



Staff photo by Amanda Ruehlen

Marjorie Freeman designed her quilt “I Speak for the Human Race” as a tribute to Durham civil rights activist Pauli Murray. Words about Murray’s life as the Episcopal Church’s first female priest are written on the stripes.

About the Exhibit

Where:

The Hayti Heritage Center
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919-683-1709

When:

Feb. 4-March 30

Hours:

| | |
|------------|----------------|
| Monday | 5-8 p.m. |
| Tues.-Fri. | 10 a.m.-5 p.m. |
| Saturday | 10 a.m.-3 p.m. |

For more information about this and other exhibits, visit:
<http://hayti.org>

‘Reflections’ showcases quilts by locals

By Amanda Ruehlen

UNC Web Editor
The Durham VOICE

What do you get when you combine a traditional hobby like quilting and a modern photo editing software?

Just ask Carol Beck, a member of the African American Quilt Circle of Durham, whose most recent quilt contrasts photos from the past and present using Photoshop.

“We are all experimenting in different ways,” Beck said. “You can see how photos looked in the 1930s, and now you can see my bags and wrinkles. It’s interesting to see the difference in young and old.”

Beck’s quilts, along with more than 70 other quilts made by members of the AAQC, cover the walls of the Hayti Heritage Center on Old Fayetteville Street as a part of the group’s biannual exhibit, “Reflections.” The exhibit, which attracted about 300 community members when it opened on Feb. 4, will be on display until March 30.

“It’s whatever you want to reflect upon,” said Willa Brigham, a member of the AAQC who has six quilts on display at the exhibit. “It gives everyone the opportunity to express themselves

via their memories. Quilts aren’t just for sleeping anymore, they have many dimensions.”

Some of Brigham’s quilts are innovative, incorporating used material like beads and felt into the design.

“I’m much more aware of recycling and I love to give life to that which has once lived,” Brigham said. “So for me, I just took it another step.”

Others of her quilts maintain a traditional approach, like the black and white gingham one flanked with bright flames. The pattern reminded Brigham of a skirt her mother made for her when she was 15.

Creating the quilts for “Reflections” came as a challenge to the AAQC, said Sauda Zahra, who has eight quilts on display. Traditionally, each exhibit the circle hosts tackles a specific topic, and this year self-portraits were central to the theme.

“It’s one of our most diverse exhibits,” Zahra said. “The idea of reflections made people open up.”

Zahra’s self-portrait is set on glittering gold fabric, complemented by warm hues of purple and blue.

“I wanted to do something whimsical and abstract,” she said.

Unconventional methods did not stop there. Marjorie Freeman said she used the reverse side of the fabric to create her self-portrait, which was an outline of her face.

“The right side was too strong and detracting,” she said of the fabric, which was comprised of her favorite colors – lime green, blue and purple.

“We wanted people to think not just about youth, but about an idea or concept and to use that in creating,” Freeman said. “It’s not just looking in the mirror.”

The exhibit’s visitors recognized these sentiments in the quilts on display.

“It’s encouraging, colorful and authentic to the region,” said Teresa Richardson, who was visiting Durham from Washington, D.C. “I can see the incredible personality, hard work and care.”

To help preserve the stories within, Freeman said the AAQC encourages people to include information about the quilt on the back so that it can be passed on as a family heirloom.

“When you look at some of these quilts, you come to realize that every quilt tells a story,” Freeman said.