

• *Book Reviews* •

1.6 Million African American Quilters: Survey, Sites, and a Half-Dozen Quilt Blocks. By Kyra Hicks. (Arlington, VA: Black Threads Press, 2010. pp. 62).

Kyra Hicks' *1.6 Million African American Quilters* is a self-published sourcebook filled with facts and figures on the participation of African Americans in quilting as of 2010. Though it is not a scholarly monograph, Hicks' work is nonetheless very useful to the digital folklorist, or indeed to anyone doing research on craft in the African diaspora. Hicks combines U.S. census data and data culled from the 2010 *Quilting in America* survey to provide several figures on African American participation in quilting, including figures on African American quilters by state, numbers and percentages of African American quilters among all quilters and among "dedicated" quilters, and figures on money spent on quilting annually in African American households.

While this quantitative data is no doubt helpful for one undertaking a study in the area, the section of the book on "Black Quilters in Cyberspace" is perhaps of most interest to the digital folklorist. Here, Hicks presents 22 pages worth of quite extensive lists containing numerous websites, blogs, YouTube videos, and interviews highlighting Black quilters, as well as a few artists in related media, such as dollmakers. These websites and videos represent not only Black quilters in the United States, but throughout the African diaspora in places such as Africa, the Caribbean and the United Kingdom. Her main criterion for inclusion in this volume was a strong degree of self-fashioning, that the website, blog, or video feature the

voice of the quiltmaker. While Hicks has compiled an excellent resource on Black quilters on the Web, I do wish that this section had been organized by medium (website, blog, video, etc.) in addition to alphabetically by the quiltmaker's last name.

The rest of the book includes patterns for six Afro-centric "art" quilt blocks designed by artist Francine Haskins, as well as a comprehensive bibliography of published works on African American quilting, including sections on books and journal articles, theses and dissertations, and films. For the folklorist, however, Hicks' collection of web resources is clearly the high point of the book. This book has no pretenses to being a traditional "book length" monograph, but it does very well what Hicks set out to do, namely, to serve as a comprehensive—and long overdue—resource guide on the subject of African American quiltmakers in a digital age. I recommend this short sourcebook to anyone doing research on contemporary crafts and crafters in the African diaspora.

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