



The Wintergreen quilt, 70 by 70 inches, is done in shades of gray and green with accents of violet, red and tangerine. The \$4,800 piece will be on exhibit at Artpack Services.

Quilter's magic bold and bright

By Janice Tiger-Kramer
special writer

Quilter Karen Kratz-Miller may have been drawn to her craft as a child resting on her mother's old bedspread.

The quilt artist memorized the pattern and the colors of the bedcovering as she ran her fingers over the lumpy, well-worn quilt each day at naptime.

And even if she didn't sleep, the familiar lines of the quilting were as relaxing then as they are today to the Farmington artist.

"It was so familiar with my mother's old quilt. Looking at the pattern every day, I'd see different pictures. I felt like I made that quilt myself," said Kratz-Miller, who will show two quilts at the Wetman quilt exhibition through April 27 at Artpack Services in Farmington.

Kratz-Miller, who designed and sold her own line of clothing, accessories and wallhangings in San Francisco, retired her apparel line in 1978 when she began quilting.

That year, her first quilt, "Sundance," earned two awards (one for innovative design) at the National Quilt Contest in Santa Rosa, Calif. Since then, the fabric artist has picked up awards throughout the

country at local and national quilting shows.

Though quilting techniques haven't changed much over the years, modern quilting is considered an art form, said Kratz-Miller, whose innovative quilts include dramatic combinations of colors and designs.

"I DON'T go for safe color combinations. I like surprises and I enjoy the magic that happens when I put fabrics together," she said. "Quilting doesn't have to be serious business. It's fun."

It's obvious the artist enjoyed creating the Maple Street Rag, a collection of quilts depicting the four seasons. "Maple Street Rag," depicting fall, was inspired two years ago when the artist moved to Michigan from California.

"I was amazed by the change of seasons. When we first arrived, I lived on the front porch and watched the leaves turn," Kratz-Miller said.

"Maple Street Rag," named for the street on which she lives, features leaves and splashes of bold colors and patches of plaid on black background. Like her other quilts, the back is quilted with a complementary pattern of colors.

"Wintergreen," measuring 70 x 70 inches, is done in shades of gray and green with accents of violet, red and



photos by SHARON LeMIEUX/staff photographer

Quilter Karen Kratz-Miller used vivid colors such as teal green, orange, red and gold against a black background to create "Fireworks," a quilt measuring 53 by 71 inches. The piece is

tangerine. It's boldly highlighted by a black background. Fan and cable quilting suggest snow drifts and gusts of wind.

"EMERALD SPRING," 74 x 54 inches, includes dozens of plaid and solid greens, some hand-dyed, on a black background. The piece is random quilted, giving it a feeling of breeze, or air. The artist is still planning the summer quilt.

"Wintergreen," priced at \$4,800, and "Emerald Spring," \$4,300, will be part of the Wetman exhibit.

When the artist is searching for fabrics to add to a quilt, she's not above using her own clothes or her boys' shirts. She literally conducted a "green hunt" while making "Emerald Spring," even using part of the dining room tablecloth to finish the piece.

Kratz-Miller, a native of Pennsylvania, learned early on to appreciate the simplicity of Amish quilts. Like the Amish, she generally uses black as a unifying color.

"What makes a quilt unique is the play between the colors and fabrics," she said. "Black brings the work together and makes the other colors pop out of the quilt."

KRATZ-MILLER, who attended

machine quilted with variegated metallic thread. "Fireworks," priced at \$3,900, is available through the Janis Wetman 20th Century Decorative Art gallery in Birmingham.

Rhode Island School of Design, creates her quilts like an artist paints a landscape.

After selecting a theme, she pins fabric pieces on a layer of quilt batting, which is hung on the wall of her

workroom. Seeing the pattern unfold vertically gives the artist a clearer perspective of the work.

Using 50-100 fabrics in each quilt, she is able to finish a project in four-to-six weeks.

Exhibit spotlights quilts as art

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The dramatic move from craft to art also is apparent in the shapes and subject matter of contemporary quilts.

Arturo Sandoval, a professor in the University of Kentucky's College of Fine Arts, will show his 54-by-66-inch "Ground Zero '89," which takes on an oval appearance from afar.

"I'm inspired by the things I see and feel," said Kratz-Miller of Farmington, a full-time artist who has fine tuned her quilting over the last 15 years. "You're not going to see landscapes or recognizable

forms."

Harris, a Detroit interior designer inspired by African themes, agreed. "It's not narrative," she said of "Homage," a 50-by-90-inch geometric that features projections, or streamers, that reach to the floor. The quilt is dominant with black, purple and turquoise.

THE EXHIBITION also will feature the work of Faye Anderson, Elizabeth Busch, Lia Cook, Caryll Breyer Fallert, Sharon Holdingsfeld, Nancy Herman, Jane Kaufman, Terrie Mangat, Ruth McDowell Jan Myers-Newbery, Elizabeth Newbill, Esther Parkhurst, Pamela Studstill,

Jane Sassaman and David Walker.

Founded in 1984, the Design Industries Foundation for AIDS was started by interior design, furnishings and architecture professionals. It now encompasses all aspects of design.

Its mission is to raise and distribute money to AIDS groups and projects nationwide. It so far has distributed \$5 million to 250 groups providing AIDS education and services in 32 states.

The design industries also have donated millions of dollars in furnishings and design services to community AIDS groups, both through the foundation and independently.

Renovation a fulfilling experience

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Taking time from his job as lead singer of Steve King and the Ditties, he began the tedious demolition, often working 12-hour days. He finished 18 months later, filling more than a dozen 30-yard dumpsters with debris. Much of the red brick was salvaged and donated to Llovnia's Greenmead Historical Village, where it was used to pave the walkways.

Besides exceeding his \$100,000 construction budget, Steve did more demolition than he originally planned.

"I wanted to save walls, but I realized the finished project would be much better if they were installed new. The project became larger and larger," he said.

AS WET plaster was replaced with drywall, he faced the problem of how to route air ducts after converting from steam heat to a forced air heating system.

For example, since head room in the basement was a premium, ducts had to be concealed and boxed into the north wall. The first-floor hallway ceiling was lowered one foot just to accommodate cold-air returns.

The couple changed each room's original design, except the library, which still includes the handsome, dark-walnut paneling installed in 1927. The couple also reused the original front door and restored the marble entry.

Since the Kings wanted an open floor plan, they raised the original nine-foot ceiling in the great room through the attic, vaulting it to the

roof. Dramatically decorated in black and white, the room is flanked by expansive windows on the west side to allow in afternoon sun. The room also includes a zero clearance, mirrored fireplace.

A platform kitchen with walls of storage and a work island overlooks the living area. Boldly decorated in black and white ceramic, the kitchen includes cabinets of pickled alder wood, a black halogen stove and a matching Jean-Air oven.

THE TWO first-floor bedrooms for Casey, 5, and Brandon, 8, include the original oak floors, which Steve picked for a more updated look. Both have nine-foot ceilings, pickled woodwork and closet doors, plus a pair of lofty, double-hung windows.

The first-floor bath, decorated in navy ceramic with gold and white accents, includes a step-up tub with a narrow window overhead for natural lighting. The couple saved the old pedestal sink, reglazed and fitted with gold-tone fixtures.

The second-floor loft, formerly the attic and a dormitory-style room for Steve and his brothers, is a departure from the contemporary first level. Overlooking the great room, it includes the original red oak floor

and is supported underneath by an exposed structural beam.

The loft has four large skylights, a walk-in closet and a whimsically decorated bath with a corner shower and a vaulted ceiling. The loft leads to a fourth bedroom for 2-year-old Allyson, born during the renovation.

THE FINISHED lower level, decorated in gray tones, houses a spacious recreation room, a possible fifth bedroom, a bath with spa, storage and a concealed furnace room.

Debbie took on the job of decorating. Neutral, off-white walls are dramatically highlighted with colorful balloon shades, shirred-on valances and mini blinds or pleated shades. The children's rooms are decorated with colorful wallpaper borders, matching bedspreads and coordinated accessories.

"We don't like heavy window treatments or an over-decorated look," Debbie said. "The house is very bright and we've been able to take advantage of the natural light."

The Kings, who've always enjoyed touring the annual Homearama and browsing through building, decorating and garden magazines, had only one request for Morrell Landscaping: year-round color.

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