

Migration #3

- DESIGNED, PIECED, AND QUILTED BY: Caryl Bryer Fallert
- DATE: 1996
- SIZE: 54" wide X 43" high
- COLORS: Blue, red, green, purple
- MATERIALS: Fabric: 100% cotton • Batting: 80% cotton / 20% polyester
- TECHNIQUES: Hand dyed, hand painted, machine pieced, machine appliquéd, machine quilted
- IDENTIFYING MARKS: Signature & label
- OWNER: Bradley University Library, Peoria, IL



Design Concept & Process:

MIGRATION #3 is one of a series of quilts about birds and flight. I selected Canada geese because we live in an area of Northern Illinois, where hundreds of geese fly over almost every day. I often watch them flying over our farm, and imagine what it would feel like to be flying among them as they travel from one location to another.

Although the geese are recognizable, by their shapes, I have chosen to interpret them in colors of the imagination, creating the illusion that each bird is lighted from within.

This quilt was designed with the assistance of a computer drawing program. The abstract background of sky and earth was drawn directly in the computer. The lines were created, stretched and manipulated until they formed a harmonious composition that suggested the movement of clouds, sky, and wind. The line drawing was scanned, and reconverted to a vector drawing of closed object. The shapes were filled with gradations of solid colors, to suggest string piecing, or with bit-maps of some of my dye painted fabrics to suggest the areas of painted fabric in the quilt.

Drawings of a number of different birds were made by hand. I scanned each of the drawings into the computer. The scanning process turns the drawings into bit-maps (a series of microscopic rectangles that look, to the naked eye like a picture of the drawing) The bit maps of the drawings were then converted to vector drawings in a program called Streamline. Vector drawings consist of lines that can be changed and manipulated, using the mouse. When the lines form closed objects, which they did in my bird drawings, they can be filled with any of 17 million solid colors or with patterns created by bit-maps. I manipulated the shape size and attitude of each bird until it looked exactly the way I wanted it to look. I made several different groups of birds, adjusting the size of each bird in the group, the angle of the heads and wings, etc. until the birds in each group formed a harmonious composition. The individual shapes within the birds were then filled with color in several different ways, until I was satisfied with them.

The group of birds were then placed on top of the background. I tried many different arrangements of background and birds, before settling on the final composition.

The line drawing of the background was projected onto a piece of paper the size of the finished quilt. The individual lines were traced, and then the large drawing was refined, before the piecing began. The paper drawing was cut apart to form the individual templates. Strips of fabric dyed in color gradations were sewn to each template (a process called "string piecing"), then the design was pieced back together like a giant puzzle. Each shape within the drawing became a template for cutting and piecing the fabric.

Once the background was completed the outlines of the birds were projected onto it to determine the correct scale. After the scale was determined, the birds were projected onto paper backed fusible webbing, and traced. The fusible paper backed web became the templates for the individual shapes within each bird. The bodies and wings of the geese were cut from fabric that had been painted in gradations of pure rainbow hues. After the birds were fused and sewn together, they were machine appliquéd to the background. The quilt was backed with a piece of dye painted fabric and cotton batting. The geese were quilted with black thread to define the individual feathers on each bird. The background was quilted in patterns that initially echo the birds, and then dissolve into swoops and swirls suggesting sky, wind and air.

This quilt was commissioned by Jean Gove, as a gift to Bradley University Library, in honor of the ninetieth birthday of her mother, Verial Phillips, who had a forty year career as a teacher. Messenger #3 was installed in the library on May 10, 1996

Exhibitions:

- none

Publications:

- Quilters Gallery 1998, (All American Crafts Annual) p. 33