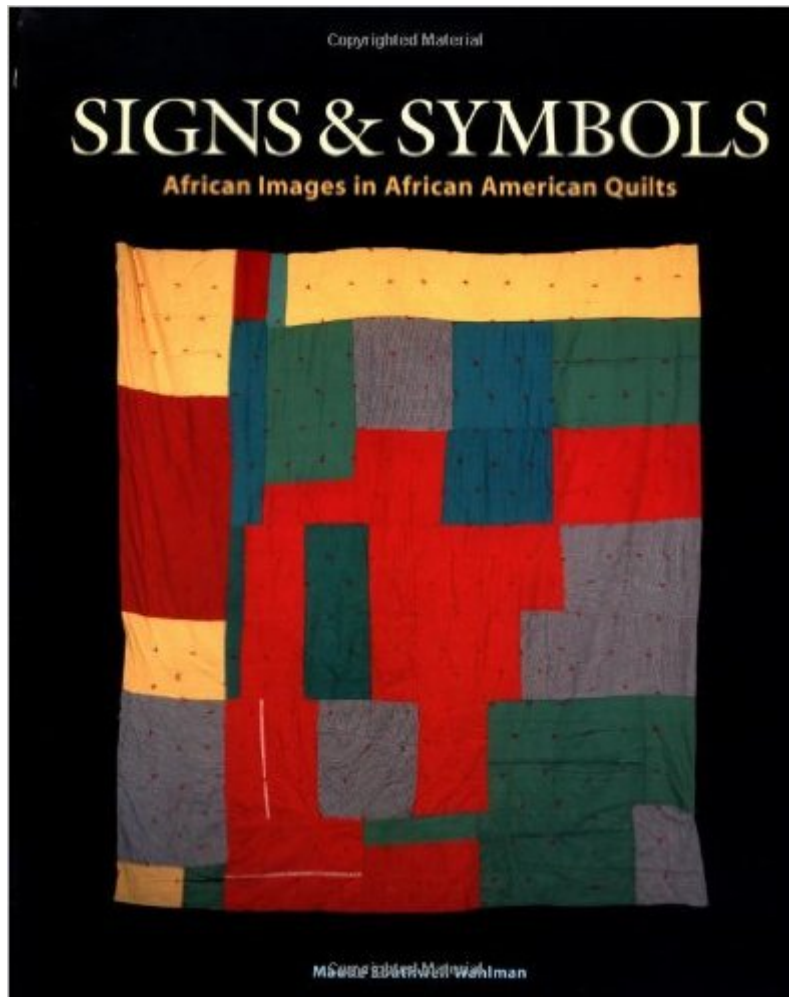


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# Signs And Symbols: African Images In African American Quilts (2nd Edition)



## Synopsis

African-American quilts possess two unique qualities: more than any other American visual art, they most fully realize the expressive force of jazz, and they bind together generations of African-American families who have made and cherished quilts. In *Signs and Symbols*, quilt expert Maude Southwell Wahlman introduces readers to a third powerful force in these quilts: their African-derived meanings, patterns, and iconography. She explores the religious, ritual, philosophical, and aesthetic beliefs that have been retained by descendants of Africans in the New World and demonstrates how these beliefs are represented in their textiles. Now back in print, *Signs and Symbols* remains the most complete illustrated work on this art form; featuring over 150 high-quality full-color reproductions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I saw the Gee's Bend exhibit and was overwhelmed by the energy, the art, and the human story in those amazing quilts. They were so different from mainstream quilts, and I wanted to find out more about African American traditions in quilting. I stumbled over *Signs & Symbols* at my local library and loved it. It not only has wonderful photos of quilts, but delves into the symbols and artistic structure of the quilts and how they relate to traditional African art and symbols---with plenty of photos of African textiles, amulets, etc. I'm no expert in anthropology and ethnology, but I am familiar with academic research, and I think Wahlman has presented a wealth of fascinating and compelling evidence for the relationship. The quilts are truly stunning, the quilting (not just the

piecing) shows up well in many of the photos, and dimensions are given (which I'm delighted by---I can get a feel for the measurements of the patches and blocks). This book's quilts are informing my own quilts and will be for many years. In terms of influence on my work, I put Signs & Symbols in the same category with Liberated Quiltmaking (by Gwen Marston). Be aware, this is not a how-to book. There are no projects, and no descriptions of how to make quilts. But if you like quilt books that are filled with beautiful old quilts, and want to immerse yourself in a different and entrancing quilting tradition, you'll love this book.

I started quilting about 10 years ago. I'm of American Indian ancestry. Along the years I have looked into the quilting styles of many different ethnic backgrounds: African American, Hawaiian, Japanese (you get the idea). This is one of my favorite books. I love the visual images and details. It is a great book for academic research and for those interested in the rich history of symbolism and meaning tied to African American quilts. When I can afford a good copy it is going to be on my shelf and eventually it'll belong to my daughter (who has taken an interest in quilting/sewing).

I own 1st and 2nd editions. Whenever I learn ( self-taught ) a new craft I search for the best of books, this is a great book on the history of African American quilting techniques. I was fortunate to attend one of the author's lectures about 20 some years ago.

This book reminds me of some of the Gees Bend quilts. There are few instructions on how the quilts are made but is a good reference for color and style. I will be using this book for the future on my quilts bookshelf. Needless to say I am very pleased with it. Ms Wahlman did a great job putting it together.

Purchased gift for an professional quilter. Wonderful Designs with historical significance. I am looking for similar type books written by the same author.

Quite interesting! There must be something encoded in one's DNA cause some these things are what I do in my quilts.

Good stuff to know--when ever we cannot get to a museum or show to actually see quilts, books like this inspires. I often take them out on rainy days, curl up and thumb through glossy pages--it reminds me what I love and hold dear about this quintessentially American Folk artform.

We see thousands of visual images every day. We pass many of them by without knowing from whence they came. This book helps us to read the signs.

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