Handstitched Worlds
The Cartography of Quilts
Handstitched Worlds: The Cartography of Quilts is an invitation to read quilts as maps, tracing the paths of individual stories and experiences that illuminate larger historic events and cultural trends. Spanning the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, the exhibition brings together 18 quilts from the collection of the American Folk Art Museum, New York, representing a spectacular range of materials, motifs, and techniques—from traditional early-American quilts to more contemporary sculptural assemblages. The quilts in Handstitched Worlds show us how this often overlooked medium balances creativity with tradition, and individuality with collective zeitgeist.

Maps and quilts are built upon established systems that use color, pattern, and symbols to create whole compositions from a network of interlocked parts. Both are infused with history and memory—they are living records of traditions, experiences, relationships, beliefs, and aspirations. Like a roadmap, the quilts in this unique exhibition offer a path to a deeper understanding of the American cultural fabric.

FRONT  Artist unidentified, Map Quilt (detail), 1886, Silk and cotton with silk embroidery, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. C. David McLaughlin, Photograph by Schecter Lee 1. Jerry Gretzinger, Jerry's Map (E1/N1), Generation 11 (detail), 2014–2016, Felt-tip pen, colored pencil, acrylic, tape, and plastic clippings on cardboard, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of the artist, Photograph by Adam Reich 2. Nora McKeown Ezell, Star Quilt (detail), 1977, Cotton and synthetics, American Folk Art Museum, Purchase made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, with matching funds from The Great American Quilt Festival, Photograph by Scott Bowron 3. Artist unidentified (signed “Ella”), “Ella” Crazy Quilt (detail), 1922, Suiting woolens with cotton embroidery, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Frances S. Martenson, Photograph by Gavin Ashworth 4. Lucy Frost, Abraham Lincoln Flag Quilt, c. 1866, Cotton with cotton appliqué and embroidery, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Florence W. and Joseph P. Rhinehart, Photograph by Gavin Ashworth 5. Mrs. Eldad Miller and others, Cross River Album Quilt (detail), 1861, Cotton and silk with wool embroidery, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Dr. Stanley and Jacqueline Schneider, Photograph by Gavin Ashworth

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Works
18 quilts

Organized by
The American Folk Art Museum, New York

Requirements
Moderate security; 175–200 linear feet

Shipping
IA&A makes all arrangements; exhibitors pay outgoing shipping costs within the contiguous US

Booking Period
12 weeks

Tour
September 2021 – September 2024