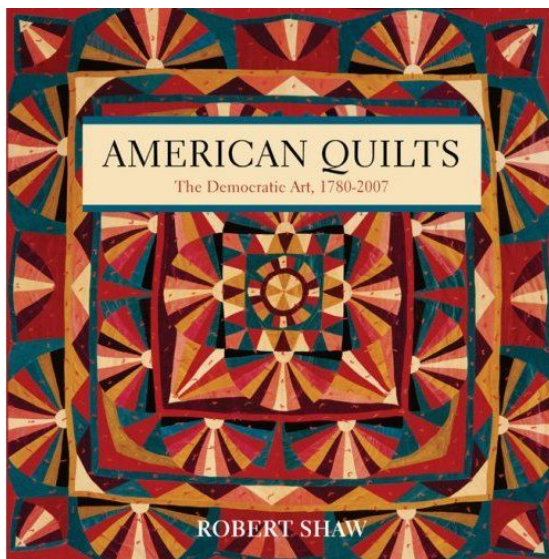


The Art of the Quilt

QUILT EXHIBITIONS

AMERICAN QUILTS: The Democratic Art, 1780-2007

Curated by Robert Shaw and Julie Silber



Robert Shaw's 2009 book *American Quilts: The Democratic Art, 1780-2007* (www.americanquilts-thedemocraticart.com) is the first truly comprehensive study of American quilts and quiltmaking ever published. This exhibition, which includes masterpieces chosen from the more than 300 quilts illustrated in the book, offers a stunning array of quilts spanning the entire history of American quiltmaking.

American Quilts: The Democratic Art is the first exhibition to tell the whole story of American quilts and quiltmakers, providing a visually compelling, in-depth study of the art, history and cultural importance of American quilts, from

their European origins to the present day. The exhibition also explores the great visual and cultural diversity of American quilts; it includes prime examples from a variety of regional quiltmaking traditions as well as outstanding works by Amish, Hawaiian, African-American, and Native American quiltmakers.

Unlike many other traditional arts, quiltmaking is vibrantly alive today and continues to grow and change. According to an independent survey, there are now more than 20,000,000 quiltmakers in the US alone, and they spend over two billion dollars a year on fabric, thread, sewing machines, books, and other supplies. In addition, many academically trained artists have taken up the quilt as their medium of choice in recent years. Quilt exhibitions are extremely popular; “The Quilts of Gee’s Bend,” organized by the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, has drawn record crowds at major art museums around the country, and a number of other museums have mounted successful shows as well. However, despite this vitality and great public interest, no exhibition has ever covered the entire scope of quiltmaking in America. Until now.

The exhibition will premier at the Whatcom Museum,

UWA/Bellingham in July 2012. We are currently seeking additional venues for booking after October 15, 2012.

Note: Expanded versions of the exhibition can be created, with fees dependent on content.

Number of Quilts: 30

Space requirements: Approximately 385 running feet

Exhibition Period: 12 weeks

Rental fee: \$20,000.00

Included:

- 30 quilts prepared for mounting
- Identification and interpretive labels for quilts
- Large title/introductory panel, 3 large text panels
- Complete condition reports on all quilts

■ Staff from The Art of the Quilt to oversee installation (Travel expenses not included)

■ Press Kit that includes:

- A copy of Robert Shaw's book *American Quilts: The Democratic Art, 1780-2007*
- Press release and fact sheet
- Digital photographs of quilts for publicity use
- Exhibition checklist
- Background material on American quilts

Note: Illustrated lectures, exhibition tours, and other programming are available. Please inquire.

TRUE BLUE: Antique Indigo Quilts from the Merry and Al Silber Collection

Curated by Julie Silber



The indigo plant, which produces vibrant shades of colorfast, fade-resistant blue dye, was even more widely grown than cotton in early America. Indigo-dyed textiles were a favorite of America's earliest quiltmakers, and they remained popular throughout the nineteenth century. *True Blue* presents a window into the history of the indigo plant and indigo-dyed fabrics in America through a selection of beautiful indigo-and-white quilts created during the nineteenth century. The exhibition draws on the outstanding collection of indigo quilts assembled by Merry and Al Silber over the past fifty years. The Silber Collection, which encompasses appliqué and pieced designs made between 1820 and 1900, has long been recognized as among the finest in the country. Among the quilts included is the rare WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union) quilt pictured above.

Number of Quilts: 24

Space requirements: Approximately 300 running feet

Exhibition Period: 12 weeks

Rental fee: \$12,500.00

Included:

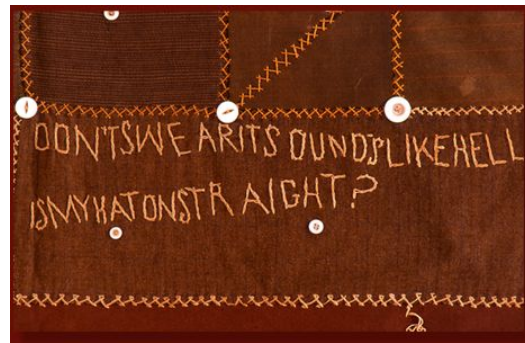
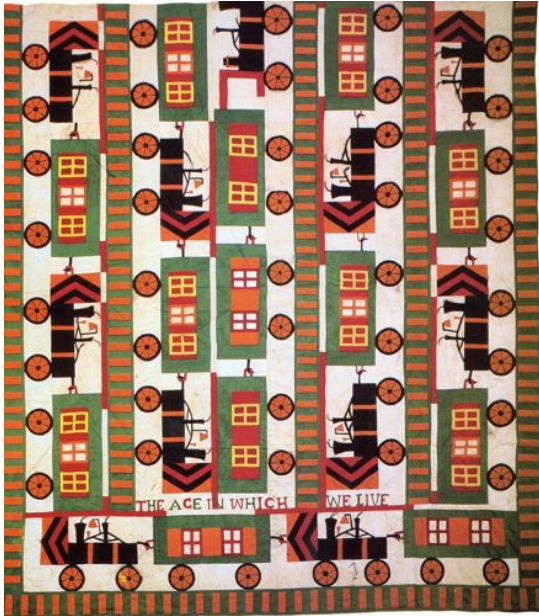
- 24 indigo-and-white quilts prepared for mounting
- Identification and interpretive labels for quilts

- Large title/introductory panel, 3 large text panels
- Complete condition reports on all quilts
- Staff from The Art of the Quilt to oversee installation (Travel expenses are additional)
- Press Kit that includes:
 - Press release and fact sheet
 - Digital photographs of quilts for publicity use
 - Exhibition checklist
 - Background material on indigo and indigo quilts

Note: Illustrated lectures, exhibition tours, and other programming are available. Please inquire.

MARK MY WORDS: Textiles and Text

Curated by Julie Silber



Nearly from the start, American quilters have at times incorporated the written word into their work. Of course, many quilts are signed with the maker's name. But beyond that, words have been used for design, explanatory, or commemorative reasons.

The exhibition draws on several well-known collections, including the former Esprit Quilt collections, and highlights quilts with political, religious, factual, memorial, and affectionate meaning expressed in letters and words that are incorporated into the designs.

The “messages” can be funny, moving, surprising, or powerful, but they are always fascinating and provocative.

Number of Quilts: 24

Space requirements: Approximately 300 running feet

Exhibition Period: 12 weeks

Rental fee: \$12,500.00

Included:

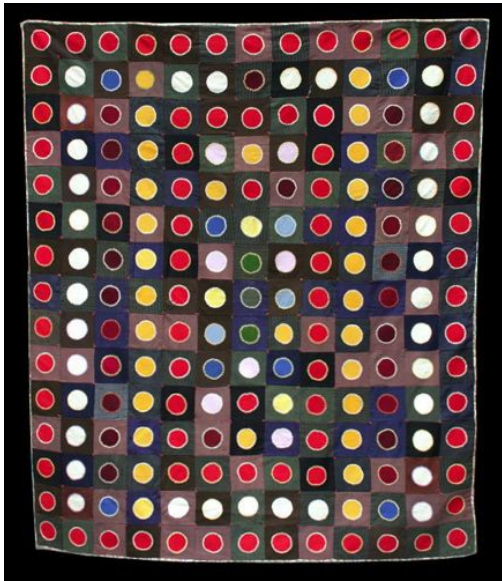
- 24 quilts prepared for mounting
- Identification and interpretive labels for quilts

- Large title/introductory panel, 3 large text panels
- Complete condition reports on all quilts
- Staff from The Art of the Quilt to oversee installation (Travel expenses are additional)
- Press Kit that includes:
 - Press release and fact sheet
 - Digital photographs of quilts for publicity use
 - Exhibition checklist
 - Background material on the use of words on quilts

Note: Illustrated lectures, exhibition tours, and other programming are available. Please inquire.

OFF THE WALL: Maverick Quilts

Curated by Julie Silber and Joe Cunningham



Some quilts are ambitiously accomplished, holding their own with the best examples of decorative art. Such quilts belie the notion of the unsophisticated American quilter “throwing scraps together” for economy. These breathtaking works of extraordinary complexity and richness will always find appreciation and be valued as manifestations of the artistic spirit.

Less noticed are the unusual, quirky examples of the unpretentious utility quilt—quilts made for everyday use, but created with a refreshing originality. Working within the conventions of the common quilt, some women have been inspired to extend the implications of traditional quilt patterns and to make them somehow their own. Like folk sculpture or painting, these quilts appeal to almost everyone, although they are often original in unfamiliar ways. Their sense of fun and play is infectious. We have chosen to call these “maverick” quilts.

Although some are very well made, maverick quilts are unlikely to be shown for the skill with which they were crafted. Some have been passed over as “unworthy” even at flea markets. What they share, however, is an unusual twist on the ordinary—a verve and a gritty individuality rarely found in more studied and self-conscious quilts.

Because they have been so little valued, utility quilts rarely have any history attached to them. So we do not know if the particularly exciting ones were created out of inspiration, necessity, or momentary whim. We do not know if the techniques or patterns they employ were the result of misunderstandings of the normal way of quilting or a conscious rejection of it. In any case, the maverick examples in the exhibition demonstrate that original, unique works of art may be as close as the blanket you sleep under.

Number of Quilts: 24

Space requirements: Approximately 300 running feet

Exhibition Period: 12 weeks

Rental fee: \$16,500.00

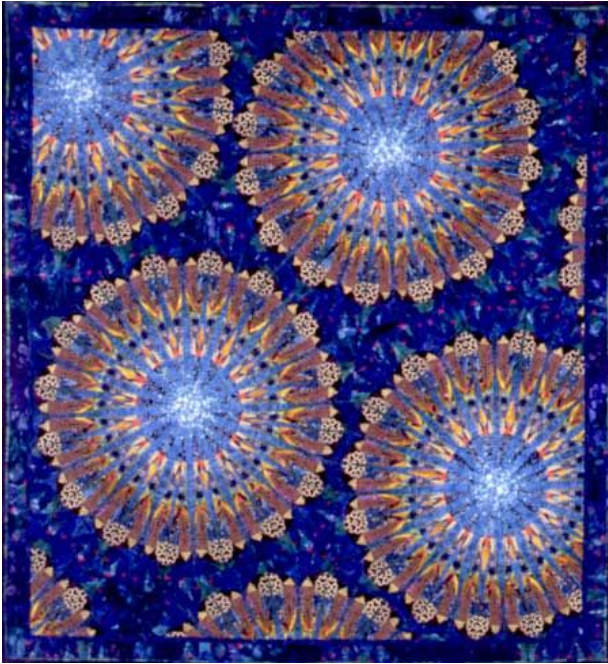
Included:

- 24 maverick quilts prepared for mounting
- Identification and interpretive labels for quilts
- Large title/introductory panel, 3 large text panels
- Complete condition reports on all quilts
- Staff from The Art of the Quilt to oversee installation (Installation instructions sent ahead)
- Press Kit that includes:
 - Press release and fact sheet
 - Digital photographs of quilts for publicity use
 - Exhibition checklist
 - Background material on maverick quilts

Note: Illustrated lectures, exhibition tours, and other programming are available. Please inquire.

SEWING CHANGE: Masters of Modern Quiltmaking

Curated by Robert Shaw



Once nearly moribund, quiltmaking has exploded over the past half century and is now a worldwide grassroots phenomenon of unprecedented proportions. Quilts are currently being made by millions of people in dozens of countries on all six inhabited continents. In addition to the US, major quiltmaking countries include Japan France, Great Britain, Sweden, Canada, and Australia. More than 27 million men and women in the US alone are involved in quiltmaking and spend more than three billion dollars a year on fabric, sewing machines, thread, scissors, rulers, and other supplies.

Quiltmaking is also at a creative peak. In the past forty years, many academically trained studio artists have taken up the quilt medium and are pushing the envelope of the quilt's meaning, content and form in remarkable ways. At the same time, many extraordinary quilts are being made by men and women working with traditional piecework and appliqué forms and methods and finding diverse ways to make them fresh.

This exhibition presents quilts by some of the most talented artists at work today and reflects the astonishing variety of styles and techniques being employed by quiltmakers from the US, Canada, and Great Britain.

Number of Quilts: 50

Space requirements: Approximately 575 running feet

Exhibition Period: 12 weeks

Rental fee: \$25,000.00

Included:

- 50 quilts prepared for mounting
- Identification and interpretive labels for quilts
- Large title/introductory panel, 3 large text panels, digital photos of quiltmakers at work
- Complete condition reports on all quilts
- Staff from The Art of the Quilt to oversee installation (Installation instructions sent ahead)
- Press Kit that includes:
 - Press release and fact sheet
 - Digital photographs of quilts for publicity use
 - Exhibition checklist
 - Background material on contemporary quilts and quiltmakers

Note: Illustrated lectures, guided exhibition tours, and other programs related to the exhibition are available. Please inquire.

INSIDE OUT: The Quilted Art of Susan Shie

Curated by Robert Shaw



This exhibition presents a life-spanning retrospective of one of the preeminent artist quiltmakers of our time and the creator of a body of work utterly unlike any other artist working today in any medium. Since winning the “Best of Show” award at the prestigious biennial Quilt National exhibition in 1987, Susan Shie’s work has been included in dozens of exhibitions around the world and become part of the collections of the Museum of Art & Design in New York, the International Quilt Study Center & Museum, and such prominent collectors of quilted art as Ardis and Robert James and John M. Walsh III. Shie, who holds an M.F.A. in painting from Kent State University, has been the recipient of two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships and also has been awarded fellowships by the Ohio Arts Council and the Ohio Designer Craftsmen. She was named 2008 Teacher of the Year by Professional Quilter Magazine and has been chosen to serve residencies in Ireland, China, and New York City P.S.#1 under the auspices of various granting agencies.

Deeply grounded in themes of family, friendship, and community, Shie's quilted diary paintings speak with a disarming directness that can be understood by any viewer, from a child to the most discerning adult. She paints and sews images of sophisticated innocence, richly detailed simplicity, and warmly embracing and playful humor. The poet and artist William Blake declared, "Exuberance is beauty," and Shie's art is nothing if not exuberant and joyful. There is no separation between her life and her art, which, with obsessive attention to detail, chronicles and celebrates the little moments of daily life and records the spontaneous movements of her nimble, allusive, and inclusive mind and open-hearted spirit.

Number of Quilts: 40

Space requirements: Approximately 475 running feet

Exhibition Period: 12 weeks

Rental fee: \$16,500.00

Included:

- 40 quilts and other artwork prepared for mounting
- Identification and interpretive labels for all art work
- Large title/introductory panel, 3 large text panels
- Complete condition reports on all quilts and other art
- Staff from The Art of the Quilt to oversee installation (Travel expenses not included)
- Press Kit that includes:
 - Press release and fact sheet
 - Digital photographs of quilts for publicity use
 - Exhibition checklist
 - Background material on Susan Shie and her artwork

Note: Illustrated lectures, guided exhibition tours, and other programs related to the exhibition are available. Please inquire.

NOT WITHOUT BIAS: The Quilted Art of Joe Cunningham
Curated by Robert Shaw



Joe Cunningham began making quilts professionally in 1979, after a ten-year career as a musician. His early mentors were steeped in the history and traditions of quilts, leading him to a life of study in quilt history and a love of traditional techniques, especially hand stitching, of which he is a master. Over the years his work has evolved into a unique personal style that is both original and shaped by the tradition.

Joe travels throughout the country to offer lectures and workshops on quilting. He has appeared on the HGTV series “Simply Quilts with Alex Anderson,” as well as “The Quilt Show” with Ricky Tims and Alex Anderson, and has performed his musical quilt show, “Joe the Quilter,” based on the life of an early English quiltmaker known only by that nickname, for guilds and theater audiences nationwide. "Joe the Quilter" has been made into a DVD, and Joe’s methods of basting and quilting are also available on DVD. He also contributed to the exhibition catalog for “Amish Abstractions: Quilts from the Collection of Faith and Stephen Brown,” which was shown at the de Young Museum of Fine Art in San Francisco, and is now writing a column called “Biased and Edgy” for *Quilt Life* magazine. His web site is www.joethequilter.com.

Joe's quilt *A Bend in the River*, which was inspired by time spent quilting with African-American quiltmakers in Gee's Bend, Alabama, was recently acquired by the de Young Museum. It is the first contemporary quilt to become part of the museum's renowned collection of world textiles. Like many of this recent works, *A Bend in the River*, with which Joe is seen above, incorporates multiple lines of bias tape that are appliquéd to the surface of the quilt.

Number of Quilts: 24

Space requirements: Approximately 300 running feet

Exhibition Period: 12 weeks

Rental fee: \$12,000.00

Included:

- 24 quilts prepared for mounting
- Identification and interpretive labels for quilts
- Large title/introductory panel, and three large text panels
- Complete condition reports on all quilts
- Staff from The Art of the Quilt to oversee installation (travel expenses not included)
- Press Kit that includes:
 - Press release and fact sheet
 - Digital photographs of quilts for publicity use
 - Exhibition checklist
 - Background material on Joe Cunningham and his art

Note: Illustrated lectures, guided exhibition tours, and other programs related to the exhibition are available. Please inquire.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Robert Shaw, formerly curator of the Shelburne Museum, is a gifted communicator who lectures and writes on many categories of American folk arts and crafts. His critically acclaimed publications include: *American Quilts: The Democratic Art, 1780-2007*; *Quilts: A Living Tradition*; *The Art Quilt*; and *Hawaiian Quilt Masterpieces*. He has curated exhibitions at major museums and expositions in Europe, Japan, and the United States, including the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; contributed to numerous books and exhibition catalogs; written articles for *The Magazine Antiques*, *Quilter's Newsletter*, *Fiber Arts*, and other periodicals; and served as a consultant to private collectors, museums, and Sotheby's.

Julie Silber is an internationally recognized expert on antique American quilts and the former curator of the legendary Esprit Quilt Collection. She is co-author of the books *Amish: The Art of the Quilt* and *Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women & Quilts on American Society* and has curated quilt exhibitions at the Oakland Museum, the de Young Museum of Fine Arts in San Francisco, the University of Michigan Art Museum, and many other venues in the United States, Japan, and Europe. Julie also is a highly respected quilt dealer who has been buying, selling, and brokering antique quilts for more than thirty-five years. Her current business is The Quilt Complex (www.thequiltcomplex.com).

Joe Cunningham is a master quiltmaker and hand quilter who has been making, writing about, talking and teaching about, and even singing about quilts since 1979. From the beginning, Joe has been a student of quilt history, and he has lectured widely and written numerous scholarly articles and essays on various aspects of the subject. Most recently, he contributed to the exhibition catalog for "Amish Abstractions: Quilts from the Collection of Faith and Stephen Brown," which was shown at the de Young Museum of Fine Art in San Francisco, and authored the book *Men and the Art of Quilting*. The story of Joe the Quilter, an Englishman who made quilts in the late 1700s, inspired him to create a one-man musical quilt show comprised of songs, stories and original quilts he

created to tell the tale of the original Joe the Quilter. Appropriately enough, his web site is www.joethequilter.com.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on these and other quilt exhibitions and related programming offered by The Art of the Quilt, contact Robert Shaw:

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www.artofthequilt.com

ABOUT QUILTS

Quilts are central to the story of America. As a democratic art accessible to anyone who can sew, quilts and quilting have been a major form of expression for American women and an important part of this country's cultural landscape since the late 1700s. The best quilts also are significant works of art. The noted art critic Hilton Kramer called quilts "the most authentic visual articulation of the American imagination," adding, "For a century or more preceding the self-conscious invention of pictorial abstraction in European painting, the anonymous quilt-makers of the American provinces created a remarkable succession of visual masterpieces that anticipated many of the forms that were later prized for their originality and courage."

For American women, quilts have always been more than bedcoverings and more than works of art. Quilts hold lives within them—the stories of the women (and yes, a few men) who made them and the people who lived with them. Women in every strata of society have poured themselves into their quilts—even a woman who could not read or write could create a kind of autobiography in cloth. Quilts are essentially communal objects. They are about sharing, and their meanings bind family, friends, and neighbors together. Our foremothers made quilts for themselves and their families; they also often gathered together in their homes, granges, and churches to create quilts for special social and community occasions and causes. They made quilts for many reasons—certainly as warming covers for the beds of loved ones, but also as a means of expressing their thoughts and feelings, as gifts for friends and community members, as a way to commemorate important events such as births and weddings, and as fund raising pieces to support political and religious causes and local projects.

Quilts are comforting and often beautiful, but they are also important and fascinating for the deep personal and community meanings and historical information they contain. Indeed, because they reflect so many otherwise unrecorded aspects of women's' lives, quilts are often now studied as historical

documents. The fabrics a quiltmaker used can tell us approximately when a quilt was made and often reveal her social and economic standing. Similarly, her choice of pattern and the quilted designs she used to join and decorate the layers of her quilt can also offer information about her life, her family, her community, and her times. Dates, signatures, and inscriptions, while rare, can offer even more intimate details, placing a quilt in time, giving it a personal context, perhaps even identifying a child or loved one for whom it was made. Even more important is the collective, cumulative information that quilts can offer when studied together, information that can paint a picture of a family, a community, a region, or even a culture.