

Special Features, Quilt Collections and Projects

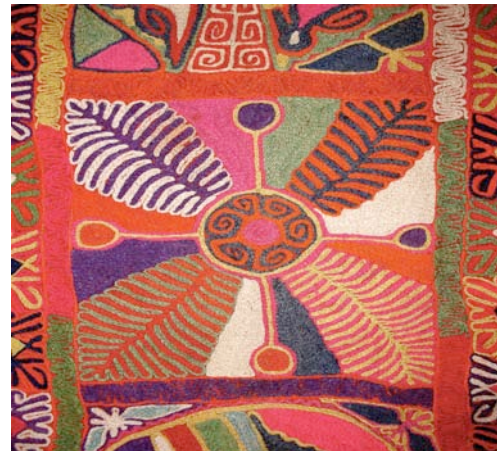


Gardens of Eden of Mesopotamia Embroidered Wedding Blankets of Southern Iraq

In the South of Iraq, between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers the Sumerians built some of the earliest known cities. More than 5,000 years ago the legendary Gardens of Eden were said to have been sited there.

The ancient places are no more, but up to the middle of the 20th century the rural population lived a life that had changed little over the course of time.

It is in this region that the embroidered wedding blankets were made until a few decades ago. They are different from any other textile tradition of the Middle East. Flowers, animals, human figures, symbols and geometric motifs are embroidered with wool yarn on a hand-woven stitching ground. Each blanket is unique in its design and character, yet visibly belongs to a common tradition. Information about these works of art is still scarce. With their wealth of colours and forms they are 'Gardens of Eden'.



Roses from the Heart: Australian Bonnets

Christina Henri is a conceptual artist from Tasmania - the smallest State in Australia.

Since 2003 her art has focused on the lives of convict women. In 2004 Christina invited the public to participate in a christening bonnet project 'Departures and Arrivals' which gave acknowledgement to the babies born to convict women. A great number of these babies died and were unceremoniously buried. Their convict mother's who were given no opportunity to grieve have been given voice through this installation of 900 calico christening bonnets.

In 2005 Christina commenced Roses from the Heart; a major installation which asks the international community to commemorate the worth all convict women transported to Australia through the making of a cloth bonnet. The bonnet is individually embellished and personalised with the name of a convict woman and, where known, also the ship and date of arrival in Australia. Christina has over 14,000 bonnets which is well over half way to her target of 25,566 bonnets. Once the 25,566 bonnets are received the work will become a permanent public art installation.



The Faces of Love: Art Craft Centre, Murmansk, Russia

The Murmansk Art Craft Centre presents a unique collection of quilts inspired by the paintings of the renowned Russian artist Anatoli Aleksandrovich Sergjenko. In 2007 a group of quilters consisting of Irina Sopina (art director), Anatoli Sergjenko (project consultant), Nadeschda Markina and Tatjana Ischkarava set out to create a collection of 17 quilts, to be shown at Russian and major international quilt exhibitions. They took as their inspiration characters from a picture by Anatoli Sergjenko. Although they did not set out to make an exact resemblance, many of the quilts became almost exact replicas of the artists' pictures - even though they were created in an entirely different medium. It was as if the artist always intended that his pictures should be re-created using textiles. The breath-taking pictures - beautiful depictions of love and eroticism - leave a great impression on the spectator, an impression which inspired the 'Faces of Love' project.

The 17 quilts, completed in only nine months, demonstrated the artists' great talent and innovative approaches to quilt art. Moreover, many of the manually demanding pieces were crafted by complete beginners who had limited quilting experience.

At the 6th Russian Festival for decorative art, 'Quilt-Mosaics Russia' in Moscow in 2007, the group was honoured by the Association of Quilting in Russia and received a special prize from the main sponsor, BERNINA International AG of Switzerland.

In 2008, Wolfgang Eibisch of BERNINA International AG, asked Tatjana Ischkarava's club to reproduce six of the quilts from 'Faces of Love' using new techniques and materials.

In 2009 the group continued their work on the Northern-Sea topic and created six more quilts based on the paintings of A. Sergjenko. All 12 quilts were crafted on Bernina Aurora 440 sewing machines.

This became a new exhibition, which will be on display at The Festival of Quilts 2010.



Pennants for Patchworkers

- At the Festival of Quilts in Birmingham 2010, the theme for the tombola, which raises money for The Quilters Guild of the British Isles, is **Pennants for Patchworkers**.
- We would encourage everyone (you don't have to be a Guild member) to have a go at making a pennant, (or two...?) which should be an Isosceles triangle, like the ones at the top of this article, with a maximum size equivalent to A4 (letter size in America), three layers, quilted and appropriately finished. No minimum size.
- Please visit our website for further details including photos of pennants, patterns to download, and hints on how to edge your finished work.
<http://pennants4patchworkers.wordpress.com/>

