



The Grand National

Invitational Quilt Exhibition



Press release – The Grand National

For immediate release

The Grand National, Waterloo Region's only national quilt exhibition, is being hosted this year by Kitchener's Joseph Schneider Haus National Historic Site in collaboration with the Region of Waterloo. Opening Sunday May 10th with a reception for artists, family, friends and the general public from 1 to 4 pm, this exhibition showcases the stunning quilt art of sixty-two gifted artists from across Canada.

Inaugurated in 2003, The Grand National, now a biennial invitational show, challenges needleworkers to quilt a work of art that artistically addresses a particular theme. For the 2015 exhibition, it was “Connections” that got the creative juices flowing in quilting studios coast-to-coast. Connecting, linking, bridging, networking have become more important than ever in our global community today but if the entries chosen for this year's show are any indication, Canadian quilters are among the artistic community's finest communicators – grounded, thoughtful, empathetic, sincere.

Visitors will undoubtedly be charmed by the visual feast these colourful works present and certainly they'll be moved by the thought-provoking interpretive “spin” the quilters have given the “Connections” concept. Most predictable, perhaps, are the quilts that demonstrate how the needle can stitch memories together that link generations past and present. Family ties bind several such quilts to the “Connections” theme.

Many quilters responded in a quintessentially Canadian way expressing strong connections to 'place' in their work and giving the natural landscape top billing.....The Boreal Forests of North Western Ontario are evoked in a quilting tribute to Tom Thompson.....the shared landscapes and road patterns that link Alberta to Saskatchewan depicted in a visually-striking green/gold graphic design.....the breath-taking beauty of the Rockies rendered in triangular forms underscoring the stability and balance, the healing strength of the natural landscape.

Other artists depicted place-to-place connectors in their work, those necessary for maintaining communication across the vast expanses of our Canadian landscape – road systems, trains, lighthouses, digital transmission towers. The most adventuresome have ventured beyond the predictable, envisioning intangible connectors such as our DNA that carries our genetic information or literature, music and poetry those traditional media that have long connected generations, nations and cultures.”

Perhaps the most poignant are the entries that address the critical loss of connection that can set one emotionally adrift. Homelessness is evoked in Pathways through the Neighbourhood I & II and Hobo Town and Not Everyone Has a House, the titles to other compositions, speak eloquently for themselves. Sowing from Dawn to Dusk, a textile tribute to the pioneers on the Prairie, exudes regret for our lost connections to the land.

So Connect with the Grand National 2015 and enjoy this outstanding assemblage of personal quilting narratives that represents technically, artistically, and aesthetically the best the quilting and fibre art world has to offer in Canada today. “Connections” continues at the historic Joseph Schneider Haus to September 27, 2015.