

# The Company Quilters Keep



Comparing Communal and Solitary Quilters in the  
Midwest





## Community of Value

- ❖ People they know
- ❖ Places they go
- ❖ Things they do

The lives and work of communal and solitary quilters can best be seen within a spectrum of communities of value.



# Literature Review

- ❖ History
- ❖ Art vs. Craft
- ❖ Feminist scholars and artists





History



# Art vs. Craft





# Feminist scholars and artists



Photo from [www.foundryartcentre.com](http://www.foundryartcentre.com)





- ❖ Epistemology
- ❖ Methodology
- ❖ Inductive analysis





# Methods

- ❖ Participant observation
- ❖ Questionnaire with free-listing
- ❖ Unstructured and informal interviews
- ❖ Digital photography



# Ethical Considerations

## ❖ Respondents as experts

❖ Names

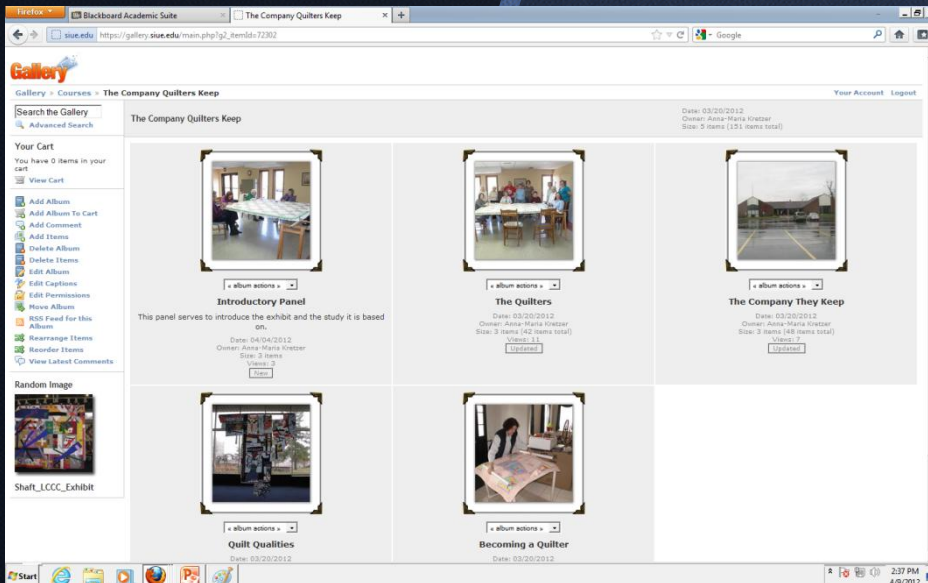
❖ Images





# Exhibit Components

- ❖ Text and graphic panels
- ❖ Quilts
- ❖ Internet gallery





# Thematic Structure of Exhibit

- ❖ The Quilters
- ❖ The Company they Keep
- ❖ Quilt Qualities
- ❖ Becoming a Quilter



# The Quilters



- ❖ New Bethel Quilters
- ❖ Audrey Kays
- ❖ Sun Smith-Foret



SUN SMITH-FORET: *Art About Film*



# The Company they Keep

- ❖ Church and community
- ❖ Family and friends
- ❖ Art world and competition





# Quilt Qualities

- ❖ Color
- ❖ Fabric
- ❖ Pattern
- ❖ Symbolism
- ❖ Experimentation





# Becoming a Quilter

- ❖ Communal
- ❖ Solitary





# Conclusions:

## Blurred Boundaries

“I’m probably a traditional quilter who wants to be an art quilter. But I don’t know if I’ve ever really made the leap.”

- Audrey Kays

“People who make traditional quilts are often very sociable and so are art quilters. There are guilds, just as in traditional quilting guilds; there are groups and associations of people who are doing that more experimental work. And another similarity is that people absolutely learn from and copy each other. That’s always been there.”

- Sun Smith-Foret



# Conclusions:

- ❖ Communities of value can allow a more in depth view of quilters' experience.
- ❖ But...it is important to remember that most quilters are involved in more than one.



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# Exhibit

*The Company Quilters Keep* will be shown  
in the Morris University Center Gallery

Opening reception

May 6<sup>th</sup> 6:00-8:00pm

Normal hours

May 7<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>

Monday through Friday

8:00am-4:30pm