

A Race Against Race Quilt Series

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist/Activist

Baltimore, Maryland
2015 to the Present

A Race Against Race is a series of anti-racism message quilts that God called me, a quilter and priest, to make in response to the rampant killing of Black men and women, primarily by law enforcement officers and others not usually held accountable, in the United States of America, "Land of the Free," and "Home of the Brave." I clearly heard the call as an answer to my prayer, "What can I do?!?!?" That was shortly after Sandra Bland died in a jail cell in Waller County, Texas, three days after being arrested during a traffic stop for not signaling when she pulled to the side of the road to make way for the police vehicle behind her. Her death was ruled suicide. I do not believe that she killed herself. I don't think many people do. All of this happened about three months after Freddie Gray died in a hospital in Baltimore, from injuries received during a "rough ride," while handcuffed, in a police van. He had not been breaking the law when he was arrested. He had simply run at the sight of police because he was scared.

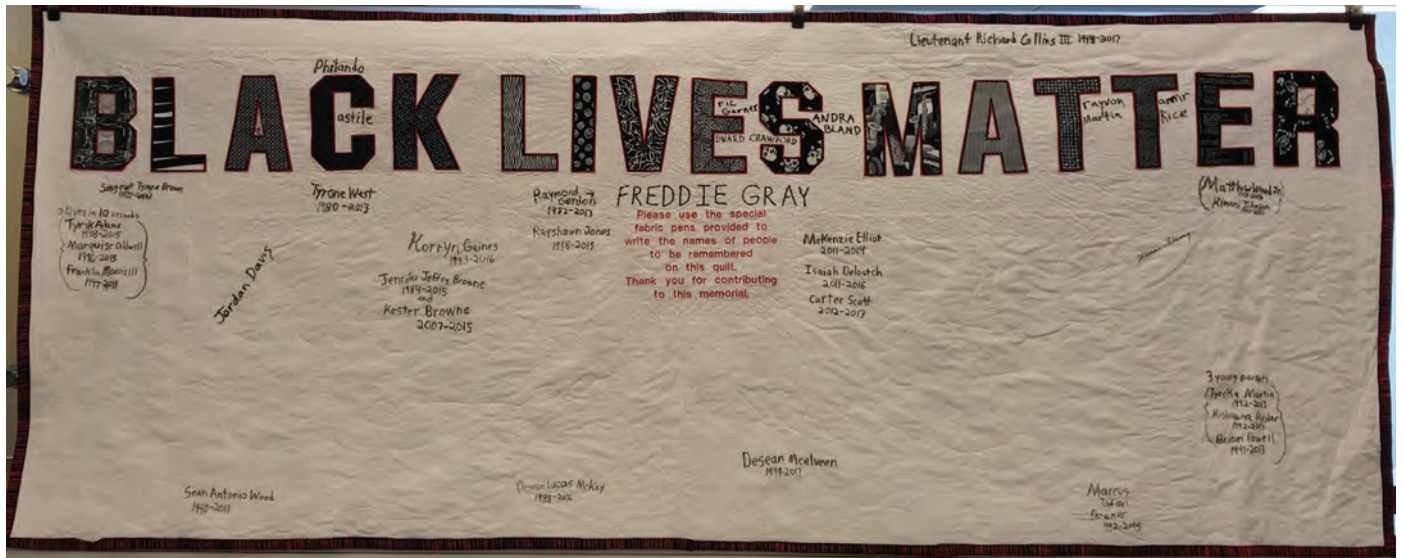
A race is a part of a sewing machine. A race is what we are on when our actions are urgent. Race, as applied to human beings, to separate and categorize, is not scientifically valid. My quilts are a race, with my sewing machine race, to fight against race to save lives.

BLACK LIVES MATTER



“Black Lives Matter”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist
Baltimore Maryland
Completed October 2016



BLACK LIVES MATTER

Design Concept: This quilt is in the form of a parade banner that can be carried by two people, each walking and holding the extruding end of a large dowel that runs through the quilt sleeve. The letters are in the top portion of the quilt, leaving lots of blank space for people to write the names of murdered Black people and others who have died as a result of systemic racism in American society. Under the lettering there is an embroidered invitation for people to write names with provided fabric pens.

My Statement in this Quilt: “Black lives matter!”

Text On Back: “Fifth in a series of quilts designed to help me, as southern, white, Christian woman, better understand systemic racism in the US. I hope my work will inspire white folks and affirm the realities of Black folks.”



The back of the quilt is black whole cloth. On the back the mirror image of the words, "BLACK LIVES MATTER" from the top can be seen in relief in the portions that are not quilted.

Top: White whole cloth, parade banner style, with black and white machine embroidery appliqué 7" varsity style capital letters spelling, "BLACK LIVES MATTER." Open space for adding names of African Americans who have been killed as a result of systemic racism by police, white racists, other African Americans suffering from the broad effects of systemic racism such as internalized racism, mental instability, euthanasia, and others causes I cannot even imagine in my white privileged brain

Quilting: dense free-motion in white thread around the letters to show the mirror image of "BLACK LIVES MATTER" on the black back of the quilt. The lower portion is more sparsely free-motion quilted with decorative lines and "Black lives matter" in cursive writing.

Size: 4,000 square inches—100" X 40"



“EPIDERMIS”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist

Baltimore, Maryland

Completed November 2016

Thanks to my
epiglottis
I will not need
epinephrine
as I sew an
epistle
on the
epithelials formed
in response to the
epic fabrication
of the materiality of
epidermis pigment.



Additional Text: "There are no significant genetic variations within the human species to justify the division of races.' Online in Good News Good blog, Wednesday, November 4, 2009"

AND

"What we call 'race' is only skin deep." Carol Burnside

Design Concept: As in "Epithet," the larger font of the words beginning with the letters, "epi," is to draw in the viewer to take a closer look. Once reading the long, convoluted sentence, the viewer starts puzzling out the meaning. After contemplating it, thinking it is understood, the blog quotation and the other statement (my own) confirm or clarify the answer to the riddle.

My Statement in this Quilt: "The human race is the only race."



Burnside/"Epidermis"

Text On Back: "Number Nine in the series begun in response to the loss of so many Black lives much too early"

The back is pieced of "epidermis" fabric and "Maryland flag colors" fabrics.

Top: machine embroidery on whole cloth, "dried blood" fabric

Quilting: traditional leaf pattern

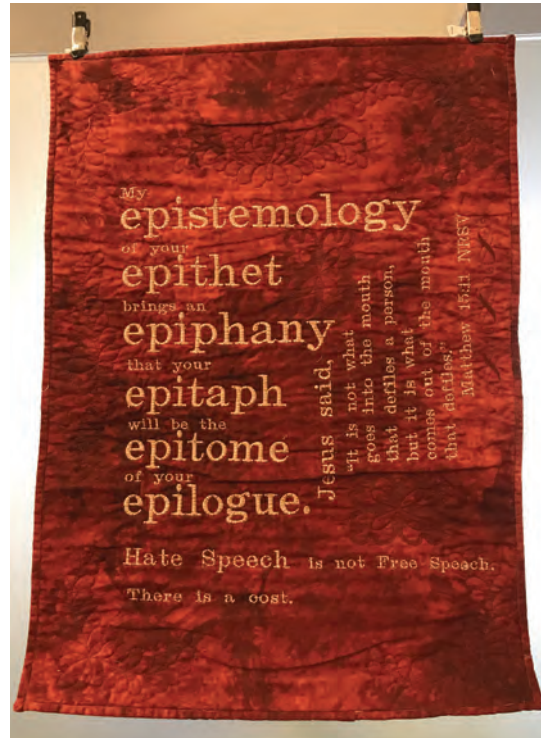
Size: 328 square inches--17" X 19.25"



“Epithet”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist
Baltimore, Maryland
Completed September 2015

My
epistemology
of your
epithet
brings an
epiphany
that your
epitaph
will be the
epitome
of your
epilogue.



Additional Text: “Jesus said, ‘It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.’ Matthew 15:11 NRSV”

AND

“Hate Speech is not Free Speech. There is a cost.” Carol Burnside

Design Concept: The larger font of the words beginning with the letters, “epi,” is to draw in the viewer to take a closer look. Once reading the long, convoluted sentence, the viewer starts puzzling out the meaning. After contemplating it, thinking it is understood, the scripture quotation confirms or clarifies the answer to the riddle. The other statement (my own) further



Burnside/"Epithet"

makes the point with a play on the concept of free speech. Yes, you can say what you want, but you will pay a price for doing it.

My Statement in this Quilt: "Using racial epithets hurts the speaker as well as the one who has been addressed in such a vile manner."

Text On Back: "In the March 1862 edition of The Christian Recorder, a publication of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the following appeared: 'Sticks and stones will break my bones, But words will never harm me.' Black children learned this rhyme as a coping strategy for surviving in a hostile society. Words have power to cause great harm. God alone knows the damage that racist hate language has done to the collective psyche of African Americans. Do white Americans have any idea how much damage their own words have caused to all Americans, including themselves?"

The back of this quilt is whole cloth, newspaper fabric, representing the systemic power that white words have had to inflict harm on African Americans by the direct use of racial epithets, the promulgation of white supremacist ideas, and the relentless lies about People of Color that the power of the press had the luxury of promoting in an era in which many Americans, Black and white, believed that what was printed in newspapers was true. It also recalls the denominational publication credited for the quotation.

Top: machine embroidery text on whole cloth, "dried blood" fabric

Quilting: in traditional leaf pattern

Size: 400 square inches--17" X 23.5"



“Freddie Gray: Martyr for a New Baltimore”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist

Baltimore, Maryland

Completed October 2015

Three vertical lines of text, layered, with smallest font to the left, in flame fabric, overlapping medium font to the right, in “ash” fabric, overlapping largest font in the center in fabric depicting smiling children of multiple races and cultures

BALTIMORE MD in flames

FREDDIE GRAY in ashes

ONEBALTIMORE in smiling children

Design Concept: The effect of this quilt is of looking at the recent past (before making of quilt), through to the present (at the time when Freddie Gray was buried after he died in a hospital from having been given a “rough ride,” while handcuffed, in a police van, when he had done nothing to warrant being arrested, except being Black and scared when he saw police), and finally through to a future that is visible, but not clearly.

My Statement in this Quilt: “When Freddie Gray died, Baltimore burned. Out of the ashes will rise OneBaltimore.”

Text On Back: “We Need a New Baltimore” “When I moved to Baltimore I was asked if I was scared. I said that I was not because it’s pretty safe if you are white. After Freddie Gray was killed, some young Black men from Baltimore were being interviewed on CNN. They said they knew their hometown as Bodymore, Murderland. That is when it hit me hard that there are two Baltimores. Others who had not known this also came to understand the same horrible fact. From that realization arose a movement called One Baltimore. I think of Freddie Gray as the martyr to this cause. When he died Baltimore burned. Out of those ashes OneBaltimore will rise. This is my prayer.”



Burnside/"Freddie Gray"

The back of this quilt is pieced of fabrics from the top, and other fabrics that express the joy of Baltimore and of the hope that this quilt expresses. There are "cat ladies," crabs, stars ("The Star Spangled Banner" was written here in Baltimore!), flamingos, and flowers.

Top: 34 letters in 3," 4", 5" machine embroidery appliqué fonts, respectively, on whole cloth "dried blood" fabric

Quilting: "1's," "One Baltimore," "Freddie Gray," and words about justice

Size: 720 square inches 10" X 72"



“Racism 2day”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist

Baltimore, Maryland

Completed August 2015

IF
U R
DWB
I M
Not
LOL
B/C
SBM
Or
SBF
On
body
cell
dash
Cam
WTF
U B
STILL
DOA



Design Concept: In American culture we use lots of different kinds of abbreviations, from common usage, social media, personal ads, slang, street language. I used this aspect of our experience to make my statement about the rampant killing of Black men, *and also women*, by police. It was my intention for the viewer to be drawn into solving the puzzle of the



Burnside/"Racism 2day"

meaning of the abbreviations, resulting in a visceral response to the truth that is revealed as the viewer reaches the bottom of the quilt.

My Statement in this Quilt: "Black men *and* women are at great risk of death when they have the misfortune of being stopped by a police officer, even if the occurrence is recorded."

Text On Back: "In honor of the life and death of Sandra Bland—Died July 13, 2015, Waller County, Texas, In a jail cell she never should have been in at all, May she rest in peace, And may justice be done for her." AND "Thank God for Cell Phones: Instruments of Justice in the right hands"

The back of this quilt is pieced in fabrics from the front, plus an African wax print showing a hand holding a cell phone.

Top: 56-3.5" machine embroidery appliqué letters, in alternating lines of African and American flag fabrics, on whole cloth "dried blood" fabric

Quilting: police chalk body outlines

Size: 946 square inches--11" X 86"

Translation:

IF

YOU ARE

DRIVING WHILE BLACK

I AM

NOT

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

BECAUSE

SINGLE BLACK MALE

OR

SINGLE BLACK FEMALE

ON

BODY,

CELL, or

DASH

CAMERA,

WHAT THE F—K,

YOU BE

STILL

DEAD ON ARRIVAL.



“REPARATIONS”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist

Baltimore, Maryland

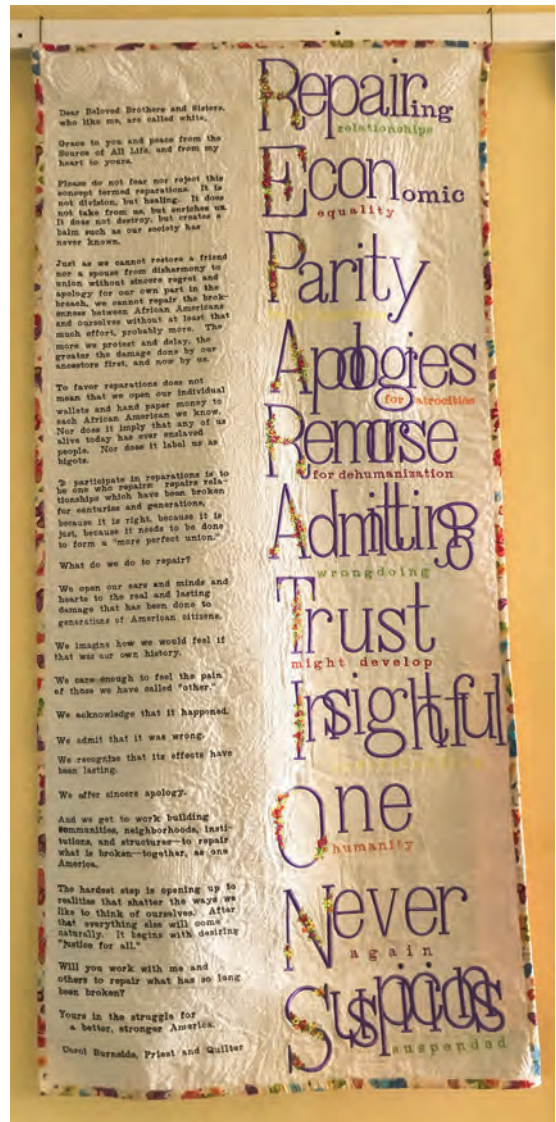
Completed October 2016

R epairing Relationships
E conomic Equality
P arity for all Americans
A pologies for Atrocities
R emorse for dehumanization
A dmitting wrongdoing
T rust might develop
I nsightful understanding
O ne Humanity
N ever again
S uspicious Suspended

Dear Beloved Brothers and Sisters, who like me, are called white,

Grace to you and peace from the Source of All Life, and from my heart to yours.

Please do not fear nor reject this concept termed reparations. It is not division, but healing. It does not take from us, but enriches us. It does not destroy, but creates a balm such as our society has never known.



Just as we cannot restore a friend nor a spouse from disharmony to union without sincere regret and apology for our own part in the breach, we cannot repair the brokenness between African



Burnside/"Reparations"

Americans and ourselves without at least that much effort, probably more. The more we protest and delay, the greater the damage done by our ancestors first, and now by us.

To favor reparations does not mean that we open our individual wallets and hand paper money to each African American we know. Nor does it imply that any of us alive today has ever enslaved people. Nor does it label us as bigots.

To participate in reparations is to be one who repairs: repairs relationships which have been broken for centuries and generations, because it is right, because it is just, because it needs to be done to form a "more perfect union."

What do we do to repair?

We open our ears and minds and hearts to the real and lasting damage that has been done to generations of American citizens.

We imagine how we would feel if that was our own history.

We care enough to feel the pain of those we have called "other."

We acknowledge that it happened.

We admit that it was wrong.

We recognize that its effects have been lasting.

We offer sincere apology.

And we get to work building communities, neighborhoods, institutions, and structures--to repair what is broken--together, as one America.

The hardest step is opening up to realities that shatter the ways we like to think of ourselves. After that, everything else will come naturally. It begins with desiring "justice for all."

Will you work with me, and others to repair what has so long been broken?

Yours in the struggle for a better, stronger America,

Carol Burnside, Priest and Quilter

Text On Back: label only; The back is pieced in fabrics of complementary colors.

Top: machine embroidery on whole cloth

Quilting: various free-motion designs between text elements

Size: 1,920 square inches—30" X 64"



“Stop Killing People”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist

Baltimore, Maryland

Completed May 2016

STOP

KILLING

Young Black Men

Young people

People

Women

Police Officers

Children and Babies

Murderers

Men



Design Concept: I wanted to make a life-sized stop sign to simply say, “Police Officers STOP Killing Young Black Men.” Between the time I conceived of the quilt and the time I completed it, five white police officers were killed in Dallas, Texas by a veteran sniper. It was later learned that he had wanted to kill as many white police officers as possible in retaliation for the police killings of Black men.

The shootings happened at what had been a peaceful protest against the police killings that week of Philando Castile in Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Louisiana. While I have no illusions that the rampant killing of Black men by police in this country is rooted in systemic racism and “blue” privilege (impunity), and is itself the symptom, the proof, and the action of that systemic racism in our whole society, and while I sympathize and empathize with, and hurt over the indescribable pain and frustration caused by police killings (with impunity) of Black men, which is far more prevalent than the other way around, I know that killing police in retaliation will only



make the problem much, much worse. And I want the killings of Black men to STOP!

So I took a deep breath and reminded myself that I do not want police officers to be killed either. Then I added Police Officers to the quilt, as well as other groups of people that I would like our society to stop killing, including Murderers. I figured if I had to water down my message by adding Police Officers to the Do Not Kill list, I might as well make a statement about capital punishment while I was at it. Besides, that also has to do with systemic racism, as evidenced in the criminal “injustice” system, since many Black men die on death row whether they have actually committed murder or not!

But I positioned the words on the quilt to get across my primary message. Reading from top to bottom, the message is, “Police Officers STOP Killing Young Black Men!” It can also be read from any side to any other side with the very essential, “STOP Killing” as the verb between any subject and any object.

The Design Concept section contains “My Statement in this Quilt.”

Text On Back: "Why do we kill people, who are killing people, to show that killing people is wrong? What a foolish notion, War is called devotion, When the bravest warriors Are the ones who stand for peace."

Holly Near, Songwriter

AND: “Number Four in a series begun in July 2015 after Sandra Bland died in a jail cell in Waller County, Texas three days after being stopped by a state trooper for failing to signal a lane change before moving over to allow the cruiser to pass her vehicle”

The back of the quilt is like the front in that it is whole cloth “blood splatter” fabric. The text on the back is machine embroidery. The binding is the same white glossy vinyl as the “STOP” letters on the top, just as a stop sign’s edges are reflective, like the lettering.

Top: whole cloth “blood splatter” fabric octagonal STOP sign with 10.5” machine embroidery appliqué letters of white glossy vinyl, and machine embroidered letters in white and variegated threads

Quilting: murder weapons

Size: 864 square inches—32" X 32”





Burnside/"The Way Forward"

The Way Forward: A White Christian Perspective

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist

Baltimore, Maryland

Completed May 2016

vulnerability
empathy
authenticity
CONNECTEDNESS

Design Concept: This quilt is forward looking, so I used the Modern Quilting style to emphasize moving from the present to a different and better future. Some of the elements that typify the Modern Quilting style are pieced words (differing from appliquéd or embroidered words), bright pops of color alongside "negative space" (light to very light fabrics), traditional quilt squares pieced in a "wonky" manner (that is, not precisely, as in the nine-patch square on the left edge just below the vertical middle), three-dimensional aspects (the horizontal traffic light just above the wonky nine-patch), and new versions of old techniques (for example, the foundation paper pieced flying geese to the right of the wonky nine-patch).

I was going through a divorce when the idea for this quilt came to me. I was thinking about what had been missing from my marriage, for me. The lack, from my perspective, could be summed up, "empathy, vulnerability, and authenticity." Immediately after that thought, it hit me that the same deficits exist in how white Americans often relate to Black Americans. When African Americans speak of real lived experiences, we white people often respond with skepticism, rather than empathy. When Black folks courageously confide in us that something in our language or behavior is hurtful, we white folks often respond with defensiveness, rather than vulnerability. When we, curiously ignorant, yet well meaning, caucasians wonder about something specific to people of the African diaspora, we sometimes intrusively reach out and touch (as if we had the right!), rather than authentically stating that we have always wanted to feel Black hair, and asking permission, being ready to accept any answer without offense.



Burnside/"The Way Forward"

"Empathy," "vulnerability," and "authenticity" are connected by electrical conduit to a generator/junction box. They are grounded to the Earth through "CONNECTEDNESS," the desired result of white people using the three helpful relational tools. Also this symbolizes the need for those who are directly connected to sources of power to reach out with empathy, vulnerability, and authenticity in order to extend the power grid to all, by the connectedness which may result. This can only come when we, with white privilege (all white Americans), recognize that the connectedness we have historically forged with those of African descent has been exploitation, rather than mutuality, beginning with the first kidnapping of the first African brought by force to this continent, through to today. We cannot expect that just because we now desire a different kind of relationship, that African Americans are able to, or want to, simply flip the switch to power up what we did not offer nor facilitate in the past four hundred years.

My Statement in this Quilt: "If we white Americans used the qualities of empathy, vulnerability, and authenticity in our encounters and relationships with Black Americans, connectedness might come about."

Text On Back: "This quilt is an original design featuring my own blocks: vulnerability, empathy, authenticity, CONNECTEDNESS, Powersource, Stoplight, Junctionbox, Concentric Circles, Conduits, and other simple structures. I also included blocks from Suzanne Woods' book, Modern Blocks: Missing Your Kiss, Simple Circle, On the Fence, Windmill, and a version of Riverbank. Wonky Ninepatch is from a class taught by members of the Baltimore Modern Quilt Guild at Seminole Sampler in Catonsville, MD. I learned Insertion Strips in that class as well."

AND

"Number Five in a series as an antidote to a feeling of impotence in the face of the mounting death toll of African Americans being murdered by police officers and others not usually held accountable"

(This quilt is actually Number Six in the series.)

The back is pieced with fabrics from the top, and coordinating fabrics.

Top: Pieced, foundation paper pieced, and constructed in "blocks"

Quilting: a variety of modern free motion designs

Size: 3,507 square inches—38.75" X 90.5"



“WHITE PRIVILEGE; WHITE CHOICES”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist

Baltimore, Maryland

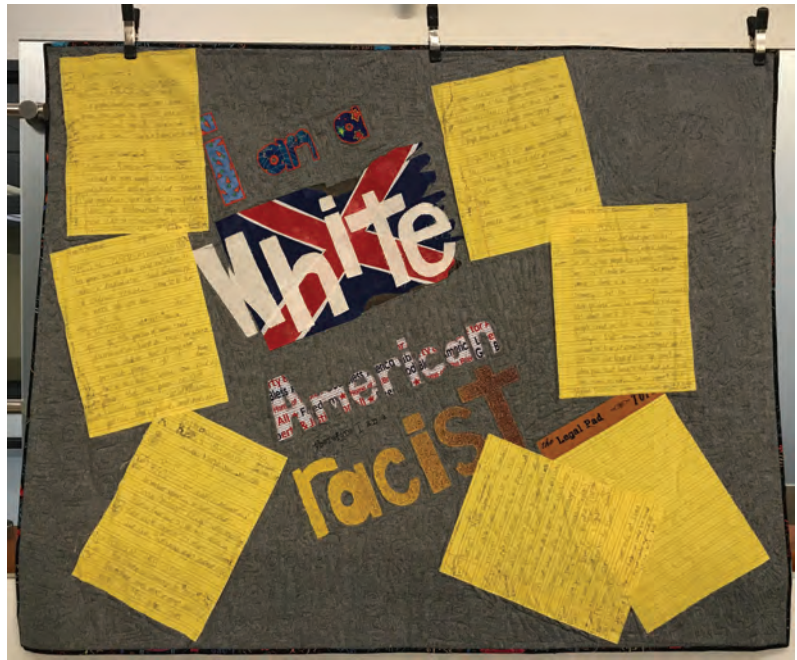
Completed March 2018

I am a white
American
Therefore I am a
racist.

Design Concept: Having heard endless debates on the questions of what constitutes racism, who can or cannot be racist, whether or not there are white people who do not have white privilege, and other often discussed confusions, I decided to

work out a logical thought progression of these concepts to facilitate my own understanding, and hopefully the clarity of other folks as well. After writing my definitions of the concepts in a way that I hope makes them less difficult to access, I decided to make a bold statement on a quilt, declaring myself to be a racist.

My desire, as with other quilts in this series, is to draw in the viewer by designing a quilt which demands to be seen more closely. I placed a mock Confederate battle flag behind the word “white” to add to the magnetism from across a room, and to emphasize the power of this symbol to signal “white supremacy active here.” The large letters are surrounded by “legal pad” fabric cut to appear to be pages torn from the pad and tossed, as one might do when furiously working to get every vital thought down on paper. The text on the “legal pad sheets” is my own handwriting, thoughts



Burnside/"White Privilege"

abbreviated as class notes would be in a college course. The progression of definitions of concepts begins on the lower left sheet, moving up to the two above it, over to the top of the right side, and down the right side. The corners are overlapped just enough to give the "tossed" appearance without covering much of the writing. Reading the text from the quilt would be tedious, to say the least, and not as elucidating as reading my full definitions, so the text of what I originally wrote is below. The concept explanations move from race, to racial prejudice, to racial discrimination, to racism, to systemic racism, to USA racism, to white privilege, to racist, building the case for how it is, and why it is, that all white Americans are racists, then inviting the viewer to choose what kind of a racist to be: an intentional racist, an unintentional racist, or a recovering racist.

Additional Text: "Race--Race is not a scientific designation. There are no statistically significant markers separating one 'race' of people from another. Nor are there any statistically significant markers binding people of one 'race' with one another. 'Race,' as it has been understood in the USA, is a social construct developed by people of Northern European descent to justify their own exploitation of other people. The first example of this is the justification of Europeans, by claiming that their whiteness made them superior to people with deeper skin tones, for claiming land where indigenous peoples were already living. Shortly after that, the same logic was employed to justify enslaving Africans."

"Racial Prejudice--Anyone of any ethnic group can prejudge any person, based on their own ideas of the person's characteristics, according to a preconceived set of qualities attributed to that person's ethnic group, by 'race.' The idea that 'white' people are always unfair to people who have deeper complexions is an example of this. Not all 'white' people behave in this way."

"Racial Discrimination--Anyone of any ethnic group can use the 'racial' prejudice that they hold in their own minds to determine between people of various 'races,' in any area of life over which they have some degree of power and control. A person of one 'race,' who is a supervisor, might use racial discrimination, rather than merit, to decide which of two employees should be promoted, between two employees whose skin tones differ from



Burnside/"White Privilege"

each other's and, possibly, from that of the supervisor. That would be discriminating by 'race.'"

"Racism--This is the practice of using 'racial' discrimination, based on 'racial' prejudices, to make decisions that disempower particular people. Inherent in this definition is the possession of some kind of power that one person (the one with the power to decide) has over the other person (the one who will be affected by the decision). That power may be social, economic, political, legal, physical, emotional, spiritual, or any of many kinds of power. Without the power of one person over the other, exercised because of a decision based on 'racial' discrimination, you simply have 'racial' discrimination, not racism. Racism is prejudice plus power."

"Systemic Racism--When racism has been practiced by many people over a long period of time, the people within a given culture may begin to assume that the racist practices, originally based on ideas developed out of 'racial' prejudice, are justified. The idea that racist practices are justified becomes inculturated, reinforcing the the original prejudices. Once the practices support the prejudices, and the prejudices support the practices, the vicious cycle becomes systematized. That causes the institutionalization of the beliefs and the discriminatory practices, creating systemic, or institutional, racism. It is prejudice plus the power of the group (which often functions without individual ascent)."

"USA Racism--Racism varies in different cultures. Racism in the United States of America has its own characteristics, based on US history, uniquely combined with other factors peculiar to the US. The systemic racism in the US favors people of Northern European descent over all others, with secondary and tertiary tiers of favoritism based on degrees of skin pigment and other factors. This means that people who are thought of 'racially' as white have generally been those who have been in positions of power and control over other people. It means that the term, 'people,' is assumed to mean 'white' people. It means that the way 'white' people live and think is considered normative for the culture. It means that laws and customs are created to benefit 'white' people."

"White Privilege--This concept can be very confusing, especially to 'white' people who have lived, or do live, in poverty. A person who knows poverty



Burnside/"White Privilege"

first hand may, understandably, have difficulty thinking of themselves as privileged. Yet, in a system which favors whiteness, all white people carry the privilege of whiteness.

One way to think about this is to ask oneself, 'If I could be _____ (Insert a 'race' other than 'white. '), would I choose to be? Why or why not?' One's answers to these questions tend to get at the concept of white privilege. White privilege is not something that a 'white' person can choose to remove because of a desire not to have a benefit which is not accorded to people of color. This is because white privilege is not about how one thinks of oneself, but about how other people tend to treat 'white' people as opposed to people of color.

"The classic example of white privilege is commonly referred to as 'Driving While Black,' or 'DWB.' As a 'white' person in the US, I never get in my car with the concern that a police officer might stop me arbitrarily. Nor do I worry that if a police officer stops me for good cause, I might get arrested, hurt, or killed. I might get a ticket. But, even when I have made an undeniable error, I have a good chance of talking my way into a warning instead of a ticket. This is NOT so for people of color, particularly young Black men, in the US. Imagine having to weigh out the importance of a simple errand against the very real possibility of not coming home in twenty minutes as you had planned! If you do not feel the need to go through that thought process before leaving home in your car, you have privilege (and freedom)!

"One reason it is hard for us 'white' folks to grasp the concept of white privilege is that it is often based on what does NOT happen to us. Unless we have friends who are Black, who share with us their experiences of living as Black people in a culture which favors 'whites,' we would not know what Black people are experiencing that we are not experiencing. It is easy to deny the existence of something that we do not have to face personally. Yet, if our existence is so 'racially' segregated that we do not have friends who tell us of the Black experience in the US, then how can we deny the reality of white privilege, or 'racial' segregation, at the very least?"

"Racist--Confusion abounds when it comes to the question of what attributes of an individual justify the moniker, 'racist.' Broadly speaking, a few people openly, without shame, exhibit racial prejudice, and act in racially discriminatory ways. There is not much debate on whether a



Burnside/"White Privilege"

person such as this is a racist, some even boasting of this status. We might say that these individuals are Intentional Racists.

"Most US citizens try very hard not to think in 'racially' prejudiced ways, are intentional in not acting in 'racially' discriminatory ways, do not want to be racist, and disapprove of racist talk and actions. This is very encouraging.

"Yet, all 'white' Americans have white privilege to a greater or lesser degree. We have a tendency to want to separate ourselves from the idea of having white privilege, because we think that admitting to having white privilege is equal to calling ourselves racists. And we are against racism!

"Here's the rub. No matter how much we deplore racism, we cannot shake off our white privilege. It comes with birth as a 'white' person in the US. It is bigger than we are. It is older than we are. It is stronger than we are. It is as stuck to us as our very fair skin.

"So, because we have white privilege, which carries with it some degree of power that 'non-white' people in the US do not have, and because we carry certain assumptions about this concept called 'race,' we are all racists by definition.

"Still, we have a choice. We can be Unintentional Racists by continuing to be against racism, but refusing to acknowledge our white privilege, because we think doing so is admitting that we are racists. (See above. That horse left the barn before we were born.) OR, we can be Recovering Racists by acknowledging our white privilege, and by listening to, honoring, and validating the experiences of people of color, and by working for positive change in our society. ('Working for positive change in our society' is a small way of categorizing a huge number of possible actions that we can do, not intended to oversimplify nor to devalue any of those very important commitments.)

"Some call this last category of 'white' people, 'anti-racist.' I prefer the term 'recovering racist,' because even the Unintentional Racist can legitimately claim to be anti-racist, by virtue of the fact that they are against racism in principle. To use the term, 'Recovering Racist,' acknowledges that we will always be racists as long as there is white privilege, and that we are working to diminish the effects of racism where we are."

My Statement in this Quilt: "All white Americans are racists because we benefit from white privilege. Yet, there is hope. We can be recovering racists, and work to rid our society of racial discrimination."




Burnside/“White Privilege”

Text On Back: “Number [Eleven] (I actually spelled it wrong on the quilt!) in a series of Confessional Quilts the purpose of which is to promote greater understanding of racism and white privilege in the hope of contributing to the dismantling of racism”

The back of this quilt is pieced of “God bless America” fabric and “With God All Things Are Possible” fabric to juxtapose the toxic patriotism of some white people who claim their justification for racist words and behavior as a God-given right, based on their assertion of white supremacy, while existing in a manner antithetical to patriotism and faith in God, with the kind of faith I feel to my bones in Black Churches and from Black friends, the kind of faith that is made strong and true by the second-by-second reliance on God for very survival and which leads to the sincere forgiveness of people who often do not even acknowledge their sin. With the God of the latter faith, I know all things are possible, even the dismantling of racism in the USA!

Top: machine embroidery, machine appliqué, and raw edge appliqué on whole cloth, a fabric woven of equal parts of black and white threads, giving it a wonderful texture and a sense of strength

Quilting: free-motion in various irregular designs and text, “Race is a social construct not a scientific designation.” And, “Be a racial justice worker.” And, “No such thing as race.” And, “Be recovering” And, “Eschew white privilege. Even better, use your privilege for justice.” And, “Racism,” in a big circle with a line through it. 

Size: 2,594 square inches—57” x 45.5”

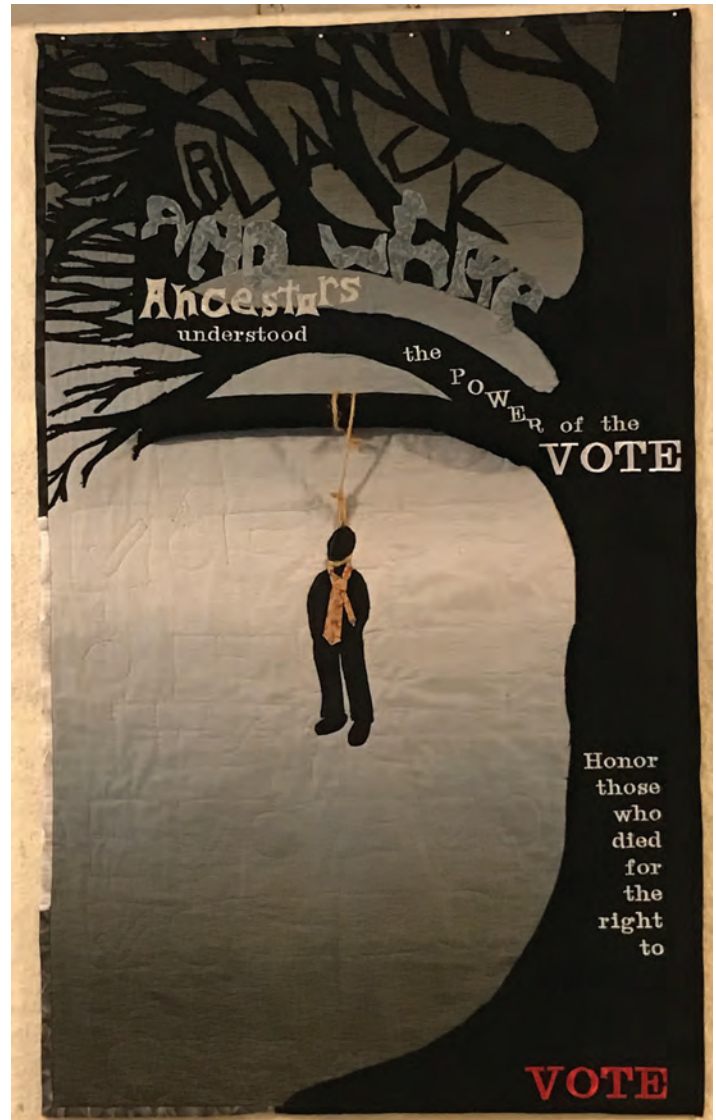


“VOTING RIGHTS”
Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist
Baltimore, Maryland
Completed May 2020

BLACK
AND white
Ancestors
understood
the
POWER
of the
VOTE

Honor
those
who
died
for
the
right
to

VOTE



Design Concept: In the period leading up to the 2018 midterm elections, I was horrified by the many instances of blatant voter suppression, largely allowed by a June 2013 decision of the Supreme Court of the United States of America which struck down two sections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Most of the instances occurred in Republican controlled states, and most of the effect was on Voters of Color. The majority opinion, written by Chief Justice John Roberts seemed to be based, at least partially, on the false assumption that because Barack Obama had been elected President of the United States of America's, we had entered into a post-racial society. (I won't delve into the white privilege exposed in that assumption in this document. See my quilt, "White Privilege; White Choices" for more on that topic.) To pick just one example of the 2018 voter suppression antics of the unencumbered, immoral Republicans in power in the states, I choose Georgia. The Republican Secretary of State, Brian Kemp, was his party's nominee for governor, so he should have recused himself from running the election, but he didn't. To ensure his win against Stacey Abrams, an African American woman, formerly the minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives, he refused to process 53,000 voter registrations which had been filed well before the deadline. He had previously removed 1.4 million voters from the registration rolls. He "won" the election by less than 55,000 votes. Considering that 70% of the registrations not processed were of African Americans, and 76.3% of the 1.4 million voters that were removed from the rolls were minorities, it is conceivable that Stacey Abrams could have won the election if Brian Kemp had not engaged in a conflict of interest and voter suppression actions. I could go on In the midst of the 2018 season of voter suppression I began work on this quilt. Also that year my daughter became engaged to be married and the Democrats won back the U.S. House of Representatives, so I turned my attention to a wedding quilt. Now the 2020 elections are coming upon us quickly, so I finished this quilt!!

One of the many reasons that whites have named for unspeakable acts of violence against African Americans, particularly in the Jim Crow era, is that the person they lynched had voted or attempted to vote. This continued long after the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the US Constitution which gave African Americans (men) the right to vote. Obviously white men



Burnside/"Voting Rights"

felt threatened by Black men voting, and Black men knew that voting was vitally important to gaining rights. Another of the many reasons white men stated for lynching Black men was that, "he wore a necktie."


My Statement in this Quilt cannot be more succinctly stated than on the quilt itself.

Text On Back: "In 1870 the 15th Amendment to the US Constitution made it illegal for states to deny voting rights to US citizens on the basis of race. As many as 100 years later, African-Americans were still being lynched to suppress their right to vote, as well as for other stated reasons. Even as recently as 2018, Republican Secretaries of State in some states got away with maneuvering to suppress voting rights for African-Americans. In spite of the 15th Amendment, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other legislation, African-Americans do not have equal rights in the United States. The right to vote is far too precious for any citizen to take it for granted."

AND: "Number 12 in the series, A Race Against Race"

Description of Back: pieced black and white fabrics, including a photo printed on fabric picturing a Black man hanging by a noose from a street light fixture with a sign stating, "This NiGGER VOTED," (in case anyone doubts the premise of the quilt), and a "Table of Human Characteristics," as well as "Harlem Renaissance musical instrument" fabric, and a red label.

Top: machine embroidery, raw edge appliqué, constructed branch, noose, and necktie on whole cloth, black to grey hombre fabric

Quilting: OTE with "O" as a noose in the large open section, "tree bark" pattern on the tree trunk and limbs

Size: 1,038 square inches—25" x 41.5"





“Not Guilty?!?”

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist
Baltimore, MD
Completed 2024



Front:

-If you respond to BLACK LIVES MATTER or BLUE LIVES MATTER with ALL LIVES MATTER do not attack law enforcement personnel with flagpoles!


-We the People

-in order to form a more perfect union

Left Side (as viewed):

-Privilege is when you think something is not a problem because it's not a problem to you personally.

Right Side (as viewed):

-American Exceptionalism  America will be exceptional when we live up to our constitutional values.

-No person is inherently superior to any other person.

Back: We the People ... self-evident truth ... All created equal ... endowed by their creator ... unalienable rights ... LIFE ... Liberty ... Pursuit of Happiness ... with out fear of killing or being killed

Design Concept: Following the United States 2020 Presidential Election, Donald Trump, the incumbent who lost the election, engaged in a number of different schemes to attempt to stop the peaceful transfer of power. His efforts came to a horrific and deadly conclusion on January 6, 2021, the day that Congress certified the election for Joe Biden, the winner of both the popular vote and the electoral vote. On that day, Donald Trump, having summoned his followers to Washington, D.C. in a Tweet, telling them to be there on January 6, and promising that “it will be wild,” then rallied them to go to the Capitol to “fight like hell,” stating that if they didn’t they would no longer have a country. They did what he told them to do. They stormed the Capitol. They pushed Capitol Police out of the way with bicycle racks.

They attacked Capitol Police and Metropolitan District of Columbia Police Officers with flagpoles, fire extinguishers, their own riot gear, bear spray, and other objects. They beat officers, badly injuring 140, killing one, and causing the deaths of four others. Some of the rioters died as well. They



Burnside/"Not Guilty"

entered the Capitol Building by force, breaking windows to climb through to areas where they were not authorized to be. They urinated and defecated in the building. They carried Confederate, and other flags into the building where they attempted to break into the House of Representatives Chamber. They did enter the evacuated Senate Chamber and the Office of the Speaker of the House, desecrating and destroying, leaving wreckage and filth in their wake. They constructed a noose and chanted about hanging the Vice President for not refusing to certify the election. All the while, the President, Donald Trump, watched on television, declining to call off his followers.

After close to four hours, the situation was brought under control, following which members of Congress, notably Republican leaders, condemned the actions, placing the blame squarely on Donald Trump. The election was certified for Joe Biden in spite of the violent attempt to stop it. Within days the House of Representatives filed impeachment articles against Donald Trump (for the second time in his term) for inciting an insurrection. Following a brilliantly argued case against him in the Senate, the Republican Senators, including the Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell, who had blamed him for the insurrection, acquitted Donald Trump of all charges.

Watching the announcement of this "Not Guilty" verdict on television, all I could do was scream and cry, "Not guilty?!?" I felt like my heart had been ripped out of my chest. I no longer recognized my country. I was despondent with anger and grief. I was traumatized. I was devastated to the point of apoplexy. Finally, I asked myself if I wanted to stay in the state I was in, or did I want to do something about it? There was nothing to do except to make art. I went to my sewing studio and created a large American flag with 53 stars, adding three for the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands, placing myself in solidarity with the people in those areas where United States of America citizens live, but cannot vote. All three areas continually seek statehood, being repeatedly denied by Republicans because of the assumption that these majority Black and Latino populations will tend to vote for Democrats, making it harder for Republicans to control White House, Senate, and House of Representatives, a distinctly racist policy decision. I draped that American flag around myself (metaphorically) as a way of taking back my country. The flag became the major feature of a vest which I covered with words and symbols of My Country, My Democracy, and the rights of all citizens to express their desires through voting. With this vest I reclaimed my country for myself and all who have been treated as "less



Burnside/“Not Guilty”

than” full citizens. I took back patriotism from those who so devastatingly tried to claim it by force instead of by love.

My Statement in this Quilt: “The Constitution of the United States is an affirmation of this multiracial democracy’s highest vision. All Americans who claim the moniker, American, should be living, working, and praying for the realization of the best that we can be as individuals, and as a society. Anyone who works against the progress toward our actualization of who we have set out to be is lying if they call themselves patriotic.”

Size: This “quilt” is a vest, made with the Quilter’s Vest/Jacket Pattern by Virginia Robertson, size 2X. It is a long vest in five sections. I wanted to wear it, but I cannot, because I cut the sides higher than the pattern directed. That preserved more of the flag, but made the armpit space too tight. I display it on a garment stand with a wooden hanger. I may put an inflatable in it to give more of the effect of it being worn, when I get myself together to inflate the inflatable.



CREDO

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist
Baltimore, Maryland
Completed 2024



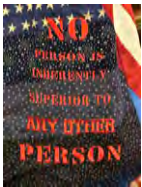
Text: NOT ONE PERSON
(Except Jesus) EVER BORN IS
INHERENTLY BETTER
OR INHERENTLY WORSE
THAN ANY OTHER

PERSON EVER BORN (By my Christian faith I know this to be true. Signature)



Burnside/“Credo”

Design Concept: While creating “Not Guilty?!?” (the vest featuring an American flag that is in this quilt series) I found myself asking how it is that people could feel justified in plowing through barriers at the Nation’s Capitol, beating police officers, breaking windows to enter the Capitol Building, defecating on furniture and floors, and all of the other unimaginable acts that American citizens, claiming patriotism, did on January 6, 2021. I puzzled over it. It still seemed surreal after several weeks. I asked myself what it would take for me to feel justified in engaging in such lawless, brazen, violent acts with impunity. I could concoct no scenario in which I would join in what I witnessed on television in real time on January 6, 2021. Then it hit me, “They felt entitled!” Something in the belief system of each of those American citizens causes them to feel superior to other Americans. I kept shaking my head. It seemed obvious, yet I struggled to believe it. I added to the vest the phrase, “No Person Is Inherently Superior to Any Other Person.”



Over the next weeks and months, I found myself uttering versions of this statement in sermons and conversations. I thought about it a lot, turning it over and over in my mind, still trying to make sense of an American mindset that was based on some other concept of the relative value of Americans besides EQUALITY. Then it smacked me, “Duh! Racism! People who think that white people are superior to People of Color have that mindset!”

In early 2024 as I completed “Not Guilty?!?” I realized that I absolutely must make a quilt to express nothing but my core belief that all humans are really created equal. I synthesized all of the versions of my statement of core belief into one full, clear statement that was to be My Creed, my statement of belief, my CREDO.

In making the quilt, I wanted it to be very personal, so it had to be bright and colorful. I chose as the background a special batik fabric, vibrant with rainbow colors, that I had been saving for a very long time. Then I laid out the lines of text to be impactful, and I drew the letters out freehand. I pieced scraps of various black and white prints to back the letters for contrast with the background. I appliquéd the letters, all batik fabrics, onto the contrast, and onto the background in the raw-edge style. Then I examined my statement on my quilt top. “NOT ONE PERSON EVER BORN IS INHERENTLY BETTER OR INHERENTLY WORSE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON EVER BORN,” and I thought of my Christian faith. I added



"Except Jesus" by hand on a small white fabric. Then I thought of my priesthood, my leadership role in the Church, the Church which holds dear ancient creeds stating what Christians throughout history have agreed is the essence of Christian faith, our unifying statements. I know that this CREDO is consistent with the ancient creeds, although a statement about human beings in relationship to each other, where the Church's creeds are about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in relationship to each other. So I added "By my Christian faith I know this to be true." by hand on a small white fabric and signed it with my name.

I intended for the message of the quilt to be a bit camouflaged, not overtly clear. It turned out to be a bit more indistinct than I had expected. When I mentioned that to Irmgarde Brown at St. John's Episcopal Church in Havre de Grace, Maryland, the first time the quilt was shown, she said she didn't think I should alter it, that it's less than clear text caused viewers to be drawn in to decipher the message. "BINGO!" "Thank you, Irm!" Every quilt in this series is meant to have the effect of drawing in the viewer to grasp the meaning. (I kind of forgot one of my own design principles for my series!)

My Statement in this Quilt: Every person ever born is equally valuable, made in God's Image, and infused with God's Spirit. What distinguishes us is our behavior, our attitudes, our values. We can choose those things, and the choices we make determine the nature of who we each become as individuals.

Back: There is no text on the back, except the label. The back is pieced. A diagonal strip, pieced of batiks left over from the letters onto the front, goes from corner to corner between large pieces of a black and white leaf pattern fabric.

Top: Raw-edge appliqué on whole cloth

Quilting:

Size: approximately 1,512 square inches—42" X 36"



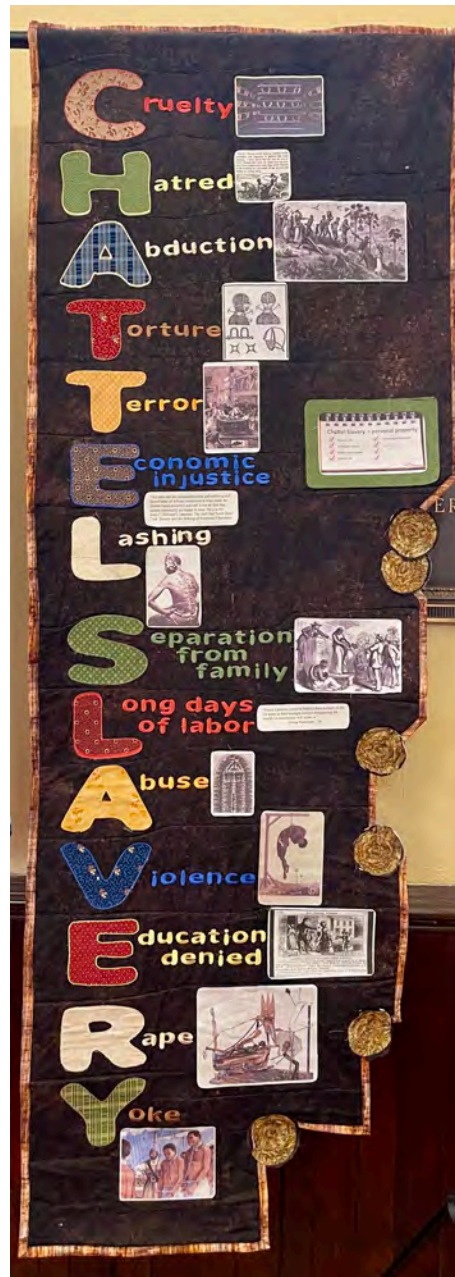
Chattel Slavery

Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist

Baltimore, Maryland

Completed February 15, 2025

Cruelty
Hatred
Abduction
Torture
Terror
Economic injustice
Lashing
Separation from family
Long days of labor
Abuse
Violence
Education denied
Rape
Yoke



Design Concept: This quilt is about American Chattel Slavery, the cruelest, most gruesome, violent, and heinous form of slavery ever known in human



history. It differed from less brutal forms of slavery because it was permanent, generational, subject to inheritance laws, and dehumanizing. First, African people were captured from their ancestral homes by other Africans, and sold to slavers on ships to be carried to Europe and the Americas. This transporting of Africans long distances over turbulent seas is termed “the Middle Passage.” Millions of Africans were kidnapped in this way to be enslaved for the enrichment of those who would eventually purchase them. Millions more died during the journey, the Middle Passage, their bodies being tossed overboard to watery graves. Once delivered to the deadly destinations, the kidnapped African people were housed in warehouses, waiting to be auctioned to enslavers. Enslaved people were bought and sold at auctions, in the same way as animals. They had no personal freedoms, rights, nor self-determination.

My Statement in this Quilt: “Of all of the cruelties human beings have inflicted on other human beings, American Chattel Slavery is the worst. Millions of kidnapped African people survived the Middle Passage, only to spend the rest of their lives in this system of dehumanization and torture. Many of their descendants spent their entire lives never finding any relief from this evil institution of greed-induced cruelty.”

Back: There is no text on the back of the quilt except for the label. The back is a single piece of quilting cotton, printed with a parqueted pattern of wood grain. The backing fabric was cut to extend 1.25” beyond the edges of the top. It was then folded in half and wrapped to the front as self-binding. The self-binding was machine stitched from the front close to the edge.

Top: Enslaved people worked the land. The whole cloth background of the quilt top is a deep brown mottled fabric, like rich, live earth. Because of the time period of chattel slavery, I used pre Civil War era reproduction fabrics for the embroidery appliqué letters to spell CHATTEL SLAVERY vertically down the left side. To the right of each letter is the rest of a word, beginning with that letter, that describes one aspect of American Chattel Slavery. To the right of each word is an image, and/or a block of text, illustrating that word.

Cruelty—tops of heads and bottoms of feet of captured African people on a slave ship, side by side and stacked, alternating directions on flat board bunks, suspended by chains, shackled, as viewed from one end



Burnside/“Chattel Slavery”

Hatred—drawing of overseer cracking a long whip over enslaved workers, with a caption describing the perspective of a deacon slave master as being pleased only with an overseer who would brutally punish the workers

Abduction—drawing of slavers marching captured Africans down to slave ships in chains

Torture—line drawings of torture devices

Terror—drawing of bound man being dangled over a vat of boiling water by a rope

Economic injustice—quotation from the book, The Half Has Never Been Known: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism by Edward E. Baptist

Lashing—photo of a man from the back, showing crisscrossed raised scars covering his back

Separation from family—drawing of a woman and child, clinging to each other on an auction block

Long days of labor—quotation from George Washington about working people as many hours as possible without causing any real harm

Abuse—drawing of captured Africans on a slave ship, as viewed from above

Violence—drawing of a young Black man, hanging from a chain on a gallows by his middle, bent in half sideways from his own weight, blood dripping from his body

Education denied—drawing with a caption about the illegality of teaching African Americans to read and write

Rape—photograph of a wooden kinetic sculpture on which a light colored human figure moves up and down on a dark colored human figure, on a raised platform, while another human figure looks on

Yoke—color drawing of African men chained together with metal yokes on a ship, while white man cracks a whip

To the right of the images and texts described above is a rectangular photocopy of a page from a spiral notebook, showing a checklist of aspects of chattel slavery.

To the right of the images and texts described above is a rectangular photocopy of a page from a spiral notebook, showing a checklist of aspects of chattel slavery.

The right side of the quilt is cut in straight and angled lines, bringing to mind the ramshackle nature of slave quarters. The round ends of cut logs are quilted onto front and back of inside corners of the right quilt edge,



Burnside/“Chattel Slavery”

depicting the ends of the logs from which these cabins were generally constructed.

Quilting: edge to edge horizontal lines of machine stitching, raw-edge appliqué machine stitching around perimeter edges of images and text blocks

Size: approximately 34” X 90”



Let's Be Clear
Carol Burnside, Quilt Artist
Baltimore, Maryland
Completed February 2025

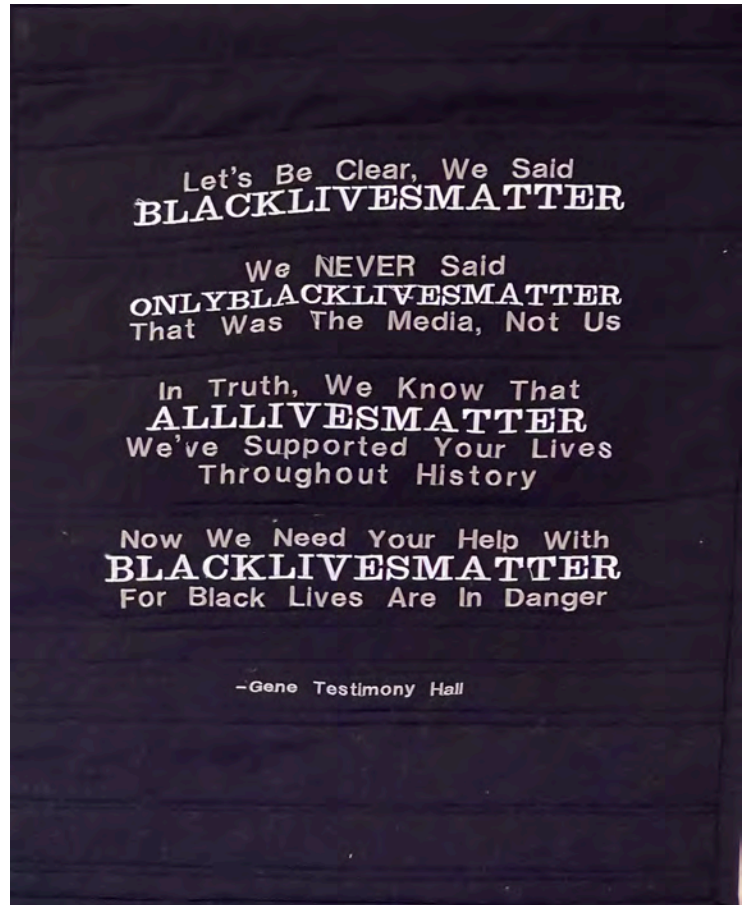
Let's Be Clear, We Said
BLACKLIVESMATTER

We NEVER Said
ONLYBLACKLIVESMATTER
That Was The Media, Not Us

In Truth, We Know That
ALLLIVESMATTER
We've Supported Your Lives
Throughout History

Now We Need Your Help With
BLACKLIVESMATTER
Because Black Lives Are In Danger

—Gene Testimony Hall



Design Concept: I started the quilt series, A RACE AGAINST RACE in 2015. About one year into the project I made the large parade banner style quilt, "BLACK LIVES MATTER." One of the questions that white folks sometimes ask is, "Why 'Black Lives Matter?'" It usually goes like this. They say, hesitantly, as if they know that there is something legitimate about this, but hidden from them, "I know that Black Lives Matter! They matter to me. Really. But don't *all* lives matter?" The statement on this quilt is the best answer to that query that I have ever heard. I found it on a postcard in the gift shop at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture. After wanting to for a long time, I finally made it into a quilt.



Burnside/“Let's Be Clear”

My Statement in this Quilt: “It’s okay that you don’t quite grasp why it’s important to state that BLACK LIVES MATTER. Thank you so much for asking the question! Asking questions is the best way to learn. Now you know that we all need to work together to show that BLACK LIVES MATTER, and to protect Black lives. Thank you!”

There is no text on the back of this quilt except the label.

The back is one piece of plain black quilting cotton.

Top: The top is whole cloth black cotton quilting fabric with polyester machine embroidery thread. The binding is of the same fabric.

Quilting: The machine quilting is straight horizontal lines of stitching from edge to edge.

Size: Square inches— ??” X ??”

