The need for warmth led to the padding and layering of fabrics, just as the need to utilize fabric scraps led to piecing and patchwork. The necessity for durability produced careful and strong stitching. But it was the desire to add beauty to everyday articles that led to the use of carefully arranged and selected mosaics of coloured fabric.

(Laurie 1970: 8)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Technology, Sydney.
March 2002
I certify that this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged in within the text.

I also certify that this thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of candidate: _________________________

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Quilts can provide a lovely, fragile and personal kind of silent, visual communication from one to another.
(Laury 1970: 11)

This research is possible because of the support, assistance and guidance of a community of people.

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In memory of

Dr Donald Samuel Levis (Dad)

and

Mrs Vera May Wagner (Nanna)
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ABSTRACT:
This study aimed to determine the qualities of beliefs and practices apparent in a group of accomplished primary art teachers to ascertain if these may be used to inform and improve design and practice in preservice primary art teacher education programs within Australia.

The participants in this study were twenty-two accomplished primary art teachers who possessed a recognised ability to successfully teach primary visual arts and who included specialist and generalist primary art teachers. Teachers were designated 'specialists' if they taught art across the school. If they taught across disciplines within the primary curriculum and taught a single class they were referred to as 'generalist teachers.' Primary school is the place in which Australian children aged four and twelve years old receive their education.

The accomplished art teachers met for four group discussion sessions termed 'critical friends groups. These were facilitated by the researcher who then visited schools to observe the teachers in practice. Informal, reflective discussions involving the participants followed. The teachers' conversations were transcribed and interpreted using a critical appreciative framework that used themes to highlight qualities of practice and beliefs. These were presented as a collaged narrative including the voices of the accomplished teachers and my reflections as critic. The analogy of quilting represented the piecing together of teachers' conversations to form blocks and the analysis of these blocks in larger patterns of analysis. This research was underpinned by the belief that teaching is an art, and that accomplished teachers are artists. Models of criticism were applied to emphasise appreciation of the art teachers and their teaching. Observations, interpretation and
presentation were viewed through the eyes of a critic who values the sensitivity and intuition of the creative mind.

The results of the study indicated the importance of visual experiences and art appreciation in the formation of accomplished art teachers. These teachers valued individuality, creativity and ownership in children's art and respected the children as artists and visual communicators. They defined art as a process, grounded in the human need to communicate and contended that this process is teachable and that preservice art education needs to be enhanced to more adequately train future generalist art teachers.

The research raised challenges to shift the focus in preservice art teacher education from linear models of instruction to a conception characteristic of risk-taking and flexibility. A stronger emphasis needs to be given to the place of art appreciation and significant visual encounters within preservice art education. Similarly, resource and studio management require greater prominence. The accomplished art teachers stressed the need to improve the profile of art education; the need for networks to overcome the isolation characteristic of primary art teachers; and greater training for generalist teachers rather than the wider introduction of specialist art teachers in primary schools.

The art-based methodology of critical appreciation encouraged the development of an ethical and critical research community that enabled significant data to become apparent. The use of collaged narrative yielded a meaningful quilt that may be metaphorically moved and placed in a number of preservice art education contexts. The critical appreciative method revealed that research could be conducted within a strong aesthetic paradigm.

The research indicated that accomplished primary art teachers possess considerable knowledge, skills and expertise that can be incorporated into preservice art education.

1 I feel a sense of great disappointment in the standard of art teaching.

An encounter with a quilt is incomplete if it does not include some understanding of the people who made it.