

FORT GANSEVOORT

The New York Times

A Bride Changes Her Mind

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Dawn Williams Boyd's "Forsaking All Others" (2015).
Credit...Courtesy of the artist and Fort Gansevoort

In each installment of The Artists, T highlights a recent or little-shown work by a Black artist, along with a few words from that artist putting the work in context. This week, we're looking at a work by Dawn Williams Boyd, who began her four-decade career as a classically inspired portrait painter before swapping oils for fabric. (She realized, she has said, that "European visual art is not the only standard of 'good art.'") Today, she makes large-scale works from intricately layered and stitched-together textile pieces, a practice informed in part by the art of quilting.

Name: Dawn Williams Boyd

Age: 68

Based in: Atlanta.

Originally from: I was born in Neptune, N.J., and grew up in the Mozley Park and Adamsville neighborhoods of Atlanta.

When and where did you make this work? In 2015, in Atlanta.

Can you describe what is going on in the work? This young bride is exercising her prerogative to change her mind at the very last minute. After months of planning, thousands of dollars spent, having walked down the aisle and been given away, when the preacher said, "and forsaking all others," she looked around the room and realized that her groom had already spread himself

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pretty thin throughout the community and that the probability of his “cleaving only unto her” was unlikely. (All the babies look just like the groom!)

What inspired you to make this work? The belief by some young men that making babies is a game, a competition, a sign of virility and manhood, even if they haven't given any thought at all to nurturing, educating and providing for, and being a father to, those children for the rest of their lives.