



'Blushing #2 - Quo Vadis?', Birgit Schüller. Overall Champion Quilt, First place Large Wall Hangings

The Great Northern Quilt Show

BY JOANNA O'NEILL

The heat wave of midsummer may have passed but at the time of writing, early September is turning out to be warm and golden. When I arrived at Harrogate for this year's Great Northern

Quilt Show everyone was in sleeveless tops and sandals and I feared the worst, but the modern building that houses the quilt show was cool and the conditions were perfect for a few hours of fabric fun!

Trying to remember that nights can be cold, I began with the bed quilts, always at the heart of quilting, I feel. The three prize winners this year exemplified the three major types of quilting: wholecloth, piecing and appliqué; they also had each won an award for technique. Third place had gone to Jackie Homer's 'Jack of Hearts', a lovely example of appliqué in pretty, classic 'bedroom' colours of soft green, lilac and white. A sampler of blocks set around a central square, the appliqué motifs were gently padded to give extra dimension above the densely quilted background and I was particularly struck by the fact that the machine embroidery around the motifs did not interfere with the padding – a beautiful effect and one that also won the award for best Machine Appliqué. Second prize was won by Andrea Stracke with her wholecloth quilt, 'Rhodonite', traditional to its core with the patterns marked using cardboard templates and the quilt finished with knife-edge binding. This quilt had taken the award for Hand Quilting also. Frances Meredith took First with her quilt 'Dear Jane', which had also scooped the award for best Scrap Quilt,

a Judge's Choice rosette and Overall Runner-Up for the show. Described as Frances' interpretation of the 150th anniversary 'Dear Jane' quilt display five years ago in France, the quilt had been hand pieced and hand appliquéd using English paper piecing techniques and was a tour de force of 169 squares apart from the border, with never a duplicate among them so far as I could see.

This show includes an award for 'My First Bed Quilt' and this year the winner was Julie Goss with her hand pieced hexagons in deep and pastel purple, 'MYSA – The Feeling of Comfort and Protection, A Time for Cosiness'. In her statement, Julie promised that her quilt would be 'used and loved' – surely the best destiny for any bed quilt?

From full-size bed quilts to tiny ones and the winner of the Cot Quilts was Joë Bennison with 'The Night Parliament' – a witty title for a charming child's quilt featuring owls. No less than two layers of wadding had been used and longarm



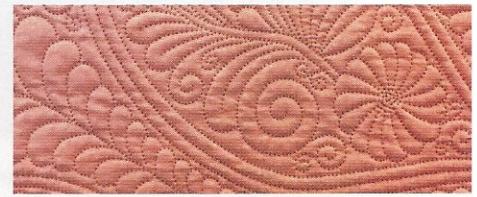
Detail, 'Blushing #2 - Quo Vadis?'



'Jack of Hearts', Jackie Homer. Third place Bed Quilts



'Rhodonite', Andrea Stracke. Second place Bed Quilts, award for Hand Quilting



Detail, 'Rhodonite'



'MYSA - The Feeling of Comfort and Protection, A Time for Cosiness', Julie Goss. Award for My First Bed Quilt



'Dear Jane', Frances Meredith. Overall Runner Up, First place Bed Quilts, award for best Scrap Quilt



RIGHT: Detail, 'Dear Jane', Frances Meredith. Overall Runner Up, First place Bed Quilts, award for best Scrap Quilt



'Cream of Wales', Carolyn Gibbs. Second place Cot Quilts

LEFT: 'The Night Parliament', Joë Bennison. First place Cot Quilts, award for Wholecloth Quilt

quilted with great contrast between dense background areas and the more open motifs, resulting in an enhanced appearance of depth. This quilt had deservedly won the award for best Wholecloth Quilt too, and a Judge's Choice. Second in the category went to 'Cream of Wales' by Carolyn Gibbs, a delightful hand quilted piece using a coffee-coloured thread on white; and third was Wendy Kennard's 'Penrose Junior', a bright, contemporary design reminiscent of a kaleidoscope.

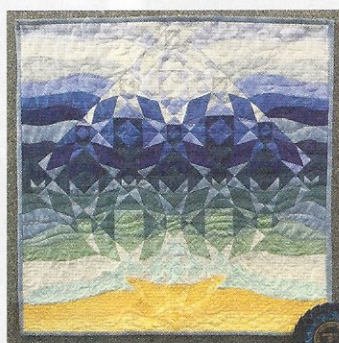
Even smaller were the quiltlings in the Miniature or Doll's Quilt category. Here all three places had been awarded to one maker: Jackie Benstead, whose entries were nevertheless quite distinct from one another. 'Walks Along the Seashore' (third) was a traditionally pieced Storm at Sea design using seaside colours, while 'Irises' (second) featured a circular arrangement of irises painted exquisitely on a background of snow-dyed fabric. In first place was 'Snowdrops', an impressive miniature quilt with vermicelli quilting on a tiny scale using graduated colours of thread – beautiful.

More large quilts appeared in the Theme

RIGHT: 'Snowdrops', Jackie Benstead. First place Miniature Quilts



'Irises', Jackie Benstead. Second place Miniature Quilts



'Walks Along the Seashore', Jackie Benstead. Third place Miniature Quilts

RIGHT: 'Penrose Junior', Wendy Kennard. Third place Cot Quilts



'Modern Mash Up', Alison Stothard. Third place Theme Quilts



'Huddersfield Modern Quilters' Sampler Quilt', Janet Bottomley. Second place Theme Quilts

Quilt category, the theme this year being 'Simply Modern'. In third place, Alison Stothard had used modern batik fabrics in bright primaries mixed with black and white in an energetic combination of traditional blocks pieced, appliquéd and quilted by hand and machine for her 'Modern Mash Up'. Janet Bottomley's quilt titled 'Huddersfield Modern Quilters' Sampler Quilt' was stated to be a block-of-the-month sampler quilt begun in 2016 and was a beguiling combination of bright pastels on a neutral grey ground, elegantly quilted to enhance the blocks – a textbook example of a Modern quilt. First place, though, was taken by Jenny Anderson with her quilt 'Modern Mystery', which resembled a tower of books. This quilt was inspired

by an online mystery series by Weeks Ringle and Bill Kerr for American Quilters' Society and American Quilter magazine. Striking from a distance, this quilt rewarded closer inspection by the careful quilting of the background and 'shadows'.

And so to the wall hangings, divided as usual into large and small. Regular readers of *Patchwork & Quilting Magazine* will recall Jean Boath's pictorial quilt 'Luskentyre', which took the



**'Modern Mystery', Jenny Anderson.
First place Theme Quilts**



**'Face Off 2017', Kay Bell. Second place
Small Wall Hangings**



**'Luskentyre', Jean Boath. Third place Small
Wall Hangings**

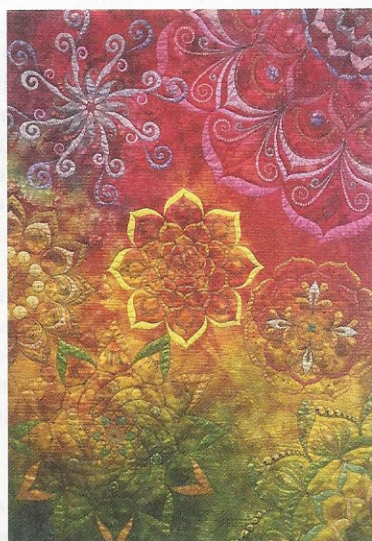
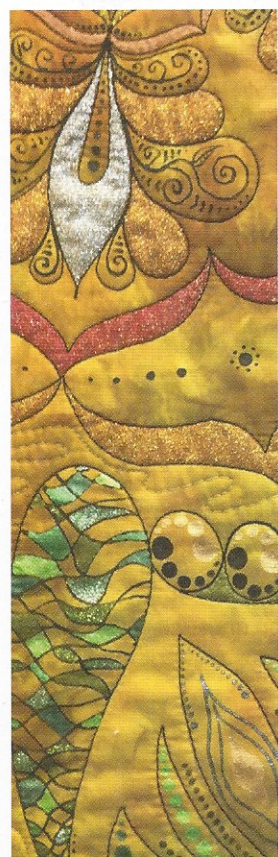


Detail, 'From Bud to Fruit'

Gold award in the Art Quilt section at the Scottish Quilting Show last February. It was described then as an atmospheric landscape and now the quiet beach and profusion of wildflowers seemed especially appropriate at the tail end of a long summer! 'Luskentyre' had come third in this show, with second awarded to 'Face Off 2017' by Kay Bell, a triptych of panels suspended against a quilted black backdrop, each closely quilted with designs inspired by the face plates on vintage Singer sewing machines. Such an interesting idea! First in this category had gone to the very painterly piece, 'From Bud to Fruit'. Maker Jane Rollason had dyed silk using leaves, fruit, vegetables, nuts, pomegranates and flowers. This had been appliquéd to a background, also vegetable-dyed, and then thread painting added. The result was a fine wall hanging featuring scrolls of foliage, flowers and fruit on a background quilted with patterns of leaves. A lovely piece.



'From Bud to Fruit', Jane Rollason. First place Small Wall Hangings



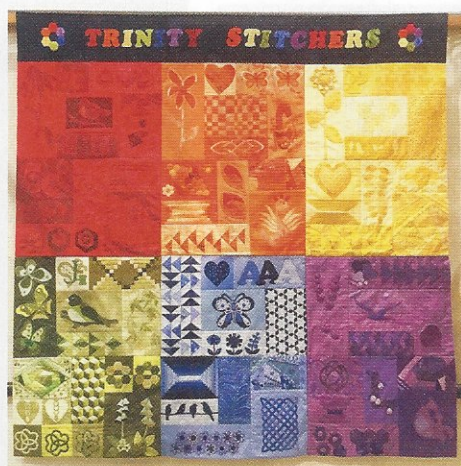
**'Alisa', Vendulka Battais. Third place
Large Wall Hangings, awards for Art
Quilt and Use of Colour**

LEFT: Detail, 'Alisa'

In the category for Large Wall Hangings, third prize had been given to Vendulka Battais for her dazzling quilt 'Alisa'. Quilted with flowing patterns in black thread on a rainbow-dyed ground, the patterns had then been painted with metallic and glitter paints, sometimes filling in their shapes, sometimes just dots, spots and squiggles. This eye-catching quilt had also won the prizes for best Art Quilt and best Use of Colour as well as a Judge's Choice. Second in the Large Wall Hangings was 'Les Pans de Chemise' by Gill Young. Inspired by a postcard of a rug from France, Gill had hand pieced recycled shirt fabric, the varying stripes arranged with great precision in a dazzling variation of tumbling blocks and stars so that it was no surprise to see it had won the award for piecing as well. Gill's statement explained that striped shirts had become an obsession and this quilt certainly supports that! First prize in this category was won by Birgit Schüller with her piece 'Blushing #2 - Quo Vadis?', an expression of Birgit's 'mixed emotions' about current affairs and with a design partly based on mid 20th century artists such as Frank Stella and Victor Vasarely. The strong visual effect of jagged arrows on a dark ground was softened by intricate quilt patterns using variegated threads in colours matching the arrows, and close examination revealed that there were arrows quilted into the



'Mere Men', Ladies in Stitches. Third place Group Quilts



'Rainbow', Trinity Stitches. Second place Group Quilts



'The Four Seasons of Harrogate Stray', Crimple Valley Quilters. First place Group Quilts



'Les Pans de Chemise', Gill Young. Second place Large Wall Hangings

landmarks and scenes set between panels of Celtic bias binding appliqué and rich patterns of flowers, birds and beasts, and combining techniques from crazy patchwork to reverse appliqué, stumpwork to transfer painting, the detail included was delightful. My favourite point? The careful lettering of 'Betty's' across the shop fronts in Autumn!

background too. A thought provoking quilt, this piece had been judged Overall Champion of the show as well as being given a Judge's Choice award.

The entries in any Group Quilt category are always fun and this show was no exception. The options for combining components worked by individual members are many, including piecing them together, linking them on net, or hanging them in a sequence. Three different methods had been chosen by the three prize winners here. 'Mere Men' by Ladies in Stitches, the third place winner that had also won a Judge's Choice certificate, featured nine panels mounted on net and showing how 'men through the ages would react to the visual art of their time'. I particularly liked the inclusion of the Bayeux Tapestry! Trinity Stitches had each used the same twelve topics – hexagons, Courthouse Steps, Flying Geese, woven, crazy, Celtic, a flower, leaves, bird, butterfly, heart and an initial – and worked them into a composite panel using a single colourway. These had then been pieced together into a joyous and colourful quilt full of interest entitled 'Rainbow'. The Group category was won by Crimple Valley Quilters for their sequence of four hangings, 'The Four Seasons of Harrogate Stray'. This entry had been made for Strayside, the mother and baby unit of Harrogate and District Hospital, at the hospital's invitation, and I feel sure will provide huge pleasure to patients and visitors for years to come. Featuring local

Stumpwork featured again in the Cushion category, where second prize had been awarded to Alison Stothard, whose 'Modern Mash-Up' had taken third in the Theme category. Cheerful daffodils from pleated and manipulated fabric were enhanced by a precise basketweave design hand quilted on the background – a joyful piece. Third prize had been taken by Christine Logan's skilful boutis cushion, 'Coussin Fait avec Amour de Boutis' and first – and a Judge's Choice – went to 'Silver Darlings' by Lizzie Wall, an attention-grabbing design of fish worked in appliqué with motifs cut from floral prints and glittering with silver fabric. Most unusual.

First prize in the Under 16 category was awarded to Sophy McMurdo for her delightful quilt 'Paws for Thought', made as a Mother's Day gift. The light-hearted doggy print fabric had been well chosen to compliment the autumn leaves, and the piecing was skilful, with points meeting and the borders even. A lovely gift to receive.

Points met again in the winner of the award for best Sampler Quilt – 'Modern Stars' by Janet Bottomley, who had already taken second in the Theme Quilt category. 'Modern Stars' was a collection of star blocks large and small, and stood out by being in a range of greys with white – an unusual and striking colour palette. It had been awarded a Judge's Merit too.



'Silver Darlings', Lizzie Wall. First place Cushions



'Spring Daffodils', Alison Stothard. Second place Cushions



'Coussin Fait avec Amour de Boutis', Christine Logan. Third place Cushions

The Sue Belton Memorial Cup had been awarded to Pamela Pitt, whose quilt 'Garden Gate' was a dramatic combination of techniques including piecing, appliqué and manipulated flowers with free machine quilting and hand embroidery, buttons and beads – a piece rich in detail and colour. And finally to the three machine quilting awards:

that done on a domestic machine, hand-guided custom longarm quilting and computer-guided longarm quilting. This year Sandra Pearson won the award for quilting on a domestic machine with her quilt 'Medallion', an extravagant design profuse with elaborate decoration that had won a Judge's Merit award too. Wonderful. The longarm awards had been won by the two quiltmakers who had also taken Overall Champion and Overall Runner-Up but with different quilts – perhaps a first? Overall Runner-Up Frances Meredith, this time with her quilt 'Referendum', had won the Computer-Guided Longarm award. 'Referendum' had been quilted to a background of media discussion of the EU Referendum, and featured a scrolling design expertly tailored to the triangle piecing. Birgit Schüller's quilt 'Loose Weave' took the award for Hand-guided or Custom Longarm Machine



'Paws for Thought', Sophy McMurdo. First place Under 16 Quilts

LEFT: 'Garden Gate', Pamela Pitt. Winner, Sue Belton Memorial Cup

Quilting. This piece used coloured strips interlaced on a black crosshatched background, and each strip was quilted with a different design. It had also earned a Judge's Merit award.

It is such a pleasure to see work by skilful quilters and this show always offers excellent quilts of all techniques. I left the show feeling quite 'quilted out' – and the sun was still shining!

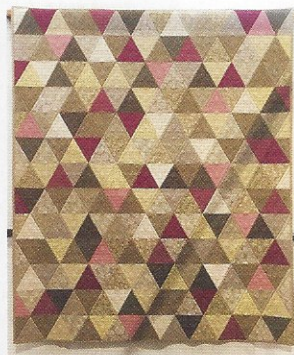
The Theme category for next year's show, which will be held on 30 August – 1 September 2019, is Row by Row. For more information and to download an entry form visit www.grosvenorshows.co.uk

CONTACT

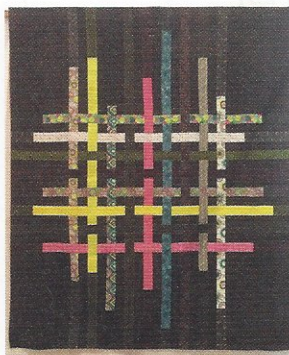
Joanna O'Neill is available for talks and workshops. For more information and to contact her, visit her website www.joannaoneilltextiles.co.uk



'Modern Stars', Janet Bottomley. Award for Sampler Quilt



'Referendum', Frances Meredith. Award for Computer-Guided Longarm



'Loose Weave', Birgit Schüller. Award for Hand-guided or Custom Longarm Machine Quilting



'Medallion', Sandra Pearson. Award for machine quilting