



The Crystal Quilt Performance
Suzanne Lacy, Sage Cowles, Nancy Dennis, Phyllis Jane Rose, Miriam Schapiro, Susan Stone
Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1985-87



Floor Plan

10'x10' unique quilt designed by Miriam Schapiro

wood Pat Klauch for Isabel Elyner Kat
Jack Assofsky for Anna V Brown
Lois Rand for Dr Antonia Briceo S
Robin Spector for E Allinson
Rosa Rosenbloom for Rosa Margolis

The Crystal Quilt was interpreted by Jannie M Spears and
Judy Petersen, assisted by Judy Breiseth Jean Cohen
Jackie Northrup Sonia Johnson Marilyn Dosh
Joan Thannell Ruth Malthstrom Linda Roof Sue Stein
Fabric donated by Northwest Fabrics & Concord Fabrics

Helen Hammond
Evelyn Hamme
Eleanor Hansen
Mildred Hanson
Hazel Hare
Irene Hatch
Jan Hawkinson
Carol Hawkinson
Marriet P Hedley
Grace E Hegman
Gunda Hammur

“I have long admired the generous and almost evangelical expansiveness of Suzanne Lacy’s work. She is one of the few performance artists who has been able to get off the stage and into the streets without sacrificing her experimental integrity and striking imagery. Combined with her commitment to feminist issues, this has resulted in some of the most imaginative and powerful ‘political’ art in the last decade.”

– **Lucy R. Lippard**

“For both performer and audience there were moments in...The Crystal Quilt when, through the magic visual “tricks” of the dazzling spectacles and the voices of the...old, black-clothed women in the Crystal Court, another world was revealed.”

– **Moira Roth**

Lippard, Lucy R. “Lacy: Some of Her Own Medicine.” *The Drama Review*, Spring 1988.
Roth, Moira. “Suzanne Lacy: Social Reformer and Witch.” *The Drama Review*, Spring 1988.



Lucy Lippard, Moira Roth, Suzanne Lacy and Larry Fink at The Crystal Quilt



The Crystal Quilt

On Mother's Day in 1987, 430 women over the age of 60 performed in an hour-long tableau that was live broadcast by public television. 3000 people attended the performance staged on an 82 foot square rug with tables placed to resemble a quilt (by painter Miriam Schapiro) and listened to an accompanying soundtrack that mixed the voices of 75 women talking about aging (by composer Susan Stone)—personal observations along with social analysis about the unutilized potential of the elderly. The project was co-produced by theatre director Phyllis Jane Rose and arts administrator Nancy Dennis.

While audience listened to the soundtrack, real time conversations between the women echoed the same themes. A loon cry or thunderclap rang out through the space at intervals, signaling the women to change the position of their hands, thus changing the design of the quilt (choreography by Sage Cowles). At the end of the performance, the audience brought hand-painted scarves as they flooded onto the stage, disrupting the austere order of the quilt design to create a crazy quilt of color, greeting the triumphant performers. The performance culminated a 2.5 year project that featured exhibitions, screenings, a leadership seminar, and a media campaign to increase the visibility of older women. It was broadcast live on PBS.

