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“Around the Quilting Frame” and Wildflower Exhibits Open at Arrowmont

A collaboration between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts

GATLINBURG, Tenn. – Get a glimpse of Smoky Mountain history and the beautiful flora and fauna of the region through two concurrent exhibitions opening at Arrowmont: “Around the Quilting Frame” and “2005 Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage Featured Artist: Gillian Harris.” The community is invited to an opening reception on Monday, April 25 from 5:30-7:00 p.m.

“Around the Quilting Frame” is an exciting collaboration that includes historical and contemporary quilts and artifacts from collections of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts. Nine quilts on loan from Great Smoky Mountains National Park represent several different types of quilts created in the Smoky Mountain region dating back as early as 1875. This colorful display embodies not only the technical, but also reflects the rich ancestral history of the region. Several examples are from the Walker family of Little Greenbrier, Tenn., as well as from other local and regional Smoky Mountain quilters.

Two quilts from Arrowmont’s Permanent Collection represent the shift from utility to the decorative. Although some quilts created today are utilitarian, many contemporary quilters use the medium purely as a canvas for expression. That often means that quilts of today are more intended for display on the wall than for warmth. The fabric might be painted, dyed, marbled or appliquéd before it is assembled either by hand or machine, into a design. Arrowmont has been

teaching both traditional and contemporary forms of quilt design for over 50 years.

Essential to mountain homes, quilts served many functions. They were used for curtains and doors to keep drafts out, and were also a popular background for portraits. Historically, quilts were also a source of pride and community. The quilting process gave the quilter the satisfaction of productive work and social interaction with others while offering a chance for creative expression.

A poignant quote from a pioneer woman's diary captures the essence of this exhibition... "I made quilts as fast as I could to keep my family warm, and as pretty as I could to keep my heart from breaking."

The 2005 Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage featured artist, Gillian Harris of Bloomington, Ind., was selected from a juried competition for her original watercolor titled "Dutchman's Pipe," the image which is featured on this year's pilgrimage brochure, website, and T-shirts. Owner of Yellowwood Studio, Harris' dual perspective as a naturalist and artist complement and reinforce one another, with one being inspired by the other. A beautiful selection of her mixed media and watercolor illustrations are on exhibition in Arrowmont's Loggia Gallery. Visit her website, www.yellowwood.net for more information.

Both exhibitions run through May 21. Arrowmont's Gallery hours are 8:30-4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Arrowmont is located at 556 Parkway in Gatlinburg. All exhibitions are free and open to the public. For more information, call (865) 436-5860.

Arrowmont is dedicated its mission of "enriching lives through art."

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