

SAQA Newsletter

President's Message

This newsletter is the result of the combined efforts of Cathy Rasmussen, Fern Tompkins Benson, Dee Danley-Brown and Cathie Hoover. We are in the process of developing a new newsletter schedule, expect the mailing to be April, July, October and January 1st. Sharon Heidingsfelder has volunteered to be editor of the newsletter and handle the word processing aspect. The Job of organizing the articles and features is still under consideration. Sharon will do the Summer newsletter.

Dee Danley-Brown reports the registrations for IDIA are brisk. We are excited about the response. Brochures continue to be sent out. We are processing informational request which are generated by magazine ads.

The **Diversity!** catalogue will be available in October. We have not finalized the retail cost at this time.

We apologize for the omission of Chicago artist **Akemi Nakano Cohn** from the list of artists accepted in the **Diversity!** exhibition which appeared in the Winter newsletter.

Please notice the Teacher Registry Update letter by Sandra Townsend Donabed in the newsletter. Sandra wants to hear from you!

It has been brought to our attention that the SAQA Directory is being copied and sent to other organizations. The



Directory is for the sole use of our members and cannot be used by others without the written permission of SAQA. In the past we have paid to use other organization lists for our mailings. We do not allow our list to be used indiscriminately.

Congratulations to Sue Pierce for the wonderful publicity for the Full Deck Project. Articles appear in the March issues of SMITHSONIAN Magazine and FIBERARTS.

YVONNE PORCELLA, President

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TEACHER REGISTRY UPDATE

Sandra Townsend Donabend is sending out flyers to all the quilting and fiber related magazines asking them to put an ad in their classified sections listing information on the SAQA Teacher Registry. Sandra keeps a list of SAQA teachers who offer a variety of classes. Please look in the **Resource Directory** under **Services** for information on the Teachers Registry. It is important that you send your packet of promotional materials to Sandra to be included in the listing. When Sandra receives a request, she sends out a comprehensive list of teachers and classes. The group requesting our list would contact the teacher directly.

LETTERS

The following unedited letter from Michael James was received in response to the article by Carol Jesson reprinted from Quilting International magazine, which we ran in Issue 14.

Yvonne Porcella, President
Studio Art Quilt Associates
PO Box 287
Salida, CA 95368

Dear Yvonne:

Carol Jessen's article "Layers of Excellence" in the Winter 1995 issue of the SAQA Newsletter prompts me to write to clarify the situation a bit, especially for readers who didn't have the opportunity to see the exhibition, or the accompanying catalogue.

Ms. Jessen leaves the impression that much was left out of the show. No exhibition of contemporary work can ever be definitive, and this one doesn't pretend to be. Many "name" quilt artists didn't submit work, so they couldn't be included. A number of others submitted work that was less than the best they could do; this was disappointing and resulted in some omissions.

Quilt San Diego very specifically required the selection of 45 works: not more, not less. I'd have preferred to restrict the selection to about 35 pieces. I feel a smaller show would have fit more comfortably in the available

gallery space, although the final installation, despite being crowded, presented the work well. Fewer quilts would also have made for a more fine-tuned collection.

Ms. Jessen stresses that my personal "taste" was the defining factor in the selections. As I look over the catalogue, I think the evidence shows that "taste" to be quite catholic and resulting selections quite diverse. To imply otherwise is misleading. The final 45 selections reflect the overall nature of the original 900+ submissions; if there are no landscapes, it's because no successful landscape quilts were submitted; if the color palette of the show is narrow, it's because these particular color expressions worked better than the predictable color spectrum variations that were submitted.

Perhaps the truest point Ms. Jessen makes is that the "skew" toward diverse surface treatments included painting, dyeing, rubber-stamping, etc. etc. represents "the direction that art quilters have taken recently." My feelings precisely. Consequently, I couldn't have chosen otherwise. These were the best works that were submitted from among the various genres in which people are working today.

I've contended since reviewing the slide submissions in the fall of 1993 that any other jury, whether composed of one, or two, or three members, would have selected essentially the same show. Certainly there would have been a few differences, but I think it's widely agreed that "cream rises to the top" and that's certainly what would have happened here with any number of jurors. Perhaps a single viewpoint does in fact produce a more cohesive and coherent group show, and at least in this case, I hope it did.

If Carol Jessen couldn't express unqualified enthusiasm for this collection of work, and if she likewise couldn't damn it forthrightly, then perhaps her ambivalence is more indicative of where studio quilts are right now: objects struggling to decide where they fall generically. Identity crises are nothing new in art: they've been happening continually and will continue to happen. But it is a difficult place to be for all concerned: artists, jurors, critics, and audiences alike.

A concern that the organizers of VISIONS shared, and one expressed by some viewers as well, was the selection by a single juror, namely myself, would be compromised by my acquaintance with many of the artists who submitted work, and with my familiarity with that work. In fact, I did recognize many artists' works during the initial slide jurying. Many have been exhibiting for as long as I have or even longer, some had studied with me over the years, others had communicated with me in one form or another. That I should recognize their work wasn't surprising. That's just the point! My comprehensive knowledge of the quilt world, and especially of the recent activities of studio quilt artists, assured that the decisions made would be informed and knowledgeable. This actually made my job somewhat more difficult, in that I had finally to reject the work of several artists I consider close friends. I felt that I had, ultimately, to keep my eye on the final product, and in the process let the chips fall where they may. It was not something that I undertook casually or thoughtlessly.

I've made a point a number of times over the last several years of stating my belief that there aren't more than 45 or so outstanding nontraditional quilts produced on a yearly basis; in fact, I've said that there are even less than that. I feel that this applies to this last VISIONS show, and will equally apply to the forthcoming QUILT NATIONAL. I'd enjoy seeing a critical evaluation of that upcoming show that can make a convincing case otherwise. What I'd expect to hear is a tale of a certain measure of mediocre and derivative expression, a small dose of originality, and an equally small portion of forgettable "here-we-go-again." Don't misconstrue this as an attack on art quilts: it isn't. The same could be said of nearly all juried group shows in any number of media. It's the nature of the beast.

I think that what's happened over the last ten or fifteen years in this branch of the quilt medium has been exciting and exhilarating. I hope it continues, and I look forward to supporting it.

/s/ Michael James

FOCUS: IDIA '95

We hope the IDIA '95 brochure has given a good sampling of what is in store for you at the conference in October. Here is more detailed information about the site and some of the workshop presenters.

ARROWMONT

Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts is an internationally known visual arts complex located only three miles from the entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Eastern Tennessee. Situated on seventy acres of wooded hillside, the Arrowmont campus is a place where students and faculty find themselves immersed in an atmosphere of visual stimulation, providing an unending source of energy, inspiration, and creativity.

Men and women of all ability levels, ages, practical backgrounds and educational attainment attend Arrowmont for one and two-week sessions, special media conferences, seminars, community classes and Elderhostel sessions. Students gather from across the United States as well as foreign countries to study with prominent visual artists. Through creative challenges and technical experiences, students expand their aesthetic understanding and broaden their perspective of a particular medium.

Arrowmont's large well-equipped studios are in close proximity to one another to facilitate the interchange of ideas and technical information. A well-stocked book and supply store on campus carries tools, materials, and books needed for courses.

The Marian G. Heard Resource Center houses a large collection of art/craft books and other resource materials including a valuable permanent collection of contemporary art and craft objects. The Arrowmont Gallery, where **Diversity!** will be exhibited, provides regularly changing juried, invitational, theme or media oriented feature exhibitions. Slide lectures, musical performances and demonstrations further

enhance the school's ongoing program. Nearby recreational facilities in Gatlinburg and in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park provide opportunities for an occasional respite from the intensity of course work.

If you would like to receive some information on upcoming activities and events in the area, or off-campus housing, please contact the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce at 800-822-1998. Camping facilities are also available through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Service at 615-436-5616.

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

COELEEN KIEBERT - ART AND SPIRIT: MANIFESTATION OF ESSENCE*

Ms. Kiebert has a BS degree in Art from the University of Minnesota and a MS degree in psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her focus of study there has been creative personality and creative process. Her studies have taken her to Japan and China where she has studied with their schools of traditional arts. Kiebert is a sculptor, working in ceramics, glass and bronze, who exhibits her work nationwide. The themes of her work are inspired from her personal and private inner life. Most of her images are of women exploring myths of nature and legends that underlie everyday reality. (*Please note that the above is the correct title for Ms. Kiebert's workshop. We apologize for the title error in the brochure; however, the workshop description is correct.)

BEATRICE BOWLES - WEBCRAFT: ARTIST AS STORYTELLER

Ms. Bowles received her BA in English from Vassar College with an emphasis on World Mythology and Storytelling for Children. While her original focus was working and developing programs for children, due to a great demand she has expanded these programs to include adults as well. Professionals operating in the interpretive fields, that is, museums, public gardens and parks, churches, schools, etc., have gained greatly from her workshops. She has traveled extensively to perform and teach a

wide range of people--from artists to ministers--how to be more comfortable in front of an audience. Her home base of operations is at the Botanical Gardens of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

SAS COLBY - THE CREATIVE EDGE

Ms. Colby's nontraditional mixed media work has been exhibited and collected nationally and internationally. Most recently her work was seen at The National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC. Her survey exhibition, "Twenty Years of Book Thinking", which debuted in Santa Fe, New Mexico will travel to Mills College in Oakland, California and the University of the Arts, in Philadelphia, PA. Colby has been a visiting artist in Australian universities and at schools throughout this country. She currently resides in Taos, New Mexico where she leads inspirational Art Retreats. The Retreats reflect Ms. Colby's desire to integrate work and play, life and art.

RICHARD FINCH - CREATIVE EXPERIENCES IN DRAWING FORM AND SPACE

Mr. Finch is Professor of Art at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. He is also the Director of Normal Editions Workshop at the Center for Visual Arts at ISU. The Workshop supports art students by recognition of achievements in print media through exhibition awards and a scholarship competition. His work has been exhibited widely across the United States through group and solo exhibitions. He has been the recipient of several awards, grants, and fellowships. Numerous private collections include his work as well as many museums and universities such as the Brooklyn Museum, the Detroit Institute of Art and Northwestern University.

LOST QUILT

An original art quilt created by Marilyn Henrion in 1990 has disappeared during shipping by UPS. The quilt, "For Christa...Lost in the Stars", was on loan to a gallery in California for an exhibition at NASA in Mountain View, California, from July through September, 1994. The quilt, which was shipped out to the artist on September 28, 1994, never arrived at its destination. UPS has been unable to locate any tracking record.

The title of the 49" x 49" quilt, as well as the artist's signature and year, are embroidered on labels sewn to the back of the quilt. Should the quilt resurface at any time, the artist would appreciate notification of any information which might lead to the recovery of the work.

Any request for confidentiality will be respected.
 Contact Marilyn Henrion at: 505 LaGuardia Place,
 #23, New York, NY 10012
 Tel. (212) 982-8949.

REGIONAL NEWS:

NORTHEAST

Marcia Johnson

In the last 20 years the art of quilting has seen an unprecedented explosion of activity. Many serious artists have begun to break down the commonly-accepted boundary between craft and art, in the process creating expressive works of deeply-felt spirituality and social conscience. Using quiltmakers from the mid-Atlantic region, the James Michener Art Museum, Doylestown, PA exhibited *Patterns of Vision: Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Quilting* from December 10, 1994 to March 19, 1995. Brian Peterson, Curator, selected work which explores this lively art form, focusing on mature artists who have developed distinctive personal voices. Included were SAQA members Karen Berkenfeld, Marilyn Henrion, Nancy Herman, Marcia Johnson and Cynthia Nixon.

In addition to the opening reception on Dec. 9, the Museum hosted a special program, *A Quilter's Roundtable and Lecture on Jan. 31*. This program offered the public information about the techniques and creative processes of contemporary quilting through presentations by four artists in *Patterns of Vision*: Joy Saville, Emily Richardson, Nancy Herman, and Marcia Johnson. Marcia opened the program with a lecture on the history of quilting and a slide presentation of the innovations made by contemporary quilt artists.

The prep time, from idea to opening reception, took about one year. SAQA provided background information and history articles in addition to registry slides from professional artist members. Our organization was given credit for their contributions, both in exhibit literature and in media releases. The exhibition was well attended and received numerous reviews by Philadelphia art critics. Linda Milanesi, Public Relations Director will provide SAQA archives will all these media pieces from her clipping service.

As it was dismantled, what remains for the art quilt movement and the public is a vivid image of studio quilts exhibited in an impressive museum setting. Many thanks to the professional staff at the Michener Art Museum and especially to Brian Peterson for his "vision".

Director's Comment: The incredible efforts of this regional group clearly paid off for them as well as for SAQA with this wonderful exhibition. The two-pronged benefits of such a showcase cannot be denied. The exposure and recognition of these artists enhances their reputations and this spills over Studio Art Quilt Associates as well. It is through the efforts of the regional groups that we have the opportunity to strengthen and broaden the understanding of art quilts. This, in turn, empowers SAQA to fulfill its mission and take this to an even higher level. It is important for everyone to become involved as an organization is only as good as the sum of its parts.

--Cathy Rasmussen

TOOLS OF THE TRADE: Writing a Press Release

Marcia Johnson

This on-going column is designed to assist you with the administrative side of your art career. Please refer to Newsletters 11 and 12 for previous columns on publicity and media lists. All materials are taken from Marcia's manual, *Professional Presentations: Tools for Reaching Real Results*.

"You've got to win in sports--that's talent--but you've also got to learn how to remind everybody how you did win, and how often. That comes with experience."

-Billie Jean King, 1982

Once you have determined WHY you need publicity and HOW to get publicity through a customized media list, then it is time to address WHAT: the actual mechanics of writing down information you wish to impart to the public using the form of a press release.

If you know all of the facts, writing a press release is easy. A press release is a basic kind of writing requiring no stylistic endeavor, only a format. All you need is to do is plug in your facts, all of them.

Following the press release format rules will not guarantee the publication of your news, but ignoring it will automatically exclude you. Here are the basics, which you need to adjust to fit your particular circumstances:

- Always type a release, using double spacing and lots of spacing around edges and paragraphs. Use paragraph indents.
- Use letterhead with a name and phone number on it. Letterhead is something that should already be a part of your basic administrative tools.

Start at the top with the date. Next, type in caps FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or FOR RELEASE AT WILL. The first

suggests that your news is of immediate interest, the second is that there is some leeway and that they can use it when it suits their needs. Include here the dates your news can be used such as July 6 - August 30, 1994.

- The next typed line should state: FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT with a name and phone number. Your release will not be considered without this information.
- Center a headline over the body of the release. It should be interesting; you are not necessarily writing the headline that will be used; your intention here is to capture the interest of your media source.
- Headlines are a whole subject unto themselves. Scan the periodical to which you are making your submission and study their headlines for ideas. Make sure something in the body of your release refers back to the headline. Keep it positive and professional.
- When writing a press release, build with the facts:
- **WHO?** (The artists, sponsors, chairperson, director)
- **WHAT?** (Exhibit, conference, award)
- **WHERE?** (Include address and any information that may be required. Don't presume that your audience knows how to get there.)
- **WHEN?** (Dates and times)
- **WHY?** (Make the importance of the item clear to your readers. Why do they need to see this exhibit?)
- **HOW?** (to get tickets, more information, park the car.)

Stick to one page if possible. If more is required, type MORE or CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE PLEASE on the lower right hand corner. Start the next page with a page number and a slug line, e.g. page 2 WRITE A PRESS RELEASE. At the end of the release center the word END as the last line or ### or -0-.

Timing is important. Find out the deadlines of each periodical or publication to which you send. Know the lead times. Do your homework. It is not useful to write press releases that are not sent in a timely manner.

Here are some other hints for successful press releases:

- Use the spell checker on your computer or have someone else proof your copy for content and spelling. Write in a clear manner using nouns and verbs. Avoid flowery adjectives.
- State your membership with professional organizations when appropriate.
- Keep copies.
- Remember the importance to Who if you are exhibiting locally. Area newspapers are interested in local people.

PORTFOLIO ROTATION:

Portfolios have been sent to the following:

Mary Halahan, Registrar
Delaware Art Museum
Wilmington, DE

Mary Chandor
MMC Associates
Basking Ridge, NJ

Director
Northcutt Steele Gallery
Montana State Univ.
Billings, MT

Director
Clymer Museum and Gallery
Ellensburg, WA

Laura Millin, Director
Art Museum of Missoula
Missoula, MT

Sharon Carter-Smith, Curator
Honolulu Advertiser
Honolulu, HI

Mona Berman Fine Arts
New Haven, CT

Director
Chattahoochee Valley At Museum
LaGrange, GA

SAQA Newsletter - A quarterly publication of the Studio Art Quilt Associates, a non-profit organization founded to promote the importance of the studio art quilt.

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For information on SAQA or to submit to newsletter, write:

SAQA, P.O. Box 287, Salida, CA 95368

Membership is \$35.00 per yr, \$100 for artist members

**RESOURCE
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(Address changes or corrections)

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