

The Enchanted World of Amy Zerner & Monte Farber

by Jill V. Mangino



Portrait by Gabriela Piana

The first time I saw Amy Zerner's art I cried. Yes, I cried. I was in Joshua Tree, California, visiting with friends and much to my astonishment, Amy's husband Monte was a surprise guest for the night. Monte was in town on a layover from a business trip in Los Angeles. What we did not know was that we were in for an impromptu "art show." What I *really* did not anticipate was that I would be moved to tears by the beauty of his wife Amy's magical art tapestries.

Since 1988, Amy and Monte have combined Amy's gorgeous fabric tapestries and Monte's creative, intuitive writing to create thirty unique books and tools, divination systems, three children's books, a book about relationships, and a coffee table art book, *Paradise Found*, which they wrote about their work and their life together. They have combined their deep love for one another with the work of inner exploration and self-discovery to build *The Enchanted World of Amy Zerner and Monte Farber*—books, card decks, and oracles that have helped millions answer questions, find deeper meaning, and follow their spiritual paths.

Infused with the powerful essences of astrology, tarot, alchemy, and healing energy, they have produced bestselling titles including: *The Chakra Meditation Kit*, *The Enchanted Tarot*, *Karma Cards*, *The Truth Fairy*, *The Breathe Easy Deck*, *The Healing Deck*, and many more.

What struck me most about Amy's tapestries was not only the uniqueness of her symbolic collages but an energy that seemed to emanate from them. As Monte unrolled the large wall-hangings one by one, I felt a sense of sacredness and awe. I was at a loss for words. **I knew she channeled from within the depths of her soul because her art touched mine.**

When I finally met Amy at a Prophet's Conference in Key West, Florida, I found her to be extremely grounded for an "artist," and especially for one who is continually in touch with "transcendent" realms. Her authenticity and warmth radiate from her. **I have tremendous respect for her commitment to bridging heaven and earth and delivering the wisdom of the sacred through her art.** It's inspiring to say the least.



Amy's art collages combine different spiritual traditions which stem from her own eclectic spirituality; she believes at the core of every faith and belief system exists the same truth and expressing that truth through her art is her mission in life. Her rich, fantasy-filled pieces combine ancient wisdoms, diverse cultures, and different time periods with unique fabrics and textures. In her pieces, you will find butterflies, temples, birds, waterfalls, angels, planets, stars, mountains, and mermaids. Amy reveals, "The fabrics, ribbons, laces, appliqués, trimmings, and thousands of other objects that fill the bins and shelves of the second floor of my studio are my 'paint.'"

Amy will layer a Japanese flower appliqué with an

"MOON GARDEN"

Fabric Collage Tapestry –
26" H x 14" W

One of Amy's "Paradise" series. Each collage in this series is a reminder that we can attain paradise if we are willing to do the work to make it so.

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Indian turtle amulet and an old Indian sari with ribbons and lace and much more. She combines many textures with lots of dimensions which she believes is synonymous with the layers of life. You can uncover myriad symbolic secrets and mysteries in the complexities of her art which she describes as very "Zen"—spontaneous and infused with nature and both masculine and feminine energies.

According to Amy, "I believe our consciousness is connected to the Higher Forces. Through our use of oracles and through the creative process, Monte and I are trying to make a clear channel between us and our Higher Selves. This 'channel' concept has appeared in many of my tapestries. The image is a sort of ladder or veil—a connecting energy that reaches from the Earth to the Higher Plane. My tapestries always show the dualities in life. From the flowers at our feet, up to the stars in the galaxy. I try to put it all in there—that complexity—and

make a balance out of it. **Good art can elevate us from the mundane and lift us out, reminding us that truth and beauty exist.** It's definitely about beauty!"

Amy's life with collage art reflects the fact that wherever she and Monte go and whatever they do, they share a passion for collecting beautiful and unusual materials of all kinds. Monte says, "Not only our own finds but also personal mementos of many friends and acquaintances find new life in Amy's collages. Like orphaned children, they turn up on our doorstep, sent by people who want to see these souvenirs of departed times, friends, and relatives reborn at her next exhibition."

Amy's inspiration comes from her surroundings. She admits, "I'm inspired every time I look into my garden or kiss my cat." Amy's environment is so important to her that she took great care in the building of her art studio, which she considers the sacred birthing place for her work. In the winter of 1987, Monte designed and then supervised the construction of Amy's large two-story studio, which they consecrated as a temple using techniques adapted from those of antiquity.

Monte marched around the cinderblock foundation seven times forward and seven times backward, nearly "falling into the hole at least seven times!" They wrote their favorite sayings in magic marker like metaphysical graffiti artists (even though the carpenters thought they were a bit strange, they still liked it). Before the large wooden beams for the floor arrived, the couple put crystals and jewels in the holes of the cinderblocks, each placement accompanied by a different temple-blessing prayer from a different culture.

Amy knew she was an artist since she was three years old, when she would paint sitting on her grandfather's knee while he also was painting. She even used a collage technique back then. She recalls that even as a child she would use six crayons in one hand and four magic markers in another. "Collage is a therapeutic technique because it is a creative and spontaneous process; it allows me to be open to my soul language, to imagine the way I would like things to be. When we develop our abilities to visualize, we can achieve



Examples of the types of raw materials Amy uses to make her tapestries—ribbons, vintage appliqués, transferred images, and embellishments.

many goals and create our own reality. As I make the many decisions of placement and balance by intuitively adding and eliminating elements, my decision-making muscles are strengthened on a daily basis. By trusting and connecting to my 'dream world' of metaphors and symbols, I draw up answers and revelations from the well of the unconscious. That is why I love to make art all the time, because it is such a spiritual journey. And it's fun, too!"

With over 1,000 original collages, Amy has displayed her unique National Endowment for the Arts award-winning, fabric-collage tapestries in more than 80 one-woman and group shows in galleries and museums in the USA and Europe. Amy has also integrated her fabric tapestries into a fashion line called Spiritual Couture™. Her wearable art pieces demonstrate her ability to perfectly blend high-fashion style with her fine art sensibility; they are sewn together with a rare expertise and attention to detail. Spiritual Couture is represented exclusively by Bergdorf Goodman and Neiman Marcus.

Monte is what I would deem a "renaissance" man. Along with his charming personality, incorrigible sense of humor, and sage-like wisdom, he is an accomplished astrologer and professional psychic counselor to businesses and individuals, a musician, and composer. His style of writing makes the mystical accessible and ancient wisdom easy to grasp and fun to experience. His first product, *Karma Cards*, was inspired by doing spot readings at parties. People wanted more and more and, unless they took Monte home with them or cloned him, that insatiable desire to tap into his source of wisdom could not be fulfilled. The *Karma Cards* teach people how to learn more about their unique situations and about astrology without needing an astrologer.

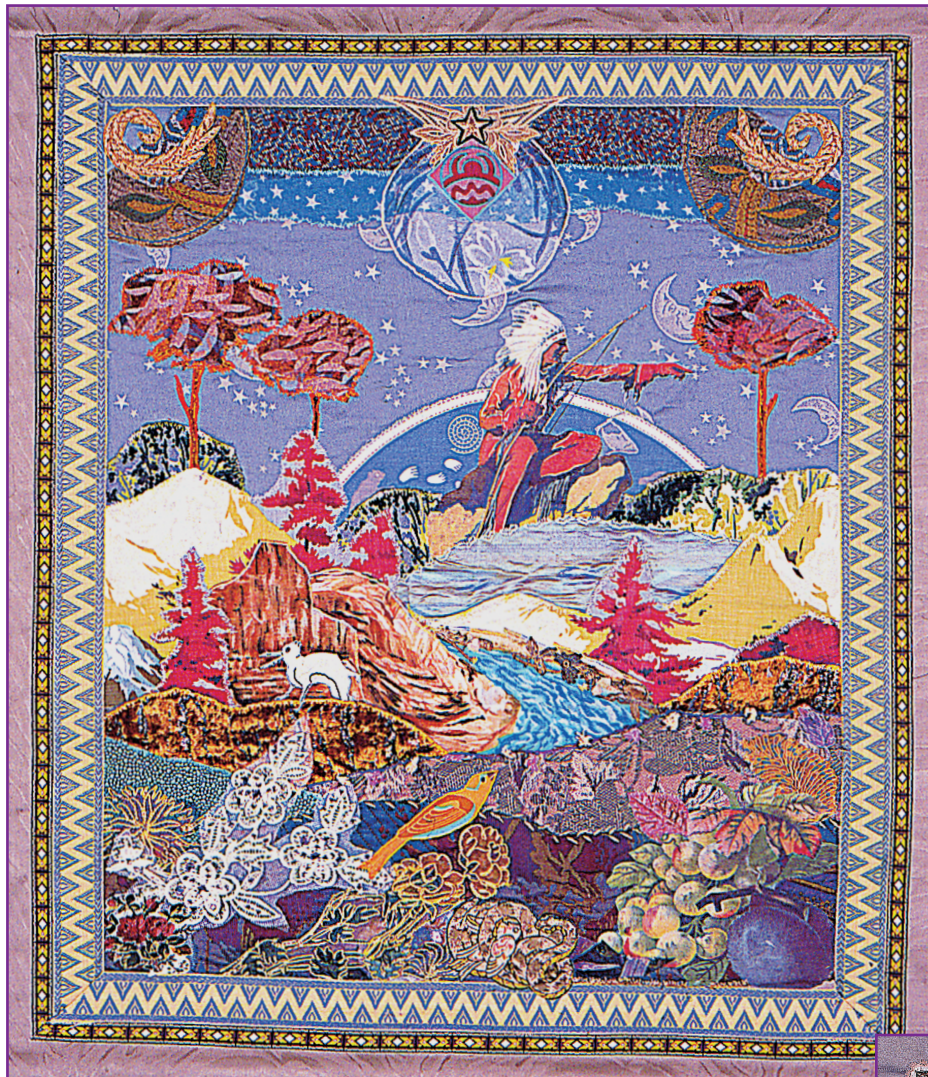
Monte's interest in spirituality was influenced by the spiritual classic *Autobiography of a Yogi* and the *Seth Speaks* materials by Jane Roberts. However, he believes in the old maxim, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." According to Monte, his spiritual teacher has been his wife Amy. He dreamed about Amy when he was 14—he even saw her purple hair (yes, she has purple hair)! "When I met Amy, she was innately a spiritual person and there was something I found within her that I did not find in anyone else. It was enchanting—almost fairytale." Monte credits his dysfunctional childhood for deepening his psychic abilities and attunement, "I've always been able to recognize the truth when I hear it. It's a survival technique when you come from a dysfunctional background. You become more open and able to read the signs and symbols of what is really going on."

Devotion to their creativity is Monte's and Amy's spiritual path because they believe you are cleansing and healing yourself when you go within and tap into that creativity—it is where all the answers lie. Monte says, "We are all creative beings. It is encoded in our genetic makeup. We are all spiritual beings, too. In a very real way, creativity is spirituality. When we wish to create something that has never been before, we must first conceive of it and visualize it in our mind's eye. When we do this, we contact the essence, the spirit of what it is we wish to create. Has this spirit always existed or are we



Amy at work on "The Magdalene" one of her "Spiritual Couture" special order jackets in the collection of Torie Gibraltar. The jacket is shown completed on the model in the photo below.





"EARTH WATCH"

Fabric Collage Tapestry – 40" H x 35" W

The Native American leader is pointing us in the right direction, reminding us to be aware of how we are inextricably tied to our environment.

creating that, too? It doesn't really matter, for when we approach living as a creative process, we are emulating the God/Goddess Force—the creative energy that brings everything into existence—and questions of time and origination become irrelevant."

Monte and Amy think that within us all is the power to make real what we can imagine. This is yet another way that proves the wisdom of the Bible's statement that we are created in God's "image"; that we, too, can create our universe. When we do, we glimpse the spiritual dimension in our mind's eye and feel its power in our intuition. By so doing, we get closer to understanding the mission of our spirit: to actualize our soul's purpose one moment at a time.

"By actualizing your creativity, you also become more spiritual. You can no longer deny the power of your invisible, inner life to influence your outer life. You must then take some responsibility for where you find yourself. To a large extent, you have made things the way they are for you by your reactions to the hand life

dealt you," says Amy. She adds, "Consequently, you have the power to make things more to your liking. When you use your creative potential to do the best with what you have and to make things the way you would like them to be, you are no longer a victim. You are, instead, living up to your true potential."

Using the very same principles that have guided their creativity, Amy and Monte have handled their business affairs, with Monte acting as their agent and lawyer and Amy overseeing design and production of their projects for some of the biggest publishers in the world. With close to two million books in print in nine languages, they have received thousands of letters which "warm our hearts with tales of how our work has helped others to live their lives more fully."

Monte says, "Creatively, we agree with

"EARTH ANGEL"

Fabric Collage Tapestry – 28" H x 19" W

By sitting still, calming our breath, and watching our thoughts, we see with clarity our real nature emerge.

Collection of Helen LaKelly Hunt





"HEART OF THE MOON"

Fabric Collage Tapestry – 20" H x 30" W

Amy specializes in making "inner portraits" that reveal the landscape of her subject's soul.

Commission for Kathy Gardarian

"THE HIGH PRIESTESS"

Fabric Collage Tapestry – 65" H x 42" W

"The High Priestess" represents sacred female wisdom. Her timeless secrets are communicated to us through our intuition.

Commission for Torie Gibraltar

the Dalai Lama that the purpose of life is to be happy. Also, as Joseph Campbell said it, 'Follow Your Bliss.' For Amy and me, **our bliss and our happiness have been our journey together on the path to making our life a work of art and our art a work of life.** Sharing our art and our discoveries about life with others has also brought us much happiness."

Their collaborations help people live in their own enchanted world removed from, even if for a short time, the media which presents us with worse case scenarios and negative images. **"We want to instill hope and provide reminders of the magic, wonder, and beauty that still exist and are inside all of us."** Monte passionately adds, "Creativity *is* spirituality. By realizing and actualizing our creativity, we become a spiritual human being, a most glorious occurrence. A world populated by such people can only make a paradise of our planet, a dream of the ages that is not only technologically possible at this time, but is crucial to our survival as a species."

I have rarely encountered a happier couple than Amy and Monte, they are the epitome of soulmates. Their holy work is trying to help people have the best possible life they can have! It is evident that their unconditional love and their commitment and mutual respect for each other are the recipe that continues to inspire their ever-growing "enchanted" world that has touched the lives of millions.

For more information, please visit www.theenchantedworld.com.

