

QUILT VISIONS – Modern American Quilt Art

Jane Burch Cochran, Joe Cunningham, Judith Larzelere, Linda Levin, Carolyn L. Mazloomi, Paula Nadelstern, Heather Pregger, Dinah Sargeant

Oulu Museum of Art, 6 June – 30 August 2015

Quilt Visions introduces eight distinguished present-day American textile artists from different parts of the United States: Jane Burch Cochran from Kentucky, Joe Cunningham and Dinah Sargeant from California, Judith Larzelere from Rhode Island, Linda Levin from Massachusetts, Paula Nadelstern from New York, Carolyn L. Mazloomi from Ohio and Heather Pregger from Texas.

In the United States the field of modern quilt art is extensive and rich – thanks to the long and versatile tradition, the established position of quilt art in the field of visual arts, and the skill and expertise of professional quilt artists. Debate about the standing of quilt art in relation to other visual arts started in the United States already in the late 19th century. The roots of the present exhibition are at the turn of the 1950s and the 1960s, when young artists from different fields of art discovered the quilts of their grandmothers and adapted them as instruments for their own artistic expression.

In English the word *patchwork* literally means something made of patches, sewn together by hand or using a sewing machine. *Quilt* and *quilting* refer to the act of stitching and well as a stitched, three-layer textile, a duvet. Stitching can be done either by hand or using a sewing machine. In Finnish it is more natural to speak of ‘patchwork art’ instead of ‘duvet art’.

The artists whose works are exhibited in *Quilt Visions* have made long careers as artists, teachers, authors and exhibition organisers. The exhibition illustrates different modes of artistic expression and different methods, such as sewing by hand, machine sewing, appliqué, printing, dying and painting. The works explore a wide field of subjects including male, female and African-American perspectives, home and everyday life, big cities, nature and music. Abstract compositions, vivid colours and creative use of materials also play an important role. A selection of six to eight works is presented from each invited artist, with emphasis on recent works.

Quilt Visions is the most extensive exhibition of modern American quilt art to date in Northern Europe. In Finland, modern international quilt art has been exhibited in art museums only seldom. The exhibition in Oulu Museum of Art is curated by the Oulu-based textile artist and teacher Vuokko Isaksson, a pioneer of Finnish modern quilt art with a career of four decades, and curator Elina Vieru. Through their selections the curators have wanted to highlight different methods of quilt art and the visual quality of the works. A series of events open to the public, such as guided tours, demonstrations and lectures, is also arranged in connection with the exhibition.