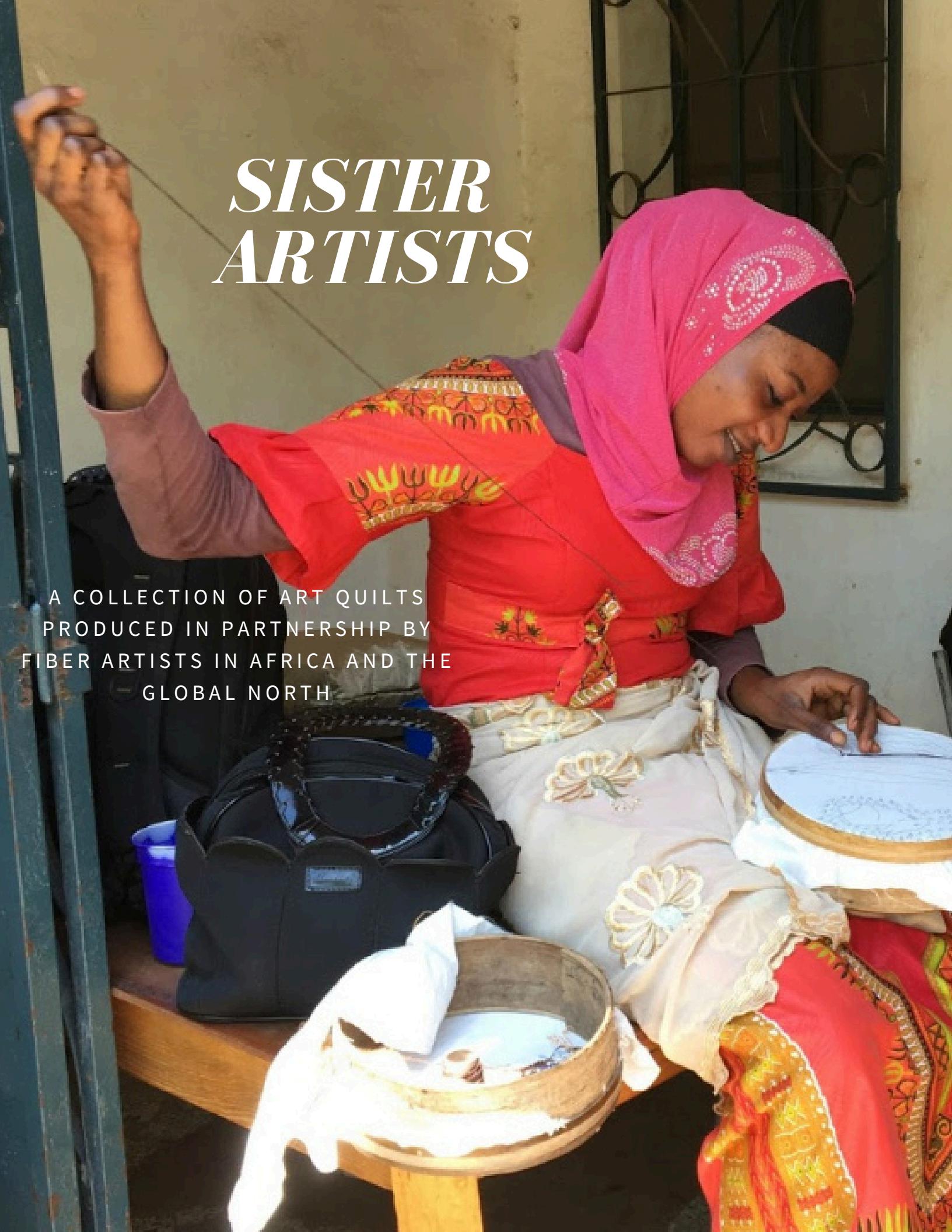


SISTER ARTISTS

A COLLECTION OF ART QUILTS
PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP BY
FIBER ARTISTS IN AFRICA AND THE
GLOBAL NORTH





Sister Artists

A Celebration of Fiber Art from
Africa and the Global North

Sini Sanuman, Mali: <http://www.sinisanuman.info/en/home/>

The Advocacy Project, US: www.advocacynet.org

Quilt for Change, US: www.quiltforchange.org

April 2020

Purchase a Sister Artist Quilt

The quilts in this catalogue are being sold to support the artists in Mali. Bid through our auction <https://www.biddingforgood.com/advocacyproject>.

For more information email iain@advocacynet.org

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Purchase this catalogue or donate to the Malian Sisters

To view this catalogue online, visit <https://www.advocacynet.org/sisterartists/>. This catalogue is available for purchase at \$27.50, including postage. Donate online to The Advocacy Project (www.advocacynet.org) OR email iain@advocacynet.org with a postal address. All proceeds will be invested in the Malian sisters.

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2020 Sister Artists Initiative



Above: Malian sister artists made embroidered blocks that described their lives in northern Mali before they were driven from their homes. Below: Sister artists in the Global North turned the blocks into art quilts. Some attended an exhibition of their quilts at the Textile Museum in Washington.



About Us

The Advocacy Project

The Advocacy Project (AP) believes that civil society can be a powerful force for social change. Inspired by this vision, we seek to support and empower marginalized communities in the Global South that face poverty, violence, and discrimination. In 2007, we launched a program of advocacy quilting to help women and girls tell their story through embroidery and quilting. Over 40 partners have used our model, including *Sini Sanuman* in Mali. Most of their quilts were assembled by quilters in the Global North.



Above: Iain Guest founded *The Advocacy Project* (AP) in 2001 to help marginalized communities tell their story, strengthen their organizations and act for change. Iain is seen with Luisa Beltran Rey and Oriana Betancourt from AP.

Below: Allison Wilbur, right, founded *Quilt for Change* with her husband Dick in 2009. Allison also made a quilt for *Sister Artists*. She is seen here at the Textile Museum in Washington DC, where the quilts were first exhibited. Ellen Fisher, left, also contributed a quilt.

Quilt for Change

Quilt for Change was launched in 2009 to raise awareness on global issues that affect women, and empower quilt artists to become agents for social change. Sharp social commentary and culturally sensitive images can tell the story of the human condition in ways that move the viewer to become involved. In addition, fiber is an international medium that has connections, particularly to women, in many societies around the world. We seek to tap into this tradition, and enable women to express their views in thread. Our exhibits serve as a call to action.



Gender-based violence in Mali



"No words can describe the painful journey of sexual violence. In addition to the physical pain, the trauma and shame are just unbearable. Sister Artists empowers survivors with training and shows them care and compassion."



Alimata Diarra (right) worked with GBV survivors in Timbuktu, Mali, before joining the Malian embassy in Washington. **Top photo:** the *Alafia Mali* quilt depicts violence against women during the 2012 rebellion. The blocks were embroidered in 2014 by survivors.



Foreword

The initiative celebrated in this catalogue, *Sister Artists*, dates back to 2012, when Tuareg rebels and jihadist fighters seized control of northern Mali. Thousands of women were abused, beaten, raped, and displaced.

In 2014, *Sini Sanuman*, a Malian advocate for women's rights, teamed up with *The Advocacy Project* (AP) to open four centers in Mali where survivors could train together, express themselves without fear, and regain their confidence. One training offered workshops on embroidery. Guided by Massaran Traore, the women produced blocks that described the horrors they had faced in 2012. Giorgia Nicatore, an AP Peace Fellow, brought the blocks to the US where they were assembled into two quilts by the *PM Fiber Arts Guild* in Bethesda, Maryland. The second *Alafia Mali* (Peace in Mali) quilt is shown on the opposite page.

In 2017 trainees in Mali put aside violent images and began producing simple but charming scenes of the lives they had left behind in the north. Allison Wilbur, founder of *Quilt for Change*, suggested that the blocks would make wonderful art quilts and put the word out to her network.

Forty-one quilters from the US, Canada, Kenya and the UK took up the challenge. Their quilts were shown for the first time on January 25, 2020 at the Textile Museum in Washington DC. The event drew 127 visitors and heard from Alimata Diarra, an official from the Malian embassy who worked with survivors in Mali before coming to the US.

The quilts will now be auctioned online. The proceeds from the auction and this catalogue will be invested in an embroidery cooperative run by the artists in Bamako.

As well as empowering survivors of gender-based violence, *Sister Artists* shows how quilting can connect women from widely differing backgrounds. Working on the blocks gave the artists from the North a strong sense of personal identification with their sisters in Mali and a greater understanding of the challenges they face.

AP and *Quilt for Change* are proud to have launched this rich partnership. We thank the many friends who have helped to make it possible.

- Iain Guest, *The Advocacy Project*
- Allison Wilbur, *Quilt for Change*

Fish in Still Water



African fabric, hand appliquéd, embroidered cotton, machine quilting
35" Wide x 27" High



Dawn Piasta
Manitoba, Canada

Until she recently retired, Dawn's job was to bring physicians to rural communities in Manitoba. She began quilting at the age of nine and kept busy following patterns until her son urged her to make her own designs. She began by depicting her mother's paintings in quilts. Dawn has made between 50 and 80 quilts, most of which were given away to friends, but accepts the occasional commission.

Dawn has a deep commitment to quilting for a cause. She was one of the first to volunteer when *Quilt for Change* launched a challenge on the theme of malaria, TB and AIDS. Dawn's quilt featured a young girl carrying a malaria net and so impressed the Swiss manufacturer of the nets that Dawn and her husband were invited to Geneva for the exhibition. (Dawn was thrilled to see her quilt hanging at the United Nations and even more thrilled when it auctioned for \$650.) Dawn has been an enthusiastic contributor to subsequent *Quilt for Change* challenges and *Sister Artists* was an obvious next step. She found photos of the Malian sisters online: "It made my soul sing to see how they were expressing themselves through stitching."

The other main influence on Dawn's quilt was her husband's work as a fishing and hunting guide in Manitoba. She says that her piscatory design came to her in a dream. She purchased African fabric and made the 39 fishes from individual pieces. Dawn used a turned edge appliquéd on her fishes to ensure that the edges were smooth.

Dawn is president of the Crocus Quilt Guild and active in the Canadian Fiber Art Network; Textile Artists of Manitoba; Studio Art Quilt Associates; and the Canadian Quilting Association.

Preparing Maize



Embroidered cotton, commercial fabric, machine quilting
44" Wide x 26" High



Patricia Rennau
Vermont, USA

Patricia sees herself as a historian as well as a “wishful” practitioner of art quilting. She recently completed a graduate program in quilt studies while holding down a demanding job at the Washington West Supervisory Union. She has co-curated an exhibition at the New England Quilt Museum and wrote a Wikipedia entry on Molly Upton, one of the pioneers of art quilting.

As a historian, Patricia is fascinated by imaginative forms of folk art quilts such as the narrative biblical quilts made by Harriet Powers and is humbled by the modern-day Migrant Quilt Project, which commemorates migrant lives lost while seeking to cross the southern border of the US. Her studies have convinced Patricia that quilting can be a tool for self-expression, advocacy and for improving lives: “Women have used quilts to express themselves, and their political views throughout the years.” This is what drew her to *Sister Artists*.

Patricia struggled with her design because her Malian block contained so much white space. She decided to separate the block into three vertical squares and used dark fabric that picked up the thread colors and – she hoped – resembled mud cloth. She would have completed the quilting by hand if she had had more time.

Patricia is a member of the American Quilt Study Group, which organizes a yearly Seminar bringing together quilt scholars and enthusiasts to view quilts from new perspectives, and discuss aspects of women’s and material culture history; and the Mad River Valley Quilters Guild.

Malian Homes



Embroidered cotton, African fabric, machine quilting
34" Wide X 34" High



**Susan Charles
Louisiana, USA**

Susan has been quilting since the early 1990s when she entered a store and learned that they needed help: “I knew how to sew and said I can do that!” She likes art quilts because they can be “hung on walls and shown as art instead of put on beds.”

Susan was alerted to *Sister Artists* while taking a course from Hollis Chatelain, a renowned American quilter who will judge the *Sister Artists* quilts. Susan has a strong connection to Africa, having served in the Peace Corps in Kenya and Chad. She uses African fabric wherever possible.

Susan selected her Malian block because it features African houses, which she particularly likes. She cut her piece into four squares, each with a house, and built around them using African fabric. She thought a lot about her Malian sister artist while making the quilt, and thought the quality of her stitching was remarkably good for someone who had only recently learned to sew. Susan loves the idea of handing down sewing techniques from mothers to daughters, and hopes her Malian sister is able to do exactly that.

Susan belonged to several quilt guilds in the past but now limits her involvement to Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Study of a Camel



Embroidered cotton, watercolor fabric machine quilting
35" Wide x 26" High



Ellen Fisher
New Hampshire, USA

Ellen caught the quilting bug after visiting an exhibition of water color quilts made from tiny squares of floral fabric: “I went home that night wanting to make my own fabric.” Ellen has been making art quilts ever since at a rate of about 10 a year but she has no interest in selling them. What she really likes is to attend openings and hear the stories of other quilters: “It’s the process I like!”

Ellen’s quilting has been influenced by studying art and design, and her subsequent work as a landscape designer. A degree in environmental biology gave her a deep respect for nature. She is a member of The Audubon Society.

Ellen’s design reflects her love of shapes and graphic design. Her goal was simple – to enlarge the image of the camel: “I saw a beautiful design and wanted to make it bigger.” The Malian artist had provided the hint of a setting and included a bit of land for the camel to walk on, and Ellen enhanced both slightly. But her main addition was the border, which picks up the colors of the landscape.

Ellen used a Xerox machine to produce a larger image of the camel. Copying the camel meant Ellen had to pay special attention to stitching. Her Malian sister had stitched by hand and left some gaps, but her horizontal lines of stitching – which was particularly effective on the coarse cloth – was very close and difficult to replicate on a machine: “It was particularly hard to keep the lines parallel.”

Ellen has belonged to guilds but now prefers to work with small groups of friends.

In the Field



Embroidered cotton, African wax batiks, machine quilting
28" Wide x 25" High



Sue Willows-Raznikov
California, USA

Sue brought her background as an educator, seamstress, and friend of Africa to her *Sister Artists* quilt. Her grandmother came from Russia and Poland where there was a strong tradition of mending blankets and old quilts. Sue made her first quilt in her 20s, when she made a living as a seamstress and remembers making men's shirts with ruffled sleeves during the "hippie days."

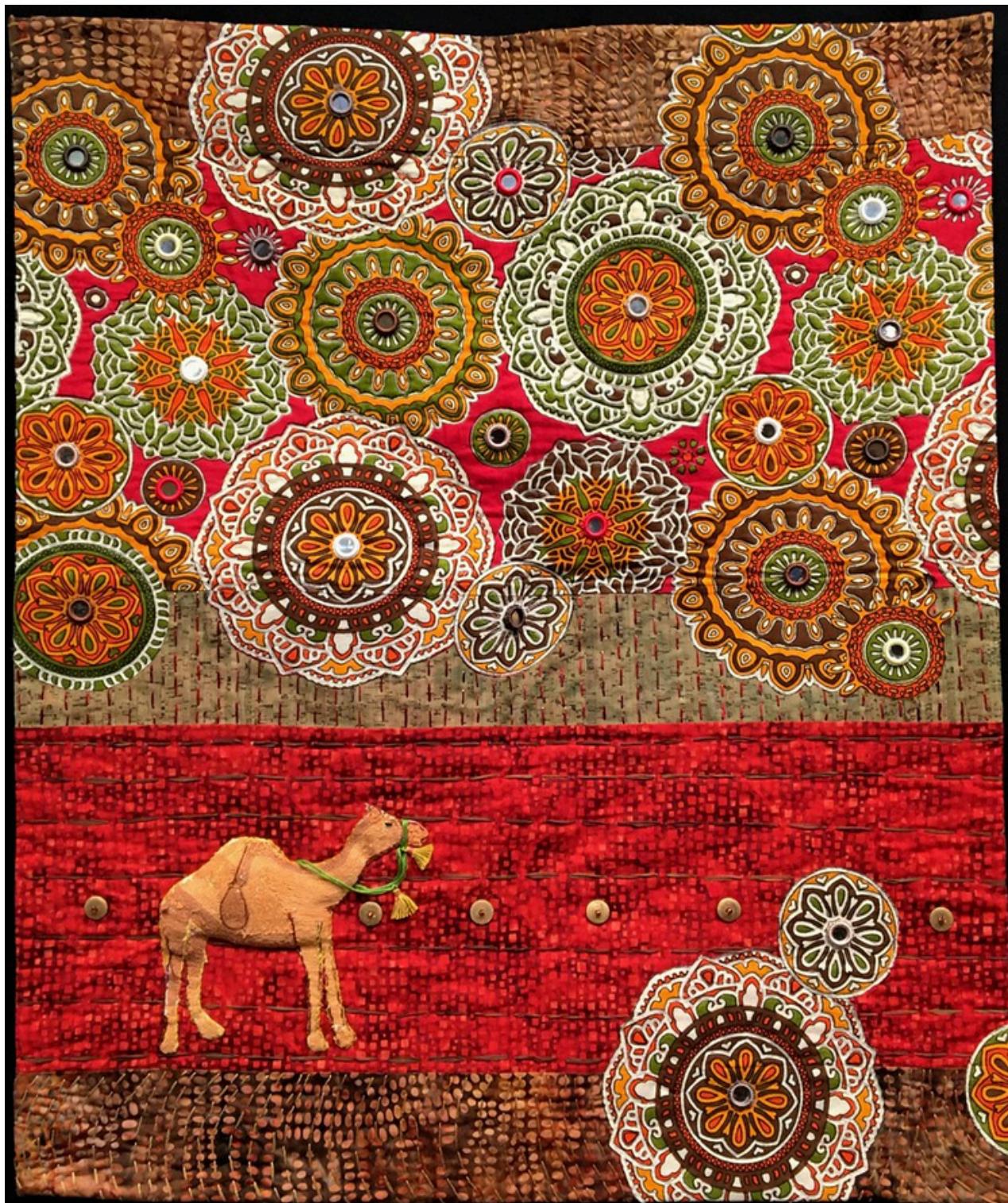
Sue studied anthropology and psychology at college and taught for nine years at community college before joining Stanford University. During her downtime she has worked as a substitute teacher in Panama, Kenya and Ghana, where she uses stitching to help students learn English:

"On day 1 they would use needles to design something and learn such verbs as 'pull' and 'push.' On day 2 they would learn how to chain stitch and thread the needle. On day 3 they would develop another design and so on, all the while learning the new language." Sue tried to visit Mali twice, but without success on account of the poor security.

All of this has led Sue to see quilting as a communal activity that brings women together.

When making her *Sister Artists* quilt, Sue thought of her Malian sister going off to the fields to work with other family members. In enhancing her block, she added African plants and two small shirts. Finding the right fabric is the "fun part" and she drew heavily on batik fabric picked up in Ghana and Kenya. Some of Sue's fabric carries an insect design, which reminded her of cicadas in the evening. The leaf pattern brought back memories of the morning wind. The two little shirts are from African wax batiks.

May You Pass the Night in Peace



Mixed fabric quilt, with metallic threads, beads, and cork fabric
24 Wide x 29 High



Cathey Labonte
Connecticut, USA

As a full-time civil engineer, Cathey makes her quilts in her spare time. She learned quilting from her grandmother and mother, and moved into art quilting after her grandchildren were born: "Art quilting allows for more imagination, decoration and techniques." She particularly likes working with colors.

Cathey contributed a quilt for *Water Is Life* and was equally drawn to the theme of *Sister Artists*. Her Malian block carried the single image of a camel, which left Cathey with a virtually blank slate. She built a night sky around her camel, full of stars, in the hope of conveying tranquility and peace: "I thought about my Malian artist and what she had gone through. I wanted my design to give her a sense of calm." The distinctive title of Cathey's quilt is a translation of the Bambara (Malian dialect) words "*Ala ka su here dama*."

Cathey describes her creative process as "a lot of experimenting on her design wall:"

"I pin stuff on, stand back, take pictures, move things around, take more pictures and so on." She made a number of sketches until she finally came up with the design. The actual stitching took about a week. Cathey added a number of features including beads, metallic threads, batik from Indonesia, African fabric and even cork fabric (made from tree bark) to get her design absolutely perfect.

Cathey is a member of the Narragansett Bay Quilt Guild; the Quiet Corner Art Quilt Guild; and Studio Art Quilters Associates (SAQA).

For Our African Sisters



Embroidered cotton, improvisational piecing, reused shuka cloth
34" Wide x 57 High



The Salama Mamas Nairobi, Kenya

The sole African contribution to *Sister Artists* comes from artists who are – like their Malian sisters – under pressure. Robina, Lydia and Hanna, seen in the photo, are among five Kenyan *Salama Mamas* (“Rest and Peace”) who make and sell embroidered products in Nairobi.

Salama Mamas was launched 5 years ago when Dorothy Stockell, an experienced American quilter living in Nairobi, offered quilting classes to the mothers of disadvantaged children from Gachie, a crime-ridden community in Nairobi. Dorothy was “flabbergasted” when the women developed their own unique style, now known as *Salama Quilting*, to produce a multicolored tapestry. With help from Dorothy, the Mamas developed their own business in Nairobi.

Lydia, Robina and Hanna offered their quilt to *Sister Artists* as a statement of solidarity with Malian sisters and African women generally. Coming from an under-served community themselves, they know all about gender-based violence. Their quilt shows Kenya at the heart of Africa to demonstrate the pride they feel in being Kenyan, and draws on their patented method. They cut up left-over fabric from one of their old products to make over a thousand tiny pieces and then laboriously attached the pieces, starting at the outside and working in. The backing is from old Maasai blankets made from shuka cloth.

Dorothy divided the original Malian block into four pieces, which she attached to the Mamas’ quilt. Dorothy recently returned to the US after 37 years of living – and promoting quilting – abroad. She is still deeply committed to the Kenyan Mamas.

At the Heart of the Village



Mud Cloth, embroidered cotton, raw edge appliqué,
hand and machine quilting
50" Wide x 59" High



Glenda Mah
California, USA

Glenda took up traditional quilting at an early age in an area of Kansas where people were thrifty: “They made their own blankets out of left-over clothes.” By the time Glenda returned to quilting, in 2006, she was looking for a challenge.

She found it when her husband was posted to Asia. Glenda was introduced to *shibori*, a Japanese method of dyeing that involves tying fabric and immersing it in indigo dye. Glenda developed a passion for natural dyeing and for indigo, which comes from a flower that is boiled and turns into a rich blue when oxidized. She brought her passion back to Oregon.

Glenda’s second discovery was mud cloth, which is one of Mali’s most famous exports. Glenda took a class in Seattle from a well-known Malian artist who incorporates traditional techniques from Mali and Japan and used mud from the River Niger in Mali in his classes. Glenda was delighted to learn that similar mud could be found near her home and now includes mud cloth in her own teaching.

Glenda was attracted to *Sister Artists* by the Malian connection and the message of social justice. She placed a series of village scenes around her block – a maize field, women returning from market, and fishermen at work in a river. She used her own mud cloth for the brown areas and raw edge applique and “fussy cutting” to produce a frayed edge. This seemed in keeping with the village theme.

Glenda is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) and will soon join the Mid Valley Quilters Guild in Salem, Oregon.

Bounty of the Village



Embroidered cotton, african wax batiks, buttons, and tassels

24" Wide x 41" High



Janice Jones
Massachusetts, USA

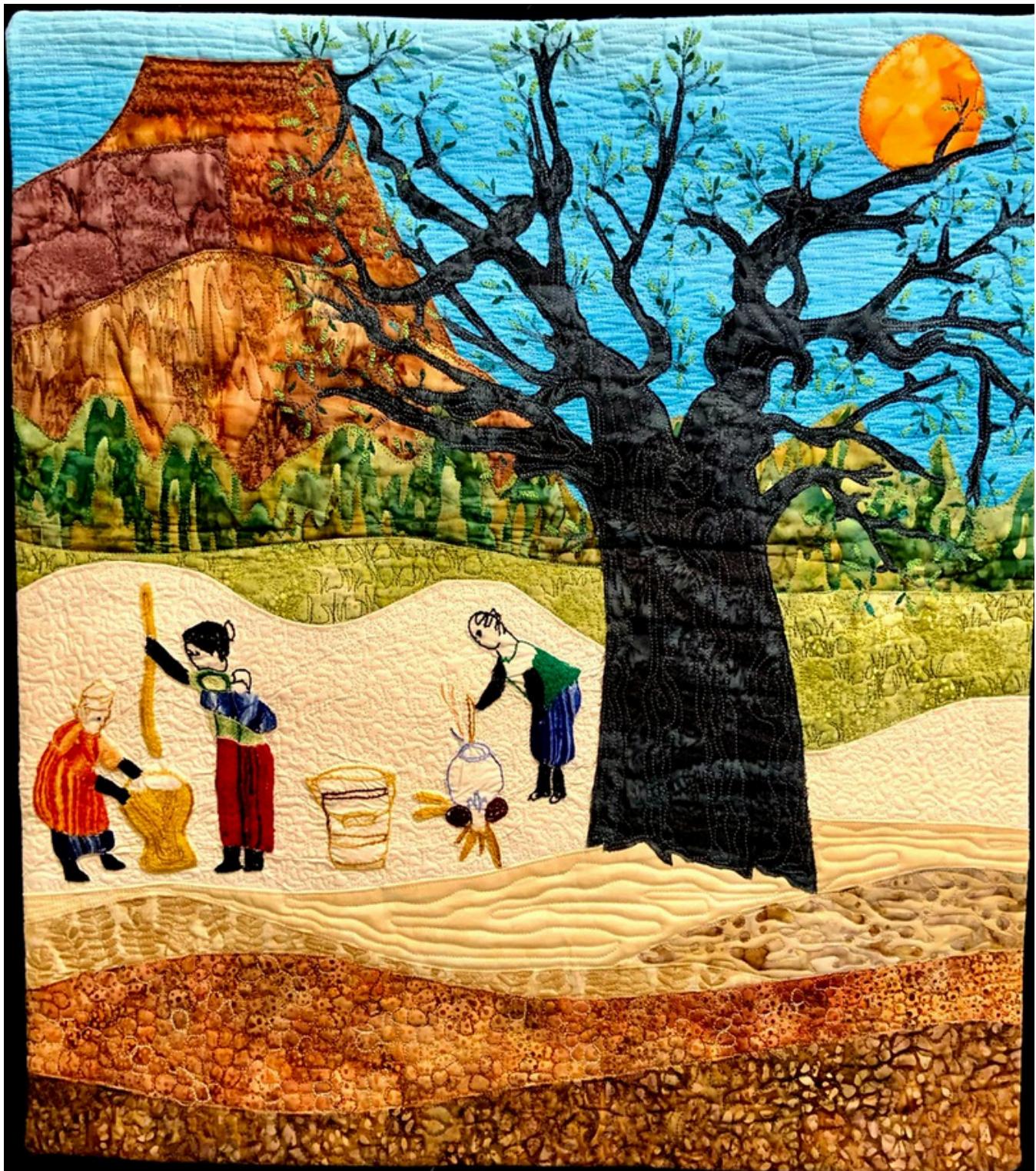
Janice was ten when she learned how to quilt from her grandmother, who worked at a New England textile mill and used to bring fabric home. Janice has produced a series of striking African quilts which can be seen on her website. She owes her love of African colors to her daughter, who worked as a nurse in Zambia and returned home with fabric.

Janice's favorite part of quilting is adding embellishments. For *Bounty of the Village* she chose fabrics which complement the colors and textures of the embroidered block from Mali. She then added appliquéd shapes, beads, prairie points and tassels. Images of a village and sun were added to provide balance and fill space.

Of *Sister Artists* Janice says: "This project has been so rewarding. Being a sister artist feels very special and I hope that we can somehow continue to be connected. It feels good to be reaching out and doing something positive." She thinks the Malian artists did a "fabulous job" with their embroidery.

Janice is a member of the Merrimack Valley Quilters Guild; the Hannah Dustin Guild; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Cooking



Embroidered cotton, machine appliquéd, thread painting
22" Wide x 23 High



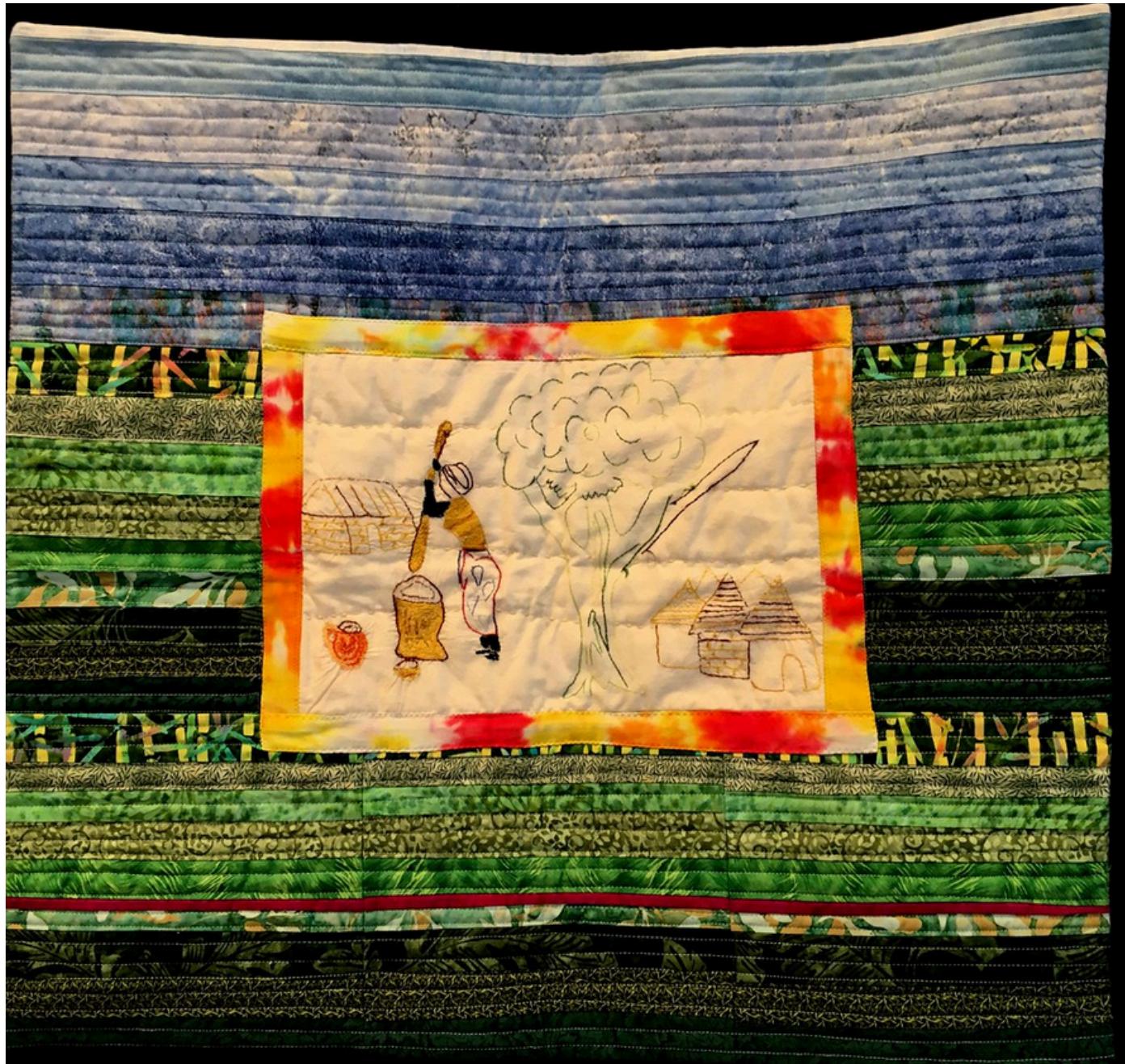
Rhonda O'Keefe
New Hampshire, USA

Rhonda leads a busy life as Director of Environmental Safety at the prestigious Broad Institute in Cambridge. She also spends much of her spare time perfecting the art of handbell ringing at her local church. This does not leave much time for quilting. Adding to the challenge, local quilt guilds tend to meet during the day, when Rhonda is at work. In spite of it all, Rhonda is a quilt enthusiast.

Rhonda is relatively new to art quilting and viewed *Sister Artists* as a way to experiment and learn. She was also drawn to the idea of advocacy quilting and was inspired by reading about the Malian artists on the AP site. Like many of the other quilters she has often thought about the young woman who made her block: “I count myself so lucky not to have been affected by violence and very privileged to hold something by someone who had been through that. I wanted to help.”

Rhonda spent several months on her quilt, working mainly at nights and over the weekends: “It sat on the wall while I thought about it!” She based her design on a giant baobob tree that she saw during a safari in the Tarangire National Park in Tanzania last year. Rhonda used a sewing machine to attach the branches and did most of the thread painting and quilting on her Long Arm quilting machine. She hopes to do more quilts, preferably on an African theme.

Same Earth, Same Sun



Embroidered cotton, hand dyed and commercial fabric
27" Wide x 25" High



Betty Warner
Vermont, USA

Betty has been art quilting since 2005. She credits her job in data communications with giving her the desire to solve problems and find new ways of expression, and loves the sheer variety of art quilting: “It’s messy, neat, abstract, realistic!”

Sister Artists appealed to Betty’s sense of social justice. She is also fascinated by other cultures and hopes that her quilt has done justice to the Malian block, which provides a snapshot of the artist’s former life in northern Mali: “I imagined her trying to take care of her family, plant and grow food, and figure out ways to survive in her own environment.”

Betty is also keenly aware that her Malian sister was violently expelled from her home. She admires the artist’s courage in speaking out: “I appreciate this opportunity to participate. I see this as an act of faith by the Malian sisters to go out to the world like this.”

In making her quilt, Betty began by producing a series of long blocks, most of which are subtly different. She used red and yellow fabric that had been dyed by a neighbor for the striking central border around the Malian block. Betty feels the blue sky is particularly important for enhancing her quilt.

Betty was active in Women Against the Grain, a guild in Connecticut, before recently moving to Vermont.

Preparing a Meal



Embroidered cotton, raw edge appliquéd, machine quilting
25" Wide x 44 High



Suzanne Munroe
Rhode Island, USA

Suzanne, a portrait artist, blogged on her website about the process of making her quilt for *Sister Artists*: “For as long as I can remember I have been creating some sort of art. I remember sewing on my great grandmother’s foot peddle machine in the attic at the farmhouse. I thought it was the coolest thing. All my cousins would be playing outside and I was up in the attic having a ball!

“I love exploring all media and styles of art. I am particularly drawn to portraits. I am focusing on drawing, collaging or painting a portrait and then translating that design onto fabric. My hope is to pull the viewer into my pieces by capturing an emotion, causing a subsequent desire to feel, or wonder more about the piece.”

Suzanne used raw edge appliquéd to make the two large trees and copied the design from the block itself. She was conscious throughout of the artists in Mali: “I can’t help but think of the women who fled from the conflict in northern Mali, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in Mali, and have used their blocks to remember the life they left behind.”

Suzanne was particularly drawn to the hut in her block: “I decided to mimic the strength of the hand-made walls to emphasize the strength of these women and what they have endured.” Huts also made Suzanne think of a community. She was inspired by one article (“*Wisdom from an African Hut*”) which described how families would gather in a hut, sit, eat and tell stories, “excluding no one.”

Suzanne is a member of Quilters by the Sea; Rhode Island Threads; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Freedom



Embroidered cotton, prairie points, tassels, machine quilting
15" High x 24" Wide



Janice Jones
Massachusetts, USA

When she learned that two of the *Sister Artists* Malian blocks were unclaimed, Janice generously offered to take them on in addition to her first choice: “It pulled at my heart strings to think that the blocks did not get chosen.”

Janice learned quilting at the age of ten from her grandmother, who worked in a textile mill and used to come home with scraps of fabric. Janice owes her love of African designs and fabric to her daughter, who brought fabric back while working as a nurse in Zambia: “I saw Africa through her eyes. The colors packed a punch!”

Finishing is the favorite part of quilting for Janice: “I love to use handmade beads, buttons, repurposed objects, fiber, stitching, stamps and various quilting techniques to add interest and texture.” Her passion is on display in *Freedom*.

Of *Sister Artists* Janice says: “This project has been so rewarding. Being a sister artist feels very special and I hope that we can somehow continue to be connected. It feels good to be reaching out and doing something positive.” She thinks the Malian artists did a “fabulous job” with their embroidery.

Janice is a member of the Merrimack Valley Quilters Guild; the Hannah Dustin Guild; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Mali Village



Embroidered cotton, mud cloth and indigo dyed cloth from Mali

29" Wide x 44" High



Allison Wilbur
Rhode Island, USA

Allison and her husband Dick founded *Quilt for Change* in 2009 to raise awareness about global issues that affect women and empower quilt artists to become agents for social change. She has also assembled and quilted several advocacy quilts for AP, including on topics such as wastepickers in India, Roma culture in Europe, Syrian refugees and child marriage in Zimbabwe. Allison is one of the driving forces behind *Sister Artists*.

Decades of living overseas in Japan, Russia, Tunisia, Kuwait, Oman and Switzerland, and travel to many other countries has brought global textiles, color combinations, and design elements into Allison's quilts. She often pairs these elements with traditional American piecing to create collaborative work that celebrates the international language of fiber shared by women in so many cultures around the world.

Allison was drawn to the remarkable pentagon shape and beautiful embroidery of her block. She used indigo cloth from Mali for the wide border around the village, mud cloth from Mali along the bottom, and African hand-dyed damask in orange to enhance the elements in the center block. She looked for ways to highlight the arts and culture of Mali in her fabric selections and the quilting motifs, which mimic the mud cloth designs.

Allison is a member of Quilters by the Sea; the Narragansett Bay Quilters Association; Rhode Island Threads, and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

A Day in the Life



Embroidered cotton, machine piecing and quilting
31" Wide x 29" High



Tricia Deck
Massachusetts, USA

For Tricia, quilting is part of a larger creative process that includes photography and screen printing. It all comes together in Tricia's quilts and she looked on *Sister Artists* as an opportunity to experiment with new approaches. Tricia knows Africa from visiting Zambia and was impressed when a friend started an education fund for young Africans.

Tricia has made quilts for fund-raising and was drawn to *Sister Artists* because she wanted to help. She says of her Malian sister: "I can't imagine what she's going through and how her life compares to mine." Tricia was also struck by the fact that some of the women in Mali walked several hours to attend the embroidery training. Tricia's main aim was to embellish the original block although she did not feel the need to sharpen the colors, which she found to be very "distinctive." She pieced the borders and added them to the central block.

Tricia is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA); co-president of the Quilters Connection Guild, based in Watertown; and active in the Rising Star Quilt Guild in Arlington.

Under the Tree



Embroidered cotton, rust dyed silk, machine quilting
22" Wide x 16" High



Nancy Hershberger
Pennsylvania, USA

Nancy came to quilting in 2007 after suffering a family loss. She attended a class, bought a sewing machine and found it a lot of fun – as well as therapeutic. She was drawn to *Sister Artists* by the issue. She has never visited Africa but felt an empathy with her sister artist from Mali: “Despite being a victim of gender-based violence, she chose to depict everyday life and her home. It moved me to tears. I am humbled by her strength.”

Nancy decided to re-arrange elements of her Malian block to create a more coherent design. She moved the two stoves to the center, made a large tree (“I’m into trees!”) and placed the stones at the foot of the tree. She researched Mali and found a country that seemed to be gray and brown with the occasional touch of green. This is reflected in the muted colors of her quilt.

For fabric Nancy used an old silk wedding gown which she cut up into strips. She then wrapped the silk around rusted machinery on the family farm in Pennsylvania, and left it in the rain for several days. The rust-dyed material provided the perfect color and mood for her quilt and seemed appropriate to the way the Malian women had been treated. Nancy then attached the pieces to the material using fusible glue and quilted the three layers together by machine.

Nancy is active in several guilds in Pennsylvania: the Pieceful Patchers Quilt Guild; the Log House Quilters Guild; the Salix Stickers Guild; Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA); and the American Quilter Society.

Hump Day



Embroidered cotton, hand dyed burlap and re-purposed
dresser cloth and African Wax batiks

37" Wide x 39" High



Colleen Ansbaugh
Wisconsin, USA

Colleen learned the basics of quilting from her mother, who was expert at crazy quilting. Colleen works in industrial textiles, where she currently tests upholstery for resistance to fire. She was first attracted to quilting for a cause by the *Water for Life* project and loves the idea of helping the Malian sisters to learn a skill that will earn them money.

In designing her quilt, Colleen was determined to avoid a simple square or rectangle and this accounts for the extended and curved square at the bottom right, as well as the uneven top quarter. She used the “Drunkard’s Path” quilting pattern for the circle and semicircle to further disrupt the sense of balance.

In making her quilts, Colleen dyes fiber and cloth by hand. She then adds more color with paint, silk screening, and felting. For *Hump Day* she used African cloth from a textile show in Chicago and left-overs from other quilt projects. She then brought out the brown and dun colors of the camel and sand with small pieces of red cloth and burlap. Antique dresser cloth material is used on the front side of the quilt.

Colleen is a member of two guilds: A Patch of Lakeshore Quilters in Wisconsin; and Women Who Run with Scissors. She also serves as the Illinois and Wisconsin regional representative for Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Our Sister's Hut



Embroidered cotton, recycled fabric, hand stamped paper
24" Wide x 38 High



Julie Zaccone Stiller
California, USA

Julie took art training while at university in California. She is particularly interested in women's issues and was immediately drawn to *Sister Artists* by the cause and the thought of making a connection with women in Africa: "Having the work of someone in my hands and making something from it was such a treat!"

Julie often thought about her Malian sister while making her quilt and wondered whether her life is improving: "Thank you very much for the opportunity to collaborate with a sister artist that I never would have encountered."

The biggest challenge Julie faced while working on her block was the white space and the fact that the huts – while beautifully made – were floating. She used the bright strips to place them on firm ground and laid torn-up fabric around the village to suggest a transition from a land that was disturbed and unsettled to the tranquil setting of the village. The top third of the quilt shows women on the move and the rectangular shapes suggest buildings. The blue hook is intended to "draw your eyes up to the rest of the quilt."

Julie used a variety of scrap material, including denim from old jeans and blue upholstery. She also used handmade paper stamped with African symbols which she tore to give the impression of rough edges. Julie reckons that her quilt took 60 hours to make. She recently entered a quilt in a show celebrating 100 years of women's suffrage.

Julie is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA); the Modern Quilt Group; Contemporary Quilters and Fiber Artists in the Bay Area.

Meal Time



Embroidered cotton, African fabric, machine quilting
26" Wide x 24" High



Veronica Mays
Rhode Island, USA

Veronica has been quilting in earnest for four years and gave up teaching in the summer of 2019 to quilt full-time. She runs her own company, Conaky's Quilt Company, and produces vivacious quilts, usually in an African style.

Veronica was attracted to *Sister Artists* by the cause: "Helping Malian women to succeed after being mistreated definitely appealed to me." She entitled her block *Meal Time* partly because she loves cooking, and partly because she appreciated her Malian design.

"I love the embroidery the artist chose for her piece and decided to add borders that bring out the colors within the panel while adding some African and Asian fabric flavors from my stash."

Veronica is a member of two guilds in Rhode Island – Quilters by The Sea and Rhode Island Threads – as well as Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Camels at the Oasis



Embroidered cotton, raw edge appliqué, machine quilting
35" Wide x 25" High



Deborah Elouahabi
Virginia, USA

Deborah works for a government contractor and is a technical writer by trade, but her first love is art quilting. She learned how to quilt from her grandmother and went on to learn painting, embroidery and other fiber crafts. Art quilting allows her to bring it all together.

With *Sister Artists*, Deborah was also looking to quilt for a cause. She has not visited Sub-Saharan Africa but has attended events on gender-based violence and forced marriage. She thought a lot about her Malian sister artist while working on her block and wonders what the future will bring for her.

Deborah enhanced her Malian block by adding new features that include deep green palm trees, camels, and a pool. One of the trees allowed her to cover up a wrinkle, but overall, she was impressed by the quality of the Malian stitching. Deborah used raw edge appliquéd to add her pieces.

Deborah is a member of the DC Modern Quilt Guild; the Arlington chapter of Quilters Unlimited; and the Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Bird



Embroidered cotton, commercial fabric, machine embroidery
19" Wide x 19" High



Deborah Weir
California, USA

Growing up in a “cold house with sharp angles and stone floors” gave Deborah an early appreciation for warm textiles, but it was as a student of costume design that she learned to love quilts.

Deborah is a mixed media artist who mostly uses textiles. Though contemporary in every sense, her work draws on traditional women’s work and uses gentle fabrics, thread and floss as well as edgier material like Tyvek and metals. Her style includes collage and embroidered surfaces as well as art quilts and weaving.

Deborah is committed to social justice and created pieces for *Solar Sister* and *Water is Life*. She was drawn to *Sister Artists* by the prospect of working with survivors of gender-based violence: “I often wondered about (my) artist and what she went through. Person to person projects are so powerful.”

In designing her quilt, Deborah chose a background of “jungly” fabric. She then placed her Malian bird in a wild habitat by bringing the border of leaves into the block and extending the border to give an impression of untamed vegetation. She used a machine to trace out the designs onto a water-soluble fabric and needle lace to stitch the designs. Deborah’s next project will be on incarceration.

Deborah is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) and Surface Design Association. She is the only non-Australian member of the Oz Quilt Network.

In the Fields



Embroidered cotton, improvisational piecing, machine quilting
38" High x 40" Wide



Diane Clapes
Georgia, USA

Diane has always loved working with fabric. She “dabbled” at quilting while raising a family but turned to quilting full-time when her last child went to college. Diane likes art quilting “because I don’t have to follow a pattern and can be more individualistic.” She still takes classes and has had several quilts hung in shows.

Diane was alerted to *Sister Artists* by three close quilting friends who she met after taking an online class together: “We challenge each other.” She has not been to Africa but felt a sense of solidarity with her Malian sister after spotting her in the group photo. “It helps to see the person who inspired you,” says Diane. “I thought of her experience while making my quilt and wanted to honor her.”

Before designing her quilt, Diane researched Mali and concluded that the land was mostly dry, brown and dusty. She was also influenced by Malian pottery and interesting rock formations. The large hill in her quilt is modeled on the Bandiagara escarpment in central Mali.

Diane wanted to integrate her design and the Malian block so completely that a viewer could not tell where one ends and the other begins. Hoping to place her Malian sister firmly in the fields, she used mono-printing to replicate the original designs (grasses and goats) and copied them into her quilt to expand the areas under cultivation. Diana used African fabric from her mother for the backing and added a trim that resembles grass.

Diane is a member of the Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

African Memories



Embroidered cotton, hand painted fabric, machine quilting
41" Wide x 37" High



Jackie Heupel

Texas, USA

Jackie began quilting when she started to make a bedspread for her 9-year old son. Over forty years later the quilt is still unfinished but Jackie has become an artist with many talents. She paints on canvas, makes prints, and fashions crafts out of tin, wood or any other substance that catches her eye. She made and sold prints at a studio in the Torpedo Factory near Washington DC for several years.

Jackie was anxious about entering *Sister Artists* at first when she saw what others had made, but decided to experiment with new techniques picked up from a recent class. She thought about her quilt for months and worked on it for about 30 hours.

Jackie's quilt is a homage to wildlife in Africa. She does not know Mali, but has traveled in East Africa and plans to return to the Kenyan reserves this year. Her husband is a professional wildlife photographer.

Jackie created three new squares which each feature a prominent African species so as to send a continent-wide message about the importance of wildlife. She also added the image of a house, copied from her Malian block, to the three new squares to provide a common theme. The three new squares were traced from photos taken by her husband and painted using soluble ink. The next stage was to make the backing from strips of fabric. The four blocks were then added and stitched. Jackie says that her quilt has taught her new skills which she will use again.

Jackie is a member of the Vereins Quilt Guild, Fredericksburg; the Hill Country Quilt Guild; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Hunting with Husband



Embroidered cotton, African fabric, machine quilting
41" Wide x 37" High



Sandy Snowden
Berkshire, UK

Sandy's quilt is the only entry from Europe, although Sandy herself grew up in the US before moving to England. Her quilts have appeared at prestigious events including the annual Houston show, the European Quilt Triennial, the Bernina fashion show, the Journal Quilt Challenge and the UK Festival of Quilts. Sandy tries to produce a quilt every month: "I have so many ideas in my head when starting a new quilt that I really have to concentrate hard!"

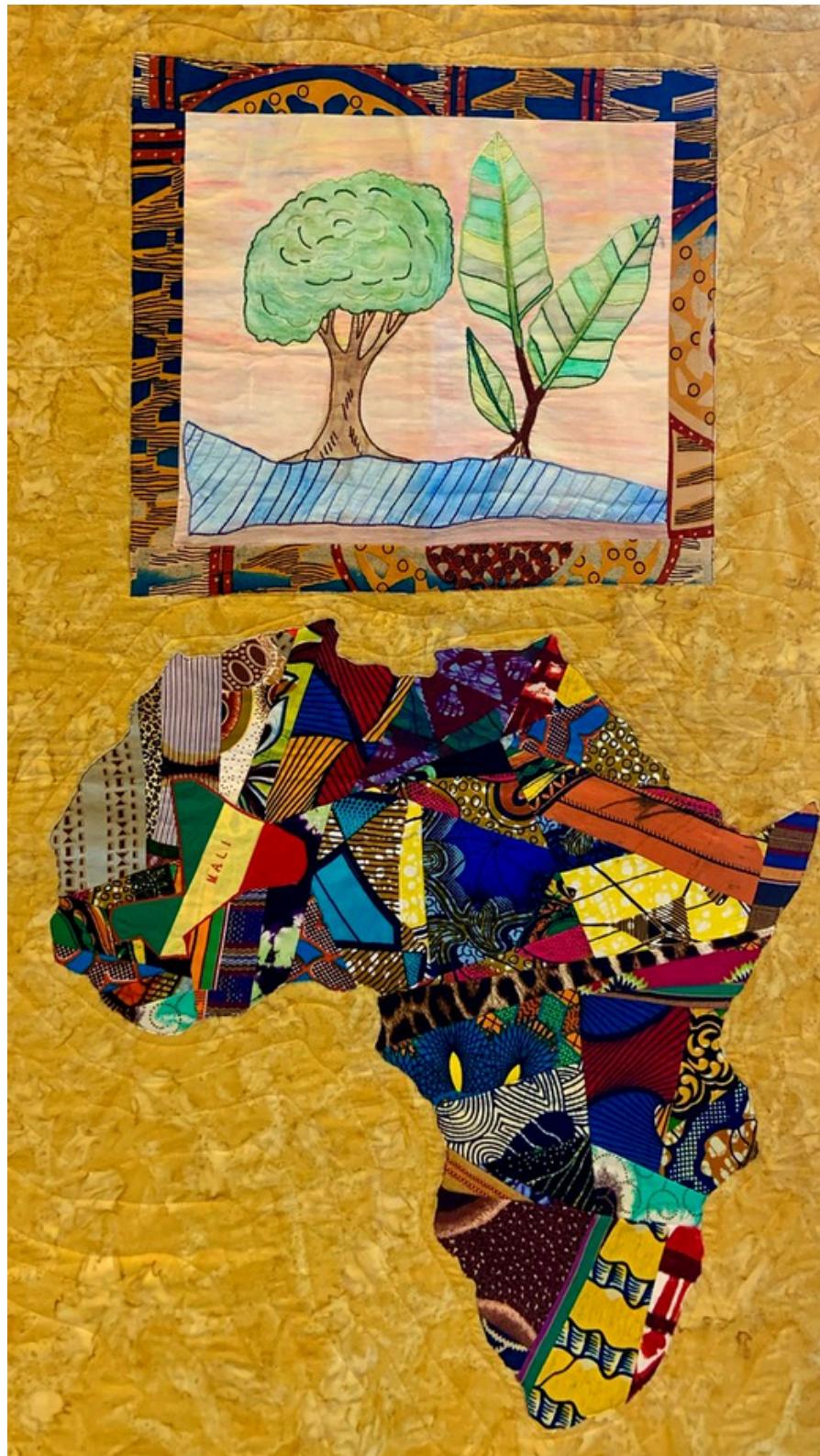
Sandy quilts for a purpose. She has made one quilt about the Chibok girls who were abducted in Nigeria and is now working on a second. Several of Sandy's quilts feature refugees and religious persecution. She was drawn to *Sister Artists* because it trains women to develop a skill and seeks to increase their independence.

In interpreting her Malian block, Sandy felt that the husband and wife were trying to keep birds from eating their precious seeds. She added the trees along with tufts of grass at the bottom, and used mulberry bark for the trunks to reflect "ethnicity."

In another nod to authenticity Sandy used *shwe shswe* fabric from South Africa and printed stamped fabric from Tanzania for the bottom piece. The brown ground is also Tanzanian fabric from Sandy's scrap stash. Sandy is not as mobile as she once was, but takes pleasure from being able reach people through quilting: "I can sit at home and make people aware of stuff."

Sandy is active in the Quilt Guild of the British Isles.

Mali



Embroidered cotton, African fabrics, improvisational piecing
28" Wide x 44" High



Katherine Wilson Maryland, MD

Katherine comes from a family where “sewing was as much a part of growing up as cooking.” Now retired, she enjoyed a distinguished career in philanthropy which included stints at the Ford Foundation, Legacy Foundation and the Appalachian Regional Commission. She is particularly proud of her efforts in advocacy and social justice.

Katherine came to quilting after a loss in her family. She took a class with Bisa Butler, a well-known quilter who uses an African American style to capture slices of black life through history. Katherine was hooked. She started taking classes and self-learning in quilting and various textile techniques.

Katherine sees herself in the improvisational African American quilting tradition, using plenty of recycled scraps, African textiles and batiks. Her hunger for scraps has taken her to countless thrift shops where she has picked up discarded African fabric and even old African clothing.

Katherine has traveled to Ghana, South Africa and Egypt and like so many visitors marveled at the gorgeous colors: “You can never have a bad combination of African textiles. The bolder the better!” She felt a connection with the Malian sister artists but wanted to pay homage to the struggles of all African women with her quilt. The result is a vibrant, multi-colored continent made from pieces of African fabric.

Katherine is a member of the African American Quilters of Baltimore; the Uhuru Quilters Guild; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

In the Village



Embroidered cotton, commercial fabrics, machine quilting
19" Wide x 19" High



**Wendy Overly
Massachusetts, USA**

Wendy was the last sister artist to sign up because she had just opened in a new play (“*Admissions*”) in Providence, Rhode Island, in which she plays the head of development at a prep school. As well as being a professional actor, Wendy has been teaching theater since the mid-1980s. Asked what is the cardinal rule of acting she says: “Listening.”

Wendy has long combined quilting with acting and reckons to have participated in almost as many quilt shows as plays. But *Sister Artists* is her first quilt challenge. Wendy’s first thought was that it would be fascinating to “support someone on the other side of the world who I will never meet.”

After checking out the project online, Wendy was also entranced by the fact that the artists in Mali and the US share the same love of craft, regardless of lifestyles. She does not see the Malian artists as novices: “We were all trained by someone.”

In designing her quilt, Wendy imagined the family working in the garden in the middle of a field. She wanted to make the surrounding land as bountiful as possible, and chose fabric that looked like fields of crops. Her only addition to the block itself was to quilt in the open space.

Wendy does not belong to any guild and describes herself as a “rogue quilter!”

Malian Medallion



Embroidered cotton, African batiks, hand-dyed and printed fabrics, beads

38" Wide x 36" High



Eleanor Levie
Pennsylvania, USA

Eleanor loves advocacy quilting and was quick to answer the call to contribute to *Sister Artists*. She based her design on photos taken by a friend during a visit to the village of Siby in Mali, where geometric patterns are used during a house-painting festival. This inspired Eleanor to use the color and design of a log cabin:

“I went with an asymmetrical medallion setting, sketched out on graph paper and used freehand-cut fused triangles and patterned fabric from my stash of African, batik, and hand-dyed and printed fabrics. There was quite a bit of seat-of-the-pants fudging as I added rounds of borders. Conveniently, African beads camouflage spots where angles and corners lack sharp points.”

Eleanor feels deep solidarity with the Malian artists: “If I could, I would pin a medal on each courageous woman anywhere who struggles and strives and supports her sisters. For now, my Mali Medallion will have to do. I honor the talent, courage and dignity of a young woman who embroidered a charming depiction of her home life in Mali.”

Grinding Maize



Embroidered cotton, hand printed fabric, machine quilting
23" Wide x 31" High



Karen McCann
Rhode Island, USA

Karen knew exactly two people when she moved to Rhode Island and was looking for friends. She found them in an art group, which also offered her an outlet for her creative and professional interests.

Karen has a background in graphic design and manages a family printing company with her husband. Not surprisingly she uses photographs in a lot of her quilts. This involves transferring the image onto muslin. Karen also uses thread painting to give an impression of movement and depth.

Karen was attracted to *Sister Artists* by the message and was moved when she found her artist in the group photo from Mali: “Seeing her from half way around the world made it seem much more personal and the world seem smaller. I’ve had her on my mind throughout and can’t imagine what she went through.”

Karen’s quilt seeks to enhance her original Malian block. She began by adding a sun, which she made by wrapping up cardboard and stamping it with the design. She then stitched her sun directly into the muslin.

Karen used a process known as Gelli plate print to make the surrounding blocks. She then cut two strips from fabric that mimicked aboriginal fabric (so-called because it comes from Australia and carries the shape of boomerangs) and attached these on either side of the central block. She then stamped on the deep blue border.

Karen is a member of the Rhode Island Threads group of fiber artists and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA)

Home, Work, Nature



Embroidered cotton, African fabric, machine quilting
13" Wide x 12" High



Sue Bates
Rhode Island, USA

After working as an engineer for many years, Sue needed a creative outlet. She turned to fabric and painting and has never looked back. She particularly likes to dye and paint fabric.

Sister Artists immediately reminded Sue of an earlier project organized by a neighbor that had involved sending upholstery fabric to refugees in South Africa. The refugees turned the fabric into self-portraits which then returned to the US to be made into small quilts and auctioned: “It was fresh, imaginative and full of great color.”

Sue felt a strong connection with her Malian sister while working on her square. She knew that the woman has been uprooted from home and suffered violence, and this influenced her design: “I tried to imagine how she would like to be – serene, at home, surrounded by nature and taking care of her family.”

In making the border for her quilt, Sue used green fabric brought from Ghana by her nephew, who is in the Peace Corps. She cut her Malian square back to reduce the white space and used free motion quilting for the backing.

Sue is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA); and Quilters By The Sea in Portsmouth RI.

Food Needed for Life



Embroidered cotton, applique, hand quilting
26" Wide x 27" High



Barbara Eisenstein Maryland, USA

Barbara started with traditional quilting and moved to art quilting “because I wanted to use my imagination.” For the past five years she has worked from a studio in Rockville where she makes and sells dyed products.

Barbara has extensive experience of using quilts to advance a cause. She contributed to two previous *Quilt for Change* challenges – *Solar Sister* and *Water is Life*.

Barbara was also part of a team from the PM Fiber Arts Guild that assembled the two *Alafia Mali* (“Peace in Mali”) quilts. The blocks for the two peace quilts were made by women in Mali, including some of the *Sister Artists*, and describe attacks of gender-based violence in painful detail. Barbara is pleased to get re-acquainted with the Malian women through *Sister Artists* and hopes she can contribute to their healing: “You can do as much with images as words.”

Barbara viewed *Sister Artists* as an opportunity to make another strong statement – in this case about food in Africa. Over four million Malians are under-nourished and Barbara’s quilt displays a range of basic fruits. They are not specific to Mali but convey the message that fruit is a universal source of nutrition. Barbara also added palm trees to her block and used hand quilting to give a feel of land being cultivated. She used light colors to avoid overpowering the original design: “I wanted to make sure the Malian block stood out.”

Barbara is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) and two guilds – the PM Fiber Arts Guild and NeedleChasers – in the Washington DC area.

Pirogue



Embroidered cotton, batik fabric, machine quilting
25" Wide x 16" High



Karen Pulaski
Massachusetts, USA

Karen came to quilting via her family bridal store. An accomplished seamstress, she would meet with quilters who worked at a nearby fabric outlet and urged her to share her secrets. This led to 25 years of quilt training, retreats, and quilt shows.

Karen is, however, a relative late-comer to art quilting. She was inspired by the *Sister Artists* challenge after meeting with Allison from *Quilt for Change* and Iain from AP. She particularly liked the idea of volunteering from home for such a good cause: “I teach a lot of children, so the idea of helping these Malian girls to learn a trade was fantastic! I feel really privileged to participate.”

In designing her quilt, Karen was determined not to break up her Malian block or fill out the white space. She was inspired by the fact that some of the sister artists in Mali had crossed two rivers to attend the embroidery training. Karen also loves water and takes every opportunity to work water into her quilts.

Karen chose blue batik fabric to match the blue in her Malian block and created the ripple effect of waves by using a rotary cutter to make long, thin slices. Karen then folded the edges over, and used a clear thin thread to stitch next to the fold. She then used a wooden iron to flatten it all out: “I hope the result is calming.”

Karen is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA); the Quilters Connection Guild; the Rising Star Quilt Guild; and a regular contributor to *Material Mavens*, an online blog.

Bus Ride



Embroidered cotton, Seminole piecing, machine quilting
21" Wide x 17" High



Elizabeth Greene
Rhode Island, USA

Asked how long she has been quilting, Elizabeth replies that she made her first quilt for a nephew, now 46. She looks back on the years and feels that she has got better: "I know more tricks!"

Elizabeth reckons to have made over 150 quilts and given away about 25, mostly to charities. She prefers traditional quilting because the quilts are put to practical use and as a result has made relatively few art quilts. But she likes art quilting because it "stretches her mind" and she likes to fall asleep wrestling with a design. "My favorite quilt is the next one!"

Elizabeth entered *Sister Artists* to test her skills against others. After reading about what the Malian artists have been through she says: "I am just glad to be here."

Elizabeth chose the only block which tells a complete story. The block appears to show two people getting off a bus near a speed limit. The artist also placed the bus at an angle to produce perspective.

This meant that Elizabeth could not alter the block and had to focus on embellishment. Using a technique known as "Seminole Piecing," which was originated by the Seminole Indians of Florida, Elizabeth sewed several strips of fabric together, cut the strips into smaller sections, and then rearranged them to form entirely different patterns: "Not many people use this technique, but it seemed to work for this image." Elizabeth used a machine in quilting.

Elizabeth is a member of Quilters By the Sea, in Portsmouth Rhode Island.

Carrying Maize



Embroidered cotton, woven hand painted fabric, embroidery
25" Wide x 43" High



Judy Miller
California, USA

Judy was introduced to quilting when a shop opened in the area. She bought a sewing machine and started to take classes. For years Judy did traditional quilting. Then the Internet introduced her to a whole new world of modern quilting and art quilting.

About 3 years ago, Judy took an online class in the elements and principles of art. There she met Ellen Fisher, Diane Clapes and Nancy Hershberger, three other American sister artists. Ellen mentioned the project to the group and they all decided to participate.

Judy had never entered a quilt challenge or show before: “I was scared to death! It forced me out of my comfort zone, but has done wonders for my confidence.” Judy was also attracted by the cause: “We need to express ourselves about what is happening in the world. Quilting opens that door.”

Judy began to research Mali and the issues. Seeing her sister artist in the group photo from Mali sealed the deal: “I felt a connection to her. My goal was to give her work greater impact.” *Carrying Maize* has a woven background, but contains a top, batting, and a backing, the traditional parts of a quilt. The strips in the weaving contain hand-painted fabrics, and burlap. Judy added embellishments using hand embroidery. Some threads and strips have been knotted and left to hang.

Judy is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

To Market



Embroidered cotton, woven muhli grass, indigo dyed fabric
19" Wide x 20" High



Pam Shanley
South Carolina, USA

Pam brought plenty of local tradition to her *Sister Artists* quilt. She started sewing her own clothes while teaching at a High School and fell in love with folk art crafts in Appalachia, particularly weaving.

During five years of living in Virginia, Pam contributed to many quilt shows. For one, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of the landing on the moon, she quilted moon craters in color. Pam shows her respect for tradition in South Carolina by giving demonstrations of weaving and sewing and serving as a guide at former plantations, dressed in 18th century clothing.

In preparing her *Sister Artists* quilt Pam researched Mali and saw water and grass amidst an arid desert. She separated the two women in her block to expand the image and allow for different weaving techniques. The sticks are made from *muhli* grass, which is commonly used to make baskets in South Carolina. The medallion was wrapped in a coil in the manner of another local product – Gullah baskets. For water, Pam used material dyed with indigo, which has been grown in the Carolinas since before independence. Pam has also made her own mud cloth.

With an art quilt currently on exhibition at the Library of Congress and *To Market* being shown at the Textile Museum, this is an exciting time for Pam. She is a member of the Palmetto Fiber Arts Guild; the Handweavers Guild of America; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Safety in Numbers



Embroidered cotton, appliquéd, dye-painting, and machine quilting
55" Wide x 60" High



Edith Gross
Louisiana, USA

Edith's love of fabric comes from her early years. She vividly remembers seeing her mother and grandmother reviewing a stitch that had gone wrong, and patiently going over it all over again. Edith made sure that the thread was re-rolled properly.

As someone who is keenly aware of the African American quilting tradition, Edith welcomed the chance to work on an African block. She entitled her quilt "*Safety in Numbers*" because women everywhere are at risk and have to be constantly aware of their surroundings: "Traveling in numbers provides camaraderie and safety." This is particularly true in Mali, where travel can be very dangerous for women.

Edith's quilt is an example of her style, which she describes as "half-way between traditional quilting and art quilting." The story in her block runs from bottom left to top right. The original Malian block is at the center and represents the life and home of the Malian artist. The top right block, made by Edith, shows two women collecting water. At the bottom left is an image of African women making soap.

Edith used appliquéd, dye-painting, and machine quilting. For the soap block she sketched the outlines of the image onto fabric and then painted it in using dye. Once it was dry, she washed out the pencil lines. She used African fabric for the women carrying water and drew on her own stash of fabric for the rich red and orange blocks. Edith also used a basket stitch for straight lines. She hopes that her Malian sister artist will have the chance to see the finished quilt.

Village Life



Embroidered cotton. African fabric, raw edge appliquéd
19" Wide x 19" High



Ellena Georato
Massachusetts, USA

Ellena has been quilting for years but only recently turned her hand to art quilting, which she describes as being about “whatever you happen to feel on the inside as opposed to following a prescribed formula.”

Ellena learned about *Sister Artists* from Janice Jones, another guild member. “I needed the practice in art quilting,” she says. “But I also really liked the idea of taking someone else’s embroidery and expanding it to tell a bigger story.”

For her quilt, Ellena used old scarves and remnants of fabric in an African style and raw edge appliquéd.

Ellena is a member of the Merrimack Valley Quilt Guild.

For My Sisters



Embroidered cotton, beading, hand quilting, sashiko stitching
44" Wide x 42" High



Linda Kim
Texas, USA

A stay-at-home mother with an MBA, Linda was looking for a creative outlet when she began to take classes at the local community center in ceramics, painting, sculpture, and art. Linda found that she loved working with wood, and this led to fiber material, which often resembled the texture in wood. Joining Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) opened her eyes to art quilting. “I’m a late bloomer!” she says.

Linda is such a committed recycler that her quilt even includes bits of an old shower curtain: “My approach is wonderfully scrappy. I find all that I need on the free tables at meetings. I love knowing that it doesn’t end up in landfills.”

Linda spent the entire summer of 2019 on *For My Sisters*. She saw it as an opportunity to send a message about the environment, women’s rights and the family: “As an immigrant woman with two daughters I feel about the plight of women. There is injustice in every culture, based purely on gender.”

Apart from the central image from Mali, the most notable design feature of Linda’s quilt may be the small red heart on the left. This, she says, is a “message of love, hope and friendship from folks in the US to the women in Mali.” She surrounded the heart with a few squares of “patriotic prints” with blue and white stars.

Linda also added *sashiko* thread and beads to her quilt. The old shower curtain was covered with big bold red circles, which seemed most suitable for the backing.

Linda is a member of the Austin Fiber Artists; the Austin Area Quilt Guild; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

Cooking at Home



Embroidered cotton, fabric markers, machine appliquéd
15" Wide x 16" High



Hope Barton
Connecticut, USA

Hope started quilting as a practical way to keep her family warm. She then branched into art quilting and has made “hundreds” of quilts, many of them at the end of the day after finishing work as a nurse practitioner.

Hope has received several commissions, including one recent quilt that commemorated a deceased acquaintance. She believes strongly in giving and plays in a dulcimer group that raises money to provide heating for low-income families.

Hope has visited Sierra Leone and Tanzania in Africa, but was mainly drawn to *Sister Artists* after handling cases of gender-based violence as a nurse: “Therapy often means just listening.” Making a quilt from the Malian block was, for Hope, a way to help the Malian sister to express herself: “I would love to have met her!”

Hope’s quilt design satisfies her passion for color, which she describes as “almost visceral.” Her main goal was to sharpen the colors in her Malian block “to enhance not change.” With this in mind Hope used fabric markers to bring out the colors. She added the red and green bouquet from fabric that picks up the green and red in the main block. Hope used machine quilting to complete her quilt.

Hope is a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA); The Narraganset Bay Quilters; and The Northeastern Connecticut Art Group.

Flight



Embroidered cotton, antique embroidered blocks
26" Wide x 34" High



**Kathleen Paduano
North Carolina, USA**

Quilting has long been part of Kathleen's life. She was taught by her mother, and remembers making an apron for a doll at the age of five. She also recalls that the family was delighted to uncover a family quilt with a flower pattern made by her great-great-grandmother in 1854.

Kathleen herself took up art quilting in 2011 when she moved to Colorado and loves the creativity it offers. She recently moved to Asheville in North Carolina, which is humming with folk art and creativity.

Kathleen contributed a quilt for the *Solar Sister* challenge and is excited to again be connecting women through quilting with *Sister Artists*. She has traveled to South Africa and volunteered in Ecuador and Peru, all of which opened her eyes to other cultures and the lives of women outside the US: "There is such a sweetness to our humanity. Stitching offers a way to connect us all."

Kathleen wanted her quilt to honor women in general. She decided to make three blocks out of the birds and the butterfly, and used bold colors and stripes to give it all an African feel. For the butterfly square, Kathleen used antique embroidery that her great aunt had given her years earlier, and was happy to see this precious piece used for such a good cause: "I wanted to honor women and how we create and make things that we share."

Kathleen is a member of the Front Range Contemporary Quilters; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

The Giving Tree



Embroidered cotton, African Wax batiks, improvisational
piecing
24" Wide x 23" High



Janice Jones
Massachusetts, USA

When she learned that two of the *Sister Artists* Malian blocks were still unclaimed, Janice generously offered to take them on, in addition to her chosen block. She could not bear the thought of the blocks not being a part of the *Sister Artists* exhibitions and auction.

African designs and fabrics are something of a speciality for Janice. She learned quilting at the age of ten from her grandmother, who worked in a textile mill and used to come home with scraps of fabric. Janice owes her love of African designs and fabric to her daughter who brought fabric back while working as a nurse in Zambia: “I saw Africa through her eyes. The colors pack a punch!”

Finishing is the favorite part of quilting for Janice: “I love to use handmade beads, buttons, repurposed objects, fiber, stitching, stamps and various quilting techniques to add interest and texture.” Her passion is on display in *The Giving Tree*.

Of *Sister Artists* Janice says: “This project has been so rewarding. Being a sister artist feels very special and I hope that we can somehow continue to be connected. It feels good to be reaching out and doing something positive.” She thinks the Malian artists did a “fabulous job” with their embroidery.

Janice is a member of the Merrimack Valley Quilters Guild; the Hannah Dustin Guild; and Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA).

