

THE QUILT ENCYCLOPEDIA ILLUSTRATED



DESIGNS ♦ PATTERNS ♦ TECHNIQUES ♦ EQUIPMENT ♦
CONSERVATION AND CARE ♦ TEXTILES ♦ DYES ♦ HISTORY ♦
QUILT ORGANIZATIONS ♦ AND MORE

THE
QUILT
ENCYCLOPEDIA
ILLUSTRATED



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藏书章



BY CARTER HOUCK

FOREWORD BY ROBERT BISHOP AND ELIZABETH WARREN

THE QUILT ENCYCLOPEDIA ILLUSTRATED



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BLACK AND WHITE: Come Quilt with Me (p. 22 right), Myron Miller (pp. 22 right, 23, 34, 37 right, 39 left, 48, 52 right, 53 left, 64 left, 65 left, 100, 109, 120 right, 121 left, 127, 131 above left, 146 right, 150 right, 152 right, 154 right, 158, 160 right, 167 left, 169 right, 172, 185), Norwood Looms, Freemont, Michigan, (p.76)

FIRST PAGE: The Soul of Medieval Italy is comprised of nine scenes of daily life, as shown in drawings in a fifteenth-century Italian manuscript, *Tacuinum Sanitatis*. The quilt was designed and made in 1987 by Suzanne Marshall. 71 x 79"

SECOND PAGE: Spider Web is a strip- or string-pieced pattern based on an octagon. Zoorett Freeman of West Virginia uses newspaper to stabilize her blocks until they are all sewn together

FOREWORD

When Jonathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof curated the exhibition "Abstract Design in American Quilts" at the Whitney Museum in 1971, no one could have predicted the success of the show or the floodgate of enthusiasm it opened in the art world for so modest an everyday object as a bedcover. After all, a quilt was a simple utilitarian object created by a needlewoman who was not a trained artist. Many of the textiles were without histories, frequently separated by years and miles from the women and the communities that had created and used them. Furthermore, there were few collectors who considered quilts worthy of serious study and preservation.

The exhibition was a resounding triumph. It captured the imagination of art critics, art historians, textile enthusiasts, quiltmakers, and, finally, collectors. This trailblazing show was the unquestioned beginning of America's appreciation of the quilt as a work of art.

While we at the Museum of American Folk Art have long known that quilts are by far the most popular category of folk art — quilt exhibitions always generate the largest attendance, lectures about quilts frequently sell out, and quilt books are the perennial best-sellers in our shops — the appeal of quilts to a wide general audience was made abundantly clear to us by the success of the biennial Great American Quilt Festival on Pier 92 in New York. The exhibitions on the pier, the many lectures and symposia, and the sold-out workshops attest to the phenomenal enthusiasm for quilts abroad in the land.

What was also made clear was the almost unquenchable desire of this vast audience for any and all information about quilts. It is a mixed audience, composed of quilt collectors, art historians, and — perhaps the greatest number of all — quiltmakers. Many of these people frequently ask members of the Museum staff to recommend one book that they can use as a standard reference for quilts of all kinds. It has been impossible for us to do this. While there are many good books on quilts available, they are almost

all highly specialized, or else they are price guides and picture books without much text. One of the earliest and best general reference works on quilts, *Quilts in America* by Myron and Patsy Orlofsky, has been out of print for a number of years, and some of its information would now be out of date.

Clearly this is the time for a general quilt encyclopedia that sums up the current state of knowledge and the basic information about the subject. Carter Houck, the author of *The Quilt Encyclopedia Illustrated*, is a writer and lecturer who has played a central role in increasing appreciation for the quilt today. As editor for many years of *Lady's Circle Patchwork Quilts* she brought to a national constituency an awareness of antique quilts as well as of the works of art being created by the contemporary needlewoman. Her critical opinions have shaped the taste of present-day quiltmakers, for she judges quilt contests often, and continues to write on the subject so dear to her.

The romance of the patchwork quilt is no longer just an American phenomenon. Important collections have been formed in England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland. The Japanese are perhaps the most avid enthusiasts. They collect American quilts, they collect antique Japanese fabrics, and they make quilts that are astonishing for their unique design and superb craftsmanship. Our quilt magazines regularly appear in Japanese. The American quilt is admired worldwide.

The Quilt Encyclopedia Illustrated is an important addition to scholarship. No museum curator, art historian, or quilt collector can be without it. The same clarity of understanding that Carter Houck brings to her every project is evident throughout the text and pictures of this volume. It will also serve as a basic reference book and source of information for the novice in the quilt world for years to come.

Robert Bishop, Director, and Elizabeth Warren,
Curator, the Museum of American Folk Art

INTRODUCTION



ABOVE: A finely quilted and trapuntoed linen cap from eighteenth-century France might have been worn by a child or young woman. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman, 1976. 1976.3.5

BELOW: Japanese firemen in times past wore protective coats of heavily layered and quilted fabric. This one from the late Edo period (nineteenth century) has an amusing design of rabbits pounding rice and is *sashiko*-quilted — the stitches appearing as tiny dots. Collection of Fifi White

Mention quilts, and the image that almost immediately springs to mind is of the American pieced, or patchwork, bed quilt. The women of the then-new country certainly took quilting to heart and made it their own indigenous art form, but the roots go back for centuries in Europe, and before that in the countries east of the Mediterranean. Quilts were mentioned as a part of household goods in British writings as early as the end of the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, fabric disintegrates more rapidly than the written word, so actual examples — even the tiniest scraps — of early quilts are hard to find.

Quilting, or the joining together of two layers of fabric with batting (filler) between, had its origins in a time that is impossible to document. It is generally thought to have come, in its decorative form, from Asia to Europe at the time of the Crusades — the eleventh to thirteenth centuries A.D. This theory certainly ties together a lot of loose

ends and seems consistent with any sure knowledge of textiles that has been confirmed by research. There is, for example, a Mongolian quilted carpet, probably made a century or so before the birth of Christ and discovered in 1924 in a tomb. It may have been made for burial or it may have graced the floor of a chieftain's tent in his lifetime. It is now kept in the Institute of the Academy of Science of the USSR in Leningrad.

The theory that quilting traveled from the East to the West gains credibility at every turn. The textile arts were much more highly developed in China and India at a far earlier time than in Europe. The use of silk or cotton made it easier to produce a fine texture, suitable for more sophisticated decoration than was possible with the wool or linen used in medieval Europe. Carvings from early Egypt show heavily padded and decorated garments that could well have been layered and quilted.

One of the great clues to its origins may be the way in which Europeans first used quilting — as padding for metal armor and as armor itself. At the time of the Crusades, armies clanked off to war more or less encased in metal. It is fascinating-looking to us, but certainly must have been as uncomfortable as a personal torture chamber, especially considering that as the men traveled south the climate became hotter. It could then follow that the first Crusader chafing in his metal case soon recognized a possible form of relief in the triple thickness of quilting.

The first bits of any quilting found in



Europe are articles of clothing rather like jackets or undershirts that went next to the body or as covers over the armor. The theory is that worn in either way the quilting helped to absorb the shock of arrows, lances, and later even bullets.

Armor was a fact of life for those who adventured and went into battle well into the period of the exploration of the “new world,” and we know that both the metal and the quilted varieties traveled across the ocean. Long after firearms were prevalent, armor was still worn. As the one became more accurate and sophisticated, the other became less useful.

By the seventeenth century, quilted clothing for men, women, and children was common. The fabrics varied according to the wearer’s class, the finest being of silk with very fine silk or wool batting. In the eighteenth century, skirts parted in the front to reveal more and more of the elaborate quilted petticoats. Caps, jackets, and vests were quilted, corded, and embroidered in intricate and beautiful patterns.

Little remains beyond the household records and wills of the gentry to say that bed quilts were important at this same time. There are also references to them in literature — with many and varied spellings. Such words as “twylt,” “quylt,” and “twilt” can be found in early English writings.

An 1859 Merriam-Webster dictionary gives a half-column to “quilt” and “quilt-ing.” The list of related European words leaves no doubt as to how widespread the knowledge of quilting was. The words cited are: Italian — *coltre*, Latin — *culcita*, Spanish — *colcha*, and Irish — *cuilt*. In any of its forms, the word seems always to have



referred to a layered mattress or bedcover.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, America was the country that kept quilting more than merely alive. It became an art form that changed and was elaborated, a part of women’s lives in every stratum of society. While some quilting was done in England and in the Orient, in America it blossomed. Now, toward the end of the twentieth century, it has spread worldwide and has taken on new meanings for each country. More than anything, it forms an artistic bond between women who do not even speak a common language.

C.H.

Appliqué and stuffed-work Bouquet with Trees and Vines, attributed to Virginia Mason Ivey, born 1828 in Kentucky, maker of the famous Kentucky Fair Quilt. Original design and fine workmanship of this type displayed the needlework training given to young girls and women in post-Colonial America. 92 x 78". Collection of America Hurrah, New York City





A

ABSTRACT DESIGNS

Many decorative designs are purely abstract, making no attempt to represent anything in nature, but only to be pleasant in terms of arrangement and color. Even though intriguing names like Boston Commons and Wild Goose Chase are attached to some well-known quilt designs, it would take real imagination to make a connection to something recognizable. A number of recent art quilts borrow much of their form and excitement from twentieth-century abstract painting.

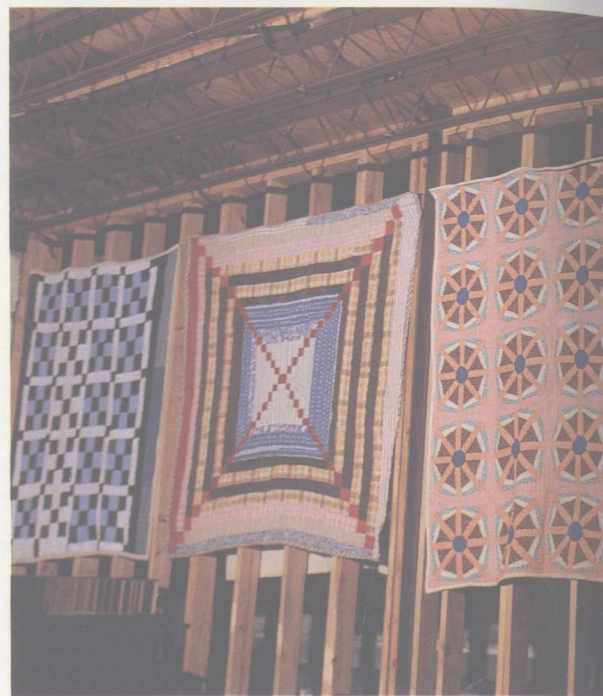
See also: Art quilts, Semiabstract designs

AFRICAN-AMERICAN QUILTS

Quilts made by African-Americans are not necessarily identifiable as such. There is, however, a strain of vivid colors and bold geometric designs, reminiscent of African textiles, that runs through many quilts made by black women. With the exception of slave-made quilts, used by the families of the makers' masters, few pieces exist from before the Civil War.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: The Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont, displays a great number of quilts from its vast collection at all times. On the left is a Sunburst and Sawtooth, pieced by Mrs. Eunice Baker Willard of Castleton, Vermont, in 1860. In the center is a Mariner's Compass, probably made in New Jersey, that won first prize in the 1949 Tennessee State Fair. On the right is an appliqué called Pine Tree, Coxcomb, and Four-Leaf Clover, made in the mid-nineteenth century. Courtesy of the Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont

RIGHT: The Road Less Traveled by Suzanne Kjelland, inspired by the book of that name, is an abstract interpretation of its theme. The artist dyes her own fabrics to achieve the delicate shading



Two types of African-American quilts dating from the late nineteenth century are still found today in black communities. Beside the aforementioned geometrics, there are story quilts — the best-known of these being the Bible quilts made in the latter half of the nineteenth century by Harriet Powers, a freedwoman. Standard patterns such as stars and Wedding Rings appear in African-American quilts, which are often distinctive for their unique coloring and proportion. Medallion formats were also popular, as was a type of strong strippy arrangement.

See also: Slave-made quilts, Story quilts

ALBUM QUILTS

These are also called “autograph” or “friendship” quilts. Generally, all album quilts are made in blocks, or at least in some separate sections. The blocks are frequently created by a number of people and in different designs. Sometimes one person plans



the overall design and hands out the fabric and pattern or patterns. Often, each block is signed by the person making it — there are very specific patterns that lend themselves to this purpose, blocks having open white spaces in the center, as in Chimney Sweep. When all the blocks are completed, they are often stitched together by the participants in an album party, at which time they would probably be quilted also.

Among the most famous album quilts are those made by a group of women living in the Baltimore area in the midnineteenth century. It is clear that some of these Baltimore album quilts were made by people of differing abilities, while others appear to have been made by one skilled woman. Now that patterns are once again available for these beautiful blocks, many highly skilled quilters make a Baltimore album quilt as a sort of postgraduate appliqué piece. The rules for and definition of an album quilt have always been indefinite, and

the idea has changed with time, so that several varieties of block quilts are now referred to as “album” quilts.

See also: Autograph quilts, Brides’ quilts, Freedom quilts, Marriage quilts, Presentation quilts, Sampler quilts, Signature quilts, Wedding quilts

ALL-WHITE QUILTS

The handsome quilts decorated only with intricately quilted designs, usually in white thread on white fabric, have a long history. The earliest-known European quilts and quilted clothing are made with this technique. Petticoats, hats, and bedcovers show off this special and demanding stitchery.

There are many variations on all-white quilts — for example, the patterns are sometimes stuffed to achieve a raised effect. Sometimes only cording is used between

LEFT: The Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center in Jackson, Mississippi, is dedicated to the African-American culture of the region. A growing collection of African-American quilts is often on display. Collection of the Smith Robertson Museum, Jackson, Mississippi

BELOW: On the bed is Sunburst by Hystercine Rankin, a well-known African-American quilter from Mississippi. The Jacob’s Ladder variation on the wall was made by a neighbor, Thelma Rankin. Private collection





Album quilt, signed "Sarah Ann Wilson" and dated 1854. It was probably from a black family since the black figures were not caricatured as was usually the case in quilts by white makers at this time. Research and comparison suggest that this quilt was made by a former slave, perhaps a dressmaker. 85 x 100". Collection of America Hurrah, New York City

the fabric layers, along with thin batting, to emphasize parts of the design.

A variety of fabrics — silk, linen, wool, and cotton — have been used in these elegant quilts. They are also called "whole-cloth" quilts and can be made with top and bottom of two different colors, often so expertly stitched that the quilt is reversible. *See also: Clothing, Corded quilting, Marseilles spreads, Stuffed work, Whole-cloth quilts*

ALPHABET QUILTS

Block-like pieced letters — the whole alphabet — have been much used for children's quilts throughout the twentieth century. A well-known pattern of this type was produced by the Ladies' Art Company of St. Louis, Missouri. There have been other alphabet designs for appliqué and embroidery, showing not only the letters but also the usual objects found in an ABC book —

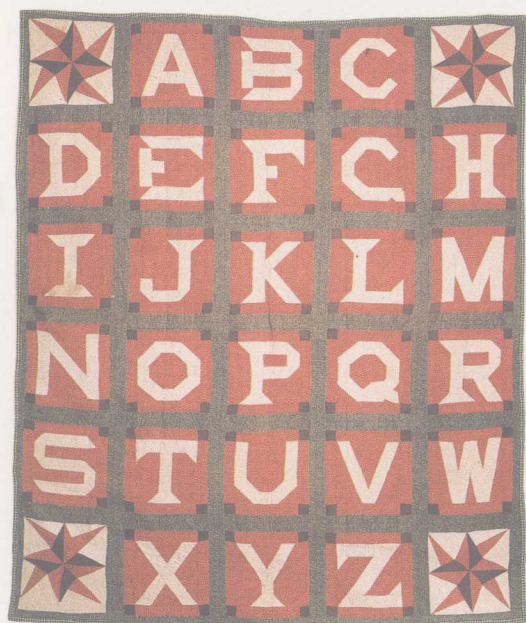
apple for A, and so on. The Nancy Page Quilt Club patterns for such a quilt came out in a newspaper, one letter per week, to whet the quilters' appetites and keep them buying the paper.

See also: Newspaper patterns

AMERICAN QUILTS

It is not unusual to hear the phrase, "American quilts." It would be hard to pin down the exact definition of an American quilt today, although up to at least 1970 there were very distinct differences between American, English, and Welsh quilts. As communication among quilters the world over has improved, the differences are beginning to blur. For purposes of simplification let it be said that America's great contribution to quilting has been the repeating block patterns.

Before block patterns began to be used in American quilts, some characteristic details emerged in what had been essentially English and Welsh designs. After the Revo-



lution, eagles appeared as a frequent design element in medallion and chintz quilts. The fabrics were often of American design, while the album quilts of the second quarter of the nineteenth century were an out-and-out American innovation.

Geometric pieced-block designs grew in popularity after the middle of the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth, swept the country as a craze. Many of the designs related to states and areas and are entirely American in appearance and name.

See also: Baltimore album quilts, Blocks, English quilts, Welsh quilts

AMISH QUILTS

The people in the Amish communities of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana live as

ABOVE: Album quilt, designed and completed by Bernice Enyeart of Huntington, Indiana, in 1985. A modern version of a Baltimore album quilt, its planning and completion required more than three years, although it was not the sole output of the maker during that time. 98 x 98"

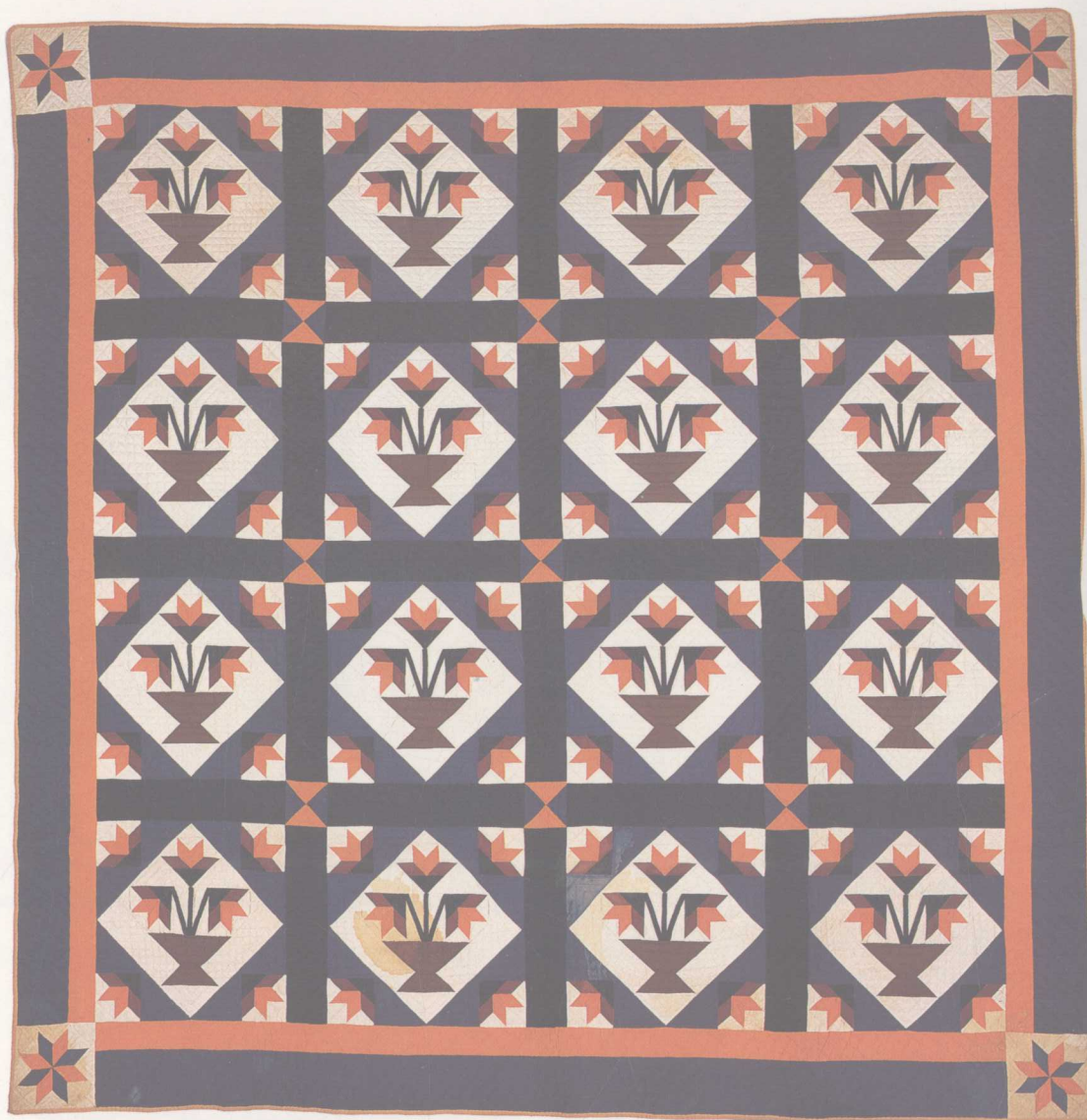
LEFT: An alphabet quilt apparently made from the Ladies Art Company patterns in the 1928 catalogue. 87 x 74". Collection of Thos. K. Woodard: American Antiques & Quilts

AMISH

RIGHT: North Carolina Lily was made by Nancy Elizabeth Nelson of Pitt County, North Carolina, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Such traditional pieced-block patterns, elaborated and enhanced with interesting settings, sashes, corner blocks, and borders are probably the most typical American quilts. 88 x 88". Private collection

OPPOSITE: An Indiana Amish quilt made in 1910 uses lighter and brighter colors than are customary in Amish quilts. The Tumbling Blocks pattern is a popular design among Amish of all regions. 82 x 67". Collection of the Museum of American Folk Art, New York. Gift of David Pottinger

BOTTOM: Storyteller by Gail Garber of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, is an American quilt inspired by an Indian pottery design. It is shown on a hogan, an adobe dwelling



nearly in the manner of their grandparents and great-grandparents as possible. Their plain, dark clothing, their bonnets, and their buggies look as though they had never left the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, the true Amish quilts, geometrically pieced and handsomely quilted, are a thing of the past. Most Amish women now make "modern" quilts for sale and for their charity auctions.

The boldly designed, solid-color, pieced quilts that are now so highly favored by collectors were made from the midnineteenth century until about the time of World War





ABOVE: Ohio Amish quilts are often made of wool in a traditional block design. This Ohio Star was made prior to 1920. 72 x 60". Collection of the Museum of American Folk Art, New York. Gift of David Pottinger

RIGHT: Large, simple center designs, such as Center Diamond, are typical of Lancaster Amish quilts. This one made of wool is dated 1910. 84 x 80". Collection of the Museum of American Folk Art, New York. Gift of Paige Rense

II, though there are few available from before the turn of the century. They were made to be used, and eventually they wore out. In 1971 Jonathan Holstein mounted the now-famous show "Abstract Design in American Quilts" at the Whitney Museum in New York. In that show were several Amish quilts, most of them from Pennsylvania.

Since that time, Amish quilts have become more popular with collectors than any other type, and have become increasingly hard to find on the open market. The Ohio and Indiana Amish quilts are somewhat similar, using many block patterns popular among the "English," as they call



their non-Amish neighbors. The Pennsylvania Amish quilts are those now-familiar, large Center Diamond and Bars designs, as well as some with smaller, less bold designs such as Sunshine and Shadow.

Darwin Bearley of Akron, Ohio, has collected, studied, and catalogued the Amish quilts of that state, selling some of them to other collectors and dealers. At the same time David Pottinger not only collected Amish quilts in Indiana but gave up his business and moved to the Amish farm area in the northern part of that state. The Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis has bought a large part of his collection and has been displaying and touring small shows around the country so that the general public will be able to see the quilts of the Indiana Amish.

See also: Mennonite quilts, Pieced quilts

ANIMAL MOTIFS

Animals are probably second only to flowers as a subject of designs for quilts, especially children's quilts. Birds have long appeared in both realistic and abstract forms — real-