

Uncoverings 2000

Volume 21 of
the Research Papers of
the American Quilt Study Group

Edited by Virginia Gunn



“Petting the Fabric”: Medium and the Creative Process

Lisa Gabbert

The sensory aspects of fabric, particularly its color, hand, and the ways in which it is used are aspects of the creative process in quilting that deserve greater scholarly attention. Emphasizing the sensory rather than the philosophical meanings of the term “aesthetic,” this paper looks at the relationship between creativity, sensory experience, and artistic medium in a group of quilters in central Idaho. Drawing primarily on the words of the quilters themselves, this research suggests that the look, hand, and particular way of manipulating fabric in quilting are key creative stimuli. This study also suggests that the relationship and response of the artist to her/his chosen material constitutes a basic dynamic without which creativity cannot emerge and art cannot be produced.

The sensory aspects of fabric are an important part of quilting that have been neglected in quilting scholarship. This study demonstrates that fabric evoked a basic, positive aesthetic response in the quilters who participated in this study. In doing so, it provided a key source of artistic inspiration that the quilters did not find in other media and therefore played a primary role in their creative processes. Furthermore, the particular way in which fabric is cut up, arranged, and sewn back together in quilting also provided creative stimulus, suggesting that both the material itself and the ways in which it is used play an integral role in motivating people to create textile art.

In examining aesthetic choice and artistic inspiration, most quilting scholars have adhered to contemporary conceptions that involve either notions of taste or an articulated set of prescribed rules, a perspective that has led few researchers to attend to the importance of fabric itself in the creative process for people who quilt. John Forrest



reminded us, however, that notions of aesthetics also invoke sensory experiences that should be taken into account.¹ Researchers such as Sharon Sherman and Linda Pershing have also pointed out the influence of the senses as important aspects of aesthetic experience and creativity.² This perspective is compatible with a growing interest in phenomenological methodologies, sometimes defined as the description of experience as told and lived by informants.³

Forrest suggested that a more complete ethnography of aesthetic objects and aesthetic evaluation involves a full description of sensory experience, including taste, touch, smell, and sound as well as sight. This approach poses obvious ethnographic difficulties. An emphasis on sensory experience, however, is useful for understanding the experience of the individual, which can provide insights into how and why people create art. At least in this case study, an initial examination of sensory experience led to a closer examination of the role the particular medium played in art and creativity. In this study I used the quilters' descriptions of their own sensory experience and their statements about their relationship to their medium of choice as evidence that fabric evokes a positive aesthetic response that is a fundamental aspect of quilting. Results suggest that the medium with which artists work is a primary source of inspiration and creativity for them. I examined the importance of fabric as a creative stimulus from both a group and an individual perspective and postulate that not only is the relationship between maker and medium essential to the creative process, but also that only after they "found their medium" were many quilters in the group examined able to define themselves as artists.

The Pine Needle Quilters

Influenced by the fine scholarship of Joyce Ice, my initial approach to this fieldwork was to further explore the interpersonal relations among women as a function of the quilting group.⁴ I worked with the Pine Needle Quilters in McCall, Idaho, a small town located in the central portion of the state. At the time, the group consisted of about twenty-two female members, approximately ten to fourteen of whom attended regularly. My mother is a member and brought me to my first meet-



ing where I was welcomed. The quilters, who ranged in age from the mid-thirties through the late seventies, were conversing about the menopausal changes women experience as they enter late middle age. "I heard one guy describing this place as a stitch and bitch club!" Joyce McFadden gleefully exclaimed. "Hoo-boy, it's hot in here." She fanned herself vigorously despite the chilly March temperature, while several other women nodded sympathetically. A few minutes later, as the women gathered around the table to begin their business meeting, an older member demonstrated the ease with which a rubber latex thimble could push a needle through fabric. The others jumped on the opportunity to allude to the thimble's other potential uses as she wagged it suggestively on her thumb. I was delighted to have found this diverse and rather bawdy group of women.

My research was straightforward. At the second meeting I asked the Pine Needles members permission to conduct fieldwork. "Yeah Yeah! Study us!" was their unified response. I observed only; it should be noted that there was no quilting frame up while I attended the weekly meetings.⁵ Instead, members brought in their own projects to work on or simply for "show-and-tell." I also conducted interviews with six women who were considered some of the "core" members of the group since they attended every week. Their background and quilting perspectives varied greatly. The youngest quilter was in her early forties and the eldest was in her seventies. Members of the group I interviewed made both bed quilts and wall hangings, quilted by both hand and by machine, and ranged widely in socioeconomic background.

As I observed the group and interviewed the quilters, their passion for quilting and love of fabric quickly became apparent, permeating the other aspects of quilting to which my studies had me attuned. Some scholars have suggested that women form groups because they share a common interest in quilting.⁶ While an interest in quilting is obviously necessary for participation, it was not the primary reason for joining the quilting group among the Pine Needles. Rather, for the people I interviewed, the initial impetus to join seemed to be only a moderate interest in quilting and more prominently a desire for company—along with an intimacy with fabric as a medium. This desire for companionship, rather than a direct interest in quilting, has been



noted by Susan Stewart and others.⁷ Yet while this was true for many members of the Pine Needles, it was their familiarity with fabric that allowed that social interaction to occur. Several informants, for example, had perhaps attempted to make one quilt on their own and had then set quilting aside until they became members of the group. Leta Polivka recalled, "The winters are really long here and I needed some companionship." She had quilted a pillow from a kit before joining the group, but stated "I don't think that I would have gotten as interested as fast as I did if I hadn't found the club."⁸ Jackie Zbrowski joined the club because of a friend and said, "There was probably about three or four months during which I went to the group and until I started quilting. . . . it looked like a jigsaw puzzle to me at first, like 'How in the world?' It was just beyond me. But little by little I just did it."⁹ For these women then, while the initial impetus to join the group was social, their background in sewing and experience with fabric allowed them to learn and participate. Catherine Petzak commented, "Of course I've always liked fabric—I've always sewn garments and curtains and you know, whatever you need. I think that's maybe what got me started."¹⁰

Pat Ferrero, Elaine Hedges, and Julie Silber identified sewing as a common denominator for women who quilt, but did not mention the unifying element of fabric.¹¹ Doris Dyen noted in her own research among quilters that "Most of the women had prior experience with needlework before joining the Quilters, but usually it was with undecorated, functional sewing, such as making and mending clothes or curtains."¹² This was true among the Pine Needles. All of them had sewn all their lives and were intimately familiar with working with needles. But familiarity with fabric as a potentially artistic medium is another element of this common denominator that is often overlooked. Karen Burton was a seamstress before she joined, and Billie Hawley, who has sewn all her life, told me, "I had a visual memory of me once, born with a needle in my hand."¹³ Leta said that her background in sewing "[is] very handy now, a lot of the things in the past that I have done have really helped me now [with quilting]."¹⁴

*Fabric as Source of Artistic Inspiration*

"I don't care about anything but quilting," Jackie once told me, and from what I observed, the Pine Needles were certainly crazy about quilting. Nearly all of my informants stated that once they discovered quilting, they knew that they had found what they were "meant to do." Karen Burton noted, "It was just like love at first sight. I can't live without this and now there aren't enough hours in the day. I just discovered that I had a passion for it, and of course the other ladies did too."¹⁵

Jane Przybysz has pointed out that quilters often characterize their craze for quilting as an "addiction," (there is a tongue-in-cheek list of traits that determines whether one qualifies for *Fabriholics Anonymous*). For the Pine Needles, this love extended to other material forms. During the meetings I saw women reading books like *Murder at the Quilt Show*. They organized quilting retreats and bought cookbooks called *Favorite Recipes of Quilters* as well as quilting calendars and t-shirts. Przybysz suggested that this addiction to quilting is the "female desire to materially and symbolically amplify and extend the self." Women who quilt, for example, often take over whole rooms of the house (and often parts of the yard) with their activity.¹⁶ Przybysz proposed a direct relationship between quilting and the body and her suggestion potentially accounts for a psychological satisfaction derived from quilting. Her perspective, however, does not address why quilters crave quilting as opposed to other art forms. When I asked my informants why quilters were so crazy about quilting, their answers suggested first that the fabric itself constituted an extremely important factor because of its particular sensory qualities and second, that quilting as a particular kind of act allowed them to use fabric in a way that was aesthetically satisfying. For them, working with fabric was something quite different from other activities. It allowed them to create in ways that other media did not. Catherine stated, "And of course once you start, it's just wonderful. It's hard to stop."¹⁷

One of the primary underlying sources of inspiration for most Pine Needle members was the integral relationship between fabric and color. The importance of color has been pointed out numerous times. Yvonne Milspaw, for example, noted that quilter Jennie Bedient's



strong sense of color was an integral part of her overall design.¹⁸ But the specific connection between color and fabric as a conveyor of color is often left implicit. For many quilters in the Pine Needles, color and fabric were inexorably interconnected in the same sentence, and many identified their love of color as stemming from childhood experiences with cloth. Jackie recalled that as a girl, her mother would take her to the store to buy fabric:

And it used to be, a man stood behind the counter and then the rolls were up and you had to choose from behind, you could not touch it. So, I remember looking at all the beautiful colors. And I've been sort of hooked on colors ever since.¹⁹

Emily Ede also said her favorite thing in the world is color:

And I love color and I love fabric. I've always loved fabric too. My mother loved fabric and she always bought fabric. She had a lot of our clothes made. And we always had fabric scraps and I always used to sew them, wrap them around my dolls. I started making doll clothes, so I always had lots of fabric scraps to play in. And it's fun to play with the color, the different prints, and the textures.²⁰

To Billie, "Primarily the fabric comes first. Or the colors. I would say. I have an idea of what colors. To me, the fabric just always finds me right away. I think I'm lucky in that I work well with color."²¹ Karen's favorite part of quilting is picking out the fabric, while Catherine commented, "I think color probably catches my eye first. If I see a quilt in colors that I don't particularly like then I'm apt to skip over it more quickly than I would if it was colors that I really really liked—that were pleasing to me."²²

Furthermore, colors seemed intricately associated with the fabric's more tactile aspects. Touch was an important tool of aesthetic evaluation. Called the "fabric hand" in textile scholarship, this sensory experience entails how fabrics feel when touched or held. Textile scholars have long recognized the importance of the hand in determining a textile's aesthetic qualities and understand the difficulty in measuring this important mode of evaluation.²³ Because the quilters stressed the fabric hand in a number of ways, it seemed important as a source of artistic inspiration. In conversation, for example, Jackie moved from



the subject of color variation to the tactile differences between washed and unwashed cottons in the same thought: "I like the material. The feel of the material and the different variations of your light, dark, medium shades. I think that's kind of fun." When asked to explain further, Jackie commented:

Well, I want to make sure that the cloth is always a good texture and weave. All cotton. And that it washes. I always wash them and dry them and iron them again before I ever use them in case there is any shrinkage. But I also don't like that sizing in it. Now some people do keep it in, especially wall hangings, people who do wall hangings instead of quilts. Course, it's never going to be washed. And they like that slickness. But I don't. So, that's part of it.²⁴

Karen also thought touch was important. She mentioned that she just liked the feel of the cotton in general: "Cause you can run the fabric through your fingers, you know. It's a very kinesthetic thing—I mean when I was little I would run my sheets between my fingers. There's a feel to it, I think. Especially cottons and things, the coolness of the fabric. It's a whole kinesthetic, sensual experience."²⁵ Billie and Catherine also liked the feel of fabric. Billie said that the whole sensation of touch was very important to her, while Catherine stated, "I love working with the fabric. Your mother has accused me more than once of petting the fabric. *Love* the feel of it."²⁶ Leta, on the other hand, did not particularly like the feel of flat cottons, but her favorite part of quilting was the actual handwork itself because it transformed a flat cotton surface into a textured one: "It's a relaxation time. And then the quilting—it's the texture. . . . you look back on it and it's totally different than the flat piece of fabric was when you started."²⁷ For Emily, the tactile aspects lay in the warmth of the final product:

It's just—something about cloth and fabric. It's very—it's tactile and comforting. I always feel like I'm creating something that a lot of people will get a lot of enjoyment out of. That makes me feel good. And it's going to last after me. It's warmth and all that stuff. You can wrap up in it, and you can touch it, and a lot of art you can't touch.²⁸

Thus, although the particularities of what each woman liked to touch and what each associated with the fabric hand differed, in each case



these aspects seemed to be an essential stimulus in motivating her to create.

Apart from the look and hand, the acquisition of cloth was an important part of the quilters' lives. Collecting is a phenomenon that often inspires awe or puzzlement to outsiders. While the acquisition of fabric is not a sensory aspect of quilting, the feeling with which collectors pursue their object of desire is fervent. For the quilters, collecting fabric is of prime importance in their lives. The Pine Needles collected textiles passionately and many had shelves filled with fabric. Billie admitted that "I have enough fabric that if for some reason they stop producing fabric, I think I'll be OK."²⁹ During their vacations, spare time, and in-between work breaks, the quilters actively sought out fabric shops, often driving hundreds of miles to check out a sale or a new store. Often, they came to meetings with new fabrics for show-and-tell instead of an actual project.

The existing scholarship on collecting, however, rarely focuses on the collection of raw materials by people who actually use them and only very recently has begun to examine the collection of "non-art" objects.³⁰ Instead, much scholarship focuses on the psychological aspects of collecting, on the connoisseurship and taste of the collectors, or on the monetary value of the collection.³¹ While fabric functioned as an object of consumption for the Pine Needles, the quilters harbored no illusion that their fabric collections would increase in value. Rather, they simply recognized that they often spent a good deal of money pursuing their interest. Joyce Ice noted that one of the church quilters with whom she worked once commented, "You should have asked us how much we spend on quiltmaking, not how much we make."³² Indeed, a quilter's expenditures may seem extreme to other members of the family and spending this money is, perhaps, a way to maintain some power or a feeling of control.³³ Leta is not wealthy and said that when she ordered brown fabric to frame one quilt, "The idea that I would order fabric and pay ten dollars a yard for it seemed like a big deal."³⁴ Karen said that her husband has claimed more than once, "We could take a trip around the world on what you've spent on fabric."³⁵

Yet collecting for the quilters seemed based in tactile, sensory, and emotional satisfaction rather than in issues of monetary control. Value lay in simply shopping for and acquiring their chosen medium. Jackie



said, "If I go into a fabric store, it's just like looking at chocolate candy. I wish I could have all of it. But I can't have it all, so sometimes I just buy pieces of it."³⁶ Necessity and use were secondary issues. Catherine said that she keeps fabric for three or four years before she decides what to do with it and that each piece has a particular memory or association attached to it: "Most all of my fabric, even the fat quarters, I can tell you where I bought it and under what circumstances. It just indicates how interesting it is to me, that's all."³⁷ Karen said:

I don't know what it is. I have shelves and shelves of fabric. More fabric than I could ever use in a lifetime if I started tomorrow and made one quilt a day. . . There is something to me, you know, that kinesthetic, that feel of fabric, that look, the color, looking at it stacked all together on the shelves, the fabric is just the most important thing. I don't even have to do anything with some of it, it can just sit there.

She continued, "I have to have one of every book and a yard of every fabric before I die. This is my goal in life."³⁸

The Quilting Process

The cloth alone, however, does not explain why quilters quilt, and another aspect important to creative inspiration in quilting seems to be the physical act of manipulating fabric in a particular manner. The color, hand, and acquisition of fabric can be or are part of other forms of sewing, yet making clothes or curtains did not motivate or inspire the quilters in the same way. For many members, sewing was too rigid and did not allow for the flexible manipulation of colors and textures that is possible in quilting forms. Leta was simply so bored with sewing that she stopped when she was eighteen and did not pick it up again until she joined the Pine Needles. She said "I'd done everything and I was tired of it. . . . I didn't want to pursue it."³⁹ Jackie said quilting for her is different than sewing because "It [quilting] is just a lot of fun. You know. It's sort of intriguing. The more I do, the more I can't wait to do three or four ahead."⁴⁰

Such comments suggest that the particular kind of action involved in quilting is essential, a fact noted by Sandra K. D. Stahl who wrote



that “[a]nother important part of the process is the cutting and sewing of the pieces that make up the top of the quilt.”⁴¹ For many Pine Needles members, exhilaration lay in designing by this particular process. Leta, for example, stressed the importance of being able to manipulate color—that even when she worked with a color she did not like such as purple, she could control it by putting it next to brown to make it fade away instead of using yellow which “made it stick out like a sore thumb.”⁴² Billie said “Basically painting with fabric is what I try to do. It may not look like a painting, but you know, working fabric is a medium in which you put pictures together. We cut it up in little squares and triangles or whatever, and put it back together in something new. I like that process a lot.” She later said, “I love cutting things up and putting them back together in a new way. That’s the best way I can describe it.”⁴³ Karen noted, “I think I’ve always liked fabric and I’ve always liked sewing. And I like the way it goes together and I don’t know what it is. Put it together, you know, disparate pieces of fabric or something.” Later in our conversation Karen elaborated on this aspect, stating that in quilting she can break rules: “We are brought up with rules, you know, you don’t wear these colors together, or put these lines together. One of the first things I learned in quilting is that there are no rules.”⁴⁴ In contrast, for Jackie the ultimate appeal of re-creation and reassembly lies not in breaking rules, but in the orderly precision of putting something back together. She said:

[I]t is a whole new thing making a large blanket from tiny tiny pieces of cloth. And they have to be so precise, that if you are off by an eighth, and if you continue to do that, the quilt is ruined by the end because you would be off maybe two or three inches on one side. Or, they wouldn’t fit together. And I find that interesting. I like it—I have to have it just right.⁴⁵

Emily also liked the challenge of working with small pieces, although to her, being “off ” did not necessarily mean the quilt was ruined: “And I really love quilting. I love the challenge of fitting the pieces together just right—don’t always get them together just right, but if you don’t get them together just right it’s still beautiful.”⁴⁶ Thus, while the reasons the quilters enjoyed cutting up cloth and putting it back together differed, this act was essential because the color and texture that inspired the women were enhanced by the particular mode of cre-



ation. Cutting up cloth and creating a new whole allowed for greater freedom and challenges than other forms of sewing and suggests that not only is the medium important, but that the way in which the medium is manipulated is essential for artistic creation and inspiration.

The Group as Source of Inspiration

With all the emphasis on fabric, I was curious why the quilting group was still important, since the quilters continued to attend the quilting meetings—often religiously—even after many of them had become extremely competent. What I found was that the group was essential to many members' development as artists because the group provided feedback about fabric and color control, and quilting in general. The Pine Needles met on Monday nights and if Christmas Eve fell on a Monday, I was told, some members would be quilting away at their meeting place in the local library. Catherine said that the only Monday night that she had missed in the past year was for her thirty-fifth wedding anniversary, although she thought that quilting on Christmas Eve was "a little extreme."

For many years researchers have pointed to the strong bonds that quilters develop and which play an important role in their lives, functioning as an outlet for psychological stress and tension and providing positive feedback and a sense of satisfaction among members.⁴⁷ Certainly personal relationships among the women were important to the Pine Needles. Catherine, for example, commented that she loved the age diversity and background: "I remember thinking, 'in this small group of people, in this tiny little town, McCall, Idaho, everything in the world that has happened, has happened to this group.'"⁴⁸ While the quilters formed important interpersonal relationships in the group, however, they emphatically stressed that an essential function was the sharing of artistic ideas.⁴⁹ Jackie commented, "You know, we learn from each other. The ideas, or ask questions, or if you have a problem, you can ask. So, that's why I go."⁵⁰ Leta agreed that going to the group was stimulating because, "Somebody was always exited about a new fabric or something."⁵¹ Catherine said that she uses colors and techniques that she would never have tried on her own. "Of course, we



talk about a lot of other things besides quilting. *But I love the medium which gets us there*" [emphasis mine].⁵²

Catherine's statements fit well with my own observations. There was certainly a lot of socializing and bonding in the group, but the majority of talk was about quilting and quite often fabric in particular. Members shared a host of magazine articles and how-to books. They talked about patterns and colors and fabrics and who had what fabrics on sale and quilting tools and quilting techniques. At my second meeting, for example, the Pine Needles informed me that they had arranged for a speaker. When the "speaker" arrived, the quilters sat around the table and quieted down. The woman stood up, introduced herself, and without another word passed around yards of swirling multicolored fabrics that she had dyed by hand, most of which did not make it past the first couple of women before they were claimed as sold. The rest of the meeting was spent admiring the beautiful cloth by literally "petting the fabric." Each piece of fabric was passed from woman to woman; each woman unfolded it, stroked it, perhaps traced the pattern with a finger, refolded it, patted the bulk, and passed it along to the next person if she was not going to buy.

At the meetings, the women laughed and joked a lot about their husbands, kids, and the trials of being female, but serious and intimate conversations were rare, suggesting that while the women firmly believed they could come to the group for emotional support, they did not often do so explicitly. I heard only one troubled personal experience narrative during my ten weeks with them, which was ironically framed as a fabric shopping expedition. As the women joked one evening about the lucky ones who were not married, one member told how she had once stolen a credit card and run away from her husband, checked into a hotel in a nearby city, and went fabric shopping for three days without once calling home.

What emerged in many of the conversations with the quilters was the fact that the women often did not realize they were "artistic" until they began attending the group and learning to quilt. Along with the quilting process, the feedback from the group helped the women look at what they were doing as creative. Karen laughingly recalled that her children used to save her *Pictionary* drawings because they were



so funny: "So I just thought, well, I'm not an artist."⁵³ Emily felt similarly:

I didn't even realize that I was an artist. I always wanted to be an artist, but didn't realize that I was born an artist until I started going there [to the group]. . . . They encouraged me and they liked what I did. They said, "you're so good with color." I didn't really realize that. I knew I liked my color combinations, but I didn't realize that other people might.⁵⁴

Several women stated that they had tried more conventional forms of artistic expression such as painting and sculpture, but that nothing had "felt right" until they began quilting. Billie said that working with fabric felt more "natural" to her, while Catherine described herself as a very directed, rule-oriented person; painting intimidated her, but she felt she could let herself go with fabric in a way she could not with other media: "Maybe because it's that I'm more familiar with fabric than with other mediums, you know, I can do more, I'm freer to play with it than I am some of the other things."⁵⁵ Karen hypothesized that this was because "you can be an artist with fabric maybe where you can't with some of those other mediums."⁵⁶ Her comment suggests that people respond in different ways to different media, and that perhaps creativity happens only after an artist has found materials that for her/him are both appealing and technically manageable. As illustrated earlier, certainly these women were intimately familiar with and loved fabric. They found that the specific actions involved in quilting allowed them to explore creatively and they received positive feedback from the quilting group. They began to redefine themselves as artists. As Emily noted, "I just think I've found my medium."⁵⁷

Conclusion

For many years, Alan Dundes, professor of folklore and anthropology at Berkeley, has called upon folklorists to interpret their data, to explain the why of folklore materials. Literally embracing a definition of aesthetics as sensory experience and listening closely to statements by informants about their medium of choice led to a closer examination



of the role of the materials and physical processes that are integral to the creation of art. The answer to any “why” question is always complex. Certainly there are many other facets that inform the quilters’ creative processes. Issues of friendship, emotional support, identity, individual and group influence, and psychological satisfaction are all important aspects. Yet while the fabric was not the only thing for these quilters, sources of artistic inspiration were partly linked to sensory stimulation resulting from the medium of cloth and the particular way in which cloth is used in during the quilting process. The role of primary materials in the relationship between artist, medium, sensory experience, and sources of creative inspiration warrants further exploration because it suggests that to create, individuals must first discover a medium that stimulates them and provides a foundation upon which creative processes unfold. Many quilters did not define themselves as artists until they found a particular way to work with a particular medium—fabric—that inspired them. A primary goal for many members of the Pine Needle Quilters was to see it, buy it, play with it, pet it, and manipulate it. The foundation of the event lay in a mosaic of women playing and arranging soft, tangible lines, colors, textures, and patterns brought together in a material they related to, were comfortable with, and genuinely loved. Within this nexus, the fabric was a primary source of inspiration and creativity, which suggests that the relationship and response of the artist to his/her chosen material constitutes a basic dynamic without which creativity cannot emerge and art cannot be produced.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Henry Glassie and Sandra Dolby for their helpful feedback, encouragement, and comments on this paper, Michael Owen Jones for emphasizing aesthetic responses, and Virginia Gunn for pointing the way to the concept of the hand. Thanks especially to Billie Hawley, Karen Burton, Catherine Petzak, Leta Polivka, Emily Ede, and Jackie Zbrowski for sharing their time and insights into the quilting process, as well as to the rest of the Pine Needle Quilters



whom I could not interview but who graciously allowed me to attend their meetings.

Notes and References

1. John Forrest, "Visual Aesthetics for Five Senses and Four Dimensions: An Ethnographic Approach to Aesthetic Objects," in *Digging into Popular Culture: Theories and Methodologies in Archeology, Anthropology, and Other Fields*, ed. Ray B. Browne and Pat Browne (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991), 48–57.

2. Sharon Sherman, *Chainsaw Sculptor: The Art of J. Chester "Skip" Armstrong* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995); and Linda Pershing, *Sew to Speak: The Fabric Art of Mary Milne* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995).

3. See, for example, Kristin M. Langellier, "Appreciating Phenomenology and Feminism: Researching Quilting and Communication," *Human Studies* 17 (1994):65–80.

4. Her work that I refer to specifically is Joyce Ice, "Women's Aesthetics and the Quilting Process," in *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore*, ed. Susan Tower Hollis, Linda Pershing, and M. Jane Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 166–77.

5. This research was conducted over a ten-week period. Meetings were held once a week on Monday nights.

6. Joyce Ice, "Splendid Companionship and Practical Assistance," in *Quilted Together: Women, Quilts, and Communities*, ed. Joyce Ice and Linda Norris (Delhi, NY: Delaware County Historical Association, 1989), 6–24; and Gayle Davis, "Women in the Quilt Culture: An Analysis of Social Boundaries and Role Satisfaction," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 13/1 (1990):5–12.

7. Susan Stewart, "Sociological Aspects of Quilting in Three Brethren Churches in Southeastern Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Folklife* 23/3 (1974):15–29; see also Davis, 1990; Ice, 1989.

8. Leta Polivka of McCall, Idaho, interview by author, 26 May 1996, tape recording in author's possession.

9. Jackie Zbrowski of McCall, Idaho, interview by author, 2 June 1996, tape recording in author's possession.

10. Catherine Petzak of McCall, Idaho, interview by author, 27 May 1996, tape recording in author's possession.

11. Pat Ferrero, Elaine Hedges, and Julie Silber, *Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women and Quilts on American Society* (San Francisco: Quilt Digest Press, 1987).

12. Doris J. Dyen, "The Allison Park Quiltmakers," in *Craft and Community: Traditional Arts in Contemporary Society*, ed. Shalom D. Staub (Harrisburg: The Commission, 1988), 63–70, esp. 64.

13. Billie Hawley of McCall, Idaho, interview by author, 27 May 1996, tape recording in author's possession.



Uncoverings 2000

14. Polivka, 1996.
15. Karen Burton of McCall, Idaho, interview by author, 26 May 1996, tape recording in author's possession.
16. Jane Przybysz, "Quilts and Women's Bodies: Dis-eased and Desiring," in *Bodylore*, ed. Katharine Young (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 165-84, esp. 168.
17. Petzak, 1996.
18. Yvonne J. Milspaw, "Jennie's Quilts: The Interface of Folk and Popular Tradition in the Work of a New York Quiltmaker," *New York Folklore* 8/1-2 (1982):11-23.
19. Zbrowski, 1996.
20. Emily Ede of McCall, Idaho, interview by author, 2 June 1996, tape recording in author's possession.
21. Hawley, 1996.
22. Petzak, 1996.
23. See, for example, Billie J. Collier and Helen H. Epps, *Textile Testing and Analysis* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, an imprint of Prentice-Hall, 1999).
24. Zbrowski, 1996.
25. Burton, 1996.
26. Petzak, 1996.
27. Polivka, 1996.
28. Ede, 1996.
29. Hawley, 1996.
30. For a folkloristic emphasis on collecting as creative behavior, see Stacy Tidmore, "Making One's Way: Souvenir Traditions among Elvis Fans" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1999). For an introduction to a cultural studies/literary perspective, see *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); and Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993).
31. See, for example, Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion: Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) for a psychological perspective. For an emphasis on connoisseurship and collection value, see Shirley Z. Johnson, "A Textile Collector's Approach to Collecting," *Arts of Asia* 25/4 (1995):126-39.
32. Ice, 1989, 23.
33. Przybysz, 179.
34. Polivka, 1996.
35. Burton, 1996.
36. Zbrowski, 1996.
37. Petzak, 1996.
38. Burton, 1996.
39. Polivka, 1996.
40. Zbrowski, 1996.
41. Sandra K. D. Stahl, "A Quiltmaker and Her Art," in *Indiana Folklore: A*



Reader, ed. Linda Dégh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 46–73, esp. 64.

42. Polivka, 1996.
43. Hawley, 1996.
44. Burton, 1996.
45. Zbrowski, 1996.
46. Ede, 1996.
47. Stewart, 1974; Dyen, 1988; Davis, 1990; Langellier, 1992; Przybysz, 1993; Ice, 1993.
48. Petzak, 1996.
49. Davis, 1990.
50. Zbrowski, 1996.
51. Polivka, 1996.
52. Petzak, 1996.
53. Burton, 1996.
54. Ede, 1996.
55. Petzak, 1996.
56. Burton, 1996.
57. Ede, 1996.