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Graduation Quilt

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Myself
Logan, Utah
November 30, 2018

Title: Graduation Quilt

Genre: Material Culture- Textiles

Informant:

My name is Brittany Fitzgerald. I am a 19-year-old undergraduate in my third semester at Utah State University and intend to double major in English and Anthropology. I was born and raised in Davis County, Utah, and spent a year living in Livermore, California when I was 8. I was raised Mormon, in a large extended family, nearly all of whom are also active members. I am pretty close with cousins on both sides of my family, and am one of the oldest cousins. My favorite hobbies are handicrafts, writing, and drawing.

Context:

At the beginning of July 2017 my paternal grandparents were visiting the family and brought with them a large gift bag. We sat around talking for a while, and my Oma gave me the gift bag. It contained my graduation quilt, and she explained that she was going to make a quilt for every grandchild who graduated high school, because it was a big achievement.

Text:

[A rectangular quilt with a pattern of concentric squares, worked in rings of alternating white and purple. The purple consists of triangles in several different patterned fabrics in different shades. The border is solid purple at a ninety-degree angle to the squares, and the backing is dark purple. The quilt is about the right size for a standard twin bed.]

Texture:

The motivation behind this quilt is one of love, but also one of limited space. My Oma purchased a quilting machine several years prior, about the time my oldest cousin was graduating. She loves quilting, but can only own so many quilts before things get ridiculous. She grew up in post-WW2 Austria, and displays the attitude toward waste you might expect from someone whose family lost just about everything during the war. Family consensus is that the quilts' colors are based on what fabric she has stashed or can get on sale, and the pattern is chosen based on what she feels like trying out. Since I'm the third oldest cousin, it's up in the air whether this tradition will persist until my youngest cousin graduates in about fifteen years. There are about two dozen grandkids, and similar projects have been abandoned or taken far longer than anticipated. However, since high school graduation is easier to anticipate than a new baby, with literally 18 years of head start, we're optimistic. I keep the quilt on my bed in my college apartment all winter, and think of my Oma whenever I wash it or remake the bed.

Brittany Fitzgerald

USU
English 2210
Professor McNeill
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