

The principles of quilt-making are quite simple. Quilt-maker Clay Lohmann, who as a male quilt-maker remains something of a rarity in the art world, points out that most modern athletic shoes are made like quilts and basic home construction uses the same principles as well—an interior wall, an exterior wall, wall studs serving as the quilting pattern, and most often fiberglass insulation as the batting between them. Lohmann makes what he calls “anatomy” quilts, which take advantage of his training in drawing and anatomy. *Black Lung* (Fig. 14-28) refers to the lung disease that develops from inhaling coal dust. The profile of a stern-looking man rises from the neckline of what appears to be a dress, but may well be a hospital robe. The black bands at top and bottom lend the quilt the aura of a funeral shroud. The quilting at the bottom of the lavender and gold bands suggests perspectival space, as if the figure is fading away. The pattern in the gold band is, incidentally, composed of the numbers 1-9, the alphabet, and an address. All suggests a history, something of a tragic story. “I grew up around and slept under quilts made by family members,” Lohmann says. “All of my quilting is homage to the unsung, underappreciated and most often women quilters who, no matter what level of artistic achievement, simply are not recognized as ‘artists.’ I incorporate bits of lace, embroidered tea towels, pillowcases, tablecloths, and in a nod to punk fashion, safety pins.”

The narrative bent of both Lohmann’s and Ringgold’s quilts is also reflected in a unique work by Marilyn Lanfear created by sewing mother-of-pearl and

bone buttons onto linen. *Aunt Billie* (Fig. 14-29) is the first of three large panels in the triptych *Uncle Clarence’s Three Wives*, each of which is a portrait of one of the artist’s aunts. The buttons create an image that is composed of large pixel-like dots, but because of the different reflective qualities of mother of pearl—and the more matte finish of the bone buttons—the surface of the image shimmers and glows in the light. The overall effect is dreamlike, as if the eye is at the edge of capturing a fleeting memory of the past. Because her Uncle Clarence worked the oil fields of East Texas in the boom days before the Second



Fig. 14-28 Clay Lohmann, *Black Lung*, 2011.

Cotton cloth, thread, silk batting, inflatable lung, buttons, tubing, safety pins, 90 × 80 in.

Courtesy of the artist.