

Faith ringgold



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

? Peggy Orr Professor Knight Art History April 12, 2009 Ringgold's Story Quilts Faith Ringgold's artwork on her quilts is not only beautiful but literally tells stories. Ringgold began her artistic career more than 35 years ago as a painter. Today, she is best known for her painted story quilts -- art that combines painting, quilted fabric and storytelling. She has exhibited in major museums in the USA, Europe, South America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. She is in the permanent collection of many museums including the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Solomon R.

Guggenheim Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and The Museum of Modern Art. Ringgold received her Bachelors and Masters degrees from The City College of New York many years ago. She taught in the New York Public schools for 18 and one half years, however, today she is a senior professor of art at University of California in San Diego, California The content caught my attention to Ringgold's image Tar Beach (pg. 1166). The image is acrylic on canvas paper, bordered with printed, painted, quilted and pieced cloth, 74 1/4 x 68 1/2". The subject of the story quilt illustrates a

Depression era girl's imaginative foray to heights from which she can see and therefore claim her world. Picnicking on the roof of her family's Harlem apartment building - a "tar beach" to which they bring fried chicken and roasted peanuts, watermelon and beer, and not least, friends and laughter. Cassie pictures herself soaring above New York City: above the George Washington Bridge, which her father helped build; above the headquarters of the union that has denied him membership, because of his half-black, half-Indian heritage; above the rooms in which they live.

Ringgold's strong figures and flattened perspective bring a distinctive magic to this dreamy and yet wonderfully concrete vision, narrated in poetic cadences that capture the language and feel of flight. Part autobiographical, part fictional, this allegorical tale sparkles with symbolic and historical references central to African-American culture. The spectacular artwork resonates with color and texture. The painted scene in the center of the quilt shows a Harlem rooftop on a starry night with four adults playing cards and with Cassie Louise Lightfoot and her brother, Be Be, lying on a blanket gazing at the sky.

It took Ringgold one month to finish Tar Beach. She is an inspired Artist who's ideas come from reflecting on her own life and the lives of people she has known and have been in some way inspired by. Ringgold thinks about the characters and the story she wants to tell and then she begins to write the chapters in segments. And then, just like the materials of a quilt, she pieces the words together until they make a story. She has to edit many times before it is finished and ready to be written on the quilt. The story is written with a black fine (felt) tip Sanford Sharpie marker.