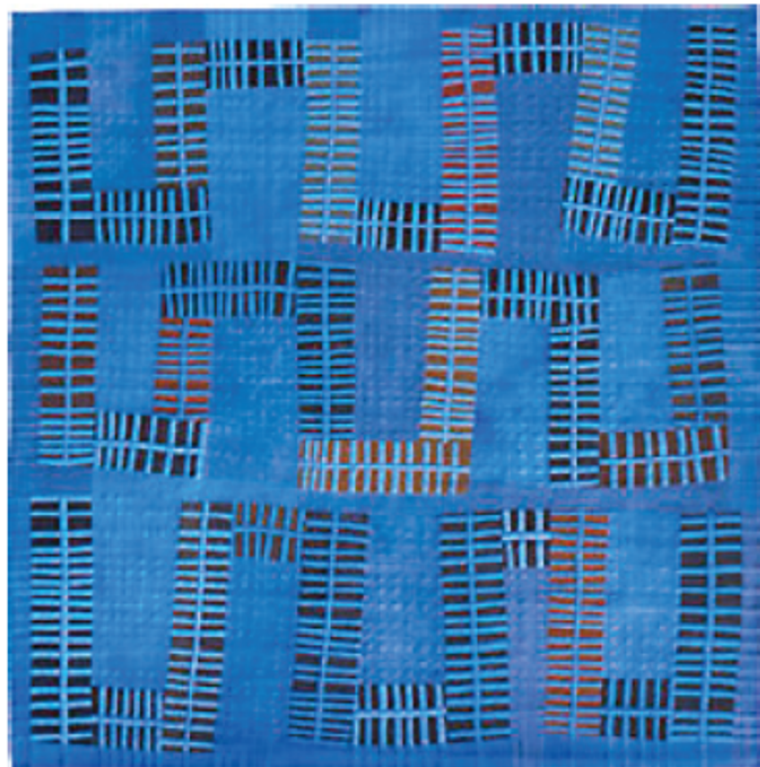


Contemporary quiltmaker exhibits work



Nancy Crow (Baltimore, Ohio), Riff #4: Calm

Color Improvisations 2 is a special invitational exhibition of contemporary quilts curated by Nancy Crow, one of the most celebrated and influential quiltmakers of the past forty years. This iteration of the exhibition will include 18 large, improvisational quilts by 18 artists from Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, and the United States.

Quiltmaking, which has a long and rich history in Western Europe, the United States, Canada, and many other parts of the globe, has, over the past forty years, become a favored medium of fine artists around the world. While they honor historic traditions, contemporary quilters have revolutionized how quilts can be made and what they can look like. They dye and manipulate the cloth they work with; they painstakingly assemble compositions piece by piece on a design wall; and, after settling on an arrangement and sewing all the pieces together, they finish their work with complex lines of quilting.

Contemporary quiltmakers have unprecedented control over their materials. If they can't find the fabric they want commercially, from the over ninety companies that currently manufacture fabrics specifically designed for their use, they can make their own, by coloring, patterning, and structuring fiber and fabric with a host of surface design techniques, including dyeing, applying resists, painting, printing, stamping, stenciling, and even embellishing with beads or other materials.

All of the quilts Nancy Crow chose for this exhibition are large abstract compositions that



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were machine-pieced, primarily from hand-dyed fabrics, and also quilted by machine. Crow says that she has always compared pieced quilting to painting. "Both require a strong classical sense of figure/ground composition, and experienced knowledge of how to mix and create colors (for quiltmakers, through dyeing cotton or silk fabrics), a strong sense of proportions, and drawing ability. In addition, the quilt-maker must have a practiced expertise in cutting all the

parts, one at a time, out of fabric and then pinning/working vertically on a huge wall. This requires strong engineering abilities coupled with common sense to put sometimes hundreds, if not thousands, of parts together by sewing each to the next. Unlike painting, fabric colors, shapes, and lines are not brushed on or glued together, but sewn together. And to be able to cut parts, shapes, and lines by eye and then to manage color and value demands hours and hours of practice. The quilt-maker's eye must be able to coordinate infinite calibrations with the muscle control of hand, wrist, and arm. The entire operation is physical and requires strength. It takes obsessiveness, intensity, practice, practice, practice, and a great eye."

Each work was made specifically for this exhibition, including a new piece by Nancy Crow. All pieces measure between 80" x 80" and 90" x 90".

This exhibition was coordinated by Color Improvisations 2, NA. It is made possible at the Susquehanna Art Museum thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Carole DeSoto Foundation.