

## 2026 Sedona Quilters Hall of Fame Award Winner “Octopus Nursery”

The Red Rock Quilters Guild and Sedona Arts Center partnered to create the Sedona Quilters Hall of Fame Award. This prestigious honor is presented annually during the Library Quilt Show, held each January through February at the Community Library Sedona on White Bear Road.

Diana Upp is the recipient of the 2026 Sedona Quilters Hall of Fame Award for her quilt “*Octopus Nursery*.” Her quilt is currently on display at the quilt show and will be featured at the Sedona Arts Center Gallery in Uptown throughout the month of March. This year’s winning quilt beautifully demonstrates how combining techniques and mediums can result in truly extraordinary fiber art.

Diana has been a member of the Red Rock Quilters Guild since moving to Sedona in 2010. She has been an active maker since learning to embroider dishtowels with her grandmother at the age of six and began quilting in 1980.

“*Octopus Nursery*” merges this year’s President’s Challenge theme, *The Octopus’s Garden*, with Diana’s fascination with Margaret and Christine Wertheim’s Crocheted Coral Reef installations seen around the world. The quilt incorporates a rich variety of fiber techniques, including Yorkshire buttons for the seashells, wool appliqué fish inspired by Sue Spargo’s *Tradewinds*, and thread painting techniques influenced by Meredith Woolnough. French knots and additional embroidery stitches create the textured illusion of coral formations.

The quilt captures a poignant moment in nature: the octopus at the end of her life cycle. Once she attaches her eggs beneath a rock ledge, she stops eating, focusing on tending and protecting them until they hatch.

“This quilt has been an obsession for me this year. Good thing there was a deadline for the quilt show, or I would still be experimenting with more coral and shells,” Upp said.

Jillian Sander of the Sedona Arts Center described the piece as:

“Every element successfully interacts with the larger composition, and the intentionally diverse textures and placement have resulted in a quilt that has broken the mold and become sculptural in nature. I applaud the attention to detail in this piece because the more time you spend with it, the more you’re rewarded. As you move through quilted currents, you encounter more and more vibrant denizens of the reef. That bright, busy complexity makes the scene unfolding under the rocky ledge feel all the more serene, almost secret. The world-building in this piece is not only beautiful, it’s believably tangible.”

The Red Rock Quilters Guild has existed for 40 years. Their motto is “Sharing and Caring.” Members come together to share their love of quilting, develop new skills and ideas, and support the community through various service projects.

The Sedona Arts Center’s mission is to connect, enrich, educate, and lead through the inspiring power of the arts and creative discovery.