

Bars Quilt

**Bar None**

The bars pattern, corner blocks, and square dimensions of this Amish quilt make it typical of those created in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Such quilts are distinctive in their use of richly colored wools rather than patterned cottons preferred by less-conservative Midwestern Amish communities.



Bars Quilt, ca. 1890

Take a closer look

From a distance, consider the ways the colors, shapes, and symmetry combine to make a forceful visual statement. Move closer to discover the miniscule, uniform stitches that create elaborate surface patterns.

Something to talk about

Quilts first drew widespread comparisons to modern art in the 1970s. They reminded viewers of geometric paintings like Valerie Jaudon's *Bay St. Louis* and Fanny Sanín's *Acrylic No. 3*, both on the third floor. What might be the value of comparing these two distinct art forms?

Who knew?

The Amish arrived in America in the mid-1700s, but their first quilts date to the mid-19th century. They learned quilt-making from their non-Amish neighbors. Owing to emigration and outside influences, there is no single "Amish" quilt style.

Bars Quilt, ca. 1890; Cotton and wool; 83 x 82 inches; Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. Peter Findlay, 77.122.3; Brooklyn Museum photograph (Gavin Ashworth, photographer), 2012

"Workt by Hand": Hidden Labor and Historical Quilts is organized by the Brooklyn Museum.

Its presentation at the National Museum of Women in the Arts is made possible through the generous support of the Arkansas State Committee of NMWA and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding is provided by the Coby Foundation, the Elizabeth A. Sackler Museum Educational Trust, and the members of NMWA.

