













ARTIST STATEMENT

AMINAH BRENDA LYNN ROBINSON
textile
1968-PRESENT

"JOURNEYS I AND II"

In 1968, I decided to create a work apart from other works that I created, that would go on and on into the future. At the same time the work would go back and look into the past — penetrating the interior of West Africa and the horizons of the Atlantic Slave Trade which had not even been imagined. It was a collaboration across deep time: the Niger River, established by the Songhai, a nation of scholars, warriors, merchants, farmers and artisans; the Songhai Empire, the first of three great kingdoms, whose slow-fresh history, had a millennium after its days of glory.

As the RagQuilts weaves in and out of history — personal, communal and global — the grids of these communities are skyvelles, preserved, the people's history by passing it orally from generation to generation.

"Journeys" is a RagQuilt that I have continued to work on for the last 35 years. Included in the work are sections that refer to my trip to Africa in 1970 to travel from 1900 to 1971, the legend of Caribbea my visits to my father's ancestral home in Sapelo Island, Georgia in 1983 and 1990, and the midwest cities of St. Louis in 1989 and at Hazlet, Iowa in the summer of 1996.

Historical references document Malinda Rood, c. 900 B.C., the leg-entroy Queen of Sheba and King Solomon of Judea giving Ethiopia its remarkable cultural link and historical tie with Israel, included in the work is a direct introduction to WWII in the Middle Passage, slave life and the Underground Railroad. Historical references also document slavehold in Ohio in 1803, and the Black Laws that were enacted in Ohio in 1804. Landmarks include a mass meeting in the Ohio statehouse in Columbus when the Emancipation Proclamation was declared, and the community of Water Street along the Scioto River before the Great Flood of 1913. Other historical communities include the Shipley Family Quilts, Village communities as well as the historical Mt. Vernon Avenue. There are a number of other landmarks shown to me by the best friends of my family and community that are woven in the work.

The RagQuilt is a concept "Journeys" tag on and on into the future. I gratefully and joyfully and profoundly thankful and proud that this work has become part of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. "Journeys" is done what it happened to do through the evolution of time and the endurance of the eternal. The RagQuilt will tag on and on and hopefully work and weave the hearts of young people and future generations. With that, comes the process of ethical healing and the foundation and connection to the ancestral and to the divine.

— Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson, a 2004 recipient of the MackWife Foundation Quilt Award









