



A community gallery and news space

Quilt National ARTISTS

Earth Stories opens at MSU Museum

on [May 19, 2014](#) in [Events](#), [Quilt National Artist](#), [Quilts](#)

by *Leni Levenson Wiener, curator*



Earth Stories will be on view at the MSU Museum until November 20, 2014. Photo by Pearl Yee Wong.

The idea behind SAQA's *Earth Stories* exhibit was simple enough; artists were challenged to create large works (or installations) inspired by a person or project anywhere in the world doing something positive for the earth. The word positive was important—we wanted inspiring stories of people who were working to change the course of over consumption and decay, rather than to embrace negativity.

Artists were chosen by a *call for consideration*. Each artist presented a portfolio of their work and Dr. Carolyn Mazloomi carefully chose the artists who would be included in the exhibition. They were given a little more than a year to complete their work in a very specific size—a footprint of 72" square or 72" on one side and at least 60" on the other.

As the curator of this exhibit I enjoyed watching the pieces develop and evolve and hearing the artists share their thoughts and progress. As one of the selected artists, I also shared the frustrations of finding an appropriate theme and creating such a large work.



The exhibit has 24 large quilts and 24 smaller summary quilts by the same artists.



Palimpsest by Brooke Atherton, Billings Montana

Most remarkable about this exhibit is the breadth and scope of the projects that inspired the work of these twenty four magnificent pieces. Many of the artists in *Earth Stories* are QN artists, and although I do not have the space to celebrate them all, here are a few of their artworks.

Brooke Atherton, Billings Montana: *Palimpsest*

Inspired by: [Floating Island International](#)

Using a matrix formed from recycled plastic drinking bottles and native plants, floating islands manufactures artificial islands that are moveable or can be tethered in place to rebalance water ecosystems that humans have upset. Brooke has incorporated a Grandmother's Flower Garden quilt which has outlived its original purpose and repurposed into a new story that centers on repurposing

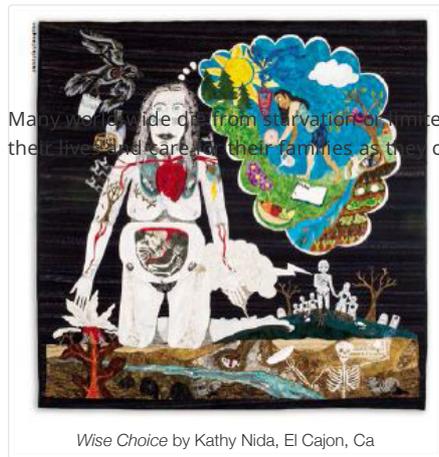
for the sake of our planet.



Maya Chaimovich, Ramat Gan, Israel: *A Source of Life in the Dead Sea*

Inspired by: www.onlinedeadsea.com

The Israeli government has invested more than a billion dollars in a project called "The Dead Sea Harvest", the intention of which is to extract mineral rich healing salt that has sunk to the bottom.



Many women live in fear from starvation or limited access to earth's natural resources. When women can plan their lives and care for their families as they choose, the strain on limited natural resources will be reduced.

Wise Choice by Kathy Nida, El Cajon, Ca

Kathy Nida, El Cajon, Ca: *Wise Choice*

Inspired by: [International Planned Parenthood Federation](http://InternationalPlannedParenthoodFederation.org)



Mirjam Pet-Jacobs, The Netherlands

Light Towers by Mirjam Pet-Jacobs, The Netherlands

Netherlands: Light Towers

Inspired by: The L Prize awarded to Royal Philips Electronics for an energy saving bulb with light similar to that of a common incandescent bulb.

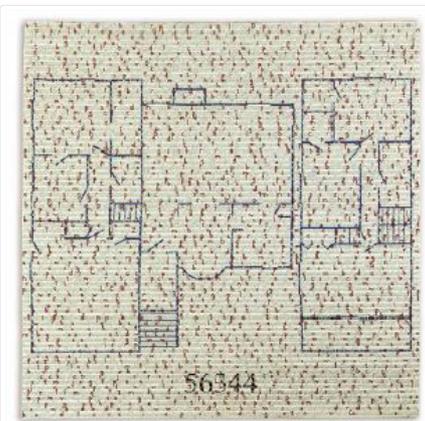
Mirjam's husband wrote the patent for this bulb. She was inspired by the skyscrapers in the US or the enormous tower apartment blocks in the outskirts of St. Petersburg, Russia. The 'Light Tower' is the nickname of the Philips building where bulbs and tubes are tested.

Kathy York, Austin, Texas: *Crowded House*

Inspired by: Annie Leonard (*The Story of Stuff*)

Kathy York took Annie Leonard's famous book about massive consumerism quite personally. She counted all the objects in her house over a period of six months. The Number, (which she calls the humiliating and nauseating number) spills out of the confines of her house.

Michigan State University Museum, the opening venue for this show and a partner in its development, is a center of regional, national, and international quilt-related scholarly and educational activities, including the Quilt Index (quiltindex.org), an online tool for centralized public access to quilt and quilt artist-related materials. The MSU Museum is also home to an outstanding collection of quilts and quilt-related materials, both historical and contemporary, from around the world. *Earth Stories* provided them with an opportunity to share a collection of contemporary quilts that reflect the power of this art form for personal expression, education, and activism.



Crowded House by Kathy York, Austin, Texas

Leni Levenson Wiener is the curator for the Earth Stories exhibit. She also created a piece in the show entitled *it's a shell of a problem* this piece focuses on both the helping hands of humans and the desirability of turtle and tortoise shells. Her website is www.leniwiener.com

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OUR MISSION

Quilt National Artists is a collaborative site dedicated to spreading the news about art quilts and fiber art. Each artist who participates on this site has been chosen to show in the prestigious biennial Quilt National exhibition. All art on this website is owned by the artists. **Please respect their copyrights.**

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