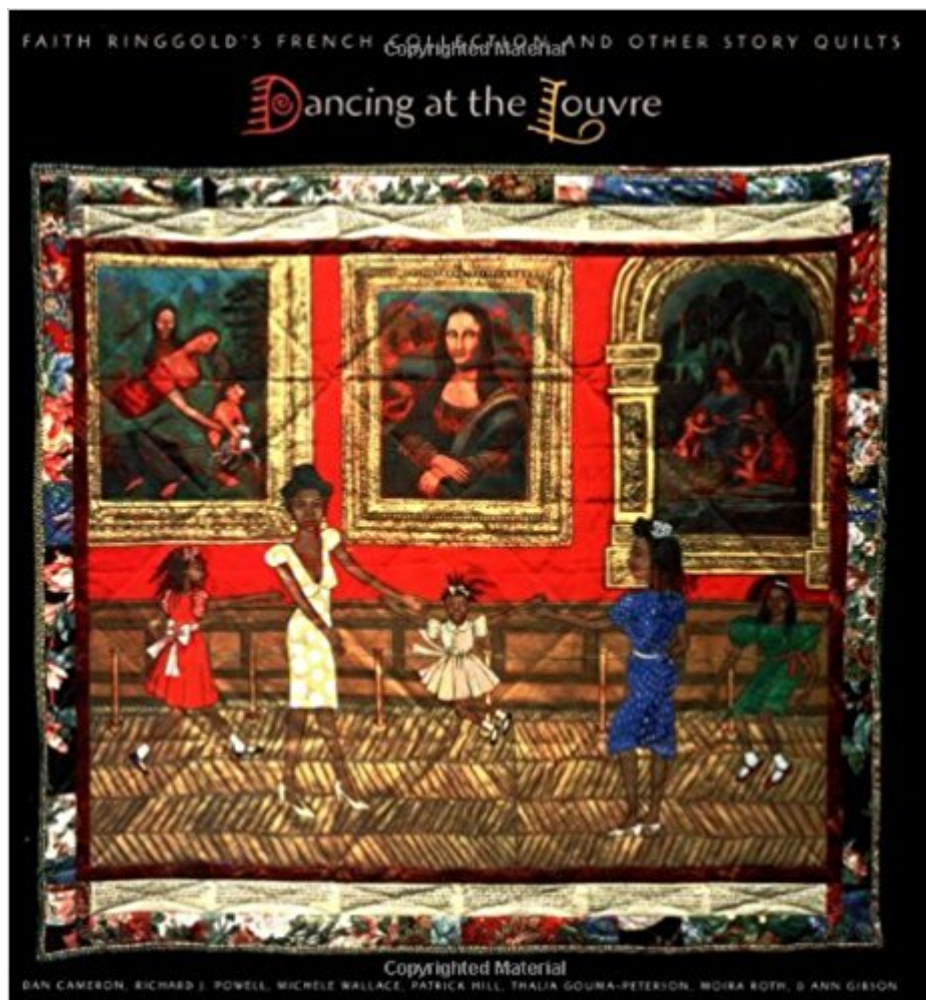




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Dancing At The Louvre: Faith Ringgold's French Collection And Other Story Quilts



Synopsis

"My process is designed to give us 'colored folk' and women a taste of the American dream straight up. Since the facts don't do that too often, I decided to make it up. . . . That is the real power and joy of being an artist. We can make it come true. Or look true."#151;Faith Ringgold, in a 1992 interview

This catalog is the first book-length publication devoted to the exquisite story quilts of contemporary artist Faith Ringgold. Combining painted images, handwritten texts, and quilting techniques, Ringgold weaves together modernist painting; feminist critique; postmodernist strategies of appropriation, parody, and montage; and personal memoir in a remarkable synthesis that takes on European modernism, African American folk art, and the "black aesthetic" of the 1960s and 1970s. The catalog accompanies an exhibition of The French Collection and The American Collection, a series of story quilts Ringgold has produced since 1990. Catalog essays include an examination of Ringgold's stylistic development through the 1960s and 1970s, an exploration of the social and political aspects of the story quilts, and a recollection by the artist's daughter, writer Michele Wallace. Ringgold has adapted the tradition of the American slave quilt to create a world in which African Americans and women dominate, where history is not only questioned but also reinvented. The titles of the quilts in Ringgold's French Collection and American Collection suggest her subject range and daring: Jo Baker's Birthday Party; Dinner at Gertrude Stein's; A Portrait of Aunt Jemima; Tubman, Douglass, and Truth: Wanted Dead or Alive are examples. Faith Ringgold's broad audience of admirers (her books for children have won Caldecott and New York Times book illustration honors) will welcome *Dancing at the Louvre*. Finally there is a book that displays her artistic achievements and provides a full discussion of her importance within contemporary art.

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Customer Reviews

No matter how society conspires to usher certain groups toward its dimly lit margins, some folks always work their way back to the center waving and shouting. Faith Ringgold redefines the solemn artistic canon represented by Van Gogh, Matisse, and Monet with her intricate, glorious story quilts. Their fabric and paint layers combine magical realism with politics, feminism, satire, memoir and the weight of African American history. *Dancing at the Louvre* was designed to accompany a traveling show of Ringgold's work. It pairs gorgeously rendered color plates with pithy text on her art, life, and politics. Her "French Collection" quilts feature protagonist Willia X enlivening--no, reviving--classical European art and tableaux. In "The Sunflower Quilting Bee at Arles," Van Gogh carries his awkward, brilliant sunflowers to a table where Willia X mingles with the likes of Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Sojourner Truth, "a fortress of African American women's courage, with enough energy to transform a nation piece by piece," writes Ringgold along the quilt border. Other pieces, such as the folk art "Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima" and the unalloyed anger of "The Flag is Bleeding" conjure the pain of racism. --Francesca Coltrera

YA-This book, which is designed to accompany a traveling exhibition of Faith Ringgold's work, gives YAs an opportunity to observe the stylistic, social, and political development of the African-American artist, writer, and storyteller. Essays by members of the art community present views of Ringgold's work and influences. The highlight of the book is the section of fine-quality full-color plates of the artist's unique and beautiful creations and the texts from several of her story quilts. The personal narratives cover an amazing array of topics as diverse as Jim Crow and Matisse's *La Danse*. The artist uses "magic realism," true artistic license, in many of her pieces, incorporating in the same scene historical figures who could never have met. Her successful journey through an often sexist and racist art world, while perhaps not magical, is impressive. Ringgold has not only created her own path; she has also provided young artists with a clear path and a direction to follow through her art and her words. Nancy Karst, Fairfax County Public Library, VA Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

She inspired me to become a traditional quilter and writer, Her work started me researching and making Pine Cone Quilts.

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