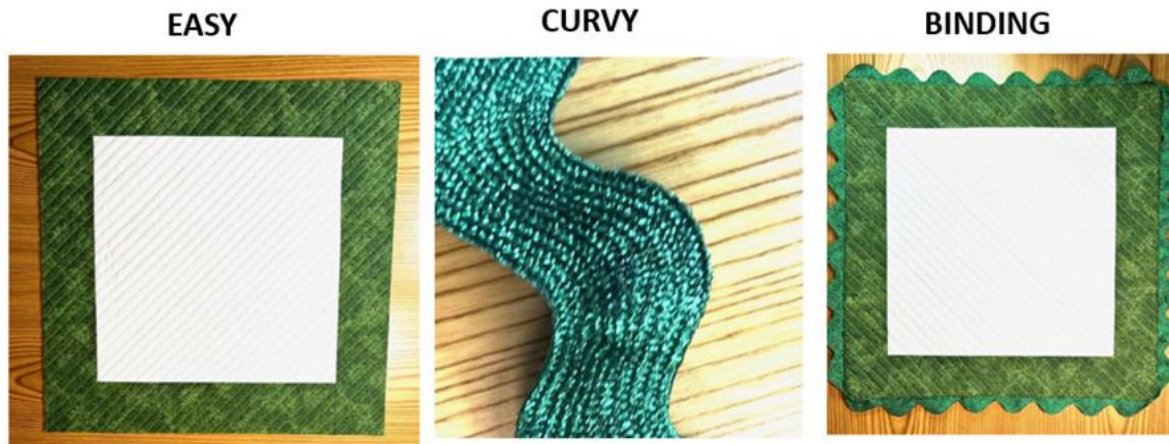


EASY CURVY QUILT BINDING USING JUMBO RIC RAC



This easy curvy binding method *is not* a traditional scalloped edge *bias binding*.

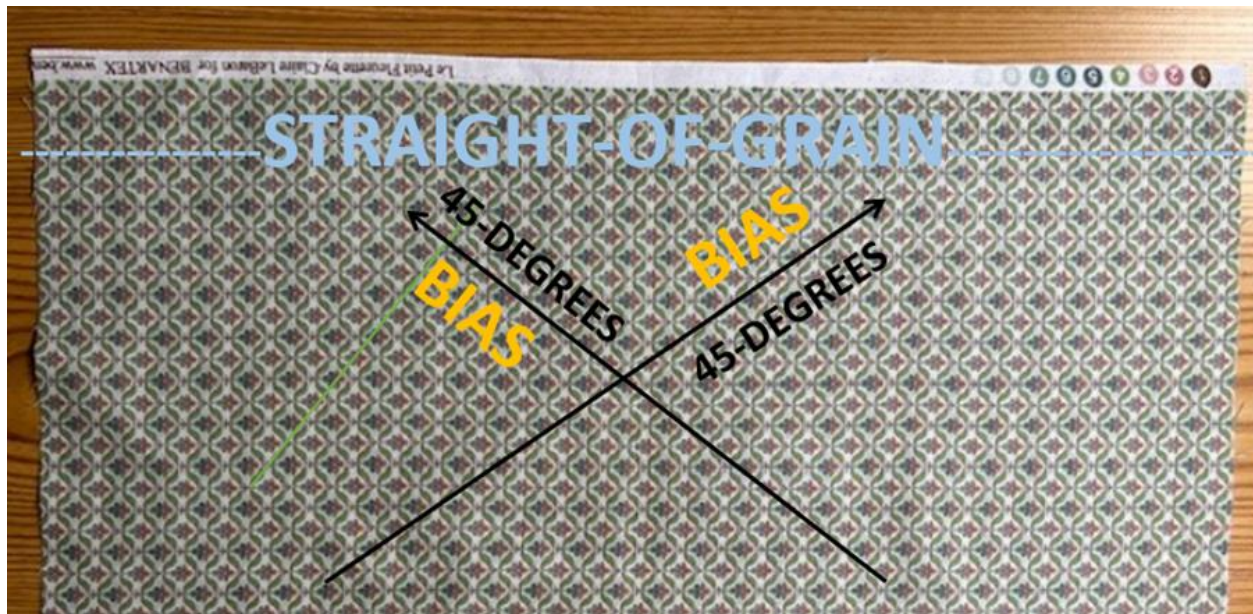
Have you ever wanted to have a scalloped or curvy edge on your quilt? Then this method is perfect for you. All you'll need is jumbo ric rac and the ability to sew straight seams. With the easy curvy binding method there is no math, minimal measurements, no special scallop templates, no bias binding and no sewing of curves.

Tip: To the uninitiated, ric rac may sound like an exotic disease. Actually, it's a strip of flat braided trim with a zig zag shape that's often used as decorative trimming on clothes and curtains.

Straight-Of-Grain Versus Bias Binding

For this project straight-of-grain binding is used. But, bias binding can be used for all types of quilts. And some traditionalists insist that bias binding should *always* be used to bind quilts. This is hotly debated among quilters. I was taught to use bias binding on all quilts but for over 20 years have successfully used straight-of-grain binding on all my straight edge quilts.

Give straight-of-grain and bias binding a try for your straight edge quilts and find what you prefer.



Here's what you should know about the two different types of binding:

Straight-of-grain binding is cut on the fabric's width. And since cotton fabric can be bought in 45-inch widths, there is less fabric wasted when cutting this type of binding. Straight-of-grain binding works best on quilts with straight edges.

Bias binding is cut on the fabric's diagonal. If your quilt is round or has curved, scalloped or wavy edges, then bias binding is a must. Binding cut on the bias stretches, is stronger because of the diagonal fibers and is easier to sew around the quilt's curved edges.

Definition: The bias of fabric is diagonal or 45-degrees to the straight-of-grain. For more information about custom-made bias binding see [Madam Sew's Bias Tape Maker](#). You save fabric when the binding is cut *straight-of-grain*.

A lovely baby quilt with scalloped ric rac inspired me to write this blog. The finished baby quilt was fantastic, but looking back on the experience, I realized it took a lot of work to make that ric rac. I vowed that if I ever used

ric rac again, it would be an easier method. Let me show you how to add lovely curves to your quilt binding the easy way using store-bought jumbo ric rac.

The seven steps of making curvy quilt binding are:

- Step One: Create a practice quilt sandwich
- Step Two: Position the ric rac on the border
- Step Three: Baste the ric rac to the border
- Step Four: Sew the facing binding to the ric rac
- Step Five: Press the facing flat
- Step Six: Prep the facing corners
- Step Seven: Fold the facing to the back of the quilt and sew it

Before you try this method on a full size quilt, test it on a practice [quilt sandwich \(quilt top, batting and backing\)](#). I recommend making the quilt top by sewing a plain 12.5-inch block to a 3-inch border.



Quilting Checklist and Supplies Needed To Make Easy Curvy Quilt Binding

Be prepared for this project. See “Supplies”, “Fabric” and “Getting Ready To Sew”.



Supplies and Tools

These are the tools and supplies that I used to execute the curvy binding method.

- Your favorite ¼-inch presser foot
- A Walking Foot

- Coordinating Cotton Threads
- [Sewing Stiletto](#) (Use to push out facing binding corners)
- Invisible polyester thread (Also known as monofilament thread)
- [Long Flower Head Pins](#)
- [Heat Erasable Fabric Marking Pens](#)
- [Thread Snips](#)
- [Madam Sew Chalk Marker](#)
- Tailor's Clapper – optional (Use to flatten seams)
- Liquid Seam Ease – optional (Use to soften and more easily manipulate seams)
- [Wool Pressing Mat](#)
- [6-inch square](#) or smaller quilting ruler
- Fabric Glue Pen (Stops ric rac ends from fraying, use if needed)
- Cotton batting (Cut one 21.25-inch square)
- [Double-sided fusible hem tape with paper backing](#)
- [Rotating Cutting Mat](#)
- [60 mm Rotary Cutter](#)
- [Sewing Clips](#)
- [6 x 24 quilting ruler](#)

Fabrics and Ric Rac

- Cut a 12.5-inch square of fabric for the plain block
- Cut contrasting fabric 3-inch wide by length of fabric (LOF) for the border
- Cut a 22.5-inches square of fabric for the backing
- Cut a strip 2.5-inch wide by length of fabric (LOF). This will be used to create double-folded straight-of-grain binding.
- Cut Jumbo Ric Rac 1.5-inches wide by length of fabric (LOF)



Getting Ready to Sew

Use your favorite way to prep for a new project or try my proven, stress-free method. See [“Getting Ready To Quilt-The Ultimate Checklist”](#).

The Seven-Step Curvy Quilt Binding Method

Step One: Create the Practice Quilt Sandwich

- Piece the border to the plain quilt block using a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam allowance and assemble the practice [quilt sandwich](#)
- Quilt the sandwich using your favorite quilt pattern or choose a simple straight line pattern like I did.
- Trim and square the quilt sandwich to 17-inches square.



Step Two: Position the Ric Rac on the Border

- Mark a 1/4 -inch seam allowance on the raw edge of the border with a chalk marker.
- Position the ric rac on the raw edge of the border so that the dip of the curve lays on top of the chalk line.
- Pin the ric rac in place to secure it to the border.

- Repeat this for the other three borders. It is ok to overlap the ric rac at the corners, it will be trimmed later.



Step Three: Baste the Ric Rac to the Border

- Turn the quilt so that the backing fabric is facing you. This will enable you to see the raw edge of the border.
- Use a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam allowance to baste the ric rac to the border. (Basting makes it easier to remove stitches, *if necessary*.)

Tip: A basting stitch is a straight stitch that is the maximum stitch length on your sewing machine.



Step Four: Sew the *Facing* to the Ric Rac

Attach the facing one border at a time. The sequence of attaching the facing to the top, bottom, left and right borders of the quilt will enable the corners to be formed properly.

Tip: Facing binding is used when you don't want the binding visible on the front of the quilt. It is popular in art and modern quilts.

Attach The Facing To The Top And Bottom Of The Quilt

- Cut a strip of facing equal to the *width* of the *top of the quilt*.
- Cut a strip of facing equal to the *width* of the bottom of the quilt.
- Sew the top and bottom facing to the quilt with a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam allowance.





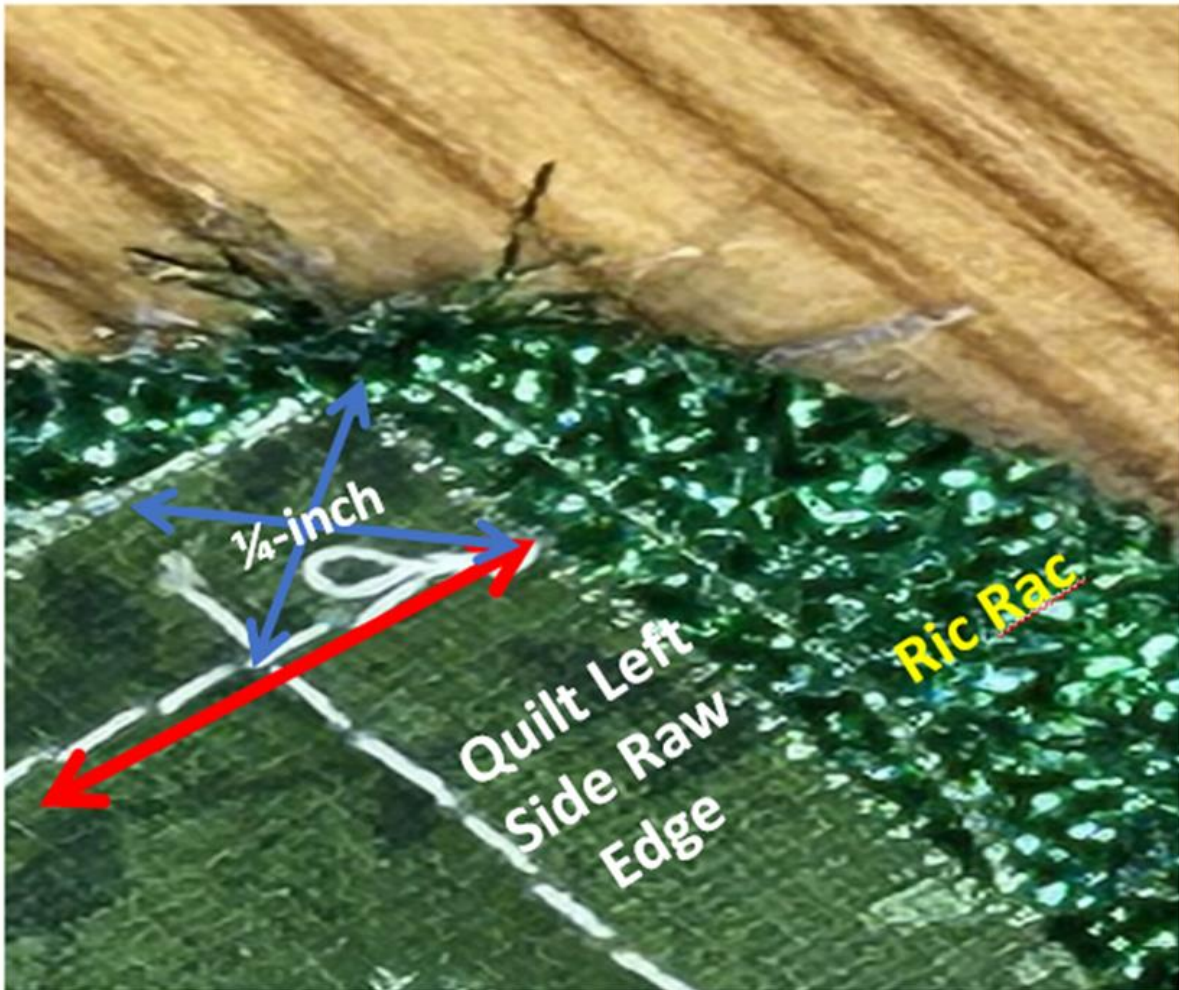
Attach The Facing To The Left And Right Of The Quilt

The *left and right* facing is positioned a ¼-inch from the top edge and a ¼-inch from the bottom edge. It will overlap the top and bottom facing.

- Cut the *left facing* to fit the length of the *left side of the quilt*. Trim the facing a ¼-inch from the top *and* a ¼-inch from the bottom.

- It is easier to see the $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seams and the raw alignment on the *back of the quilt*.

Align Top of The Left Facing At The Red Arrow

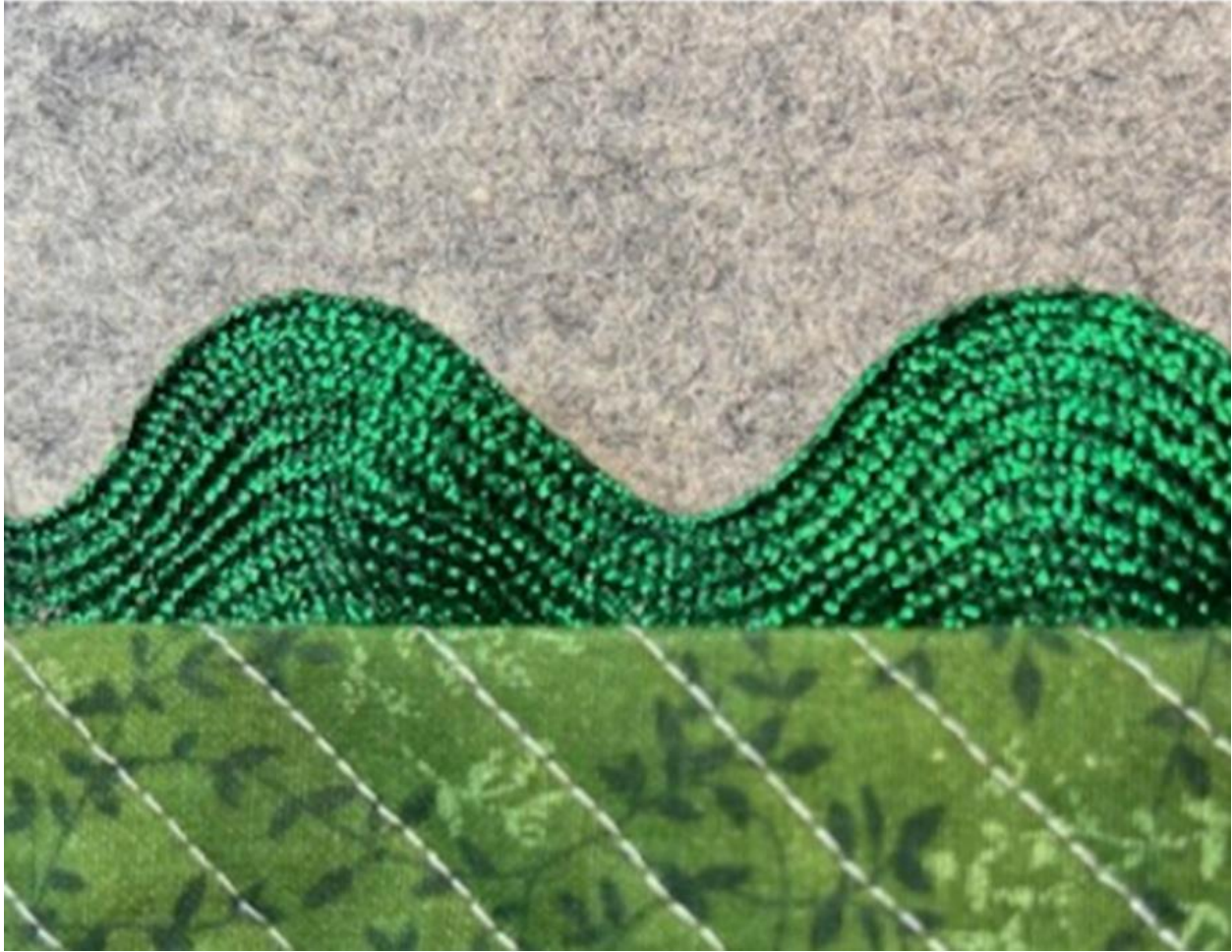


- Place pins at the $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch measurements and use them as reference points.
- Position and sew the facing on *the front of the quilt*. Sew the entire seam, you'll trim it later.
- Repeat these actions to sew the *last* side of the quilt.



Step Five: Press The Facing Flat

- Steam press the facing flat. The seam should roll to the back of the quilt and this will cause the ric rac to unfurl on the quilt edge.
- Help flatten the facing by applying liquid seam ease.
- Steam press and then press with a tailor's clapper. Do not press the corners.



Step Six: Prep the facing corners

A rounded corner is best for this project. Reducing the bulk in each corner will make it easier to shape the corner.

- Reduce the bulk in each corner by clipping the edge of each corner. And reduce the width of the side seams. Important: Don't cut any stitches or facing fabric.

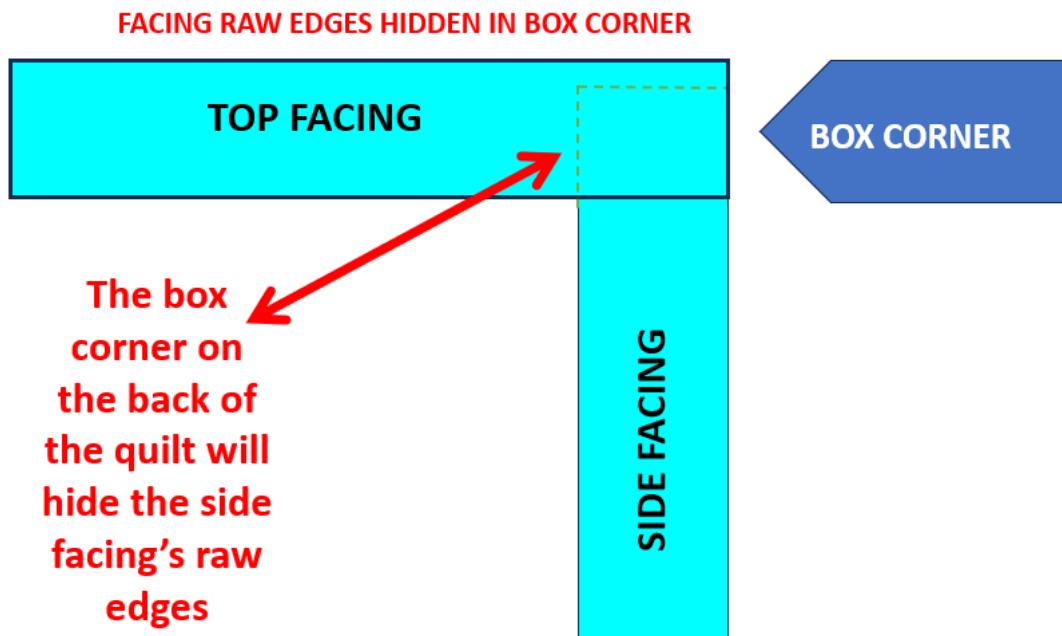
Tip: Apply fabric glue to the ric rac to control fraying at the cut edges.



- Turn the corner inside out and shape the corner with your finger. Use a [sewing stiletto](#) to further shape the corner. Be patient. A sharp corner is not needed because the ric rac will be getting all the attention. Ask me how I know this.



- You'll have a boxed corner on the back of the quilt which will hide the raw edges of the side facings.



Optional:

If you cut the side facings too short, then each corner on the back of your quilt will have one strip of facing with a raw edge. *Don't worry, the solution is to fold under the raw edge and miter it. It's not a bug it's a feature!*

Tip: The term 'bug' originated with Thomas Edison. He used it to describe technical problems on the path to innovation.

A famous example of a bug that became a feature, was the weak glue discovered by a scientist working on creating strong adhesives. That glue became the main feature of Post-it® sticky notes.

- On the back of the quilt each corner will have a raw edge. Fold the raw edge under and form a 45-degree angle. Then pin it in place.
- You've just mitered that corner!
- Prep the other three corners using this method.

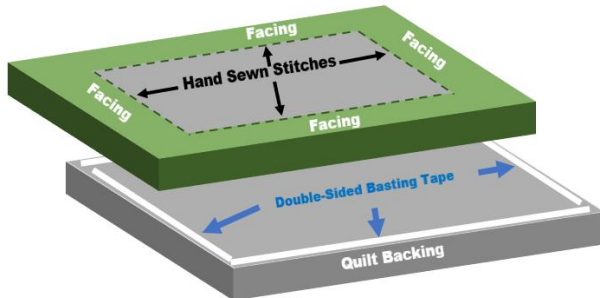


Step Seven: Fold the facing to the back of the quilt and sew it

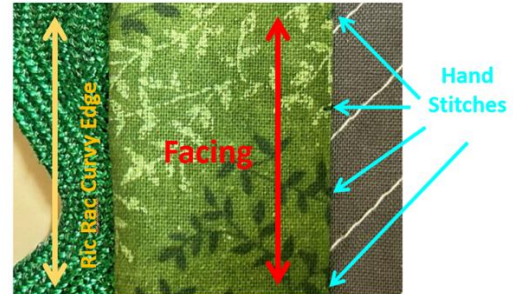
- With the quilt top in front of you, give the facing a final pressing. (Repeat Step 5). This will ‘retrain’ the facing to roll to the back of the quilt. Make adjustments to the corners if needed.
- Don’t iron the ric rack, the facing will *pull* the ric rac to the perimeter edge of the quilt. And, the ric rac’s thick woven fibers will enable it to lay flat.
- Use pins or use double-sided tape to affix the facing to the back of the quilt before you sew.

- [Hand sew](#) the facing to the back of the quilt. You'll love the look!

Exploded View Of Facing, Doubled-Side Tape and Quilt Backing



Actual View of Facing Hand Sewn To The Back Of The Quilt



- Or machine sew the facing to the back of the quilt with a zig zag stitch. A [stitch in the ditch presser foot](#) or a walking foot with a stitch in the ditch blade would be perfect for this job.

Tip: If you use invisible polyester thread in the needle and bobbin, then the quilt top stitches will be perceived as part of the quilt pattern. Ask me how I know this.

Your lovely curvy quilt binding is finished. I told you it was easy!

FRONT & BACK OF FINISHED EASY CURVY BINDING PROJECT

FRONT



BACK



Are you inspired to add curvy binding to your next project? Try these wonderful Madam Sew projects:

- [Free Quilt Blocks and Quilted Projects](#)
- [50 Free Sewing Patterns and Projects Tutorials](#)

May your quilting always bring you joy!

Ernie Grant

Guest Blogger For Madam Sew

[Download the PDF of this tutorial here](#)

Ernestine “Ernie” Grant is an avid quilter with over 20 years experience and is the owner of the custom baby quilt business www.kalibabyquilts.com. As an African American living in Harlem, NY her view of quilting is shaped by her heritage and the elders who taught her—Quilting is not just thread, fabric and stitches. It is art, it is love, it is community