



NEWSLETTER

Contents

<i>Why Me? The Variety of Art Scams</i>	1
<i>President's Letter</i>	1
<i>New Year Reflections</i>	2
<i>Museum Has New Director</i>	2
<i>SAQA Update</i>	3
<i>Members' News</i>	4
<i>Call for Entries</i>	5
<i>SAQA Membership: Planting the Seed</i>	7
<i>SAQA at Houston</i>	8
<i>Auction Items</i>	8
<i>Book Reviews</i>	9
<i>Art and Quilts: 1950-1970</i>	10
<i>On the Road</i>	15
<i>SAQA Classifieds</i>	16

WHY ME? THE VARIETY OF ART SCAMS

Drew Steis

The author is the Editor at Large for Art Calendar Magazine, P. O. Box 199, Upper Fairmount, MD 21867. This article, printed in the September, 1998, issue is reprinted with permission.

Even before the Brooklyn Bridge opened in 1883, somebody, who didn't own it, tried to sell it to somebody else. I have a sneaking suspicion that "somebody else" was an artist, and not only an artist but a visual artist who would have paid top dollar. That's because visual artists are among the most gullible people in the world. That is why there are so many people in the art world today trying to take advantage of them.

It is axiomatic that if you work at your art long enough someone will try to take advantage of you. They will take your ideas, your art, your money, or most important, your reputation, and leave you with a lot less than you started with. There are consultants, representatives, and agents who promise, for a fee, to sell your art. There are publishers, who, for a fee, will reproduce your art as

a poster, a print, or a book. There are galleries, which, for a fee, will either give you a show, or try to sell your art. There are competitions, which, for a fee, will judge whether or not your art is worth showing to others. There are co-ops, which, for a fee, will let you try to sell your own and others' art from their space. And, there are private, corporate, and museum collections that, for a fee, will look at your art for possible acquisition. At the same time there are the good guys and gals in all of the above categories who are sincere, honest, and willing to work hard for artists for fair compensation.

So how do you tell the difference?

The bad guys are the rip-off operators, the vanity strokers, and the scam makers, who spend all their time plotting new and even more effective ways of taking your money and your art from you. The bad guys are those who promise products, services, publicity, shows, representation, and/or sales for monies paid first before there are any results. Sometimes they deliver, sometimes they don't. Sometimes artists are happy with what they have been paid, but most times they are not. Often artists are taken and, then are too ashamed of having been taken, to protest about it.

continued on page 6

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Yvonne Porcella

The Appraisal Seminar cosponsored by The Alliance for American Quilts, the International Quilt Association, and Studio Art Quilt Associates, held recently in Houston at the International Quilt Festival was a huge success. For those attending it was a thought-provoking day as well as insightful in the matters of quilt appraisal. Cathy Rasmussen, in conjunction with Shelly Exaggerate, selected the experts for our distinguished panel. The expenses for the one-day seminar were divided by the sponsoring groups. The event was recorded for historical purposes, but at this time the tapes have not been transcribed.

Appraisals of art quilts are tied to value. The seminar set forth terminology for discussion of the appraisal process. The aspects of quilt appraisal and terminology were discussed in the SAQA newsletter during 1998. These articles serve as an excellent reference for artists. Pricing art quilts was the subject of an SAQA survey two years ago and the results were also printed in the newsletter. Pricing is an integral part of the appraisal process since the price is usually established by the artist and the appraiser has to substantiate the value. Refer to the newsletter articles to identify the different types of value.

continued on page 5

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

Cathy Rasmussen

I apologize for the delay in the winter issue of the Studio Art Quilt Associates Newsletter. I had hoped it could be on time, but the best laid plans . . . and all of that.

As many of you already know, I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the fall of 1992. After undergoing the necessary surgeries and chemotherapy, I quite brazenly thought I had beaten the demon. But cancer has a way of keeping one humble. I had a recurrence in the fall of 1996. With more surgery and chemo I went back into remission until the summer of 1998. Hearing this news of another recurrence two weeks after my father's death was quite a blow. It was also time to come to terms with the fact that cancer – for me, as well as for many other people – will be a chronic illness, such as diabetes, that will require management and constant supervision to keep the demon at bay. If kept at bay it will, quite possibly, allow for a normal life span.

Proceeding with my scheduled chemo, I thought everything was going along fine until I was admitted into the hospital in late November for gastrointestinal bleeding. (Fall, as you can see, is not my best season.) The day before the surgery was scheduled, I woke covered in spots which turned out to be – can you stand it? – chicken pox. They whisked me into isolation so fast my head spun. Obviously, the surgery had to be rescheduled until the beginning of December. It was very successful and I quickly started back on chemo which has become very manageable for me at this point.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, I guess it seemed a better excuse than the dog ate my homework, but there are some things I have learned from this experience and I would like to share them with you. So here goes.

■ *Be flexible.* Remove rigidity from your thinking and your schedule as it is much easier to bend than to break. Nobody

knows what life has in store for them so a certain sense of adaptability can be extremely helpful and much easier on the nervous system.

■ *Take joy in the ordinary.* Be happy for uneventful times and enjoy the natural routines of your life. Treasure each day for the possibilities it holds as life is made up of a series of smaller moments rather than larger ones. You get the idea so insert whichever cliché you prefer here.

■ *Keep a sense of humor.* It makes life's annoying travails much easier to deal with and it's good for the immune system. In my case, the worse things get the more I see the humor in them which at times can have an extremely macabre slant but, hey, whatever works!

■ *Tell the people you care about how you feel about them.* Don't leave things unsaid or just assume that your friends and family know you love them, everyone still needs to hear it. If someone has made a difference in your life you need to tell him/her before the opportunity is lost. Use discretion here – you could get annoying.

■ *Kindness is contagious.* We all need to connect with one another far more than we realize. That conversation with someone in the supermarket or that note you sent a friend going through a rough patch in her marriage, can be a life-altering experience for the person on the receiving end but might have only taken a minute of your time. Sometimes it's hard to work that extra minute into a day but it can mean so much to someone who is feeling alone.

■ *Make art.* Express yourself with joy and passion. Take risks and welcome the challenges that they bring.

MUSEUM HAS NEW DIRECTOR

The Board of Directors of the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles announces the appointment of Jane Przybysz, as its new Executive Director. Przybysz was formerly the curator of research and folklife at the McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina.

Przybysz was hired after a ten-month national search for a leader with a strong track record as a museum professional as well as a person with passion and knowledge about quilts and textiles. Her experience with building community support and her excellent skills at grant writing were among the strengths that attracted the Board of Trustees to Przybysz.

Upon her appointment, Przybysz wrote, "What brings me to the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles are the seemingly endless possibilities. The Redevelopment Agency's continued interest in developing a permanent site for the Museum in downtown San Jose means that the staff will have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help create a space and an institution specially configured to respond to local community needs, yet anticipate reaching out to national and international audiences. Over the coming years, I hope to partner with other cultural institutions to apply for National Endowment for the Humanities research funds to develop traveling exhibitions that promise to increase the public's awareness of quilts and textiles as art and as constituting a largely undervalued and taken-for-granted 'fabric' of our lives."

Przybysz holds a Ph.D. in performance studies from New York University, an M.A. in Theater Directing from Columbia University, and a B.A. in English from Emory University. She has published numerous articles on quilting, folk art, folk music, and has an upcoming book, *Sentimental Spectacle: The Traffic in Quilts*, to be published by the Press of the University of Mississippi. She was awarded a faculty scholarship in 1997 to develop a model for interpreting quilts made in South Carolina during the years between the World Wars. Przybysz is also a quilt maker herself.

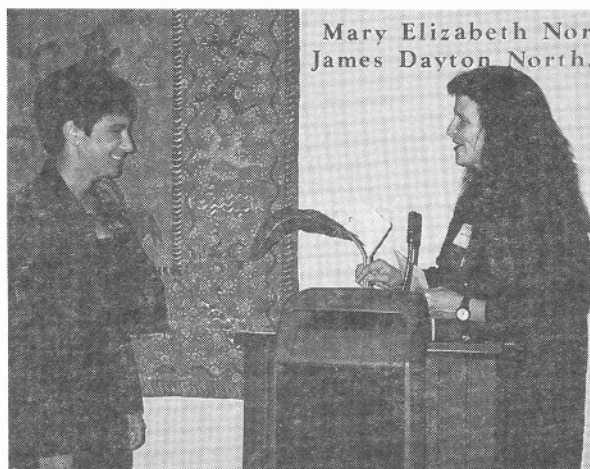
SAQA UPDATES

Cathy Rasmussen

• **Professional Artist Members** – In 1999, we are changing the format of the portfolio rotation. Instead of postcards, etc., we want to include "Guild"-type pages in the portfolio. If you are not sure what that is, please contact Karen Berkenfeld or myself. Any new information on what you've done this past year should be sent to Karen for inclusion in your file. Contact Dominie Nash if you have any contacts for her to send a portfolio. Your input is extremely helpful in reaching as many sources as we can.

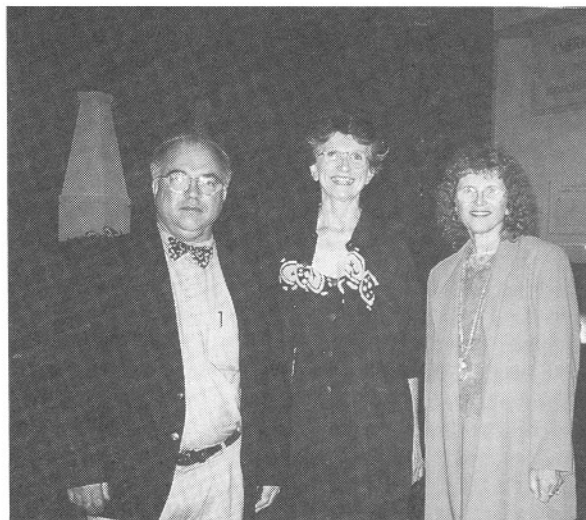
• **Membership Drive** – Our membership drive will continue for another year so please try to recruit new members. Our members are our best advertisement. It helps when you list SAQA on your résumé and refer to it in articles, lectures, and classes. Remember, your membership is extended by three months for each active member you bring in.

• **Quilt San Diego/Visions** – Congratulations to Vita Marie Lovett who was presented the "Rookie Award" at the opening of the *Visions* exhibition. Sponsored by Studio Art Quilt Associates, this award was presented by SAQA Board Member, Wendy Huhn, on behalf of the organization. The award honors a first-time exhibitor at *Visions* whose work is outstanding. The recipient was selected by the jurying panel.



Wendy Huhn presents Vita Marie Lovett
with Rookie Award
Photograph: Beth Kennedy

• **Edge to Edge** – The SAQA exhibition at the Museum of American Folk Art in New York City was seen by almost 12,000 people during its three-month showing. A hundred people attended the lunchtime lecture series in July and another hundred attended the one-day seminar in September. Speakers Dottie Moore, Yvonne Porcella, and Robert Shaw gave great, and very diversified, presentations on art quilts. Yvonne's workshop sold out so quickly that she graciously agreed to another which sold out as well. The *Edge to Edge* catalog sold in the Museum's Book and Gift Shop also sold out. The exhibition received coverage on the CBS and ABC evening news; a two-page spread in the Long Island newspaper, *Newsday*; an article in *American Craft*; a weekly listing in the museum sections of *Newsday*, *The New York Times*, and *New York Magazine*; and a radio interview with two of the artists and the curator. The



Robert Shaw, Dottie Moore, and Yvonne Porcella at
Edge to Edge Show

exhibition was also included on the viewing list for the Friends of Fiber Art International and The Textile Society of America who held their conferences in New York during September. Heritage Plantation in Sandwich, Massachusetts, will have the exhibition in the spring and summer. This busy Cape Cod spot hosts an incredible number of people each season so this SAQA show will continue to have a large audience.

• **Santa Fe 2000** – Mark your calendars for November 1 - 5, 2000, for the SAQA multi-event creative conference. Additional days before and after the conference have been blocked off for attendees to extend their trip because Santa Fe, and the surrounding areas, has so much to offer. As stated previously, the title for the exhibition held in conjunction with the conference is *Exit/Entrance*. More details will be available soon.

• **SAQA Classifieds** – If you are interested in submitting ads for the next newsletter, the deadline is March 10. Please include a check for \$10 for thirty (30) words and send to SAQA, P.O. Box 287, Dexter, OR 97431. Please take advantage of this opportunity to let others know about your workshops, retreats, books, fabrics, T-shirts, clothing designs, etc.

• **Newsletter Topic** – I would like to compile your comments and experiences and include them in the next newsletter on the following item I received from a member. Please let me hear from you. Here it is. "It has come to my attention that one long-established quilt guild has decided to charge a 10 percent commission on all items sold by contracted teacher/lecturers to their members **including sales of art quilts**. In my experience such sales are not 'impulse' purchases at guild meetings, or sales in which the guild has in any way acted as a broker. Indeed, such sales are usually the result of a long-term admiration of the quilt artist's work by the client whose guild membership is irrelevant. A 10 percent commission can be a very significant amount of money. For a nonprofit guild to expect a commission for such a sale strikes me as completely inappropriate."

MEMBERS' NEWS

• Virginia A. Spiegel won first place for her work, "Freedom," in the fiber category of *Iowa Crafts: 31*. Two other of her works were selected for the clay/fiber/metal competition/exhibit held at the Macnider Museum in Mason City, Iowa.

• Michael James will have a retrospective of his work at the Museum of the American Quilter's Society in Paducah, Kentucky, from February 27 through May 22, 1999. The exhibition entitled, *Michael James: Studio Quilts, 25 Years* will span his career from 1975 to 1999 and include more than 30 quilts.

• Rose Momsen, recently moved to the Canadian Border after 16 years in Hawaii, has had an exhibit of narrative art quilts as part of *Illustration: On Fiber and Paper*, at Umpqua Community College Fine Arts Gallery in Roseburg, Oregon. Quilts exhibited included several from her master's degree thesis works on developing art curriculum called, "The Path to Personal Content." She graduated last May with an M.A. in Humanities/Art History from California State University at Dominguez Hills, using art quilts as a primary focus in her thesis.

• *Four Artists, More Quilts* was the title of the exhibition at the University Place Gallery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, during October and included the work of Sylvia Einstein, Sarah Gindel, Beatriz Grayson, and Carol Anne Grotrian.

• Rachel Brumer's work was included in an exhibition at the Nancy Sachs Gallery in St. Louis, Missouri, from September 25 through October 24, 1998.

• Jill LeCroisette showed quilts at the International Quilt Festival in Houston and was juried into *Aesthetics '98* at Sandzen Gallery in Lindsborg, Kansas. Her garments were included in *Hats '98* at T.L.D. Gallery in Westmont, Illinois, and at the Pacific International Quilt Festival in Santa Clara, California.

• Ann Fahl will have her work exhibited from February 20 through April 3, 1999, at the Art Elements Gallery in Mequon, Wisconsin. An exhibition of her quilts featuring cranes, birds, and swans, entitled, *Stitches, Feathers and Color*, will be seen at The Artists Gallery in Racine, Wisconsin, during March, 1999.

• New member Zelda Tanenbaum had an exhibition of her hand-made paper quilts at the Robert C. Williams American Museum of Papermaking in Atlanta, Georgia, from October 9 through January 11, 1999.

• Nancy Erickson had her works included in *Coming into Animal Presence* at the Sutton West Gallery in Missoula, Montana, during November.

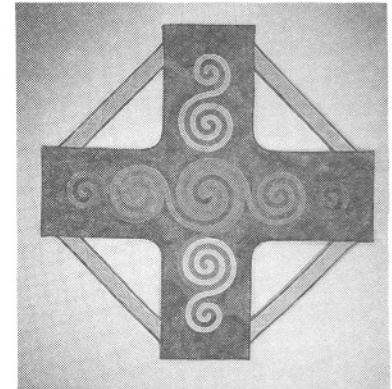
• Janet Kurjan had two pieces accepted to *Quilts=Art=Quilts* at the Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center from November 7 through January 8, 1999. Her work was included in *Green Mountain Visions: Vermont Craft Artists* at the Works Gallery in Philadelphia, in December and January. She will be one of five artists in a show at the Chaffee Center for the Visual Arts in Rutland, Vermont, from July 5 through August 15, 1999.

• New member Rosanna Lynne Welter had a very productive year in 1998. She was juried into *Quilter's Newsletter's Rhapsody of Roses* contest, published an article in the fall issue of *American Quilter*, entitled "Mega Fune with Monoprinting," and participated in the invitational exhibit, *Go Figure*, at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles.

• Adrienne Yorinks had an exhibition of her works at the Ardsley Public Library in Ardsley, New York, during the month of December. The quilts were the original artwork photographed to illustrate Marian Wright Edelman's book, *Stand For Children*.

• New member, Anne-Lore Gubler from Zurich, Switzerland, had 40 of her quilts included in an exhibition this summer and was included in a Christmas show at Schloss Greigensee, a small beautifully-restored castle about thirty minutes outside of Zurich.

• Sandra Sider had her work, "Water Wheels," purchased for the city of Atlanta Airport Art Program and was installed at Gate E-29 in International Concourse E at the Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport.



"Spiralen Kreuz,"
57" x 57",
Anne-Lore Gubler, 1998.

• Lauren Camp had two of her works on display at the *Road to California* show in Ontario, California, in January. Three other quilts were selected for a group show at the Ironic Horse Gallery in Albuquerque, New Mexico, during November and December. "Close Your Eyes and Look Inward," a quilt focusing on the beauty and horror of the Holocaust, was selected for *Expressions of Freedom*, a traveling exhibit commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights.

• Robin Cowley had two of her works selected for the U. S. Embassy in Armenia through the Art in Embassies Program of the United States State Department in Washington, DC.

• Marilyn Henrion has works included in *Stitches: the Art of Fiber and Thread* at the Janice Charach Epstein Museum Gallery in West Bloomfield, Michigan, during January and February; *Contemporary Craft of New York State* at the New York State Museum in Albany, New York, from February 12 through May 2, 1999; and *Spring Fever* at the Garden Education Center of Greenwich, Connecticut, during April.

• The Northwest Designer Craftsmen invitational show at the American Art Company in Tacoma, Washington, exhibited the work of SAQA members Erika Carter, Nancy Erickson, Melissa Holzinger, Wendy Huhn, Stephanie Randall Cooper, and Sally Sellers from November 19 through December 12, 1998.

• The Boehm Gallery at Palomar Gallery in San Marcos, California, included the works of SAQA members Charlotte Bird, Erika Carter, Patricia Klem, Jill Le Croisette, and Jeanette DeNicholis Meyer, in *Contemporary Art Quilts and Clay Forms* exhibited from November 20 through December 17, 1998.

• *Yardworks Art Quilts by the Manhattan Quilters Guild* includes the works of SAQA members, Teresa Barkely, Karen Felicity Berkenfeld, Marilyn Henrion, Paula Nadelstern, Robin Schwalb, and Sandra Sider. Originally seen at the International Quilt Festival in Houston, this exhibition is currently touring.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (cont.)

After a morning of short lectures on specific topics by the five panelists, there was a lively question and answer period. In the afternoon sessions, the group was divided into three rooms to discuss appraisals of antique quilts, traditional/contemporary, or art quilts. Each group had specific quilts to view and discussed all the aspects an appraiser would use for arriving at a legal appraisal.

During the art quilt session a pertinent issue was brought up by a member of the audience. The question related to the value of a quilt that is selected for a traveling exhibition. First, it would be necessary to distinguish the type of exhibition. Individual quilts selected for a juried exhibition which then goes on tour may have a different value than art quilts made by invitation for a specific theme exhibition.

For the exhibition, the artist submits a retail value if the piece is for sale and an insurance value for the quilt. The insurance value is the amount that the touring entity uses to insure the quilts for travel and exhibition in various venues. The artist's contract should list the amount of insurance and the artist should be informed of the touring itinerary. If the insurance value of an individual quilt is deemed too high by the touring company or its insurance company, the artist may be required to substantiate the price, i.e., a sales record or comparable sales.

But back to the question, the artist wanted to know if the value of the quilt is changed after the end of the touring exhibition. The answer to this question is one that I felt important to all SAQA members. Yes, the quilt is more valuable after it has been on tour since provenance is one aspect of the value. Hence, if the quilt has been in a very prestigious exhibit and traveled to major venues, the quilt could have a higher value at the end of the tour. An appraiser would consider who the other artists were in the tour, the quality of the work, the places (a domestic venue vs. a foreign venue), the length of the tour, and the condition of the work at the end of the tour to readjust the value. All quilts do not require an appraisal at the end of a tour but, artists should be aware of these facts in the event of change of ownership of the quilt.

Traveling exhibitions and theme exhibits are becoming more popular. There are no rules or specific protocols. It is like wading into a vast ocean. Artists should take the time to read and gather all information possible. SAQA educates artists on professional issues through its newsletter, seminars, and conferences. Pricing work and establishing value is one aspect. Entering the marketplace is another and it is the theme of the May 1999, SAQA seminar in Athens, Ohio. I hope to see you all there!

CALL FOR ENTRIES

- The historic textile center of Lowell, Massachusetts, will be the location of the **Quilt 21: American Art Quilts for the 21st Century** juried exhibition which is planned as a biennial presentation with the premier scheduled for August, 2000. Approximately sixty works of American quilt artists will be selected by the co-curators, Maxine Farkas and Sandra Sider, who also are serving as jurors for this inaugural competition.

Quilts selected will show outstanding command of the quilt medium, in both technique and design, with the originality expected of an art quilt. Collaborative pieces are acceptable, but not work created in a workshop or other classroom setting.

Work submitted must have been completed after May 1998, and may not have been exhibited in either *Quilt National* or *Visions*. Artists must be residents of the United States or be American citizens residing abroad. A prospectus and entry form may be obtained by sending a SASE to *Quilt 21*, The Brush Art Gallery, 256 Market Street, Lowell, MA 01852.

Deadline for submissions is February 1, 2000. Notification of acceptance or nonacceptance will be mailed by April 10, 2000. Accepted quilts must reach The Brush Art Gallery by July 15, 2000. All accepted works must remain in the exhibition until November 15, 2000. Those quilts selected for any touring exhibition must remain in the exhibition until December 1, 2002.

- The ***Hanging By a Thread 1999 Defining the New Century*** exhibition of studio art quilts is sponsored by Northern Arizona

University (NAU) Art Museum and Galleries. In 1997, the NAU Art Museum and Galleries sponsored the first *Hanging by a Thread (HBAT)* exhibition which was so well received that it has become a biennial exhibition. *HBAT99* will be located in the Old Main Art Museum on the north NAU campus in Flagstaff, Arizona.

The work must be a quilt/layered composition with the maximum size of 82" x 82." The entry deadline is March 15, 1999, and the exhibition dates are June 3 through September 3, 1999.

Please contact NAU for a prospectus and entry form by sending a SASE to NAU Art Museum and Galleries, P.O. Box 6021, Flagstaff, AZ 86011.

- ***Fiber Focus '99***, hosted by Art St. Louis, co-presented by the Weaver's Guild of St. Louis, St. Louis Needlework Guild, and Art St. Louis, is a nine-state juried exhibit open to artists in Arkansas, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.

Presented at the Art St. Louis Gallery from June 18 through July 30, 1999, this exhibit of contemporary works in any fiber media or combination of fiber media, will be juried by Yoshiko Wada. The deadline for slide entries is April 1, 1999.

For more information, please send a #10 SASE to *Fiber Focus '99*, Art St. Louis, 917 Locust Street, #300, St. Louis, MO 63101-1413.

WHY ME? THE VARIETY OF ART SCAMS (cont.)

Everyone has her/his own story about the bad guys. We all have heard about the vanity book publisher who collected \$1.7 million from 3,000 artists promising each one of them one page of reproductions of their works and one page of biographical information. That book would have been a minimum of 6,000 pages long if it had even been published. But it was not and artists lost their money, slides, transparencies, and other materials. That publisher was enjoined from publishing in the state of Illinois, but in the meantime, has had at least one other book published in New York State.

Galleries have closed with artists' work lost behind locked doors or tied up in costly court battles. There are two galleries that have gone out of business this year in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan area leaving artists wondering where their art was.

Art representatives, agents, and advisors have disappeared with works either sold, or in hand, and the artists never saw any money. It is not unheard of for the artists to receive less money than a work actually sold for.

A so-called "foundation" in New York City with an East 59th Street address announced the expansion of its permanent art collection and issued a call for the works of new, emerging artists. They requested ten slides and a \$29 processing fee. The foundation didn't exist as a nonprofit foundation nor where they at the address listed, but, according to the postal service, if this group purchased just one work for as little as \$5, they circumvented the mail fraud laws.

A vanity gallery will offer a show and the costs to the artist may eventually exceed \$5,000. There are membership fees; the per-month, or per-exhibit, fees; hourly fees for telephone work; exorbitant insurance fees; publicity and reception fees; shipping fees; and framing fees. Adding insult to fiscal injury the gallery may also take up to 50% commission if anything sells. And, if the gallery discounts the price, guess who loses her/his share of the sale price? Reputable galleries will let an artist "buy" a show so the public never knows whether that artist was juried in, or bought into, the show. Even New York Artists Equity rents their Broome Street Gallery. They do this to offset the costs of the building and the organization.

Also beware of museums. A 1993 competition, advertised in a major national art magazine, promised winners a show at the Museum of Modern Art of Miami plus up to \$4,000 in cash awards. Only one problem, there is no Museum of Modern Art in Miami, or all of Florida, and there never has been. But this competition asked you to make your checks payable to "MoMA" and to send your money and slides "within 30-days because the museum staff will select for this competition as well as future exhibits in '94, '95, and '96."

A museum in a foreign country may not be what we in the United States would consider a museum. One group who called its facility a museum is actually a private home, where, according to the French Embassy, the shows are held in a dining room. Some of their competitions only quoted one-way shipping charges leaving the artist to decide whether to pay extra or abandon the art in Europe. The same competition accepted an artist who had written for information but sent no slides. Beware

of sending your art for direct sale on a purchase order. One fine craft producer sent \$11,000 in ordered goods to a catalogue company 24-hours before that company filed for Chapter 11 protection under the bankruptcy laws. She may get 10¢ on the dollar, if she is lucky.

Unfortunately even a track record of six years doesn't protect the artist from being taken. The National Discovery Awards, sponsored by the Art Institute of California in Napa, went out of business, but only after collecting hundreds, if not thousands, of \$48 entry fees.

The best way to protect yourself from the bad guys is by using common sense. Use "a sucker is born every minute" rule and if it sounds too good to be true, take another long, hard look at what's being offered.

Here are clues to help you protect yourself from being taken. If you are not sure, ask the following questions.

- Do I, or anyone else I trust, know this organization or individual?
- Do they list a street address, a telephone number, and operating hours?
- Are the dates and location of the show given?
- Is this an annual event and/or does this organization have a known track record or history of producing successful shows?
- Have they told me all the fees up front?
- Are the fees worth what they say they will provide?
- Do I, or anybody I trust, know the jurors, judges, curators, space, etc.?
- Are the shipping charges for one-way, or round trip, and is there a reasonable chance I will get my work back?
- Is there a better way to spend this money to promote my art and my career?
- Will I be proud to have this connection appear on my résumé?

If all of the above questions are answered to your satisfaction, here are a few more warning signs that should make you think twice about becoming involved.

- If the entry fee seems unusually high.
- If the prize monies are directly linked to the entry fees collected.
- If a museum, foundation, and/or collections charge an entry, or processing fee, for looking at slides.
- If a gallery charges a monthly fee plus takes a commission on sales.

continued on page 14

SAQA MEMBERSHIP: PLANTING THE SEED

Sally Sellers

It is with a mixture of amusement and frustration that I hear artists debate whether or not to join Studio Art Quilt Associates and whether or not to join at the artist's level. In my mind, there is no question that this organization is one of the best things we have going for us professionally. I cannot imagine why anyone seriously interested in this field would not join.

Some of the common concerns I hear are SAQA is too expensive; SAQA is not effective enough because I didn't get perceivable results in six months; I don't understand what SAQA does; and SAQA isn't as "fun" as other organizations. I'd like to respond to these concerns by saying, "What are you thinking?" Get your coffee and, as Joan Rivers says, "Let's talk." I promise it will be more "fun" than the things you read in those other organizations' newsletter.

Some of these arguments I have presented before, but for those who were not at that particular dinner party, and for those who have not enjoyed the benefit of my extensive e-mailings, I will do so again. I will use the Socratic method of questioning, (one oft preferred by mothers), in which I will ask a series of questions, the answers to which you know perfectly well but for some reason have forgotten.

QUESTION: How much money do you spend on fabric and supplies in a given year? And, what percentage of that would a SAQA membership comprise? Take the total of A, don't forget sales tax and shipping, not to mention those impulse buys at conventions, divide A by B, multiply by point-zero-five . . . *no, just kidding*. Suffice it to say that the SAQA membership fees, at any level, suddenly seem pretty small in comparison to the other things you purchase to enable you to work.

QUESTION: Of the aforementioned supplies, how many have been completely used up by the end of the year? (IRS agents need read no further.) Is there fabric left in your stash? Do you feel somehow disappointed because you didn't "use" everything you paid for? Or, do you perhaps view these supplies as part of your arsenal, (Ha! Art is War!) an investment which will reveal its worth later, at the proper time? Your SAQA membership is the same. It is not a quantifiable object which yields its value in discrete portions. It is not something to be measured and evaluated by how much was "used" in a given year. SAQA membership is not a discernible quid pro quo situation. (I really like that last sentence and think you should all read it again, as I rarely use Latin and seek your full admiration, also for the use of the word "discernible.")

QUESTION: Given that we are all fond of bemoaning the fact that the world does not understand art quilts, let me ask how it is that we can best educate the masses. Is not having our best works out there being seen by discerning eyes (as in the rotating portfolio), one effective method? Or, would you prefer to go out cold-calling on galleries, giving speeches and seminars, showing slides, and giving up more of your studio time for promotion and education? (Stars in the crowns of those of you who do, for it is immensely valuable and I thank you for it, I *really* thank you for it, but personally there are days when I don't even want to say hello to the mailman, let alone converse with a bunch

of people who are going to tell me how nice my work is, but their grandmother did everything *by hand*.)

QUESTION: Does it not behoove *all* of us when curators, galleries, and agents see good work? Does it not benefit *all* of us when one of us, any one of us, sells her/his work? Is it not one more victory (There it is again, art is war!) when a collector, or even your neighbor, realizes that your effort is, in fact, art and is worthy of respect not to mention cash? Perhaps you personally did not sell from a portfolio rotation, but someone else did. And you probably will to at some point. (Or, are you one of those people who resents it when someone else does well and I'll bet you also don't want to pay for the tax levy to repaint the yellow lines in the center of the road because you never drive in that part of the county and you don't care whether those people get in accidents because your own neighborhood is perfectly fine and you're getting tired of supporting the rest of humankind and it's time to start thinking about YOURSELF PERSONALLY!)

QUESTION: Do I hear you say "Gallery X didn't call me, yet I was in the portfolio rotation?" Hmm. Would Gallery X have called you had you *not* been in the portfolio rotation? (Just asking.) Wasn't it better to have been given the chance?

QUESTION: How many of you have heard an amateur (unlike all of us that is) enthusiastically announce, "Well, I just decided I'm going to start selling my quilts and make some money?" Did you smile tolerantly? Did you snicker behind your hand? Did you choke on your soup? Did you finally get yourself under control and say gently, "Well, it's a little harder than that. It takes time and patience." Did you also say, "You have to get your work out there and get it seen. You have to educate people about it. It's not going to happen overnight." Remind me of this the next time I am choking on my nachos when someone says, "I joined SAQA for a year but I'm just not sure what I got out of it."

QUESTION: Speaking of which, do you hear doctors saying, "I joined the AMA but I'm not sure what I get out of it?" Do you hear teachers saying, "I'm a member of the NEA but I can't tell you exactly what benefit it brought to my very own personal doorstep?" A professional membership in an organization which promotes your field has obvious value. Other professions realize this. We should too.

A short-term view is defeatist not to mention naive and irritating. A true professional realizes the need for a long-term approach, for seeding the soil, for continuing its care, for patience. If we allow SAQA to continue its efforts, I believe we will all be mighty pleased with what grows. (I could make a cogent comment here about cross-fertilization, but that might be pushing the metaphor into questionable territory.)

I am in this for the long haul, and a long haul I know it is, because, as most of you have no doubt figured out, this isn't exactly an easy life we have chosen. Or, more correctly, the life which has chosen us. I am immensely grateful that someone sat down and pointed out that we need to organize, we need to bind together, we need to educate, we need to gather strength in numbers. I'm grateful that someone has the organizational skills

continued on page 16

SAQA AT HOUSTON

Cathy Rasmussen

We had a great time in Houston this year and it was wonderful to see so many familiar faces as well as new ones. The Appraisal Seminar was a quality event providing the educational information so necessary to be an informed consumer. The presenters, Sally Ambrose, Hazel Carter, Leatrice Eagle, Bunnie Jordan, and Shelly Zegart, did a masterful job in providing insight into the appraisal process. Yvonne Porcella, as the moderator, kept things moving and fielded the question-and-answer session quite successfully. It was a program we can all be proud of and I am delighted that SAQA was such a vital part of it.

This year's Silver Star Salute honored Yvonne Porcella for her efforts in bringing quilts to the forefront. It was a gala celebration which fell on Halloween so everything was decorated accordingly. Darcy Falk made a great hat for Yvonne to wear and Wendy Huhn presented her with a creative bouquet in black and orange. Yvonne discussed her career via a slide presentation at the dinner, and Karey Bresenhan shared the words friends and colleagues had written about Yvonne. Yvonne received a beautiful silver pin in the shape of a kimono as a memento of this incredible evening.

The most fun, though, was the SAQA auction. Everyone had a great time and laughed a lot. Sue Benner and Barbara Hartman, the chairs for this event, did a wonderful job of getting people to donate items. They enlisted the aid of Judy Dales, Gabrielle Swain, Alison Whittemore, and Sue's assistant, Karen, to keep things moving that night and to handle the financial transactions. It was a very lively room and the bidding got really heated at times especially with auctioneer extraordinaire, Wendy Huhn, egging everyone on. Items ran the gamut from tuition to Katie Pasquini's Alegre Retreat, a B & B weekend at Michael James', a week at Terri Mangat's house in Taos, to wallhangings by Karen Berkenfeld, Dominie Nash, and Judy Dales and fabric by Ann Johnston, Barb Hartman, and Beth Kennedy. It was a very successful evening raising more than \$5,000 (after expenses) for the SAQA general operating fund. As a result the money will help keep with expenses without raising membership fees. Thanks to everyone who participated, those who donated, those who bought, and those who volunteered in making this event a success on many levels.

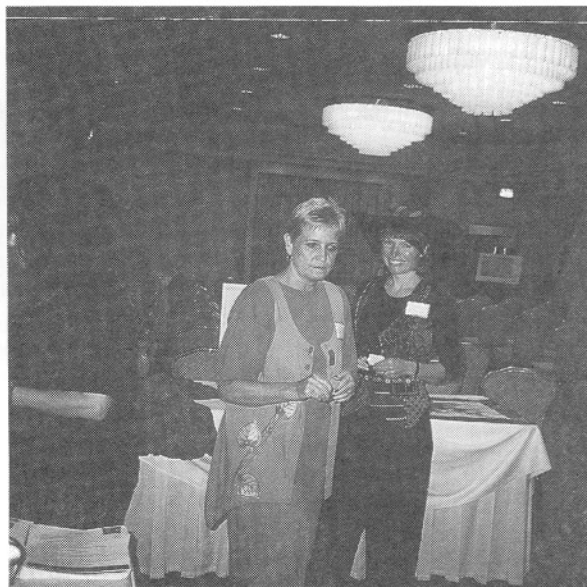
AUCTION ITEMS

The evening went by so quickly that we ran out of time before all of the items could come up for bid. If you are interested in any of the items, please send your bid in writing to Cathy Rasmussen, 1203 East Broadway, Hewlett, NY 11557, and you will be notified.

- Two Yards of Hand-Dyed Fabric by Patty Hawkins – one in autumn colors the other in purples. *Opening Bid - \$25*
- Portfolio Consultation with Penny McMorris – a telephone consultation where you can get the information needed to get your portfolio, and career, on track. *Opening Bid - \$50*

Thinking about coming to New York City? Here's the way to make the most of your time in the city.

- A Half-Day Tour of the Garment District (for two people) with Paula Nadelstern – find the best places for fabric and embellishments in New York City. *Opening Bid - \$30*
- A One-Day Tour (for four people) of the Metropolitan Museum with Robin Schwalb – this seventeen-year employee will give you a behind the scenes guided tour of this great institution including her favorite spots. *Opening Bid - \$50*
- Two Nights at the Apartment of Marilyn Henrion – this incredible space is on the 23rd floor and has a spectacular view of the city. Located near Greenwich Village and Soho it is the perfect spot to have as a home base in Manhattan. (Flexibility for scheduling is necessary.) *Opening Bid \$100*



Barbara Oliver Hartman and Sue Benner chaired the auction.

BOOK REVIEWS

Yvonne Porcella: Art and Inspirations

Yvonne Porcella, C & T Publishing, Inc., 1998

Bets Ramsey

Writing one's life is a daring challenge. To do it without a recitation of consecutive events and refrain from sentimentality and flights of braggadocio requires the author to assume the position of an astute, but dispassionate, observer. In writing about her life and work in *Yvonne Porcella: Art and Inspirations*, Yvonne Porcella accomplishes a difficult task with enviable success. Using a clear, honest style that exemplifies her demeanor, she records a stunning career that begins in childhood in the agricultural setting of Watsonville, California.

Psychologists tell us that the memories of those early years recur throughout one's life and form the emotional responses we make to people, places, and events. Embracing the years of her youth, Yvonne asks, "Where have you been and what did you see?" The theme shapes her thoughts and, like a thread, connects all the phases of her artistic growth. The foundation of her work evolves directly from what she has seen and where she has been. She builds upon each level from the experiences of the preceding one by exploring all the possibilities: assimilating, combining, expanding, inventing, and developing methods and styles to satisfy her creative needs.

Family – grandparents, parents, husband, children, grandchildren – has shaped the person, Yvonne Porcella, and she, in turn, has given of herself to them. The joy of life sings in all her works. The colors, shapes, and themes are reflections of the person who says, "I love life and I love what I am doing." Even in expressing sadness over the death of unknown children and family pets she adds the touch of hope and healing, and an acceptance of death.

Yvonne Porcella: Art and Inspirations is a journey through a life of artistic achievement that begin in the early 1960s with focus on weaving and continued in that medium for eighteen years. During that period the artist developed an absorbing interest in textiles of all kinds, particularly those of other countries and ethnic groups. The weavings, which were intended for clothing, in turn led to construction in the kimono form, then patchwork for clothing, and then into the quilt form. Step by step, Porcella traveled to the place where she is today because she was open to what she saw and where she had been. She is receptive to the influences that become a part of her inspirational resources and she is willing to let them lead her in new directions. It is a lesson worth emulating.

Not the least of Yvonne Porcella's accomplishments has been the leadership and energy she has given to establishing the Studio Art Quilt Associates. In a little more than ten years the organization has been able to increase appreciation for the art quilt and see that it is placed in the context of fine art. If the book has a flaw, it is due to the author's modesty. She is unable to convey the gratitude of the many students and fellow artists whose lives and careers she has enriched with her gentle grace and enthusiasm.

Dancing at the Louvre:

Faith Ringgold's French Collection and Other Story Quilts

Edited by Dan Cameron. University of California Press. 176 pages, \$29.95

Lauren Camp

Published in conjunction with The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City, *Dancing at the Louvre* is a tour-de-force of discussions and full color works to help you better understand the story quilts of the artist. (The museum has mounted a three-month retrospective of Faith Ringgold's work that's well worth seeing.) Her art is an art of historical fantasy, a juxtaposition of legendary artists like Van Gogh with prominent and political African-American women. By borrowing from past artworks and utilizing European influences, this Harlem native creates her own, more satisfactory, approach to the history of her people.

As her daughter, Michele Wallace, writes in the included catalogue essay, "Faith lives in a rich, complex world almost entirely of her own creation, composed of equal portions of mythic past, present, and future in an idiosyncratic combination of truth, fact, and fantasy." A child of the Great Depression with apparent and strong sensitivities to her race and gender, Ringgold is able to take on a dual role of an artist and playwright. Through the included essays, you come to understand the lenses of feminism and history, both familial and racial, that guide her vision.

The book is divided into sections, beginning on an academic note with essays by six prominent figures in the arts. The comprehensive essays speak of the artist's motives, from her flag art of the 60s to the current *French and American Collections*. Next you will enjoy the selection of full-color plates of the quilts. Though nothing could take the place of the visual "wow" of the real thing, the book's photos give you a good sense of what you're missing if you don't catch this traveling show. A selection of the stories is published immediately following, giving you a chance to jump into the painted quilts, the characters and the mind of this fascinating woman.

The book closes with a chronology and recent exhibitions, a section I'd recommend reading if you're an emerging artist and of the mind you'll never get known. Since her college studies in art, late 1940s/early 1950s, Faith Ringgold has been expressing herself through art. She has been single-minded in her efforts, though global in her mediums and techniques, to express her views. Issues of weight, child rearing, race, gender, and politics all find a place in her quilts. Her pieces, simultaneously wise and witty, afford her broad audience of admirers a moral cloaked under the bright paint and whimsy of this imaginative American artist who has rightfully made a name for herself in the world of contemporary art.

ART AND QUILTS: 1950-1970 (Part 1)

Bets Ramsey

Prior to major exhibitions of non-traditional quilts, between 1950 and 1970 certain artists began to adopt and incorporate various quilting techniques in their work, coinciding with a new awareness of the value of women's work and an acceptance of fiber as an art medium. This paper notes the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement and The Bauhaus philosophy and recognizes several fiber artists of the twentieth century. I singled out seven significant artists who are pioneers in creating quilts as art pieces and whose teaching, exhibiting, and writing have affected and stimulated a wide audience. They are Charles and Rubynelle Counts, Jean Ray Laury, Alma Lesch, Joan Lintault, Therese May, and Katherine Westphal. My sources included published literature, letters, lectures by and interviews with the subjects, personal acquaintance, craft organization affiliation, and my own experience as a critic/reviewer of art and craft exhibitions. While it may seem daring and new, the art quilt of the 1990s has a history which is directly related to the artist quilts of the 1950s and 1960s, and to even earlier decades.

Quilts: Out of the Mainstream was an invitational exhibition prepared in the fall of 1992 as a component of the Red River Revels in Shreveport, Louisiana. Careful planning far in advance of the event and judicious selection resulted in a spectacular display of non-traditional quilts.¹ Gertrude Embree summarized the experience for the December 1992 newsletter of the Studio Art Quilt Associates, by stating that twenty-one of its members comprised nearly half of the selected artists.² The show's coordinator described the diverse audience which came to view the exhibition, people who came because of the universal appeal of quilts. They were unprepared for a display of "modern art." Nevertheless, they were captivated by the artists' daring innovations in color and design, yet the form remained that of the familiar quilt and was not identified as "art."

In addition to the general public, members of the art community also came and marveled at the quality of artistic accomplishment in a medium largely unfamiliar to them. They looked, they saw, they learned, and they encouraged their students and associates to share their delight. Embree stated the problem of acceptance, "The art world and especially the art critic has been slow to recognize and understand first that quilts can be art, second that the art quilt is not a painting, and finally that it has its own unique aesthetic qualities."³

Penny McMorris, a guest lecturer during the exhibition, rated it as the country's most significant showing for 1992. She found a vitality that was too often lacking in other shows. She was impressed with the quality and depth of the work and its spacious installation.⁴

Placing a collection of art quilts in a location that is, in itself, removed from the mainstream of cultural activities may seem daring, even risky. The instigators were aware that their audience might not be ready to accept work that was contrary to the familiar quilts of their ancestors. Yet, they believed in their mission to acquaint a wider audience with the exciting departures in quilting they had come to admire.

Actually the way was being prepared for the quilt exhibition in Shreveport for quite some time with the showing of other

major gatherings of contemporary quilts. There were international, national, and regional competitive and invitational shows such as the ongoing *Quilt National* exhibitions, originating in Athens, Ohio, in 1979, and *Quilt San Diego*, in 1987, each traveling to several locations. Under the direction of Paul J. Smith, New York's Museum of Contemporary Crafts⁵ mounted a number of innovative fiber shows including *Fabric Collage* in 1965, *Stitching* in 1967, *Sewn, Stitched and Stuffed* in 1973, and *The New American Quilt* in 1976. The *New California Quilt* exhibition was shown in 1984. The *Art Quilt* exhibition curated by Michael Kile and Penny McMorris in 1986 was another traveling show, and *Southern Quilts: A New View* toured the South from 1990 to 1992. Publications relating to these events have reached even greater numbers of people who admire quilts.⁶

In 1971, the Whitney Museum presented *Abstract Design in American Quilts*, curated by Jonathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof. The exhibition received unprecedented media coverage and was followed by an extensive touring schedule. A prestigious art museum had displayed quilts as art and has been cited as fostering the current quilt revival. Penny McMorris and Michael Kile point out that "what was unsaid was that only antique pieced quilts had been accorded a measured status in the art world."⁷

This paper focuses on events in the twenty years preceding that exhibition.

Before the advent of major exhibitions of non-traditional quilts, in the period between 1950 and 1970, certain artists began to adopt and incorporate various quilting techniques in their work. For the most part they used quilt work not as extensions of family needlework accomplishments, but because of a new awareness of the value of women's work and the acceptance of fiber as an art medium. This had come about through a long and gradual process.

A new regard for fiber arts had occurred in the nineteenth century through the influence of William Morris and his associates in England and the resulting Arts and Crafts Movement.⁸ Recognition of the value of the handmade object came about through the work of Morris' followers in this country along with a growing interest in American history and handcrafts that fostered the development of the Colonial Revival. Morris and his associates were practitioners of the total concept of design for interiors and took particular interest in developing finely executed needlework wall hangings to complement their furniture and wallpaper.⁹ Members of Morris's own family were willingly, or unwillingly, enlisted in production of the embroidery. Their work became known and admired.¹⁰

In every period of quilting there are individuals who push beyond the accepted boundaries and try new approaches. At no time was this more pronounced than during the late nineteenth century when the crazy quilt fad reigned. In addition to breaking away from traditional pieced patterns and the usual appliqué designs by making crazy-patch blocks, their makers created heavily ornamented surfaces with paint, bead, photo-transfer, ribbon, elaborate embroidery, and other unquilt-like materials, approaches not uncommon in the 1990s.¹¹

One of the major causes for the elevation of fiber arts in this century can be attributed to the Bauhaus School of Design, which was founded in Weimar, Germany, in 1919, as a reaction to the ornamental influence of Art Nouveau. Its director, Walter Gropius, and its teachers advocated clean, sparse design in keeping with the modern age, stressing the concept of art and form as it relates to function. The school's radical changes in architecture and industrial design, as well as its approaches to painting, had worldwide influence. Within six years, however, due to its unorthodox philosophy, it was forced to close by the Nazis.¹²

Many Bauhaus adherents left Germany to find refuge in the United States. Several members of the group located in Chicago to establish a new school, the Armour Institute of Design. Some received other teaching appointments where their methods and ideas marked successive classes of art students during their tenure and beyond, continuing to this day. Other artists came to the mountains of North Carolina to share in finding Black Mountain College, an institution which existed from 1933 to 1956.

Foremost among the Black Mountain teachers were Josef Albers, later to have a distinguished academic career at Yale University, and his wife, Anni Albers. They propounded the Bauhaus philosophy that the artist had an obligation to society. The artist was to make his contribution by creating good and useful objects for everyday use in accordance with beauty, form, and function as interpreted by Bauhaus standards.¹³

Anni Albers was a gifted weaver whose work was considered an art form in accord with the movement's ideology that all objects for living were to function as art. As a designer/weaver, she and her students created prototypes of fabric intended for commercial manufacture as furnishing fabrics. The handwoven appearance was meant to soften the severe lines of "modern" interiors.

In addition to the Bauhaus influence on style, Swedish handcrafts and furniture being imported to this country, became known as "Swedish Modern," and added yet another aspect to contemporary design. The introduction of these rugs and fabric intensified the preference for the handcrafted appearance of machine-made drapery and upholstery material.

Woven hangings were considered appropriate art pieces for this setting long before quilts were displayed on the walls. Among the more prominent weavers of the 1950s, in addition to Anni Albers, were Trude Guermonprez, Sheila Hicks, Lenore Tawney, and Claire Zeisler. An exhibition, *Wall Hangings and Rugs*, at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York in 1957, included weavings by Guermonprez and Tawney, printed fabric by Jack Lenor Larsen, a hooked rug by George Wells, and embroidered fabric by Mariska Karasz. *Craft Horizons* reported that the "fabrics created to enhance architectural space . . . show some of the most exciting trends of this expression today."¹⁴

The use of paper collage had been enthusiastically explored some forty years earlier by Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso, Kurt Schwitters, and Juan Gris, among others. John Perreault noted the similarity to quilt technique in the introduction to *The Art Quilt*. "We can, if need be, redefine the quilt as fabric collage. Although collage as a term originally meant 'pasting,' it has come to mean 'the piecing or placing together of various pre-existing

two-dimensional elements' – which can be done by stitching as well as pasting. Hence, we can view quilting as the origin of collage, since it certainly predates anything done by Picasso or Braque."¹⁵

The interest in needlework paralleled that of weaving. Other artists of the period found that collage lent itself easily to fabric and, when combined with derivations of embroidery from European traditions, they formed a new type of twentieth-century art which was given the name of stitchery. Art galleries displayed and sold stitchery.

Women's magazines prepared enticing articles generously illustrated with original works of art. Artists gave lectures and workshops, taught in universities, wrote books. Creativity and originality were encouraged as replacement for copy-work from printed patterns. Needleworkers felt a sense of freedom, a liberating of spirit which allowed them to choose their own materials, initiate their own explorations, invent their own designs, and even exhibit and sell their works.

Eve Peri was one of the first to exhibit her work of fabric collage and stitchery. In 1939, in Paris, she began making abstract compositions in fabric and embroidery in forms reflecting the influence of Miro, Picasso, and Braque. She had a calculated sense of space and movement, and intuitive response to fabric.¹⁶ Coming to this country, she showed work at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts and other art galleries, and was included in a number of publications.¹⁷

The American Craft Council initiated regional and national exhibitions to showcase the work of artist craftsmen, and its publication, *Craft Horizons*, covered major exhibitions and regional showings as well as those of smaller, privately-owned galleries. Along with potters, furniture makers, metalworkers, and weavers, needleworkers' objects were shown. Dorothy Sturm, of Memphis, Tennessee, was one of the first to have her fabric collage at the Parsons Gallery in New York.¹⁸ Marie Kelly, of Pittsburgh, sometimes showed work in three-dimensions as well as flat-surface appliqué and embroidery.¹⁹ Martha Mood's appliqué and stitchery was included in a milestone exhibition called *Inventions with Thread* at the Montclair (New Jersey) Museum in 1961, as was work by David Van Dommelan, who dared to combine machine work with his hand stitching.²⁰

Nik Krevitsky, Marilyn Pappas, Lillian Elliot, Helen Bitar, Elizabeth Jennerjahn, Kate Auerback, Jacqueline Enthoven, Doris Hoover, Ragnhild Langlet, and the author were among the many who contributed to the growing interest in threads and fabric as a legitimate form of art. Their work appeared in a number of craft books and magazines. (Later some of them did use the quilt as a vehicle of expression.) Mariska Karasz, however, is recognized as the one, above all others, who most dramatically established fiber and fabric to be acceptably received as fine art.

Mariska Karasz was born in Budapest, Hungary, where she learned traditional needlework and, coming to this country at the age of sixteen, she studied costume design with Ethel Traphagen.²¹ For a while she taught that clothing construction and embroidery could be an art form in itself. She had already developed great sensitivity in the use of color and texture, assets which she employed in her compositions with fiber.²²

continued on page 12

Mariska Karasz began exhibiting her remarkable work in 1947 and almost immediately was accepted as an artist at the Berta Schaefer Gallery in New York, staging five shows there between 1949 and 1959. It was an extraordinary accomplishment to have been accepted then as a woman, and fiber artist, in the highly-competitive New York art world.

Karasz's work appeared in numerous magazines and books, especially *Woman's Day* and *House Beautiful*, where she was needlework editor in 1953. Illustrations of her work provided stimulus for an army of needleworkers to abandon ready-made patterns and produce their own designs. Her exhibits, her lectures, and her teaching sparked the imagination of many who attribute to her the beginnings of their own successful careers in fiber arts.

By her death in 1960, Karasz had given sixty solo shows and been part of many others. The following year the Museum of Contemporary Crafts presented a posthumous retrospective of the works of Mariska Karasz and ceramist Katherine Choy. Oppi Untracht wrote in a review, "That both of these women left us at the peak of their creative output is indeed a loss, but they bequeath a body of work and ideas whose germination will flower in the many with whom they had contact."²³

Thus, in the 1940s and 1950s there was an increasing acceptance of weaving and stitchery as recognized forms of art which were finding a place in exhibition and domestic environments. Craft objects from the hands of accomplished craftsmen had become items of integrity and prestige. At this same time, within the various disciplines of art, there was lively exchange of ideas and use of materials, exploration, new technology, in fact, new purposes for the objects themselves. Many boundaries were being crossed. Rose Slivka, editor of *Craft Horizons*, wrote that the American craftsman "has created . . . a prolific and vigorous handcraft culture within the structure of industrial power . . . (and) has broken new ground and challenged past traditions, suggested new meanings and possibilities to old functions of habit and seeing."²⁴

This extension of possibilities allowed artists to expand their techniques, try new materials, reorient their views and values, build on, instead of being bound by, tradition. With the inclusion of fiber arts in art galleries, it easily followed that painters began to use textiles in their work. In *The Art Quilt*, Penny McMorris and Michael Kile describe the Pop Art culture of the 1960s when artists such as Claes Oldenburg, Christo, George Segal, Roy Lichtenstein, and others added fabric in a wide variety of ways.²⁵ Artists began taking seemingly unrelated materials and media and reassembling them to form a new whole. This approach of taking bits and pieces and putting them together to create an entirely new image is identical in spirit to that employed by quilt-makers. It is not surprising, therefore, that artists were more and more influenced by quilts as they experimented."²⁶

Even before this period of new directions in art, quilts had already been displayed to the public. While bedspreads were constructed and used in a horizontal plane, they had been exhibited vertically in quilt contests and fairs of the late nineteenth century. Their "artification" became evident during the 1920s when traditional quilts became collectible.²⁷

With the acceptance of Pop Art and broadening classification, in 1965 the Newark (New Jersey) Museum mounted an

exhibition called, *Optical Quilts*. "Old quilts are being looked at in a new light as handcraft of women working in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have a smashing *au courant* look. It's Op Art from prior centuries, and it really works. They are labeled sparingly to encourage visitors to look at them as examples of abstract art. The effect is one of heraldic brilliance."²⁸ It was, as Perreault said, placing quilts in a vertical plane which allowed the definition of "art."

The first artists' quilts that I recall seeing were part of a monumental collection of fine contemporary American crafts assembled in 1969 for the S. C. Johnson and Sons Company of Racine, Wisconsin, called the *S. C. Johnson Collection of Contemporary Crafts*, and exhibited as *Objects: USA*. (It was later dispersed to the American Craft Museum and the various other museums that had shown the exhibit.) Anne Ogden, director the Kentucky Arts Council, cited it as "a major international exhibition documenting the crafts aesthetic and rebirth in the 60's that has changed the face of the American craft movement."²⁹ On an extended tour that began in Washington, DC, and traveled the United States and Europe, the exhibition came to the Hunter Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in the early 1970s.

Although quilts were not my personal interest at the time, the memory of two of them remains vivid in my mind. One was a large, 96" by 58", brightly-colored quilt of small batik patchwork squares, called "A Square is a Many Splendored Thing" by its maker, Katherine Westphal. The other, "Bathsheba's Bedspread," by Alma Lesch, was even larger with heavily textured areas of stitchery appliqué.³⁰ Since then I have become acquainted with the many accomplishments of these two artists and their astonishing production and involvement in art.

Katherine Westphal, after attending schools in her native state of California, began teaching in 1945 at the University of Wyoming, proceeding to the University of Washington the next year. In 1966 she went to the University of California at Davis and remained there until her retirement. She was an exciting teacher and brought international recognition to the school's design department.³¹

Early in her career Westphal designed fabric for industrial reproduction. Rather than render a design on paper with paint, she preferred to design directly on cloth, using a variety of techniques. When the textile agent who took her work retired in 1958, he returned a box of unsold designs to her. She began cutting up the samples and using them in collage, making ten or twelve wall quilts in as many years, dating from 1959.³²

Westphal's pioneer exploration with dye-printing, Xerox-and-heat-transfer introduced these techniques to many fabric artists. She was, and is, a prolific artist whose works continue to surprise and delight viewers with the products of her fertile imagination. "I was trained as a painter. I see things from that viewpoint. I build up; I destroy. I let the textile grow, never knowing where it is going or when it will be finished. It is cut up, sewn together, embroidered, quilted, embellished with tapestry or fringe, until my intuition and visual senses tell me it is finished and the message is complete."³³

Comments by Spencer Moseley in a catalog accompanying one of her exhibitions relate to the artistic climate of the time.

The quilted wall hangings of Katherine Westphal are unique examples of the unexpected possibilities of invention to be found in traditional techniques. For this artist, the materials and elements of design provide the environment, the demand, that shapes the form. Katherine Westphal is keenly sensitive to the characteristics of her medium. To her they are resources, not limitations. Her work is the result of a continuous, impressive and exhilarating dialog between ideas and material. Several textile techniques are combined in these works – appliqué, stitchery, batik, tapestry, and quilting. The forms are built up, section by section, from disparate elements...to make a new order.³⁴

Westphal expressed her personal commitment during an American Craft Council panel discussion in 1966 by saying, "We experiment, and we try different techniques, processes and the rest, but the whole thing is the doing. One reason I gave up silkscreen was because of its repetitive nature. My work with batik and quilting, it's like painting, you know, it grows as you go, and this is the important thing."³⁵

Katherine Westphal and her husband, Ed Rossbach, a distinguished weaver, teacher, and scholar, have influenced hundreds of students and textile admirers, particularly on the West Coast, through academic associations and an impressive schedule of exhibitions here and abroad. Katherine's spontaneity serves as a model for those who wish to leave boundaries behind and explore new areas. She will not limit the exploration to right or wrong, only that is done with the best of one's imagination and ability.

Alma Lesch was born in McCracken County, Kentucky, and was educated in that state and taught there for twenty-five years. At first she worked with vegetable dyes and her book, *Vegetable Dyeing*, published in 1970, became a standard text.³⁶ She is best known for her fabric collage and stitchery pieces incorporating unexpected found objects. A favorite of many viewers in "Uncle Bob," a fabric "portrait" consisting of blue denim jacket, eyeglasses, and framed wallet, heavily embroidered in some areas.³⁷ She has an uncanny ability to place such found objects, lace, and embroidery with cast-off clothing to become provocative works of art. "She continues to surprise and engage us," says Anne Ogden, "with common images uncommonly presented and expertly crafted. Her work reminds us of our past, as such parts of her life as her high school graduation dress becomes the central image in a wall hanging. But each piece keeps on giving and challenges us to examine our values and assumptions, when she transforms a work shirt, for example, into a work of art."³⁸

Mrs. Lesch is particularly fond of blue denim, as noted above, especially if it appears to be indigo-dyed. She once told me that on an occasion when a local farmer was delivering blackberries to her door, she bargained with him for the overalls he was wearing.

While the assemblage pieces became her best trademark, quiltmaking is included in her repertoire. She remembers making Nine Patch blocks at the age of five and later having heated discussion with her mother and grandmother on the proper way to set them. She was advised to use sashing but followed her own preference for joining them block to block. The resulting quilt hints of the whimsy that became such an important ingredient in later work.³⁹

"Bathsheba's Bedspread," with its heavily stitched surface, was a departure from the simplicity of the first quilt. Before its inclusion in the Johnson Collection, a reviewer noted that it received the second merit award in the First Regional Craft Biennial at the J. B. Speed Museum in Louisville. "The dominant piece is Alma Lesch's embroidery passages, uninhibited in color, texture, and pattern."⁴⁰

While "Bathsheba's Bedspread" may be Lesch's most spectacular bedcover, she was partial to a scrap quilt, albeit, an unusual gathering of scraps. She had been given a bag of scraps from Jack Lenor Larsen's extraordinary series of surface-design fabrics. She proceeded to assemble them in their existing irregular shapes to form a dramatic quilt. Again, it was the unexpected composition which caught the eye.⁴¹

A tribute to Alma Lesch's teaching career highlighted the many lives she had touched when work by thirty-five of her former students was shown at the Louisville Art Gallery in 1985. I asked Jane Burch Cochran, whose work is currently shown in major exhibitions, if she had studied with Alma Lesch. "No," she replied, "but when I finished "The Last Dance" piece I realized that her work, first seen in *Objects: USA*, had been in the back of my mind."⁴² While Jane's work has a certain similarity, the pieces in the exhibition seldom reflected Lesch's imagery. She had taught her students well, then set them free.⁴³

Concurrent with the exhibition of work by former students was a retrospective of Lesch's work curated by Jacque Parsley and shown at the Liberty National Bank. Lisa Gordon wrote in the catalog, "The work of Alma Lesch is unique in the world of contemporary fiber. Her impact upon the development of 'fiber art' has been no less than profound. As an innovator both in technique and in approach to subject matter, her work has influenced a new generation of fiber artists...and contributed to the acceptance of traditionally female processes as a viable medium for expression in contemporary art."⁴⁴

It was most appropriate that a piece by Alma Lesch was included in the Kentucky Art and Craft Gallery during *Louisville Celebrates the American Quilt* festivities in 1992. In *Quilt Conceptions: Designs in Other Media* she showed a delightful work which featured fancy dancing slippers draped over a quilt-covered tombstone and entitled, "A Quilter's Epitaph." Her wit and imagination continue to play a part in her work.

Notes and References

1. Coordinators of the Shreveport exhibition attended my lecture at the Arkansas Art Center in Little Rock, on May 19, 1991, which accompanied a showing of *Southern Quilts: A New View* and discussed implementation of their project.
2. Embree, Gertrude. "Quilts: Out of the Mainstream," *Studio Art Quilt Associates Newsletter*, December 1992.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Later renamed the American Craft Museum.
6. *The New Quilt: Dairy Barn Quilt National*, 7th in a series. Newtown, Connecticut: Taunton Press, 1991; *Visions: The Art of the Quilt*. Deborah Bird Timby, ed., 3rd in a series. Lafayette, California: C & T Publishing, 1992; *The New California Quilt 1984*. Santa Clara, California: Leone Publishing, 1984; Penny McMorris and Michael Kile. *The Art Quilt*. San Francisco: Quilt Digest Press, 1986; Bets Ramsey and Gail Trechsel. *Southern Quilts: A New View*. McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1991.
7. McMorris and Kile, 46.

continued on page 14

WHY ME? THE VARIETY OF ART SCAMS (cont.)

- If the vanity book will only be seen by the artists who buy space.
- If the local or state arts agency has ever heard of the organization, gallery, show, individual or group.
- If the solicitation or call for entry appeals more to your ego and vanity than to your talent.

There is hope. We may not immediately recognize the enemy but we know how they work so we can plan a defense. That defense, the defense each artist must bring into play when dealing with art marketing opportunities, is common sense. Don't be rushed into making a decision or sending money, slides, or art before you have weighed all the angles. Pay with a credit card, whenever possible, to give yourself the option of

canceling the charge if you are not satisfied or services are not provided.

Never sign a contract or agreement without having some other counsel, preferably legal, also review the wording. If you still have doubts, or unresolved questions, don't get involved no matter how great the opportunity seems. Art marketing is like waiting for a bus. If you miss one opportunity, another will be along soon.

Art Calendar would never stand in the way of an artist profitably and successfully marketing her/his art. But we hate to see the bad guys continuing to make a handsome living from artists while giving so little in return. If you know of a questionable individual, or group, operating in the art marketplace, let us at *Art Calendar* know. It is through early warnings from artists that enable us to alert all artists to the latest abuse.

ART AND QUILTS: 1950-1970 (cont.)

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9. Bradley, 38.
10. Bradley, 28,30.
11. See Penny McMorris, *Crazy Quilts*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1984.
12. Bevin, Marjorie Elliott. *Design Through Discovery*. New York: Holt, Tinehart, and Winston, 1970, 105 - 6.
13. Ramsey and Trechsel, 46 - 47.
14. Slivka, Rose. "Wall Hangings and Rugs: Museum of Contemporary Crafts Exhibition," *Craft Horizons*, May/June, 1957, 18 - 25. *Craft Horizons* later became *American Craft* magazine.
15. McMorris and Kile, 18.
16. "Eve Peri's Fabric Forms," *Craft Horizons*, Spring, 1949, 14 - 15
17. Van Dommelen, David B. *Decorative Wall Hangings*. New York: Furnk and Wagnalls, 1962, 51.
18. Krasne, Belle. "Needle, Thread and Scraps of Cloth," *Craft Horizons*, January/February 1955, 16 - 19.
19. Krevitsky, Nik. *Stitchery: Art and Craft*. New York: Reinhold, 1966, 72, 89, 91, 99, 100, 108.
20. Adams, Alice. "Inventions with Thread, September 10 - 24," *Craft Horizons*, November/December 1961, 44.
21. On several occasions I was shown work of Mariska Karasz and given biographical information by her daughter, Solveig Cox, of Alexandria, Virginia; Bets Ramsey. "A Tribute to Mariska Karasz (1898 - 1960)," *Uncoverings 1989*, ed. Lauren Horton. San Francisco: American Quilt Study Group, 1990, 159 - 60.
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24. Slivka, Rose. "The American Craftsman/1964," *Craft Horizons*, May/June, 1964, 10 - 11, 32.
25. McMorris and Kile, 52 - 56.
26. *Ibid.*, 54
27. *Ibid.*, 18
28. McFadden, Elizabeth. "Optical Quilts - Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey, May 27 - November 7," *Craft Horizons*, September/October 1965, 52.

29. Ogden, Anne. *Alma Lesch: A Retrospective*, catalog. Louisville, Kentucky: Liberty Gallery, Liberty National Bank, 1985, 2.
30. Nordness, Lee. *Objects: USA*. New York: Viking, 1970, 280 - 81; 316 - 317.
31. *Ibid.*, 280 - 81.
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33. Nordness, 280.
34. Moseley, Spencer. *Quilted Textiles and Wall Hangings*, catalog. New York: Museum of Contemporary Crafts, 1968.
35. "Textiles," a panel discussion, *Craft Horizons*, June 1966, 32 - 34.
36. Lesch, Alma. *Vegetable Dyeing*. New York: Watson - Guptill, 1970.
37. Kevitsky, 88.
38. Ogden, 2.
39. Alma Lesch, conversation with author, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, October, 1970.
40. Page, Addison. "First Regional Craft Biennial, J. B. Speed Museum, Louisville, April 9 - May 5," *Craft Horizons*, July/August 1968, 37.
41. Both the early *Nine Patch* and *Homage to Jack Larsen* quilts appeared in an exhibition I curated for the Hunter Museum in 1976.
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44. Gordon, Lida. *Alma Lesch, A Retrospective*, 2.

SAQA member, Bets Ramsey, curated an annual exhibition and directed the Southern Quilt Symposium for seventeen years at the Hunter Museum of American Art in Chattanooga. She is coauthor of a recently published book, *Southern Quilts: Surviving Relics of the Civil War*.

This article is reprinted with her permission, was originally presented at the 1993 American Quilt Study Group Conference and was subsequently published in their publication, Uncoverings.

ON THE ROAD

Niki Bonnett

Niki "ran away from home," Greenwich, Connecticut, in early June. She toured the country all summer visiting friends and making plans to start her life over somewhere new.

Howdy! I'm writing you from wonderful, friendly, sane-paced, and warm San Antonio, Texas, the home of the Southwest School of Art and Craft (SSAC). Oh, and also a little ol' church called the Alamo. After a summer of driving 10,000 miles around America and Canada in my van, I arrived in San Antonio, Texas, on September 1. I had visited a lot of interesting art towns that were listed in John Villani's *The Best Small Art Towns in America* (John Muir Publishers, 1996), looked into internships and artist residencies at places like Banff Centre for the Arts and the Oregon College of Art and Craft. I even made some potentially useful connections at galleries in Seattle, Boulder, and Santa Fe. But it made all the difference in the world to have a "final destination."

I owe a great deal of thanks to Jane Dunnewold, fiber artist, art quilter, department chair, teacher, lecturer, and the "source of inner calm" at the SSAC. In early 1998, as I resolved to divorce and agonized over my future home, my future job, my future future, I came up with only one burning desire, to take Jane's "Complex Cloth" class. I called her in Texas, asked her when and where she was teaching this course. (The course is the basis of her book of the same title, and she had taught it at Quilt Surface Design Symposium in '97.) She said the best place to take her class was at SSAC where it was offered as a sixteen-week course.

I said I was as good as there. Then I asked her if she knew of any art schools that offered internships or facilitator jobs similar to the one I've held at QSDS for three years. She absolutely amazed me by saying that for the first time ever she was able to hire an intern in her department. She thought, pending my résumé, slides, and letters of recommendation, that I'd be a good candidate for the position. This internship opportunity was so recent that she hadn't even started looking for applicants. It still gives me the shivers thinking about my good fortune.

Julia Cameron (*The Artist's Way*) would just say, "Duh." I know. But it just blows me away every time she's proven so right! Follow your heart and the bits and pieces really do come together. With Jane's generous guidance my student/internship status has grown to include a six-week teaching position (Fabric Diary Art Quilts) and two lectures ("An American in Asia" and "The Evolution of an Art Quilt") for the school and the fiber artists of San Antonio during this past fall term. And Maggie Block, one of the original founders of the school, has taken me under her wing, helped me find a home, and introduced me to lots of people.

What a wonderful place this is! SSAC has just expanded its campus to include a new building which houses a fantastic gallery, a multimedia presentation room, and the design, papermaking/book arts, drawing/painting, jewelry/metalsmithing and photography departments. The original campus is across the street in a cool old building that was, in the mid-1800's, a French Catholic convent and girls' school. It's located downtown on the river that runs through the heart of San Antonio. If you haven't had the opportunity to take a class here, get a catalog and check it out. The people who work here are the nicest, most sharing group of artists and administrators. I can't remember when I've been so excited about getting up and going to work in my life.

I've been asked to stay on as an intern. The class I taught was a great success so I'll be teaching it again and have also been hired to teach a fabric and paper collage workshop in Salado, Texas, for the Texas Federation of Fiber Artists. I've put in lots of extra hours in the surface design studio, perfecting all the techniques that Jane teaches in her "Introduction to Surface Design" class. This coming semester I'll be taking an independent study with her. I'm producing a completely new body of work based upon all I've learned. And I've got an intriguing idea about how to display this work which will involve studying with Claire Holliday, chair of the jewelry/metalsmithing department. I may have one or two opportunities to show here in San Antonio. So I have to get work done!

My plan, when I left Connecticut with my possessions narrowed down to fit into a van, was to be totally mobile and available to serve in any capacity at art/craft schools anywhere in the USA. I'm in San Antonio until May. Then, in June, I drive up to Ohio to work as a facilitator for QSDS. I love seeing so many of you, my art quilt friends!

After QSDS, I don't know where I'll go; maybe back to San Antonio. I love it there and have made such great friends. Also, I'm getting really used to 92 cents gas and being called "ma'am" all the time. I think I could stay here forever, but I'm aware of my Plan and am beginning to look in the art magazines for my next option. I'm hoping to stay in the west. If you know of anything, please contact me at 210-224-1848 or NikiBNikiB@aol.com.

For the time being, I'm in a totally unique position in my life. I've given up a lot to live my life on my own terms. I'm trying to get the most out of it. I am working hard at my job and my art and trying to do it right. I'm making efforts to choose my destiny while at the same time remaining open to synchronicity. It's a balancing act that is scary at times, but I believe in my artwork and my Plan.

I keep thinking of Harrison Ford in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* when he takes off from the archeological site on horseback. Someone shouts, "Indie, what are you going to do now?" He calls back, as he gallops off, "I don't know. I'm making this up as I go!" I can relate. So watch for me and Moz, my galloping van, at an arty-illogical site near you!



Yvonne on her way into Silver Star banquet. Crown made by Darcy Falk. Bouquet (black and orange for Halloween) made by Wendy Huhn.
See article on page 3.

STUDIO ART QUILT ASSOCIATES

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SAQA NEWSLETTER

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

To submit information to the newsletter, write Cathy Rasmussen, Executive Director, 1203 East Broadway, #G-14, Hewlett, NY 11557, (516) 374-5924 (telephone and FAX). (Deadlines for information are December 1, March 1, June 1, and September 1.)

The newsletter editor is Sharon Heidingsfelder, P. O. Box 391, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72203-0391; (501) 671-2102; (501) 671-2294 (FAX); sheidingsfelder@uaex.edu (e-mail).

For information on SAQA, write P. O. Box 287, Dexter, OR 97431, wchuhn@aol.com, <http://www.saqa.com>. (Membership is \$35 per year, \$100 per year for artist members.)

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SAQA MEMBERSHIP (cont.)

to write guidelines, create a directory, catalog slides, gather lists of venues, and send images to those venues. I'm grateful that someone took the time to evaluate the look of our portfolio and fine-tune it. Mostly I'm glad that the someone doing this is someone else. Why, I'd be more than willing to pay for it. Oh! I guess that's what that membership fee thing is all about.

For those of you who saw the length of this article and just skipped to the final paragraph, let me just recap. I firmly believe that SAQA is a valuable organization, that results are happening, that even more results are on their way, and that you should, in fact, get down on your knees and thank your lucky stars that SAQA exists. Tell me, when is the last time you had your work considered for exhibition in a New York museum? Pass the nachos, please.

The author is a professional artist member of Studio Art Quilt Associates who resides in Vancouver, Washington, and who is going to drop this article in a public mailbox so she doesn't have to converse with her mailman today.