



Patching It

Quilts and "quilts" in rival towns

Quilts, once disregarded as simply "women's work," have come into their own over the past three decades as feminist art historians revived the idea that communal work could still be art. Though men and women often work together on large-scale quilting projects, quilting remains largely women's work. Two shows, one at Opus6ix and one at Corvallis' ArtCentric, examine contemporary art and craft produced by women interested in continuing the tradition.

In Corvallis, the gorgeously hung show encompasses the work of three Oregon women. The show, "More Than One View: Quilt Country," stretches the meaning of quilting beyond its traditional boundaries and is the stronger for that reinterpretation. ArtCentric's newsletter explains that the work of all three women "follows the same premise as quilting, making one unified whole out of many elements."

The airy, small converted church serves as a quiet backdrop for the various media on display. Portlander Lisa Kaser's felt constructions, the only fiber connection, are colorful and evocative, a gesture at the internal world made visible. *That Beautiful Someday's* abstract, Clyfford Still-like colors leap from the wall and warm the room. *Elephant Has 29 Visions While Running up the Mountain* gestures at cryptic children's worlds and a mysterious cosmology with tiny animals, whimsical and grotesque, sewn onto the blue felt background. Kaser also paints these animals as watercolors and apparently creates them out of small clay as well, but those pieces aren't in the show.

Eileen Kane's acrylics, each a small square, carry the memory of early Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Agnes Martin and Jo Baer with their color fields, etched grids and framing devices. But the artist hangs groupings in a manner that sketch a reproduction of piecing a quilt: The colors and patterns aren't the same, but they do speak to each other and share certain themes. For instance, the cool-tone groupings share water-related titles like *Abalone Shell* and *Late Afternoon — Yaquina Bay*, and a warm grouping contains not only *Roseate Tile* but also the lovely *New England Autumn*.

Hilary Pfeifer's two works provide a site-specific visual contrast with her piecing together of a variety of scrap material and found pieces into a unified, whimsical, undulating line of "lovebugs," each piece painted black with a red splotch representing a heart. The piece, called *'sWarm* in clever homage to Gershwin's

(above) *Vertical Garden* by Hilary Pfeifer
(below) *String Quintet* by Janet Hiller



song "Wonderful," twirls up and through the former altar space and twines around her colorful, goofy *Vertical Garden* pieces, also composed of scrap and found material. If you head to Corvallis for the Fall Festival and its associated race, do drop into ArtCentric for a lovely show whose power and grace remain in the mind. The show closes at the end of the Festival on Sept. 23.

ArtCentric's show runs in conjunction with quilt displays all over Corvallis, and at the same time, Eugene's Opus6ix gallery presents "Art of the Quilt," a fiber arts show with examples of the work of 18 Linn and Lane County women.

This show contains a certain amount of whimsy — like Phyllis Prom's *White Birch* with its gold birch leaf hanging in the cleft of a fragmentary tree branch/torso — along with a few eye-rollingingly painful pieces (Digital cat photos turned into quilts?! *Oh no they didn't!*). Yet some combine skill and artistry to create works of interest.

One of the best of the smaller pieces is Lynda Christiansen's *Itsy bitsy*, which despite its too-cute title combines patterns of various colors and styles into an intriguing and professionally finished whole. Jae McDonald's larger *Red Center*, with its four quarters split yet unified by a diagonal river shape, becomes oddly calming despite its sanguinary color scheme. Janet Hiller's *String Quintet* and *Scattered showers with sun breaks* display a strong sense of Mondrian-like balance, and Catherine Beard's various pieces, especially *Aspens III*, gesture at realism but hold to a commitment to blocky, lively colors and patterns. "Art of the Quilt" runs through Sept. 30.

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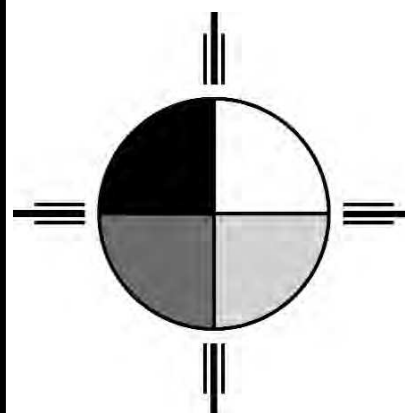
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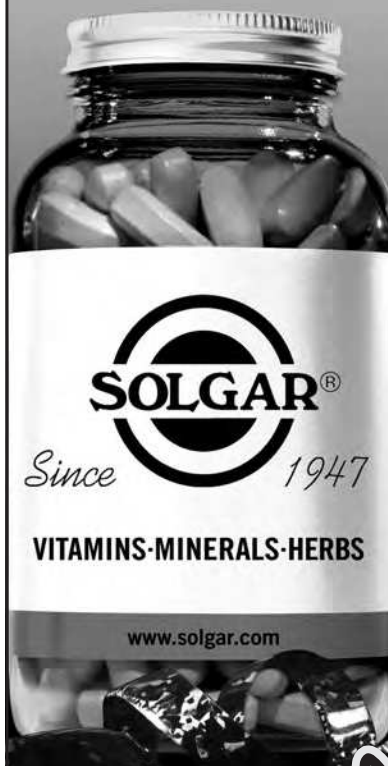
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