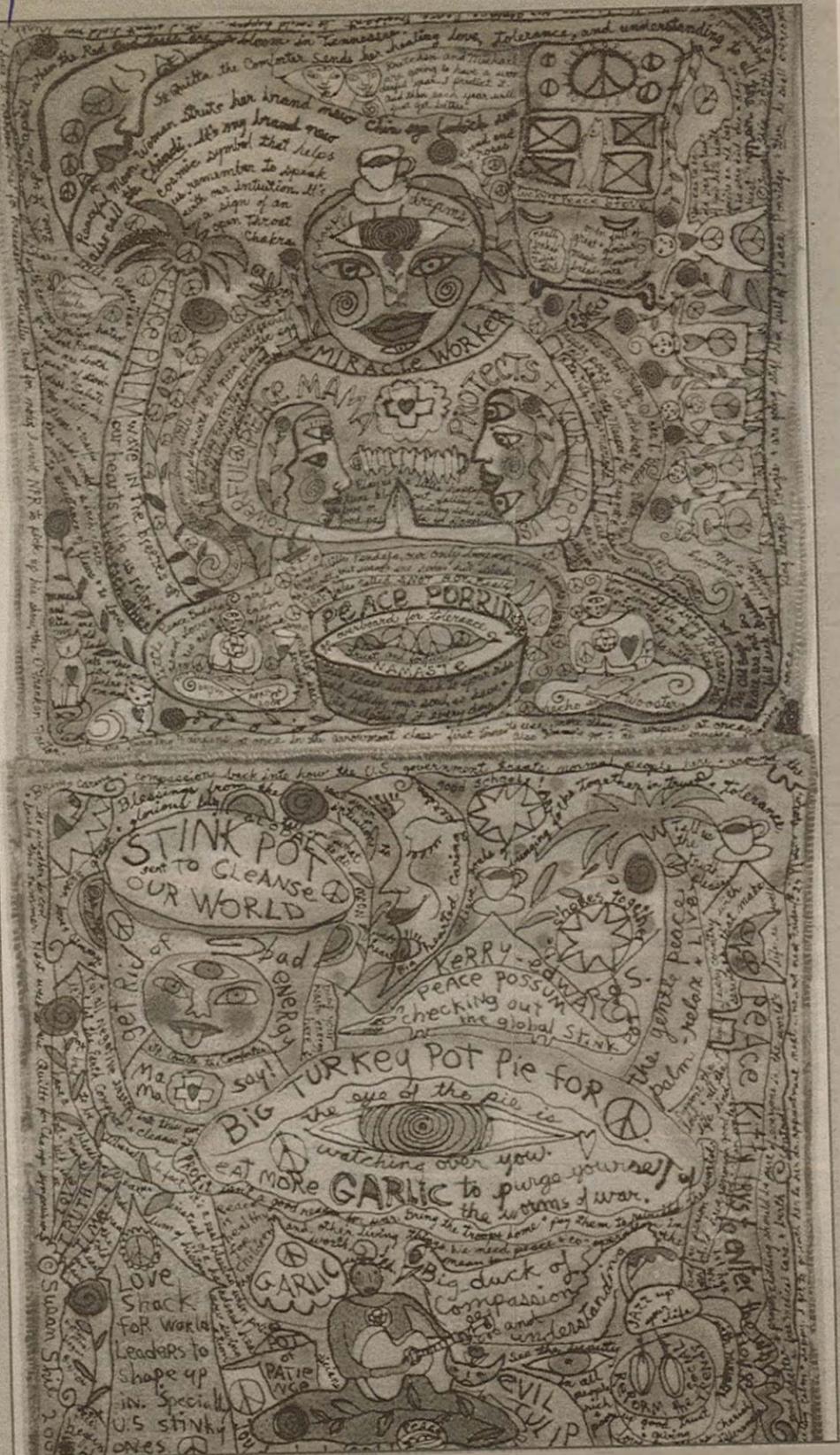


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**Y**es, quilts serve an everyday function that paintings do not. But that doesn't make them any less of an art form. The 30 works at the Ohio Arts Council's **Quilt National '05**, which is on display at the **Riffe Gallery** through April 16, show some of the most innovative trends in art-quilt design. *Quilt National '05* will be on display at, 77 S. High St. Downtown through April 16. Hours are 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays, noon-8 p.m. Saturdays, noon-4 p.m. Sundays, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays. Admission is free. 644-9624.

# Riffe Gallery's quilt display tells a multitude of artist's stories

By John Matuszak  
Staff Writer

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Every quilt tells a story of dreams and hopes - whether it is a classic, traditional design or a contemporary work of art.

"There is absolutely no difference between what your great-great-grand mother did and these quilts," explained Hilary Fletcher, project director for Quilt National, on display at the Riffe Gallery now through April 16. "She used available materials to tell you about her life."

Family quilts told stories about comings

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and goings, happiness and loss. Mourning quilts would incorporate a piece of clothing of a departed loved one.

The artists of Quilt National address many of the same themes, while also carrying on the tradition of originality in design began many years ago.

"Every old-fashioned design was somebody's original design," Fletcher said. "You can't look at great-grandmother's quilt without thinking about shape, line, color, texture, composition."

The only difference is that the creations at the Riffe Gallery, drawn from more than 1,200 entries for the juried show, were meant to be seen on the wall, and not on a bed.

"These are quilts by structure, not function," Fletcher said, and run the gamut from "classic to innovative."

The themes run from the joyous to the somber, and demonstrate exquisite craftsmanship that employs tools from the needle to the camera and the computer.

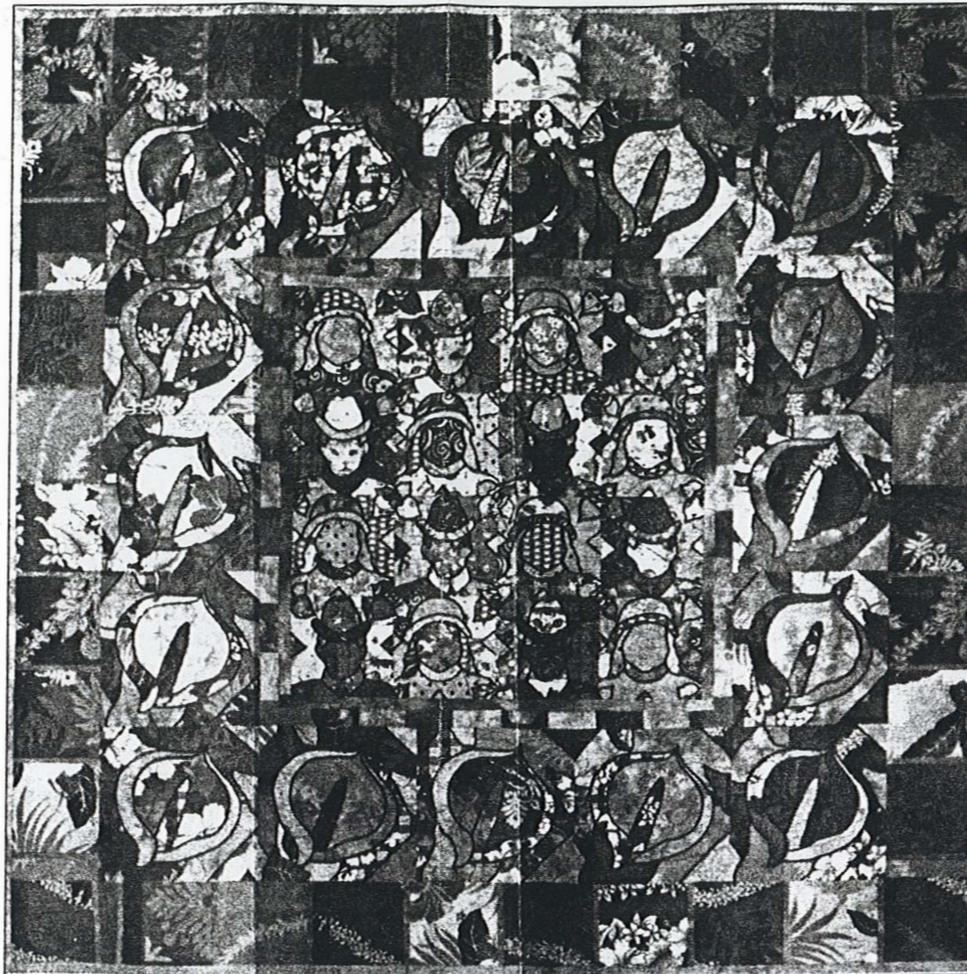
Canadian Kit Vincent's "Lancaster Series: Witness" is about "the brutal and shattering effects of war," according to the artist's statement.

The quilt tells the story of the artist's uncle, who, as a 22-year-old RAF pilot during World War II, was shot down in a French beet field.

The surface is dotted with the images of plants sending their roots into the soil, and belts of bullets snaking around, looking like fence stakes but representing something more sinister.

Even today, Vincent relates, the farmer is still picking up pieces of the airplane from the ground.

Therese May, one of the pioneers of the art quilt movement, also addresses themes of family in a tribute to her parents, "Alice and Don," which uses pieces of clothing in the tapestry.



Therese May's "Alice and Don," a tribute to her parents, is one of the works on display in the Quilt National exhibition at the Riffe Gallery now through April 16.

The quilt is May's way of thanking her parents for everything they gave her, including issues she had to overcome. It's 70" x 70" dimensions are a plea for forgiveness, echoing Christ's admonition to ask for forgiveness "70 times 7."

Not all the surfaces are two-dimensional. Susan Else submitted whimsical three-dimensional figures with quilted bodies in "Bingo!"

Splashes of color are typical, but some artists choose a more muted palette, as in Patricia Mink's "Wall Quilt," with a photo-transfer of crumbling edifice in Cordoba, Spain.

"You don't need a lot of color. Color is important, but so is texture," Fletcher said.

Some of the artists reach back centuries for their techniques and their inspiration.

Jan Myers-Newbury uses an ancient Japanese method similar to tie-dyeing to color her fabrics, demonstrating the fabric artist's desire to control every aspect of the creation.

Mirjam Pet-Jacobs, an artist from the Netherlands, fashioned spirits venerated by Australian aboriginals in "Mimiquilt IX: Solidarity."

The mimis, long, thin spirits who teach the aboriginals everything they need to know to survive, demonstrate that "in times of trouble, people help one another."

That helping hand is vividly illustrated in *Suenos y Deseos* ("Dreams and Hopes"), quilts originating from an outreach program between Passion Works, an Athens, Ohio, studio for the developmentally disabled, and its sister facility, Cruz del Sur, in Punta Arenas, Chile.

Patty Mitchell, the artistic director of "Dreams and Hopes," explained that the partnership allows patrons to learn about people with disabilities and "what's possible through the power of the arts."

In addition to the quilts, greeting cards have been printed with the designs, with profits being shared between the two centers.

Envisioning possibilities has been what Quilt National and its home base, the Dairy Barn Cultural Arts Center in Athens, have been all about from the beginning.

The arts center came about when a 100-year-old barn, part of the Athens Mental Health Center, was saved from the wrecking ball at the last minute.

The opening coincided with the resurgence in interest in art quilting, and the need for a place to hold exhibitions.

When they moved in, "the flies were still there," Fletcher recalled. "You have no idea what flies can do to quilts," demonstrating the desperation of artists to find a home.

The first Quilt National was held in 1979, and has grown into an internationally recognized showcase.

Like those who looked at a barn and saw an arts center, the quilt artists view the long thread of tradition and weave it into something unique.

"They didn't know what a quilt should be, but they knew what a quilt could be," Fletcher said.

*The Riffe Gallery is located at 77 S. High St., across from the Ohio Statehouse. Admission is free. Hours are Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Saturdays, noon-8 p.m.; and Sundays, noon-4 p.m.*

*Special events include Family Day March 12, from 2-4 p.m., where visitors can make their own paper quilt with assistance from Passion Works art director Patty Mitchell and artist-in-residence Wendy Minor.*

COLUMBUS DISPATCH  
COLUMBUS, OH  
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# Quilts are sew very artistic

When you think of a quilt, images of soft, colorful blankets — perhaps made by your grandmother — might come to mind. But, did you know that a quilt also is art?

Today, artists make some quilts that are never meant go on a bed.

When creating either type of quilt — to use on a bed or display on a wall — artistic choices are made. Quilt makers, like painters, carefully choose colors for the look that they want, and they often tell stories with the shapes and patterns that they sew.

Art-quilt makers use a variety of materials and techniques in their work. Some even make quilts that look like sculptures.

The Ohio Art Council's Riffe Gallery has two exhibitions of art quilts, "Quilt National '05" and "Dreams and Hopes," both on view through April 16.

On Sunday, the gallery is hosting a free Family Day from 2 to 4 p.m. Kids and adults will work with artists Patty Mitchell and Wendy Minor from Passion Works Studio in Athens, Ohio, to create their own paper quilts.

If you want to try making a paper art quilt before Family Day, here's what to do:

- Gather your materials. You will need paper (as many types and colors as you like); pencils, markers, paint and crayons; scissors; tape and/or glue; and (if an adult says it's OK) a needle and thread.
- Collect some items from around your house. For example, magazines that you can cut up, bottle caps, buttons, beads, glitter, yarn, lids — anything that sparks your imagination.
- Make a drawing and decorate it. Cut it out and glue or tape it on another piece of paper (construction paper is good). This is the beginning of your quilt square.
- Get creative. Sew buttons on your picture, glue on glitter or yarn, attach pictures or letters cut out from magazines — just use your imagination.
- Do this project with a friend or make a bunch of squares yourself. Sew the squares together. Now you have a colorful paper art quilt.

To reserve a space at the Riffe Gallery's Family



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Day, call 614-728-2239 or e-mail [riffegallery@oac.state.oh.us](mailto:riffegallery@oac.state.oh.us).

The Riffe Gallery is located in the Riffe Center, 77 S. High St., Downtown. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, noon to 8 p.m. Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Admission is free.

For more information, call 614-644-9624 or visit [www.riffegallery.org](http://www.riffegallery.org).

**Sources:** Information for Culture Creature was provided by the Riffe Gallery, in cooperation with the Columbus Arts Marketing Association, [www.camaonline.org](http://www.camaonline.org).