

# JEN BERVIN: *SHIFT ROTATE REFLECT, SELECTED WORKS(1997-2020)*

University Galleries of Illinois State University

GRADES K-6

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Jen Bervin](#) is a poet and visual artist whose work explores relationships between art, science, text, technology, and craft.

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*Shift Rotate Reflect* is the first show to present a collection of artworks created by artist Jen Bervin between the years 1997 and 2020. The artworks chosen for this show highlight the many interests of the artist including the knowledge and achievements of women artists and writers, the relationships between text and textiles—such as quilts or weavings—and altered language and landscapes.

## ART PROJECT 1: Story Path

**Materials:** Paper, pencil or pen, Google Maps (optional), scissors, and tape.

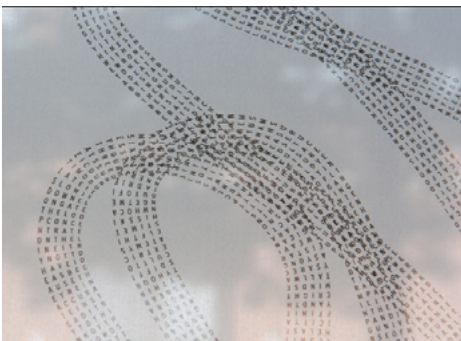
**Inspiration:** What materials did Bervin use to create [River](#)? How did Bervin create this artwork? Why do you think the artist used these materials and techniques to create a scale model of the Mississippi River?

Think of a place that means a lot to you or somewhere you often go. Consider paths you travel from your home like to a friend's house, or to school, or in a video game or a dream.

### Project Steps:

1. Using Google Maps, **search** the directions from your home address to the place you have chosen to focus on.
2. **Draw** or print out the path between these two places as big as your paper allows.
3. Once you have drawn or printed your path, **cut** out around the shape of the path.
4. **Tape** it to a wall or a table top.
5. **Think** about how this path makes you feel and what it reminds you of. What memories do you have from being on this path?

**Extension:** Write a poem or short story inspired by your memories and feelings while at your chosen place or on this path. Arrange your words so they follow the shape of the surface of your path, similar to Bervin's [Silk Poems](#).



Jen Bervin, *Silk Poems print on silk* (detail), 2016. Digital print on silk fabric, suspended on aluminum tube. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Lyndsie Schlink.



Jen Bervin, *River* (detail), 2006-2018. Silver foil-stamped cloth sequins, metallic thread, silver mulberry paper, mull, and Tyvek. 230 curvilinear feet; 100 x 20 feet installed. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Lyndsie Schlink.

## ART PROJECT 2: Tissue Paper "Quilt"

**Materials:** Colored tissue paper, scissors, glue stick, tape, sharpened pencil, paper, and folded paper towel.

**Inspiration:** What shapes do you see repeated in Bervin's work *Pierced Light*? How do you think the artist made the designs across the surface of the work? What do the shapes and lines in this artwork remind you of?

Bervin created this work after spending 3 years as a fire watch in Bisbee, Arizona. A fire watch is someone who observes the landscape to search for signs of fire. If they see smoke or fire, they send an alert so firefighters can get to the area before the fire gets out of control.

### Project Steps:

1. **Cut** your tissue paper into different sized squares and rectangles.
2. **Glue** the edges of your tissue paper pieces together to form a paper quilt.
3. **Set aside** to dry. If necessary, use scissors to cut around the edges once dry.
4. On a separate piece of blank paper, **draw** the shape of an object of your choice.
5. **Cut** out the shape you drew.
6. **Fold** a paper towel in half and place your tissue paper quilt **on top** of the paper towel.
7. **Place** your cut-out object **on top** of your tissue paper quilt.
8. Using a sharp pencil, **poke holes** into the paper quilt following the outline of your cut-out shape.
9. When done, **tape** your paper quilt to a window to see the light shine through.

### Extension:

Place your shape on another area of your quilt and repeat the process. Do this multiple times to create an image similar to Bervin's *Pierced Light*. Consider trying multiple cut-out shapes, or a variety of sizes of the same shape.



Jen Bervin, *Pierced Light* [Latitude 31.4482, Longitude 109.9284] (detail), 1998. Topographic perforation of Bisbee, Arizona, paper scraps of various sizes sewn together with pale green cotton thread. 64 x 70 inches. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Lyndsie Schlink.