



1839

Roller-printed, plain weave cotton  
pieced work with diamond quilting  
115 x 119 inches (292.1 x 302.3 cm)

**REBECCA SCATTERGOOD  
SAVERY**

American, 1770–1855

## LOOKING QUESTIONS

What shapes can you see in this quilt (an eight-pointed star, octagons, diamonds)?

Look for the primary and secondary colors. Which of these colors change to pastels (pink, cream, light blue)?

What pattern do you see?  
What does it remind you of?

Do you think it took a long time to make this quilt? Why?

If someone made a quilt like this for you, how would you feel?  
Where would you keep it? Why?

## QUILT

An eight-pointed star in the center of this quilt radiates outward into **concentric** circles, then into a series of brightly colored **octagons**. Light colors blend gradually into darker, complementary ones, creating the effect of rings of glowing, colored light. Measuring roughly nine by ten feet, it contains almost four thousand diamond-shaped pieces of printed cotton fabric, each about four inches long. What does the design remind you of? Traditionally called a sunburst **pattern**, it is like looking through a **kaleidoscope** because of the many colorful **geometric** shapes and patterns. Invented in 1816, kaleidoscopes were still incredibly popular in the United States in 1839, when this quilt was made.

Rebecca Scattergood Savery created this quilt when she was sixty-nine years old for her first granddaughter, Sarah Savery. Too large to actually wrap around a tiny baby, it was more likely intended to be an **heirloom**, a family possession that is admired and handed from one generation to the next. Savery was a Quaker married to the son of a successful Philadelphia cabinetmaker, William Savery. Although Quakers were taught to dress plainly and avoid “Striped or Flower’d Stuffs, or other useless & Superfluous things,” both Rebecca and William Savery created useful things with fancy decorations. We know of six quilts made by her, three with sunburst designs. For this quilt’s top layer, she used diamond-shaped paper **templates** to keep all the pieces the same size and evenly arranged. The quilting (stitches that join the top, filling, and bottom layers) also forms a diamond pattern, and was probably done with the help of women friends at quilting bees.