

SAQQA *Journal*

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc.
2016 | Volume 26, No. 2



Invitation

by Elaine Quehl

see page 5

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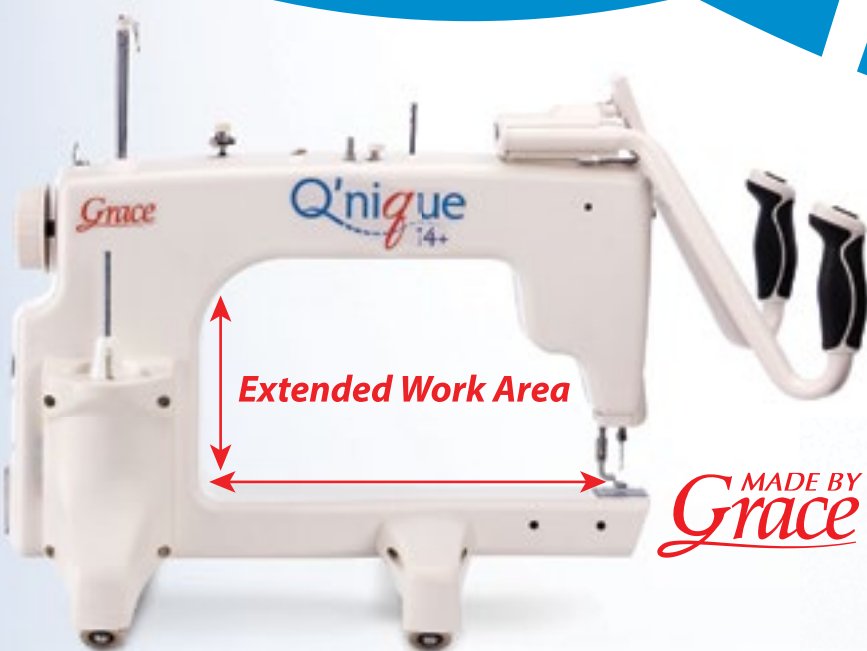
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Bittersweet goodbyes

by Kris Sasaki



It's been an amazing five and a half years since I joined the SAQA board. If I try to sum up this time, I would say it was a time of transition. SAQA has grown from a small organization in which most everyone knew each other, and matters could easily be dealt with during a phone call or two, to a large organization with a formal infrastructure and over 3,400 members worldwide. Not only do we not all know each other, we sometimes don't even speak the same language. What keeps us all connected is the art we create and promote. It speaks all languages and knows no boundaries.

In looking back over my two and a half years as president, I reread my first journal column, and these words about the vitality of SAQA jumped out at me: "The secret lies in our regions, which may develop in

various ways but which all have the full support of SAQA."

This all came home to me this past February, when I visited our founding president, Yvonne Porcella, for what turned out to be the last time (see *In Memoriam*, page 18). Yvonne was physically weak, but her mind was still sharp. We talked about our families, art, and SAQA. When I told her about the growth in membership and regions, she reiterated her vision for this type of organizational structure. Regions, she explained, would be how we would get art quilts recognized as art. We bring the people together in areas where they can network and support each other.

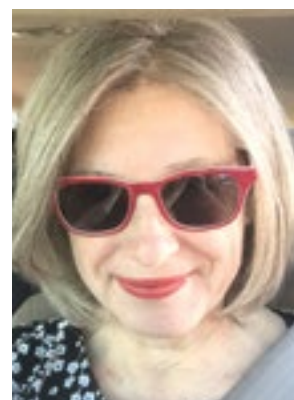
Yvonne motioned with her hand (beautifully manicured, I must add), using a dropping motion as if she were planting seeds. Here, here,

and here, she motioned. Now go out and conquer! I remain in awe of Yvonne and her power to keep thinking about the future, even in her final days. So that is what I plan to do—help ensure SAQA's future and support its mission even when I'm no longer president.

As I say goodbye to you as president, I have the pleasure of officially welcoming Lisa Ellis as our new president. Lisa has been serving as Vice President for Strategic Planning and is perfectly poised to seamlessly take over the reins of the organization. With our dedicated board, esteemed Executive Director Martha Sielman, and her excellent staff and cadre of incredible volunteers, I leave my post in the most capable hands. Now go out and conquer!

What we really need is a fully stocked gig bag

by Diane Howell, SAQA Journal editor



What's in your gig bag?

We talk a lot about multitasking and how overburdened we are. But I often wonder how true that is. If I spend a lot of time thinking about being organized, how organized can I really be?

The answer is not very. What I need is a gig bag, just like my friend jazz guitarist Pete Pancrazi.

Pete is a fine example of the right way to approach the business of being an artist. The man has a gig bag, and he knows how to use it. In this bag are all the tools he needs to perform. Adapters, cords, other stuff. I resist the temptation to rifle through the bag, because musicians need things in their proper places. But I know the bag exists, and my life

as a music agent is all the better for this knowledge.

Pete is disciplined about never removing items from his gig bag except when performing. He never has to look through his studio or his car to find the right cable, because he already knows where it is. Never once on a gig have I seen him distracted by

see "SAQA Journal editor" on page 34

Meet your new board members

We welcome four new members to the SAQA Board of Directors: Deborah Boschert of Lewisville, Texas; Jayne Gaskins of Reston, Virginia; Jeanne Marklin of Williamstown, Massachusetts; and Christine Nielsen of Head of St. Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Deborah Boschert



Deborah Boschert is a self-taught artist who has been creating quilts for nearly 20 years. Her

art quilts incorporate layers of fabric, paint, and stitch. They have been shown in many galleries and exhibitions, including two SAQA exhibitions. Deborah also has been published in books and magazines, and her own art quilting book will be released by C&T Publishing later in 2016.

Deborah regularly gives presentations about the possibilities of creating with fabric. She's always seeking creative spirit, new ideas, and a great cup of coffee.

Currently Deborah is the coordinator of the SAQA Mentorship Webinars and chairs the Education Committee.

She has also served as a regional representative for the Maryland, Washington D.C., West Virginia region. Deborah is a regular SAQA booth volunteer at International Quilt Festival in Houston and a Benefit Auction donor. She now lives in Lewisville, Texas, with her husband and two children. She is a member of the Dallas Area Fiber Artists, the Quilter's Guild of Dallas, and the Visual Arts Society of Texas.

Jayne Bentley Gaskins



Jayne Gaskins produces photorealistic work that defies media categorization. She has coined

the term "fiberography" to describe her technique of combining digitally manipulated photography with fiber art. "I really don't care if you call my work photography, fiber art, mixed media, or even painting. It's art. Everything else is irrelevant."

A hallmark of Jayne's work is her use of strong directional light. "I am fascinated with the effects of light and light sources, as seen in works by Rembrandt and Vermeer. Both used strong directional light, but in different ways, to achieve dramatic results, and I try to emulate these effects in my work."

Jayne's work has been exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the United States and Europe, and

she has earned numerous awards for excellence. Her art has been shown in a variety of prestigious exhibitions such as *Quilt National*, and published in several books, including *500 Art Quilts* by Lark Crafts.

Jayne served as co-rep for the Florida region, and she holds a BFA in graphic design and an MBA with a double concentration in marketing and management. In 2006, she retired from a long successful career in communications, and now devotes herself to her art and travel.

Jeanne Marklin



Jeanne Marklin has been a full-time studio artist for the past 11 years. She was formerly a photojournalist in Washington, D.C., and later

a clinical social worker.

Jeanne's work includes themes of social commentary, spiritual yearning, and nature. She dyes her own fabrics and recently started a new series using snow-dyed fabric. Her work has been exhibited in local, regional, national, and international venues, both those focused on quilts and on fine art. Jeanne enjoys the quiet and focus of the studio, and can be found there almost every day.

SAQA has been a great educational experience for Jeanne. Attending conferences, serving as a regional

see "Board members" on page 35

Elaine Quehl

Hostas and open attitude drive quilt artist's career

by Cindy Grisdela



A

chance encounter with a hosta plant changed Elaine Quehl's life.

Elaine, who lives outside Ottawa in Ontario, Canada, had been making both traditional and art quilts for several years when she came upon hosta leaves unfurling after a rain during a visit to Prince Edward Island, Canada, in 2006. "When we are away from our usual environment and routine, we notice things in a way we might not have before," she says via an email interview.

The hosta leaf became the perfect vehicle for Elaine to study value in

light and shadow, while also focusing on interesting lines and shapes. Hosta plants are also green, the color of life, and can be a symbol for the human life cycle, both ideas that she believes are important.

This focus is on full display in *Encore*, a multipanel piece that depicts the life cycle of a hosta plant, from the new green leaves opening in the left panel to the yellowing foliage of a dying plant on the right. The piece is constructed so that each panel can stand on its own, or the entire set can be exhibited as a grouping.

Elaine has built up a multilayered business that includes creating original work, often based on hostas, teaching, fabric dyeing, patterns, and fabric designs. She did not have a business plan to start with, she says. She began experimenting with fabric dyeing after hearing a talk at her local fiber arts group, then began selling the fabric when she had dyed more than she could use. Exhibiting her work led to invitations to teach. "I just kept responding to demands as best I could, while still having a full-time administrative job," Elaine says.

Encore, 24 x 60 inches





Curtain Call, 19 x 44 inches

Cavern, 20 x 16 inches

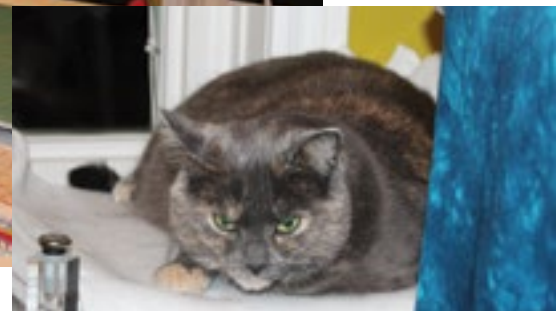


In 2008, she left the 9-to-5 world after 25 years and began making art full time.

In 2014, Elaine was approached by Northcott with an opportunity to design fabric lines after company representatives noticed her work made frequent appearances on Pinterest. "Along with that came the requirement to design patterns to accompany the lines. I was also finding that students wanted patterns in my classes," she explains. Her patterns are available on her website and when she teaches or lectures. A second line of fabric was released by Northcott in Spring 2015.

These days, Elaine's primary focus is on teaching. Sales of patterns and fabric go along with that, since "students tend to want to create something that looks like mine," she says.

Teaching, preparing to teach, dyeing fabric, and traveling take up most of Elaine's time. She estimates that she spends less than 10 percent of her time in the studio creating original pieces. Often that means only one



new large piece is created in a year plus a handful of smaller quilts. Still, she finds a great deal of satisfaction in helping her students find their own voices. She was named 2015 Teacher of the Year by the Canadian Quilters' Association.

Elaine comes from a quilting tradition. She grew up on a farm in Canada surrounded by traditional bed

quilts made by her grandmothers and her great-grandmother. Her mother was also a quilter. When her mother developed early onset dementia at age 65, Elaine registered for a quilting class in the hope that it would provide a pleasant diversion. "I suspect it was also in the hope of a last connection with my mother," she says. "What I got hooked on was the calm

and peace I felt as I lost myself in the creative process."

"My first act was to jump in and try things. I made a huge number of quilts, and with each piece I made, a little progress was made," Elaine says. She believes in the old admonition: "Do the work." When she first began quilting in 1996, she quickly lost interest in following patterns and directions, preferring to find her own way even though she didn't think of herself as particularly creative. "In my family it was my sister who was the creative one," Elaine says.

To overcome her perceived lack, she took classes and began really looking at art. "I think too many people expect their first work to be a masterpiece and give up too soon when it isn't. I also started looking at art in all mediums, mostly in magazines, but also in galleries," Elaine says. Immersing herself in art helped her to

see "Elaine Quehl" on page 36



Invitation, 24 x 30 inches

Make your art pay

Niche markets create multiple income streams

by Cindy Grisdela

Editor's Note: Our featured artist, Elaine Quehl, is a grand example of finding and embracing niche marketing within the art quilt world. Here are the stories of several other artists who have used their creative talent to find new income streams related to their main artistic endeavor.

Is being an artist a viable business proposition? Or is the concept of the “starving artist” the truth?

Certainly it can be more difficult to have a successful business as an artist than working 9-to-5 in an office environment. You have to wear all the hats: boss, employee, marketing guru, and customer service representative. But it can be done.

Not everyone wants to make their passion for art into a business, because then it might feel more like work. But there are definite benefits to following your passion and making it pay. Maybe you won't make enough to buy a big house and vacation in the south of France, but you can create multiple streams of revenue to make your art pay.

First, invest the time to create the best art you are capable of. Learn about the principles of design and how to create interesting compositions. There is a wealth of information online to help you

educate yourself, or you can take classes—either online or in your community. Consider taking art classes, not just quilting classes. Fiber art is like any other art medium, and doing it well requires a working knowledge of design and composition concepts. Even if you choose to break the rules, you should know what they are.

Then get yourself and your work out into the world. You certainly will not be able to make money if you spend all your time in the basement creating art, no matter how wonderful it is.

The Internet is a huge help in getting your work out there. Set up a website, be active on social media, apply to exhibits. Offline, look for local places to show your work, like your local library, retail establishments with a gallery space, farmer's markets, or art walks.

Selling your original work usually won't generate enough income to make a living, although some artists are able to do it. In a workshop at a SAQA conference in Denver several years ago, Colorado artist Carol Ann Waugh talked about how she structures her business. She estimated that only 10 percent of her income comes from sales of quilts and the other 90 percent from other sources.

What can you do to bring in money besides selling your original work? Think of opportunities to

create different streams of revenue. Some of them will be active, like teaching or lecturing, for example. Some will be more passive, like creating a pattern and selling it online or licensing an image to be reproduced on a scarf or pillow.

Frieda Anderson, of Elgin, Illinois, is an award-winning artist with a successful business teaching and selling hand-dyed fabric and patterns. “I treat it like my job,” she says. “I'm in the studio every day with a long list of ideas and things I want to do.” When she's at home, she spends an hour or so every day dyeing her fabrics. She sells them at her workshops and from a booth she shares with fellow artist Laura Wasilowski at two of quiltdom's largest events—American Quilter's Society's QuiltWeek in Paducah, Kentucky, and International Quilt Festival in Houston—and one or two other venues each year. The booth presence also leads to teaching opportunities.

Frieda also has a line of more than 20 patterns uploaded to Craftsy.com. This is a great example of a passive revenue stream. Once you create a pattern, you go to your account at Craftsy and upload a pdf. Craftsy doesn't charge for listing patterns, nor does it take a commission when the pattern sells. The customer downloads the pattern, pays for it through PayPal, and the money, minus a small transaction charge, is deposited into

Reading list

Two resources to give you more ideas about multiple streams of income:

Art, Inc.: The Essential Guide for Building Your Career as an Artist

by Lisa Congdon

“Starving” to Successful: The Artist's Guide to Getting Into Galleries and Selling More Art

by Jason Horejs



Floris Flam sells her hand-dyed socks and other items through her co-op gallery and various local and regional shows.

your account. There is little work involved after the pattern is created and uploaded, except for whatever you decide to do to send potential customers to the site.

Melbourne, Florida, artist Ellen Lindner also teaches, both in person and online. She sells patterns and writes articles for publications. Her advice for artists wanting to expand into alternative revenue streams is: "Jump in and try it!"

"Many options require no financial output. Remember, too, that everything supports everything else. If you have a quilt hanging in a prestigious fine art show, it may not seem like it helps you sell patterns, but it does. The prestige and publicity you gain from the former help with the latter and vice versa. If you're marketing patterns, you are also putting yourself in the public eye and exposing yourself to other opportunities. Do

everything with professionalism, even if it's a free presentation to a group of third graders," Ellen advises.

Bethesda, Maryland, artist Floris Flam hand dyes her own fabrics for the original art quilts she makes. While she's dyeing the fabric, she also dyes other items, such as bamboo socks and cloth napkins. She sells them at various local and regional shows she attends each year. Floris belongs to a co-op fiber art gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria, Virginia. When she joined the gallery in 2002, she made art quilts and wearable vests. The vests didn't sell well enough to make them worthwhile, so she transitioned out of those and into smaller items that could make nice gifts, like business card cases, silk scarves, and fabric bowls. "Card cases are my best seller," she says.

There are a number of avenues to create income out there, but look for those that you would enjoy doing. When Ellen was transitioning her quilt hobby into a business, she didn't know which revenue stream might work best, so she pursued all of them: selling via her website and galleries, teaching, and writing articles. She soon found that teaching was the best option for her and she focused on that, while also realizing that gallery representation was not right for her at that time.

Talking about the smaller gift items she sells, Floris noted, "The small stuff I don't do if I don't enjoy it." She likes dyeing and playing with color, so dyeing socks and napkins is a logical extension of what she does anyway.

Debra Jones, a portrait artist from Scottsdale, Arizona, pursues two other niche markets with her painting. In



Watercolor artist Debra Jones expanded her business by adding commissioned pet portraits to her offerings.



in addition to portraits of people, she paints pets. Pet commissions are one way she has expanded her business, as some clients would pay for a painting of a beloved pet instead of, or in addition to, one of themselves.

Debra also paints generic animals which she sells through a print-on-demand site called Fine Art America. After completing a painting of a running Yorkie, for example, she photographs the painting and uploads it to the site. They print, frame, and send the image to the customer and give Jones an agreed-upon percentage of the sale.

Linda Jones (no relation to Debra) is a watercolor and acrylic painter in McLean, Virginia. She supplements her income from original art by teaching and also by making note-cards from her favorite paintings. She sells the cards both individually and in boxed sets. She photographs the painting immediately after finishing it and uploads the image to her computer. She formats and prints the cards herself and puts them together with envelopes in cellophane sleeves

or boxes in odd moments when she has free time.

The cards have led to sales of original work when customers see an image they like and ask if the original is available. If the original has been sold, sometimes the card will lead to a commission of a similar subject.

One question many artists with multiple streams of income wrestle with is how to balance their time between creating original work and doing the work that brings in regular income. Some, like Floris, work in spurts when the need arises. "If I have a show coming up, I might do three dozen socks and three dozen sets of napkins, plus card cases," she says.

Frieda dyes every day she is at home so she maintains a regular inventory. It can take three years to create a large original quilt, working on it a little bit at a time. When she has breaks from her teaching and show schedule, she takes time to devote her full attention to her art. She gives herself room not only to work, but also for failure in case the

initial idea doesn't work out the way she envisioned.

Ellen does business activities in her home office and creates her work in her studio. She estimates that about 60 percent of her time is devoted to business and teaching pursuits, with only 40 percent being active studio time.

Debra says she spends all of her waking hours thinking of opportunities. She doesn't do much teaching, but she's often asked to donate work to charitable organizations for auction. She always sets a reserve price as a floor for the bidding, and she asks to be present at the event so she can do demonstrations and talk to attendees to educate people about her process. "I need to explain to people why I am a necessity," she says.

Be open to opportunities that may come your way and say "yes" if you can. "I weigh every opportunity and see where it leads me," Debra says. ▼

Cindy Grisdela is a SAQA JAM living in Reston, Virginia. See her work at cindygrisdela.com.

Understanding white balance

How to improve color accuracy in your quilt photography

by Deidre Adams

As SAQA members, we have a wealth of opportunities for publication of our work, including the *SAQA Journal*, exhibition catalogs, the *Portfolio*, and numerous places on the SAQA website. In order to take advantage of these opportunities, we have to do more than just create the work itself — we must also be committed to obtaining the best possible photographs of the work. This means either hiring an experienced professional or, if we have the money and the motivation, investing in the right equipment as well as learning as much as possible about artwork photography so we can take our own photographs.

Every photograph is the result of many different considerations, some of which become especially critical when photographing artwork. In addition to proper setup and a good quality camera (note: your iPhone photo *still* isn't good enough for a catalog), you need to have a good understanding of sharpness and focus, light and exposure, depth of field, image noise, and dynamic range. One of the least understood aspects of digital photography is *white*

balance, which is key to getting the correct color in your image.

Color temperature

As an artist, you're aware that without light, there is no color. But what you may not be aware of is that light itself can be said to have color. The visible light spectrum is a very narrow band of frequencies within the larger electromagnetic spectrum. The range of visible light colors is described using the Kelvin scale, which is a measure of color temperature from warm to cool (see the illustration below).

The easiest way to understand this is to think of a white object seen in different types of lighting. The white will have an orange cast at sunset or a blue cast in shade. Your eyes can adjust to the light and your brain will still tell you that object is white, but the camera can only capture what's actually there. When white has a color cast, so does every other color in the scene.

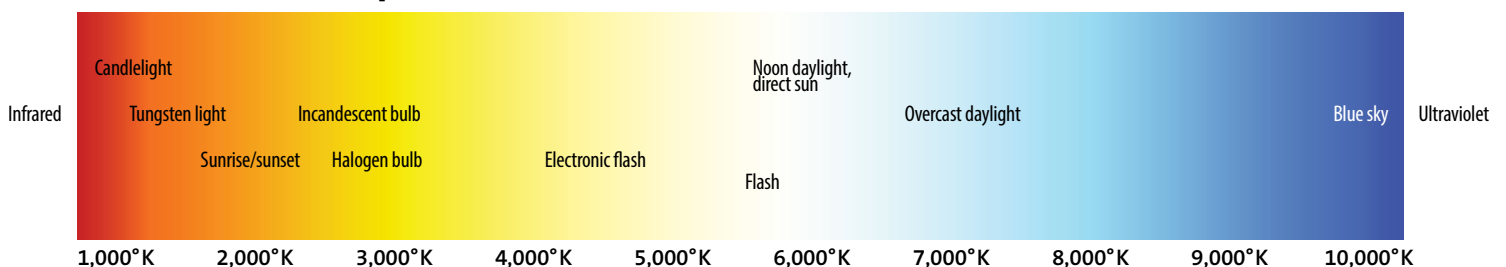
The ideal light source is white light at around 5,500° Kelvin, which has neither a warm (red to yellow) nor

cool (green or blue) color cast. This is the light given off by the sun at mid-day and by photo studio strobes or speedlights (flash).

If you don't have strobes or flash, you can use constant light to take your photos. However, be aware that the most commonly available light sources have some amount of color cast or may not be capable of accurately rendering all the colors in a scene or an artwork. Some lights may also introduce a green or magenta tint that will need to be corrected later with computer software.

When deciding what kind of lighting to purchase for your photo studio, it's useful when you can purchase it based on the temperature, which may be listed on the package or in the specifications online. Another factor is the *color rendering index* (CRI), which becomes especially important if you choose fluorescent lighting. CRI is a measurement of the ability of a light source to accurately render all frequencies of the visible color spectrum, with 100 representing the best possible result. Look for something labeled "High CRI," which should be

Kelvin color temperature scale



White balance products

The number of available white balancing accessories is large and bewildering. Here is just a small sampling of what you can find at B&H Photo (www.bhphotovideo.com), Adorama (adorama.com), or Amazon.com. Prices vary tremendously, and it may or may not be true that you get what you pay for. Be sure to do your research — read the user reviews and check photography forums for recommendations.



White balance card set

Comes with white, black and gray cards; \$10-20 depending on size and manufacturer. B&H Photo and Amazon carry different options. Be sure to read the user reviews; some people say the gray is not completely neutral, which can result in slight color shifts.



DGK Color Tools DKC-Pro Color Calibration & White Balance Chart Set

\$14.95 at B&H Photo. Very inexpensive; however, some reviews say the neutral gray side is not completely accurate.



X-Rite ColorChecker Classic Card

\$59 at B&H Photo. In addition to grayscale chips, this card includes 18 color chips to help with color calibration.



X-Rite ColorChecker Passport Photo

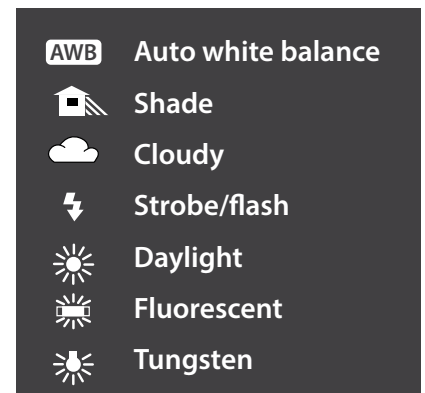
\$89 at B&H Photo. In addition to color and grayscale chips, the Passport ColorChecker comes with software that allows you to build profiles for every lighting situation, which can simplify correcting a large number of images simultaneously with Photoshop or Lightroom.

at 90 or better. Avoid household fluorescent bulbs that don't list a CRI rating; these will mostly likely be much lower and your photos will have color problems that can't be fully corrected later.

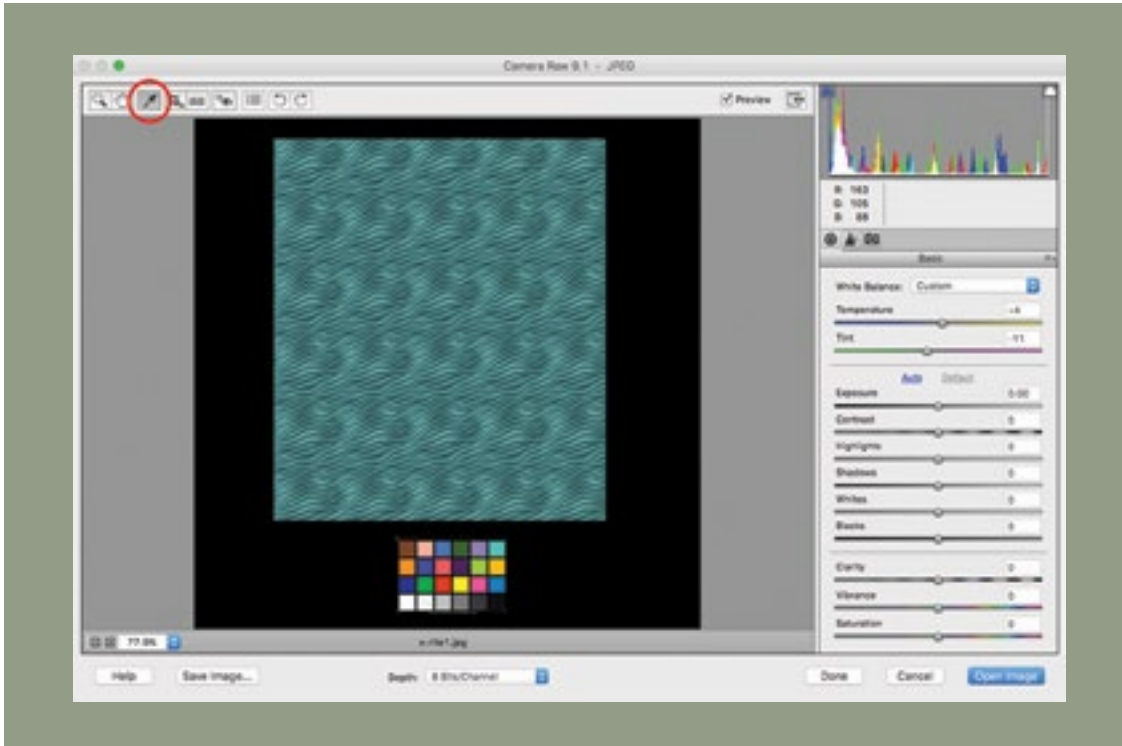
Another lighting situation that's highly problematic is having multiple light sources in your image. An example of this might be light coming from a window at the same time you've got a household lamp casting light on your subject. This kind of lighting is difficult to impossible to correct.

Setting white balance

Any camera you consider for photographing your artwork should have the ability to set white balance, and preferably to set a custom white balance. Below is a typical list of settings available on a wide range of cameras.

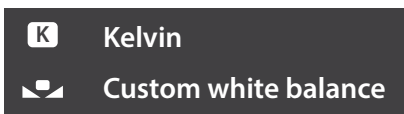


If you've never looked at this setting on your camera, chances are it's set to auto. Auto white balance may give acceptable results in a wide range of circumstances, but it's very unlikely that it will give you the best result for photographing artwork. Be sure to read your camera's manual to learn how to use these settings.



Custom white balance

Some cameras offer additional settings that allow you much greater control over white balance.



If you know the temperature of your lighting and your camera allows it, you can dial in the number using the *Kelvin* setting.

Custom white balance is used with a target that has a known neutral color balance, either white or a value of gray. These targets are sold by a number of suppliers specifically for this purpose. See a partial list of possibilities in the sidebar on page 12. The procedure will vary somewhat depending on your particular camera, but basically it involves filling your viewfinder with the target, taking a photo of it, then using that photo after choosing *Custom white balance* in the camera's menu. Ideally,

you would use the same lighting setup every time you shoot your artwork, and you would have this custom setting saved so you can come back to it each time.

Shooting with a target

Another way to use a target is to include it in the shot with your artwork. If you have proper lighting on your subject, there is a very simple way that you can correct the color in your image using Adobe Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, or Lightroom. If your camera offers the ability to shoot in RAW format, this is the preferred option because RAW will often contain a greater dynamic range and color gamut. However, this procedure will work with jpegs, too.

In Photoshop Elements, choose *File > Open in Camera Raw*, navigate to your image, and click Open. Choose the White Balance Tool, which looks like a small eyedropper, in the icons

above the image (see illustration above). Click on a neutral area—your white balance card or one of the neutral squares in a color target—and that's it. You will see the temperature and tint values change accordingly. Click Open, make cropping or other adjustments, and save the file with a new name and in Photoshop format or as a jpeg with maximum quality and minimum compression. The procedure is similar in Photoshop or Lightroom.

If you don't want to do the color correction yourself, you can include your white balance target in the image you send to SAQA for publishing in the *Journal* or a catalog. This can help us to ensure that your image has accurate color. ▼

Deidre Adams is the graphic designer of your SAQA Journal and many of SAQA's exhibition catalogs. She is also a textile artist and painter with a studio in Denver, Colorado. See her work at deidreadams.com.

Why blogging still matters

Heart and soul of artistry revealed in online journals

by Abby Glassenberg

A blog is an online journal that typically includes both pictures and text. Blogs have become such an entrenched part of the online community, you may be wondering if starting or continuing a blog holds relevance. The answer is a resounding yes.

For an artist, a blog can be a way to record your studio practice, share tips to help readers learn new skills, reflect on your creative journey, connect with a community, and market your work. Often your blog is the dynamic part of an otherwise static website because it's frequently updated. The new content allows visitors to see works in progress and

learn your thoughts on a wide variety of topics.

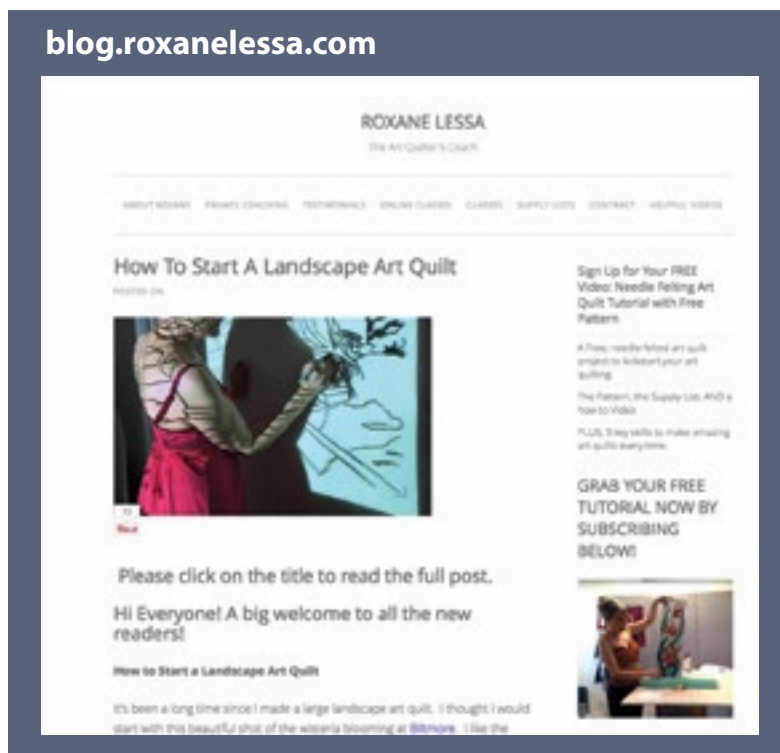
Getting started

Roxane Lessa set up her blog in June 2010 and has been posting at least once a week ever since. "I decided to start the blog to write about why and how I made my fiber art pieces," she says. "The whole point of my blog

is to inspire and teach quilters to be more adventurous and create works of their own that reflect their points of view." For Lessa, there have been no drawbacks to blogging. "I think it's very useful for me to put into words what my process is. It's helped me define my message and decide what's most important."

Blogs are created on a software platform that is specifically set up for online journaling, such as Blogger or WordPress. Learning to use the software can be a hurdle, but don't let that get in your way. Consider hiring someone for a few hours to get you started. Textile artist Ellen Lindner paid for assistance to get her started on a WordPress blog. "I got the help of a web designer to set it up because it was easy for her and it cost me very little," she says. Once it was ready, Lindner was able to easily create posts and update the blog on her own.

If you don't want to pay someone, consider asking a friend or family member to help you start a blog. Kathy Loomis worked with a friend to set up her Blogger blog. "She had a blog and sat with me for several hours





while I went through every step of the layout and design. It was great to have somebody sitting there to show me how the platform worked. It only took me a couple of days before I figured out how to add new things and improve the layout," she says.

No matter which blogging platform you choose, be sure to learn to upload images to illustrate your posts. Quilting is very visual so it's key that those images be large on the screen. Aim for 700-1,000 pixels wide.

Clara Nartey points out that starting a blog is actually the easy part. "Getting it set up was definitely not hard. What was hard, though, was showing up every week with a topic to write about."

Figuring out what to write

Once you become a blogger, you'll need an ongoing flow of content for blog posts. Many new bloggers find it helpful to brainstorm a list of potential post types that they can pull from. These might include tips or tutorials, reflections on your latest

finished work, works in progress, exhibit reviews, student work, trends and observations about the quilting world, interviews with other artists, research into art history, stories about your family or travel, and advice to other art quilters about lessons you have learned. A blog post can be very short with just an image and a few sentences, or it can be an in-depth article. This is your journal, so you get to determine the type and length of the posts.

Roxane writes about a variety of topics on her blog. "I generally write about exhibits I've seen, quilt shows I've been to, classes I've taught with examples of student work, and lots of colorful pictures to illustrate," she says. "Some posts are quick and take about 30 minutes, and some take a couple of hours." Roxane advises being generous in what you share. "The more you can share your knowledge, the more valuable you'll be to your readers. Share without fear of someone 'stealing' it. Stingy content is of no use to anyone."

For Clara, a blog is a place to explore the more emotional side of being an artist. "I write about the struggles, fears, exhilaration, rejection, and validation associated with creating," she says. "All are emotions creative people feel but sometimes don't have an avenue to express. Using my creative journey as an example, I try to make other creatives see how not uncommon their own creative journeys are."

Using Analytics to guide future content

Once you have a dozen or so posts published on your blog, you can begin to look at the data showing how many people visit and which posts are most popular. This information is available for free from Google Analytics, or, if you're using WordPress, from a plugin called Jetpack. If you have a particular tutorial that's getting more clicks than any other post, creating another tutorial on a related topic will grow your readership. By the same token, if a



particular post has gotten a lot of comments or Facebook shares, that's a good indication that you should create more content in a similar vein.

Once you get into the groove of blogging, you can determine how frequently you would like to post. Some bloggers publish new content three or four days a week while others might update their blogs three or four times a month.

Some bloggers decide on content spontaneously according to what they're working on or thinking about on a particular day, while others prefer a more structured schedule. Keeping a simple editorial calendar where you can jot down post ideas for the days and weeks to come is a great way to stay organized.

It's a good idea to publish on a regular schedule. Roxane says, "Consistency is key, because then your followers see you as reliable and trustworthy." Clara echoes this sentiment. "Although I know my readers will forgive me if I miss my schedule, I like to stick to it," she says. "It helps me be organized and keeps me accountable to my readers to have an

expectation of receiving an article at regular intervals."

If you're going to be traveling for a period of time, you can write posts in advance and schedule their publication. "If I'm planning a long trip away from home, I get my posts done in advance. I don't like to have the

blog disappear just because I'm on vacation," Kathleen says.

Many artists fear that blogging will be a time-consuming task that will take them away from their studio work. Clara once felt that way. "When I first considered blogging, I thought I could never find the time to do it. I couldn't find enough time to create art. How, then, was I going to blog?" She realized that the trick was to come up with a realistic schedule she could stick with. "It's better to set a schedule that's comfortable for you than one that you will not be able to keep. A schedule helps at the beginning because we're creatures of habit. After you've formed the habit of writing, you can relax your schedule as needed. It takes a while to figure out what you're comfortable writing about, so don't give up too soon."



The benefits of blogging

Although blogging does take time and effort, the rewards can be numerous. Many artists use their blogs as a tool to reflect on their work and solidify their thinking. Clara says, "Blogging has helped me articulate better what I do and why I do it. As much as you may think you know why you do something, you will be surprised how much you learn about yourself when you sit down to write about it. Blogging helps you sort out and synthesize your thoughts."

Blogging can also be a way to connect with a community of people who share your interests, no matter where they might live in the world. Deborah Boschert started her blog in 2004 at a time when her family was relocating frequently due to her husband's military service. "Building local relationships was difficult, but online there are no barriers," she says. Over time Deborah has shared stories about her family, travel, and art making and has seen numerous benefits from connecting with her community in this way. "My audience isn't just buying my artwork, they're buying my ideas, teaching style, and experience," she says. Kathleen has found similar benefits of connecting with an online community. "Through my blog I keep in touch with my art pals, and I make new art pals. I act as a mentor or guide to lots of people. Many people say they like my online personality and feel they know me even though we've never met."

A blog can also serve as a living portfolio that can help you get new career opportunities as an artist. A popular blog can raise your visibility in the fiber art world, promote your

teaching career, and lead to paid work. Through relationships made on her blog, Deborah was invited to contribute to *12x12*, a book published by Lark Crafts in 2011. When quilts from the book were exhibited at International Quilt Festival Houston that year, hers was included.

Finding and keeping up with blogs

If you're fairly new to blogging, it's helpful to become a regular reader of other blogs in your niche. There is no holistic directory of blogs, so the best

*You will be surprised
how much you
learn about yourself
when you sit down
to write about it.*

—Clara Nartey

thing to do is to visit the websites of artists you like and look to see if they have a blog. If you find an artist on Facebook or Instagram, take a moment to click over to their website to investigate.

Keep up with new blog posts from the bloggers you follow with a feed reader such as Bloglovin' or feedly. These readers are free services that create an ongoing digest of the latest posts of the blogs you follow so you can see them all in one place. Both Bloglovin' and feedly have mobile

apps that allow you to read the latest posts from the blogs you follow on your smartphone as well. In the process of reading blogs, you'll inevitably discover new post topics you would like to write about on your own blog.

Driving traffic to your blog

A blog is a public journal, and most bloggers would like to have readers visit to read and interact with their content, but readers don't just flood in once you begin a blog. You will have to do some ongoing work to bring them to your posts.

Consider what people might be searching for when they do a Google search related to art quilting. Try to include those keywords in your post titles so that your blog post comes up in online searches. This is part of search engine optimization—the science of how websites are ranked in search results.

You also can drive traffic to your blog by linking to your posts from other social media channels. If you have a Facebook artist's page, post an image and excerpt from your latest blog post and a link back to it. Pinterest is a strong traffic driver to blogs. Well-lit photos with a vertical orientation do best on Pinterest, so try to include at least one Pinterest-optimized image in each post. Even if you're not active on Pinterest yourself, your readers will pin your posts to their own boards and that action will drive traffic back to your site.

Invest in blogging

When you first begin blogging, it can feel like you're talking to an empty room. If you can find value in having

see "Blogging" on page 38



In Memoriam

Yvonne Porcella (1936-2016)

Yvonne Porcella, SAQA's founder, passed away on Feb. 12, 2016. Her contribution to fiber art in general and art quilts in particular cannot be overstated. She was a force built on kindness and determination. One of her last pieces was a donation for SAQA's Spotlight Auction that was sold at our 2016 annual conference in Philadelphia.



On this page, we have gathered some of the many tributes that poured in as SAQA members learned of her passing. May we all take a moment to remember Yvonne and her wonderful, colorful life.

Yvonne Porcella was a great artist and inspiration for Belgian quilters. Starting up SAQA was a wonderful idea.

— Monique Gilbert-Oversteyns

I've always admired Yvonne's work; it's so lively. She has made a huge impact on SAQA and art quilts all around the world. We were fortunate to have her jury the *Strata* show last year (Ed. Note: *Strata – New Works from the Studio Art Quilt Associates* at the Harrington Art Gallery in Pleasanton, California, Nov 12-Dec. 16, 2015, for Northern California and Northern Nevada regional members). She spoke at the reception about her art and her life. It was a moving talk. She'll be missed and remembered.

— Patricia Porter

Yvonne's artistic and quilting influence reached all the way to a remote corner of Australia when I was beginning my quilting journey in the 1990s. I was so pleased to have met her and swapped some stories while waiting for our delayed flights in Columbus, Ohio, in 2009. She was an amazing woman.

— Sue Dennis

Yvonne's graveside service took place on a glorious Spring morning. Her casket was covered with one of her lovely quilts and she designed her own memorial card before

she died. She was surrounded by family and friends. A letter from SAQA's president was read at the service and one of her handsome grandsons sang *Amazing Grace*. Farewell to our friend.

— Sue Siefkin

Yvonne has been an inspiration to me for over 20 years, not only for her work, but also for her incredible spirit and generosity. Her bravery and optimism during the past few years, while still continuing to create and be a force in the arts community, is something I will always remember.

— Patty Kennedy-Zafred

I have intense admiration for Yvonne Porcella—both as an extremely talented artist as well as a person with amazing abilities to organize and inspire other artists. When Yvonne taught a workshop in 2007 at the Museum of Texas Tech University, she encouraged us to form an art quilt group and get involved in SAQA. Following the trail she blazed has been an exciting, enriching, and delightful experience.

— Ellie Kreneck

She died as she lived, with grace, dignity, pizzazz and color. She was such a stellar example of living life to the fullest. There will never be another like Yvonne. RIP extraordinary woman.

— Carol Larson

Yvonne's 1981 quilt *Razzle Dazzle* began my art quilt collection 30 years ago, and it still brings a smile each time I see it. She became a friend and mentor. Yvonne's death saddens me, but not as much as her life inspired us all.

— Sandra Sider

Yvonne set the benchmark that we all aspire to. Thank you for sharing her with us. She will be greatly missed worldwide! Rest in peace.

— Giselle Burningham

So sorry for this great loss to the art world. I had long admired Yvonne's work, and had the opportunity to sail with her on a quilting cruise to Alaska many years ago along with Harriet Hargrave. Yvonne was in her wild fabric "faces" mode, and she was a fun, encouraging teacher. Wonderful memories of a sweet woman.

— Laurie Fagen

I never had the opportunity to meet Yvonne or take a class with her. It was, however, her vision in creating SAQA that has enabled me to meet so many wonderful people and to develop in my own textile art career. Thank you for being the inspiration that you were, and still are, Yvonne.

— Maggi Birchenough

(Ed. Note: We regret to report that Maggi also passed away this spring. How inspiring and moving to see her tribute to Yvonne come in to SAQA. We will miss both of you.)

left: **Illusion**
Yvonne Porcella
36 x 33 inches, 2014

SAQA member gallery: *Landscape*



Nancy Bardach

A Song of Ascent
64 x 140 inches | 2015
www.nancybardach.com
Refugees travel toward a future life. This piece speaks not only of sorrow, regrets, dangerous oceans, and traversing dark spaces, but also of aspiration, arrival, inner joy attained.

Noriko Endo

Entering Eden #2

73 x 86 inches | 2012

www.norikoendo.com

I have been dreaming of entering Eden where flowers are in full bloom and birds are singing songs happily. Trees are a recurring theme in my quilts.



Melody Randol

Still Waters

26 x 54 inches | 2014

melodyquilts.com

Silent still waters have their own story to tell. What lurks and lives beneath the surface of the water is ours to imagine.

Janet Windsor

Like Arizona Gold

47 x 25 inches | 2013

janetwindsor.com

Like Arizona Gold references the copper mines which are an ongoing controversy in this state.



Barbara Schneider

Prairie Night Sky

36 x 42 inches | 2015

www.barbaraschneider-artist.com

Prairie Night Sky captures the beauty of the prairie as sunset colors the sky.



Vicki Conley

Spring Storm in Denali

24 x 40 inches | 2015

www.vicki-conley.com

Inspired by a recent trip to Denali National Park.

Upcoming themes and deadlines: *Raining Cats & Dogs: July 1, 2016*
See submission guidelines at www.saqa.com/journal-gallery

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- Eight point morph allows you to tweak single patterns, grouped, or individual patterns within a group, for a perfect fit.
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- Make fine adjustments with new customizable increment settings for nudge and rotate.



New **Lightning Stitch** features conveniently allow you to work directly at the sewhead when tools call for precision placement or stitchout action. Place and morph patterns perfectly using the boundary tool with sewhead. Place pushpins, pause, stop and resume sewing right at the sewhead. Sewing time display, stitch count and pattern data interface contribute to improved project management.

AutoPilot Mach 3 increases speed and improves accuracy. The possibilities are endless with the tools provided in AutoPilot Mach 3! You've seen ABM International introduce many new patented specialty items such as **PantoVision** (9,267,222), **Sequin Stitcher** (9,074,309), and **Innova Sketch** (9,010,259 B2).



Watch as ABM International continues on its innovative journey and enjoy the rewarding results brought to Innova and longarm quilters around the world!

www.innovalongarm.com
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2016 Annual Conference speaker roundup

What we learned in Philadelphia

by Cindy Grisdela

Renowned artist and historian Dr. Carolyn Mazloomi was the keynote speaker at the SAQA Inspire-Connect-Engage conference in Philadelphia March 31-April 3. Her talk, entitled *When Being a Good Artist is Not Enough*, encouraged quilt artists to move beyond criticism and rejection by acquiring a thick skin and at least one set of “fire-retardant clothing.”

Carolyn, an authority on African American-made quilts, has acted as curator or juror of a number of exhibits. She noted that all artists deal with criticism and rejection, ranging from the subtle lack of “likes” on Facebook or other social media to more overt rejection from a coveted show. We must accept that “rejection is all part of the game,” she said. The key is how to overcome our reaction to being rejected or criticized. Even as

well known a figure as she is, Carolyn has experienced criticism and rejection in her own career.

The first step is to separate yourself emotionally from your work. Although she acknowledged the difficulty in doing this, it is essential that we know we have done the best we can, accept the flaws in our work, and move on.

One way to make this happen is to get positive critiques of your work from someone you respect. This should be an artist friend rather than a personal friend or family member. If you pick the right person, they will point out the flaws while still being supportive, and you will learn and grow as an artist from the experience.

Remembering why you create art is the second step. “Creating art is a spirit thing and a personal expression of who you are,” she said. Look at rejection as a challenge and an

opportunity to grow, realizing that all jurors have their own tastes and preferences, she added. A quilt that was rejected for one show might win an award at another with a different juror.

Thirdly, surround yourself with like-minded people and stay clear of negative people. Avoid criticizing or feeling jealous of other artists. “Everyone has a rightful place at this table called art,” she said.

As a curator and a juror, Carolyn has seen mistakes artists make when entering juried shows. She listed the most common ones:

- Failure to follow directions
- Wrong size images
- Bad photography
- No website
- Grammatical or typographical errors in written materials
- Failure to submit work that fits the theme
- Weak artist statement

“All these little things add up to a big thing that will knock you out of a show,” she said. Avoid these errors and improve your chances of being accepted.

Above all, don’t stop creating because of rejection. “All art is special because we uplift the world,” she concluded.

Award-winning SAQA member Kathleen Loomis of Louisville, Kentucky, gave a talk entitled *Why Working in a Series*

Dr. Carolyn Mazloomi





still from video shot by Sam von Brand

Conference attendees enjoy a joke at the dinner banquet.

Works. “Working in series is the single approach that distinguishes serious artists from amateurs,” Kathleen said.

She used examples of her own work, plus that of three other SAQA members: Kathleen Probst, Maria Shell, and Judy Kirpich, to illustrate her points.

To work in a series, start with one quilt that you like. Then ask yourself what you like about it, what you don’t like, what parts were difficult, and what alternate choices you might have made in the design. “For the next quilt, do more of what you like and less of what you don’t like,” she said. For the difficult bits, either don’t do them or figure out a way to do them better, and try other options for the next design. Each subsequent quilt can explore the same elements in different ways.

Perhaps you’ll work toward radical simplification of lines and shapes, as Kathleen Probst does, or explore one type of design like Maria Shell’s unequal nine-patch block, or find different ways to express a circle, like Judy Kirpich.

As long as each quilt flows logically from the previous work, you have a

series going on. Kathleen’s own fine lines series has been going on for many years now and has more than 40 quilts in it. One benefit of working in this fashion is not having to wait for inspiration to strike for your next design. “I just go down my list [of ideas] and try something new,” she said.

SAQA JAM Maria Shell of Anchorage, Alaska, expanded upon her successful lecture from the Portland conference entitled *Use Your Words: How to Walk, Talk, and Write Like an Artist*. “One of the most important keys to being a successful artist is remembering to always be your authentic self,” Maria said.

“Claim your voice and protect it from cultural conditioning, fear, and self-loathing,” Maria advised. “Voice is not about being a rock star or being famous, it’s about being true to who you are and being authentic,” Maria continued. “Don’t let your doubts, or those of people around you, stop you from pursuing your artistic dreams. Remember, this may have been done before, but it hasn’t been done by you,” she said. We are all unique and

our approach to our art reflects our personalities and experiences.

Writing is important to the business of being an artist, whether it’s an email to submit a proposal, a blog, a Facebook or Instagram post, an artist statement, or a biography. Learn to write clearly and thoughtfully.

We also have to talk about our art to others. Have a short “elevator speech” that describes what you do to someone else. Maria’s is: “I am a visual artist whose primary medium is the quilt.”

If you are asked to speak to a group about your work, stand tall and project confidence, even if you have to practice it in the mirror before you start. Maria calls this adopting your Wonder Woman pose and she demonstrated it perfectly to the group.

Maria’s other recommendations included having a beautiful website to present your art to the world and business cards to hand out whenever you meet someone who might be interested in your work. As a former journalist, Maria advises writing down your goals and dreams. “Use your words to visualize what you

see “Conference” on page 40

concrete & grassland



Jennifer Hammond Landau

Root & Branch
39 x 35 inches, 2015

Concrete & Grassland explores the juxtaposition of the natural landscape with the human-built cityscape. SAQA artists were asked to submit works that explored either the openness of natural landscapes, or the more confined spaces formed by urban structures, or a combination of both.

This exhibition focuses on contrasts. Not only do urban spaces contrast with nature's scenery, but some of the elements of design used in the artwork, such as color, line, and shape, form artistic contrasts as well.

The beauty of a landscape, be it rolling prairies, the colors of a sunset, or lush surrounds of a tranquil lake, is undeniable. But there is also beauty in a soaring skyscraper and the way the sky reflects in its glinting surface, or in the repeating patterns of bridge or tower. This exhibition celebrates the perseverance of one within the realm of the other.



Maryte Collard

Lust for Life
44 x 26 inches, 2015



photos by David Windsor

Janet Windsor

Resilience
21 x 21 inches, 2015

Elizabeth Barton

Electric Fields

34 x 44 inches, 2009



photos by Diane K. Bird



Joanna Mack

In the Clouds
32 x 16 inches
2014



Deborah Runnels

Surveyed, Sold, Fenced
43 x 38 inches, 2015



Janis Doucette

All's One Under The Sun 2
14 x 23 inches, 2011

How to pack and ship fiber sculptures

by Susan Else

Good news! Your 3D work was accepted into an exhibit. Now how are you going to get it there?

Many SAQA members are starting to experiment with three-dimensional art quilting, and more SAQA exhibits have started to accept it. Since I have been doing sculptural quilting since 1999, I wanted to share my packing and shipping experience.

You have two primary goals: to prevent your shipping container from being crushed, and to prevent your

artwork from banging around inside the container.

Use new cardboard boxes. They tend to hold up better to the rigors of shipping. Your box is likely to be dropped by the shippers, and it will have other boxes stacked on top of it. The exhibit venue will return your work in the box you sent it in. Consider double-boxing, with a



Susan Else's collaged and quilted sculpture *Family Life*, 2014, 38 x 20 x 20 inches, with its cardboard shipping box. She has added a sheet of corrugated plastic to reinforce the bottom of the box.

Here the skeletons have been swathed in bubble wrap to help them conform to the dimensions of the box. The carton has been lined with polyethylene foam, further reinforcing the box and making it a snugger fit. The foam cradle at the top will separate and support the delicate necks and skulls of the figures, and the extra foam layers on the side of the box just above the sculpture's base will help keep the piece from shifting in transit.

slightly smaller box packed inside the main shipping box. To pack my piece *Family Life*, I reinforced the bottom of a cardboard box with a piece of corrugated plastic made by Coroplast, available at retail plastic and signage stores. An extra piece of cardboard would also work for this purpose.

Pack the sculpture snugly, so that it can't move inside the box. A box

that just fits the work, with a little room for padding, is better than an oversized box that allows the piece to shift around. If the shape of the piece means that even a snug box has lots of air space, be sure to fill up the empty area, either with bubble wrap, air pillows, or similar materials.

I often line the box with foam sheets or build a custom foam cradle

that fits snugly inside the container. I use a polyethylene product called Ethafoam®, which is flexible but resilient and can be cut with an X-Acto knife. It can be purchased at retail plastic outlets or online. Recycled packing foam can be pressed into service as well. Since these products do not always accept glue, I use packing tape to adhere them to each other and to the box, always making sure that all tape stays well away from the surface of the sculpture.

Examine your piece to see where it is strong and where it is fragile. In *Family Life*, the cloth-covered plastic skeletons sit on a sturdy cloth-covered wood base. If the packing box fits snugly around the base, it will help keep the carton from being crushed. The base itself, plus the reinforcing piece of corrugated plastic sheet, work together to protect the more fragile skeletons.

If you can, keep standard box sizes in mind when creating 3D work. I recently worked on a sculpture I envisioned to be 48 x 48 x 15 inches. I realized that making the piece a couple of inches smaller was a better idea, as it had a better chance to fit a commercially available box. Your shipper can show you a list of available box sizes. You can create your own boxes or cut down standard ones, but it takes more time. Cutting down boxes can also damage their integrity. Although it's important to use new boxes when you ship, other materials, like packing foam and bubble wrap, can be reused many times. I rarely have to buy new bubble wrap.



photos by Marty McCallivray

All the empty space has been filled with recycled bubble wrap and air pillows. Unpacking instructions, as well as “to” and “from” information, are added before the carton is sealed.

A second view of 3D packing

by Mary McCauley

Storage and shipping of 3D fiber art need not be difficult or expensive. It can even be a creative work in itself! I reuse old foam-core boards to create sides, top, and bottom for a box that is only ½-inch bigger in height, width, and depth than the artwork itself. This keeps the art from shifting around too much inside. I cover the box panels with scraps of fabric from other projects. I sew the panels together with either a zigzag or a hand whip-stitch, and I use Velcro® tabs to close up the box.

If the work is more fragile (like *Protea*, shown here), I use rolls of bubble wrap, or the air pillows from other packaging I have received, to make bumpers or blocks that hold my art in place within the box. This is all lightweight, and it recycles packing materials I might otherwise have to throw out.

I fuse a photo of the artwork to the opening panel of the box, and inside I add a photo of how the art looks when correctly packed. The box can then be taken to a shipper and placed inside one of their standard shipping boxes, usually with a simple layer of bubble wrap placed around my box, acting like a double-hulled boat. If the shipper's box gets damaged, my storage box inside is usually protected, and my artwork avoids damage or exposure.

top right: Mary McCauley's **Container Garden: Protea**, 14 x 16 x 16 inches

center right: **Protea** inside its custom container, with stabilizing bumpers made of bubble wrap and foam core.

right: The custom container with its fabric cover and handle, Velcro closure, and fused label is ready to put in a standard commercial shipping box.



photo by Inge Kraus



My colleague Mary McCauley has a slightly different approach to packing her delicate 3D work, which tends to be smaller than mine. She makes a custom container for each piece, and then packs these inside commercially available shipping boxes. She allows room for a layer of bubble wrap between inside and outside containers.

Delicate and projecting parts of the work should be reinforced and stabilized. Sometimes I wrap a projection with bubble wrap and then circle that with thin, flexible cardboard. If an area seems too delicate to bubble wrap, I cradle the work. I might make a foam cradle that extends from the sturdy waist of a figure to the edges of the box, leaving delicate hair or toes free of packing material but unable to bump the sides of the box.

Most exhibition venues prohibit packing in foam peanuts. Shippers do not like duct tape, so use clear plastic packing tape to seal your outside box. If you have an inner box or cradle that you want the exhibition venue to reuse (either to ship the work on to another venue or back to you), seal it with blue painter's tape that can be removed without damaging the container. Put a small roll of extra tape in the box. McCauley achieves this same result by sealing her inner boxes with Velcro®.

Label all your packing materials with your name so they can be identified for return shipping. Include a sheet of paper with your name and address and the recipient's name and address. If the piece is complicated to unpack and install, put instructions in the box and consider adding photos of the process and of the assembled sculpture. You can email

the instructions to the venue as well, but often your contact for a show is not the person who will actually unpack and install the work.

Big, heavy sculptures may require wooden crates. Most of my work is pretty light, even if it's large, so I've had to use a wooden crate for only one piece: a five-foot-tall mechanized Ferris Wheel with a steel armature. Since some venues prefer not to receive wooden crates, check out the new kübox, a combination of laminated paper and corrugated fiberboard. This line is available at FedEx® in a few standard sizes and in custom sizes online; visit www.thekubox.com for details. These strong, lightweight containers are more expensive than crates you make yourself, but take into consideration that your time is also valuable.

Shipping costs are determined by weight and size, and they can be expensive. I use lightweight plastic materials for armatures in my work wherever possible. Designing a piece so that it can be disassembled can save a lot of space, but be sure you include assembly instructions, as well as photos of the process and what the assembled piece is supposed to look like.

The shipper you use will depend on many factors: who is available nearby, where you have an account, and the maximum package dimensions a shipper will accept at standard rates. It is worth doing research in advance, and if you already have a relationship with a shipping business that sends your flat work, it may be a good source of information and advice. In the past, I have used UPS, FedEx, and the U.S. Postal Service. Specialty art shippers are pricey, but they are

sometimes the only option for very large-scale, delicate pieces.

Check your shipper's regulations on insurance and on shipping artwork. If you want to insure something for more than the "default" amount (currently \$500 for the shipper I use), they may make you unpack the box or insist on packing it themselves. Some artists solve the insurance problem with a rider on their homeowner's policy; check to see if this is an option for you. To protect myself from theft, if I have to declare the contents, I always list "textiles" instead of "artwork."

I have been packing and shipping sculptures since 2000, and so far I have had one piece damaged (you could see tire tracks on the box, but I was able to repair the work) and one piece lost (the quilt show organizer wasn't paying attention when the piece was returned). I have never tried to press a claim. If you are really worried about a sculpture, do not ship it. Sometimes things happen. I try to remember that I could have chosen to make flat quilts!

Please bear in mind that this advice is based on my personal experience, and it is not meant to be an endorsement or guarantee of any kind. All artwork is different, and so are individual artists' packing and shipping needs. When in doubt, check with your shipper and the exhibiting venue. ▼

Susan Else is a SAQA JAM residing in Santa Cruz, California. Susan also is a SAQA board member and serves on the Exhibition Committee.

Write artist statements that welcome, captivate your audiences

by Sarah Entsminger

An artist statement is a necessary part of sharing your work with others. A captivating narrative sells you and your work to jurors, gallery owners, and people who visit your website.

Artist statements typically fall into three categories. The first is a brief statement for a specific piece of work, only a few sentences in length. The second is a short statement consisting of two to three paragraphs that introduces your body of work at a gallery, museum, or exhibit. The third is a longer statement that describes who you are, what you do, and how you do it. This long-form version is useful for your website or to send along with a portfolio of work to a gallery owner, publisher, or museum curator. Keep this statement to no more than five paragraphs.

It is important to use the correct statement for each situation. There is no “one size fits all” version, especially if you need to submit work to a themed exhibition.

Writing a brief artist statement for a juror to read while looking at an image of your work lets you explain why your piece fits and enhances the theme. Make sure your words fill in the blanks and cause the juror to linger over your image, enjoying the nuances of your work.

A few examples of artist statements for an exhibition submission follow:

Poison dart frogs sport vibrant colors in order to alert their predators to danger. They are tiny, no bigger than a pinky

finger nail. None are hot pink, except in my imaginings.

—Gwyned Trefethen

Despite its connotation as a luxury item, we seldom consider how silver is obtained through the arduous, dangerous work of mining, particularly back in 1907.

—Mary Pal

Wine glasses are transparent objects that glow with rich color when wine is poured. But fill them with light, and magical, unpredictable images appear.

—Sandra Sider

Whether you consider yourself a professional artist or a hobbyist, you need to engage those viewing your work. Your art took considerable time from generation of ideas to completion, and it was created to tell a story. Your artist statement speaks for you when you are not present to answer questions or introduce a piece of art.

Here are some tips for writing an artist statement:

1. Write more information than you think you can use. Come back later and highlight the most important parts. Simplify and streamline your text until it presents a short, compelling look at your work.
2. Use first person to welcome others into your world and help them feel comfortable. Write why you make art, what inspires you, what your art means to you, why you chose a specific medium to work

in, and how your work is different from others.

3. Catch the viewer's attention in the first few lines; people tend to have short attention spans.
4. Answer questions you think someone might ask as they view your work. Show connections between your ideas and the finished work. Materials and techniques should not be your focus.
5. Write for a wide range of viewers. Make your statement sound like something you would say to another person. A sense of humor will take you a long way.

Sue Bleiweiss wrote this example of an artist statement:

“Working with my own hand-dyed fabrics, my goal is to create vibrant, colorful, and whimsical fiber art collages that delight the eye of the viewer and draw them in for a closer look.

Each piece I create begins in the pages of my sketchbook where I make several rough sketches of the imagery that I want to work with. Beginning with a small sketch gives me the freedom to explore combinations of the images and colors before cutting into any fabrics. My small sketches are enlarged into full-size cartoons that allow me to adjust the scale of the images and then the actual construction of the piece in fabric begins.

I work with professional fiber dyes using a process that uses a minimal amount of water to add color to the cloth I use in my fiber art collages. Dyeing my own fabric allows me to maintain a consistent color

palette and I really enjoy that full circle feeling of starting with plain white cloth and using it to create something that vibrates with color and makes you smile when you look at it."

You can begin to work on an artist statement by practicing writing exhibit submissions for select pieces. Ask your friends, including non-artist friends, to read your drafts and give you feedback. If they can't follow your story, re-write the statement until it is clear. It's important that your unique voice is heard. Be confident about revealing yourself, as this is the purpose of an artist's statement.

Look through exhibition catalogs. If you were a juror, would the statements in those publications create a positive outlook and allow you to see how the work fits the theme? Read your statement out loud. Can you imagine saying it to a person you don't know? Find a good proofreader, because spelling and grammar do matter.

Once you're satisfied with your artist statement, consider writing another one in third person. There are still some galleries, museums, or exhibit opportunities in which a third-person statement may be requested.

Even if you don't consider yourself a confident writer, this is too important a task to leave undone. There are many resources to guide you, including books on writing, online blogs, and websites. A writer can be hired to create a starting point for you.

The time you spend creating artist statements is invaluable. Each time you write or repeat this information, you become more comfortable in talking about and explaining what you create and why you devote your time and talent to the work.

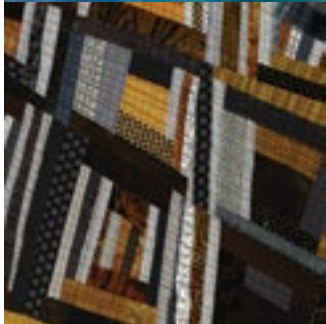
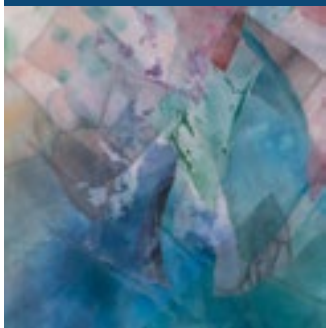
Sarah Entsminger is a SAQA JAM residing in Ashburn, Virginia. She is a member of the organization's Exhibition Committee.

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SAQA Journal editor from page 3

a missing item. If I could follow his example, I would not own more than one 6" square ruler. Instead, I joke I could open a store selling just this one item.

Pete's discipline about equipment extends to all aspects of his career. His performances—for which he is always on time—range from solo appearances at galleries and coffee-houses to fronting his quintet at larger venues. He writes books. He teaches online and at one of our community colleges here in Arizona, where he instills the need for a gig bag in his students. He will randomly ask to inspect students' gig bags to see if all the necessities are present. Having traveled with musicians to gigs throughout our state for about two decades, I believe that this is the most critical practice he can instill in

students. Believe me, it's no fun to be the agent sent on an emergency run in a rural location to retrieve the

Have you stopped to write down what you could do to survive as an artist, especially when the economy drops?

proper kind of adapter plug right before sound check. Especially when you have never bought it before.

I see Pete's entire business plan as one expanded gig bag. He has skills built through the years, enhanced by all of his experiences. He has embraced a multifaceted but uncluttered career. His decision to do many things within the music business keeps him focused on what feeds his soul and supports him in all the ways that are important.

Do you have a gig bag? Have you stopped to write down what you could do to survive as an artist, especially when the economy drops? Panic will not help. Tears won't sustain. Attending all the seminars in the world won't make your dreams come true. It is knowing who you are as a person and an artist that matters.

Life forces side trips. But a well-stocked gig bag makes the journey yours. ▼



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Detail: DELIGHTFUL SPIRALS by Robbi Joy Eklow

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WHAT'S NEXT

Board members from page 4

representative, networking, and learning from other members has inspired growth and a continued commitment to her work. As a board member, she hopes to support SAQA members to help them reach their goals.

Christine Nielsen



Christine (Chris) Nielsen worked as a scientist for many years before leaving to pursue other

interests. Though active in various fiber arts since her youth, she was

drawn to art quilts after working on large loom-woven beaded pieces. It occurred to her that she could accomplish the same effects faster using fabric.

"I think of myself as a storyteller. Once upon a time I was a research scientist and my tools were numbers and graphs. Now I tell my tales with the help of fabric, shape, texture, and color."

Chris has served as a SAQA regional representative for the Atlantic Canada region since 2012, successfully bridging gaps caused by geography and experience to build an energetic membership base. Her interests within the larger organization relate to developing activities and communication channels, which support

both established artists and those who are relatively new to art quilts.

"I am committed to creating community in everything I undertake. I have felt and seen what can occur when individuals let go of personal biases and insecurities and contribute their special talents for the good of a group. The group thrives and each member grows in ways they never thought possible. It is that interest and mandate that I bring to my service on the SAQA Board."

Chris moved from the United States to Canada in 1977, and now lives in Nova Scotia with her husband and four dogs. ▼

Allison Reker compiled this article. Allison is the SAQA membership secretary.



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Elaine Quehl from page 7

develop her artistic eye and her sense of composition.

Elaine works in a studio that is bathed in her favorite color, which perhaps not surprisingly is a char-treuse green. It is a 10-foot by 10-foot bedroom space. Activity is overseen by her studio cat, Wilma.

Elaine begins her work with a photograph. She takes lots of pictures and spends hours in the composition stage deciding which will make the cut to be made into a quilt. The image is often cropped to emphasize the lines and shapes that appeal to her the most. Once the composition is determined, Elaine makes a pattern and uses fusible applique to create her design. She uses her own hand-dyed fabrics and adds texture with free-motion stitching.

Cavern 2 is part of a new series which features a new color palette with more reds and blues instead of greens. She is also experimenting with depicting hosta leaves that are past their prime, which leads her to explore golds, coppers, and browns. "I'm really enjoying these new palettes," Elaine says. *Curtain Call 2* is another example of one of these new designs.

What advice does Elaine have for art quilters who want to expand their businesses beyond selling original work? "Make lots of work and send it into the world," she says. "When people see your work, they want you to teach them how you do what you do."

As a teacher, you need to do everything you can to help your students be successful, Elaine adds. "When

your work is out in the world, you will also be noticed by magazines, book editors, and fabric companies. Of course, sometimes you'll also sell a piece."

To get your work out into the world, Elaine suggests you apply to local or national exhibits, have a website, write a blog, and post your work on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, or Pinterest. Make a quilt for a SAQA auction. The Internet makes it much easier than it used to be to get noticed.

Elaine began exhibiting her work, which has now been shown internationally and widely published, because of a chain of circumstances. "I was invited to be artist in residence at a local guild. Reps from our provincial quilting organization



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were present to promote their show. They saw my work and invited me to have a solo show in their quilt gallery, the Waterloo County Quilt Gallery. This gave me the confidence to submit for their juried show, and eventually other juried shows around the world," she explains.

Looking toward the future, Elaine dreams of having another solo show in a gallery, perhaps with her hosta pieces. "I had several exhibitions when I first quit my day job, but now the busy teaching schedule has taken over. It will happen!" Elaine says positively. ▼

Cindy Grisdela is a SAQA JAM living in Reston, Virginia. See her work at cindygrisdela.com.

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Blogging from page 17

a place to record, reflect, and show your work as it evolves, blogging will be rewarding for you no matter what your readership. As Roxane says, "Don't be afraid to start a blog, and don't worry whether anyone will read it. The process of writing about your work is valuable and is of value to anyone who collects or buys your work, as well. I've heard from people who read my blog that they enjoy it and have learned from it. That alone makes it worthwhile for me." ▼

Abby Glassenberg blogs at whilesheaps.com. She designs sewing patterns, creates podcasts, and writes newsletters about the sewing industry. She recently co-founded the Craft Industry Alliance (craftindustryalliance.org)

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—Judith Content



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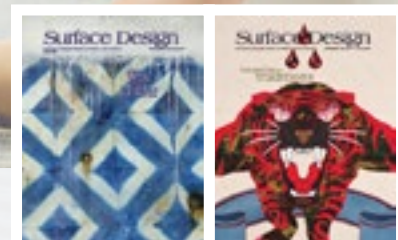
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Conference from page 25

want to happen next and then act upon them," she concluded.

The final speaker was **David Kohane**, an intellectual property attorney with the national law firm Cole Schotz P.C. His topic was *Can I Use That? Copyright from a Legal Perspective*.

David made a complicated topic understandable with a series of examples of copyright infringement cases from both music and art. The law is always being refined as new cases go through the courts.

Although we automatically have copyright to an original work we create as soon as it is created, David recommended registering your copyrights with the U.S. Copyright Office (copyright.gov) to protect yourself in case you are faced with a copyright infringement.

The safest way to avoid copyright infringement is not to use images or other materials that you did not create yourself. But if you do wish to use someone else's image, whether it's a photograph, a company logo, or other material, you must ask permission to use that material from the person or company who owns it.

Conference attendees also enjoyed presentations from the **SAQA Exhibition Committee**, about ways the committee is expanding exhibition opportunities for all SAQA members, and from a student panel of fiber artists from the nearby University of the Arts in Philadelphia. ▼

Cindy Grisdela is a SAQA JAM residing in Reston, Virginia. View her work at cindygrisdela.com.

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Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. (SAQA) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the art quilt through education, exhibitions, professional development, documentation and publications.

The *SAQA Journal* is published four times a year. To submit articles, contact the *SAQA Journal* editor at editor@saqa.com. See the submission guidelines at www.saqa.com/journal-submit.

Deadlines for articles:

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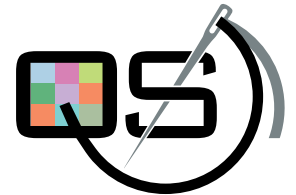
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