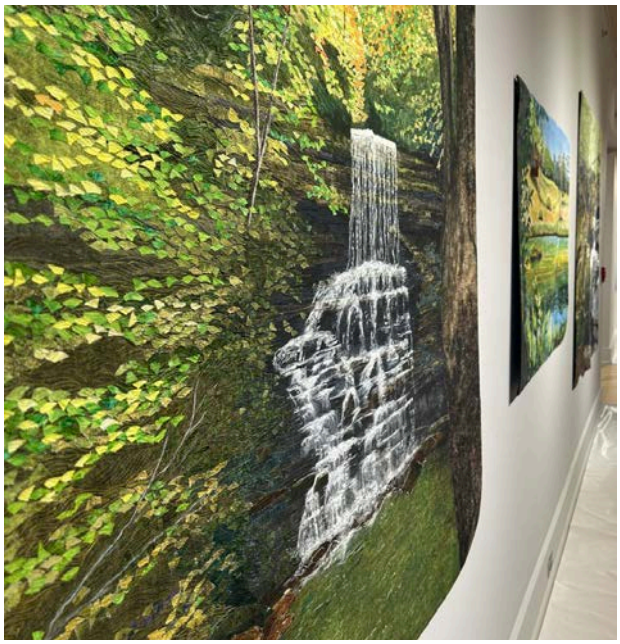
INVITATION TO CREATE

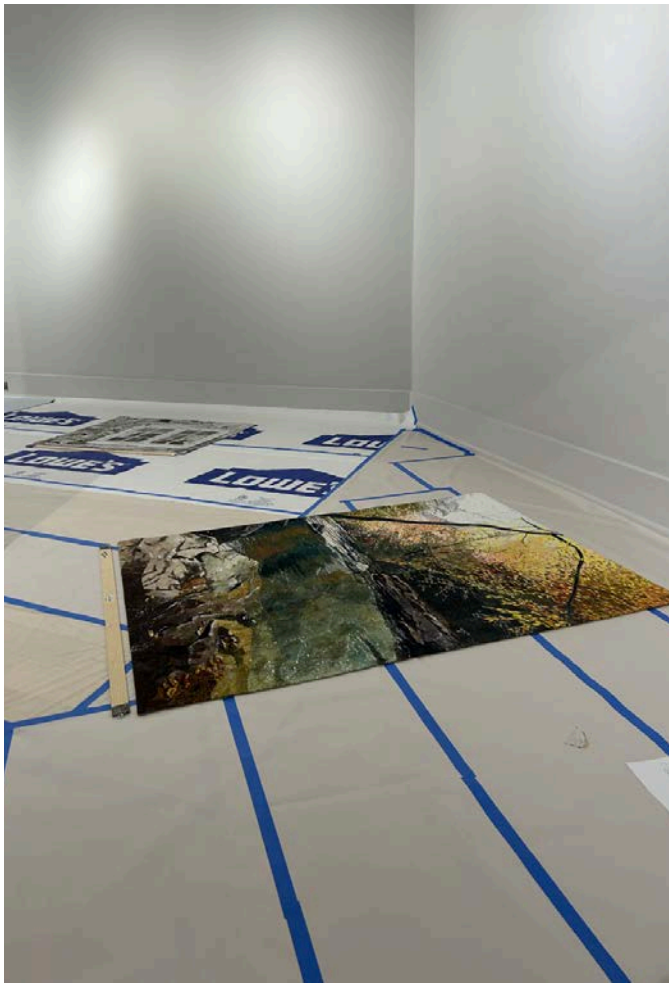
Artist Nancy Hershberger lets the fabric do the talking through her innovative quilts. She transforms small pieces of fabric into vivid landscapes that evoke the memory of places she's visited or admires.

TRY IT!

Select your own fabric scraps, cut them into unique shapes, and glue them onto larger fabric or cardstock backing to bring your own favorite environment to life!

BEHIND THE SCENES

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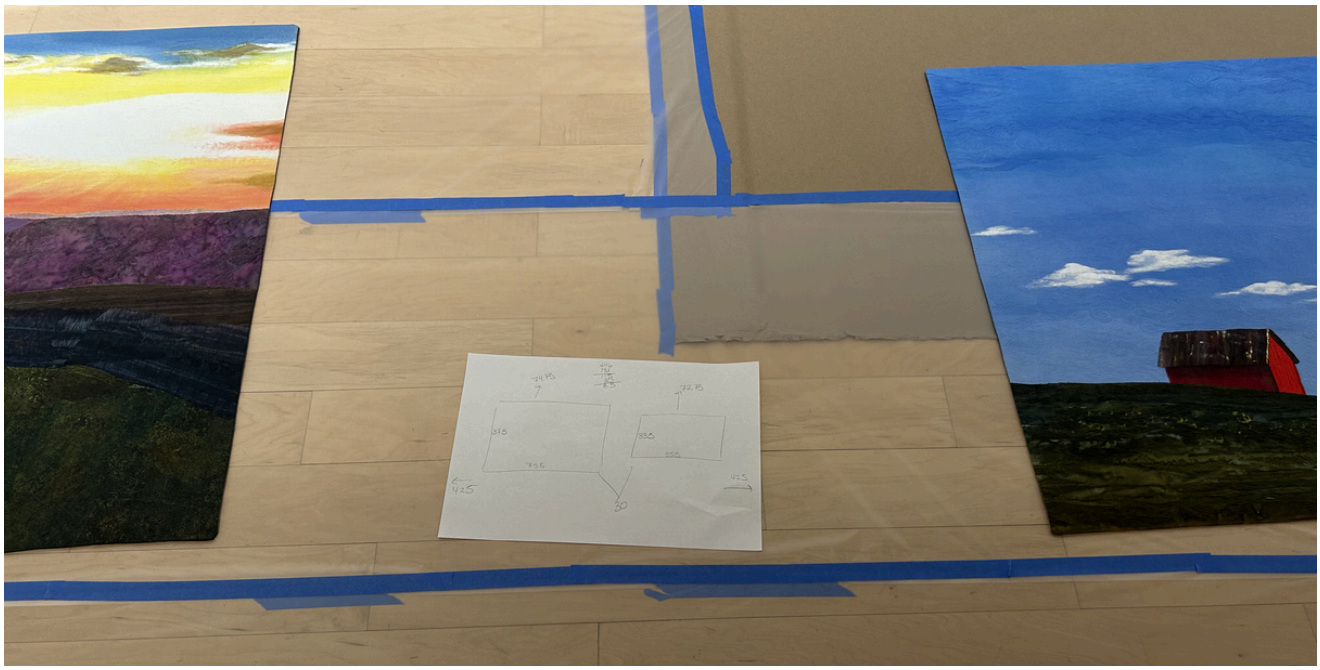

SELECTED WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

October Standoff, 2024
Nancy Hershberger
Courtesy of the artist

Yosemite, 2020
Nancy Hershberger
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Yosemite II, Half Dome, 2020
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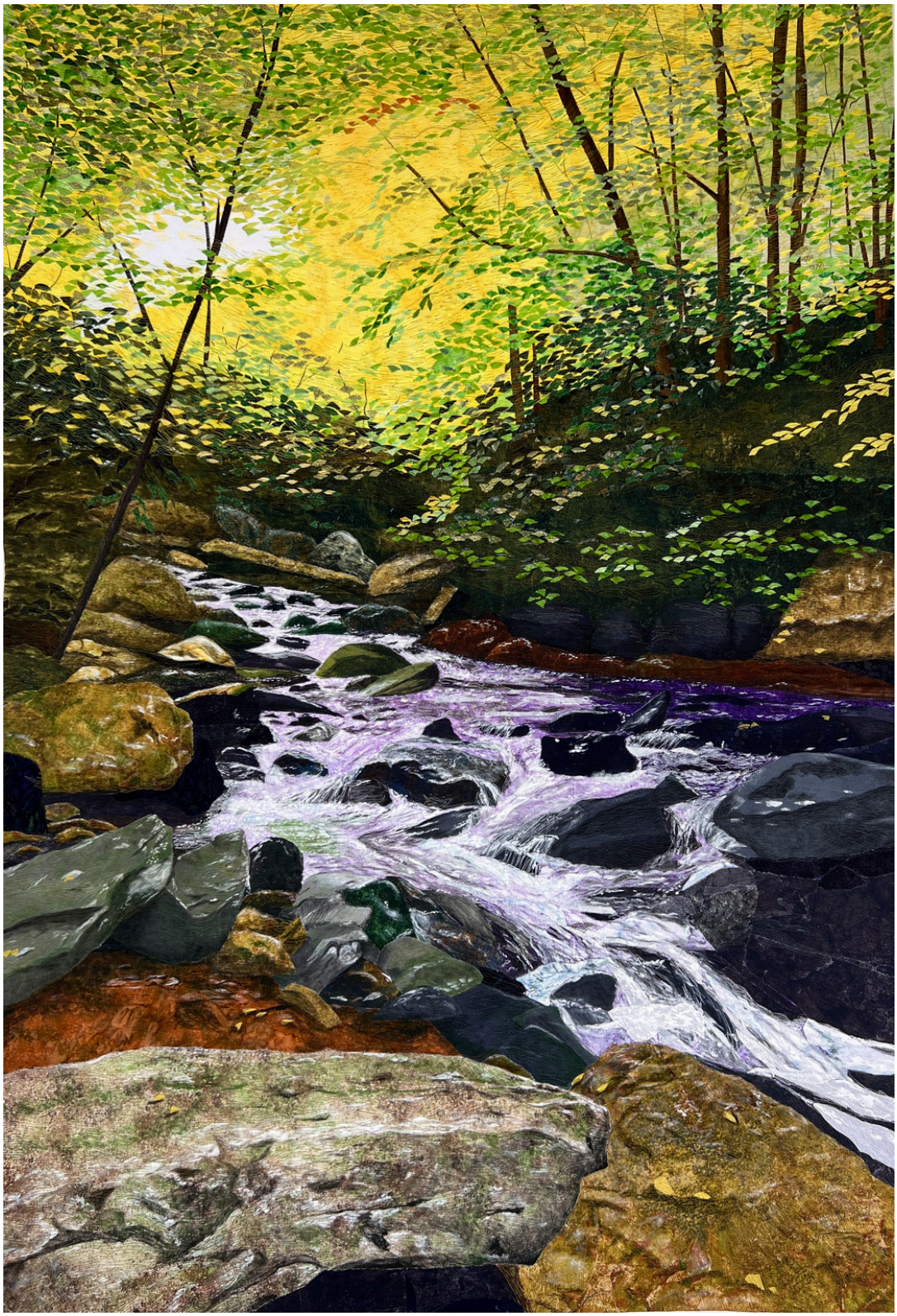

Little Stony Creek, 2023
Nancy Hershberger
Courtesy of the artist

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEBSITE / www.nancyhershberger.com/
www.facebook.com/NancyHershbergerArtist/

STUDIO ART QUILT ASSOCIATES / www.saqa.com/art/juried-artists/nancy-hershberger

NATIONAL PARKS TRAVELER / www.nationalparkstraveler.org/podcast/2022-07-14-audio-postcard-parks-stitching-national-parks-together

www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2022/06/capturing-national-parks-stitch-time

FRIENDS OF THE SMOKIES / friendsofthesmokies.org/blog/nancy-hershberger-art-quilter-gsmnp/?fbclid=IwAR2Fj40uQyMCOqwwtNNlYEOpLUeEhT9UzY4D4LuPUlN21DN9_95jIM2HMkw

SHENANDOAH VALLEY CHILDREN'S CHOIR / www.youtube.com/watch?v=mB6LnP2Tums

SHENANDOAH NPS / www.youtube.com/watch?v=F05of_6SJJg

THANK YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

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