

Odyssey Quilt 1 Exhibition 'Childhood Memories'



The images on the 'Childhood Memories' quilt represent the waves of the water, symbolising the artist's departure from their Mother country. This quilt was created by Gerarda Baremans, Jo Brinkhorst, Wilhelmina de Brey, Yvonne Chapman, Anne Dicker, Frances Larder, Vera Rado, Vicki van der Ley, and Frances Wititz.



FRANCES LARDER was born in 1937 in Bandung, Java to parents of Dutch-European descent.

Her memories of the time are very fragmented as she was just four to five years of age when Japanese forces invaded in 1942. As an adult, she was left with partial memories, unanswered questions, and lingering impressions of events that finally became clear with the assistance of her mother and the reflective process of piecing together the Odyssey quilts, and the

cameraderie of other quilt makers whose early experiences were shaped by life in the Netherlands or the Netherlands East Indies.

ABOVE: Frances Larder's memories of life in Java on her way to school.

GERARDA BAREMANS was born in the Netherlands on 8 April 1937, the eldest of five girls.

She recalls: "I was only two years old, when war broke out. My childhood was not free and easy as my mother had three girls between 1937 and 1940. She would constantly remind me that I was the eldest of the family and had to be an example for my siblings. Times were hard we didn't have many toys and I remember my mother making dolls for us out of material and using papier-mâché for their faces. She also made dolls houses from cardboard boxes with the furniture made from match boxes. Those were the days."

IMAGE RIGHT: Gerarda Baremans, childhood memory of taking produce to the market, Holland, late 1930s.



VICKY VAN DER LEY was born in 1926 in the small village of Sliedrecht, near Dordrecht in the south of Holland. Her fondest childhood memories were of the Merwede River that ran near their house.

Vicki, together with her brothers and sisters, would swim, row the boat, or skate on the river's frozen surface during winter.

IMAGE LEFT: Vicki van der Ley, fond memories of going fishing with my father.

JOHANNA BRINKHORST was born in 1918 to a Dutch father and German mother. She was educated in Germany, and enjoyed a comfortable family life until the depression began in the late 1920s. Due to political unrest in Germany, her father made the decision to relocate to Holland which, at the time, was not an easy transition for a family with four children.

IMAGE RIGHT: Johanna Briskhorst, living on the boat, Holland, 1930s.

The three images on this page illustrate the importance of rivers, canals, boating and fishing – and water as a means of arrival and departure – in the memories of the Dutch artists.





ABOVE LEFT: Another **JOHANNA BRINKHORST'S** early childhood memories, of her mother hanging out the washing each Monday in Holland, 1930s. ABOVE RIGHT: **ANNE DICKER**, life in the tropics, 1930s. Unfortunately Ann passed away while still working on her memory quilt, and there is no narrative available.



IMAGE CENTRE LEFT: Contribution to the childhood memories quilt by **WILHELMINA DE BREY**, reflecting memories of life in Borneo prior to the outbreak of war.

IMAGE DIRECTLY ABOVE: **FRANCES WIDITZ**, childhood memories of life on a rubber plantation, 1930s.

IMAGE LEFT: **VERA RADO**, born Purwokerto, Java, 29 July 1926. Reflections on a bygone era, Netherlands East Indies, 1930s.

Source of exhibition in this format: <http://www.daaag.org/> (2014)

The Odyssey collection is on display at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, NSW.