

FORT GANSEVOORT

Ms. Wells's "Yesterday: Civil Rights in the South III" (1989) is an epic quilt that shows the Mayflower arriving in North America, with a black man rowing a white man ashore. There are little figures at the bottom picking cotton and a lynched man hanging from a tree, as well as an image of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, where four girls were killed by a bomb in 1963. George Wallace, the Alabama governor and presidential candidate, is depicted in front of a door, attempting to prevent the integration of the University of Alabama, and a circle of civil rights marchers surrounds an image of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "Rosa Parks I" (2005) takes a different tack, with the civil rights pioneer dominating the quilt's composition.

What is most evident throughout "From Heart to Hand," however, is that practical boundaries — three layers of fabric stitched together and sized to cover a bed — create the conditions for great art, much the way paintings were born from canvas stretched over a frame, and sculpture from blocks of wood and stone waiting to be hewed.