

Quilters' Hall of Fame

A Quilter's Hall of Fame sprang into being on October 27, 1979 with a surprise announcement at the banquet session of the Continental Quilt Congress, Inc. Officers of the corporation Hazel Carter, President, and Holice Turnbow, Vice-President, and writer Ellen Dykes had prepared a lovely booklet as a memento of the occasion, copies of which were presented to persons attending the banquet. The booklet's introduction states that "Quilters' Hall of Fame has been established to recognize the people behind the quilting renaissance, to pay tribute to their accomplishments, and thereby to establish documentation of a part of quilting history."

The 1979 entries into the Hall of Fame are listed and described in the booklet. They are: William Rush Dunton, Jr., Ruth Ehright Finley, Lenice Ingram Bacon, Marguerite Ickis, and Jonathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof (entered together). This year's entries are all notable authors of books on quilts.

The main speaker at the presentation banquet was Jonathan Holstein (see story on next col.) and the special guest of the Congress was Marguerite Ickis. Miss Ickis, author of THE STANDARD BOOK OF QUILTMaking, was honored with a standing ovation when she was formally introduced, and was almost besieged with greetings, handshakes, and requests for autographs throughout the three-day Congress. The enthusiasm with which she was welcomed and congratulated left no doubt about her fame. Her friends and neighbors feted her again when she got home, and she reports that "the quilting party is still going on!"

Sally Garoutte

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nail and then finish by pushing it through with my thimble.

...you may believe I have sore fingers from the time I begin to quilt until I get it done. My 1st & 2nd fingers scab up thick enough so I have to use sand paper on them.

I do not use any particular kind of a needle. I have a thousand or more that my wife left and I select one and use it until I break off the front and then hunt up another. But I use a short stubbed one that will do the work without bending much.

Yours very respectfully

Jonathan Holstein on Art

Jonathan Holstein, premier quilt-collector and author of AMERICAN PIECED QUILTS, a catalogue of his quilts exhibited at the Whitney Museum in New York in 1971, later expanded into the book THE PIECED QUILT, was the featured banquet speaker at the recent Continental Quilt Congress at the Stouffer Hotel in Arlington, Va. In this presentation Holstein contracted his views of the place of quilts in Art, concluding ultimately that they have no place at all.

First, the collector-writer reminisced about past collecting and writing. Then he moved to definitions which he felt might be applied to quilts: Primitive art, Naive art, Nonacademic art, Folk art and Tribal art. He rejected the first three of these, and seemed rather to incline toward Folk art as his preferred description, although he felt that quilts stand somewhere between "design" and "folk art," being "utilitarian objects which are pleasing to the eye."

After presenting some extremely questionable theories regarding the origins of American quilts, Holstein did admit that he thought that pieced quilts had their origin in esthetic principles. However, he said, women were not artists, as they did not speak Artlanguage. "I have no reason to change my opinion," Holstein said. Art is only made by artists; and since, in his opinion, women are not artists, quilts -by his definition -- cannot be art.

Maybe Holstein is right. And maybe quilters don't care. They know what they are doing; it doesn't matter what it's called.

Sally Garoutte

HELP WANTED

I am researching black quiltmakers in U.S., from the earliest record to present day. Would you please share any information you have on quilts made by black women, slavemade quilts, post-Civil War quilts, or Contemporary Quilts. Or if you have addresses to which I should write, I would appreciate getting these.

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If you have a specific area of research you would like help with, drop us a note explaining briefly what you are looking for and we'll try to publish it. Let's all help each other.