Homage To Baltimore: A Quilting Exhibition

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 6 from 6-9pm

Exhibit Runs: June 6 - July 19, 2026

Closing Reception & Artist Talk: Sunday, July 19 from 4-6pm

Gallery Hours: Saturdays from 1-5pm, during public events, or by appointment

Presented by: Mayor Brandon M. Scott

Sponsored by: Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture & Entertainment, Maryland State Arts Council, Maryland Folklife Network, and Orser Center for Public Humanities at UMBC

Including: Janice Adams-DeVance, Denise Bailey-Jones, Sharon Coffman, Piecing with a Purpose Quilt Collective, John Collins and family, Elaine Foster, Cheryl Hills, Liz Holland, Brenna Horris, Danamarie Hosler, Colleen Hughes, Kianga Jinaki, Marnee Keith, Karen Middleton, Jantzen Nolan, Claudia Pearce, Ursula Populoh, Sheila Reiss, Lauren Stephens, Baltimore Heritage Team, Kimberly Tucker, 8th Graders in Ms. Downing's Class at Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women

Quilting has always been...stitched... into Baltimore's story. From practical bedcovers to decorative works of art, quilts reveal connections to global textile and dye trades while grounding themselves in the city's working-class traditions. Baltimore's most famous contribution to this legacy is the Baltimore Album Quilt, a mid-19th-century style known for its elaborate appliqué blocks—floral motifs, patriotic emblems, and personal dedications—combined into one-of-a-kind community heirlooms.

In 1981, Mayor William Donald Schaefer celebrated this tradition with a citywide quilt competition that drew makers from across Maryland. Exhibits at City Hall and the Baltimore Museum of Art showcased the artistry of local quilters, with a $1,500 grand prize going to a striking black, white, and gold geometric design inspired by the city's iconic marble stoops. The winning quilt with the marble step design captured Baltimore's rowhouse traditions, while dozens of other prizewinners reflected the breadth of Maryland quilting—many of which can now be seen at www.homagetobaltimorequiltingcompetition.com

This project began in a 2025 UMBC co-lab course on Baltimore Album Quilts, where students partnered with Baltimore Heritage to produce a "Five Minute History". Along the way, they worked closely with Hall of Fame quilter Mimi Dietrich, visited Baltimore City Hall, and studied quilts from the city's landmark 1981 exhibition under Mayor William Donald Schaefer. The quilts are now at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum.

Awards will be announced during the opening reception and a Viewer's Choice Award will be determined by the gallery visitors and announced at the exhibition's closing on July 19.

Project Leader: Dr. Sarah Fouts

Project Coordinator: Kat Gill

Juried by: Mimi Dietrich, Monique Crabb, and Dr. Christa C. Gilliam

1981 Grand Prize Winner

First Place, Architecture Category

Roberta Floyd, Irene Krebs, Sallye Silesky, Sue Smith, Leureta Thieme, Suzanne Trice

Techniques: pieced work, hand quilted on a quilting frame; patches individually completed

"We have quilted together since 1976 when we met to make a Bicentennial quilt as a project of the University of Maryland Extension Service. The theme was selected because of the tradition of Baltimore's white steps. The visual concept of the steps lent itself beautifully to a traditional quilt pattern. The design is an original by Sallye Sileskey and is influenced by a photograph by A. Aubrey Bodine. Black and gold are Lord Baltimore's colors, and the colors of the City flag. There are 13 pieces in each patch or square (the original 13 colonies) and 63 squares in all. Each square is an optical illusion; turned in any direction you can still see the white marble steps of Baltimore."

On loan from the Reginald F. Lewis Museum

1981 Third Prize Winner

First Place Transportation Category

Merry Bean, Arlington, VA

Techniques: sewing machine applique

Materials: manmade fabrics, polyester batting

"I love all of Baltimore's redoing. Transportation is an important part of the building and re-building of the city; it seemed to be the natural theme under which I could incorporate the old and the new of this dynamic city. I used a sewing machine because it allowed me to do things in my quilting that I could not do by hand, tiny intricate work and solid lines."

On loan from the Reginald F. Lewis Museum

Iconic Baltimore People, Places, & Things

John Collins and family

"A Baltimore Album style quilt the blocks were designed and assembled by my dad & late mom in the 80's. I believe this was going to be her entry in the first contest. In 2025/26 (in her memory) it was hand embroidered with iconic Baltimore people, places, & things around the border, sandwiched with batting and backing and hand quilted along red borders and yellow blocks."

Not for Sale

Fifi, The Kinetic Sculpture

Lauren Stephens

"Fifi, the kinetic sculpture, represents the creativity, scientific feats and moxie of the people that make Baltimore a great city. Wearing a bib inspired by Baltimore Album quilts, this pixelated portrait is both an homage to Baltimore and to the city's history of quilting."

$800

Baltimore Portraits

Ursula Populoh

"The panels of this quilt feature portraits of important people and depict locations and inventions that help to define Baltimore's history and parts of our shared story. All seams and appliqués are hand-stitched, and the materials used are repurposed and upcycled, including water-stained canvas. My choice of techniques and materials is inspired by my commitment to being resourceful and working meditatively to reflect on our city's challenging and complex past."

Not for Sale

Howard Street Bridge

Karen Middleton

"This quilt draws from my daily walks for the past two summers across the Howard Street Bridge, a path that connects the student dorms to my graduate art studio at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). Made with repurposed shirting cotton and simple stitched lines, the piece reflects the bridge's endearingly cheerful and colorfully painted steel framework. The quilt also echoes the calming, quiet, and meditative experience I feel each time I cross the bridge as a student in the Low Residency MFA program."

$2,120

BLSYW's Embroidered Baltimore

8th Graders in Ms. Downing's Class at Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women

This quilt was made by eighth grade students at the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women during their spring semester of 2026 in Ms.Downing's Visual Arts Class. This quilt features embroideries by Payton Cash, Kourtney DeRamus, Mason Hopkins, Zoe Lennon, Layla Lovett, Terrkira McDonald, Khloe Randolph, Deanna Simmons, Rilee Ware, Journie Williams, and Malaysia Williams. In preparation, the students studied Baltimore Heritage Quilts, Gee's Bend Quilts, and learned hand quilting and embroidery. The eighth graders employed their embroidery skills to each represent what Baltimore means to them. This quilt features the AFRAM Festival, Baltimore Twilighters, a dirt bike rider doing a wheelie, the Lethal Ladies of BLSYW, the famous RLong tag, Old Bay, the Baltimore Ravens and Orioles, an image of Greg Butler at the protest of Freddie Gray's death, Fort McHenry, a photo by Shan Wallace of the Baltimore Voguing Scene, and Baltimore Fashion. The quilt was pieced together by the students and Francesca Downing, using only recycled materials from the Baltimore Fabric Swap.

Not for Sale

Baltimore Arabbers: Makin' It Around the Town

Denise Bailey-Jones

"Baltimore Arabbers: Makin' It Around the Town is a machine appliquéd and quilted wall hanging was made with cotton fabric and twisted cord with lip piping trimming. It pays respect to the men who provided fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the communities of Baltimore City. Whether on horse-drawn cart or the back of a pick-up truck, you could hear the melodious call of "Get your ... Watermelons! Apples! Peaches! Grapes! Bananas!"

Not for Sale

An Ode to Franklin - Mulberry area of Baltimore Maryland

Kimberly Tucker

"This quilt is a hand sewn, raw edged quilt depicting a block in the Franklin-Mulberry area of Baltimore, Maryland. The tulle overlay represents what happened to the community."

Not for Sale

My Home in Highlandtown

Brenna Horris

"This quilt depicts my home in Highlandtown, with added details from stories told by generations of my family, who also grew up in Baltimore rowhomes (everything from cleaning steps to planting trees). It is traditionally pieced with some applique; quilt stitches and placement were chosen to accentuate the rich history and architecture of the traditional brick Baltimore City rowhouse."

Not for Sale

Painted Ladies

Danamarie Hosler

"This quilt weaves together traditional and contemporary Baltimore influences through improvisational color-blocking inspired by the city's jazz legacy & the painted lady row houses of Charles Village and Abell. The hand-quilted borders on each block echo the quiet privacy of Baltimore's painted window screens, inviting viewers to look more closely, while the overall composition pays homage to the historic Baltimore Album Quilt and the city's rich artistic heritage. Subtle quilting along the border—revealed gradually through careful observation—draws from antique Baltimore Album Quilt patterns, mirroring the city's layered history and support in shaping its present."

$4,000

That's So Baltimore, Hon!

Sheila Reiss

"With a nod to "Hairspray!", my quilt features iconic Baltimore Director John Waters, with his friend and muse, Divine. The famous Baltimore Skyline has the things Baltimoreans look for at night, including the Domino Sugar sign and Mr. Boh, as well as a nod to the rockets bursting in the air (The Star Spangled Banner) with the Baltimore Aquarium waves beneath it. Divine wears bracelets featuring some of the great places/institutions that make Baltimore Charm City!"

$3,000

Edgar

Claudia Pearce

"A lunar eclipse, created with layers of yellow and orange fabrics to evoke fissures and holes, casts its haunting glow across the sky. Edgar the raven, named for Edgar Allan Poe, quietly peruses his surroundings displaying a black sheen of individual feathers using a variety of black fabrics. A Maryland-native Polyphemus moth, a separate lightly attached quilt, keeps Edgar company along with flickering moths and fireflies, and darting bats in the purple background, all native to the Baltimore area. Finally, the colors of purples, oranges, and blacks evoke the colors of regional sports teams."

Not for Sale

Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory and Botanic Gardens

Liz Holland

"This quilt pays homage to the Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory and Botanic Gardens in Druid Hill Park -- one of my favorite places in Baltimore! The conservatory offers a refuge – especially on a cold winter's day -- among the lemon trees, bougainvillea, cacti, orchids and other tropical species. Some of the plants and the conservatory building itself are rendered in appliqué using cotton fabrics. Small details are hand embroidered and stitched by machine. Quilting was done by hand."

$1,500

A Street of Row Homes

Jantzen Nolan

"This quilt is hand constructed using piecing and applique techniques, depicting a street of rowhomes evocative of streets that can be found in many neighborhoods in Baltimore city. Using old clothes and scrap fabrics, the layering and construction of a fabric cityscape shows Baltimore's unique charming character paired with its more free-willed gritty nature. This quilt is not a pinpoint of one location, but rather a representation of a piece of every neighborhood in the city."

$650

The Doorway of a Rowhome at Dawn's Early Light

Sharon Coffman

"This mixed media pictorial wall hanging incorporates hand applique, hand embroidery, machine stitching, pen and pencil, and hand quilting. The quilt portrays some of Baltimore's most recognizable features from the doorway of a rowhome at dawn's early light. The composition includes Baltimore's history, past and present."

Not for Sale

Baltimore Map

Marnee Keith

"This machine pieced quilt features an appliqué map of Baltimore, embroidered with many neighborhoods. The borders are designed to incorporate elements of the city's iconic flag. A black inner border includes some of Baltimore's nicknames, offering a subtle finishing touch to this piece."

$800

All My Dreams Started in East Baltimore

Kianga Jinaki

"This handsewn quilt celebrates the love of my childhood home and neighborhood in East Baltimore. Depicting a segment of the 1400 block of Broadway, (our address was 1408) using raw edge appliqué, hand and machine quilting, bead embellishments, embroidery, stenciling and photo transfers to capture the memory of my neighborhood in the late 60's and 70's. In addition to quilting cottons, I used indigo dyed and hand painted fabrics. As well as a recycled pair of tie-dyed jeans for a portion of the sky and a recycled batik table cloth for the grassy square that separated our street. The plane's message, a favorite quote by native Baltimorean Reginald Lewis, was true for me as well; and the title of my quilt. I framed the entire quilt in an Ankara print with the colors of the Maryland and Baltimore flags combined."

$4,500

Baltimore: The City that Quilts

Baltimore Heritage Team

"This community-sourced quilt was created by 17 Baltimore-loving quilters who responded to Baltimore Heritage's call for volunteers on social media. Using Baltimore Heritage's Five Minute Histories videos and the Explore Baltimore Heritage blog as inspiration, the quilters have represented a wide swath of Baltimore's traditions, culture, and historic sites in their blocks. Techniques include hand-beading, applique, hand embroidery, hand-tying, printing using MICA's Globe Press, as well as the use of various embellishments--such as plastic flowers and yarn--and textures. The quilt reflects our deep affection for our city and its people and celebrates the power of community creativity, as well as the diversity of the quilters, their skills and talents, and their vision of what Baltimore Heritage looks like. Sarah Barnes created Howard Street Bridge. Janine D'Adamo created Globe Poster. Peggy D'Adamo created Pride of Baltimore II. Krista Green created Carroll Park. Janet Indresano created Duckpin Bowling. Jesse Lentzwiler created Arabbers. Aynex Mercado created Arch Social Club. Pam Negrin created Filbert Street Garden. Elise Petersen-Deitrick created Snowballs. Paige Peterson created Moorish Tower. Tish Peterson created Preakness Stakes. Edith Pula created the Katyn Memorial. Jules Sease created Camark Cats. Katherine Somerville created Formstone. Dina Rodriguez Tillman created Tola's Room. Sarah Williams created Baltimore Bricks. Mary Zajac created Pratt Central, Baltimore Heritage logo. The quilt was pieced and tied by Janet Indresano and Mary Zajac."

Not for Sale

Baltimore by Neighborhood

Cheryl Hills

"This collage-style applique quilt depicts a map of Baltimore's neighborhoods, each brought to life through a vibrant array of Ankara African fabrics that form a striking mosaic of color and pattern. An outline of the city's skyline crowns the composition, paying tribute to Baltimore's rich cultural landscape and distinctive urban identity. From select vantage points, delicate shadows emerge of blue crabs drifting like clouds across the surface subtly honoring Maryland's heritage with a quiet, almost ethereal presence."

$800

Baltimore Blues

Elaine Foster

"This quilt was inspired by my love of steamed crabs that are often enjoyed with family and friends throughout my years living in Baltimore. This quilt was created by using raw edge collage style. The word (Baltimore) was sewn using trapunto style that requires stuffing the outline of each letter. The Chesapeake Bay blue crab represents resilience, community and central to the spirit of Baltimore!"

$450

Back Window View

Janice Adams-DeVance

"This quilt is named "Back Window View", inspired from a painting. It is an abstract representation of Baltimore's row houses with marble steps. The array of colors represent diversity, togetherness and beauty."

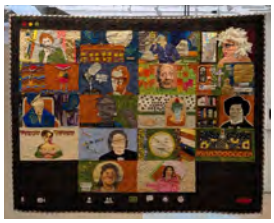
Not for Sale

Baltimore A to Z

Colleen Hughes

"My quilt was hand appliquéd, machine-pieced and longarm quilted. Fort McHenry, the Raven, the Oriole, the Crabs and the Black eyed Susan's highlight iconic images associated with Baltimore. The vine and leaves surrounding the quilt, labeled with names and places, suggest a weaving path to wander through Baltimore."

$2,500



Baltimore Citizens, from Past to Present, on a Zoom Call

Piecing with a Purpose Quilt Collective

"Each of the 18 blocks of this hand- and machine-stitched quilt is made by a member of the Piecing with a Purpose quilt collective. The quilt imagines citizens of Baltimore, both past and present, as they might appear together in conversation on Zoom. From left to right, starting at the top row, the blocks depict Grace Hartigan by Sanzi Kermes, Edgar Allan Poe by Kathy Cowan, Adrienne Rich by Sarah Z. Barnes, and Divine by Terri Ach. The second row features Jada Pinkett Smith by Jane Khattak, Ira Glass by Susan Tuberville, John Waters by Janine D'Adamo, and Mary Lange by Dr. Denise Bailey-Jones. The third row includes Joyce J. Scott by Joan Freedman, Erricka Bridgeford by Susie Brandt, Emily Post by Rebecca Wolfe, and Frederick Douglass by Sharone Conteh-Morgan. The final row presents Betsy Patterson by Susan Adler Davis, Barry Levinson by Betsy Armstrong, Elizabeth Talford Scott by Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims, Billie Holiday by Rodette Jones, Henrietta Lacks by Peggy D'Adamo, and Cass Elliot by AnnMarie Cordner."

$1,170

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