

From Farming to Folk Art: Sara Buscaglia

Description



Sara Buscaglia with one of her large-scale quilts

There is a remarkable symbiosis between Sara Buscagliaâ??s life and work; she seamlessly blends her charmingly old school textile art â?? mostly exquisitely handcrafted quilts, but also knitting and clothing â?? with running a successful and prolific organic farm, where she is currently raising a family of four children alongside her husband. Based in La Plata County, Southern Colorado, Buscaglia is the founder of Farm & Folk, an admirable venture which merges her work as a sustainable farmer, and her practice as a folk artist, into one.

Buscaglia grew up in the suburbs of Detroit, and she was raised by a family of quiltmakers who cast the seeds for her future life. She explains, â??Quilt making has been in my family for several generations and itâ??s an honour to be the one bearing that torch presently.â?• In her home today Buscaglia has several cherished quilts that were made by her grandmother, while her mother is also an avid quiltmaker â?? each of them, Buscaglia argues, have used quilting to tell their own stories in a myriad of different ways.



â??Many of these colors began as seeds I planted and tended to.â?•

Having already ventured into farming on borrowed land with her husband as a young adult, Buscaglia came to sewing following the birth of her first son, while taking a break from outdoor manual labour. She says, â??I found myself a little lonely and needing something to do, so my friend convinced me to buy a sewing machine and a few patterns. Thatâ??s how I learned to sew and suddenly I was making my son little clothes and then making myself clothes.â?• Sewing naturally led to knitting â?? creative, engaging and useful practices she could carry on while caring for her young children.

When she and her husband were finally able to buy their own, longed-for farm in the following years, that was when Buscaglia began to see how the dots could join up. She notes, â??When we bought our farm we got a flock of sheep, which led me to learning how to spin wool into yarn, which led to natural dyeing, and so on.â?•



Sara Buscaglia holding a chamomile sheâ??s grown



Dried chamomile

The practice of making clothing for her children left Buscaglia with overflowing baskets of scraps, which, as it turns out, could be transformed through the quilt making already bound within her family history. In contrast with making clothing, quilting was, she felt, closer to an art form, as she explains, â??That discovery of quilt making was so fulfilling to me because I was able to turn my passion for sewing into an art. Cutting up fabrics and creating expressive shapes that in turn became functional pieces of art felt, and still feels radical.â?•

All the rich colours for Buscagliaâ??s quilts come from natural sources, many of which she has grown on her own farm. Some of these have taken years and years of practice to perfect, with plenty of failures along the way, but she is resolutely focused on slow art, and a slow life, away from the frenetic consumerism of the 21st century. She says, â??The colours in my quilts are born through the alchemical processes of seeds + soil, sunlight, moonlight + water. Through this alchemy, the seeds are transformed to become fibres and dyestuffs.â?•



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Sara Buscagliaâ??s knitting stash at home

Meanwhile, her designs take influence from a range of sources. â??I find inspiration in nature,â?• she says, along with, â??traditional and vintage quilts, plant and mineral derived colours, perfectly imperfect colour variations, rustic hand stitches, and sustainably grown, ethically sourced fabrics.â?• The emphasis is always on the natural and handmade, and it is this tactile sensibility which has allowed Buscaglia to earn such a widespread following of customers and fans, as much for her lovingly made quilts as the homegrown produce that she and her husband sell throughout the year. Describing her quilting process, she explains, â??All piecing is done with a sewing machine and the quilting stitches are done by hand.â?• She adds, â??Those slow stitches produce a finished piece with depth and character which can only be achieved with human hands.â?• In 2023, Buscaglia published the compelling book *Farm & Folk Quilt Alchemy: A High Country Guide to Natural Dyeing and Making Heirloom Quilts from Scratch,* which demonstrates the real depth and care that she pours into her quilting practice, and it is likely to become a bible for so many seeking a more sustainable and creative way of life.

CATEGORY

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