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## Mary Fisher’s paintings found on fabric

Written by Lu Stitt

Wednesday, 13 July 2011 00:00

As people walk through life, they hope their presence has a positive effect on the people they meet.

Sometimes, a person is fortunate enough to find their effect on others goes beyond their personal circle.

Mary Fisher has affected lives around the world through her art, voice and caring about others, especially people afflicted with the AIDS virus. She was diagnosed as HIV positive in 1991 and speaks to advocate, bring about awareness and hopefully dispel fears and discrimination.

“I’m a woman living with AIDS and give speeches all over the world,” Fisher said.

Much of her art reflects her caring particularly in the portrait quilts seen around her West Sedona studio. Many include words from her speeches. She has worked with fiber for decades, along with photography, quilting, weaving, bead work, jewelry, paper making, bookmaking, sculpture, paint, watercolor and writing. Fisher has also written five books.



Tom Hood/Larson Newspapers

Mary Fisher stands Thursday, July 7, with some of the quilts she has made at her West Sedona shop. Fisher’s artwork recently received recognition from the Troy Corporation, a large Chicago-based textile manufacturer and distributor.

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One avenue of Fisher's artwork recently received recognition from Troy Corporation, a large, Chicago-based textile manufacturer and distributor. Dorothy Troy chose Fisher's Pathways and Every Living Thing collection for the company's Riverwoods Collection. All of the designs are Fisher's watercolors.

"With these two collections we made some fabric ourselves so we could see how it looked on a yard, but Troy has done this enough they know how it will transfer," Fisher said. "They've already made the material, and it's in the stores on high quality cotton."

Fisher has made a quilt with the fabrics and is currently working on two new design collections.

Having Troy use her designs is a first for Fisher.

"It's exciting to transfer my artwork into another medium — my own designs," she said.

How the deal with Troy came about was also exciting. Fisher had an exhibit of quilts she created with faces and words from her speeches incorporated into the design at the 2010 International Quilt Festival in Houston. She took some of the samples of her two design collections along just to see if people would like them.

"I was talking with a designer and while I was standing there, a woman said she liked my designs. She came to see my exhibit and said, 'I would like to do your fabric.' It was Dorothy Troy," Fisher said. "I was very honored. It was one of those serendipitous moments."

A visit to Fisher's studio is a colorful glimpse into her artistic world. Pieces of her are in the displays of quilts, beads, jewelry, yarn, and other materials and tools used by a creative mind.

In the Pathways and Every Living Thing collections, color and design stand out.

"I'm a quilter, and I took my watercolors and thought about how I could transfer them to my quilts," Fisher said. "For me, an exciting part of this is it's just about my art. It doesn't have any messages in it — it's just art."

People on Facebook have written about finding pieces of Fisher's fabric and using it, which causes Fisher to be excited, yet humbled.

"It's nice to be recognized and appreciated for what you do. I would still do art anyway. It's in my heart, my soul. If I don't express it I'm not myself and I'm not as happy. I like being happy," Fisher said. "Having fabric I can share with others is exciting and rewarding."

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