

Art by Betty Busby, Jill Kerthula, Vicki Conley, Louise Hall, and Heather Pregar



## TEXTILE POSTERS DISCUSSION POINTS

Textile Posters is an exhibition of 24 art quilts created by members of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the art quilt through education, exhibitions, professional development, documentation, and publications. Founded in 1989 by an initial group of 50 artists, SAQA now has over 3,400 members worldwide: artists, teachers, collectors, gallery owners, museum curators and corporate sponsors. Since its establishment, the organization has grown alongside the evolution of the quilt as an art form. Today, SAQA defines an art quilt as a creative visual work that is layered and stitched or that references this form of stitched layered structure.

For the Textile Posters exhibit, SAQA artists were invited to draw upon the scope of historic posters and contemporary iterations for their creations. The artists' cloth interpretations were open to reflect advertisements for products, places or events; to be employed as a way to educate on topics of historical, social or cultural significance; or to otherwise communicate using the language of posters.

Our juror, printmaker Joseph Lupo, has selected pieces which reflect the wide diversity of posters. What all have in common though is an emblematic economy of text and imagery. Posters are meant to convey a message in the blink of an eye, be it to inform, educate, or persuade. It is that particular aesthetic consideration which characterizes these textile artworks. The discussion points posed below should help viewers take the time to ask questions about the artists' decisions, and to make connections between the works to further deepen the experience. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, and individual pieces may connect to others in more than one way.

## Visual Impact

The principle task of a poster is to influence and attract the attention of passersby. Which poster caught your attention first and why?

The poster as we know it began with the advent of color lithography and Jules Cheret's integration of text and imagery. Which posters in this exhibit best combine text and image? How does the text style (font), size, and placement effect a poster's visual impact?

Many of the textile posters in this exhibit reference well known works or styles. Can you imagine the soaring characteristic of Works Progress Administration (WPA) travel posters when viewing *Shiprock* by Cat Larrea or *VOLCANO!* by Heather Pregger? Is the gentle humor in Christina Blais' *Chien Blond* funnier when you recognize the play on Steinlen's classic *Le Chat Noir*? Do any of the other posters remind you of quintessential designs?

## Promotion

Early uses of posters were to promote cultural institutions such as cabarets, circus, and bullfights. This soon expanded to include products – the simplified colors and shapes embraced by the genre helped reinforce brand identity.

Which posters in this exhibit promote a place, an event, or a product?

What elements in the poster(s) might compel you to visit the place or purchase the product promoted?

## Education

Using structural organization, gentle humor, and/or eye-catching imagery, posters are an effective educational tool.

- Patricia Kennedy-Zafred's *This Land Was My Land* and *American Portraits: Living on the Edge* invite conversation about appropriation of Indian lands and the Dust Bowl period respectively.
- Compare *I Am The Face of Rescue* by Michelle Jackson to *3 Wise Words* by Claire Passmore. How do they use persuasion and education in their message? Similarly, compare and contrast *3 Wise Words* to Eleanor Levie's *ReUSE/REFuse*.
- Which textile posters utilize humor, and how?
- *Mammals of Oklahoma* by Shannon Conley marries the information of a natural history poster with the aesthetics of traditional applique. Look for elements in other works that combine traditional quilt styles with poster characteristics.

## **Social Commentary**

Emerging during WWI, with their blunt and powerful messages, posters helped rally support, increase morale, raise money, recruit soldiers, defame the enemy and boost patriotism and support for the war in the US and worldwide. Depending on which “side” one was on, the poster was a great propaganda tool as well. This continued through WWII and today political messages and posters walk hand in hand.

Many of the posters in this exhibit are commentary on current events. Would you categorize any as recruitment, propaganda, or defamation attempts?

*I Will Not Be Silenced* by Betty Busby, *Je Suis Ma Soeur* by Anne Heimstra, and *Women’s March on Washington* by Trish Hodge all speak to the voice of women in society today. Compare and contrast the messages in these three textile posters, as well as the style and imagery each artist used. Does the fact that quilts have traditionally been regarded as “women’s work” influence the subject matter?

Consider the use of red and blue in *Mend The Gap* by Jill Kertulla and *Pardon Snowden* by Louise Hall. In what ways do both address division and patriotism?

*I Will Not Be Silenced* by Betty Busby and *Art is Confession* by Janelle McCall are compositionally very similar. In what other ways are they similar? How are they different?

## **Technique**

Technical advances such as lithographic printing followed by the reproduction of photography influenced the style and substance of posters. Art quilting also embodies styles which reflect myriad ways of manipulating imagery. Look at the various ways in which the artists have presented their subject matter on fabric. Which techniques are you familiar with? Which are new to you? Which seem particularly appropriate to the theme of the exhibit? The following are some examples of works using various techniques. Note that some quilts may fall into several categories.

### ***Digital Printing/ Photography on Fabric:***

*I Will Not Be Silenced* by Betty Busby

*Travel Muse: Wanderlust* by Mary-Ellen Latino

*This Land Was My Land* by Patricia Kennedy-Zafred

### ***Painting on fabric:***

*ReUse/Refuse* by Eleanor Levie

*Women’s March on Washington* by Trish Hodge

***Stamping and Printing:***

*3 Wise Words* by Claire Passmore  
*Elements #12: Blue River* by Michelle Hardy

***Applique/collage with fabric:***

*No More Labels: A Plea for Civil Discourse* by Margaret Phillips  
*I am The Face of Rescue* by Michelle Jackson

***Patchwork and piecing:***

*Mend The Gap* by Jill Kertulla  
*VOLCANO!* By Heather Pregger

***Free Motion Quilting:***

*Mammals of Oklahoma* by Shannon Conley  
*Reach For The Sky* by Vicki Conley

**More Information:** For more information about this exhibition (including image slideshows and audio statements), please visit [www.saq.com/textileposters](http://www.saq.com/textileposters). If you have any questions, please contact us at [exhibitions@saq.com](mailto:exhibitions@saq.com).