

The Art of It



A Stitch in Time

On March 15, the Katonah Museum of Art will open **BISA BUTLER: PORTRAITS**, the first solo museum exhibition of the artist's quilts celebrating black life. One of the 20 works that she will exhibit is, *Broom Jumper*, inspired by Ghanaian tradition in which the broom is waved over the heads of marrying couples to ward off spirits. The couple jumps over the broom at the end of the ceremony, symbolizing the wife's commitment to clean the courtyard of the new home. Butler has created a mesmerizing feast of rich and vibrant color, pattern, and symbolism, and reinvented the quilt as a fine art form using silk, cotton, wool, and velvet. Her subjects are based on archival photographs. Butler is inspired by her mother and grandmother, who taught her to sew. And she credits her grandmother, who told her the stories behind the family photographs, for inspiring her style of stitching narratives into her art. —**SUSAN D. GRISSOM**