Textile Extensions:
Quilts in a New Context, the Work of Carole Harris

October 2, 2009 – January 28, 2010
Acknowledgements
Marilyn L. Wheaton

Carole Harris is a professional fiber artist and interior designer. She creates one-of-a-kind, improvisational works that provide warmth and texture to enhance an environment. “The rhythmically constructed, non-traditional tapestries of artist Carole Harris have been exhibited nationally in museums and galleries and are composed of hundreds of richly colored fabrics which are cut, overlaid, appliquéd, pieced and quilted,” according to Harris’ website.

Carole’s first inspiration to be an artist came from her parents. They provided her with a piano when she showed an interest in music, and with paints and brushes when she showed an inclination to creativity. They made sure that Carole and her sister and brother always had books to read. Her mother taught her how to sew. Her father worked on a Ford Motor Company assembly line and invited anyone who played the piano to their home to play.

When she was in her late teens, the legendary African American painter Harold Neal would take Carole with him to his drawing classes, a memorable learning experience. Cyril Miles, a Detroit painter, collagist, poet and teacher, “showed me how to live with art when I was attending Highland Park Community College,” said Carole. “She taught me how to see and express myself artistically.” Like Miles work, Carole’s quilts appear to be inspired by a global view of folk cultures, making constant reference to the things that connect humanity.

As a student at Wayne State University, Carole studied interior design, a field of practice at which she believed she could make a good living. A memorable Wayne State instructor, Olga Constantine, taught Carole basic design composition and color principles.

In 1965 a friend of Carole’s received a quilt for her wedding. The following year when Carole was preparing to marry Bill Harris, she began to create her first quilt, a pinwheel design, for her own wedding. Ten years in the making, it was during that time that Carole realized quilts are art.

Throughout the more than 30 years when she ran a successful interior design business, Carole never stopped quilt making, and today she is totally devoted to creating her “art.”

Carole has said many times that quilts are like paintings, full of color and texture and design. She is drawn to fabric because she likes the way it feels. African American artists Jacob Lawrence and Raymond Saunders have been major influences on her work, as have Euro-American painters Richard Diebenkorn and Robert Rauschenberg.

I want to acknowledge and thank her parents, teachers and mentors who nurtured her innate creativity, which in turn prepared Carole to build a successful career as a designer and fiber artist. The end result is that all of us are the beneficiaries of a well nurtured woman whose art does what she hopes: “I want people to look at my work and enjoy it.”

Cover: The Sun’s Gon’ Shine In My Backdoor Someday, 1999, 52 ½” wide x 70 ½” long

2
Night Shift, 2009, 68” wide x 58 ½” high
San Francisco Holiday, 2009, 60” wide x 49 ½” long
Rhythm-a ning, 2009, 49” wide x 56½” long
I Want to Make Beautiful Things

I want to make beautiful things, as words no longer suffice.

Want to feel the grain of kente 'neath my thumb, my fingers; savor the perfection of stitches and seams.

Want to send the spirit to other worlds at the revelation of light on silk and textures so sweet as to enrapture.

Let words slide into silence. Let thought slip through the lace of days like light rays through parted curtains. Let truth speak through my hands.

by Aneb Kgositile
Detroit
July 2009
Before The Freeway, 2008, 61” wide x 55” long
Way Across Town, 2008, 59” wide x 70” long

Fire Music, 2008, 31” wide x 58” long
Epistrophy, 2007, 58” wide x 83” long
Big City Blues, 2007, 54” wide x 70” long
Kitchen View-Preston Street, 1999, 63 ½” wide x 36” long
Dahomey Dream, 1993, 39 ½” wide x 70 ¼” long
Passion Dance, 1993, 51 ½” wide x 67 ½” long

Playing on the Edge, 1991, 59” wide x 65” long
Carole Harris

EDUCATION
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 1966

SOLO EXHIBITIONS
Ellen Kayrod Gallery, Detroit, MI, 2009
Center for African and African American Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, 1995
The River Gallery, Chattanooga, TN, 1994
The Anderson Gallery, Pontiac, MI, 1996
Arnold Klein Gallery, Royal Oak, MI, 1992
Gallery 7, Detroit, MI, 1977

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
ArtCite, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 2008
Center Galleries, College for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI, 2007
King Arts Complex, Columbus, OH, 2007-10
Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland, African American History, Baltimore, MD, 2007-10
Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI, 2007-10
New York State Museum, Albany, NY, 2007-10
American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY, 2007-10
Museum of Texas Tech, Lubbock, TX, 2007-10
Dell Pryor Gallery, Detroit, MI, 2007
Contemporary African American Quilts from the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, AL, 2006
Marygrove College, Detroit, MI, 2005
Scrab Club, Detroit, MI, 2003
University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 2001
Pavillon Josephine, Parc de l’Orangerie, Strasbourg, France, 2000
Lansing Art Gallery, Lansing, MI, 1999
American Craft Museum, New York, NY, 1999-01
The Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC, 1999-01
Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 1999-01
Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, 1999-01
Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby Academic Center, Spelman College, Atlanta, GA, 1998
Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI, 1998
The African American Cultural and Historical Museum, Ann Arbor, MI, 1997
Center for African and African American Studies, Ann Arbor, MI, 1997
Center Galleries, College for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI, 1997
New Initiatives for the Arts, Ann Arbor and Pontiac, MI, 1996-97
University of Akron, Akron, OH, 1996
University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI, 1995
Anderson Gallery, Pontiac, MI, 1995
General Electric Corporate Gallery, Fairfield, CT, 1995
Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH, 1995
Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, MI, 1995
University of Michigan School of Art and Architecture, Ann Arbor, MI, 1995-96
Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI, 1995-96
Jesse Besser Museum of Art, Alpena, MI, 1995-96
Pontiac Center for the Arts, Pontiac, MI, 1995-96
American Craft Enterprises, Baltimore, MD, 1995, 1997
Marketplace, Atlanta, GA, 1994, 1996
SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS  (Continued)
Kentucky Art & Craft Foundation, Louisville, KY, 1994
American Craft Museum, New York, NY, 1993
The African American Panoramic Experience Museum, Atlanta, GA, 1993
Museum of African American Life and Culture, Dallas, TX, 1993
African American Museum of Fine Art, San Diego, CA, 1993
The Renwick Gallery, Washington, DC, 1993
Frank Hale Black Cultural Center, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, 1993
American Museum of Quilts and Textiles of San Jose, San Jose, CA, 1993
National Afro-American Museum & Cultural Center, Wilberforce, OH, 1993
Junior Black Academy, Dallas, TX, 1993
International Quilt Festival, Houston, TX, 1992
Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI, 1992
Museum of History and Science, Louisville, KY, 1992
San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, CA, 1992
American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY, 1992
The Valentine Museum, Richmond, VA, 1992
Anacostia Museum, Washington, DC, 1992
Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, KS, 1992
Minnesota Museum of American Art, Minneapolis, MN, 1992
Museum of African Life and Culture, Dallas, TX, 1992
Janis Wetsman Gallery, Birmingham, MI, 1991
Michigan State University Museum, East Lansing, MI, 1991
Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI, 1991
Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, MI, 1991
Ella Sharp Museum, Jackson, MI, 1991
Annual Quilt Exhibition, Mount Clemens, MI, 1990
Detroit Gallery of Contemporary Crafts, Detroit, MI, 1990-2007
International Quilt Festival, Houston, TX, 1989
Detroit Historical Museum, Detroit, MI, 1978
Detroit Bank & Trust Company, Detroit, MI, 1978
Detroit Artists Market, Detroit, MI, 1977
Somerset Mall, Quilt Exhibit, Troy, MI, 1977
Harlem Gallery Square, Detroit, MI, 1977
Gallery 7, Detroit, MI, 1978

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS
John H. Stroger Cook County Hospital, Chicago, IL
Sinai-Grace Hospital, Detroit, MI
Detroit Receiving Hospital, Detroit, MI
The White House, Washington, DC
Harris Bank and Trust, Chicago, IL
Henry Ford Health System, Detroit, MI
Michigan State University Museum of Folk Art, East Lansing, MI
Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, Lansing, MI
Kalamazoo Arts Council, Kalamazoo, MI
Lewis & Munday, P.C., Detroit, MI
Montgomery Museum of Fine Art, Montgomery, AL
Northern Trust Bank, Chicago, IL
Mercy Hospital, Chicago, IL
Delta Manor; Delta Sigma Theta, Detroit, MI
Amurcon Management Co., Southfield, MI
Comanche County Hospital, Tulsa, OK
Hamilton Anderson Associates, Architects & Planners, Detroit, MI
Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, Detroit, MI

Carole Harris
Photo:
Clyde Stringer
Down the Block & Across the Street, 2007, 52” wide x 75” long