Filmmaker Ken Burns Really Values Quilts

In a recent article by JUDITH H. DOBRZYNSKI at The New York Times (click here to read full article), we learned that documentary filmmaker Ken Burns really values quilts. When talking about one of the quilts in his collection, he says, "If you consider the thousands of woman-hours that went into this, it's just an extraordinary thing." "I would not trade it for a $25 million painting by you-name-the-artist," he added.

And now a number of those quilts are going on display at the International Quilt Study Center & Museum in Nebraska.

Uncovered

The Ken Burns Collection

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Prolific film-maker and documentarian Ken Burns loves antique American quilts.

To him, each of these textiles represents a moment in time and American history—a nexus of individuals and geography and culture that can never be fully recovered, but which is nevertheless represented in these strikingly graphic compositions. Burns is less concerned with the provenance and genealogy of his quilts than with their gestalt—both their visual impact on the viewer, and their implicit connections to life stories.

Displayed alongside eloquent, anecdotal thoughts about quilts, collecting, art and authenticity, Burns' quilts function as his films do: they spark dialogue and remind us—he hopes—of our shared humanity.