

Quilts: Quilting information



A patchwork quilt is formed from three layers. The top layer consists of pieces of fabric sewn together to form a design, the soft middle layer of 'batting' provides the warmth or insulation, and the bottom layer or fabric backing completes the quilt.

Quilting is the sewing that is undertaken to stitch the layers together. The quilting stitches, done by hand or by sewing machine, outline the individual patch pieces that make the design, or can be a completely separate and independent decorative design.

Quilts are warm, and functional, but are also regarded as artworks that embody creativity, cleverness of design and beauty. Originally a patchwork quilt was made using scraps of fabric that were left over from other sewing projects. The salvaged fragments of fabric were saved up and when enough had been accumulated, these were pieced together, making economic use of 'waste' material and at the same time creating a practical item. Today, quilting has become an art form in itself, and fabrics are now sold specifically for this purpose.

Quilting designs are often geometric, but they can also be quite imaginative. The geometric designs are often easier to piece together because of the way in which they tessellate.

The Amish people in America are one group of people who are famous for their patchwork quilts. Quilting techniques are often passed on from one generation to another and a quilt is seen as a precious gift because of the many hours of time and effort that are invested in making one. The Amish women, who often gather together in quilting working bees, are admired for the beautiful quilts that they create by hand. Within the Amish community, social groups often form as quilts are worked on over time. The quilts are both practical and beautiful, but in the process of their creation, they also serve as entertainment as well.