

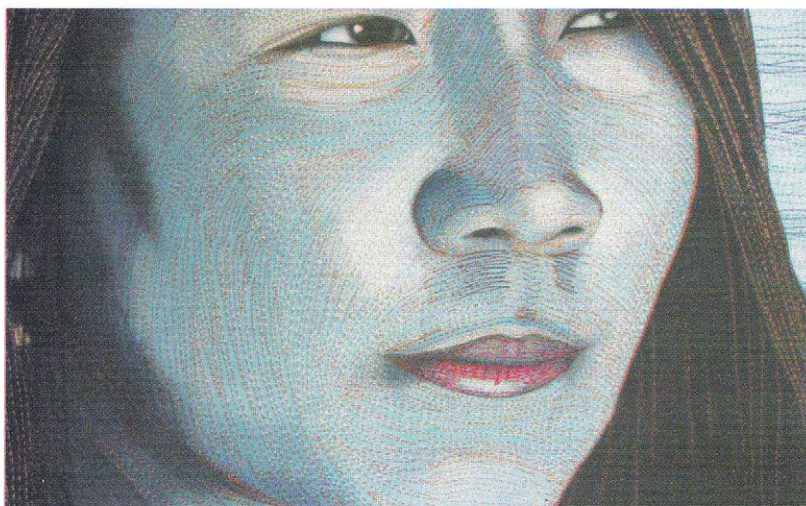
Photos courtesy of Lynn Ruck.

An interview with Hollis Chatelain regarding her new traveling exhibit, 'Imagine Hope'

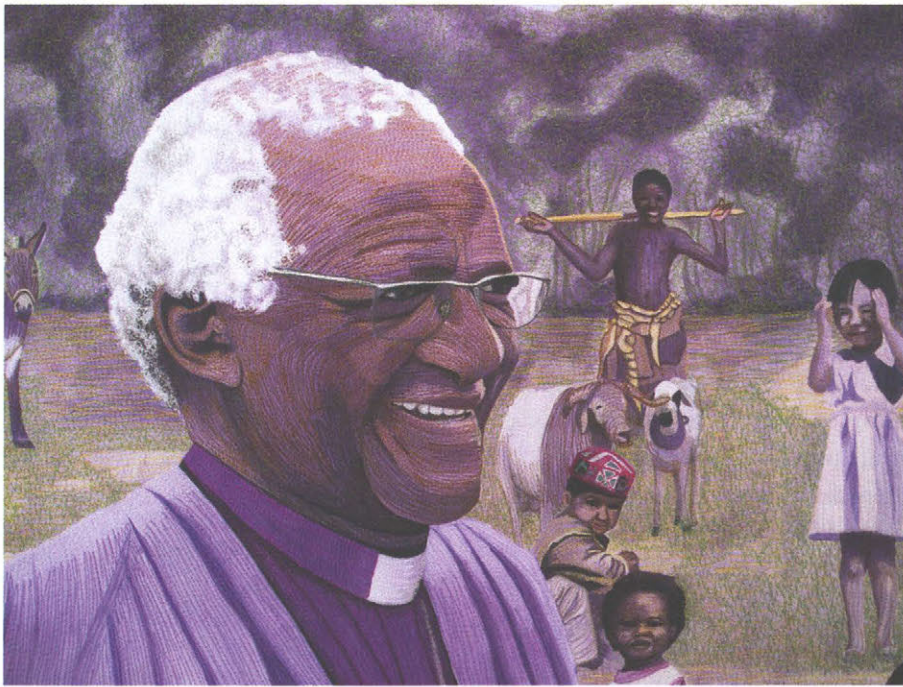
A celebrated name in the fiber arts community, Hollis Chatelain has left an indelible impression on quilt show attendees for years, as she has unveiled a new art quilt for public viewing annually, most often at the International Quilt

ever hopeful

BY POKEY BOLTON



Festival in Houston. It's a common sight to see a crowd of people huddled very closely around her quilts, eyes following the paths of tens of thousands of free-motion quilting stitches that have been carefully applied using hundreds of different threads. Having at times gotten up at 2 a.m. to free-motion quilt in order to meet a deadline, Hollis works tirelessly at her art quilt creations, all of which (ironically) begin in her sleep.



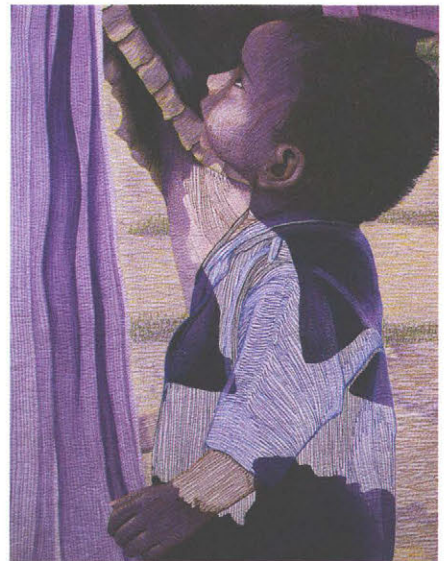
This page: "Hope For Our World" • 82" x 82" • "In February 2002, I dreamed 'Hope For Our World.' The dream was in purple and Archbishop Tutu was standing in a field. Children from all over the world were approaching him like he was a piper. The dream seemed to be speaking about world peace and the future of our children. Desmond Tutu represented hope. In May of 2005 I was honored to have a meeting with Archbishop Tutu to discuss my dream."



"Many of my pieces are from my dreams of another place, such as 'Exodus.' Once I dream these pieces, I do more research to confirm my dreams," said Hollis in an interview this past spring with Duke University's THE CHRONICLE. "I then do drawings, transfer them onto white fabric and paint them with thickened dyes, attach a backing, and quilt it. Most pieces are painted in just one hue with hundreds of different values."

Hollis' quilts are timely, dealing with worldwide social, environmental, and economic issues. And with her traveling exhibit of quilts, which (hopefully) will come to a town near you, she wants to bring these issues back into the forefront of daily conversation.

PB: Hollis, you took on quite a daunting task when envisioning this exhibit. Can you tell me the inspiration behind it and what encouraged you to pull it together?



Opposite page: "The Gift" • 48" x 52" • "This quilt is about a young woman, Karen, who had been trained as a physical therapist and felt she had a gift in her hands. Because she couldn't make a living in her home country, the Phillipines, she left. From my point of view, the islands had always represented tropical flowers and beautiful beaches. Karen made me see how economic refugees are the sacrificed ones who must leave their homes to support families."

HC: Since my husband and I lived in Africa for many years working for humanitarian organizations, we have always tried to bring attention to other cultures and worldwide issues. When some of these issues started manifesting themselves in my dreams, there was no question that I would create what my subconscious was portraying to me.

I have been creating the work for this exhibit since 2000. When I started, it never occurred to me that these monochromatic statement pieces would all end up in one exhibit. I just knew I had to make them. Since my dreams were the driving force behind the art, the quilts are a big part of my

been pulled into a situation that they personally never asked for. My hope is that viewers who see these will relate to the individuals and be moved enough to try to make changes. We can all make changes in our lives that will affect the world.

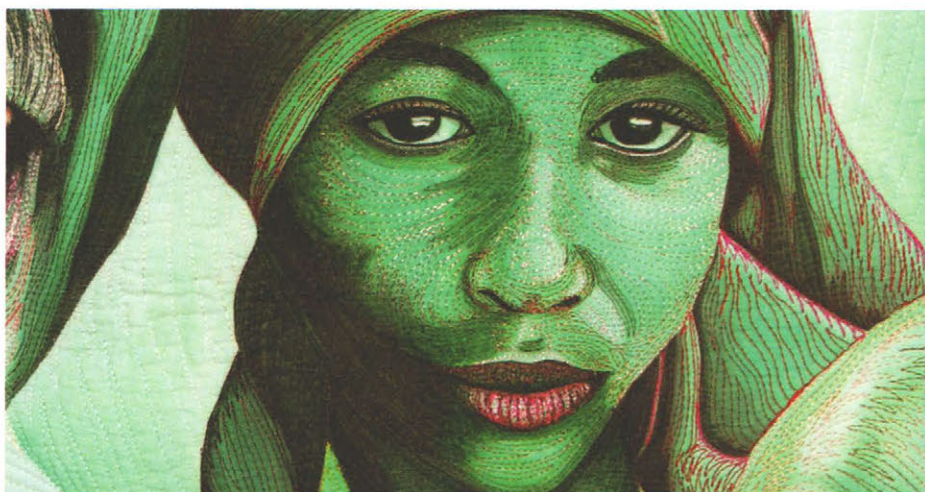
PB: How many pieces total are planned for the exhibit?

HC: There will be 12 of my quilts complemented by 18–20 black-and-white photographs, taken by five prominent photographers, depicting the real-life situations across the world.

PB: Where and when will the exhibit debut?



“This is a positive exhibit with quilts that evoke an emotional response. The individuals in them each represent a person who has been pulled into a situation that they personally never asked for. My hope is that viewers who see these will relate to the individuals and be moved enough to try to make changes. We can all make changes in our lives that will affect the world.”



being. At the same time, it seems that our world is pulling apart. People are retreating into their own safe areas; we need to find a way to bring people back out and unite ourselves to make changes. This is a positive exhibit with quilts that evoke an emotional response. The individuals in them each represent a person who has

HC: We are still in negotiations as to where it will debut, and it will travel from January 2010 until January 2013. We are also continuing to look for more venues. If anyone knows of a museum, art center, or university that would be interested, please go to our website for more about the exhibit and contact information. Once we have

“Resident Alien” • 48" × 30" • “As a young child, I remember a television commercial reminding resident aliens to register at their local post office. This commercial was a cartoon of walking stick figures. Today, I assume that using stick figures avoided choosing one specific type of people to represent resident aliens. But as a child, it meant that resident aliens were not real people—they were stick figures. ‘Resident Alien’ is based upon this childhood misconception along with my adult experiences. For two reasons green became the base color’s obvious choice: first, the common belief that all aliens are green, and second, all resident aliens receive a ‘green’ card.”

more firm commitments, you will also be able to find a schedule on the website.

PB: What are some of your hopes for this exhibit?

HC: I hope by having this exhibit appear in non-quilting venues, textiles will start to be recognized as fine art that can motivate people, as ‘activism art’ in other media has done for generations.

To find out more about “Imagine Hope,” visit Hollis’ website on this exhibit at imagine-hope.com.