

## Quilts from around the world on display at Michener Art Museum

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By [Janet Purcell/For The Times of Trenton](#)

There's always something interesting going on at the Michener Museum in Doylestown, and that makes it difficult to decide which exhibition or event to report on.

This time I've decided to whet your art appetite with three, two of which are up and waiting for you right now and one that will open its doors to us all come spring.

That one is the new Events Pavilion that is now under construction. The pavilion was designed by Kieran Timberlake, the architectural firm that designed the new U.S. Embassy in London and the Cellophane House at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The 2,700-square-foot pavilion will be constructed of individual sheets of glass, 6½ feet by 23 feet and weighing 5,000 pounds each. The space will be used for supplementary museum programs such as lectures and the popular jazz nights, and the public will be able to rent the space for weddings and cultural events.



"Cutting the Carbs" by Bethan Ash of Wales is part of the exhibition "Quilt Art: International Expressions" at the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, Pa.

"Museums are temples of culture and symbols of community pride," says museum director Bruce Katsiff. "We expect a museum to build remarkable spaces. It's part of what the experience is all about."

And, of course, the exhibitions that are offered within the museum make up the other parts.

Among those currently on view is "Quilt Art: International Expressions," a traveling exhibition of 40 quilts by 24 professional quilt artists from nine countries. The collection embraces everything from realistic landscapes to abstract designs, from words and photographic images to appliqué, embroidery, stenciling, painting, and printing.

An available full-color catalog includes not only images of the works on display but of earlier quilts made by each of the artists and their own essays about the quilts they have created.

American quilt maker Jette Clover's "Marks the Spot III" is done with fabric bearing marks from rusting objects found during the rebuilding of the 18th-century house she lives in on the Atlantic coast.

To this she stitched and layered occasional patches, and she painted and printed words and symbols, thus blending her experience of the house with its rust-marked history or, as she says in her essay, "its DNA."

Elizabeth Brimelow's silk quilt, "Low Meadow," is a realistic rendering of the grassy meadow strewn with yellow wildflowers where she walks with her dog.

She shows the path she takes where light bleaches the darker foreground grasses to a beautiful spring green as her path narrows and approaches a hillside near her home in England. The quilt is hand and machine stitched, appliquéd and hand-knotted.

A different kind of landscape is Ireland's Evelyn Montague's "In the Beginning," a collection of abstract shapes of mixed fabrics fused on painted linen and then machine quilted. She calls this "an emotional landscape" and says it is her way of exploring what is left since she became disabled.

Montague's technique evolved when she was no longer able to cut and sew. Created in earth tones, the designs suggest primitive marks, ancient runes.

"Cutting the Carbs — Shedding the Pounds" by Bethan Ash of Wales is also about the quilt maker's personal experience, her life-long battle with weight problems.

Described as an improvisationally cut and fused wall quilt, machine quilted and stitched, this is a brightly colored patchwork of lively contemporary designs and digital transfer words such as pizza, pasta and pastries.

In contrast to the dazzle and bright energy of Ash's quilt is a dark and brooding one called "Universe" by fashion designer Bente Vold Klausen of Norway.

For this, she hand-dyed her fabric blue with yellow spots, applied resist to create two free-form circles, then painted and printed markings in various subtle colors. Her abstract shapes and free motion machine quilting come together in an artful blend of design and texture.

This exhibition is a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Quilt Art group.

In the foreword to the exhibition catalog, Robert Shaw, author of "Quilts: A Living Tradition," says the formation of the group "brought together a select group of professional artists in efforts to extend the boundaries of the quilt medium and increase recognition of the quilt as an art form."

He points out that "members have also brought elements of their home countries' culture, geography, and textile and design traditions to their work."

This is an expansive exhibit that will please you with color and pattern, with intricacies and bold statements. It will also introduce you to the work and words of these international quilt makers where you will learn about their culture and design traditions.

But make sure you reserve time to step into the intimate gallery nearby to enjoy the small collages by the late Ann Irwin. Although Irwin was also a quilt maker, this exhibit focuses on small works she pieced together from old books, bits of fabric, and found objects.

According to exhibition materials, Irwin struggled with serious health problems but still worked daily in her studio creating these meticulously pieced works of art that have a mystical quality about them. Some will make you chuckle and others are simply for quiet contemplation.

But be prepared for the unexpected. You'll find a monkey wearing a king's crown, a canoe sprouting a sail, a teddy bear sitting on a teapot, and "Mother Angelica," whose face is a wooden structure.

You'll also find a paper and fabric "Kaleidoscope" and a crowned "Heart of a Saint" that are simply pleasing to the eye.

While the components of the new Events Pavilion are being put into place in the courtyard outside the museum, these two exhibitions inside are also about putting pieces together to create art.

Whether it be on the grand scale of glass walls, pieced and stitched fabrics, or small cuts of glued paper, it is all art in a few of its many diverse experiences that can be found at the museum.

## Quilt Art, International Expressions

Through Dec. 31

## The Collages of Ann Irwin

Through Oct. 16

**When:** 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tuesdays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays, noon-5 p.m. Sundays

**Where:** James A. Michener Art Museum, 138 Pine St., Doylestown, Pa.

**Contact:** (215) 340-9800 or [michenerartmuseum.org](http://michenerartmuseum.org)