



Rita Farro, Mary Mulari & Deanna Springer show IMPWEAR gift bags made by Rhonda.

There's a new fabric in town and you will love it! Tracy Krauter is creator and designer of IMPWEAR, a laminated cotton. IMPWEAR is a great fabric choice for bags and products that come into contact with water. This fall I was introduced to IMPWEAR by Mary Mulari. Mary had made a couple Hipster Aprons (http://www.marvmulari.com) from IMPWEAR. She raved that IMPWEAR was soft, pliable and easy to sew. Earlier, the new SCHMETZ Super NonStick Needle was introduced. Voila! IMPWEAR and the new SCHMETZ NonStick needle stitch perfect together!

Sewing on laminated cotton was new for me, until Mary sent a few IMPWEAR scraps. Then I couldn't stop! I made over a dozen IMPWEAR bags for friends. Then I met Tracy at International Quilt Market in Houston. After you read Rita Farro's profile of Tracy, you too will be inspired to find your own creative journey and just may find yourself making endless IMPWEAR aifts!

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There's an App for That!













Tracy in the IMPWEAR booth, 2018 Fall International Quilt Market.

Tracy Krauter

One of the main reasons to attend International Quilt Market, the largest sewing industry trade show, is to walk the show and see what's happening. Of course, it is always a pleasure to see the new fabric lines, and it's the best way to discover new teachers and designers. But to actually find a NEW PRODUCT is very exciting. Or, in the case of Tracy Krauter, a new spin on an old product. Do you remember oilcloth?

When I was a kid, oilcloth was on big rolls in the back of the Five & Dime. Oilcloth was not suitable for sewing machines; it was simply cut into lengths to make tablecloths or smaller pieces for shelf and drawer liners. But Tracy Krauter had a vision, and she roared into 2018 Spring Quilt Market with her new, softer, gentler laminated fabric. You'll find her story inspiring, and the message is, "If you build it, they will come," or, in her case, "if you develop a new fabric, they will sew."









On stage wearing a double knit pantsuit. Tracy was hooked on sewing!

Tracy tells her story:

I have always been a maker! I remember gluing blocks together when I was three. I grew up in Seattle, WA, the child of intellectuals. My mom was a social worker and dad was a professor of urban planning at University of Washington. I always loved puzzles. I loved my Grammy. Grammy taught me how to embroider. When she died, all I wanted were her embroidered linens and pillows.

In the sixth grade, I learned to sew. I took a Singer sewing class and won a prize!

I sewed everything: Barbie clothes, costumes, masks, tents, anoraks, pants from vintage tablecloths, quilts, a menswear mohair tailored suit. Eventually, I went to Stanford University and majored in Chinese and design. I love problem solving challenges and working in 3-D.

Always an outdoors person, I spent three glorious summers as a seasonal park ranger for the National Park Service in the Southwest. In my off hours, I hiked, sewed and made a back strap loom to play with colors. After college, I got a job as a model maker, building intricate models for architects and industrial designers before the days of CAD (Computer Aided Design).







IMPWEAR on parade with Tracy's children and friends.



Seattle school kids sew!

In 1986 I married David and started having kids. I made all their clothes. My first son wore some crazy outfits, as did all his friends and neighbors. I started selling kids clothes at local street fairs... and IMPWEAR was born! My business goal was to play with color and make products that make people happy.

For 15 years, I did street fairs featuring children's reversible playwear. I knew I had "made it" when a customer bragged that she "scored" IMPWEAR at Goodwill!

My children went to Seattle Public Schools. I was a volunteer art teacher & organizer. I taught them to sew, batik, make birdhouses and art with found materials. I wrote grants, bought a kiln, hired artist-in-residences and did massive community based clay tile making and installations at the middle school.

These days, I donate a portion of IMPWEAR sales to Coyote Central, a Seattle organization that works with inner city youth, teaching them self-esteem and leadership skills through art and to Forterra who helps preserve wild lands around urban centers.

http://www.coyotecentral.org/ https://forterra.org/









Laying out imagery in Christine Joly deLotbiniere's wonderful studio. The IMPWEAR look is sophisticated, but not stuffy, a little quirky and trends towards earthy & ethnic.

Five years ago, I started playing with a new type of fabric — laminated cotton. I was struck by its hand, versatility, durability and usefulness. I always enjoy the odd materials. I could make a purse for day hiking or rafting down the Colorado River. It is rain-proof and coffee-spill proof, great for Seattle. The colors were glorious! IMPWEARhome was hatched.

I started making all the things I could think of out of this amazing stuff. I was thrilled to have my "grown up" line of goods: totes, pouches, tablecloths, aprons and more. I sell to a growing list of stores all over the country. My favorite shops cater to makers like me: knitters, crafters, gardeners, cooks, sewists.

Meanwhile, my source for laminate fabric was discontinuing my favorite prints and colors. So three years ago, I decided to make my own laminate fabric. How hard could it be?

It has been a long, exciting journey to design my own prints. I tried to get fabric made in this country, but due to the lack of eco-friendly coatings and costs, I decided to go to Korea. I order a minimum of 3,000 yards of screen printed goods.









Over the years, I have found fantastic artists to grow and develop the look and feel of IMPWEAR. Our first fabric was "VINTAGE." Christine Joly deLotbiniere gets the imagery into layers in Photoshop and I play with colors. We then send the design off to the mill for strike-offs. A piece of fabric is sent with the interpretation of my design. Back and forth we go, until the color adjustments "spark." When the fabric is right, I feel it. I am always in search of the "spark." The "spark" drives me, my design and my life. Now that I have control of colors and mixes of prints, I can make color stories of my own!

I still love to sew, but have passed product production on to other capable hands in Seattle. I am proud that our products are locally made and I can keep a close eye on quality. I most enjoy coming up with new ideas and products. IMPWEAR is a dream to sew. It is neither sticky nor stiff. It folds and hems nicely and sews easily. IMPWEAR is machine washable and dryable. It can be ironed too.

Last year, I designed a fabric line with stripes that looks like a rug. I ended up with three colorways inspired by trips.





Mary Mulari's adorable bags!





My supportive husband, David, with Mary Mulari, who took fabric samples and made some pouches, then told her friends at Threads Magazine and SCHMETZneedles.

In spring 2018, I signed up for a booth at International Quilt Market in Portland OR. I was terrified to show up with my own fabric line. My booth was hidden on the show floor on the back of the last row. The quilting community found me. I was welcomed with open arms! People flocked to my booth to exclaim, enjoy, pet the fabric and place orders. These are my people! We had to run home and figure out how to re-roll fabric in 10 yard pieces. That's where my mechanical engineer husband and sons came to the rescue.

My business goal now is to design and make more fabric and continue to play with color. I want each fabric store to be successful with IMPWEAR! I have to show their customers what to make. Voila! I already make them, having reverse-engineered this business in a way. Now I am developing my own sewing pattern line. The beautiful thing is, since I started selling fabric, people share so many lovely things they have made. I love that people are using this unique fabric to make new and wonderful things! I have seen hair salon ponchos, shower curtains, window shades, seat covers, drawer liners, plant pot cover. What will you make with IMPWEAR?

https://impwearhome.com/









Tracy's IMPWEAR Sewing Tips:

Fear not! Sewing with laminated cotton is easier than it looks.

Thread: 40wt or heavier.

Needle: SCHMETZ Super NonStick Size 100/16.

Tips:

- *Use a longer than normal stitch length.*
- If stitches need to be ripped out, try to "heal" the fabric with your fingers.
- No need to bind or serge cut edges. IMPWEAR does not unravel. It's sealed/laminated.



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