

Lauren Frances Adams

American, born 1979

Crazy Quilt, 2018

custom-designed, digitally printed wallpaper with additions in paint

Inspired by the historic “contained crazy quilt” technique, Lauren Frances Adams has retooled images of art from the Ackland’s collection, ephemera from Wilson Library’s collections, symbols specific to North Carolina, and personally resonant references to create a meditation on the constructions and revisions of historical narratives. The quilt pattern serves as a visual and conceptual framework for the disjunctive influences, both private and public, that interact to produce collective memories.

A number of the images feature depictions of female work or its products. Taken in concert with the traditionally “feminine” medium of quilt making, the final composition prompts us to consider ways in which women have been able to craft and express their own viewpoints over the past 150 years. For example, many late nineteenth-century crazy quilts combined luxury fabrics and everyday materials almost as a variation on scrapbooking, including items like commemorative ribbons issued by civic societies. Adams’s design nods to such quilts with its own inclusion of dedicatory ribbon imagery repurposed to honor noted females from North Carolina’s past. The resulting depictions of ribbons are aspirational imaginings, rather than strictly quoted documents. They represent what Adams feels should exist within collections and archives. In this regard, the installation reminds us that the negotiation and critique of historical narratives is a perpetual work in progress, much as the lower central blocks of the quilt have yet to be fully integrated into the whole (or may instead be disintegrated during future revisions).

Lauren Frances Adams is a native North Carolinian who earned her BFA in 2002 at UNC-Chapel Hill. She has exhibited in England and around the United States in multiple group and solo shows. She is the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award and the Trawick Prize. To see other works by Adams, please visit her website at lfadams.com.

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