

Media Release

10 June 2015

Hazelhurst
REGIONAL GALLERY & ARTS CENTRE

LABOURS OF LOVE **AUSTRALIAN QUILTS 1845 - 2015** **8 August – 5 October 2015**



Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre is proud to present *Labours of Love: Australian Quilts 1845 - 2015*, an exhibition featuring 35 stunning hand crafted textiles made in NSW from the mid 1800s to the present day.

Visitors to *Labours of Love* will see some of the finest example of quilts made in Australia. Spectacular heritage quilts will be on loan from the National Gallery of Australia, the Powerhouse Museum, the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and the National Museum of Australia as well as select examples from regional museums. The quilts and patchworks have been created for comfort and show, commemorate historical events and family occasions, and reveal social histories and personal stories. Made by women and treasured in families as objects of value, the heritage quilts in *Labours of Love* have been handed down through the generations before they were acquired and preserved in public collections.

Labours of Love explores the history of quilting in Australia with exhibits dating from the mid 1800s to the mid 1900s in themes: Traditions from Home (mid 1800s); Skill and Taste on Show (1860-1900); Patriotic Voices (1870-1915); Family Ties and Friendship (1880-1930); The Beauty of Making Do (1930-1940); and Honouring and Maintaining the Craft (1940-60). Interspersed within these themes are contemporary works by artists to illustrate current engagement with quilt making.

Quilts were made in early colonial Australia as immigrants brought their quilts and skills with them.

More....2/

The earliest quilts in *Labours of Love* are made out of fashionable printed cottons pieced in geometric patterns. Patchwork quilts remained popular in the late 1800s and into the 1900s as quilt makers combined and recombined squares, rectangles, diamonds, and triangles to make highly complex and decorative textiles that were often more for show than function. Carefully planned and made from costly fabrics, often embellished with intricate embroidery and appliqué, heritage quilts made for display were showcases of the maker's creativity, skill, taste, hard work and perseverance.

Quilts in the exhibition reflect changes in technology, textiles, and fashion. They commemorate enduring relationships and family occasions. *Labours of Love* include quilts made to celebrate weddings, births, love and friendship. Quilts in the exhibition also reveal an engagement with a wider world such as those with patriotic messages or a signature quilt created to raise funds during World War I.

Many quilts were made as functional objects to provide comfort and warmth. These quilts were prevalent during the Depression, being made as part of a thrifty 'make do' tradition, utilising scrap material that would normally serve no useful purpose. Often crudely made, they represent a bold and original aesthetic revealing the maker's eye for colour, shape, and composition.

Although quilt and patch working went into decline after World War II, the tradition of competing and exhibiting quilts has helped to maintain the tradition. In the late 1900s the craft movement stimulated a revival in traditional crafts and interest in the heritage of quilting blossomed. Artists were drawn to the subject and quilt making became a vehicle for ideas as well as processes. Current engagement is represented with works by Judy McDermott, Jan Irvine-Nealie, Judy Hooworth, Pamela Fitzsimons, Carolyn Sullivan, Lucas Grogan, Adrienne Doig, Emma Peters, Paula do Prada, Gillian Lavery and Belinda von Mengersen.

Labours of Love: Australian Quilts 1845 - 2015 is a Hazelhurst initiative with guest curator, Louise Mitchell. It is supported by a Museums & Galleries of NSW grant and the Gordon Darling Foundation.

During the exhibition, the Quilters Guild NSW will also present a contemporary quilt exhibition in Hazelhurst Community Gallery from 29 August to 8 September 2015. The exhibition will display entries from a national competition showcasing the expertise of the Guild members and quilting groups from across Australia.

Don't miss these beautiful exhibitions which will delight viewers with the level of skill, intricate detail and workmanship presented.

For further details please visit www.hazelhurst.com.au.

On Show: 8 August – 5 October 2015
At: Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre, 782 Kingsway, Gymea NSW
Open: Daily 10am – 5pm.
Admission: Free
Enquiries: Tel 8536 5700 Fax: 8536 5750 Email: hazelhurst@ssc.nsw.gov.au
www.hazelhurst.com.au

Images from left to right:

1. **Clara Bate** *Aunt Clara's quilt* (detail), 1890-1915, Hand stitched, pieced and embroidered silk, 199 x 160 cm. Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney. Gift of the Hughes family, 2004. Photo: Sotha Bourn.
2. **Gladys Williams**, *Quilt* (detail), 1957, hand stitched, pieced, cotton and silk, 180 x 140 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Gift of Neil and Margaret Williams, 2011.
3. **Adrienne Doig** *The View (Honeycomb)*, 2013, patchwork, appliqué and embroidery on canvas, 181 x 152 cm. Courtesy Martin Browne Contemporary.

MEDIA CONTACT:

For further information please contact Andrea Merlak on (02) 8536 5739 or Viola Soliman on (02) 8536 5723 amerlak@ssc.nsw.gov.au. Images available on request.