

WRT

New & recycled fabric, printed photo, beads, thread; pieced, stitched

*Mary Ann Tipple
Elyria, OH*

CHALLENGE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The artist's words:

This is a business photo of my father William Richard Tipple. He taught all of his children to be hard working and reliable, just like him.

The dimensions of this representational quilt are 31.5" high x 36.5" wide so it is a little wider than it is tall. It is hanging, like a banner, from the ceiling above and behind Puffed Stitch Vessel.

It is a portrait of a middle-aged man, with a pair of eyeglasses in his hands. He is behind a desk or counter. Because he is dressed in a suit and tie, the natural assumption would be that he is behind a desk – probably in an office, but the background is an abstract assortment of rectangles with various textures and patterns so there is no way of knowing where the man truly is. The figure of the man is placed to the right of center and is almost triangular with the head at the top, his right hand in the lower left and his left elbow in the lower right.

The figure of the man, Mr. Tipple, is seen from the chest up. It fills the right hand section of this rectangular composition. His head is to the right of the center of the composition. He is seen in a $\frac{3}{4}$ view – his body turned slightly away from us as he faces toward the left. His head tips slightly to the left. His eyes look to the right as his gaze is directed out towards us. Mr. Tipple has dark hair and a hairline that is receding from his high forehead in two peaks on both the left and right sides. The peninsula of hair that is left in the center is thick and waves back from his face, joining the rest of his still full head of hair. His rounded face is showing his age in the form of horizontal lines across his forehead and pronounced laugh lines radiating from the outer corners of his eyes. His jaw line has softened and has become jowly. Mr. Tipple's thin-lipped mouth forms a straight line that is slightly curled up in the corners.

Mr. Tipple's arms are bent at the elbows and his forearms rest on the top of the table. The sleeves of his plaid suit jacket bunch up into deep curved folds at the bend of his elbow and along his upper arms. The folds emphasize the roundness of the arm beneath the fabric as well as the angle of the arm. The forearm of Mr. Tipple's left arm runs parallel to the bottom edge of the quilt. The cuff of his jacket is pulled back, exposing a wristwatch with a round face and a black leather strap. We don't see his right wrist as that arm is foreshortened with the hand blocking our view of the forearm. Only the backs of his fingers, which are bent down toward the table, are visible. A pair of eyeglasses, with heavy black frames, rests on the table in front of his hands. The extended stems of the glasses frames sit between the fingers of his two hands. Beneath his suit jacket, he wears a white dress shirt and a black tie with very small red

dots. The red dots are tiny beads that have been sewn on to the tie in diagonal rows running from upper left to lower right. They glimmer in the light and add dimensionality against the flat white of the shirtfront seen between the wide lapels of his suit.

Mr. Tipple's likeness is portrayed with great realism as the artist used a black and white photograph printed on fabric in this quilt. The dimensionality of the figure contrasts with flatness of background that is predominantly grey and made up of six blocky shapes of varying sizes. Two are stacked to the left of the figure and three are stacked to the right.

On the left, in the upper corner, is a large pale grey rectangle with vertical stitches. It is divided by a white stripe with small white buttons. It resembles the buttoned front placket of a man's dress shirt. This area extends almost two thirds of the width of the quilt and frames the top of Mr. Tipple's shoulder as well as the side and top of his head. Below this area and separated from it by a thin horizontal black stripe with large red dots is a rectangle of medium grey fabric with quilting in the form of a pebble-like circular pattern. The circles are of different sizes and are spaced tightly against each other. On the right side of the figure a square of dark grey fabric frames the other side of Mr. Tipple's head and the back of his suit collar. It is separated from the medium grey area below by a thin red line. This medium grey section has the same quilted circles as the one on the left. The two areas don't quite line up with each other. The one on the right is smaller and placed higher than the one on the left. A thick strip of red and white striped fabric above a strip of solid black separate the medium grey area from a small almost square area of black fabric with small white circles. Below this is a field of black fabric covered with tiny white dots like pin pricks that stretches the entire width of the bottom fourth of the quilt. This is the surface upon which Mr. Tipple's arms, hands and glasses rest. Mr. Tipple's head, figure and hands have also been quilted. Grid-like stitching follows the pattern of the plaid suit. Wavy lines of stitches follow the direction of the hair that is brushed back away from his face. The pattern of the stitching in the face and hands is unlike any of the other quilting in this piece. The face and hands are rendered in shades of grey, with small areas of black and white highlights. These areas are irregular shapes. The artist has used the stitching to fill these shapes with a variety of lines. Along the forehead, for example, are thin horizontal lines. This contrasts with the organic concentric circular stitching on the chin.

The quilt has many patterns and textures and seems very busy but by organizing the space and balancing the lights and darks in the composition, the artist draws our attention to the important part of the picture: WRT – or as I have been calling him, Mr. Tipple. The flatness of the background and the way the figure intersects the wide black band with tiny white dots at the bottom brings the figure of Mr. Tipple forward.