



# Dancing at the Louvre: Faith Ringgold's French Collection and Other Story Quilts

From University of California Press

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"My process is designed to give us 'colored folk' and women a taste of the American dream straight up. Since the facts don't do that too often, I decided to make it up. . . . That is the real power and joy of being an artist. We can make it come true. Or look true."—Faith Ringgold, in a 1992 interview

This catalog is the first book-length publication devoted to the exquisite story quilts of contemporary artist Faith Ringgold. Combining painted images, handwritten texts, and quilting techniques, Ringgold weaves together modernist painting; feminist critique; postmodernist strategies of appropriation, parody, and montage; and personal memoir in a remarkable synthesis that takes on European modernism, African American folk art, and the "black aesthetic" of the 1960s and 1970s. The catalog accompanies an exhibition of *The French Collection* and *The American Collection*, a series of story quilts Ringgold has produced since 1990. Catalog essays include an examination of Ringgold's stylistic development through the 1960s and 1970s, an exploration of the social and political aspects of the story quilts, and a recollection by the artist's daughter, writer Michele Wallace.

Ringgold has adapted the tradition of the American slave quilt to create a world in which African Americans and women dominate, where history is not only questioned but also reinvented. The titles of the quilts in Ringgold's *French Collection* and *American Collection* suggest her subject range and daring: *Jo Baker's Birthday Party*; *Dinner at Gertrude Stein's*; *A Portrait of Aunt Jemima*; *Tubman, Douglass, and Truth: Wanted Dead or Alive* are examples. Faith Ringgold's broad audience of admirers (her books for children have won Caldecott and *New York Times* book illustration honors) will welcome *Dancing at the Louvre*. Finally there is a book that displays her artistic achievements and provides a full discussion of her importance within contemporary art.

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