

## MY INSTAGRAM

# This Jamaica Plain resident has a modern take on quilting

By **Ysabelle Kempe** Globe Correspondent, Updated December 12, 2019, 6:08 p.m.



TORI COSTA

Tori Costa ([@teeceestitchery](https://www.instagram.com/teeceestitchery)) took up quilting as a hobby decades ago, but eventually realized she didn't have the "time or patience or space for it." A year and a half ago, however, she picked up the hobby again, this time creating smaller pieces that focused more intensely on the composition of fabrics and colors. The Globe spoke with the

Jamaica Plain resident to discuss the nostalgic power of textiles and Costa's passionate use of color.

### **How do you define your art?**

I describe my work as contemporary textile collages. I used to quilt way back in the day, but I found that I really loved more of the abstract feel of quilting. I seek to use different types of fabrics that you wouldn't use together in traditional quilting and approach it from a contemporary lens where I'm using abstract shapes, different colors, mixing texture, and really following what the textile itself is kind of lending itself to be. I'm also seeking to use materials that are already worn or abandoned. I take a lot of old ties and old denim, and I'm really just trying to figure out what I can repurpose versus going out and buying more material.

### **What is it you love about your medium?**

What I find really wonderful about working with textiles is that there's an emotional quality to it. There's this history and life within this textile. So, I really love drawing from older pieces that have had their own sort of individual lives. When I tear apart old denim jeans, I'm thinking about the trips that I took in them. When I'm cutting up old ties, I think about all the family dinners that those ties went to. When I'm creating these pieces, what I'm really driven by are color and texture and how they speak together, but I also love that there's this hidden life underneath the surface. There's these memories and stories behind it that textile or fiber art really captures. There's something very nostalgic.

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**Walk me through the process of creating one of your pieces.**

I usually will pull together a pile of scraps from a couple of different color variations, different types of textiles. I'll just sit down and try to make as many compositions from that pile as possible. So, I really try and challenge myself to use materials and think how I can be creative in using them in different ways. How many times can I create something using the same source, but that looks different and feels different and speaks differently to other people.

I do machine sewing. I'll stitch them together. Oftentimes, I'll embellish them with embroidery. Sometimes I will stitch them together as if they were quilt pieces so you don't really see the seams. Sometimes I just love how thick the fabric is or I love how a top stitch will add another element to it. So, I'll actually piece things together on top of each other and sew on top of each other, versus seaming them together.

**How do you want people to feel when they look at your work?**

I am inspired by color. To me, color can imbue a lot of different emotions. I hope that when people are looking at one of my pieces, they're feeling some kind of emotion because they're responding to the color choices. But I also hope the abstractness of it all gives them room for imagination.

*This interview has been edited and condensed.*

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