

# The Hendricks Collection and Alegre Retreat

by Sandra Sider



Maureen Hendricks developed an interest in contemporary art quilts when she participated in a series of studio workshops taught by Katie Pasquini Masopust, Sue Benner, and others. Many of the workshops she attended were offered at Masopust's Alegre Retreat, which was originally conducted in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In 2005 Masopust had to end her workshops in Santa Fe. Since the Alegre Retreat experiences had become so important to Hendricks, she invited Masopust to establish a new Alegre Retreat at the Gateway Canyons Resort, which Maureen and her husband John had built at the western edge of Colorado for the purpose of offering a variety of enrichment opportunities in a spectacular natural environment.

The Gateway Canyons Resort site also houses the Gateway Colorado Automobile Museum, approximately 30,000 square feet showcasing more

than forty classic American cars. Both wife and husband have a collector's eye for quality and style—Maureen for quilt art and interior design, and John for automotive design and photography. They also understand American popular culture, having founded the very successful Discovery Channel.

To enhance the Hendricks's Colorado ranch and Gateway Canyons Resort, Maureen Hendricks commissioned two quilts from Masopust and purchased a third one, *Grapes*, after she saw it in an exhibition in California. She also purchased dozens of 12-inch-square quilts in the SAQA online auction, with 36 of them

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**Palisade Triptych** 72 x 186 inches ©2009 Katie Pasquini Masopust







### **Grapes**

60 x 95 inches

©1996 Katie Pasquini Masopust

Benner's *Body Parts*, a tribute to the *Combines* of Robert Rauschenberg, features deconstructed recycled clothing, dyed and painted fabric, and monoprinting. Also influenced by the mixed-media paintings of Joan Snyder and Benner's own background in biomedical science, this quilt references the underlying structure of the human form.

*Sub Rosa: Portal* by Blaydon, which offers a hint of horizon, belongs to the artist's series of imagined landscape quilts. Using color and visual texture, she suggests abstract vistas and architectural details in this quilt. In 2004, Emily Richardson won the Quilts Japan Prize at *Quilt Visions*. *Blossoms of the Waves* is part of the body of work resulting from her trip to Japan. Richardson's expertise in overlaying translucent silk fragments has created a surface as dynamic as it is fragile.

arranged in a quilt-like grid in the foyer of the resort's Palisade Event Center, balancing color and contrast in interesting ways. *Palisade Triptych* also graces the Palisade Event Center, situated below an imposing rock formation known as the "palisade," while Masopust's quilts *Rainbow River* and *Grapes* are installed at the Hendrick's residence, West Creek Ranch.

Masopust used her fractured-landscape technique to structure the sections of *Rainbow River*, inserting diagonal color washes to introduce a sense of movement and enliven the wintry scene. The fractured landscape of *Palisade Triptych* functions differently, as wide vertical bands of cool, slightly darker hues recede into the background, causing the lighter sections to project toward the viewer. This subtle composition creates an expansive undulation, with the central palisade surging forward majestically.

Masopust's *Grapes* quilt originated with her photographs of grapevines hanging over an awning in the summer sun. Her circular motifs in the quilt reference the spherical grapes, with the artist's hallmark ghost layers and color washes brightening the

surface. Displayed above an antique 1915 Steinway player piano, the textile nuances of *Grapes* contrast beautifully with the piano's rare Circassian walnut wood.

Hendricks's patronage of quilt art extends to her support of the Alegre Retreat, now in its fourth year at Gateway Canyons Resort. Every year she provides space in the resort's banquet room to exhibit quilts by the current year's teachers, as well as by teachers for the coming year. These exhibitions have provided an opportunity for Hendricks to study and occasionally purchase quilts made by some of the teachers, including Sue Benner in 2010, and both Judi Warren Blaydon and Emily Richardson in 2011.

### **Body Parts**

81 x 61 inches

©2007 Sue Benner







above: **Blossoms of the Waves** 28 x 44 inches ©2006 Emily Richardson  
 left: **Sub Rosa: Portal** 70 x 53 inches ©2007 Judi Warren Blaydon

Scholarships are available for select attendees. Maureen and John Hendricks have established the Young Emerging Artist Award (YEA), and a second YEA Award will be awarded in 2012, donated by Sandy Chapin, a longtime devotee of Alegre Retreat, in honor of her mother-in-law, Elspeth Hart. Abigail Kokai, the 2011 recipient of the YEA Award, is a fiber specialist earning her MFA at the Savannah College of Art and Design. She had this comment about the retreat: “We all wanted to push our individual artistic practices and express ourselves. And we did.” Kokai also emphasized that the environment of the Colorado canyons encourages reflection and engagement with the physicality of materials.

Another scholarship was established in 2011 by the teachers, the Alegre Retreat Annual Scholarship, through the “Hats Off to Alegre” auction. Masopust gave a Gateway Canyons baseball cap to each teacher, and Jane Dunnewold suggested that each teacher decorate a cap. During the final day of the retreat the wildly decorated caps were auctioned,

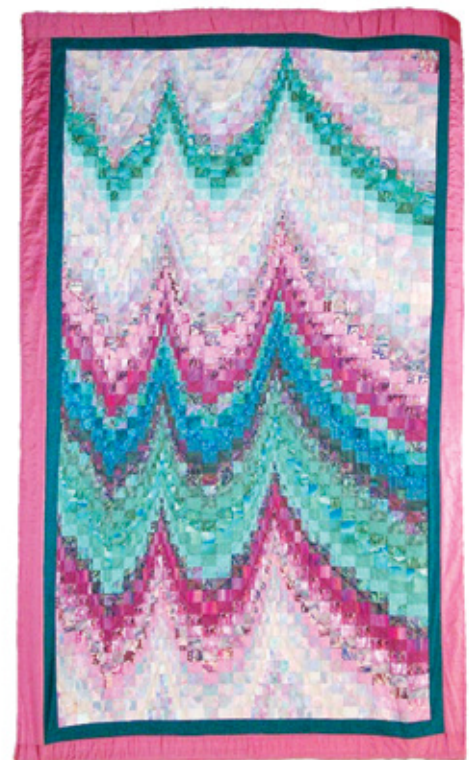
raising enough money to cover the costs for one attendee in the coming year who otherwise would not be able to participate. Hendricks and Masopust plan to continue this fundraising event at future retreats. Carol Hazen, recipient of the first Annual Scholarship, says that the “experience ... ignited my creativity on a variety of levels.”

Maureen Hendricks exemplifies a collector who keeps her thumb on the pulse of her medium, not only through her relationship with a world-famous artist and teacher, but also through her encouragement of students and other teachers. She believes in quilts as inspiring works of art and enriches her own life by collecting and making them. Hendricks’s affinity for color can be appreciated in her own *Beach Bargello Quilt*. Vibrant bands of color suggest the rhythm of waves while subtle

shifts of tone can be seen as waves retreating along the beach.

More information on the retreat can be found at [alegreretreat.com](http://alegreretreat.com). ▼

SAQA President Sandra Sider is an artist, critic, and independent curator. She lives in New York City, and her website is [www.sandrasider.com](http://www.sandrasider.com).



**Beach Bargello Quilt**  
 88 x 62 inches  
 ©1996 Maureen Hendricks