

The Gee Benz quilts by African-American women were handmade in the 1980s and part of Josephine Richardson Collection. She acquired the quilts from Larry Hackley, Hackley Gallery, North Middletown/Winchester, Kentucky.



[Valerie Deas](#) who taught quilt making at SoHarlem to formerly incarcerated women restored the Gee Benz quilts in the summer 2022. They inaugurate Shop SoHarlem at the Malt House. Images below of Valerie who replaced all the stars, backing and other precious handmade parts of these quilts.



Valerie Deas was born in the Bronx, raised in Harlem, and has resided in the Bronx for more than three decades. She has taught art professionally for over 25 years in public school classrooms and community workshops. Valerie is a multimedia artist whose work often combines painting and textiles to explore dimensionality and color. Her work also draws from the rhythms and lines of music and dance traditions. She cites African art and Indigenous art of the Americas as inspirational, alongside the work of Picasso, El Greco, Wassily Kandinsky, Basquiat, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, and others.

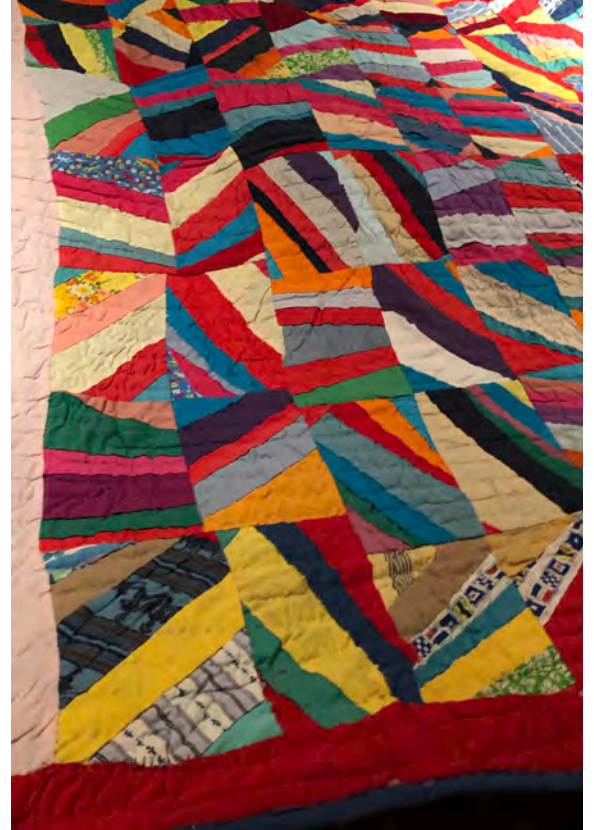
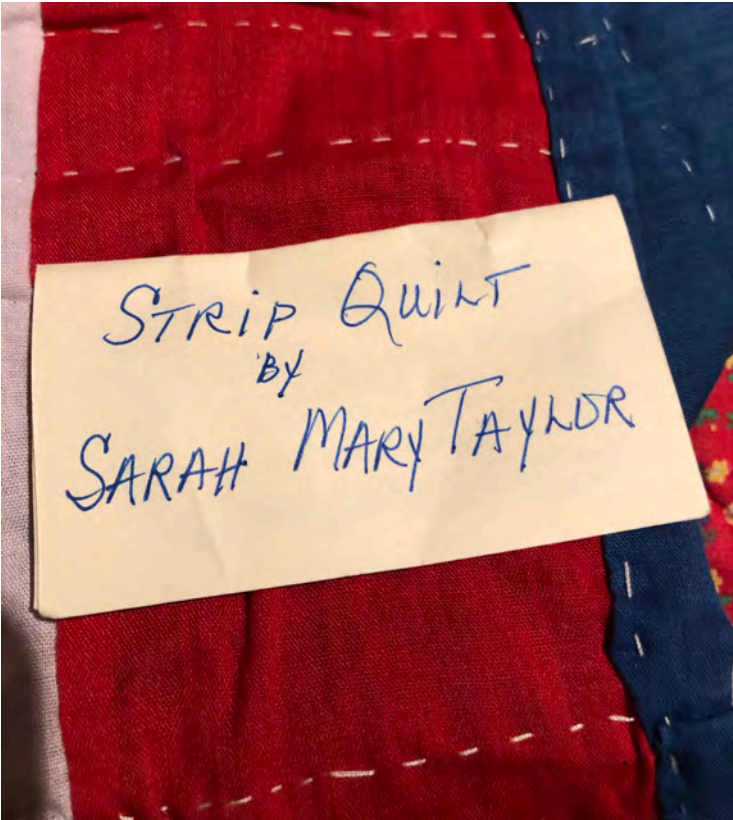
Valerie has participated in more than 25 group shows. Her work has also appeared in two international shows, Book Art in Brazil and the International Textile Biennial: Beyond Category - Visions of Jazz in Fiber in San Jose, Costa Rica, curated by Carolyn Mazoolmi. Valerie's solo exhibition, Thread and Paints, took place at Gallery M in Harlem, New York. Valerie's work has been on exhibition at Lincoln Center, Rush Gallery, Kente Royal Gallery, and Blue Door Art Gallery. Her quilts have been touring with the African American Fiber Art Exhibition throughout the country. In 2021, Valerie was awarded a City Artist Corps Grant to bring some of her artwork to her community. In 2022, Valerie was one of the Bronx Council on the Arts Community Engagement Grantees.



Selection of Valerie Deas Quilts

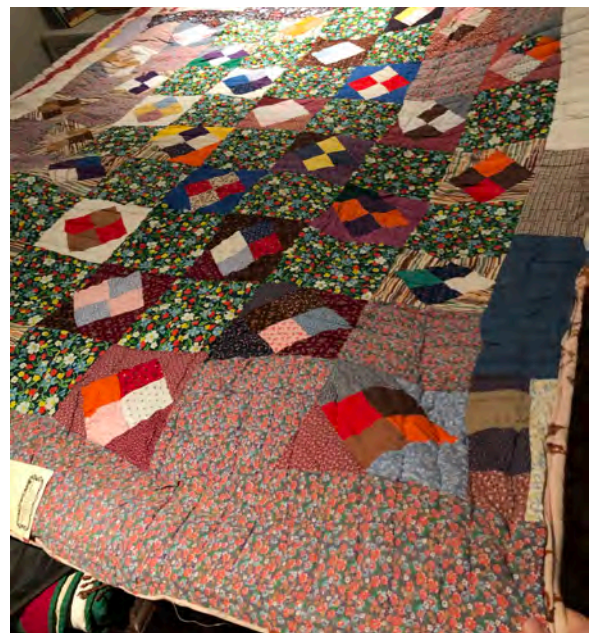
Valerie is the current Programming Board Chair of the Riverdale Art Association and a member of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQUA), Blue Door Art Center, Bx 200 Visual Artist Directory, and Harlem Girls Quilting Circle (HGQC).

African-American Quilts Received from Larry Hackley, Hackley Gallery,
North Middletown/Winchester, Kentucky, 1992-93



Sarah Mary Taylor

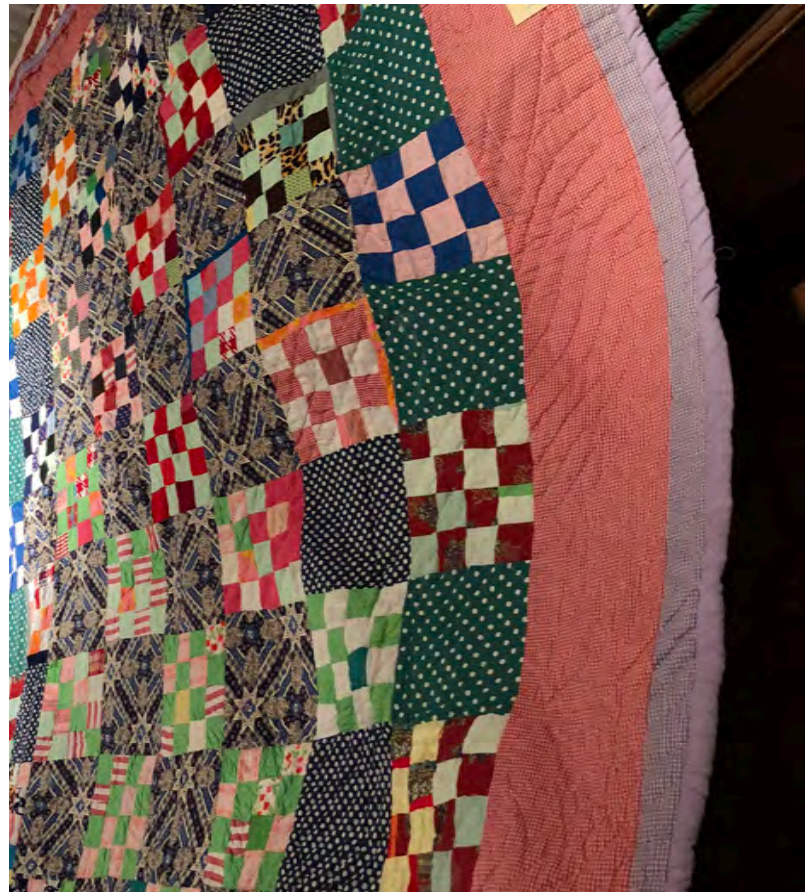
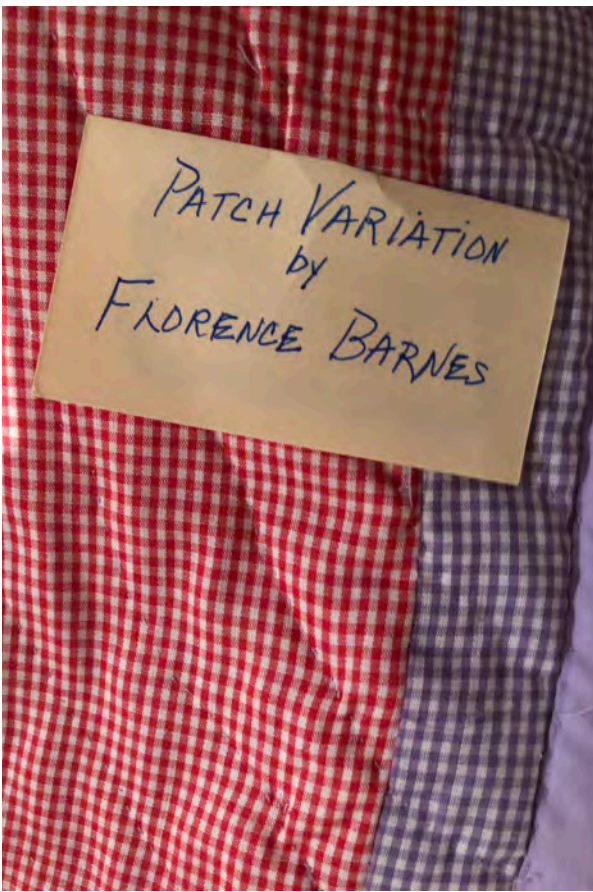
Strip Quilt: was made in the early 1980s in Alabama from bright scraps by Quiltmaker *Sarah Mary Taylor* **Dimensions:** 74" X 88"



Louella Pettway

Four Patch Variation was made in Wilcox County, Alabama in the 1980s with scraps of fabric material from Louella's quilting bee, *Freedom Quilters*. Quiltmaker Louella Pettway, born in Boykin, Alabama on February 14th, 1921.

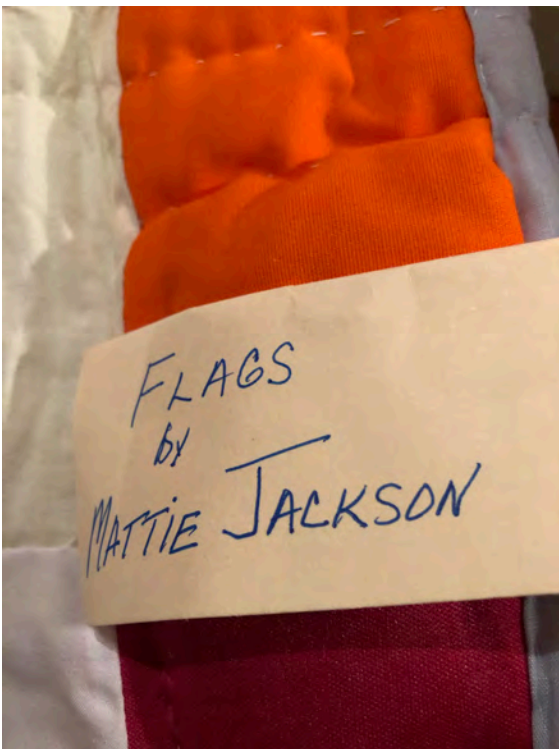
Dimensions: 80" X 82"



Florence Barnes

Patch Variation: was made (date unknown) in Wilkinson County, Mississippi by Quiltmaker *Florence Barnes* who was born July 18th, 1916

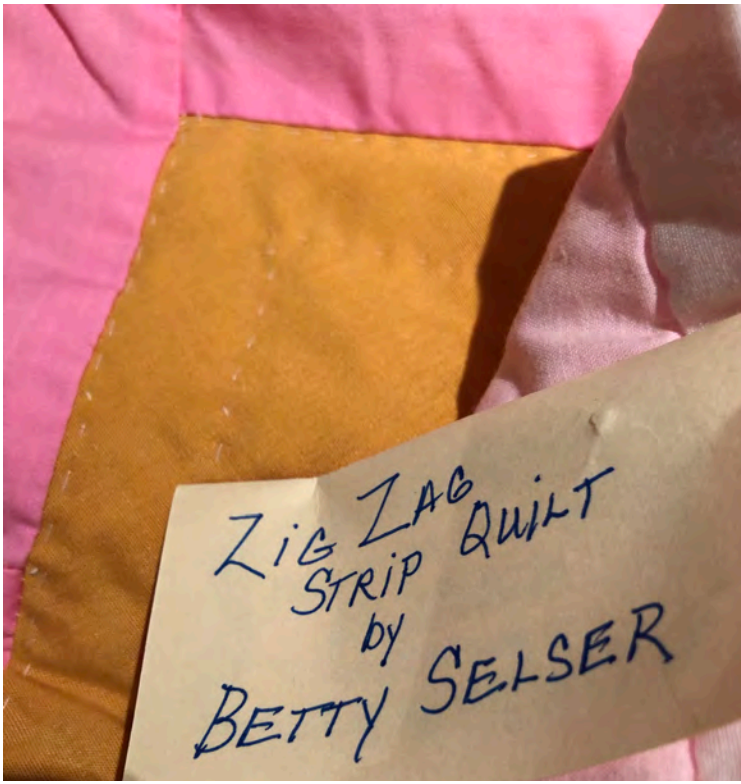
Dimensions: 84" X 76"



Mattie Jackson

Flags: Flags representing 6 countries and the United States of America interpreted by the Quiltmaker *Mattie Jackson* of Yazoo City, Missouri in 1987

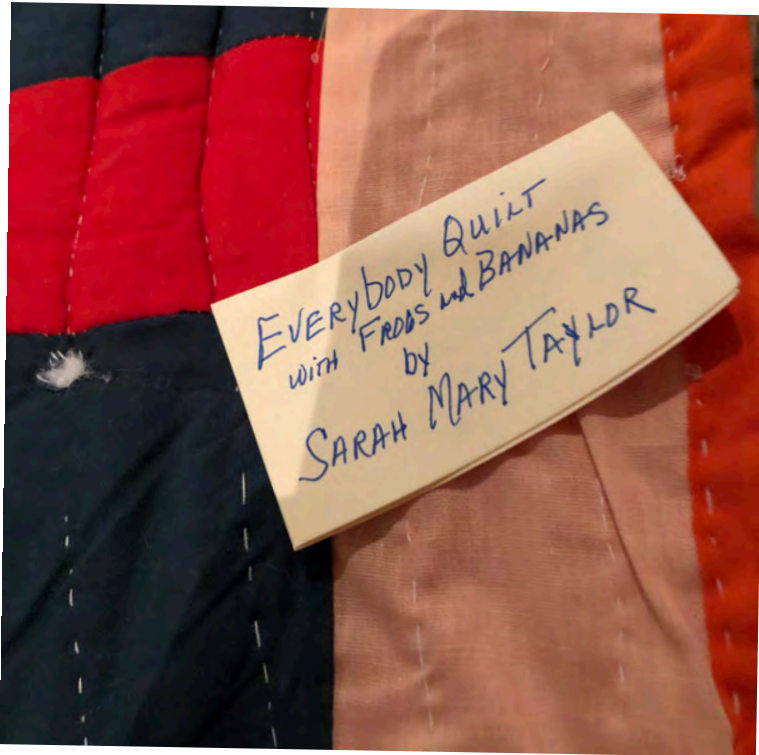
Dimensions: 80" X 82"



Betty Selser

Zig Zag Strip Quilt: Strips of bright pink, orange, gold and white, made by quilter Betty Selser (born in September, 1939, Boykin, Alabama. The quilt was made in the early 1980s in Wilcox County, Alabama.

Dimensions: 78" X 76"



Sarah Mary Taylor

Everybody Quilt with Frogs and Bananas: by Sarah Mary Taylor in early 1980s in Alabama.

Dimensions: 68" X 82"