

2005 Honoree Bets Ramsey





On left: ***Peto's Centennial Challenge***, Bets Ramsey, 1994
Florence Peto bought a quilt top made of Centennial prints, took it apart, and divided it with Bertha Stenge, Elizabeth Richardson and herself. She challenged each to make a quilt. Elizabeth Richardson's scraps were passed on to Bets Ramsey and she finished the piece. On right: ***Shoo Fly in Nine Patches #1***, Bets Ramsey.

2005 Honoree Bets Ramsey has had a life-long love of the arts and needle crafts. The summer after her graduation from high school, she and a friend set up a dressmaking business in her

parents' dining room. After earning her B.A. with honors in Art, Bets focused on her marriage and raising her four children.

In 1970, Bets Ramsey decided to go back to school and get a master's degree in crafts from the University of Tennessee. She selected quilt making from a list of research topics, never imagining where it would lead her. She studied all the quilt books in the library. As

she interviewed relatives about her grandmother's quilts, the past and the grandmother she had never known became very real. This was the beginning of a new career path, and she has followed it ever since: making quilts and wall hangings; writing, teaching, and lecturing about quilts; and curating quilt exhibits.

In 1994, Bets decided to make her own artwork her priority. "Finally, I could see myself as an artist," she says. "I began to understand that in the past I had refused to claim the title and take the responsibility for living it. Now I know that I am an artist and this is my work.

I will continue to curate exhibitions, to write articles, and give lectures because that is what I do, but my studio work comes first."

Bets' work is characterized by low key yet animated colors and patterns and careful attention to technique, reflecting both her formal training in design and her love of art. Many of her pieces are pieced of historic textiles, adding to the uniqueness and stories of the pieces.

We will have some of Bets' pieces on display at The Quilters Hall of Fame February 22 – May 7, 2022. Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. To 4 p.m. We'd love to have you stop in to see them.

Deb Geyer