

Fossil Fantasy #1 Tutorial

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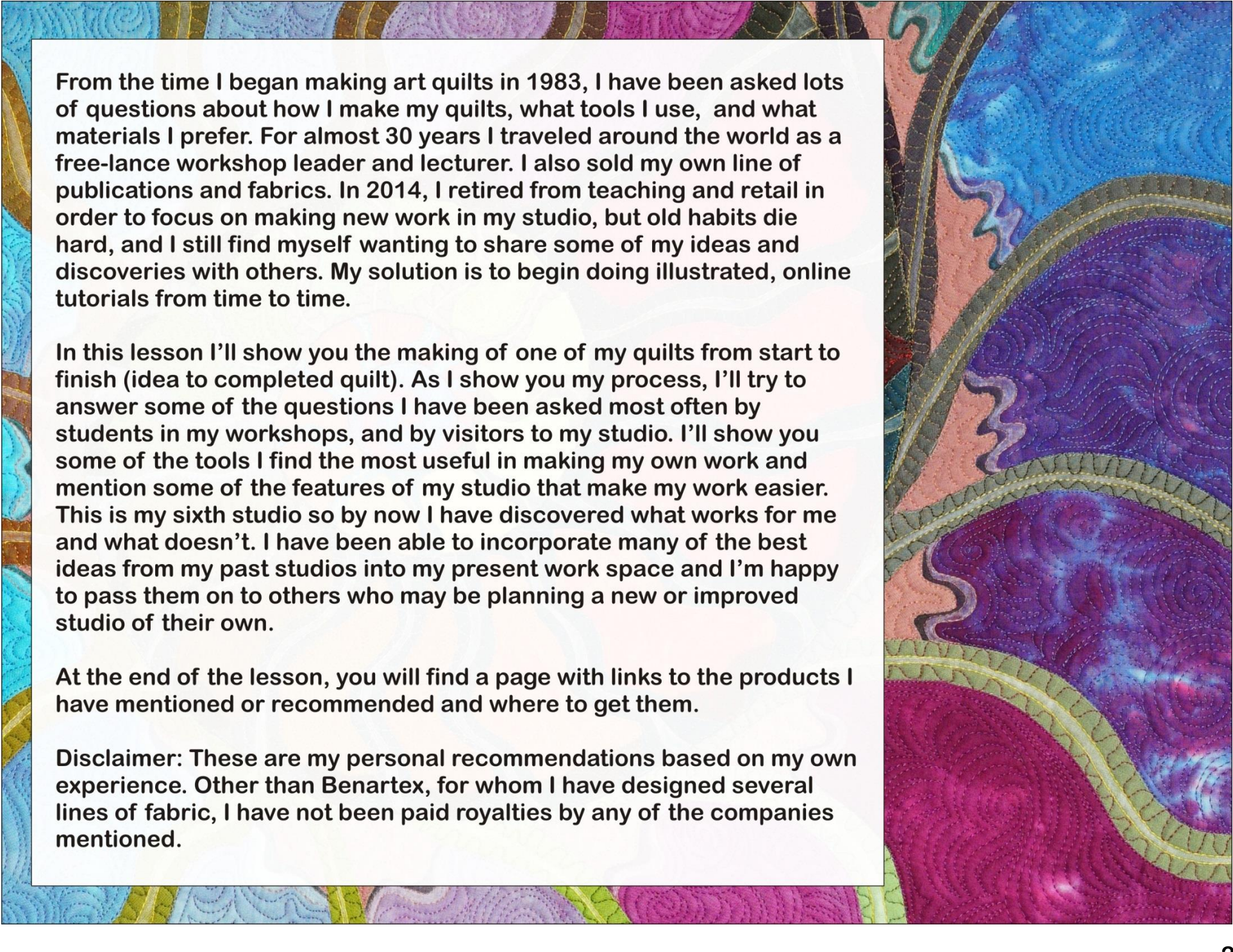


Fossil Fantasy #1

a complete lesson on
the creative process

by

Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



From the time I began making art quilts in 1983, I have been asked lots of questions about how I make my quilts, what tools I use, and what materials I prefer. For almost 30 years I traveled around the world as a free-lance workshop leader and lecturer. I also sold my own line of publications and fabrics. In 2014, I retired from teaching and retail in order to focus on making new work in my studio, but old habits die hard, and I still find myself wanting to share some of my ideas and discoveries with others. My solution is to begin doing illustrated, online tutorials from time to time.

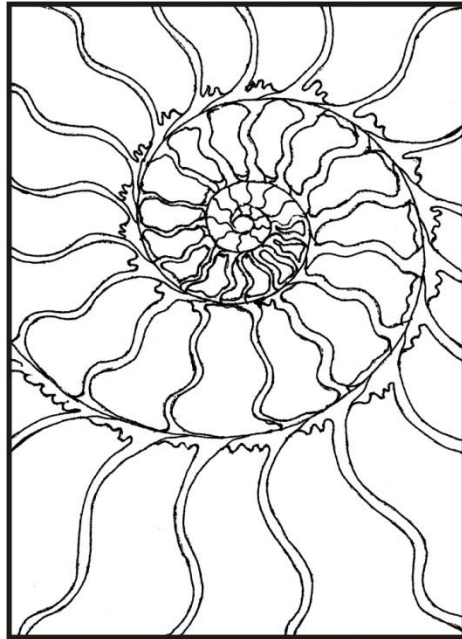
In this lesson I'll show you the making of one of my quilts from start to finish (idea to completed quilt). As I show you my process, I'll try to answer some of the questions I have been asked most often by students in my workshops, and by visitors to my studio. I'll show you some of the tools I find the most useful in making my own work and mention some of the features of my studio that make my work easier. This is my sixth studio so by now I have discovered what works for me and what doesn't. I have been able to incorporate many of the best ideas from my past studios into my present work space and I'm happy to pass them on to others who may be planning a new or improved studio of their own.

At the end of the lesson, you will find a page with links to the products I have mentioned or recommended and where to get them.

Disclaimer: These are my personal recommendations based on my own experience. Other than Benartex, for whom I have designed several lines of fabric, I have not been paid royalties by any of the companies mentioned.

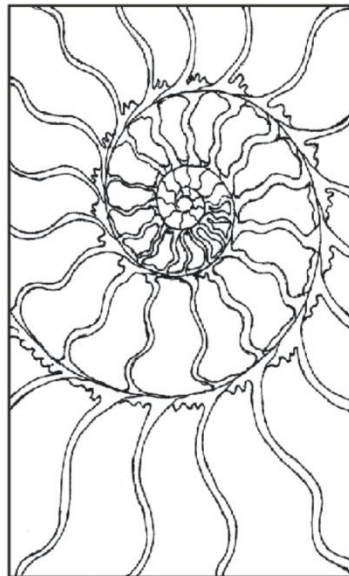
Spirals of all kinds have always fascinated me. I love visiting rock shops that have ammonites on display and decided to make a spiral design based on the shapes found in these prehistoric, fossilized, sea creatures. I began by looking a dozens of pictures of ammonites and studying the basic shapes they shared, regardless of size.





I began by making a simple line drawing in which I combined elements from several different ammonites and added a few flourishes from my imagination.

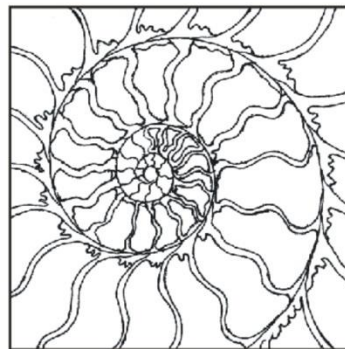
I tried cropping and stretching the design in different proportions and my favorite was the one that was 30" x 44" .



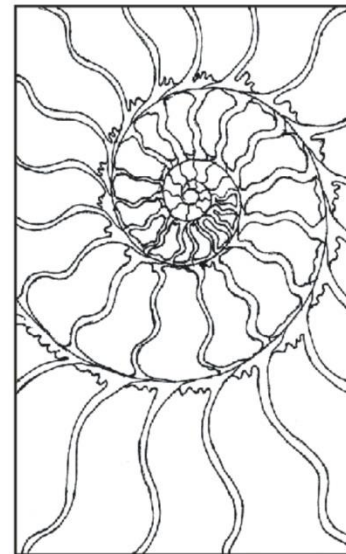
30" x 50"



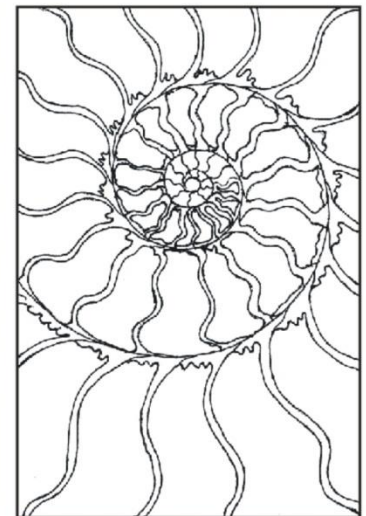
30" x 40"



30" x 30"



30" x 48"



30" x 44"

The line drawing was printed on clear acetate and projected onto a piece of freezer paper using an overhead projector.

The paper is 31" x 45". I find that the quilt almost always shrinks a little when it is quilted, so I make my pattern an inch bigger than the size I want for the finished quilt. If it ends up a little too big, I can either just let it be bigger than intended or, with an organic design like this, I can trim a little off the edge when I'm finished, and no one will miss it.

I am drawing with a #2 pencil so I can edit later. It's difficult to draw precisely when you are at an angle, trying to stay out of the way of your own shadow.



I'm just lightly sketching in the basic shapes and proportions. All of the drawing goes on the paper side of the freezer paper, and the fabric will go on the shiny side, so what I'm drawing here will be a mirror image of the finished quilt.

When working with an overhead projector, I find that it works best to project the design onto the wall, square it up, roll the projector back and forth until the image is the size you want, and then hang the paper where the image is.

Trying to project onto a piece of paper that is already hanging on the wall is much more difficult.

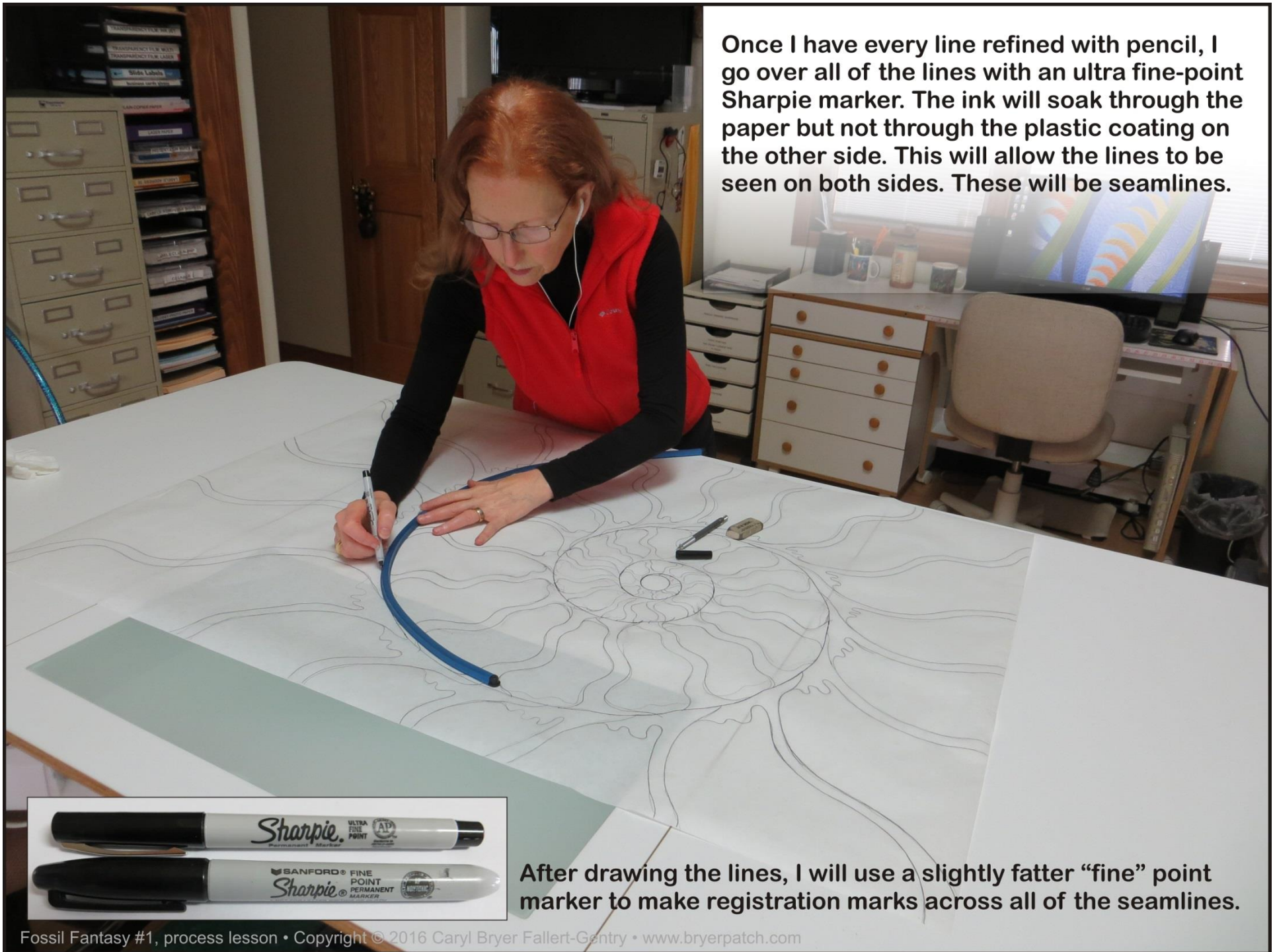
Before you move the acetate or projector, turn out the light and make sure no lines are missing.

Once the freezer paper is on a flat surface, I use a flexible curve tool and pencil to clean up the lines, smooth out the curves and add any additional design elements I may want. I'm still using pencil so I can edit and erase lines until everything pleases me.

I added a light box to this standard Horn cutting table which came with a cut-out for a sewing machine. I took the insert from the hole to my local glass company and had them cut a piece of frosted glass to fit the hole. A light stick sits on the sewing machine shelf, which is just below the glass.



Once I have every line refined with pencil, I go over all of the lines with an ultra fine-point Sharpie marker. The ink will soak through the paper but not through the plastic coating on the other side. This will allow the lines to be seen on both sides. These will be seamlines.



After drawing the lines, I will use a slightly fatter “fine” point marker to make registration marks across all of the seamlines.



Here is the finished pattern on the paper side. You can see that in addition to all of the heavy black lines across the seamlines I have added some colored lines as well to help orient the pieces after they have been cut apart.

Since many pieces are similar in shape and size I have also numbered the segments.

The fabrics on bolts that you see to the left of the work wall are from the various collections I have designed for Benartex, all of which are based on my own original hand dyed fabrics.



Here is the finished pattern on the shiny plastic side. This is the side where the fabric will go, so naturally I will work with the drawing shiny side out.

The bolts of fabric on the left were covered with plastic to protect them when I moved from Paducah, KY to Port Townsend, WA. I have left them in the plastic to give them an added layer of protection from UV light coming through the windows and skylights in the studio. The studio windows have also been covered with UV protective film to help prevent fading.



My first cut into the pattern was along the line dividing the revolutions of the spiral. Next I began cutting out one “chamber” template at a time. Each freezer paper template is ironed, shiny-side-down to a piece of hand-dyed fabric. The plastic side of the freezer paper clings to the fabric but it can be easily peeled off and ironed to a different fabric if I change my mind. As I cut the fabrics, I add a quarter inch seam allowance on all sides of the paper template.

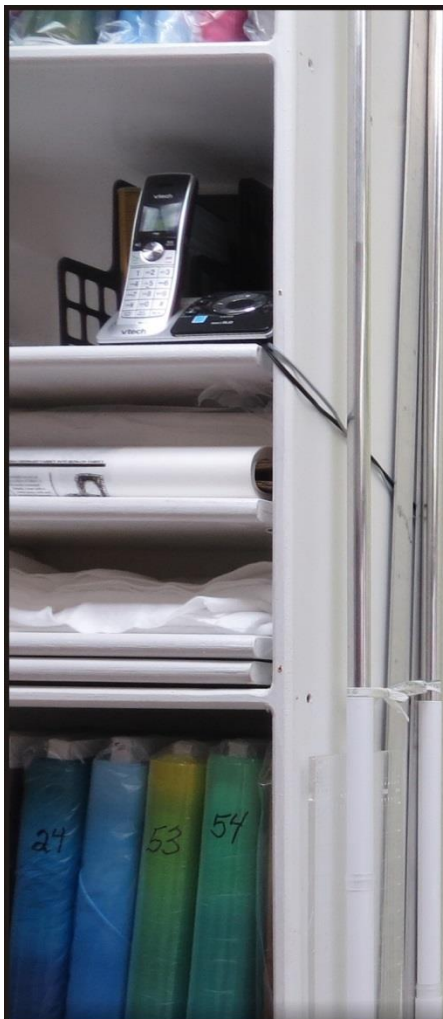
I immediately pin the fabric shapes back into the paper pattern on the wall.



Although I am not making a perfect gradation of both color and value I am more or less following the hues of the color wheel as I choose my fabrics.

Definition:
Value is how light or dark the fabric is.

The pin wall is made from two 4' x 8' x 2" sheets of heavy-duty Styrofoam insulation board, covered with cream-colored 109" wide flannel quilt-backing fabric.



The hand painted fabrics are not all the same visual texture, so I stand way back from the wall and squint to make sure they are blending into a smooth gradation.

I keep a big, magnetic bowl full of pins handy for pinning my pieces to the wall as the pattern is cut apart. These are my favorite pins. They are long, very thin, and very sharp. The heads are arrows indicating up, down, left, and right. I don't know what that's supposed to be for, I just like the pins.

magnetic bowl full of pins



I have fourteen rolling drawer stacks under my tables and counters. When I'm piecing a quilt, I roll one of them out and park it right next to the pattern on the work wall and use the top to keep pins scissors and other tools handy.

The quilt on the back wall is Orangutan by Sharon Malek. On the left side wall quilt is a miniature daffodil quilt by Frieda Anderson.



Here I have started adding purple hues. I am cutting the next template from the pattern, trying to split the line down the middle. The good news is that, with a good pair of scissors, it is often easier to cut a smooth curve than it is to draw it. If I happen to cut a little wide of the line, the next template is automatically adjusted to fit it exactly.

I keep several kinds of scissors handy; 8" Ginger shears for long gentle curves and Japanese, paper-cutting scissors for more intricate curves.

So... what are those poles next to the shelves on the left?

The bottom (white part) is a \$10.00 adjustable tension shower rod. The silver, top part is a piece of aluminum or steel pipe, like the kind used for electrical conduit. I remove the cap from the small end of the rod and slide the pipe inside. The cap is then used on the end of the pipe which goes against the ceiling.



Twist the rod until the assembly fits snugly against the floor and ceiling.

In this case, the back rod holds the work wall in place and the two together provide a slot for storing the long rulers and aluminum bars I use with a rotary cutter for squaring up paper patterns and quilts.

**TwistTight
Adjustable Tension
Shower Rod**



Ruler and bar
storage behind
the poles

8'
aluminum
bar used
with a rotary
cutter to make
a long straight
edge. →

48" rotary
ruler →

18" rotary
ruler →



Here I have
finished choosing
fabrics for the
second
revolution of the
spiral and started
on the third. I
have been
careful to make
sure the inside
and outside
colors don't
match as I work
through the
spectral hues.

If colors and
values match
along a seamline,
the seam will
dissolve visually
and leave you
with an odd
shape that
distracts from the
overall design.



The first two wraps of the spiral are all cool colors. Now I'm introducing warmer hues toward the focal point in the center of the spiral.

I have reached a point in the center beyond which the pieces would be very small and too fiddly to piece.

The center will be printed digitally later.



Now I'm starting to cut the fabrics for the spines.

In contrast to the rainbow colors of the chambers, the spines are in sludgier neutral tones. They are also solid colors with no visual texture.

Each spine is a slightly different color and, so far, they are in a subtle gradation from dark to light.



The spines get darker against the blues and purples, and lighter against the raspberry. The important thing is for the colors and values to progress in an even gradation and also maintain contrast with the chambers in both color and value.



Hmmm...
I could have a problem here where these two colors match. However, after checking the pattern, it turns out that these two pieces will not actually touch once the quilt top has been pieced together.

If I needed to change colors it would be very easy to just peel off the freezer paper template and iron it to a new fabric.

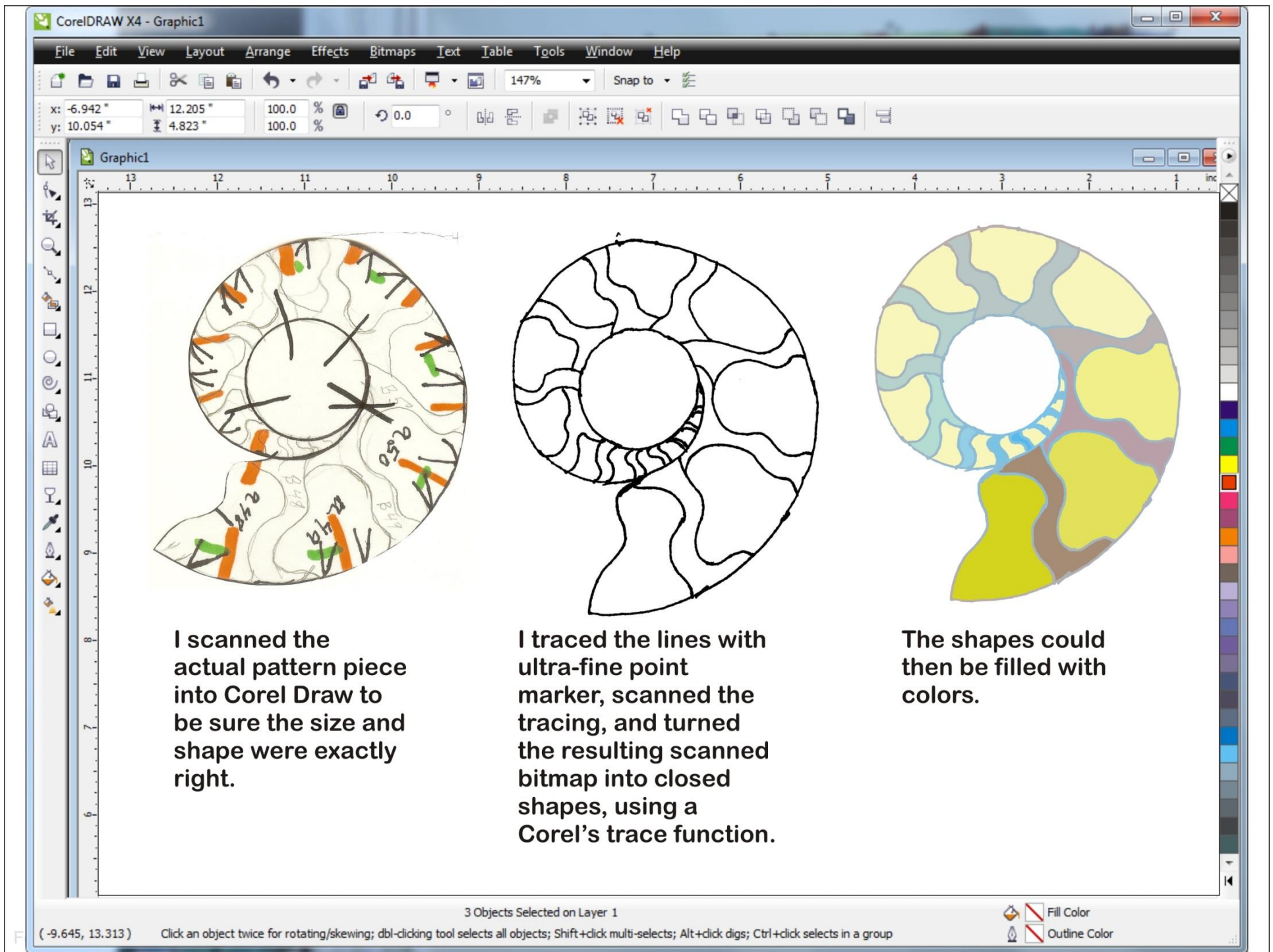
Here I have added a digital print to complete the center.

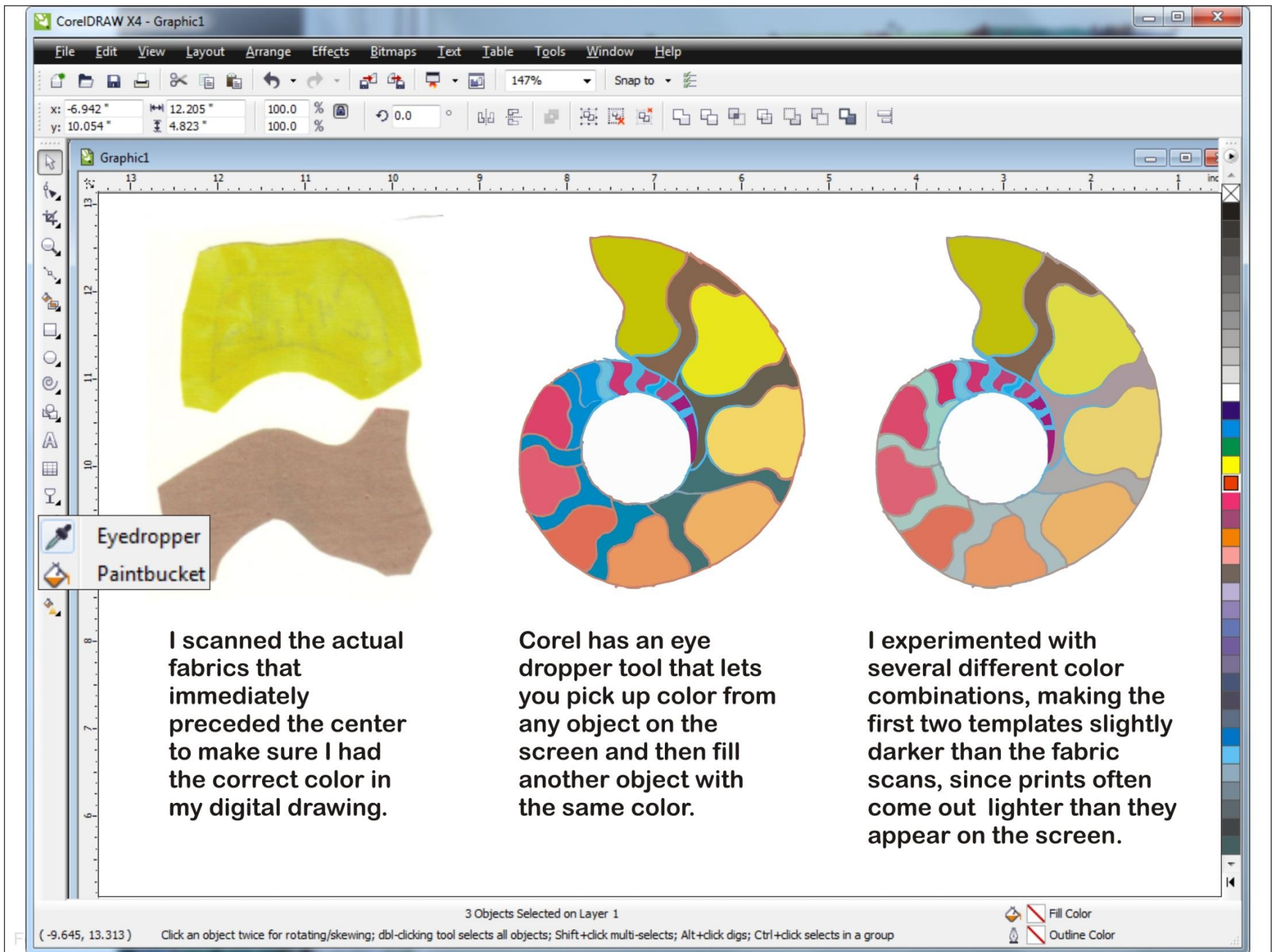
More explanation about this is on the next page.

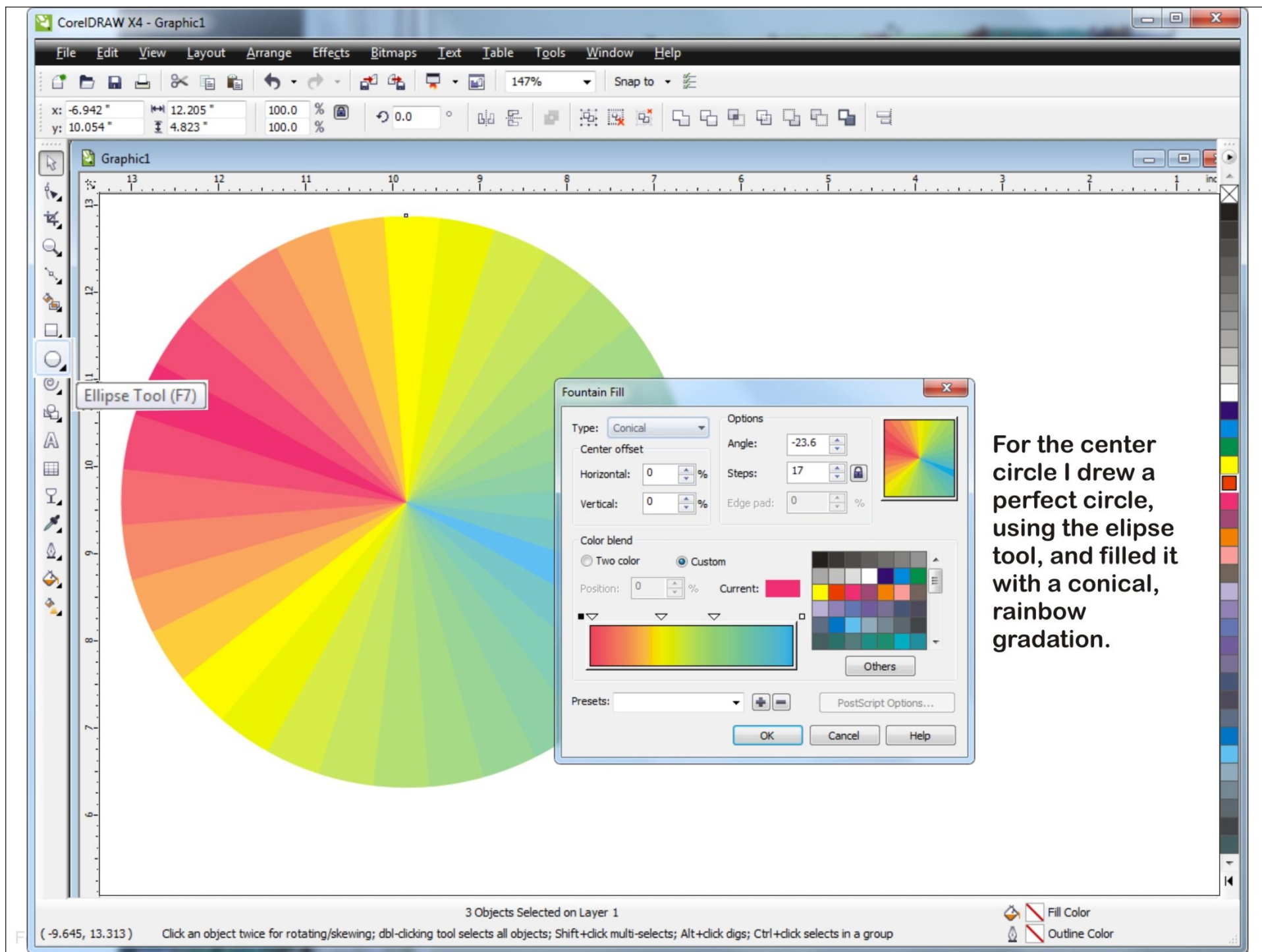


I designed the center on the computer (Corel Draw) and printed it on cotton fabric. The fabric was treated with a chemical that makes the printer ink bond chemically with the fiber molecules and become permanent. The treated fabric was bonded to a copier-paper-sized backing to carry it through the printer.

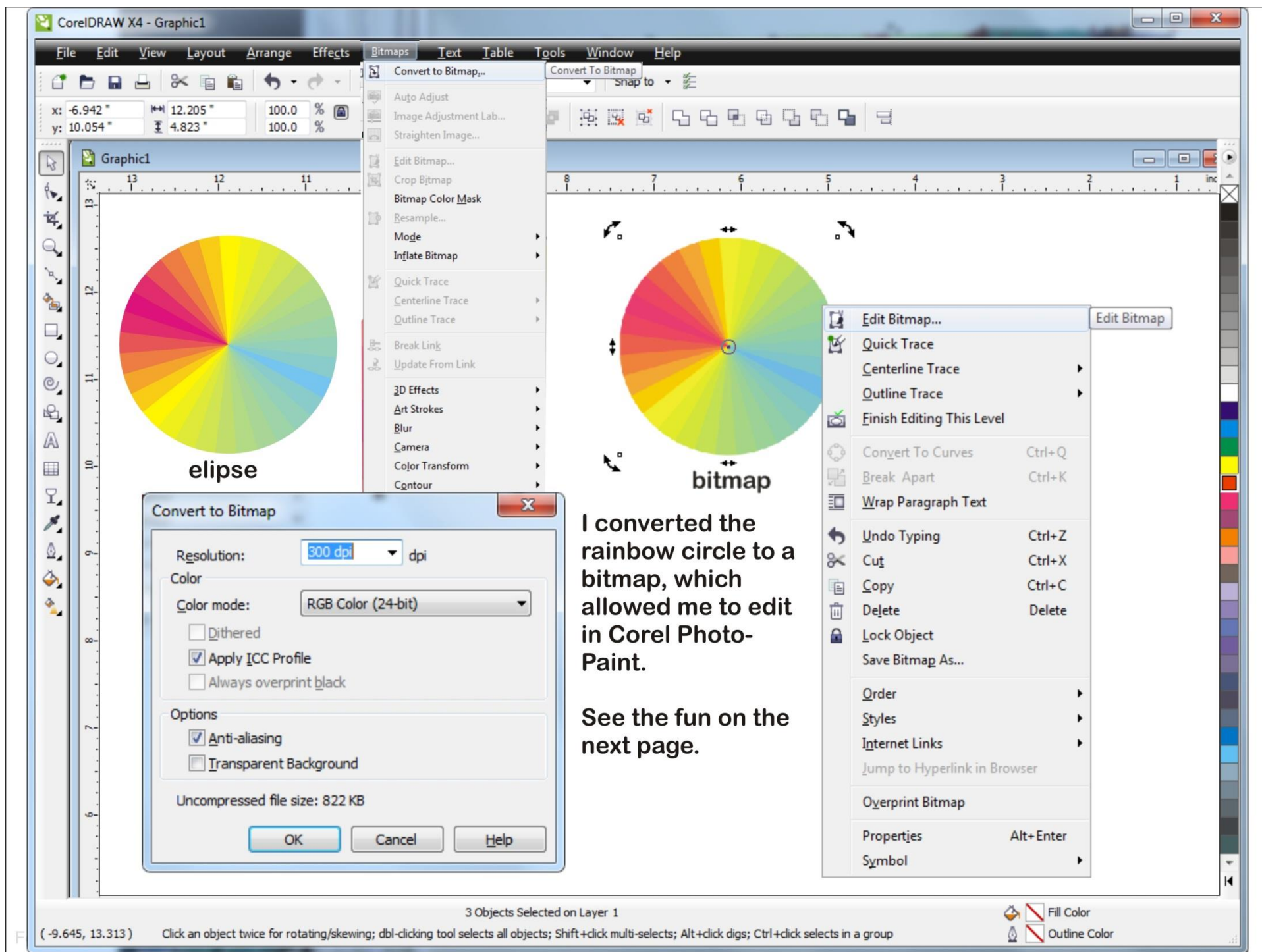
Printer sheets are available from several different companies.

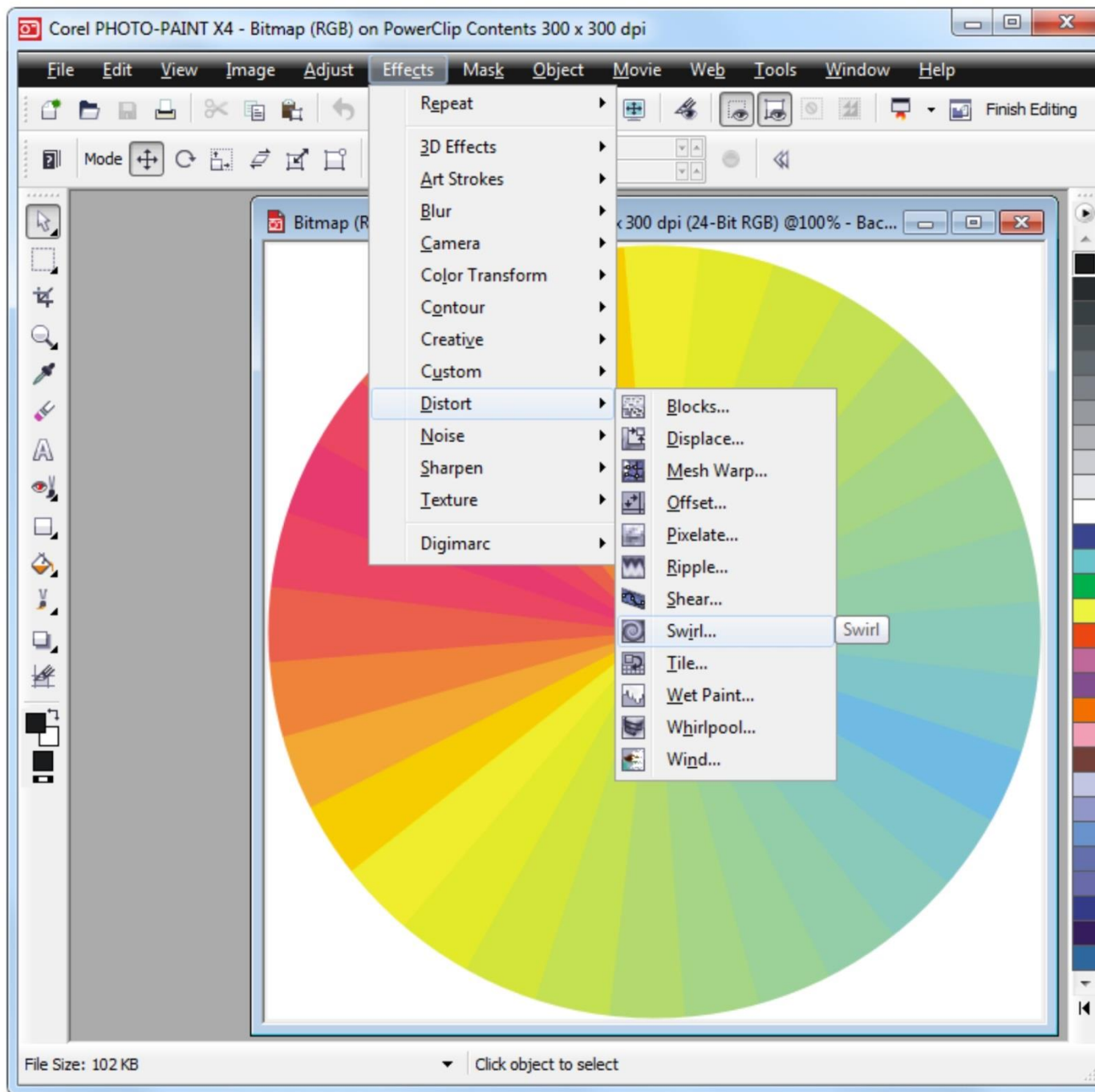




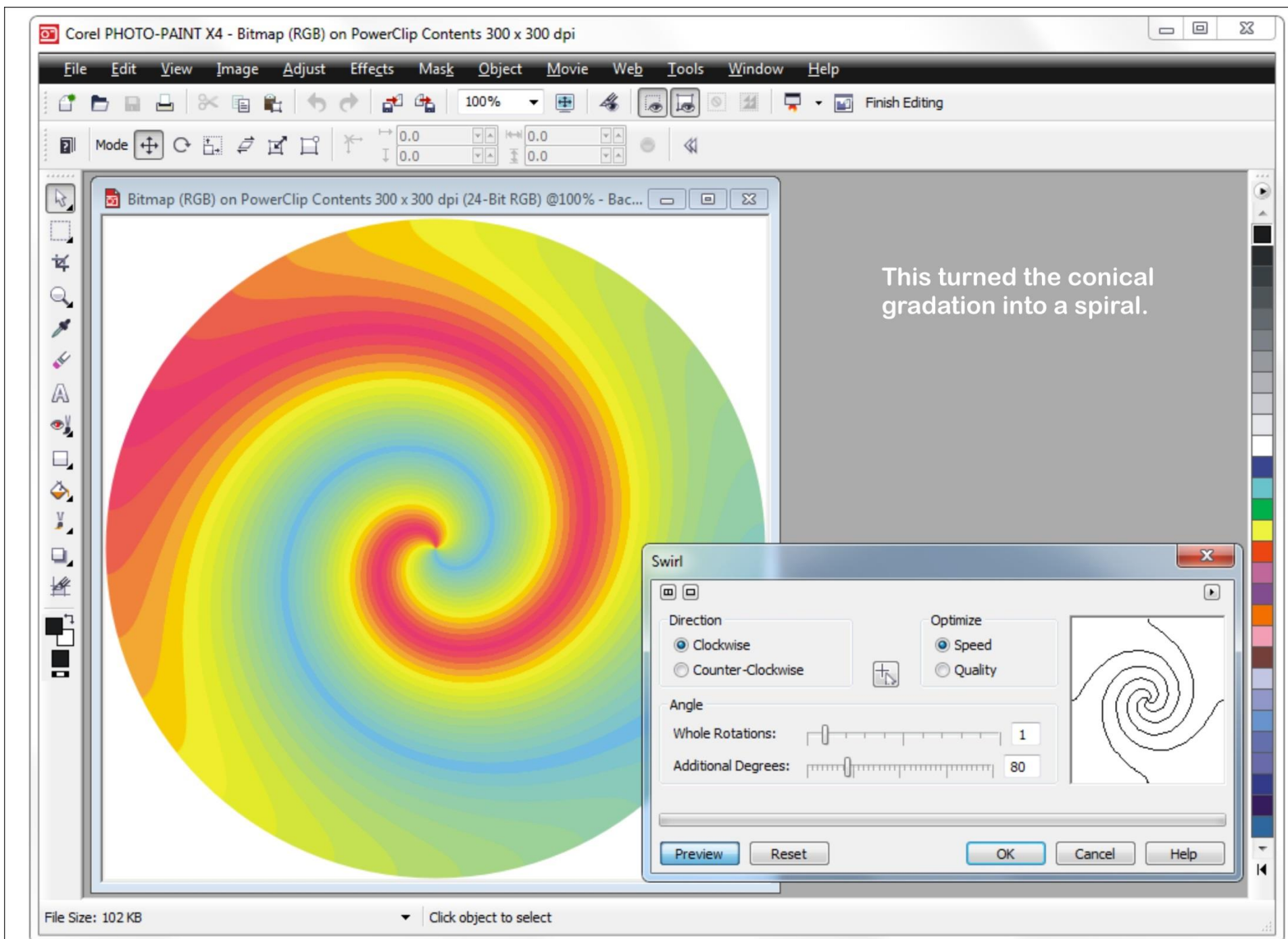


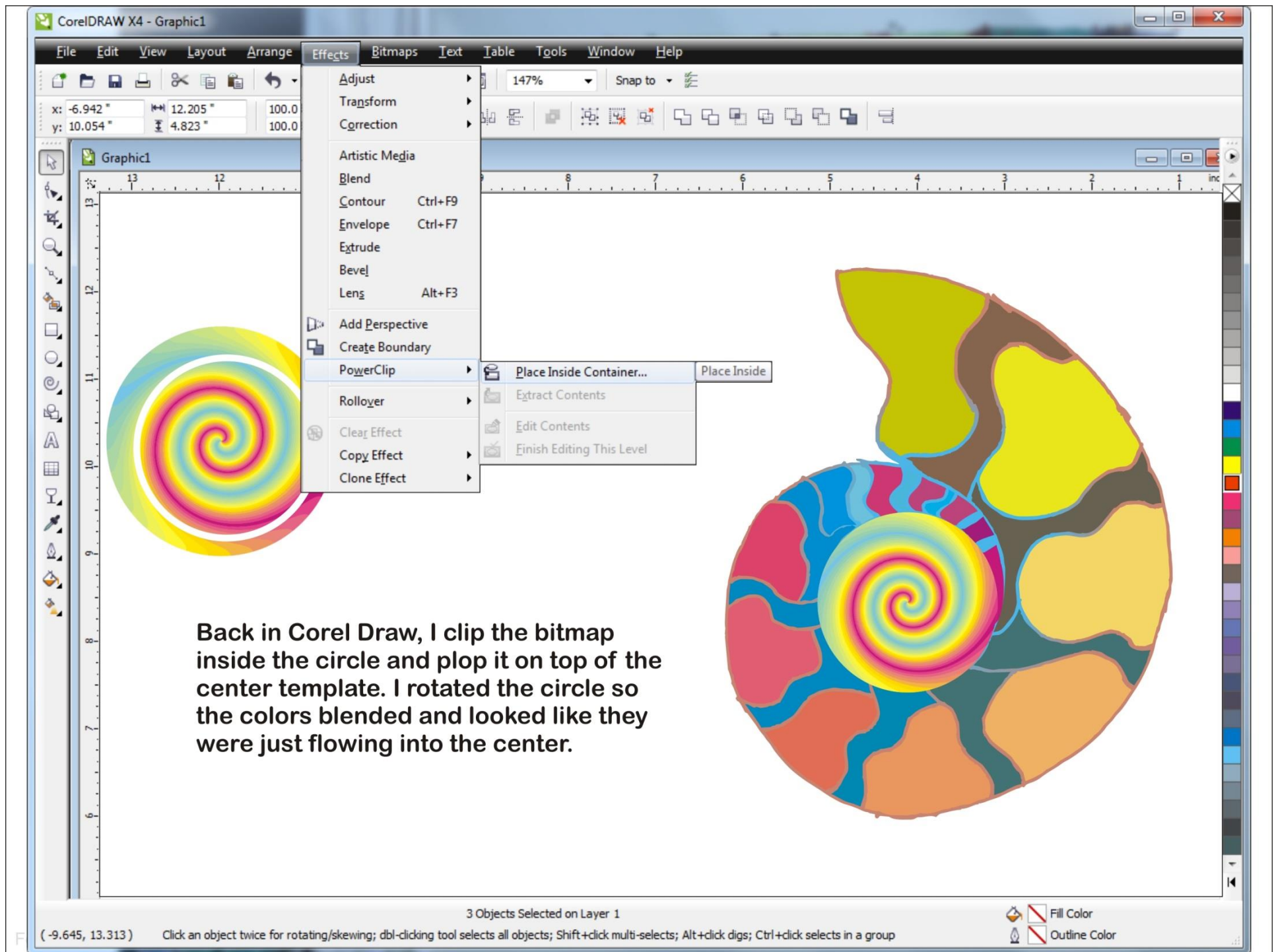
For the center circle I drew a perfect circle, using the ellipse tool, and filled it with a conical, rainbow gradation.

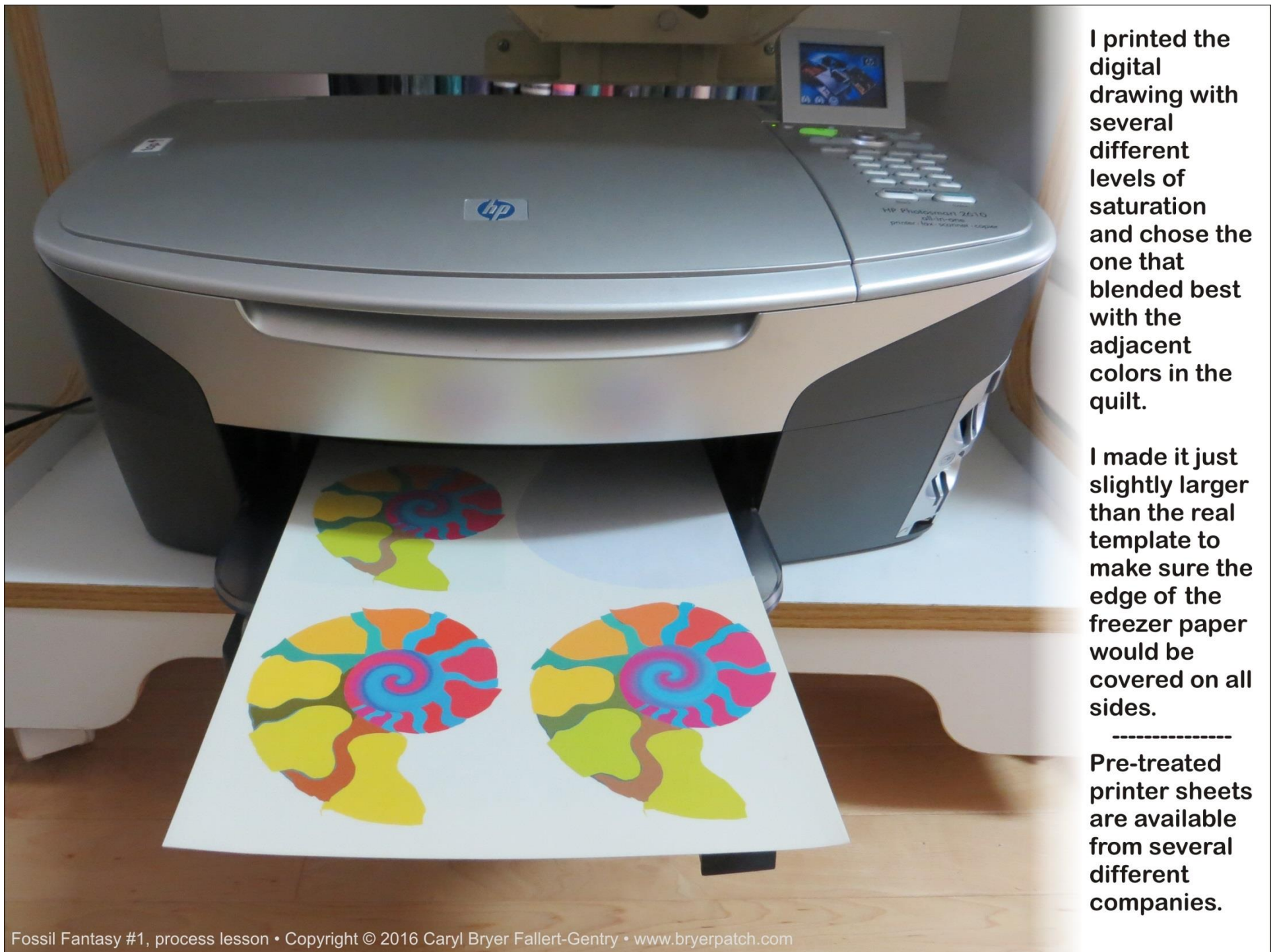




In Corel Photo-Paint, I chose a function under Effects / Distort / Swirl.







I printed the digital drawing with several different levels of saturation and chose the one that blended best with the adjacent colors in the quilt.

I made it just slightly larger than the real template to make sure the edge of the freezer paper would be covered on all sides.

Pre-treated printer sheets are available from several different companies.

Here I have adding appliqued shapes on the inside edge of most of the chamber templates.



The shapes were traced from the freezer paper drawing onto paper-backed fusible web. I added a little extra width where they fall along the seams so they would extend into the seam allowances.

By laying each template on a light box, I can see the outline of the applique on the freezer paper and align it exactly as it was drawn. At this point they are just fused down. The edges will be stitched down later.

I used indelible black marker to make dark shadows along the outside edges of the chamber templates in the second and third wraps of the spiral.



With the template lying on a light box, I traced each shape with an ultra-fine point marker, then filled in the rest of the shape with a heavier marker.

The fine line creates a bit of a resist, so the ink is less likely to migrate into areas where it is not wanted.

With the heat turned all the way up, I iron each piece face-down over a piece of copier paper to remove any excess ink.



Beginning with the digitally printed shape in the center, I pieced together all of the templates up to the point where the pink applique shapes start.

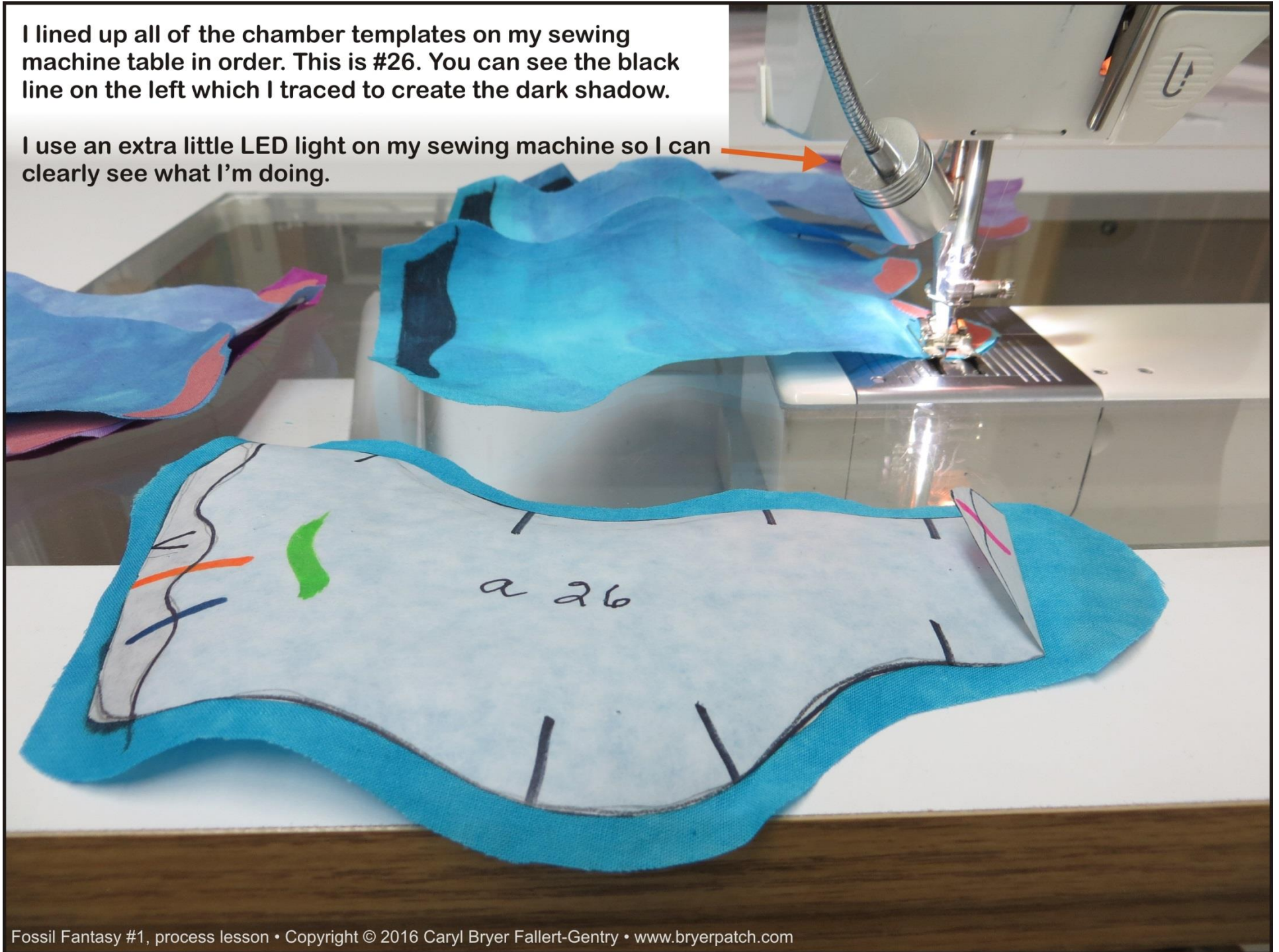
To join the templates, I use a technique I developed in 1989 that I call “appliecing”

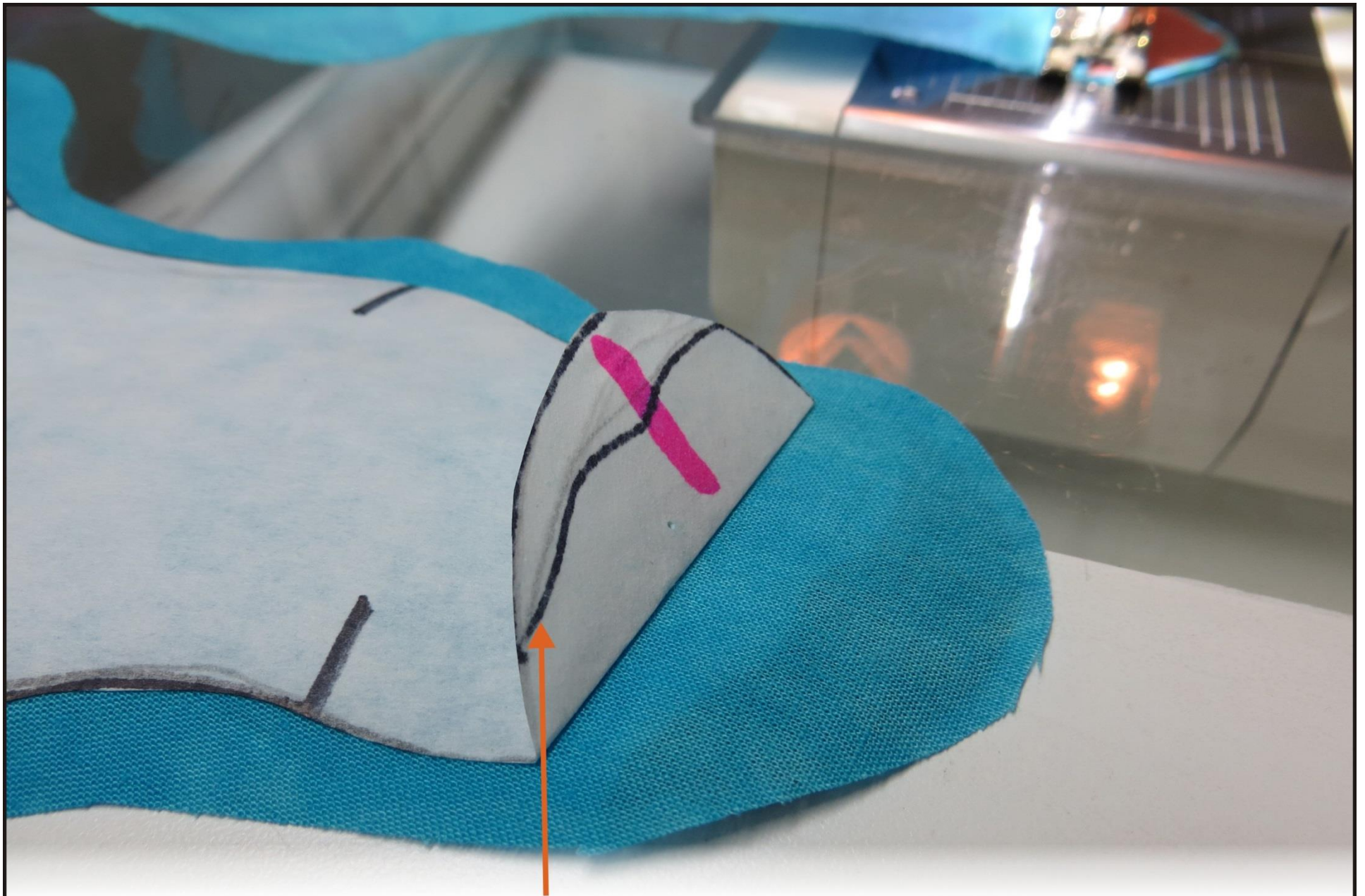
I’ll share more details about this technique later.

Now we’re ready to stitch down the edges of the appliques.

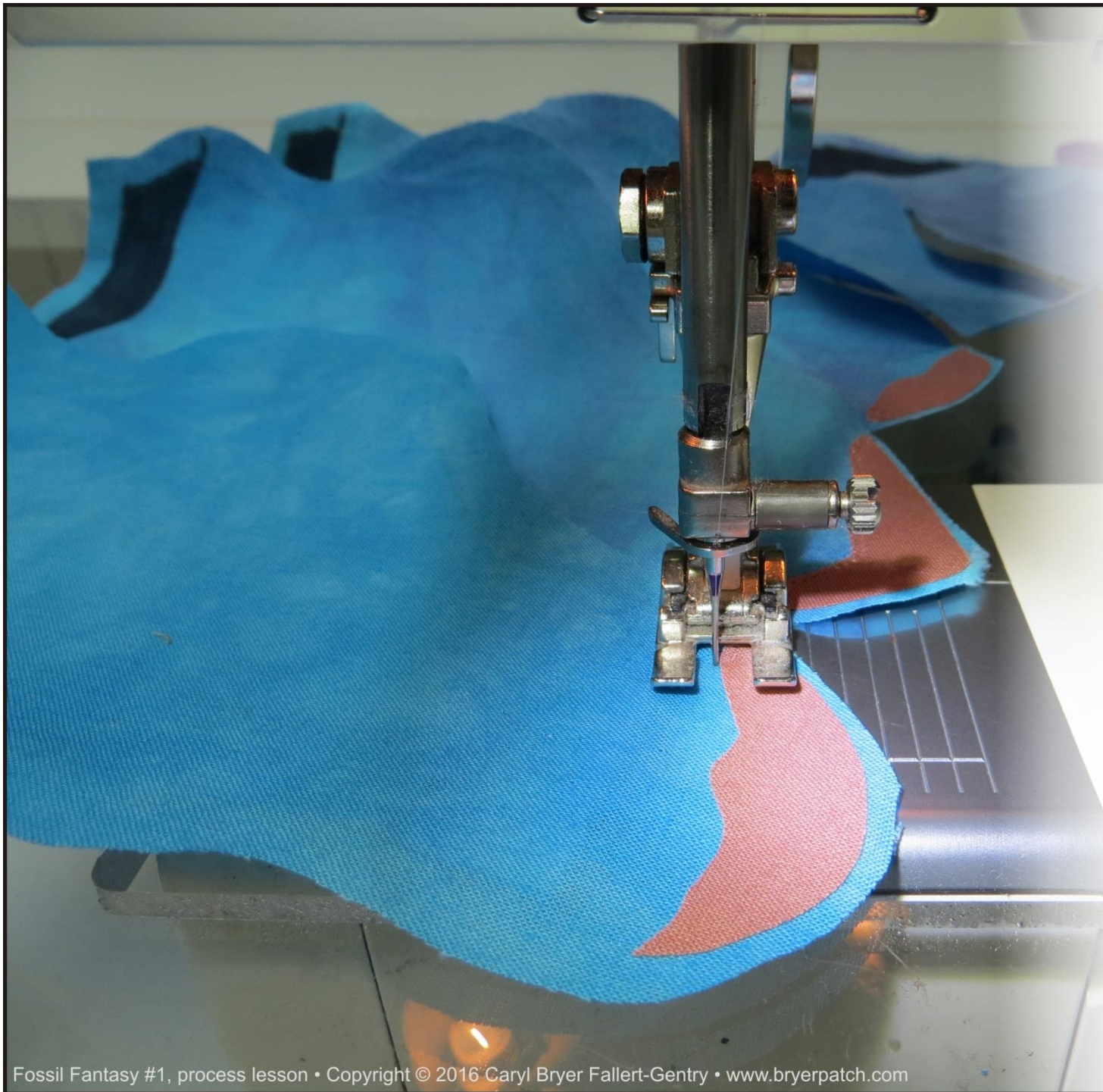
I lined up all of the chamber templates on my sewing machine table in order. This is #26. You can see the black line on the left which I traced to create the dark shadow.

I use an extra little LED light on my sewing machine so I can clearly see what I'm doing.





This black line defines the shape of the applique. I peel the paper back a little beyond that line and fold it out of the way.



The machine is threaded with invisible, polyester monofilament. The needle is a Schmetz Microtex Sharp 60/8. I use this very fine, sharp needle so I don't poke big holes in my fabric or fray the edges of the applique.

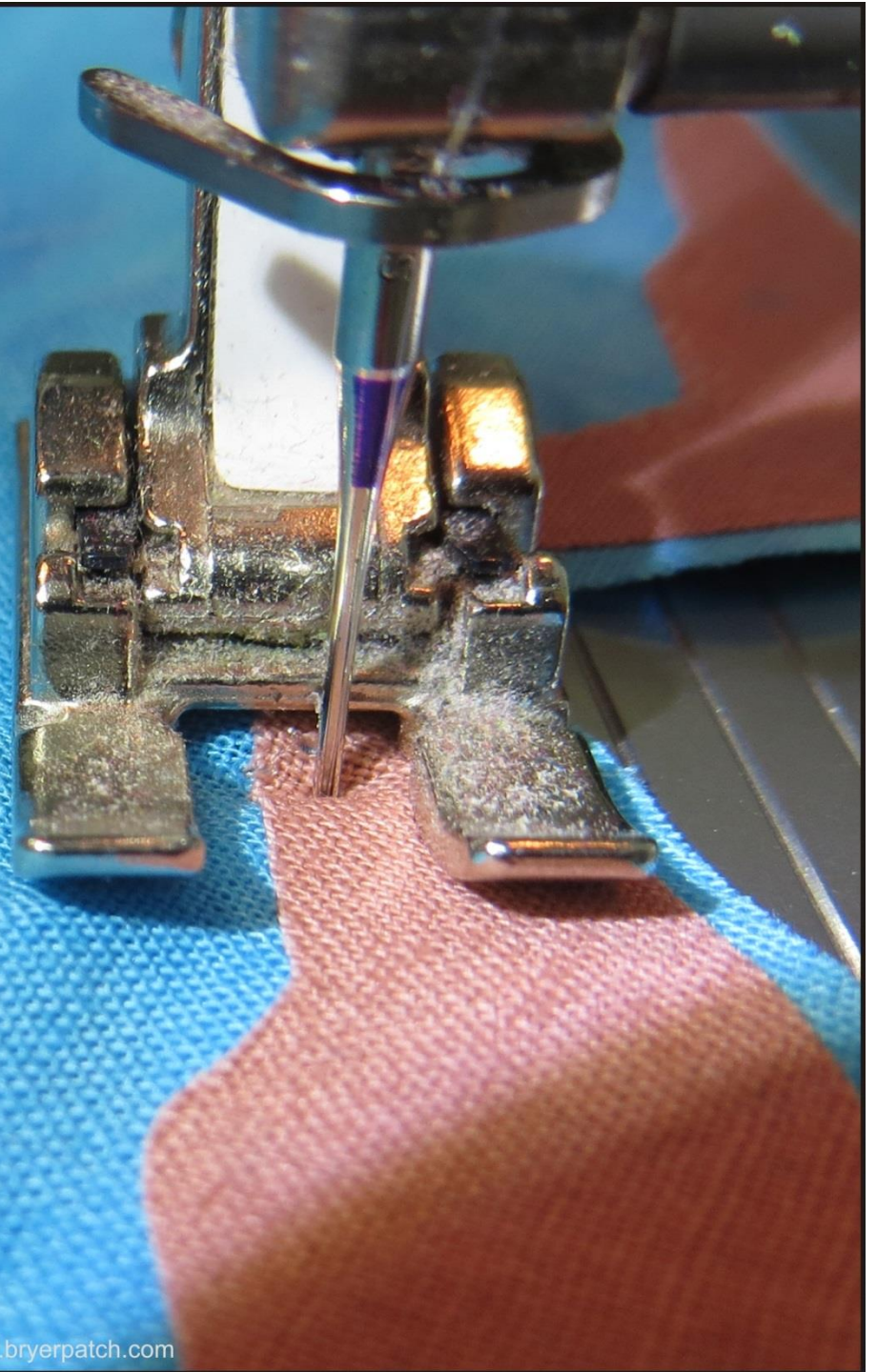
The machine is set for a zigzag stitch at length: 1mm width: 1.5mm This is just wide enough to catch the edge and prevent it from fraying. As you can see, when the needle swings to the left, it barely clears the edge.

I use an open-toed embroidery foot so I can see where I'm going.

When the needle swings to the right, it is catching 4-5 threads in the fabric.

Naturally, you will not be able to see this clearly even with 20-20 vision.

Since my vision is more on the middle age side, I work with a clip-on, fold-down magnifier, attached to my regular glasses when I'm doing this kind of stitching.





I chain-sewed all of my templates in order. That means I stopped at the edge of each piece and, without breaking the thread, sewed onto the edge of the next piece. In this way, all of the pieces are joined together in order. I cut them apart, one at a time, iron the freezer paper back to the fabric, and put them back on the work wall in order.

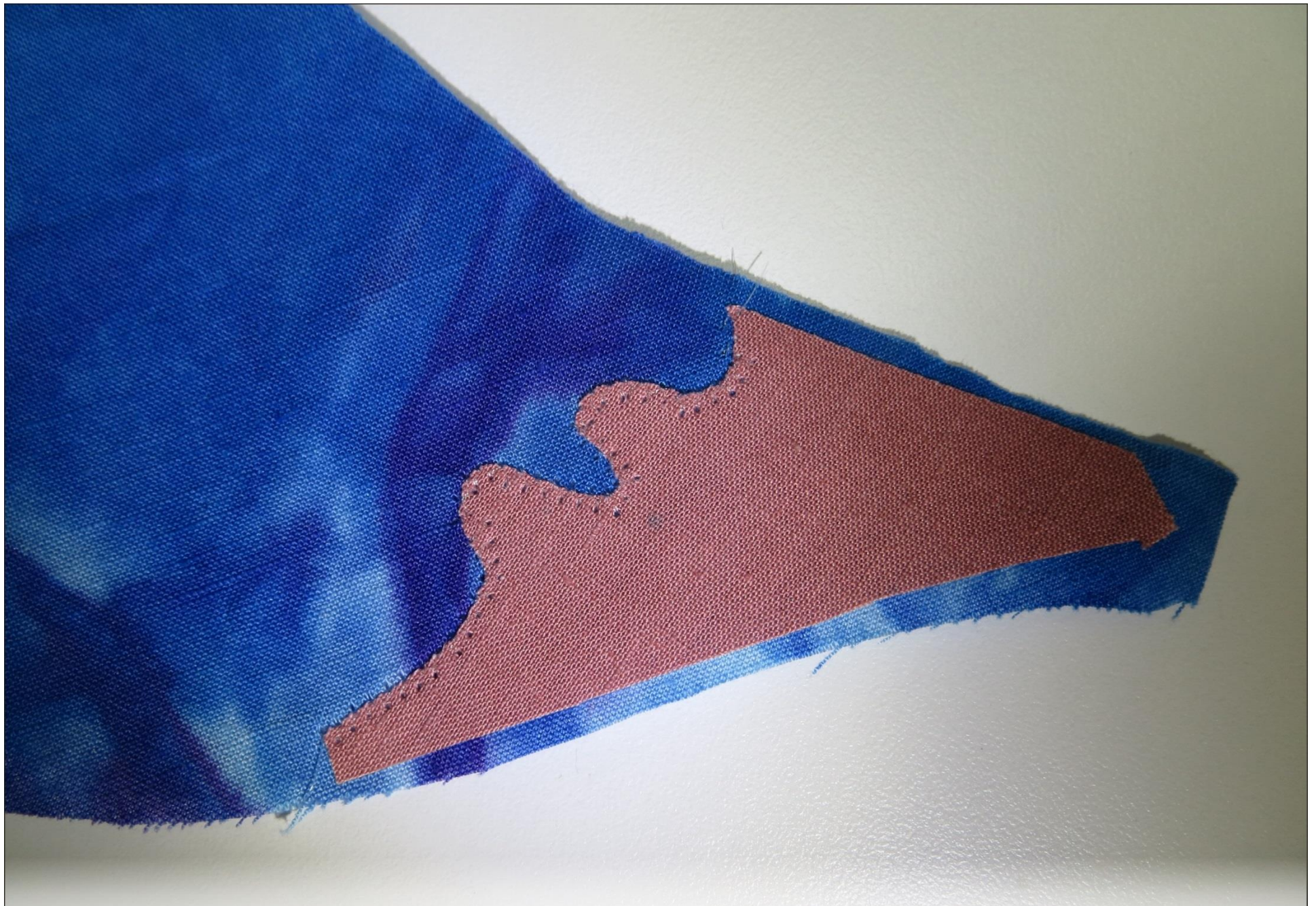
It is important to iron the freezer paper back into place because you will need it to stabilize the edges when you applique.

This is, by far, the best iron I have ever owned. It is a Reliable Digital Velocity. It has two steam settings, and you can kill the steam with the click of a button, without turning down the heat. It has an auto-shut-off feature, which can be disabled. It holds a lot of water, and best of all, after four years of hard use, it still doesn't leak!!

It's a little pricey, but well worth it.



My ironing table, made from a 36" wide hollow-core door and a custom table base, is covered with a silicone fabric, which I was able to buy by the yard from the ironing board cover manufacturing company. It is very slippery, and never burns. It is the best surface I have ever ironed on. I like to iron on a very flat surface, so it has only one layer of thin cotton batting underneath.



This is what the 1mm x 1.5mm stitching looks like on the applique when you are finished.

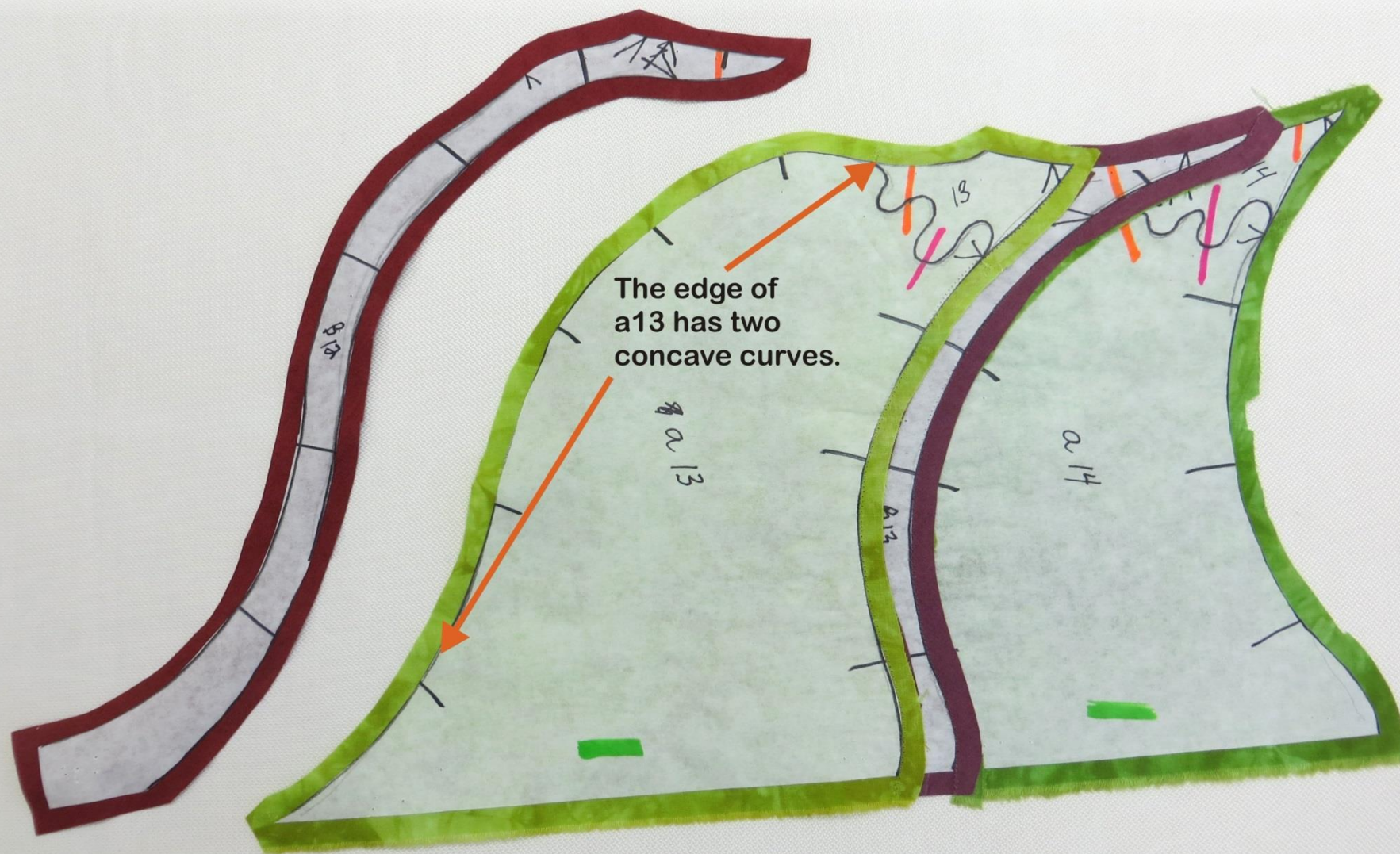
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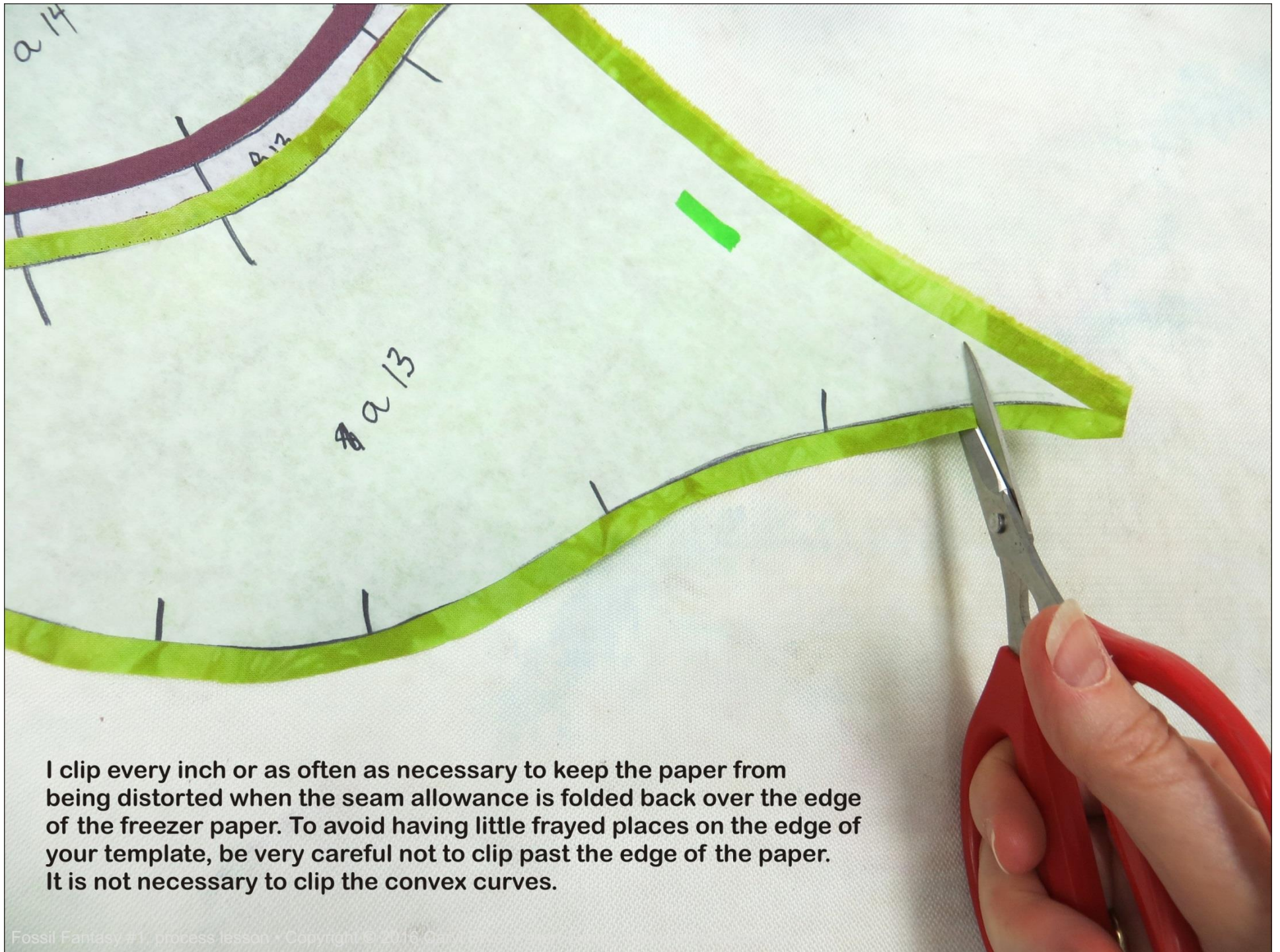


I continue to piece the spiral in sections that are manageable.

When the section I am working on becomes too awkward to handle, I start a new section.

Here are some of the templates on my ironing table. A13, B13, and A14 are already stitched together. Now we are ready to join templates a13 and b12. I will be folding one of the two seam allowances over the edge of the freezer paper. A13 will be easier to fold, so that's the one I choose. The seam allowance on B12 will stay flat for now.

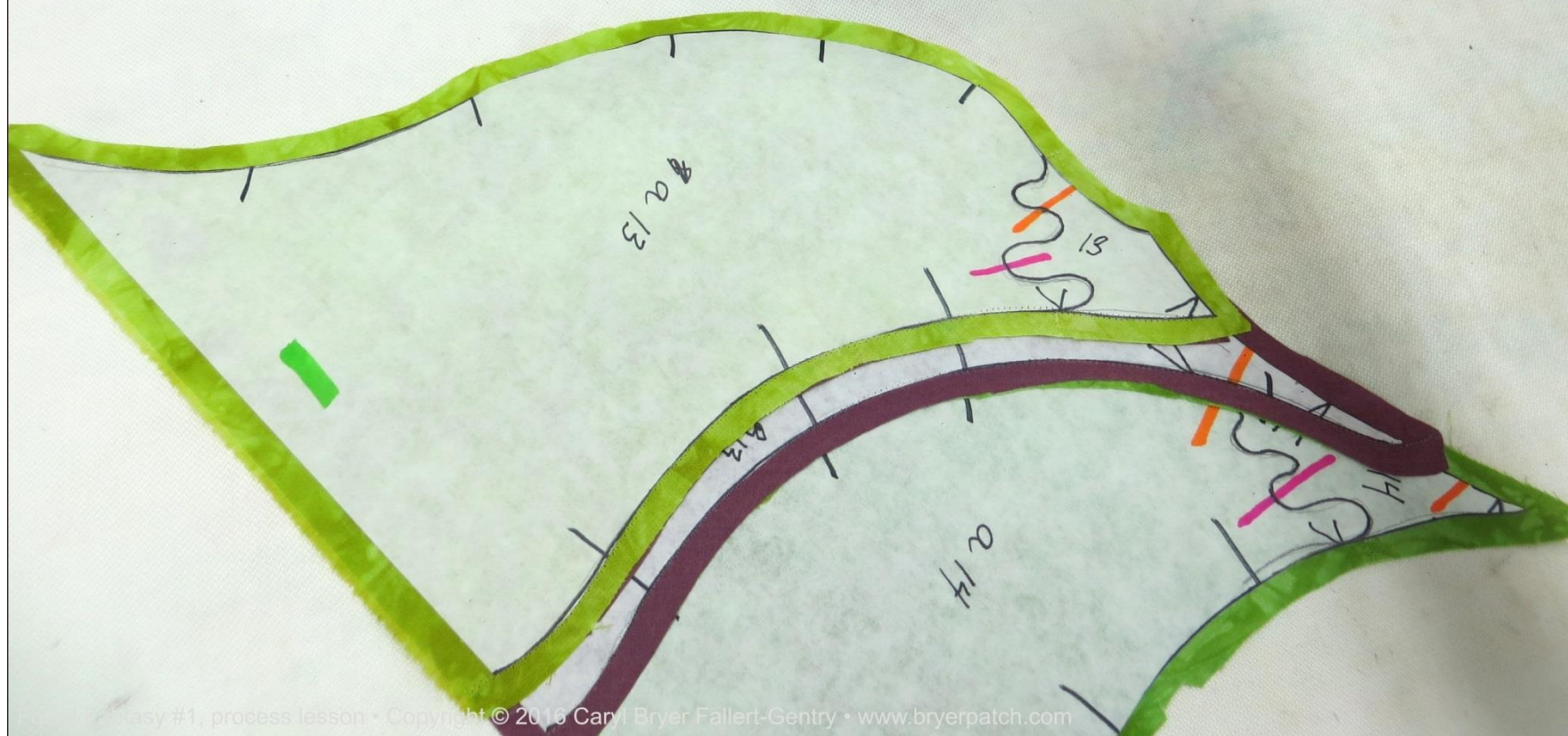




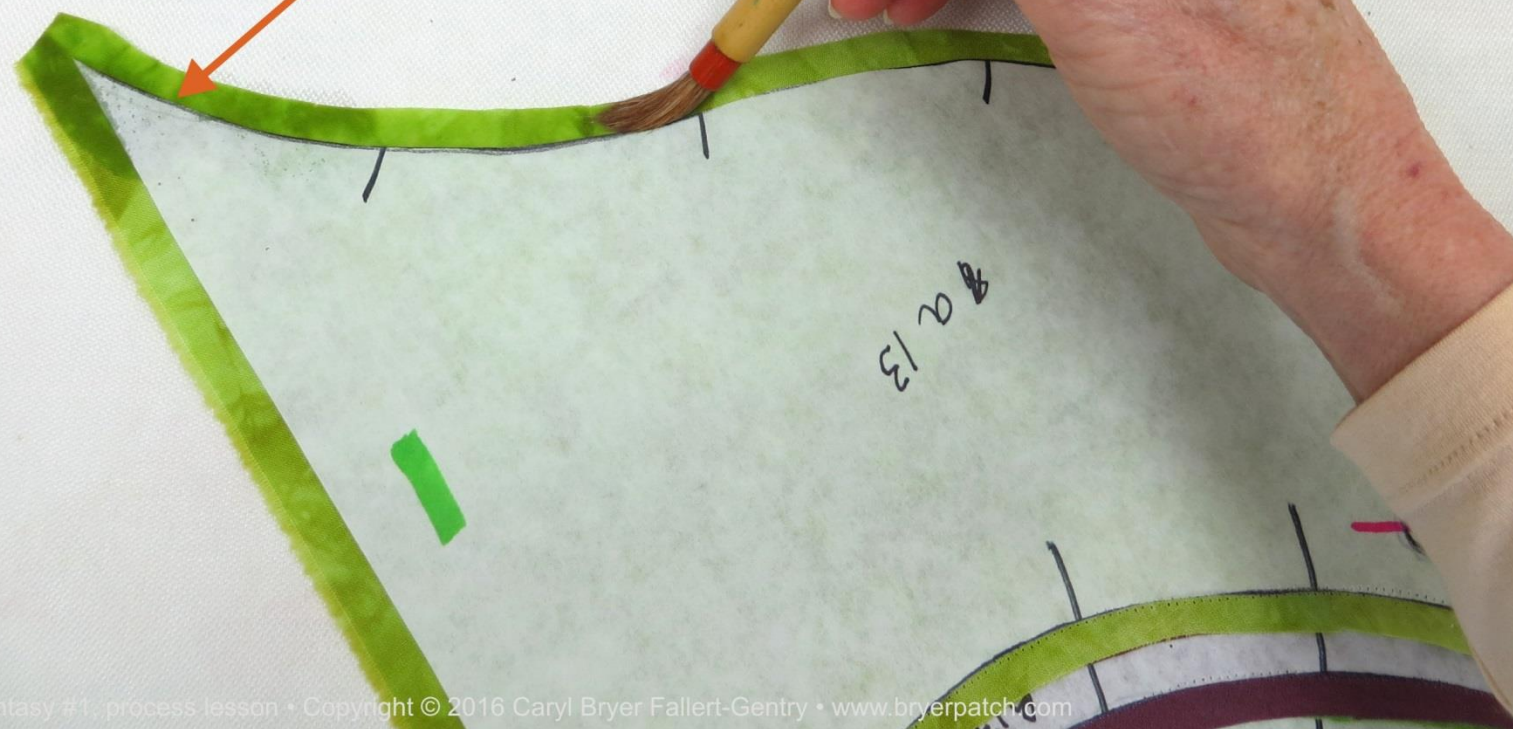
I clip every inch or as often as necessary to keep the paper from being distorted when the seam allowance is folded back over the edge of the freezer paper. To avoid having little frayed places on the edge of your template, be very careful not to clip past the edge of the paper. It is not necessary to clip the convex curves.

I use liquid starch or sizing like Best Press (my favorite because there is an unscented choice). I spray it into a container with an airtight lid. This is an old film cartridge that fits exactly into the little center cup in an aerosol can lid, making it virtually spill-proof. I dip a brush or cotton swab into the starch and use it to moisten the edge that will be folded.

This is not glue. It doesn't stick down the seam allowance. It just keeps it crisp enough that it doesn't pop up while you are lining it up with the next template.



As you moisten the seam allowance, some of the starch usually runs under the edge of the paper and can make the paper soggy.



I turn off the steam and run the iron along the edge of the paper until it is dry and crisp. This leaves the seam allowance just slightly damp, which is perfect.



Carefully fold the seam allowance over the edge of the freezer paper, easing in the fullness on the convex curves so you don't get pleats along the edge. The clips on the concave curves open up and allow the seam allowance to lie perfectly flat. You want the fold to lie exactly along the edge of the paper.

I run a little glue stick along the folded-back seam allowance. Just enough to hold it to the next template while I carry it to the sewing machine.

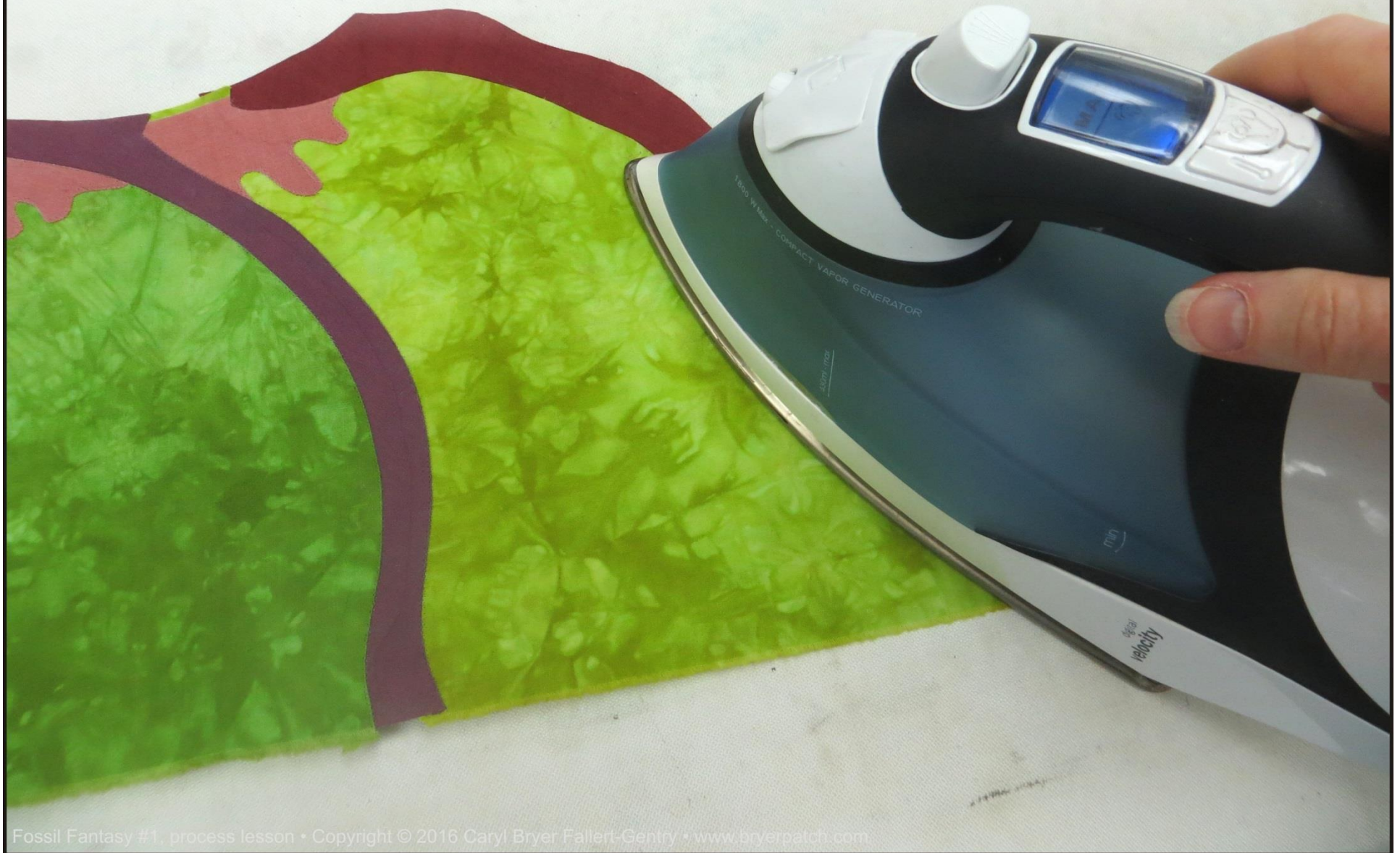
As you can see, the edge of the applique gets folded over right along with the rest of the seam allowance.

On a light box, where I can see what I'm doing, I overlap the seam allowances and line up the edges of the paper and all of the registration marks. Now you can understand why it's a good idea to make big dark registration marks.

Unless you are working with very dense, dark fabric, it is easier to line up the edges with the right side facing up.

Finger-press the edges in place until the glue sticks. I'm just using kindergarten glue-stick; Elmer's or Scotch or whatever comes in a 24 pack at the big box store.

Iron the glued templates with steam. This will assure that everything is lying perfectly flat and it will also dry the glue so it doesn't gum up your sewing machine needle.





Set your machine for a 1mm x 1mm zigzag stitch. This is narrower than the stitch we used for the applique. Again, I am using invisible polyester monofilament and a sharp, #60/8 needle so I don't punch big holes along the edge of my template. Here I am just catching 1mm (about 2 threads) along the edge of the fold. This is a good time to get out your good glasses or a magnifier, so you can see what you are doing.



When the needle swings to the right you want it to swing clear of the fold, but just barely. Ideally the needle will be touching the edge of the fold but not piercing it. If you hit the fold with both swings of the needle, the stitching will show more, and it will be more difficult to remove the paper.

Stitching like this just barely perforates the edge of the paper and it will pop right out when you are ready to remove it.



Here's what the seam looks like after it has been stitched. Even at this magnification, it is virtually invisible. Most of the little holes you see will close up after the paper has been removed and the fabric has been steamed.

Here are the two
templates you
just saw me sew.

a13
b12

I continue to piece
the spiral in
sections that are
manageable.

The newest section
has 12 templates: 6
chambers and 6
spines.



Here all of the sections have been finished and it is time to join them.

If the paper begins to make joining big sections awkward, just remove any paper that is not along a raw edge that still needs to be pieced.

At this point I removed all the paper that was along the outside edges of the quilt. This meant ripping most of the chamber templates and just leaving 2"-3" of paper along the edge of the spiral seam in the first wrap of the spiral, i.e. I would have removed the paper outside the white line.



Getting rid of the excess paper makes handling the long, complicated, last seams much easier.

When I'm ready to sew the final seams I often use a combination of glue and pins to hold the pieces together so they don't pull themselves apart while I'm running them through the sewing machine.

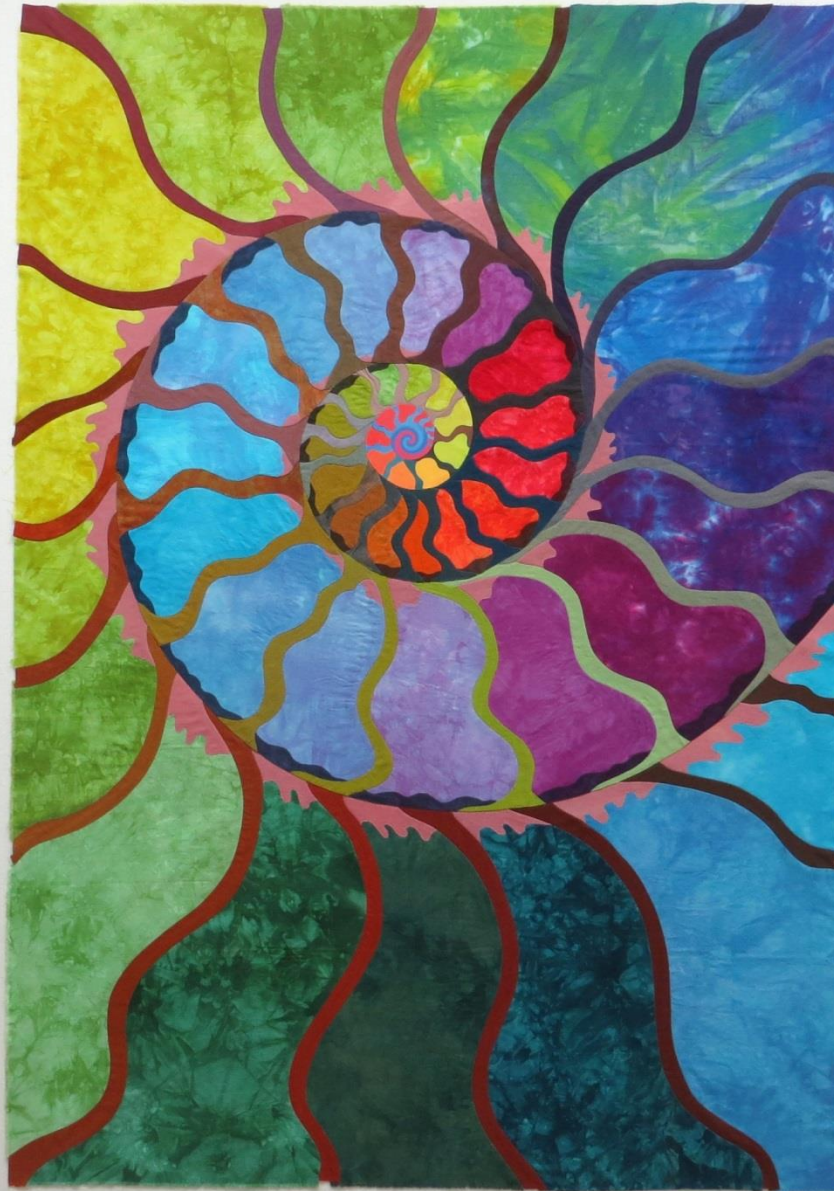
I use those very long, thin, sharp pins to get as little distortion as possible.

While I'm stitching the seam, the pins are removed one at a time as they get 2"-3" from the needle.

I keep a small light stick under the clear plastic insert in my sewing cabinet, so I can check to be sure everything is still properly aligned before it reaches the needle and I stitch it down.



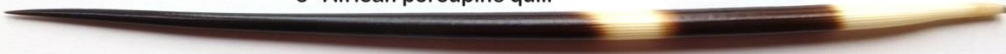
Finally...
here is the finished
quilt top.



I use the sharp end of an African porcupine quill to loosen the edges of the freezer paper and the blunt end to release the paper in tight corners. You could also use the cut-off end of an artist's brush.



8" African porcupine quill



cut-off end of a water color brush



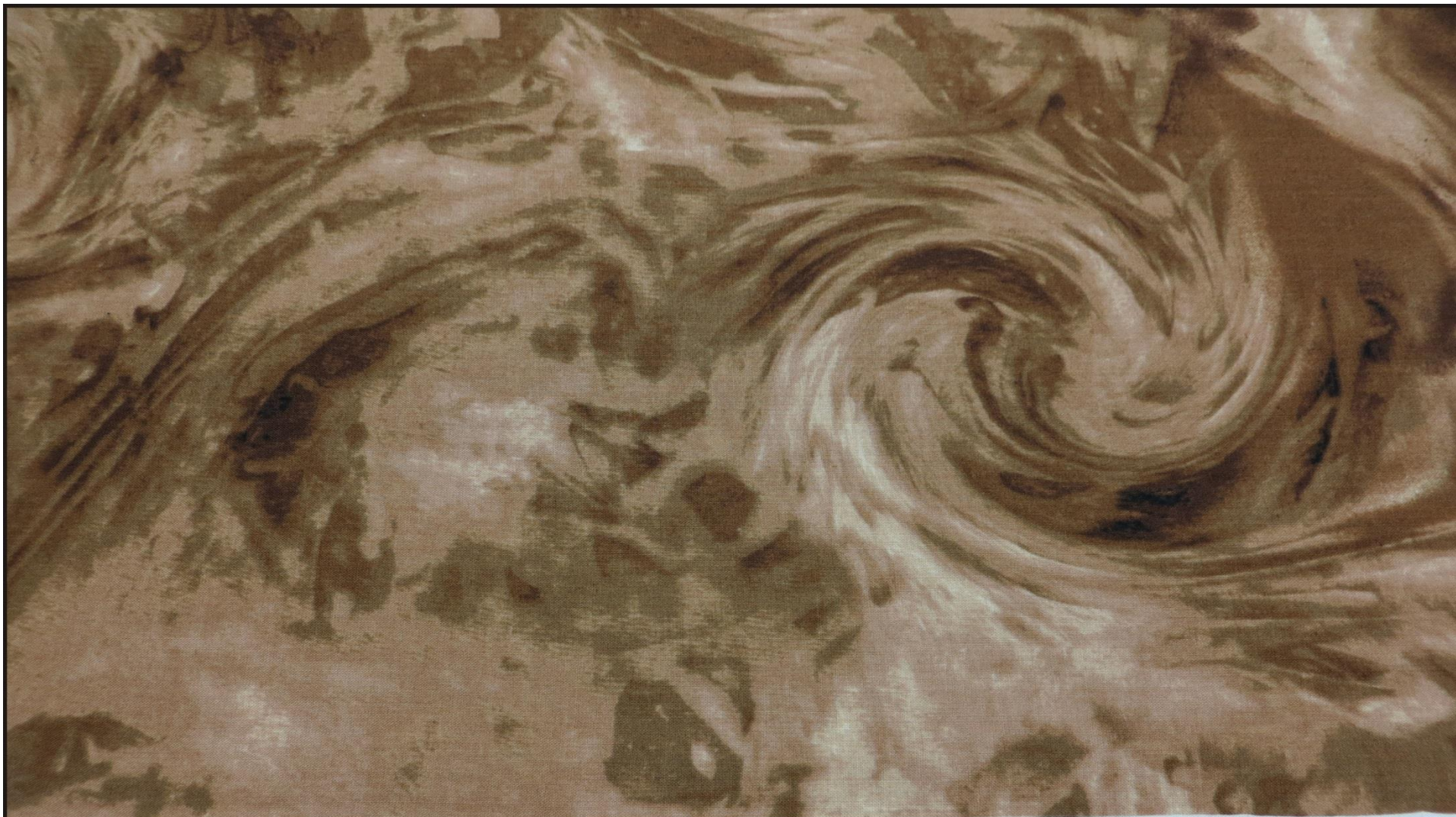
When the quilt top is finished, I cut a piece of batting that is about 2"-3" larger than the quilt top and spray it very lightly with repositionable adhesive. I **NEVER** use this indoors. I a-frame two pieces of 40" x 60" foamcore and do all of my spraying outdoors. I use 3M Photo Mount because it is presumably archival and dries in just a few minutes, which

- A) makes the job of positioning the fabric much easier
- B) doesn't gum up the needle when I'm quilting
- C) allows me to reuse the foamcore almost indefinitely.

The adhesive will re-activate with ironing.

Some of the other available adhesives remain tacky.





Caryl Bryer Fallert for BENARTEX www.Benartex.com © 100% Cotton Screen Prints 01147



For the backing fabric I chose a fabric from my Atmospheres collection for Benartex with a swirling pattern that echos the spiral design of the quilt top.



I cut the backing fabric a couple of inches larger than the quilt top, center it over the side of the batting with the adhesive and iron it to the batting with steam. The dry adhesive will reactivate with the heat and cling to the fabric, preventing it from shifting and puckering during quilting.

Above the ironing table, you can see that I have pinned more of the backing fabric for making the hanging sleeve, so I don't have to search for matching fabric after the quilting is finished.

The view out the window behind me is looking over Port Townsend Bay and Puget Sound.





After the backing is ironed to the batting, I take it outside again and spray the front side of the batting with adhesive.

After it dries, I position the quilt top in the middle, smoothing it to remove any puckers.



Then I steam it to activate the adhesive and it will cling to the batting.

The batting I am using is Fairfield Nature-Fil, a 50-50 blend of cotton and bamboo.

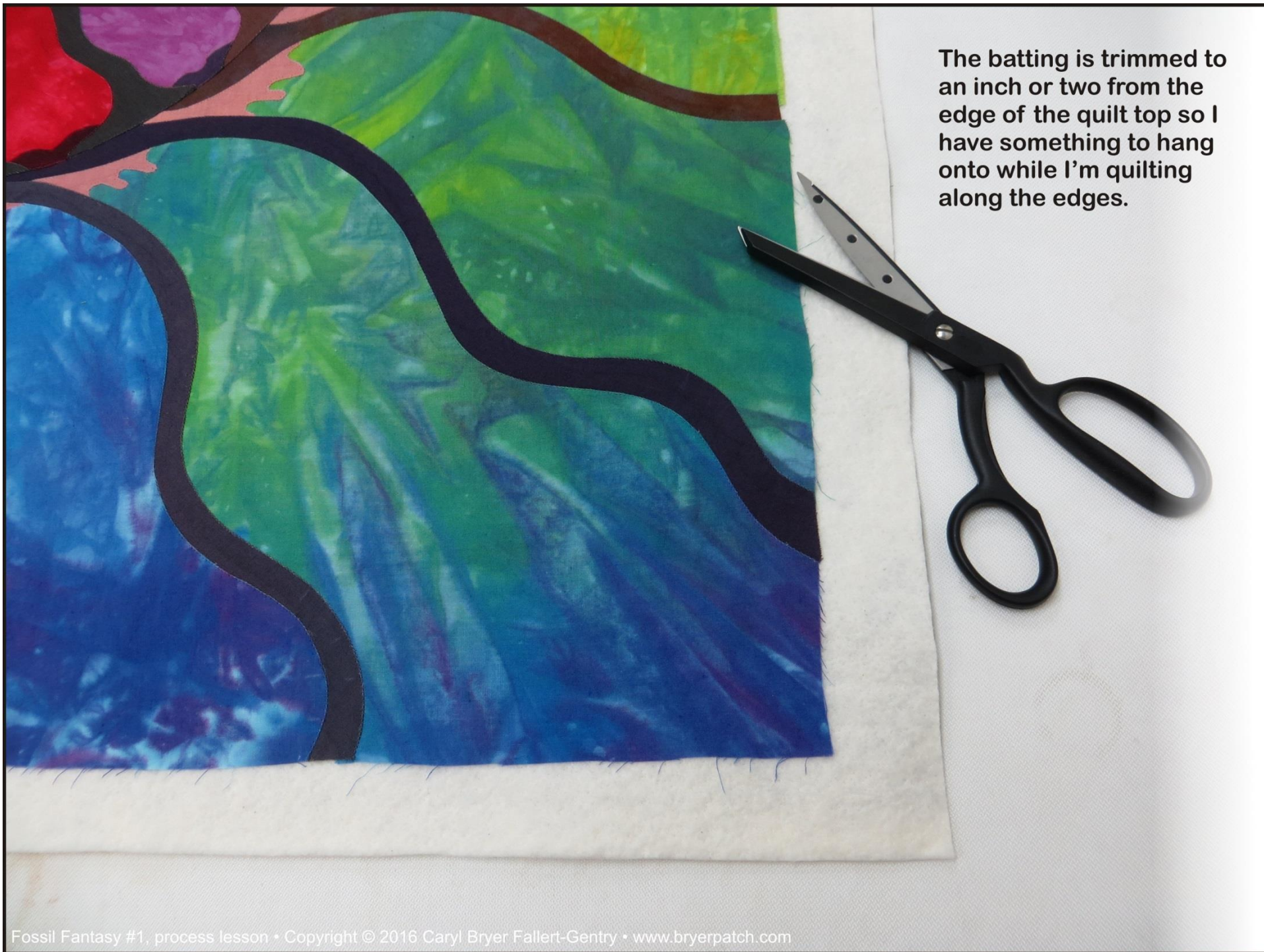
As you can see, the cord of my iron comes down from the ceiling so it doesn't drag across my ironing table.

We had an outlet installed in the ceiling above the ironing table. A cord reel extension cord is plugged into it and hangs from the ceiling.

With a big binder clip, I attach the excess cord from the iron so it doesn't drag on the table. I can lengthen or shorten the cord just by pulling on it.

Another cord reel hangs in the center of the studio over the drawing table so I can have power anywhere in the room without crawling behind furniture to find an outlet.





The batting is trimmed to an inch or two from the edge of the quilt top so I have something to hang onto while I'm quilting along the edges.



Now we're ready to quilt.

My three sewing cabinets are pushed together to form one large, level surface to support the quilt.

A couple of Supreme Free-Motion Sliders™ are taped to the table tops to make them more slippery and smooth out the seams between the tables.

A second sewing machine, which I often use for piecing, is lowered below the table top for now.



I use a backless, rolling stool when I'm quilting so I can easily access the thread drawers, which will be just behind my back. I found that I almost never used the back of the chair and it got in the way when I was switching between the thread drawers and the sewing machine. A rigid floor protector is under the stool.

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Cones of thread are stored in Elfa wire drawers in a closet behind my quilting machine. The closet doors were removed and stored in the basement to make better use of this space.



Cones of thread are stored by type and color. Most of the thread I use for quilting is #40 acrylic or polyester top-stitching thread.



Smaller spools are stored in my regular sewing cabinets, also according to color.





1/16" strips of aluminum bar were cut the exact depth of the drawers to act as dividers so the thread doesn't get jumbled.



As you can see, it will be easy to reach all of the thread from where I am sitting. The sewing machine is cast iron, and I use a couple of magnetic, LED, gooseneck lights so I can have light exactly where I need it. I am also using clip-on, fold-down magnifiers on my glasses. They quickly flip up and out of the way when it's time to change thread or wind a bobbin, and flip down when it's time to thread a needle or stitch. The super sliders help smooth out the slight difference in height between the tables.

The machine I use for quilting started life as a factory/industrial Bernina. In 1999, it was rebuilt, souped up, and customized to my specifications by Neal lund (www.legacyquilt.com) who renamed it Legacy. Neal no longer manufactures Legacy machines but did work as a consultant in the development of the HandiQuilter Sweet 16. Unlike the HQ 16, this machine has a traditional orientation, i.e. the quilter faces the front of the machine rather than the needle end. This allows the bulk of a large quilt to be supported behind the machine, rather than bunched up under the head.



I use this machine primarily for free-motion quilting, but, unlike both the HQ 16 and the APQS George, this is not exclusively a free-motion machine. It has feed dogs that can be installed in less than 5 minutes for regular sewing and it also has a wide zigzag option. I had it customized so that when I stop with the needle up I can heel back on the foot pedal and the needle will go down to hold the quilt in place while I shift it around. It also has the option of always stopping with the needle down, but I seldom use that while I'm doing free-motion quilting.

Magnets on the front of the machine hold my favorite thread snips within easy reach.





Next to the machine is a drawer stack with all of the accessories that are specific to machine quilting and this machine. I keep a trash can close by to corral loose threads as they are clipped.

I use lots of different colors of thread in my quilting, so before I start any quilting project, I wind lots of bobbins. I generally use the same thread in the bobbin that I use on the top.





I use some kind of gloves with rubberized fingers (in this case Machingers) to help move the quilt more smoothly. I have clamped a metal bookend to the table at the far end as a barrier to prevent the quilt from rubbing against the black rubber drive belt. The feed dogs have been removed and I'm using a darning foot so I can move the fabric freely under the needle. The stitch length is determined by how fast I move my hands and how fast I run the foot pedal.

I get lots of questions about that clamp and pulley thing hanging over my machine. I only used this a couple of times on this quilt because it is small, and I forgot to take pictures.

When I'm working on a larger quilt, the clamps support the weight of the part of the quilt I'm not working on, so I can move the part I am working on more easily. The cord locks make the height of the clamps adjustable. In the Articles section of our website, there is a complete explanation of how to make a simple version of this that clamps onto any sewing table, using hardware that is readily available at your local hardware store.

As soon as I finished taking detailed pictures and writing instructions, my wonderful, scientist-husband, Ron decided the old version looked too tacky and built this new version out of extruded aluminum framing. This version is bolted to the table rather than clamping on.





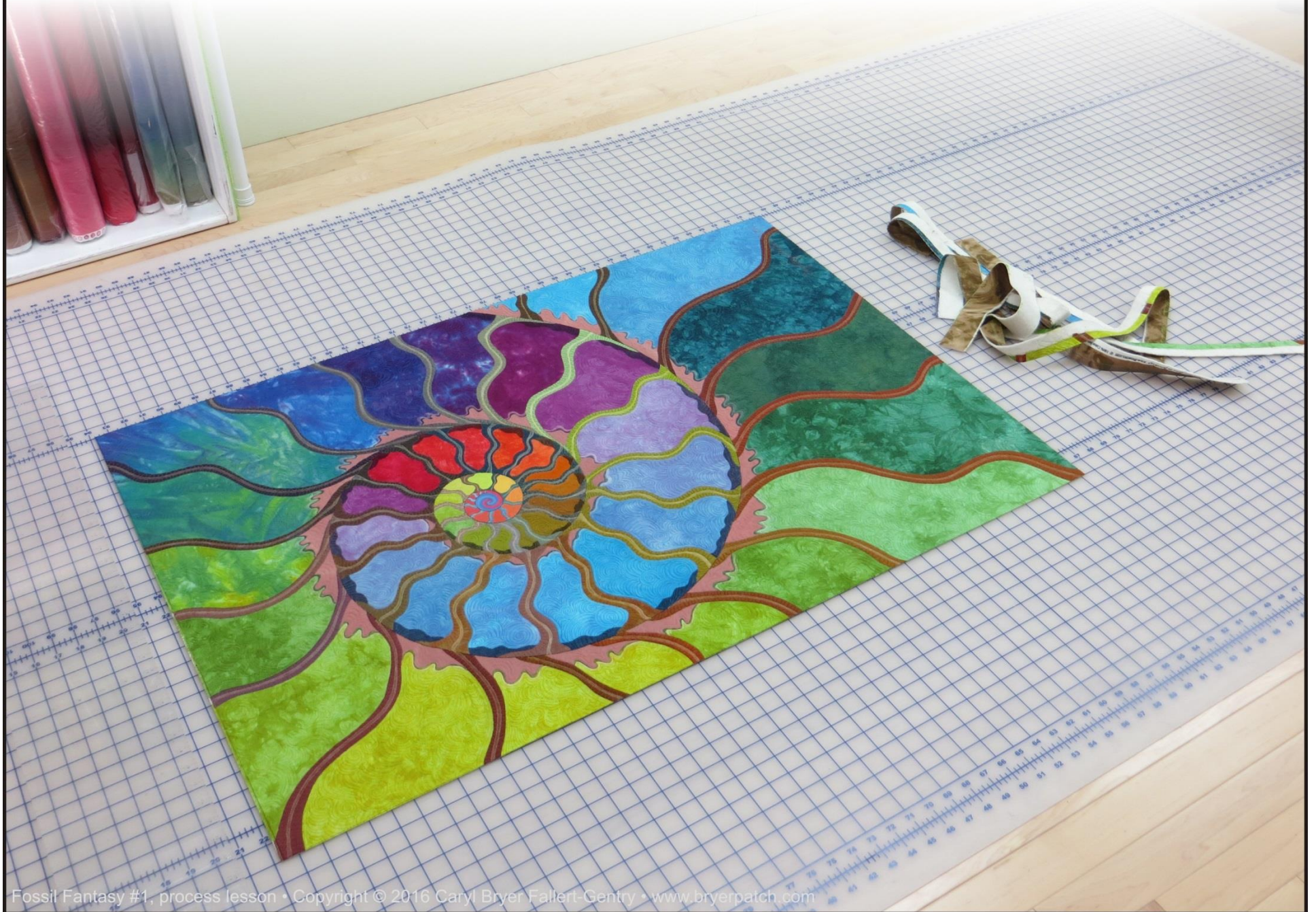
In this picture I'm working on a much larger quilt and although the clamps are not in the picture, you can see that most of the bulk of the quilt is hanging from above the sewing table, and only the part I'm working on is on the table top.

Free instructions for the do-it-yourself version of the quilt cradle are at:
<http://www.bryerpatch.com/faq/machinequilting/mq.htm#Qcradle>



When the quilting is finished, I block the quilt flat with my steam iron and then square it up using an aluminum bar, rotary cutter, and a 5' x 10' gridded cutting mat. I kneel on one end of the bar and hold the other end with my hand to keep it from slipping while I'm making the cut.

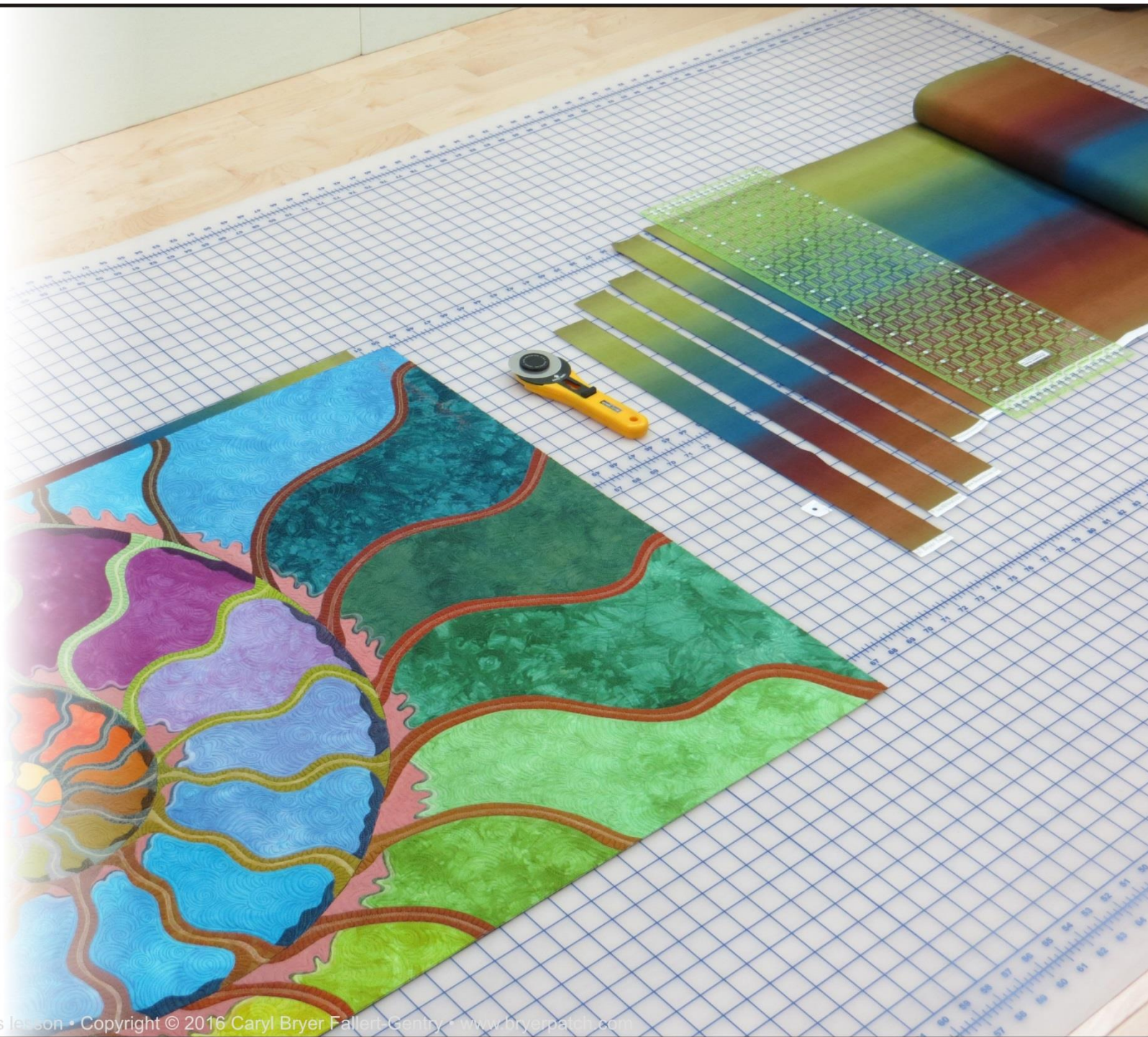
Now the quilt is ready for binding and hanging sleeves.



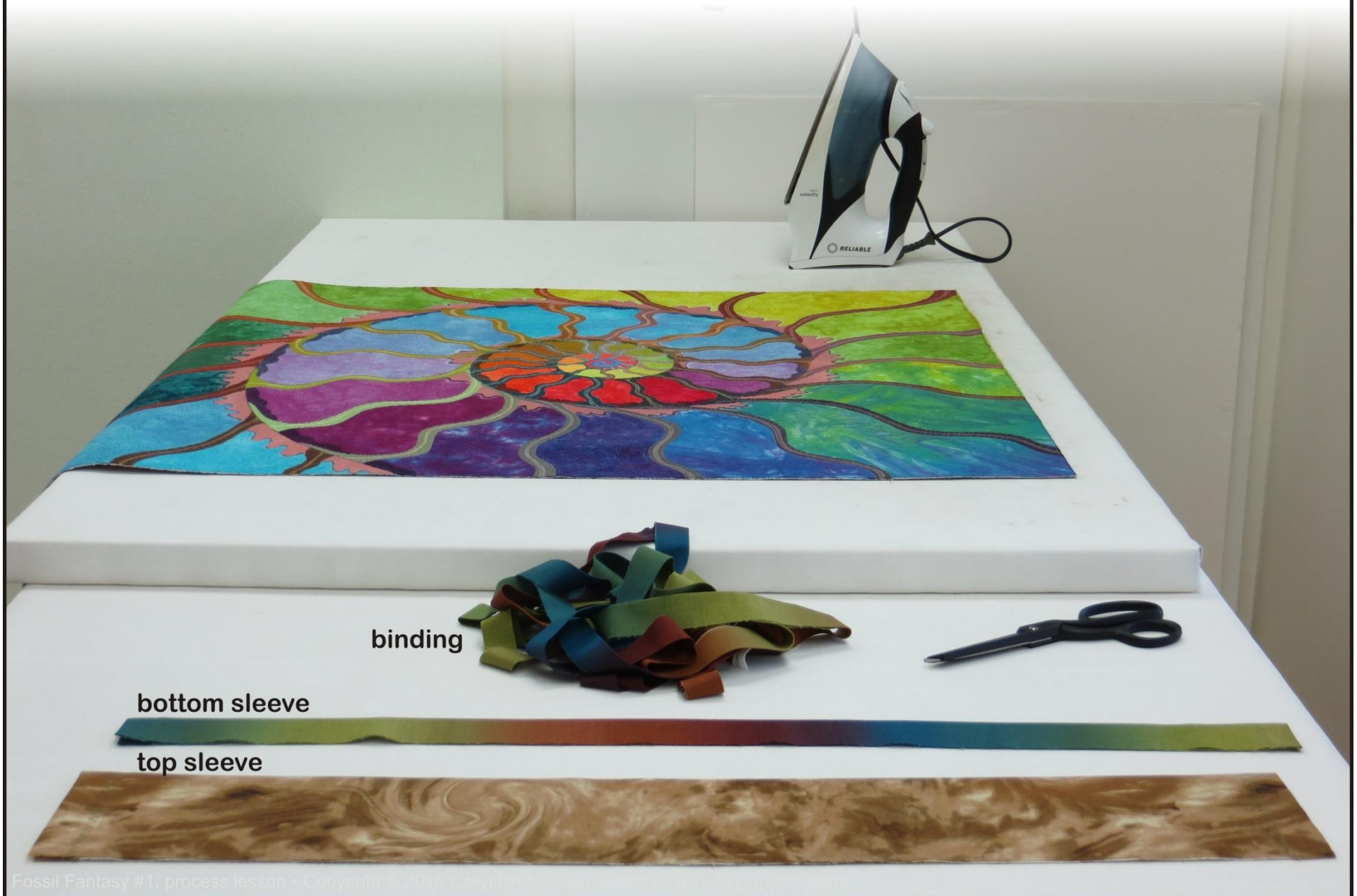
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For the binding, I audition a fabric from my Gradations collection for Benartex. I cut a narrow strip and lay it next to the quilt then stand back and evaluate whether or not it will work.

I decide that it will work and cut four 2" strips for the binding.



I use an 8" strip of the backing fabric, hemmed on the ends and folded in half, for the top hanging sleeve. A 3" strip of the binding fabric, folded in half, will become the bottom sleeve. The four 2" wide strips were sewn together (colors matched along the seams) and folded in half to form the binding.



The label was printed on treated fabric and satin stitched to the center of the top hanging sleeve. I rounded the ends so I wouldn't have to bother with machine embroidered corners.

Fossil Fantasy

Designed, hand dyed, painted, pieced & quilted by Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

2016 • 30" wide x 44" high

100% cotton fabric hand dyed by Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Batting: 50% cotton / 50% bamboo

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The hanging sleeve was attached along the top edge of the quilt at the same time as the binding. I line it up with the top edge and hold it in place with tape along the fold. Then I stitch the binding on from the front side. The bottom of the sleeve is slip-stitched by hand along the fold. A complete tutorial on the method I use for binding will be coming soon. Check under Articles on our website: <http://www.bryerpatch.com/faq/faq.htm>

Finally...
here's the
finished quilt.



**Fossil
Fantasy
#1**

**2016
30" x 44"**

I began quilting by stitching down the center of each vein in contrasting #30 top-stitching thread. I lightened the area between the lines with white pencil. The sides of the veins are stitched with wavy lines in #40 thread with a contrasting color.



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The pink appliques are echo quilted with matching thread. With the same pink thread I added two additional lines of echo quilting off the edge of each applique. I added a shadow in the first space with black pencil and the second space was lightened with white pencil.



The quilting in the chamber templates began with a line or two of outline quilting followed by fantasy spiral patterns. The thread colors are just slightly lighter or darker than the background fabrics to provide contrast. I'm just making up the pattern as I go.

I used contrasting thread to sign my name in the bottom right corner.





I chose not to outline the black shadows in the second and third wrap of the spiral. I just continued the spiral quilting pattern in the same thread as the rest of the template.

Needless to say... I changed thread color frequently. Rather than threading every hole in the thread path of the machine with each change of thread, I save time by tying the new thread to the end of the old thread and pull the new thread all the way through the thread path to just in front of the needle. Then I only have to clip off the knot and thread the needle.



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The spiraling, free-motion quilting continues almost all of the way to the center, even on the very small templates in the digitally printed area.



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The quilting ends with stitching in three colors on the center spiral.



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About the Author

Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry is internationally recognized for her award-winning fine art quilts, which are easily recognized by their luminous colors and illusions of light, depth, and motion. Since 1983, her work has appeared in hundreds of exhibitions and publications throughout the world. In addition to six pieces in the permanent collection of the National Quilt Museum, her quilts can be found in other museum, corporate, public, and private collections throughout the United States and in eight foreign countries.

Honors include: 100 Most Important Quilts of the 20th Century (2000), 30 Most Influential Quiltmakers in the World (2002), Bernina Quilt Leadership Award (2003), NQA Masterpiece Quilt Award (1986), All American Quilter (2004), and the International Quilt Festival Silver Star Award for lifetime achievement (2006).

Caryl has won Best of Show in sixteen national and international competitions including the International Quilt Festival (2009) and the American Quilters Society Show (1989, 1995, and 2000).

Caryl's workshops and lectures have taken her to eleven countries on five continents. She continues to share her knowledge through her publications, digital workshops, and website.

Caryl was a lifelong resident of Northern Illinois until 2005, when she relocated to the historic LowerTown Arts District of Paducah, KY and built The Bryerpatch Studio Gallery & Workshops Center which was open to quilters and art lovers from 2006-2014.

In 2013, Caryl married Dr. Ron Gentry and in May of 2014, they moved to Port Townsend, WA, where Caryl continues her work as a full time artist in her new studio overlooking Puget Sound.

Suppliers & Links

Here are links to the tools and other products I have mentioned in this tutorial

NOTE: This is just a list of suppliers I found online. I am not endorsing any of them and take no responsibility for the services they render either good or bad.

Corel Graphics Suite: I'm still using version 14. Later versions are available: [CLICK HERE](#)

Clear acetate for overhead projector: Printable transparency film is available at most big-box office supply stores. For one, [CLICK HERE](#)

Wide freezer paper: you have to buy a whole roll, but here it is: [CLICK HERE](#)

Overhead projector: You can probably find one used on eBay for a much better price, but here's what Staples has. Office Depot has them too: [CLICK HERE](#)

Flexible curve tool: Get the longest and best quality one you can find. Here's a 40" one at Nancy's Notions: [CLICK HERE](#)

Magic Rub Eraser: You can get this at almost any office or art supply store. Here's one at Office Depot: [CLICK HERE](#)

Horn of America Sewing Cabinets & Tables: [CLICK HERE](#)

Light Stick: If you can't find one at your local hardware store, here's one that's 24" online at True Value: [CLICK HERE](#)

The 12" light stick may be harder to find. I don't remember where I found mine.

Sharpie Markers are available at every office supply store.

Caryl's Benartex Fabrics: I don't have a list of the shops that buy all of my various collections of fabric, so check with your local quilt shop. Online, Joy's Fabric and Quilts has:

Electric Feather: [CLICK HERE](#)

Gradations & New Wave: [CLICK HERE](#)

UV Protective Film: We got ours through a local installer and don't remember the brand. You'll get lots of results if you google it.

Heavy Duty Styrofoam Insulation Board: [CLICK HERE](#)

Wide Flannel for covering a work wall: I got mine at Hancocks of Paducah, but they don't seem to have it listed online. Here's another source: [CLICK HERE](#)

Fons & Porter Directional Arrow Pins: [CLICK HERE](#)

[Magnetic Pin Bowl](#) by Dritz Longarm: [CLICK HERE](#)

Drawer stack taborets: [CLICK HERE](#)

Hollow core door for ironing table: You can get hollow core doors at any lumber yard or home center. Your local lumber yard can probably order a custom size to fit your space. The ironing table fabric is 38" wide, so you probably can't use anything wider than that. My previous Port Townsend studio was tiny, so I had a 54" door made to fit the space. For my present studio I got a standard 80" door. In some of the pictures you saw the two of them stacked on top of each other. Here's an example from Home Depot: [CLICK HERE](#)

Base for ironing table: For many years I just rested my ironing table on my 27" drawer stacks. As time went by, however, I found a higher work-surface more comfortable. The ideal solution was a custom Parsons table base. I had it made the same height as my cutting/drawing tables. I can roll three drawer stacks under it on each side, with enough room to store thin, flat thing like my portable light box on top. The table base was made to order by Doug Mockett & Company, Inc.: [CLICK HERE](#)

I also got some table legs and attached them to a 16" x 8' white laminate shelf board from Home

Depot. It became a narrow table in my bay window for pencil holders and other accessories, and three more drawer stacks fit underneath.

Silicone ironing board cover fabric: This is the best ironing surface ever, and as far as I can tell, only one company sells it. It is called Miracle Ironing Board Cover Fabric and it is from a company called Measure Matic: [CLICK HERE](#)

Reliable Digital Velocity Iron: Unfortunately, at most places I checked online, it seems to be out of stock. Here's a link to one place that seems to have it in stock: [CLICK HERE](#)

Gingher Scissors: They are the best scissors I have found anywhere. [CLICK HERE](#)

Japanese paper-cutting scissors: Hmmm... the ones I have are old and not available any more. I do LOVE the applique scissors by Karen Kay Buckley. They come in several different sizes and are great for getting in and out of tight curves. [CLICK HERE](#)

Floor to ceiling poles: The bottom is a Twist Tight Adjustable Tension Shower Rod. You can buy them at Walmart and probably a bunch of other places too. [CLICK HERE](#)

The tops of mine are made from an aluminum clothesline prop, which used to be available at the local True Value Hardware Store. Now all I can find are plastic or steel poles. An easier solution is to just buy electrical conduit pipe, which is readily available and easy to cut with a hand held pipe cutter. \$3.54 for 10' at Lowe's: [CLICK HERE](#)

Pipe cutter: [CLICK HERE](#)

Aluminum Bar: Available at almost any hardware store, usually in the window department. I also use this to make hanging rods for all of my quilts up to 54". [CLICK HERE](#)

48" rotary ruler and 5'x10' mega mat: Quilter Rule: [CLICK HERE](#)

Little LED lights: Mine are old, and lighting is changing almost daily. Here's something similar sold by an embroidery company: [CLICK HERE](#)

Invisible Polyester Thread: My favorite is Superior MonoPoly. Polyester monofilament is also made by Sulky and Madeira. [CLICK HERE](#)

Schmetz Microtex Sharp 60/8 needles: [CLICK HERE](#)

Clip-on flip-up magnifiers: [CLICK HERE](#)

African Porcupine Quill: Mine was given to me as a gift and I love it and use it all the time. Here's one company I found that sells them one at a time: [CLICK HERE](#)

3M Photo Mount Spray Adhesive: [CLICK HERE](#)

40" x 60" Foam Board: I bought a whole box of 12. Hopefully you can find a local art supply store where they sell single quantities or plan to split it with your quilt group. It also makes a great backdrop for displaying small quilts at guild meetings: [CLICK HERE](#)

Retractable Cord Reel — 30-Ft. extension cord with Triple Tap: I hope you like red, because they don't seem to come in black and white anymore. [CLICK HERE](#)

Supreme Free-Motion Slider: Hmmmm... they don't seem to make the really big ones anymore, but here's where you would find them: [CLICK HERE](#)

Free instructions for a simple quilt suspension system: [CLICK HERE](#)

Clamps for making a quilt suspension system: Irwin Quick Grip Clamp: [CLICK HERE](#)

Cord lock for quilt suspension system: [CLICK HERE](#)

Parachute cord for suspension system: [CLICK HERE](#)

Extruded Aluminum Framing for a fancy quilt suspension system: [CLICK HERE](#)

Legacy Quilting Machine: You can't buy this machine anymore, but here's the link if you want to read about it: [CLICK HERE](#)

Elfa wire drawer units: [CLICK HERE](#)

My favorite thread snips: [CLICK HERE](#)

Button magnets for attaching thread snips to the sewing machine: [CLICK HERE](#)

Machingers quilting gloves: [CLICK HERE](#)

Round bobbin holder: [CLICK HERE](#)

If I have missed something that you saw in this tutorial, let me know and I'll try to remember where I got it or find a source for it. caryl@bryerpatch.com