

Nature vs. Man

Many quilts pay homage to the beauty of the natural world: including patterns of feathers and flowers, dyeing fabric using seed-pods or flowers, or simply representing the natural landscape that their creators love. However, this tradition also makes the quilt a powerful medium to reflect on how man interacts with nature.

Michele Walker

“My work deals with re-interpreting the traditional quilt. Inspiration comes from what I experience and observe around me. It is essential that the content of the work reflects the time in which it is made... I aim in my work to challenge the associations and meaning of the word quilt.”

Michele Walker, Craft Council Statement, 2008

Walker was one of the small group of contemporary artists who revived interest in British quilt making in the 1970s and 80s. Together with Pauline Burbidge she exhibited in a pioneering exhibition to change the perception of British quilt making at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, 1998.

She reinterprets the craft to engage with social, political and environmental issues in an accessible and relevant manner – the definition of *soft power*. She trained as a graphic designer, and has written works that celebrate the unknown makers of traditional North Country quilts. Her quilts have been widely exhibited in America, Europe and Japan.

Cherry Vernon-Harcourt

An award winning quilter who often take inspiration from natural environments, including the North Norfolk coast. Her recent wholecloth quilts make use of a variety of different dyeing techniques to add texture to the material, including bucket and tray dyeing, soy wax resist, freezer paper stencils, mono and screen printing, breakdown printing and discharging with bleach and paste.

Field Force (1996)

Another reimagining of the traditional Strippy quilt, Walker places the stripes on the diagonal, and uses household waste including plastic bags to create the quilt. The quilted patterns are based on tyre treads. Walker was inspired to make this piece by witnessing the destruction of the South Downs by commercial farming.

House Block (1999)

Made in response to graffiti about homelessness in Brighton: “No home, No vote, No job, No chance”. The quilt uses plastic material, newspaper, assorted threads and buttons, on a backing material purchased from an Amish store in Ohio. It is hand and machine-stitched with hand-stencilled lettering.

Summer in the City (2010)

Winner of The Quilters’ Guild Challenge, Festival of Quilts 2010, sponsored and purchased by Bernina.

Rather than a pastoral scene, this quilt pays homage the stark beauty of urban wastelands, where the natural meets the man-made.