

ALABAMA ARTISTS GALLERY

ALABAMA QUILTS: Stitched for Warmth & Beauty January 14 - March 18, 2011

On January 17, 2011, Dr. Robert Bentley was inaugurated Alabama's governor. The new First Lady, Dianne Bentley is an avid quilter and has expressed her interest in celebrating the beautiful quilts made in the state. She also noted that she worked on a quilt using Dr. Bentley's ties as she drove him around during the campaign. Inspired by her interest, as its first exhibition of the New Year, the Alabama State Council on the Arts has organized an exhibition of quilts by twenty-six quilt makers from throughout the state.



A quilt is an object made with three fabric layers, the quilt top, batting or filling, and backing material. The quilt process uses a needle and thread to join these layers together. The complexity of a quilt is related to the design of the top and also the back, as well as to the patterns made by the stitching, which may be very extensive or in some cases marked by a single tie. We are honored to show the Cathedral Window panel made by Mrs. Bentley during the campaign.

These quilts on exhibit are a broad representation of approaches to design and construction of contemporary quilts in Alabama. Some are made from traditional patterns or variations of patterns, while others are originally designed. Some are totally hand stitched, others are totally sewing machine stitched, and yet others are a combination of both processes. Most of the quilts on exhibit have been made for use. Several pieces are sculptural forms. In many cases the quilts have been made as gifts for family and friends.

A quick survey such as this shows the vitality of fiber arts in Alabama. Quilting may very well be the most extensive creative activity in the state. All generations are making quilts, with grandmothers and mothers passing the skills to their children. Men are also quilters. There are many quilt guilds, which bring members together for networking, educational opportunities, and occasional creative challenges. These guilds sponsor quilt shows at which prizes are awarded for exemplary pieces in each category. Many of the quilts in this exhibition have extensive award records.

Of special note in this presentation is the Pine Burr Quilt, designated the official quilt of Alabama by the Alabama Legislature in 1997. The example in the gallery is on loan from the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Also of note is the quilt by Bettye Kimbrell and the North Jefferson Quilter's Guild of Mount Olive. Kimbrell is recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Award. Two artists are recipients of the Alabama State Council on the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship for excellence in craft: Murray Johnston and Nancy Goodman.



Quilters in the exhibition:

Ellen Anson, Hoover
Anne Yancey Barrett, Grove Oak
Gary W. Batson, Piedmont
Loretta Pettway Bennett, Huntsville
Dianne Bentley, Tuscaloosa/Montgomery
Lura Campbell, Helena
Cheryl Clabaugh, Helena
Linda Dyken, Mobile
Judy Robinson Ernst, Springville
Flavin Glover, Auburn

Nancy Goodman, Mobile
Ann Harper, Phenix City
Lynnette Hesser, Wellington
Murray Johnston, Birmingham
Soon Hee Kim, Montgomery
Bettye Kimbrell and the North Jefferson
quilt guild, Mt. Olive
Joan Knight, Prattville
Betty F. Krotzer, Vestavia Hills
Mary Lou McNair, Daphne
Hallie O'Kelley, Tuscaloosa
Mary Ann Pettway, Gee's Bend

Laurie Prentice-Dunn, Tuscaloosa
Peggy G. Rhodes, Warrior
Sylvia G. Stephens, Waverly
Yvonne Wells, Tuscaloosa
Suzie Wilbanks, Rogersville

Georgine Clarke, Visual Arts Program
Director, Gallery Manager, 334-242-4076,
ext. 250