

[Art](#)

In Large-Scale Quilts, Jesse Krimes Memorializes Those Subsumed by Incarceration

"American Rendition" interweaves materials cherished by current and formerly incarcerated people into contemplative scenes.



by Billy Anania

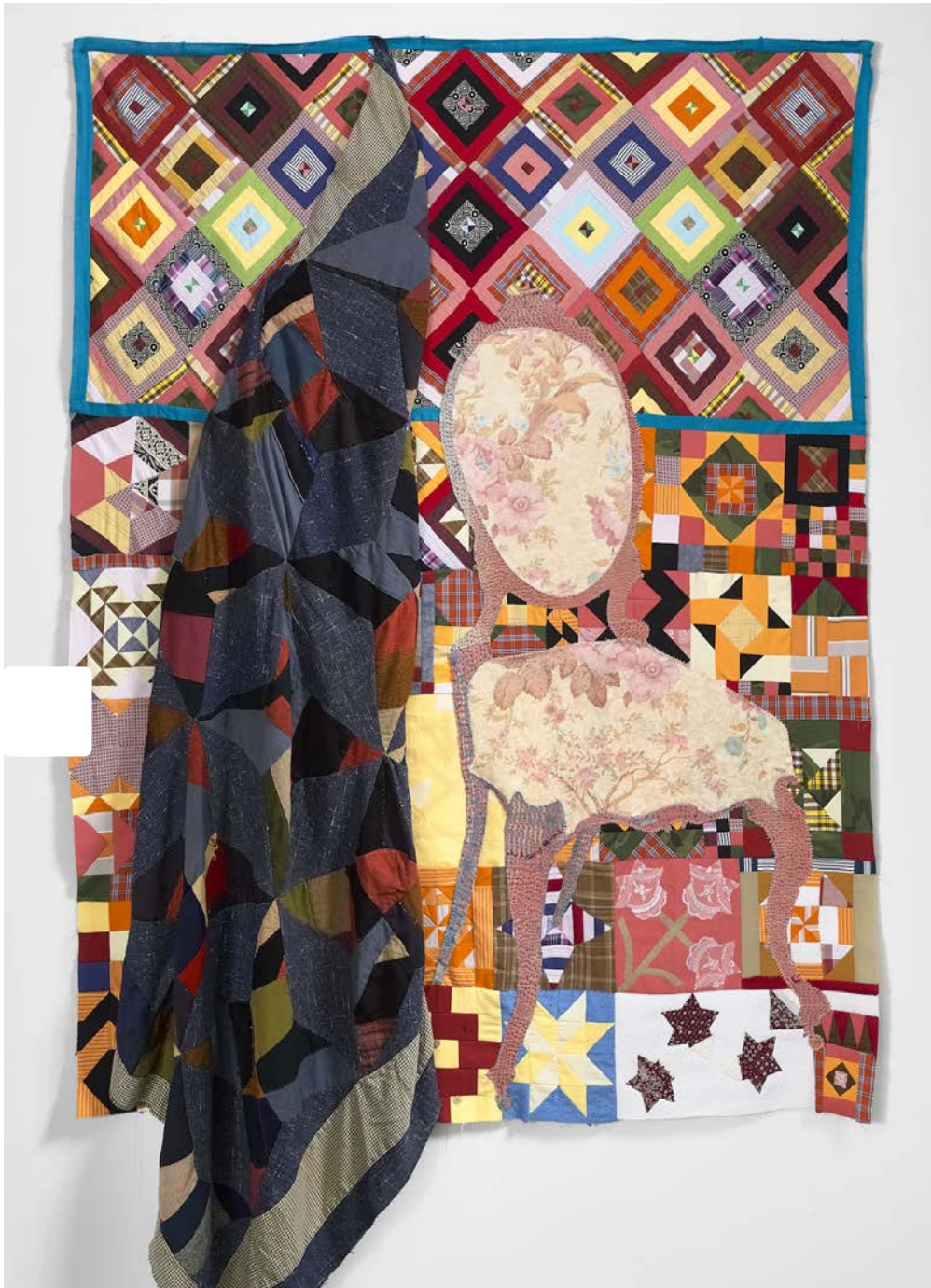
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Jesse Krimes, "Red Eagle" (2020), antique quilt, used clothing collected from incarcerated people, assorted textiles. 95 x 72 inches (all images courtesy Malin Gallery)

Jesse Krimes is quilting a history of disappearance. Originally a sculptor, he developed an interest in patchwork while incarcerated. With no art supplies, he made do with old newspapers, bed sheets, pencils, and hair gel. His large-scale quilts now reach over eight feet, draped across the walls of Malin Gallery like grand tapestries. For his latest exhibition, he brings together works focused on the loss of individual identity within the prison industrial complex, interweaving victims' cherished materials into solemn, contemplative scenes.

Multiple quilts in *American Rendition* portray a solitary bird perched beside a chair. These two symbols are particularly thought-provoking in the context of imprisonment — the caged bird longing to fly, an empty chair at the dinner table. Krimes sews pieces of denim, US flags, and textiles collected from current and formerly incarcerated people. Decorative flourishes bring the scenes to life, with patterned borders and backdrops drawing the eye to each colorful motif and panel.



Jesse Krimes. "Ravbrook" (2020). antique quilt. used clothing collected from incarcerated people. assorted textiles.

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75 x 59 inches



COVID-19 has exacerbated poor conditions in American prisons, adding another layer of erasure. Thus, these quilts feel like somber memorials. While we collectively fathom an immense loss of life, Krimes mourns those who continue to perish out of sight.

Jesse Krimes: American Rendition *continues through December 19 at Malin Gallery (515 West 29th Street, Chelsea, Manhattan).*

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