

Feb '14

QUILTING SISTAH NEWS


African American Quilt Guild of Oakland



CELEBRATE AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

AFRICAN AMERICAN QUILT GUILD OF OAKLAND


FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY!



The Public is invited to our
ANNUAL DEMONSTRATION and WORKSHOP.

Supplies will be provided so you can make
your own quilt.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 12 - 3 PM
WEST OAKLAND BRANCH LIBRARY
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 Your Library WWW.OAKLANDLIBRARY.ORG
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**African American Quilt
Guild of Oakland**
P.O. Box 31834
Oakland, CA 94604
www.aaqgo.org
email: aaqgo@comcast.net



**Our Guild
Meeting is the
4th Saturday
each Month**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! This year will be a busy one for the African American Quilt Guild. In February, we will celebrate Black History Month with our annual Black History Month Family Workshop. On March 7, 2014, we will welcome Faith Ringgold, painter, writer, speaker, mixed media sculptor and performance artist to the Bay Area. AAQGO is a proud co-sponsor of this event hosted by the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles . Please come and join us in San Jose as we welcome Faith Ringgold to the Bay Area.

In celebration of Black History Month, the VISA Corporation has asked the guild to do a presentation on quilting and to share our quilts, especially the Ancestral Memories quilts, at their Foster City offices. Laney College Library has invited the Guild to display quilts within the library. Julia Vitero and her band of helpers will be busy in the coming months displaying the quilts of our members. Katie Wishom and Marion Coleman along with other quilters will have quilts on display at the Joyce Gordon Art Gallery in Oakland. The Fairfield guild members have quilts on display at all of the Solano County libraries. Guild members are indeed extremely busy this month.

At our March meeting, we will ratify our updated By-Laws. The last revision of our By-Laws was in 2005. If you are a current Guild member, a copy of the changes to the By-Laws were previously provided to you. This is also an election year and we will be selecting new leaders to serve for the next two years at the May meeting.

Besides Guild business, Ann Seals and Kyla Laffoon are planning some exciting speakers for our meetings. Come and learn new skills and quilting techniques.

Long-time guild member and past president, Marion Coleman has volunteered to be the chair of our next quilt show. I am grateful to Marion for volunteering to coordinate our next show. Stay tuned to hear updates on how our show will take shape.

As I think of New Year wishes for you and the Guild, I wish for members to be actively involved in our activities and to take responsibility for the direction of the Guild, and for every member to hone their quilting and creative skills.

Blessings, Marie



TEMPORARY LOCATION CHANGE ~ AAQGO MEETINGS

For the months of **APRIL, JULY** and **OCTOBER**, our meeting will be held at St. Benedict's Church, 2245 - 82nd Avenue at Bancroft Avenue, Oakland, CA. The time and date, 1:00PM and the fourth Saturday of the month, remain the same. Free parking is available in the school yard.

JOYCE GORDON GALLERY

Oakland, California

FABRIC OF OUR CULTURE

February 2014



Guild Member BUZZ!



SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS



Our positive thoughts and prayers to all members and their families facing health challenges.

Our condolences to Alex Jennings on the loss of her husband. And our condolences to Rev. FranCione on the loss of her sister.

New and Returning Members

Nickcolyes Hills

QUILTER'S

TIP OF THE DAY:

When your rotary cutter starts skipping, take it apart and turn the blade, add a drop of sewing machine oil and you will have double the life on your blades. Happy quilting!



Birthdays!

FEBRUARY

Theodora Adkins
K'Ren Martin
Renea Rambo

MARCH

Helen Anderson

APRIL

Loretta Cohen
Nelvia Davis
Amal Johnson
Benita Jones
Susie Patrick
Dolores Presley
Sandra Sweeting-Hall
Mary Wimply
Katie Wishom



Local Events

March 22-23, 2014

Glorious Foothill Flowers
Foothill Quilters Show,
Gold Country Fairgrounds,
Auburn, CA

March 22 - 23

11th Annual Quilt Show
Q.U.I.L.T.
Vintage House
Sonoma
707.996.0311
707.343.1476

April 5 - 6

41st Annual Quilt Show
Guild of Quilters of Contra
Costa County, Centre
Concord Concord, CA
www.contracostaquiltguild.org

April 25 - 27

Northern CA Handweavers
Festival
Oakland Convention Center
Oakland, CA

May 3 - 4

Sew Amazing Show
Solano Fair Grounds
Vallejo, CA

June 6 - 8, 2014

Contemporary Crafts Market
Pasadena Convention
Center,
Pasadena, CA,

June 28 - 29, 2014

Seven Sisters Quilt Fair,
Madonna Inn Expo Center,
San Luis Obispo, CA

October 16 - 19

Pacific International Quilt
Festival
San Clara Convention
Center
San Clara, CA

Local Events

January 11 - February 28

*18th Annual The Art of Living
Black*
Richmond Art Center
Richmond, CA

February 20 - 22

Bay Area Quilt, Craft and
Sewing Festival
San Mateo Event Center
San Mateo, CA
www.quiltcraftsew.com for
free coupon

March 22-23, 2014

Voices in Cloth 2014
East Bay Heritage Quilters
Craneway Pavilion
Richmond, CA
www.ebhq.org/quiltshows/vic2014

SEWJOURN TO GHANA 2013



It really all started late summer of 2011. I had ordered some books from www.CulturedExpressions.com and noticed an upcoming event called SewJourn to Ghana 2011. I was intrigued because at the top of my bucket list has always been to go to Africa. This trip was music to my ears because everything was geared around the things I love, fabric, beads, and culture. There was more than one problem in going. I was already missing the deadline. Money, timing, and mentally I was not prepared. In April of this year my daughter was admitted to the hospital with a ruptured appendix, the same morning I lost my Mom.

Fast-forward a year or so later. I could not get that SewJourn to Ghana out of my mind. This trip offered everything that I would enjoy and I asked my daughter if she wanted to join me. My daughter had healed and had proved herself a good travel partner. She looked at the information and the itinerary and thought it more my kind of thing. She wondered if there would be any younger people going and if there was something besides crafty things to do. It prompted a call to Lisa, owner of Cultured Expressions, who assured her that she would enjoy it and that this 'crafty' thing was the culture of Ghana. She decided to go and so the planning and payment plan began.

On October 7th I flew to New York a couple of days early to break up the long flight. I enjoyed Stanley Clarke at the Blue Note and left with the group for Ghana on the 10th. The 'Crew' greeted us. This group of changing characters would make sure our every need was met for the next 10 days. Who comes with the 'Crew'? My daughter, she arrived a day early and was already settling in. There was a total of 28 of us from all over, Boston, Canada, South Carolina, Hong Kong, Washington, Philadelphia, and of course New York, and New Jersey.

For the next 10 days we all took in the culture, from the memorial park of Ghana's first president, President

Kwame Nkrumah to the farewell dinner. The people were gracious and kind. The weather was perfect, warm but not unbearable. I think I speak for everyone on the trip when I say WE HAD A BALL! Everyday there was something new and different to experience. There was the massage and feast on the Atlantic Ocean. This included a woman selling her catch of live lobsters that our host prepared with garlic butter. Delicious! There was the W.E.B. De Bois Centre for Pan African Studies. There was the Kente and Batik presentation and workshop. There was the village where we did Andinkra stamping and learned how the ink was made.



There was the bead making workshop and the Kumasi Market tour where we had to get permission from the Market Manager before entering the market. Kumasi Market is West Africa's largest outdoor market. You have not seen fabric like this before, my,my,my. This is what Lisa would call a 'Fabrigasm' this is one of many that we all would have. There was the first SewJourn quilt exhibit which some of us had entered a quilt or two. I have a copy of the magazine 'Fabrigasm' that includes the quilts that were in the exhibit. You can order a copy from www.culturedexpressions.com.

Then there was the Cape Castle Tour where the same guide as President Obama gave us our tour of the castle. This is where the slaves were held before being bound and shipped like cargo to this country. They went through the 'door of no return.' I can't explain the overwhelming feeling that came over me. It was obvious that there were sinister things that went on in the alcoves of these dungeons. The ancestors it seemed were screaming from the walls. My heart ached.

I think everyone had to decompress after visiting here. One of the most ironic things for me was the fact that the church was directly above the male dungeon.

The next day we had a sunrise gathering where we dressed in white, made a circle and were encourage to enter the circle and share whatever we wanted. One of the 'Crew' gave a moving poem of how we as a people have come to be, and then we honored our ancestors with libations. Many of us with wet cheeks left to start the rest of the day.

Some of us had gathered even earlier not to miss the sunrise. We were not disappointed.

The last days were spent visiting BASICS, an organization in Ghana whose mission is to end illiteracy, poverty, hunger and child labor. We were asked to bring school supplies and other items to donate. We were able to walk in the village and visited the children at BASICS. It was something to see these kids who even in their circumstances can be creative, grateful and humble. We encountered a young man in the village who had constructed himself a guitar with strings.



Some of us had garments made or artwork to pick up. We did those things and others just packed and relaxed. There were so many other things that I didn't even mention like the food, woodcarvings, the food, huge billboards and the Woodin Fabric store and.....You get the picture.



The next day we left for the airport checked in our luggage, had dinner and begin the long flights home. I will keep my experiences of Ghana in my heart forever.



Carolyn Pope



AFRICAN AMERICAN QUILT GUILD OF OAKLAND
Sankofa ~ Preserving the Past, Designing our Future

LeConte Elementary School, Berkeley, CA

QUILTING BEE - DECEMBER 7, 2013

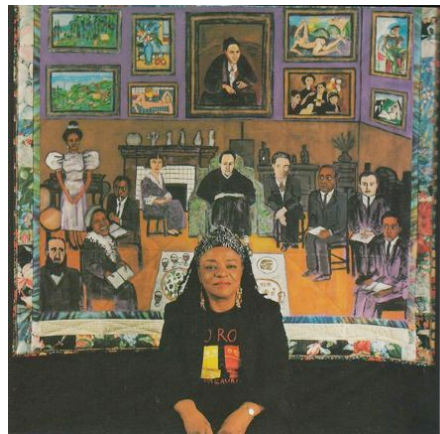


Faith

Ringgold

Patricia A. Montgomery, MFA

February 2014



*“My process is designed to give us “colored folk”
and women a taste of the
American dream straight up. Since the facts don’t
do that too often, I decided to make it up. . . .
. That is the real power and joy of being the
artist. We can make it come true. Or look true.”*

Faith Ringgold

In 1998, I visited an exhibition of Faith Ringgold at the University of California, Berkeley. It was inspiring to meet an African American artist who created story quilts as well as being a painter and a sculptor. At the time, I had no idea that Faith Ringgold would influence my journey as an artist.

In 2001, I was accepted in the *Biennale Internazionale Dell’Arte Contemporanea Exhibition* in Florence, Italy. At the time, I was painting large abstract paintings and realized that I needed to change my creative media to fabric. In preparation for my trip, I remembered reading Faith’s story about how she lugged around large paintings through small hallways and stairwells. She tired of it, and inspired by her seamstress mother, she began designing and constructing fabric sculptures that she could transport easily.

For the exhibition, I created two story quilts about the lives of African American women during colonial times, and a third one about slavery. Like Ringgold, I packed the quilts in a gym bag and carried them on the plane to Italy.

In the tradition of African American quilting, strip piecing, simple blocks made from squares and triangles, and handwritten text, frame Ringgold’s paintings. The subject matter she often depicts throughout her work has historical, philosophical, and aesthetic references, such as stories from her life, social issues, and honoring her ancestors. These references are symbolically represented in the various series of paintings, soft sculpture and her famous story quilts.

One of her famous children's book is "*Tar Beach.*" It is the transformation of her memories of childhood in Harlem. Her family often went up on the roof on hot summer nights and the roof became a pretend beach. The adults played cards, and the children ate and stayed up late, lying together on a mattress.

The flag series with their haunted images of people, spoke of the social changes of the 60's. The quilt titled "*Flag Story Quilt*" signaled a radical shift in her thinking about the possibilities for social change.

In her American series, she shares the stories of slavery, which is so much a part of our African American history.

In her French Collection series, she depicts African Americans, such as Malcolm X, Frederick Douglas, Sojourner Truth, Madam C.J. Walker, Rosa Parks, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Henry O. Tanner, Romare Bearden, family members and friends.

Her contemporary approach and the combination of paints, text, and fabric have made her an internationally known artist.

My creativity has been inspired by Faith Ringgold and I am so honored that she has been a part my journey as an artist.

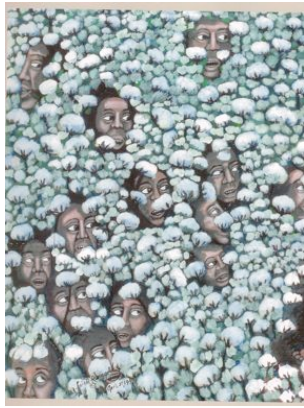
The African American Quilt Guild of Oakland (AAQGO) is the presenting sponsor for *Fiber Talks: Faith Ringgold and her Legacy in Art!*, with the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, Friday, March 7, 2014, 11:30 am. Purchase tickets online at www.sjqquiltmuseum.org

It will be the only time for some, and a repeat privilege for others to experience Faith Ringgold, the awesome prolific artist, and quilter, who will tell you,

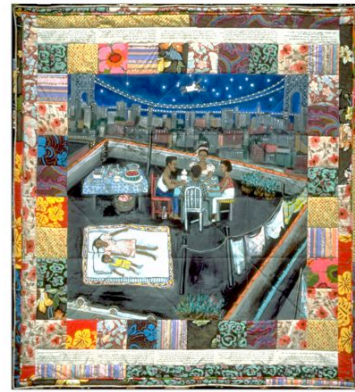
"You can fly as an African American woman - artist - quilter - storyteller."



We Came to America - The American Collection #1
© 1997 Acrylic on canvas, painted and tie-dyed fabric 74 ½" x 79 ½"



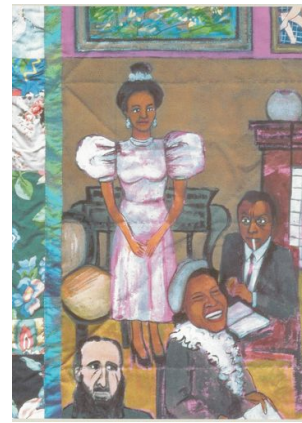
Detail from **Born in a Cotton Field - The American Collection #3**
 © 1997 Acrylic on canvas, painted and tie-dyed fabric 73 1/2" x 79 1/2"



Acrylic on canvas 74 x 96 Collection: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NYC



Detail of **The Wedding - The Lovers Trilogy: #1**
 © 1986 Acrylic on canvas, painted and tie-dyed and pieced fabric 77 1/2" x 58"



Detail **Dinner at Gertrude Stein's - The French Collection, Part II #9**
 © 1991 Acrylic on canvas, painted and tie-dyed fabric 79" x 84"

These are only brief samples of Faith Ringgold's amazing body of work. Even if you are not a painter, you can learn how to combine digital images, text, figurative images of important African Americans, telling stories about your family and life, become inspired, and find your own creative voice, by studying Faith's work.



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THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD QUILT CODE FACT OR URBAN MYTH

It's a story we all love to hear and tell. Slaves preparing to flee, and those traveling along the path to freedom, looked for maps, signals and signs in the form of quilts to determine when to leave and how to progress along the way.

The story has been taught to children in classrooms, using blocks made into Underground Railroad quilts, and from books, such as *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* (Deborah Hopkinson, 1995). It has often been presented as historical fact. Adults have read *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad* (Dobard and Tobin, 1999) which recorded the quilt code story told by Ozella McDaniel Williams. In most cases, those who hear the story of codes using quilt blocks believe it to be true.

But, is it?

The simple answer is that there is no historical evidence supporting the story. Historians have searched available sources such as slave memoirs, interviews with escaped slaves, and written accounts of the abolitionists who assisted slaves who were running away. They have found no evidence or mention of quilts used to create a code or a map. Quilt historians have found that some of the quilt blocks mentioned as part of the code were not developed before the Emancipation Proclamation.

It's unlikely that the story about quilts being used as codes, maps, and signals will go away. It's almost as firmly established as the tale of George Washington and the cherry tree. Instead of passing it along as fact, retelling it as a folk tale or myth is more accurate. It makes a good story, but is without evidence or documentation.

If you're interested, some references for investigating the quilt code story and telling the history of early African Americans quilters are listed below.

Brackman, Barbara. *Facts and Fabrications-Unraveling the History of Quilts & Slavery*, 2006

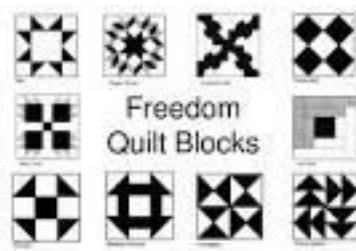
Wright, Giles R. *CRITIQUE: Hidden in Plain View: The Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*, 2001

*Hicks, Kyra E. *Franklin Roosevelt's Postage Stamp Quilt: The Story of Estella Weaver Nukes' Presidential Gift*, 2012

*Hicks, Kyra E. *Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria*, 2012

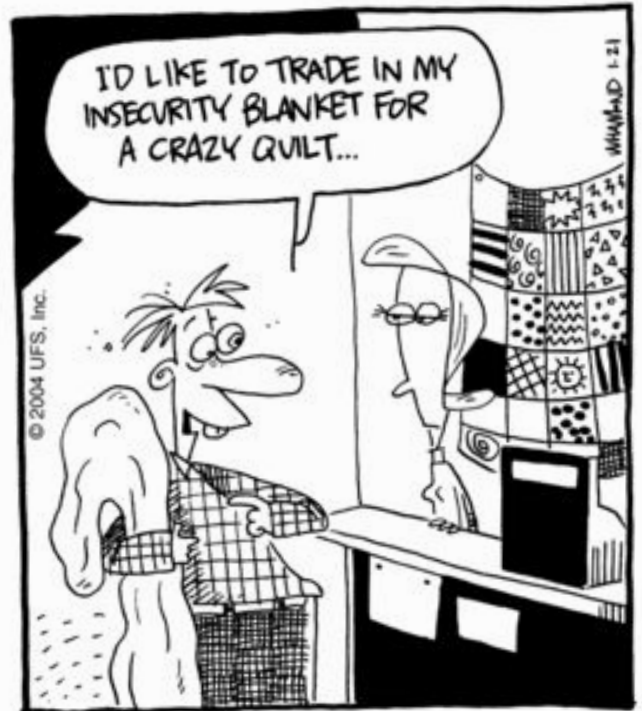
*Children's books.

Marilyn Handis



Who is who? and what is what?

2012 - 2014 Officers and Board Members	
President	Marie dePorres Taylor
Vice President	Marsha Carter
Secretary	Rosita Thomas
Treasurer	Dolores Vitero Presley
Historian	Donald Foreman
Parliamentarian	Katie Wishom
Founder	Esther Pancho
Education	Vacant
Exhibits	Julia Vitero
Library	Shyrrl Spann-Hancock
Membership	Pat Bailey
Newsletter	Dolores Vitero Presley
NCQC Liaison	Katie Wishom
Opportunity Quilt	Teri Green
Publicity	Vacant
Program	Ann Seals
Quilt Show	Marion Coleman
Sunshine	Nell Mays
Website	Kyla Laffoon
Worthy Causes	Jackie Clemons-Dorsey



MEMBERSHIP:

Membership shall be open to anyone interested in the purpose and objectives of this Guild, and payment of annual dues. No discrimination shall be made with regard to race, color, creed, or national origin.

**African American Quilt
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P.O. Box 31834
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