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Quilts are among the most utilitarian of art objects, yet the best among them possess a formal beauty that rivals anything made on canvas. This landmark book, drawn from the world-renowned collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, highlights the splendor and craft of quilts with more than 300 superb color images and details. Fascinating essays by two noted scholars trace the evolution of quilting styles and trends as they relate to the social, political, and economic issues of their time.

The collection includes quilts made by diverse religious and cultural groups over 400 years and across continents, from the Mediterranean, England, France, America, and Polynesia. The earliest quilts were made in India and the Mediterranean for export to the west and date to the late 16th century. Examples from 18th- to 20th-century America, many made by Amish and African-American quilters, reflect the multicultural nature of American society and include boldly colored and patterned worsteds and brilliant pieced and appliquéd works of art.

Grand in scope and handsomely produced, Four Centuries of Quilts: The Colonial Williamsburg Collection is sure to be one of the most useful and beloved references on quilts and quilting for years to come.