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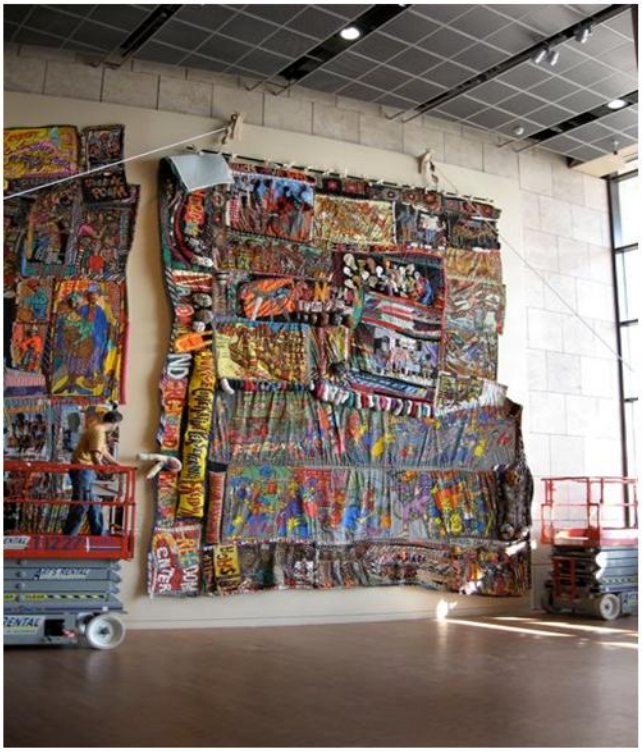
RagGonNon "Journeys"



National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
50 East Freedom Way
Cincinnati, OH 45202

The ICA was chosen by the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center to conserve its signature piece of public art, "Journeys," a RagGonNon by 2004 MacArthur Fellow Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson.

The piece—referred to by the artist as a RagGonNon because it "rags on and on"—is a complex personal and community narrative. Robinson created "Journeys" over a thirty-five year period to represent the history of Poindexter Village (Columbus, Ohio), her neighborhood and one of the United States' first federally funded urban housing projects. It was commissioned by the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in 2003, to hang in the museum's Welcome Hall.

"Journeys" is comprised of two fabric panels, each approximately twenty-five feet high by eighteen feet wide, covered with objects including music boxes. It is designed to be a hanging work of art, which over time will create stresses in the piece.

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, recognizing the importance of the art quilt and of cultural heritage preservation in general, undertook this preventative conservation to forestall any future damage. ICA conservators constructed a new secondary backing for "Journeys" that allows the panels to be remounted while off-setting much of the tension related to hanging it.