

Medallion Quilt



Eagle Eye

Medallion Quilt showcases several techniques, including reverse appliqué. Elizabeth Welsh layered white and floral fabrics and cut away the top cloth, revealing the printed textile beneath. Because material is removed during creation, reverse appliqué is a reductive process. It requires a sharp eye and a steady hand.



Medallion Quilt, ca. 1830

Take a closer look

Elizabeth Welsh (dates unknown) united rectilinear sawtooth edging, a curving ivy border, sporadic butterflies, and an array of collaged floral arrangements into a dynamic design. Together, these elements create a visual rhythm that draws our eyes throughout the composition.

Something to talk about

Marble sculptors also work in a reductive manner. View Sarah Bernhardt's *Après la tempête* (*After the Storm*) on the third floor. Compare her technique to Welsh's. What challenges might an artist face when using a reductive process?

Who knew?

A common misconception holds that most quilts are made from castoff scraps of material. Actually, quilts like this one required large swaths of expensive fabrics. In Welsh's day, such textiles were typically imported from England.

Elizabeth Welsh, *Medallion Quilt*, ca. 1830; Cotton; 110½ x 109 inches; Brooklyn Museum, Gift of The Roebling Society, 78.36; Brooklyn Museum photograph (Gavin Ashworth, photographer), 2012

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

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