

### Nettie Pettway Young



Nettie Pettway Young was an American artist who grew up on the Young Plantation of Gee's Bend, Alabama, where the women were known for their quilting ability. Young's quilt work is a part of the Freedom Quilting Bee, an organization founded in 1966 that was inspired by a visit from Martin Luther King Jr., who wanted the group to participate in the Civil Rights Movement. The organization began selling their quilts which raised funds that they invested into civil rights activism. (Little, 2022)

Image shown: Untitled Quilt, Nettie Pettway Young, Year Unknown

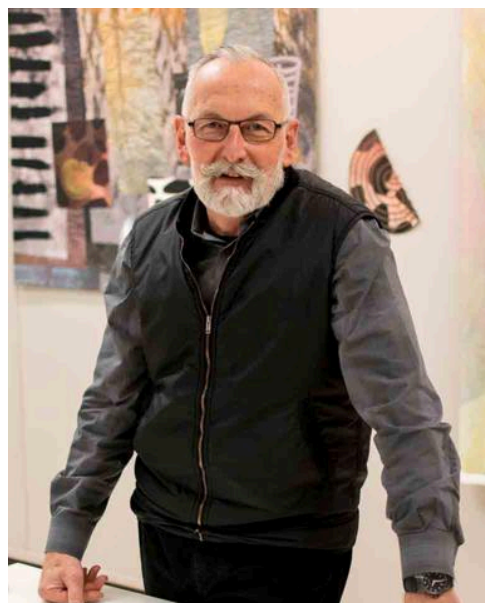
Young's work is filled with color, pattern, line, and

so many other elements. Lauren Haynes, an exhibition curator, stated, "There's a timelessness to her work. The influence of Young and other Gee's Bend artists on the current generation of artists was one thing I was interested in examining in the exhibition at the Nasher." (Haynes, 2022) Young created all of her quilts by hand with no pattern. She once said, "I always loved sewing. I made all my children's clothes. Didn't need a pattern. Same with quilts. If I seen a dress or a quilt or something I liked, I can make it. I just draw it out the way I want it." (Young, *Souls Grown Deep*) This is how we will be constructing our pillows in the workshop -no pattern or machine, all by hand.



### Michael James

Michael James is an American textile artist from New Bedford, MA who creates colorful, abstract, and wild quilts. He attended Dartmouth and Rochester Schools, and now works as a professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His quilts are a bizarre collection, with abstract colors, lines, blocks, incorporated with imagery. Alyson B. Stanfield of *Rhythm/Color: Improvisation* catalog states, "His mature work...is completely abstract and is characterized by exhaustive study of color relationships. Minute differences in tone and value appear to be the subject." (Stanfield, Shamy) In a



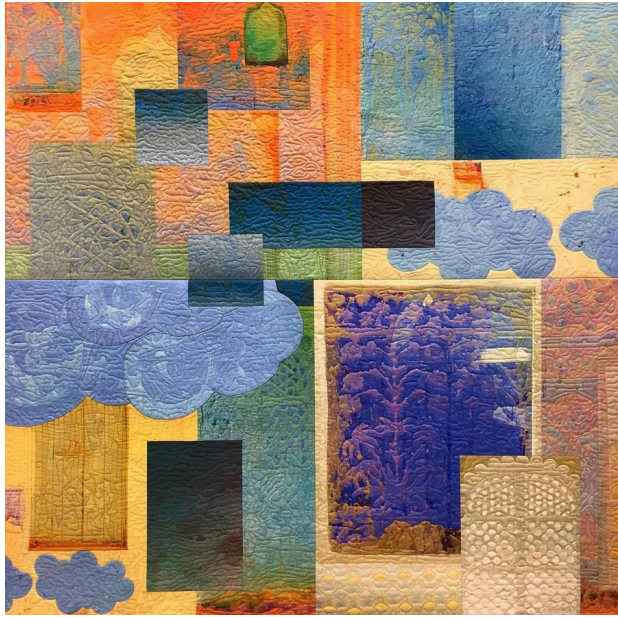


Image shown: *Haveli 3*, Michael James, 2018

statement regarding a series of quilts he created titled *Daybrook*, James stated, “In any case, the individual results can be taken as reflections of my mood or my emotional/intellectual impulses as I composed the surface arrangement.” (James, Shamy) So, he was inspired by his moods, thoughts, and emotions, similarly to how we will be taking inspiration from our dreams and goals when creating our pillows. We will use what we know about how these influential artists created their work, to create our own.

### Questions

1. When looking at Young’s quilted artworks, what elements and principles of design can you see actively being used?
2. How were Young’s quilts dependent on the materials she had at hand?
3. What do you notice about James’ work compared to Young’s? How are the two fundamentally different from one another?
4. Does it appear that each artist has an understanding of color and pattern? How so?
5. How can we incorporate these methods and ideas into our dream pillows?

### Vocab Words

1. Quilt- a bed coverlet of two layers of cloth filled with padding (such as down or batting) held in place by ties or stitched designs
2. Sewing- to unite or fasten by stitches
3. Stitch- one in-and-out movement of a threaded needle in sewing, embroidering, or suturing
4. Textile- a fiber, filament, or yarn used in making cloth
5. Pattern- a repeated, decorative design OR a model or design used as a guide in needlework and other crafts
6. Dream- a cherished aspiration, ambition or ideal

Little, C. (2022, November 23). *For generations, African American women have used quilting as a powerful tool of survival, resistance, and artistic expression*. ARTnews.com.

<https://www.artnews.com/list/art-news/artists/contemporary-textile-quilting-artists-to-know-1234647693/nettie-pettway-young/>

Nettie Young | *Souls Grown Deep*. (n.d.). <https://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/artist/nettie-young>

Shamy, Nancy J. – *The Quilters Hall of Fame*. (n.d.). <https://quiltershalloffame.net/2546-2/>