

## Blind Spot

My quilled Blind Spot was a journey that started with a greeting card. It was a card that immediately struck me as a gorgeous piece of art, a girl peeking out of a myriad of flowers and colors. I bought two. I had already decided I should TRY to quill this painting.

On the back of the card was a web address for the artist. OK. I typed in the URL and low and behold it actually went somewhere! I contacted the artist and asked for permission to quill his work. A very short time later I received a positive email back. Mr. Lewis told me the story behind his painting, "Blind Spot". Now nearly totally blind, this was the way he saw the world due to a blinding eye disease called "retinitis pigmentosa". He sees bright, fluorescent colored floaters and the world is a narrow field of vision. When I realized Blind Spot was a result of a tragic circumstance for Mr. Lewis, I almost did not go on with the idea of quilling her. In the end, I decided to at least try. Now (when I see her finished and also as I worked), she always reminds me of Mr. Lewis and the blessing of eyesight which I have.

After receiving permission, I had to figure out how in the world I was going to do this. The original card was smaller than what I wanted. So step one was to scan the card and print it larger and get it onto a background. I used an 8 x 10" piece of Hardiboard. I spread a thin coat of glue, positioned my matte photo paper on it, brushed another layer of glue over the picture, and set it aside to dry. Next I looked at quilling. OK. Baby steps. Deep breaths. Maybe pick colors first. Mr. Lewis told me the brighter, more vivid the colors, the better. Next start rolling 1 strip! I started with the pink, yellow and green tight coils. They were big round dots. And very far away from that eye! They looked easy. I rolled tight coils, s-scrolls, a few bee hives, loose closed coils. I made single color quills, layered strips quills, joined strips end to end, added a second color around the first. I tucked additional tight rolls into empty spaces. Each quill I made was glued to my board right away. Every quill made me love this piece more and more.

About 6 months into the project I decided not to mat my picture and so needed to extend the quills out to the edges of my board. I kept rolling. By the time I was working on the skin under her eye, I was using a lot of 3/8" long strips, quilling around a shaft thinner than a corsage pin for these rolls. I also used a corsage pin and my needle tool for larger quills.

Into year 2 of my work on Blind Spot, I decided this was going to be my competition project for NAQGCON. I rolled and glued and rolled and glued in earnest. I was only about 2/3 done overall and I had already ripped the eye off once and thrown away several more attempts. Eek! Time was so short and we were leaving on a trip to Egypt. Blind Spot needed to go with me. I slid her into a plastic bag, bundled up the paper I would be using, stuck a corsage pin into my carry-on with a bottle of glue and quilled during the airplane ride to Egypt. I quilled a couple of evenings in Cairo and one afternoon at the end of our trip while watching the Great Pyramid. As I told Mr. Lewis, yep, I watched the pyramid. It did nothing but be amazing and grand but I watched it in awe. And I quilled on the airplane home. Now with only about a fourth of the picture to go, I was very encouraged. And my latest eye version seemed to be ok. Then suddenly my last quill was rolled and we found a very simple frame which did not take away from her. She was done.

At the quilling conference, I was so surprised to be awarded first place. Any ribbon at the convention is a distinction. The competition is always fierce, entries are amazing, the skill level high. And your friends are doing the judging. To have gotten first place was such a high honor. My fellow quillers LIKED what I made. I am grateful to each of my fellow quillers who like my rendition of her. Then my name was called as the winner of the People's Choice award. It is an incredible honor I am still trying to assimilate. Thank you.

I love Blind Spot. And I thank my friend John for his permission and encouragement.

As a footnote, Mr. Lewis told me his Blind Spot was awarded first place at the Annual "Shared Visions" exhibit in Fullerton, California in 2010. It is a powerful piece of art. Congratulations to him!