



FEBRUARY 2010

Staying Warm with Scraps of Cloth

Eloise Lindsey | *African-American Strippy Quilt*



VISIT THE BMA
and see this strippy
quilt in the *Textiles
Recycled/Reimag-
ined* exhibition in the
Berman Textile
Gallery, March 10–
September 5, 2010.

Eloise Lindsey (American, 1894-1984). Detail.
African-American Strippy Quilt. 1950s-1960s.
Cotton, silk or rayon. 86 x 74 1/2 inches.
The Baltimore Museum of Art: Gift of Mrs. Eddie
Jordan, Baltimore, BMA 2005.87 ©Estate of
Eloise Lindsey

One small scrap of cloth won't keep you warm on a cold night. But many scraps of cloth sewn together can make a big quilt to cover your bed. Eloise Lindsey was a Mississippi farmer's wife with eight children. With little money to spare, she saved every piece of cloth that came her way in order to sew quilts for her family. Old denim overalls, worn-out shirts, and printed feed sacks that held grain for the farm animals could be opened up, laid flat, and stitched together to make a no-nonsense workaday quilt. But every now and then, Mrs. Lindsey found time to work on a lively patchwork quilt made with colorful stripes, checks, flowers, dots, and bright solid colors and patterns.

Eloise Lindsey kept her scraps in a sack under her bed. Some were leftovers from dressmaking while others were remnants purchased from a mail order catalogue for 15 cents a batch. It didn't matter if the strips were long or short, wide or narrow. Each one could become part of a quilt.

Rather than use a prescribed pattern, Eloise Lindsey depended on her own color sense to arrange her strips of cloth. She probably started by hand stitching several strips together to form a rectangular block. After making more blocks of the same width, she sewed them end-to-end to form a single strip the length of her bed. Altogether she made about 50 blocks, sewn into 8 bed-length strips. Finally she stitched these long strips together to create her quilt top. After adding a dark backing, she padded the inside of the quilt with cotton grown right on her farm to make it extra warm.

CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

Discuss how a quilt made of a variety of individual strips is similar to a community of people with diverse backgrounds, talents, and interests.

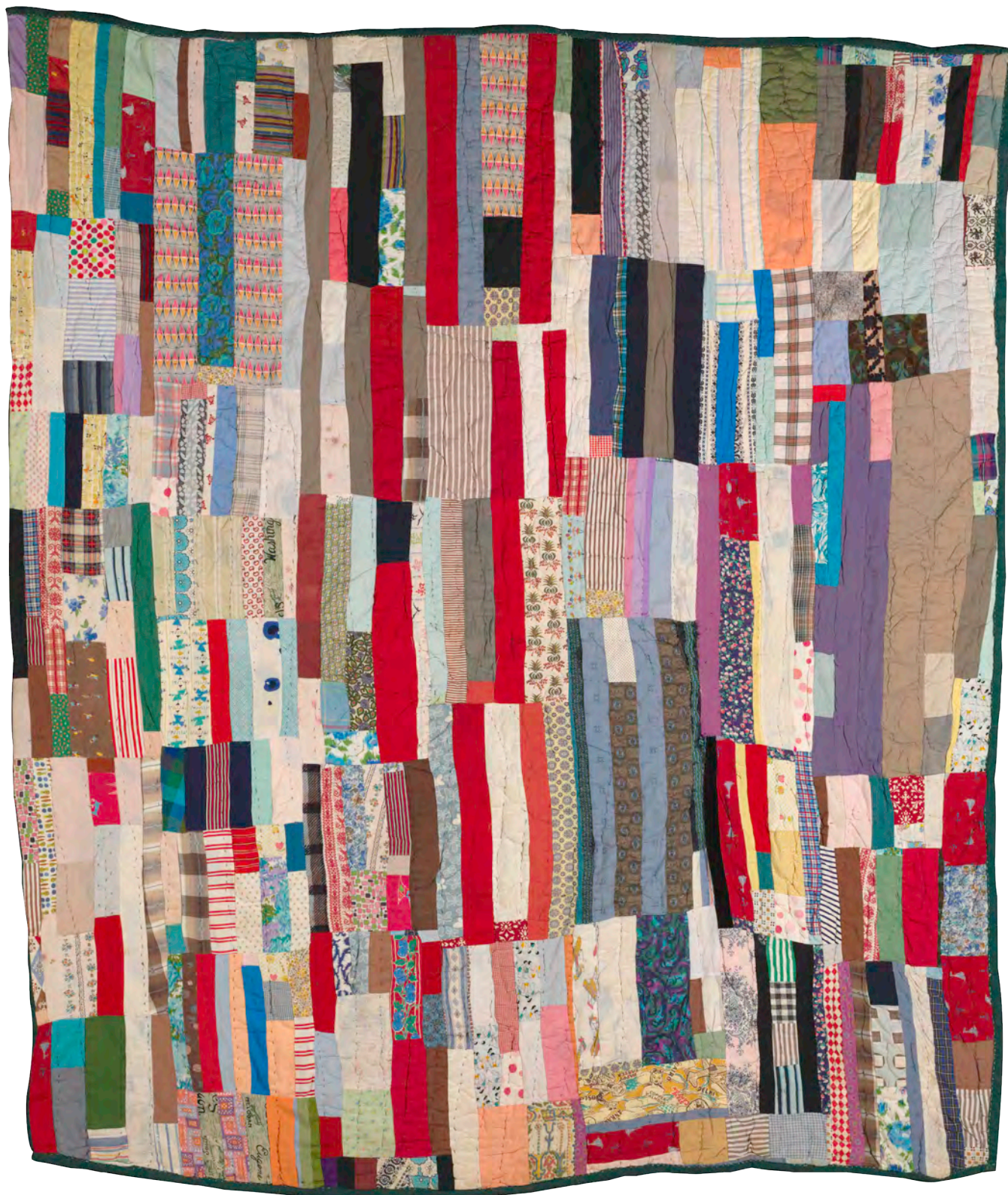
Collect scraps of cloth in many different colors and patterns and cut or rip them into strips of different lengths and widths. Cut foam core into rectangular "blocks" of identical width but different heights. Have each student complete a "block" by gluing fabric strips so that the entire block is covered. (The class may first establish rules, such as "place all strips diagonally" or "use both thick and thin strips".) Experiment with different ways of arranging the completed blocks to form a "quilt" on the floor. To learn about stitching a strippy quilt, visit <http://quiltville.com/simplystrippy.shtml>

**BALTIMORE
MUSEUM OF
ART BMA**

To comment or register
for Art-To-Go, email
Landre@artbma.org

For visitor information:
artbma.org

PRINT THE IMAGE ON PAGE 2 FOR YOUR STUDENTS.



Eloise Lindsey. *African-American Strippy Quilt*.

(American, 1894-1984). 1950s-1960s. Cotton, silk or rayon. 86 x 74 1/2 inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Gift of Mrs. Eddie Jordan, Baltimore, BMA 2005.87 ©Estate of Eloise Lindsey