

Quilting the Hawaiian landscape Exhibition

Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford Summer 2024

Review by Teresa Cuthbert July 2024

I had the pleasure on Tuesday last of visiting the 'HAWAII Ma uka I Ma Kai: Quilting the Hawaiian Landscape' exhibition in Oxford. It is a beautiful free exhibition consisting of 15 quilts commissioned by the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford. Alongside the quilts are photographs of the Hawaiian landscape and vegetation which have inspired the quilt designs. Each quilt has a brief description of the maker, their quilting journey and the inspiration behind their work.

Each quilt is colourful although the colours are not significant. Each pattern is cut on the 1/8th and the techniques used are needle turn appliqué, hand embroidery (on some quilts, the most popular stitch being 'chicken feet') and hand quilting. The philosophy of the quilting is that you start at the centre (representing the heart) and always returning to and finishing at the centre. The quilting group follow a strong tradition and when they meet they sit around four tables with one table dedicated to beginners. As they advance they are then distributed among the other groups of more experienced quilters.

There is a lovely short film explaining and demonstrating methods which is very informative.

What did I take away from this?

Well there are some traditions which I took to heart. One of which is that before you gift a quilt that is made with love you should sleep under it for one night to seal the love. And a quote that I wish I had considered many years ago is this:

"Never design a quilt for a child, let the child grow into the quilt"

I really recommend a visit, but if driving to Oxford I would recommend you park and ride, as it very difficult and expensive to park in Oxford centre.

How long the exhibition is on, for the guide did not know, however he said the last one was on for two years. This one started in the spring of 2024.

Enjoy!