



Quilts Inspired by **PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA**



JOURNEY OF HOPE

Carolyn L. Mazloomi

Foreword by Meg Cox





African Burial Ground

Valerie S. Goodwin | Tallahassee, Florida | 2009 | 32 x 44 inches (81 x 112 cm) | Cotton, sheers, paints, digitally printed fabric, thread | Pieced, fused, raw-edge machine appliqué, machine and hand quilted | *Photo by Richard Brunck*

Valerie Goodwin

African Burial Ground



For me, maps are intriguing as an art form and as a vehicle for artistic expression.

They are personal explorations of map language and imagined landscapes. Most of my pieces are not consciously based on a specific place. However, the story of the African Burial Ground, a real place, served as the inspiration for this particular work. The previously forgotten and hidden life of African slaves living on this particular site spoke to me as a vehicle for artistic examination. Much of what I chose to include in this quilt was learned from a book entitled *Breaking Ground, Breaking Silence*, written by Joyce Hansen.

The burial ground for African slaves was discovered in 1991 during the excavation for the Foley Square Federal Building in lower Manhattan. During construction, workers uncovered the biggest colonial cemetery for slaves and free Africans in our nation. Reportedly, more than twenty thousand Africans living in the Dutch colony of New York were part of this moving and dramatic discovery.

On the left side of this quilt is a map of the slave farmlands, the cemetery, and Dutch settlement during 1755. It is said that the slaves were given these lands to be a buffer zone between the colonists and the hostile Indians to the north. The right side of this quilt is a map of lower Manhattan as it exists today. The quilt is anchored on the bottom with an imaginary scene of the burial site.

The *adinkra* symbol of Ghana, *sankofa* means “go back and fetch it,” and it was found on some of the slave artifacts. The goal of this piece was to celebrate our remarkable journey in this country—especially in light of the recent election of our nation’s first African American president. For me, it was important that this subject matter inform my art in order to map the memories and experiences of our history as slaves.