

Amazing Endeavors: Quilt My "Ride"



The Quiltmobile made by Ann Fitts and the Crazy Quilters of Port St. Lucie, FL

While quilted car covers occasionally appear here and there in the media and at quilt shows, their scarcity and scope—and the stories behind their creation—make each one an amazing endeavor.

The Quiltmobile

One of the first quilted car covers resulted from discussions on how to promote a quilt show. Ann Fitts, an innovative member of the Crazy Quilters of Port St. Lucie,

Florida, announced, “I’ll quilt my car and we can use it for advertising! I want everyone’s orphan blocks.” Ann’s 11 quilting volunteers each selected enough blocks to complete their assigned portion of the car—hood, top, door, trunk, etc. Total cost of the project: less than \$40! The car quilt “fit like a glove and was held in place with Velcro straps similar to a fitted sheet,” Ann explains, adding, “It

by Iris Frank

was aerodynamically secure...as long as you were going forward!”

As a result of the Quiltmobile (as it was dubbed) being shown at various venues during the month before the show, the guild experienced a landslide attendance that year, thus accomplishing their mission.

Ken’s 50th birthday present

Rhonda Leach, owner of a home-based longarm quilting business, created a car cover for her husband Ken’s treasured 1985 Corvette in celebration of his fiftieth birthday. Named CRUZIN’, this cover was truly a labor of love.

Rhonda first measured the car and then purchased 55 yards of fabric, including black-and-white checkerboard racing yardage for the background. The side panels and top represent important events in Ken’s life as well as various patriotic depictions. Techniques include hand, raw-edge, reverse, and machine appliqué; thread painting; machine embroidery; and trapunto. It took Rhonda a total of 1,100 hours to complete.



CRUZIN', Rhonda Leach's labor of love for her husband

Rhonda shares these words of wisdom with other quilters: "Remember the sky is the limit! I learned a lot and experienced an emotional roller coaster including fatigue, tears, doubt, laughter, joy, and fun with my sisters, to whom I'm very grateful for helping me complete this endeavor. Most of all, I did this to show my husband how much I love him."

Meter maid car

Paul Margolis, as a senior project for his bachelor of fine arts degree at the University of Washington, decided to create a full-sized meter maid car after he realized how frustrated he became at parking enforcement, himself, and *anyone* else nearby each time he got a parking

ticket. He asked himself, "What would I have to do to like the Parking Enforcement Officer (the correct title of a meter maid)?" Thinking the act of creating a piece of public art might possibly inspire a change in his current mindset, he began his eight-month endeavor.

After constructing a frame of wood, metal bars, and Styrofoam, Paul began his quilted cover using a variety of fabrics including recycled shirts, vinyl, cotton yardage, fancy batiks, and metallics. "My sources ranged from JoAnn's to home dec studios to the fanciest quilt shops in town, as well as my wife's huge stash," Paul shares. The cover was constructed just like any quilt—a pieced top layer, batting, and backing.

Explaining his technique, Paul relates, "My work consists of examining everyday objects and interactions by interpreting them through techniques I learned from my mother. Through quilting, crocheting, and other craft processes, mundane objects become special." He continues, "My hope is by making this object beautiful, people will be attracted to it and maybe question their reactions and actions toward people who write parking tickets, as well as question other seemingly insignificant acts of negativity. My



The Meter Maid Car by Paul Margolis

work can be silly and fun, but also, I hope, perplexing and meaningful."

Best National Quilting Day idea ever

The inspiration for the car cover made by the Heritage Quilters of Shiner, Texas, occurred as they began planning for their first two-day quilt show three years ago. The show was planned to coincide with National Quilting Day, and they thought having a car covered to



The Quilt Car, Heritage Quilters, Shiner, Texas

look like it was made from a quilt would be a great idea. Guild members donated orphan blocks from their stash, and a small group of members met twice a week to work on quilting the blocks and sewing them together. A final challenge came as the weight of the finished product became evident. To help support the weight and ensure no surprises would occur as the car traveled down the street, three strips of nylon strapping were stitched from the "hem" of one side of the car quilt, across the top, and down to the "hem" on the opposite side.

The attractive cover has garnered numerous awards both locally and nationally, including being named as the Best

National Quilting Day Idea Ever by C&T Publishing. **Smart for two pink passion**

A touching and very worthwhile car cover effort was recently undertaken in the United Kingdom. A host of famous names joined forces to raise money for the Breast Cancer Campaign by each donating a pink item of clothing. The material from these items was then used to create a life-size patchwork smart-

car cover to mark the launch of the limited edition smart fortwo pink passion micro hybrid car. The patchwork smart cover, constructed of over 76 yards of fabric, took seven people 408 hours to construct. Made entirely from the fabric donations of celebrities, the cover was auctioned with all proceeds going to breast cancer research. Among the celebrities donating fabric were models Elizabeth Hurley and Twig-

gy, actress Joanna Lumley, comedian Russell Brand, and Welsh football star Ryan Giggs. Items donated to create the patchwork included everything from shirts and bras to blankets and baby "onesies," with celebrities often sending messages of support along with



The smart fortwo pink passion cover, United Kingdom

their item. BBC Radio disk jockey Sara Cox stated, "The squares were cut from my youngest daughter's outgrown vests. I hope with all my heart that a cure for breast cancer will be discovered before she reaches womanhood."

In addition to the proceeds from the auction, smart is also donating \$10,000 to the charity from sales of the smart fortwo pink passion automobile.

Quiltmobile: The rest of the story

Following the successful quilt show that year, the car with its cover made numerous appearances both in Florida and nationally, including the AQS Quilt Show & Contest in Paducah, Kentucky, where it was accidentally but illegally parked in a fire lane. Rather than ticketing the Quiltmobile, a local policeman was overheard saying, "This thing has to be illegal, but we have more important things to do." Turning to his partner, he said, "Isn't this something? Only in Paducah—after all,

it is 'Quilt City USA' and home of The National Quilt Museum." And, yes, the car was moved momentarily.

Currently, the car quilt is safely stored in the collections of the International Quilt Study Center and Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska. Plans are to have this wonderful creation on full display at some future date to be admired once again.



CRUZIN', detail

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