Polynesia comprises a series of island groups scattered across central and eastern Pacific. They include Samoa, Cook Islands and Hawaii among others. Polynesian tribal art was practiced as part of a culture of religion and magic, which believed that all things were endowed with *mana* or sacred supernatural power - not just people, but also buildings, stones, almost everything.

Nature-inspired motifs like plumerias, orchids, pikake, hibiscus, anthuriums, tropical flowers, and fruits like pineapples, marine and animal life. In addition, motifs of crowns, royal crests and the Hawaiian flag – the most popular, were used.

While Hawaii has its own form of quilting utilizes appliqué to sew on snowflake-like designs that capture the islands flora; we did not imitate this style completely. We did utilize a symmetrical design and appliqué techniques.

In the state of Hawaii, the hibiscus is the state flower simply because it is one of the most common flowers to find on the islands and is generally given to visiting officials and sometimes even tourists. It also holds great meaning as in Hawaiian history and tradition, the hibiscus is a symbol for the old royalty and is a flower that brings great power & respect.

Hawaiian identity is, in fact, derived from the *Kumulipo*, the great cosmogony genealogy/mythology. Its essential lesson is that every aspect of the Hawaiian conception of the world is related by birth, and as such, all parts of the Hawaiian world are of one indivisible lineage. This is why the motifs we used on our quilt are literally connected.  

In the Hawaiian society, one is expected to know and understand what it means to be a contributing member of the community. Everyone has a responsibility to use their talents to the benefit of the entire *ohana* (literally, family). The hula dance reinforces these beliefs as it illustrates tales of ethics.
Judaism

Quilters: Marcia Nelson, Harriet Miller, Margaret Haseley, Coreen Beckford

Our group worked well together to accomplish the various tasks needed for this decorative quilt. Our assigned culture is a living one with deep historical roots: Judaism. Although we tend to think of Israel as the center of Judaism, Jewish practices are held all over the world and even have regional variation. The essential origins of Jewish metaphysical belief can be found direction in the Old Testament. In essence, the people established a covenant with God by which they lived out their everyday lives.

Commonly used motifs by the Jews are:

*The Star of David-* believed to be this hero’s shield and to represent three types of early Jewish tribes. The six pointed start consists of two overlapping equilateral triangles: one points toward god and the other triangle points to earth. In 1897, the Star of David became official symbol for Judaism and now adopted as an emblem on the flag of Israel.

*A Mizra* is a decorative marker placed on the eastern wall of a dwelling to give proper prayer direction

*A Mezuzah*- is a symbol placed on door posts of houses as constant reminder of God’s presence

*A Menorah*- is a seven-branched candelabrum used in the temple. It symbolizes the endurance of the nation of Israel so as to be a light unto other nations

*The Hamesh Hand*-is a hand affixed with eyes and sometimes a Hebrew letters. This dates back two to three millennia and features an almost ubiquitous belief about fending off evil eyes with a constantly watching figurative eye in the middle of the palm.

*A Tzitzia Talli* –is a shawl worn by men that has blessings written on it

*The Lion*- symbolizes the guardian of holy elements

*The Dove*- symbolizes the chosen people and purity

Many Jewish motifs utilize the color blue as the symbol of the firmament and white as the symbol of faith. Purple indicates holiness.
South India

Quilters: Winsome Bailey, Marvine Bennett, Tashoy Gentiles, Leonie Arnold-Ruddock

Every region of the 35 states of India has folk art forms. Much of Indian visual folk art steps from spiritual symbols often rooted in epic narratives such as the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Buddhist texts and the Islamic Koran. 

*Rangoli* is a ground based art form done by women as a welcoming gesture. 

*Mendhi* is the term for Henna decoration on hands/arms done during celebrations. 

Textiles, body adornments and even miniatures are other means of placing meaningful symbols.

Traditional Indian culture believes the self as the center of the universe with its roots in absolute moral laws. A man’s duty is the apprehension of human moral nature of the universe itself. In predominant Hindu philosophy, the existence of the universe is governed by the creator and the forces of sustenance and destruction.

**Motifs for South India:**

- **Taj Mahal** - reflect aniconic nature of Islamic part of country
- **Rangoli** - floor patterns as diurnal welcoming symbols
- **Running sticks** – reflects sun and wheel of time
- **Flag** – green=verdant earth, white=purity, orange=vitality, life cycles=wheel
- **River Ganges** - considered the sacred river
- **Elephants** - symbol of royalty
- **Lotus**
- **Tree of life**
Celtic

Quilters: Sherome Charles, Tashanna Ramsey, Yvonne Grant, Shelly Roberts, Joan Jarrett.

Celtic culture is ancient and contemporaneous. It began in a region that is today Britain, Ireland, Scotland and even parts of France. Celtic visual art is ornamental -- avoiding straight tines and only occasionally using symmetry. Knotwork, metalwork and lettering are predominant craft involving unending, intertwining lines and patterns.

The Celtic cross pre-dates Christianity and contains a ring around the axis known as the solar wheel.

Spirals are the most ancient symbols used -- perhaps illustrating the balance between inner and outer consciousness. The triple spiral is believed to represent cycle of life death and rebirth or the family structure.

We tried to capture the intricacy of Celtic design in our quilt. We created a stamp for the border and an elaborate star pattern in the middle. Motifs in triplicate echo the beliefs in this number's solidity and association with luck.
Quilters:
Dave Reid, Olivia Hamnott, Tamara Freeman, Jillian Harris, Kisha Romaine.

Japan is an island culture with belief systems steeped in Shinto and later on, Buddhism. Shinto espouses the idea that natural spirits exist in all forms of nature and should be revered equally. Buddhism is a belief system that strives for detachment from earthly woes (in part) through meditation. Many Japanese art forms utilize nature-based pattern to draw one toward inner sanctity. This quilt utilizes the following symbols and imagery:

- Rustic and bright colored cloth-Japan is known for austere colors but royal occasions often called for vibrant colors
- Katakana and hiragana -Japan developed its own writing system from China but made the characters more organic
- Shibori Cloth- a dye resist inspired by sea patterns
- Swords/family crests- reminiscent of the Shogun era
- Dragon- common in many Asian cultures, the dragon is mythical and fortunate
- Rising sun on the Japanese flag- depicts “less is more” aesthetic philosophy
- Images of Japanese holidays/houses- selected to show how holidays are steeped in nature
Quilters: Jillian Harris, Pauline Cox, Deloris Bramwell-McFarlane, Tanisha Stewart, Cynthia Brown, Marvesha Bennet.

Our quilt surrounded the theme of “Day of the Dead” which is a holiday unique to Mexico and probably derived from Pre-Columbian beliefs merged with Christian beliefs. The cross is the strongest element and this also helps divide the quilt into four sections.

*El mano poderosa* (2 hands that contain a heart) show a strong belief in the spiritual connection of handiwork. The skull and the tree of life reflect ancient beliefs that the bloodshed of the gods paved the way for human life --which is fleeting and temporal. Skulls were considered metaphoric seeds from which new life began. All cultures share a fear of the unknown and death is certainly a great unknown.

Mexican people devote one day (November 1st) to defy the gravity of death by celebrating with their deceased near the gravesite which is decorated as once were altars to revere Pre-Columbian gods.