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2005 Conference: The Business of Fiber Art

by Carol L. Myers, IN/OH SAQA Rep.
SAQA's 2005 mini-conference "The Business of Fiber Art" will be held May 26-29 in Athens, Ohio in conjunction with the opening of Quilt National '05 at the Dairy Barn. Fill out the enclosed 2005 Conference Form and join artists from all over the world for a weekend of artistic inspiration, professional development and sharing.

We'll begin Thursday afternoon, May 26th, with registration and a meeting of all the Regional Representatives. Thursday evening after dinner, we invite you to come prepared: bring a t-shirt with your own design for a new SAQA logo, one that showcases your artistic inventiveness and wear it to the ART ON YOUR CHEST parade and photo-op. Then we'll share in the biennial SAQA slide show. Please bring 2-3 slides of your recent work to share.

Friday's roster of top professional speakers will address "The Business of Fiber Art" for artists at all levels of professional development. Here's a preview of the Friday speakers and their topics:

- "Feel Your Passion and Carry it into Your Art" by keynote speaker Jane Sauer, co-director of Thirteen Moons Gallery
- "Selling Through Galleries-Marketing Your Art" by Rick Gottas, SAQA Board Member, owner of American Art Company
- "Creativity at Mid-Life" by Jill Heppenheimer
- "Why Do People Collect Art Quilts?" by Kate Lenkowsky
- "Commissions: Public and Private" by Margaret Cusack
- "Pricing Your Art" by Judith Trager

The drawing for Full Deck Scholarship Raffle winners will be at 1:30 PM just before we reconvene for the afternoon speakers.

Friday evening's activities shift focus to the Quilt National '05 Opening and Award Ceremony at 5 PM. Returning to the conference center, we will share a joint QN/SAQA dinner at 7:15 PM. Seating in the primary dining room will be limited, so pre-register early to assure your spot. After dinner, SAQA will host a special auction of several major art quilts juried from submissions of the SAQA professional artist members. The final auction item will be the second Art Gallery in a Box. This collection of twelve works of art by twelve well-known art quilters is stored and displayed in a special handmade inlaid wood box.

Saturday will start with a SAQA-sponsored breakfast at the Dairy Barn. The event is free, but you must pre-register on the 2005 Conference Form. It is a private viewing for QN'05 exhibitors, SAQA conference participants and special guests. Before the Dairy Barn opens to the public at 11 AM, photography is permitted for your personal enjoyment only, but no flash and no close-ups. (Entrance fees to the Dairy Barn are complimentary for the entire weekend for conference attendees - just wear your conference badge.)

While the Board holds its annual meeting Saturday morning, there will be an opportunity to attend several different "Coffee With A Mentor Sessions". Mentors will include: Jane Sauer "Approaching and Working with Galleries"; Margaret Cusack "Commissions"; Jill Heppenheimer "Presenting Yourself Professionally"; Carole Lyles Shaw "Creating an Artist Group"; Judith Trager "Pricing"; and Carolyn Lee Vehslage "Publicity/Marketing".

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There will be two sessions, giving you the opportunity to speak to different mentors depending on your interests and needs.

After lunch on Saturday, art and networking are on the agenda. One option is a walking tour of galleries in Athens. Another option is a tour of our own Sarah Williams' studio. You can also go back for another visit to the Dairy Barn or go sightseeing.

At 2 PM we ask everyone to reconvene for the final speaker's presentation: Carole Lyles Shaw's "Challenge, Support and Learning Experience of the African American Art Quilters." This talk about collaboration and growth of groups will provide an introduction to an open networking session from 3-5 PM. This is an opportunity to show your work and other materials (web site info, PR handouts) and to link up with other art quilters with whom you might want to meet or collaborate. This is a chance to bring your ideas for shows, challenges, and critique groups and to meet other quilt artists who may want to join you. There will be tables and easels for display. Bring artwork to share, but please make sure that you carry your own insurance.

Concurrently with the networking, there will be an opportunity to participate in an initial trial for "A Sampling of SAQA", a potential CD marketing tool for SAQA. The first 25 to register for this option will get a digital photo taken of their work and will receive a complimentary CD. This trial will also offer a look at how digital photography works and the steps to manipulating and saving the images. The fee will be \$5, one work per person.

Saturday evening, everyone's invited to Hilary Fletcher's famous Dinner and Cheesecake Party! Who would want to miss a party? Just make sure you check the right box on the enclosed 2005 Conference Form to pre-register. (Hilary's home is a 10-minute drive from the conference center. Attire is casual.)

Sunday, May 29th, Friends of Fiber Art International will be hosting a brunch at 10 AM at the Conference Center. Starting at 9 AM QN'05 invites you to a private SAQA members viewing of the show before it opens to the public. Again, you have permission to photograph the artwork.

The conference planning committee has put together a GREAT weekend that is aimed at all levels of experience and interest. Combined with the opportunities to see and show our work and the work of others, this is an invaluable learning opportunity. Make sure you plan it into your schedule and register early.

Add the SAQA 2005 Conference to your Holiday Wish List!



Thoughts From
SAQA President
Katie Pasquini-
Masopust

Fall is in the air, just cold enough to enjoy working in our studios looking out at the changing colors.

We have had some changes to the Board of Studio Art Quilt Associates. Warren Brakensiek has been on the Board for three years as our treasurer, and his term is now over. He has done a wonderful job and has guided us with his unique thoughts and musings. We will miss him very much.

Lucky for us, his wife Nancy joins the Board as our new treasurer, so I am sure we will continue to get some great insights from Warren. With her background as a CPA, Nancy will keep us on track with the budget, and with her knowledge from the many Boards she has served on in the past will be invaluable.

Cynthia Nixon has been on the Board for almost three years and has submitted her resignation. She is very excited about some new turns her own artwork is taking and wishes to devote more time to working in her studio. We want to thank both Warren and Cynthia for all of their hard work in serving the members of SAQA.

We are going through some changes with our web site and with the service to the PAM members; we will be bringing these changes to you through the newsletter in the coming year. Big Thanks to all of the volunteers who have kept this organization going, to the regional reps who keep us meeting and sharing our ideas and to the Board and the executive director who work very hard for SAQA as well as their own ventures.

Have a great holiday seasons and may all your wishes come true.

--katiepm

Recent Professional Artist Members Portfolio Submissions:



AmericanStyle & Niche Magazines
Arizona State University Art Museum
Avalene Gallery, Makawo, HI
Bunel Street Gallery, Homer, AK
DSA Fine Arts, Water Mill, NY
FiberArts Magazine
Gallery of Contemporary Art, University of Colorado
Heather Lineberry, Senior Curator
Kentucky Museum of Arts + Design
Kimberlee Cole Art Services, Miami Beach, FL
M.C. Ginsberg Objects of Art, West Des Moines, IA
Pearl Conard Gallery, Ohio State Univ. at Mansfield
The Art Institute of Chicago
Victoria Boyce Galleries, Scottsdale, AZ



The Director's Report by Martha Sielman

We've just finished the schedule for the 2005 Conference: "The Business of Fiber" and I'm really excited about heading to Athens, Ohio in May. I'm looking forward to going to Quilt National '05. While I own many of the catalogs for past exhibits, I've never actually been to the Dairy Barn, and seeing artwork in person is always so much better than in photographs.

I'm excited about our Speakers on Friday. There's always more to learn, new perspectives, new inspiration. I'm looking forward to meeting everyone and to having the opportunity to sit down with the regional representatives on Thursday and with the Board on Saturday to discuss how we can continue to make SAQA better. I practically live at my computer talking to everyone via email, but there's no substitute for meeting people in person.

I'm excited about seeing all those slides of member artwork Thursday night – I love seeing other people's work and getting to know them through what they're drawn to create. Also, it will be tremendous fun to see everyone's take-off on the SAQA t-shirt at the reception.

I'm excited about the chance for small group mentoring sessions on Saturday with many of the Speakers, the networking time Saturday evening, and the digital photography session.

I'm excited about the SAQA Auction at the Quilt National Banquet on Saturday night. Our final item, Art Gallery in a Box, is fantastic. The box is handmade by New Mexico artist Robert Kegel and features a beautiful inlaid wood design. It has twelve drawers that rotate open and hold twelve art quilts by twelve of our favorite artists. I'm also looking forward to seeing the other auction items by our PAM members – knowing our membership, it will be breathtaking!

Finally, I can't wait to spend an entire weekend doing nothing but art – seeing art, talking art, discussing art. So take a moment, fill in the enclosed 2005 Conference Form, and mail it today. --Martha

Request For PAM Quilts For SAQA Auction from Nancy Brakensiek and Linda MacDonald

SAQA has been given an incredible opportunity to hold a live auction during the Quilt National '05 opening banquet May 27, 2005. 200 – 300 people including artists, collectors, media representatives, educators, writers and friends of artists usually attend this banquet. We are asking the Professional Artist Members to donate an art quilt for this important auction.

Donations to the auction are important for several reasons. First, the auction is a major source of funds to insure the continued operation and financial stability of SAQA, providing services to our members. Second, if we have an exciting auction with great art quilts at this venue, we improve the likelihood that we will be invited back to have another auction at QN'07. Third, it exposes our PAMs to a broader audience.

We only have time to auction about 8 quilts plus Art Gallery in a Box. How will we decide which quilts to auction? We are asking PAM artists to submit slides (full + detail) of up to 3 quilts that they would be willing to donate. Is this a big favor to ask of our PAMs? Yes! We realize this is above and beyond what has been asked for in auctions before. But we feel that there are many PAM members out there who would like to donate to really help their organization. SAQA is about Art Quilts. What better items than art quilts do we have that we can auction? This is what we do best.

What does the PAM artist receive if his or her quilt is picked for auction?

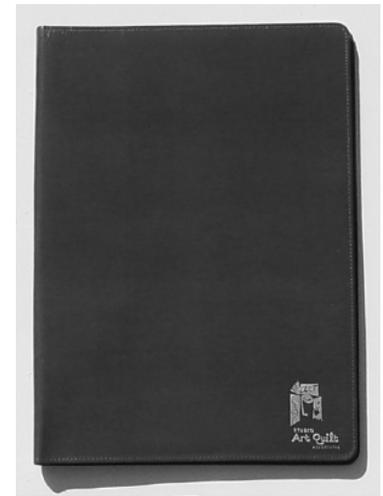
- Pre-auction publicity in mailings and in the Newsletter.
- We will display your quilt in front of the 200 - 300 banquet attendees.
- We will talk about you as an artist—who you are, how long you have been making art quilts,

what motivates you, etc.

- We will talk about your quilt—what it is, what it means, where it has been, etc.
- You will have the satisfaction of supporting your organization and enhancing its ability to provide services to members.

Board members and artists already included in "QUILTS IN A BOX" are not eligible. Only one art quilt per artist will be selected.

Contact Linda MacDonald (linda@lindamacdonald.com) if you have any questions. Please submit slides of up to 3 art quilts that you wish to donate to Linda MacDonald, 191 Wood St., Willits, CA 95490-3406 by January 1, 2005. Please indicate dimensions and estimated retail value of your submission. The Auction Committee will review the slides (in confidence) and advise donors by March 1, 2005 if one of their quilts has been chosen for the auction.



SAQA leather folders are now available in 8 colors: blackberry, chestnut, taupe, raspberry, cranberry, dusty rose, pumpkin or papaya. They come with an 8 1/2 x 11 pad of lined paper and have pockets to hold papers, a business card and a pen. The SAQA logo is embossed in gold on the lower right front corner. We are offering them to members at cost \$19.95

Contact director@SAQA.com

Letters to the Editor

Several letters were received in response to the reprinting in the summer Newsletter of Marilyn Henrion's letter to the New York Times. Due to an unfortunate error of layout, Marilyn's letter was given a full page, making it seem to be an official communication. Marilyn's letter was her own personal opinion and not that of the SAQA Board Members, President, Executive Director, former Newsletter Editor, or Membership-at-Large. Everyone involved regrets any misunderstandings that occurred due to the way in which the letter was published.

Because of space constraints, we are unable to print all of the letters received or even the letters quoted below in their entirety. If you are interested in reading the correspondence in full, please contact Martha Sielman.

To the Editor:

Marilyn Henrion's letter addresses the New York Times' coverage of three important quilt exhibitions that were recently presented in NYC. Instead of praising and celebrating the extensive coverage that these exhibitions garnered - coverage that was a major acknowledgement of quilt making as a viable medium for artistic expression - the letter took the newspaper to task.

The famed 1971 exhibition of Amish quilts at the Whitney Museum has always been applauded in the art quilt world for bringing quilts to the attention of the "art world." I would think that the presentation at the Whitney of the "Quilts of Gee's Bend" would generate the same kind of response from studio quilters. Adding to that the major exhibition "Threads of Faith" with its accompanying hardcover catalog and the "Talking Quilts" show at the American Folk Art Museum gave NYC a plethora of significant exhibitions and an overwhelming basis for in-depth coverage by the New York Times...

Chastising the mainstream press for not covering other quilt exhibitions is naïve, self-indulgent and counter-productive. Publishing Marilyn Henrion's letter in such a prominent way without any disclaimers seems to say that SAQA agrees with the contents.

I certainly hope this is not the case

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because the letter may be interpreted as both racist and elitist.

Martha Connell, SAQA Advisory Board Member, Owner/Director, Connell Gallery, Atlanta, GA

To the Editor:

Marilyn, I commend you for speaking up so strongly in your letter to the New York Times and yet, I am very disturbed by the approach that you took...your letter unfortunately was an example of the politics of "divide and exclude". Your comments did not recognize that there are hundreds of highly professional African American art quilters and fiber/mixed media artists out there (some of us are active in SAQA and other organizations).

You may not be aware that your letter was a dismissal of professional artists of color. I fear that you are not sensitive to the fact that artists of color often hear from Caucasian artists that any recognition given to us is based solely on race or, as you mention, 'political correctness'. For example, your letter completely ignored the fact that many of the artists who participated in Quilts of Faith are active professional artists whose work is much sought after by museums, galleries and private collectors around the world. You insulted their professionalism, their talent and their success at getting recognition of their work by dismissing this attention as racially motivated...

Regards,
Carole Lyles Shaw
SAQA 2005 Conference Speaker

To the Editor:

Unfortunately the attempt to "clarify the issues" (laid bare in Ms. Henrion's letter to the art reviewers of the New York Times), has only served to raise more questions about the underlying mind-set and premises on which the original letter was based...in several instances It is stated or strongly implied that the three exhibitions cited only received critical acclaim and notice because of the artists' ethnicity [two of the exhibits were comprised solely of work by African-Americans, and works by African-Americans were represented substantively in the third]; that the exhibits were

reviewed only because it was the "politically correct" thing to do, or in other words, the art itself was not good enough to compete on its own merit, hence the exhibits were reviewed to meet the paper's affirmative action goals; that among African-Americans there is no discernable difference in the style, in the sophistication and/or in quality of workmanship of the art whether created by folk or studio artists; and that African-Americans are not to be counted among "those of us who are serious artists working in this genre"...

I therefore must ask, what are the criteria by which an artist's work is measured before status as a "serious" and/or as a "contemporary" artist is conferred? ...[This questions has] relevance because the artists and the art exhibited in Threads of Faith meet fully any standard that can be set... in what way did the work shown in the Threads of Faith exhibit not meet the standard of quilts as an art? What was it about these artists that indicated they were lacking in seriousness or contemporariness?

As a member of the SAQA Board with a mission to act on the behalf of all art quilters, it would have been far more appropriate for Ms. Henrion to focus her energy on promoting exhibits ... I, too, believe strongly in the stated mission of SAQA, but this incident seriously raises the question of whether or not we all...actually are working toward a common goal. It is an issue that needs to be discussed in open forum.

Sincerely,
Gwendolyn A. Magee,
AL/AR/MS SAQA Representative

Response From Marilyn Henrion:

While there were a number of letters in support of my letter to the New York Times, there seems to be some misunderstanding among others. I am writing in order to clarify the issues...In no way would I want to diminish the accomplishments of African American quilt artists, whom I believe have contributed mightily to the strength of the genre. The exhibitions that were covered were certainly deserving of attention and praise. I was simply bringing attention to the fact that

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the [New York Times'] interest in these exhibits unfortunately does not extend to the genre itself as a legitimate form in the mainstream art world along with painting and sculpture. I will continue my efforts to promote [art quilts] in the hope that it will ultimately benefit ALL of us...

To conclude, I believe strongly in the mission of SAQA, and hope that all of us as members will continue to work toward a common goal.

Marilyn Henrion, SAQA Board Member

Review: Art Quilts Whistler

Whistler House Museum of Art,
August 4 - September 17, 2004
review by Maxine Farkas,
MA/RI SAQA Representative

"Art Quilts at the Whistler II" was a cohesive exhibit, demonstrating a clear fascination with, and adherence to the grid as an implied or explicit visual element. While not all of the work referred to the grid, enough did so that an interesting conversation was allowed to develop between the varied approaches to this most basic of quilt structures.

Two of the pieces I was most impressed with were Nancy Crasco's elegant "Choken of Consolation", and Ree Nancarrow's "Birch Forest". Crasco's piece is a kimono form in six panels of sheer bronze, stitched in a manner reminiscent of Korean Pojagi creating



Birch Forest © Ree Nancarrow

pockets in which repose rectangles of unknown composition, each tied with gold thread left to whisper in the breeze. The moiré effect of two layers of sheer fabric is stunning in its complex simplicity. Crasco's work speaks to a well-

defined personal aesthetic.

There is a simplicity in Ree Nancarrow's "Birch Forest", that I don't remember in other works that I have seen of hers. The insertion of pieced trees on painted landscape creates a bittersweet tension. The work captures the feel of the forest, and while at first the curved lines delineating the undergrowth felt intrusive and not true to the mood, with time and repeated visits they ceased to intrude and became an essential element.

Anne Huskey-Lockard's 'Who Will Survive', was perhaps the most challenging piece in the exhibition, offering an image unlike much of what is seen in the



Who Will Survive © Anne Huskey-Lockard contemporary quilt world. It was the first piece that I have seen dedicated to a Punk Rock musician. Some walked past it with hardly a glance, perhaps put off by the imagery, but those who opted to linger, were rewarded by a vision, exquisitely executed, elegant, evocative of time and place and culture.

SAQA members Natasha Kempers-Cullen and Nancy Crasco each received a Juror's Choice Award, Vita Marie Lovett won the Whistler Award and Rosemary Claus-Grey received the Best of Show.

Opinion: What do I get from SAQA?

By Louise Thompson Schiele
No. CA/NV SAQA Representative

While working on my latest creation in the peace and quiet of my home studio the other day, my mind was wandering from one subject to another, much like my machine needle. Up, down, in and out all over the surface of my fabric, continu-

ously meandering the thread from one place to another, when suddenly I got the answer to a question that had been bothering me for quite some time... "What do I get out of being a member of SAQA?"

This question has been posted in various SAQA e-mail chat rooms, and I've read replies from others. I realized that for me it was the members whom I'd personally met and become friendly with.

People like Marjorie DeQuincy who always brings a smile to my face when she walks into my studio with a carton of chocolate chip mint ice cream in one hand and her wonderful whimsical artwork in the other, both to share. People like Barbara Blessington whose artistic eye always sees my artwork for the first time every time. People like Liz Berg who creates piece after piece after piece without hesitation, inspiring me to never stop creating. Marcia Stein who has a strong focus to detail, yet creates artwork that depicts freedom and style. Julie Hirota who left her career for her art and is a success and has an enormous amount of talent. Patt Hull who experiments with her artwork with success and changes her hair color more often than I do. And Charlotte Patera who tells you the "truth" about your artwork.

These are a few of the people who have hit me over the head with their creative abilities, their personalities, and their true gift of friendship. There are many, many more people that I'd like to add to the list above.

The point is, I didn't meet these people at a workshop or seminar or guild meeting; I met them through SAQA. They all have influenced me in a positive way. There are over 110 members in our SAQA region, some I've known for years from other quilt related venues, others I don't know at all, except for their name and e-mail address. Someday I hope to KNOW them all and experience their influence to my life and to my art.

NOTE: Opinion Pieces are the opinions of the individual authors and are not necessarily the opinions of the SAQA Board Members, President, or Executive Director. The Newsletter Editor encourages the membership to express their ideas through the Opinion Forum.

Review: Art Quilts IX: Sight Line at the Chandler

Center of the Arts, Chandler, AZ
October 20 – December 3, 2004

©04 thelmasmith www.thelmasmith.com

Chandler is one of several distinct communities that surround Phoenix. The gallery is an excellent venue, and Diane Howell has curated an excellent exhibition. (www.ChandlerCenter.org)

I was pleased with the spectrum of artwork. "Through the Grass" by Sarah J. Williams is simple, austere, and smashingly good! Pamela Allen's "Crone of Crazy" proceeded by J B Wilcox's "Leather Fetish #4" are front and center, catching your eye and stopping your feet the moment you come in the door. Julie Z. Stiller's "Mother's Tears" has a nice use of beads. Embellishment seems to be evolving into a more austere, more thoughtful use.

Peg Keeney has outdone herself with "Raspberry Patch" and "Maple Sugar Forest". Her use of the leaves in the forest sticks in my mind in a haunting way. Deb Richardson's "Rediscovering Joy, A Self Portrait in Red" is a delight. Her manner of using traditional quilt blocks in a visual sort of pun caused me to look to my own feet and those around me - nothing like the joy expressed in her quilt.

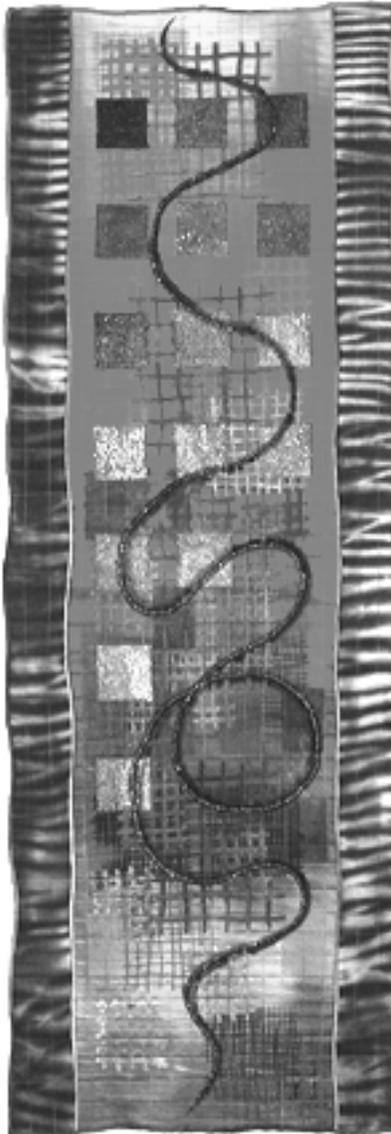
June Underwood's "Interiors" makes bold use of silks and seta color paints. It's a strong statement. With a subtle use of thread work, Michele Hardy's two vertical works "Directions #5" and "Directions #9" hang side by side. Sandra L. H. Woock's "Seeds of Change" is a discharge work with little piecing; black to white and black to salmon. Her tiny sprinkle of beads in only two places was effective. Her other work, "Cosmic Matters" is for me the pick of the litter.

Opinion: Where Can You Learn Art Fundamentals?

by Mary Ann R. Baker-Randall
New Mexico SAQA Representative

A reader wrote to Quilting Arts magazine something to the effect of, "To
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create better art quilts, stop taking quilting classes and start taking art classes." At the time, I was a novice quilter and certifiable quilting class junky, so that statement intrigued me. Quickly, I realized I could benefit from learning basic art concepts and techniques in order to create better art quilts. I wanted to be



Directions #9 © Michele Hardy

able to convey depth, perception, mood, movement, atmosphere, and emotion - the whole gamut.

Adult education classes. Beginner drawing, painting, watercolor, and sculpture classes are everywhere and often inexpensive. You don't have to want to become Rembrandt to learn how to draw well. Working with paint, particularly watercolors, is a great way to become comfortable mixing paints and handling

brushes and sponges. Somehow it was easier for me to put paint to cheap paper than paint to expensive fabric, and now I enjoy doing both.

College courses. Auditing a class usually costs the same as taking it for credit, but you may feel less pressure to attend every class or complete every assignment. Survey lecture classes, such as history of art or modern art, are a great way to expose yourself to what has happened in the art world over time. The definition of "art" is ever evolving, and paintings we consider masterpieces today were often rejected as "non-art" or vulgar when produced. Studio classes are where you roll up your sleeves, pick up a pencil or brush or chisel, and learn how to translate an idea into a tangible object. I guarantee your appreciation for the craft and skill of all artists will skyrocket.

Go to galleries and museums. Exercise your eye regularly by viewing all forms of art. Galleries tend to sell contemporary works. Museums help give you an historical perspective.

Read. Check out books on art at your local library. Buy or subscribe to art magazines. Surf the web. Sometimes taking a class is not feasible, but there's nothing to stop you from self-education.

Surface design, fiber art and art quilt conferences. Many conferences are dedicated to teaching artistic aspects to working with fabric and fibers. Some are held in conjunction with major quilt exhibits.

A life-long process. Education is a life-long process, both in a classroom and through self-study. Reflect on how far you've come since making your first quilt or your 100th quilt. Think about all the skills you've learned along the way. Now think about how much farther you're capable of going. Building a solid base of knowledge of art fundamentals will make the journey easier and more gratifying.

A \$500 donation from the SAQA Education Fund has been made to help support the "Layers of Meaning" catalog.

The Education Fund will also support the Coffee with a Mentor sessions at the 2005 Conference.

Review: Special Interests, The Art of Politics

San Jose Museum Of Quilts & Textiles

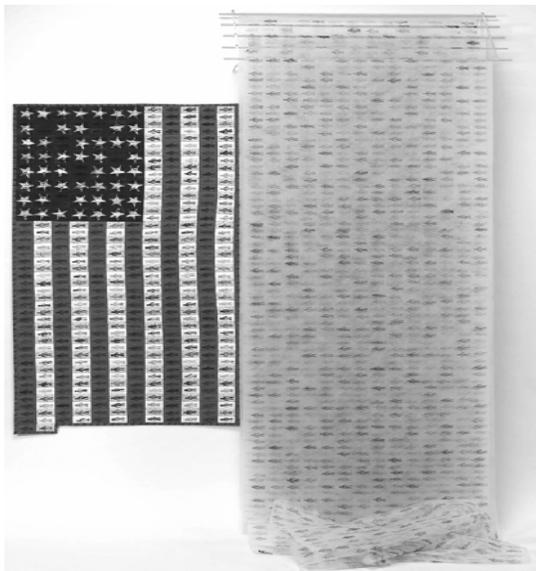
August 24 to October 31, 2004

by Linda MacDonald, SAQA Board of Directors

Curator Robin Treen mounted an invitational show of textile art dealing with current political and social commentary in a very successful two-part series. The initial series was made up of quilts drawn primarily from their permanent collection and dealt with political and social expression prior to WWII.

The 35 pieces [in the second series] included artwork by SAQA members Julie John Upshaw, Terrie Hancock Mangat, Susan Shie, Jean Ray Laury, Beatriz Grayson, Donna Leigh Jackins, Sue Pierce, Wendy Huhn, Patricia Autenrieth, Linda MacDonald, Teresa Barkley, Bonnie Peterson, Martha Bruin Degen, B.J. Adams, Eliza Brewster, and Kathy Weaver.

Robin states that this show "...is intended first and foremost as an exercise in free speech. The content of the exhibition is completely uncensored." Because of this liberty, artists delved into a myriad of subjects, including: alternative energy, conflict in N. Ireland, Kent State, gay marriage, rape, the War in Iraq, the Patriotic Act, the flag, the environment, 9/11, gun control, and macho status.



IRAQ Year One/What Price Freedom? Parts I & II © Sue Pierce

The piece that affected me the most in its simplicity, beauty, and statement was Sue Pierce's "IRAQ Year One/What Price Freedom? Part I: American Military" and its complement "Part II: Iraqi Civilians." Sue constructed an American flag with 574 identically sized patches, each stamped with the image of a fallen soldier (March '04 stat). She then created a flag/banner that portrayed the Iraqi civilian men, women and children killed (8-10,000). Each figure is stamped on a gossamer cloth that drapes and loops up and down; the transparency becomes a visual symbol for statistics. It is 60 feet long and graphically displays and contrasts the difference in casualties of each country.

This powerful, poignant, disturbing and thought-provoking show is definitely one that needs to travel and to step beyond the confines of the Bay Area.

Opinion: Musings of a Harried Artist

by Deborah Tiryung Sidwell, SAQA Fiber Revolution regional group member www.FiberRevolution.com

June Underwood's "Why Cloth?" (Vol. 14, No. 2, 04) started me along a path of reflection and writing. I wish June had not said, "Quilting and quilt arts are easy for the beginner" and [paraphrasing] "that cloth might be chosen as medium by some, because it is easier for a beginning artist to achieve success than completing a rigorous formal art program." This subtly undermines our art form, and actually perpetuates some of the prevalent attitudes held by artists of other mediums and the art communities at large.

Such a statement implies there is a subset of quilt artists who lack the drive or artistic ability to complete a formal art program. It implies creative work without formal training is somehow less meritorious, and that quilt art is inferior to oils or sculpture because quilt art is easier and quicker to learn. The artist who isn't formally trained but creates quilt art is then tiered at an inferior level on the art ladder. Why do artists in our own medium want to perpetuate this snobbery?

The truth is that artists can technically master their mediums by formal training, but produce mediocre artwork. Likewise, other artists can produce terrifically innovative artwork considered technically inferior by art teachers. Some artists develop mature style quickly, and others develop slowly over decades. Some never progress at all.

The creation of art requires the individual to take that step beyond execution of sublime technique, and it requires an inner spark and vision that is difficult for the non-artist to comprehend. Is it easy to make good art? No. Is it easy to make good quilt art? No. If it were easy to make good quilt art, then the world would be filled with good art quilts. It is imperative that we quilt artists stop feeding the perception that quilt art is easy art, less than equal to the work created in mediums regarded as fine art.

Formal art training, such as a college degree curriculum, produces individuals who are well versed in art history and who possess a technical knowledge of various fine art mediums. Textiles are usually not emphasized. Formal art training is a necessary prerequisite for employment in the teaching profession and a number of other professions, but such training does not necessarily lead to the creation of great or even good art. Formal art training can actually perpetuate a self-defeating cycle that begins with the notion that one should not do. One of the reasons our medium emerged and continues to develop is that some quilt makers didn't listen to the 'should not do' voices.

We quilt artists must aggressively pursue venues that place our work alongside other fine art and place our work in venues regarded as spaces that befit the exhibit of other fine art. The more often quilt art is exhibited as art, the more quickly it will be accepted as art within the community at large. We need to actively engage in this pursuit for the benefit of our own individual art careers and for the benefit of our medium.

Opinion: Another Response to “Why Cloth?”

by Kate Cox, SAQA Fibre Artist, London

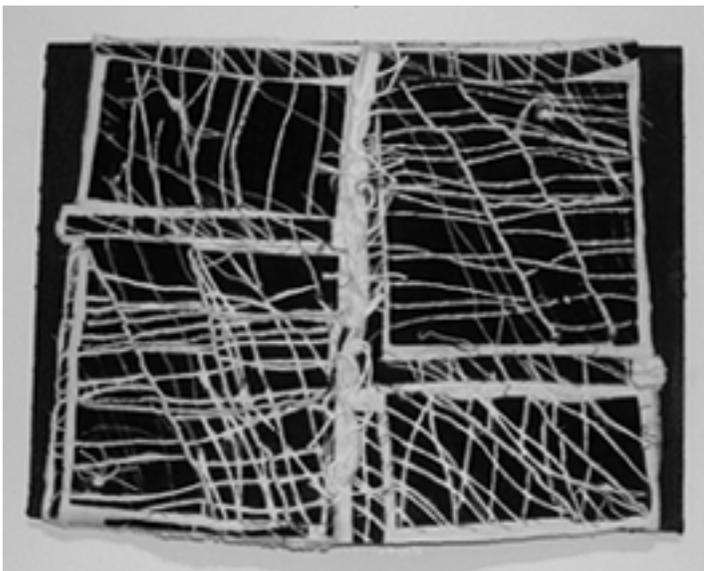
I really appreciated June Underwood’s article, “Why Cloth?” It set me thinking more than I had been already!

I became a quilt artist almost by accident and quickly became a popular and much sought after teacher and lecturer here in the UK. As a result, I got trapped into creating the [class] work leaving little time for new learning, research, or boundary pushing.

This year before my husband retired, I took the 6 months prior as time out for me – a last chance to be home alone! All the pent up creativity started to unfold and I began to work at top speed. However, although I love what I have done, it is not enough. It feels like a beginning. I plan now, especially after June’s article, to really think this through. To really consider where I want to go with this.

What I do know is that it has to include fabric. So even if I don’t have the answers to the questions June is asking I know that what I want to work with is fabric. And as a maker of wearables, as well as wall hangings, the drape and texture of the different fabrics seem to have a lot to do with my choice. And I have learnt to use paint!

Suddenly I feel excited. I don’t mind “bristling”, if it gets me thinking!!



String Theory © R. Lynne Welter

Request for Collectors of Art Quilts

SAQA member Kate Lenkowsky is writing a book on the topic of buying and collecting contemporary, innovative quilts. She is seeking references to contemporary quilt collectors and other purchasers of art quilts.

The book will introduce readers to artists (established and emerging), contemporary quilts, styles and methods. An important aspect is to help the public navigate the market. She would like to interview a range of collectors and other quilt buyers, as well as gallery and exhibit directors. Indiana University Press will publish the book. SAQA members interested in providing references should e-mail Kate at klenkowsky@msn.com.

Review: Small Works for Small Spaces

Ayers Loft, Lowell MA August 2004

by Elizabeth J. Poole, www.elizabethpoole.com

SAQA Fiber Revolution regional group member

How do you pack a lot of show punch when your exhibit space is only a single small room? Scale back the size of the works. “Small Works for Small Spaces” does exactly that.

As soon as you walk into the gallery, one of the most powerful pieces pulls you in immediately. SAQA member R. Lynne Welter’s “String Theory” is a gripping example of just how far the medium can be pushed. Stark blacks and whites create a beautifully formal thread construction that simultaneously tears itself apart while straining to tie itself back together. Layer upon layer of tangled knotwork builds up a network of ghost lines that beg for cohesion, while raw edges make clear the primal act of ripping. Welter explains, “String is used to hold things together; but here, not only is the piece fractured into four parts, the strings are cut and chaotic as well. What happens when the ties that bind us are cut? As a metaphor for my life, the work reflects a life parceled, fractured, cut apart.”

Another jewel lights up a different corner. Laurie Swim’s “The Net Mender” uses textiles as an impressionist palette, achieving an effective representation of her subject matter with the glow of exactly the correct daubs of fabric in exactly the right juxtaposition. The quirky stitching and the raw edges of the tiny fragments blend before your eyes as easily as paint, and the colors glow right off the surface of the piece.

Two impressive works from Sara Rockinger: “Cover Series I and II” use thread as pure line, stitching on richly surfaced paper. The dense layering and over-layering of “Cover Series II” in particular kept pulling me back into the work — What does this stitching conceal? What images lurk beneath this surface? Yet despite the layering, the pieces aren’t overworked. They retain a fresh sketch-like quality that’s unusual for the medium as a whole. Rockinger confirms this impression: “I didn’t think about layers as in the technical definition of a ‘quilt’ like I normally do. I just stitched onto heavy paper and really enjoyed the freedom.”

“Small Works” showcases several other pieces that emphatically challenge the definition of quilt. SAQA member Virginia Spiegel’s “Leaf, Tree, Forest #4” features a hauntingly abstract use of text, where the stitching is so minimal as to be almost irrelevant. The work is so glazed, polished to such a sheen, that it begs to be touched in the same way sculpture might. And Marcella Stasa’s “Another Home” goes the final step toward sculpture — it’s a freestanding three-dimensional piece, where the quilted portion consists of a delicately felted nest, supported by quirky legs and cradling a single tiny egg as if it were a treasure.

Despite some uneven selections, the beauty and introspection of the high points makes “Small Works for Small Spaces” a powerful show, well worth watching for when it comes around again during the next Lowell Festival. For more information, visit www.LowellQuiltFestival.org

Opinion: LINE

by June O. Underwood, (contact her at june@JuneUnderwood.com for footnotes)

In a conversation with the on-line discussion group, the Ragged Cloth Café, Mary Horton explained why she likes to hand-stitch rather than machine-stitch her art quilts, “When I hand-stitch...I can make stitches that are 3 inches long or 2mm long. I can make stitches which go anywhere I want them to go... it’s far easier to jump around the top of the quilt and react ... to what it needs...I can work more intuitively.

“The stitches I make by hand are the work of my hand. Nobody else could make stitches quite like these, just as nobody else draws quite like I do... the interrupted lines and erratic marks of my hand-stitched surface [aren’t there] with a machine-stitched surface’s more-or-less continuous line.”¹

In reacting to Mary’s comments, I found myself thinking, not about hand and machine stitching, but pondering our peculiar drawing tools — needle and thread — and the traditional drawing tools of graphite, ink and charcoal. In that same Ragged Cloth discussion, Sue Kaufman mentioned that the line (as in the quilting line) is one of the two basic elements of our art quilt medium.² The stitched line, holding the two or more layers of fabric together, is as crucial to the art quilt as the material. Line is, of course, also one of the basic elements of design.

David Lauer in *Design Basics* says, “Of all the elements in art, line is the most familiar to us. Most of our writing and drawing tools are pointed, and we have been making lines constantly since we were young children.” Colin Saxton in *Art School* says, “Drawing is the most fundamental activity of the visual artist” and talks of three uses of line drawings: drawing as enquiry and exploration, drawing in preparation for painting, and drawing for its own sake.”⁴

If line is one of two basic elements of art quilts, and drawing is “the most fundamental activity of the visual artist,” then, logically, line drawings (defined as those works of art in which the line predominates) should be widely found in our art. The enhancement of shapes, the

in-fill of backgrounds, the painted line, and quilt-embroidery such as is done by Ellen Ann Eddy all use line to enhance, supplement, or complement images. However, the singular use of line drawing for itself alone is hard to find in art quilts. Even whole cloth quilts, which were traditionally focused on the quilting line, now tend to shape their lines around the surface shapes of the fabric.

For art quilters, fabric shapes and colors serve as the basic elements of enquiry and exploration. In many if not all instances, art quilters used hand-dyes, painted surfaces, and prints as preparation for their image making. They work from pre-drawn appliques and photographic reproductions. In other words, art quilters defy the basic tenets of art school by using shape and color and prints and paint to prepare their fabric for the final design. That ‘defiance’ serves the medium well.

Some quilt artists draw with needle and thread. Among these are Alice Kettle, Victoria Montgomery, Sue MacArthur, Julie Upshaw, Dorothy Caldwell, Linda Gass, Marian Bijlenga, and Denise Linet.⁵ Surfing the web and seeing the work of these artists made me want to try some on my own. So I got out blank white fabric, sandwiched it, and put it under the needle. Quickly I saw that the hand-stitched, or pencil-drawn line has more immediacy than the machine-drawn line. I could not, except in very rudimentary way, engage in the free flowing, brain-to-page, mark making that conventional drawing tools like pencil and charcoal — and hand stitching — give.

This had little to do with the quality of the tool. It was a physical fact — the machine mechanism blocked my view. While I stitched I couldn’t see where I was going. I overcame that difficulty by lightly sketching my composition on the fabric with a pencil. With the whole marked out, I could immerse myself in the making of the drawing with the sewing machine.

And of course, I had to go back to the texts to check out the conventions of the drawn line. Textbook discussions of line always speak of the contour, fairly continuous and used for its own beauty as well as to define form. The gestural line, more free, also defines form while

generally indicating movement. Line can create texture (and stitching on art quilts creates unavoidable texture). Line can express emotion; it makes value, tone, and mass through hatching and cross-hatching and scribbling and over-scribbling. By virtue of its weight and width, line emphasizes or de-emphasizes.

Translating the ways that lines can be drawn and used into machine stitching isn’t all that difficult. Stitched lines have traditionally been praised for their regularity, which is not, generally speaking, a virtue in line drawings. However, altering the machine stitching speed and the speed that you move your fabric changes the length of the stitching line. You can make “stitches that are 3 inches or 2mm long.” Continuous line stitching is easier with a sewing machine, but the tools of contemporary sewing machines make the discontinuous line possible.

Cross-hatching is surprisingly easy with the sewing machine, although the regularity of the classic stroked line is harder to imitate. Scribble massing is great fun. Changing line widths while stitching is possible, although it’s hard to achieve the sensuality or smoothness of the sumi brush stroke. Overstitching can sometimes achieve a smoother, more definitive or a wilder, gestural line, and certainly adds emphasis. Bobbin drawing is now common among machine quilters. A variation of that is found with Sue MacArthur, the British machine embroiderer, who says she stitch-draws all her images from the back because she like the surprise of the slight changes that the bobbin stitch produces.⁶

And as art quilters we have available a range of tools to supplement the stitched line. For example, the use of opaque white fabric paint and white or colored fabric markers can achieve discontinuity or fading of stitched lines, changing their emphasis and mood. Fabric markers can be used to change color or add depth and darkness to a line of stitching, while watercolor, used like washes in traditional prints, can perk up a white and black image stitched image.

I think that, along with the other elements of shape and color and texture, the beauty of the stitched line can be further explored in our art quilts.

Review: The Collection of the Museum of Arts & Design

American Textile History Museum
by Yvonne Porcella, founder and former
President of SAQA 1989-2000.

The collection from the Museum of Arts & Design was a small survey of 23 art quilts that showed the development of the quilt medium throughout the twentieth century. "Lyrical Abstractions" was the perfect title for a grouping of quilts from England, Australia and the US. Bethan Ash's 2000 "Chasing the Dragon" featured a complex surface full of interesting texture with metallic shine mixed in with red tone cottons, silks and satins. Colors conjured up images of ancient dragons flashing warm fire flames. Katherine Westphal's 1969 "Tiepolo" had a softer edge in the artist's abstraction due to the use of hand painted and dyed fabrics. Even the black and white appendages hanging free from the center of this ceiling-mounted quilt were a bit unclear in the division of contrasting stripes. It was exciting to see this historical artist's work in a prominent place in this collection. Using a more geometric form of abstraction, Ann Wilson's work "3-5 Coentis Slip, No. 1" was dated 1959-63 and featured a found quilt that was dipped in paint and applied to a canvas foundation. The geometry of the found quilt survived although the paint applications blurred the intent of the previous maker.



Snow on Mount Fuji © Yvonne Porcella

Rounding out the selection of quilts in this gallery with blue walls was my 11' x 7' enlarged kimono "Snow on Mount Fuji". Unfortunately the gallery ceiling could not accommodate hanging this 11-foot tall kimono and it was displayed on a slanted black board. At first, it seemed to me that the MAD exhibit installer chose not to hang the complete piece editing out the foundation kimono, exhibiting only to the exterior cover. When I inquired about the rest of my piece, I was told the remainder was crated in the basement of the museum. The disappointment and concern about seeing my artwork edited like this still exists.

The next gallery had gold walls. 2001 "Kuba Africa" featuring hand-dyed cottons and imagery of tribal lands was created by Jutta Farringer, who lives in South Africa. SAQA member Emily Richardson's 2001 "Bird Call" with hand appliqué, embroidery and quilting accented with acrylic paint on cottons and silks rounded out the geometric abstract quilts.

Symbolism was the thematic thread of the next selection of quilts, which featured the artwork of Linda MacDonald, Michael James, and Tom Lundberg all from the US, Miwako Kimura of Japan, and Gabi Mett from Germany. Although each quilt artist conveyed a personal message in their artwork, each chose to portray images in a unique fashion. The contrast of Michael James's 1996 "Crash Site" in strong black and white shapes anchored with a bold slash of orange-red in the center was a counterpoint to Linda MacDonald's 1991 hand painted, airbrushed "Peter's Favorite". Though MacDonald and James used a similar palette, their concepts were dynamically different.

Miwako Kimura's 1989 quilt featured vintage cotton and hand techniques of piecing, appliqué, embroidery, and quilting. "Hohju - The Sacred Ball" offered a glimpse of the spiritual symbolism of Japan. Whereas, the Gabi Mett entry 1996 "El Dorado" was the motherlode of fabrics and techniques depicting her theme: silk, felt, tulle, brocade, beads, hand piecing, trapunto, appliqué, embroidery, hand quilting, and machine quilting. Tom Lundberg made "Lucky Yellow" in 1984, and like the Ann Wilson quilt used

canvas along with cottons and silks, embroidery and hand dyed fabrics.

Another thematic gallery in the exhibit featured Nature either in title or content of the quilts. SAQA member Bonnie Peterson's 1993 "Fissures in the Earth, Fire in the Sky" and Yael David-Cohen's 1998 "Central Square 98" exemplified the use of alternative materials. David-Cohen used oil sticks, netting, painting and hand sewing, while Peterson used dye printing techniques along with heat transfer. Nature or the disruption of nature as imagery makes a powerful statement when the medium is the quilt.

Politics & Social Statements was the last theme gallery in the exhibit. "Guns Are Us: Funerary Piece Two" created by SAQA member Kathy Weaver in 1994 was provocative and left the question of what Funerary Piece One might look like. "Wash Day" by SAQA member Wendy Huhn in 1994 offered all the cliché images of the little woman at home that this artist uses to give the audience a reminder of women's work then and now. Perhaps the political statement of this quilt was not as obvious to some who visited the exhibit. Images of the quilts can be viewed under "Past Exhibitions" at www.athm.org

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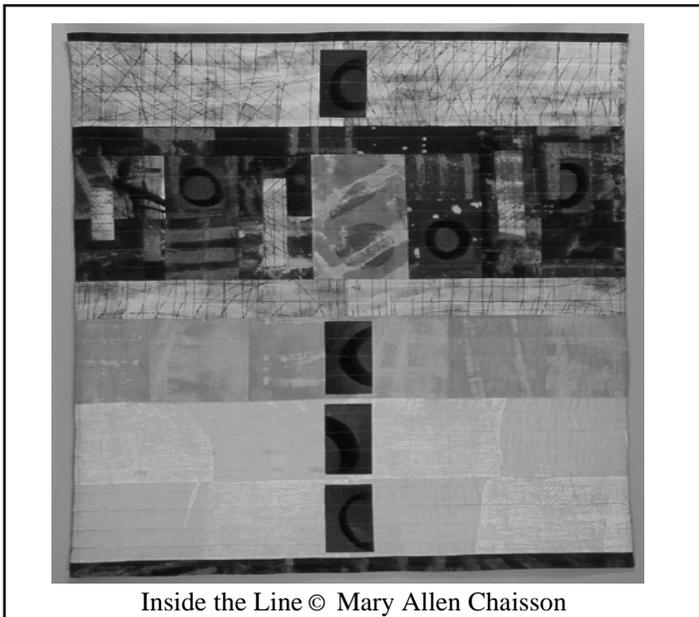
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Inside the Line © Mary Allen Chaisson

Review: Art Quilts New England

The Brush Art Gallery, Lowell, MA August 5-October 31, 2005
by Beth Surdut ©2004

With themes as diverse as a personal diary and as global as war, "Art Quilts New England" featured 30 pieces by 23 New England artists. Whereas many quilts were pieced from recognizable commercial fabric, the more innovative work in this current selection shows a trend towards artists employing materials that they have generated or uniquely manipulated with dyes, paints, and embellishments. A particularly successful piece, both technically and emotionally, is SAQA member Mary Allen Chaisson's "Inside the Line", an effective impression of sandstorm and barbed wire, with bright sun spots, night bombings, azure water and green patches of new growth amidst barren ground.

SAQA member Natasha Kempers-Cullen's boldly graphic and thoughtful "Leap of Faith", shares the gallery with more subtle juxtapositions of hues, such as SAQA member Wen Redmond's "Diapause". Kempers-Cullen effectively fills the space with numerous block printed figures dancing, conversing, and going about the daily business of life, as did the artist who worked on the piece as she dealt with the illness and death her brother. Redmond's quiet green meditation "epitomizes the leap of faith it takes to enter the cocoon and emerge, through time, a changed creature to be transformed," according to the artist's notes.

Another very successful piece is Margot Stage's adept interpretation of an iconic symbol of Lowell, "The Mill". Stage uses gauze fabric overlay to form shadows and reflections, and juxtaposes bold form, bold color, and bold graphics to build an old brick building cut into squares, reminiscent of a traditional bed quilt.

The expansion of the parameters of the definition of "art quilt" has given designers freedom to grow creatively. Other SAQA exhibiting artists were Marilyn Gillis, Phyllis Harper Loney, Rosemary Hoffenberg, Denise Linet, Karen Loprete, and Nancy F. Wheelwright. Visit the online gallery at www.thebrush.org

Professional Advice: A Fiber Friendly Gallery Director Discusses Proposals

by Carolyn Lee Vehslage, SAQA Newsletter Editor clvquilts.com

While cruising the Chesapeake this fall I had the unexpected pleasure of finding an art quilt exhibition. The title of The Fiber Connection's "World Views: Common Ground" Sept 3- Oct 22, 2004 exhibition acknowledged that its members hail from Belgium, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and 11 states across the US. 37 art quilts and fiber structures by 16 artists hung in three separate locations in the Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts. Considering the artists are from such diverse lands, the artwork was cohesive in format. Circular, square, and rectangular imagery was consistent throughout the body of work and the pieces were installed in harmonious color groupings. The majority of the group's members also belong to SAQA. To see examples of members' artwork visit www.TheFiberConnection.com

The "World Views" exhibition was the second showing of fiber art that Christine Manucy has selected during her two-year tenure as director of the Hall's three formal galleries, additional informal display areas, and outdoor sculpture program. She has found that the community is very receptive to fiber. Christine commented, "People love to see fiber art. It's so tactile and colorful. They appreciate that they can't do what the artists do and they recognize the amount of work that went into creating the pieces." As for the artwork itself, Christine feels, "Fiber artists are coming into their own – creating innovative art."

Christine, who is a painter and graduate of the Maryland Institute of the Arts, receives on average 20 proposals a year for less than half that number of available exhibition slots. She typically reviews them quarterly and plans about 18 months in advance. Her preference is to receive slides finding, "They are easier to project on a wall for the committee members than to have them huddle around a computer screen viewing a web site or CD."

Although The Fiber Connection submitted slides of the actual artwork that they had planned to exhibit, Christine said, "It's not necessary to have the exact artwork in the proposal as long as it's representative." She acknowledged that with the long lead-time between proposal submission review, acceptance, and installation, an artist might have sold many pieces. Occasionally as the show date grows near, Christine asks the artist to send slides of recent artwork so that she may select more current pieces.

As is standard with most college galleries and art centers, MHCA requires a letter from the artist or group stating why they want to exhibit, 10-20 slides, a slide identification list with artist name, title of work, date of work, dimensions, medium, resume(s), artist statement(s) or group statement. MHCA is a non-profit and retains a 30% commission on all sales.

Place an Ad in the Next
SAQA Newsletter
See Page 19

Reviews: Essence Of Fiber

Lakewood Civic & Cultural Center

Contemporary Fiber Art

Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art
by J. Bruce Wilcox, SAQA PAM member
www.jbrucewilcox.com

The Handweaver's Guild of America held its biennial convention in Denver in July, and there were over 25 fiber exhibits in town. I visited the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art to see work by Lia Cook, Kyoung Ae Cho, Virginia Davis, Ann Hall Richards, and Sue Hammond West, all exhibiting in "Contemporary Fiber Art."

Lia Cook's large weavings seem to be interestingly visualized out-of-focus photographic images. Quoting from the BMOCA catalog, "Many of the hand and portrait images are self-studies using video capture and emphasizing the rough quality of the particles forming the image. The images are translated pixel by pixel into a weave structure that resembles a damask tablecloth. Sometimes they seem like old photographs that have captured a fleeting instant of a sensual experience." These woven pieces were stunning!

Two of Kyoung Ae Cho's pieces were crafted out of layers of white silk organza, hand-stitched in white, with very thin half-inch squares of burn-marked wood sandwiched in between the layers of organza. She'd left long threads hanging down the back that were visible. Exquisite and very Zen. But her most interesting piece was titled "Quilt?!" and consisted of a 54" X 54" black fabric square, including wide mitered bindings, that had hundreds of 1/8" thick wood squares in 2 sizes, sliced to expose the growth rings, then drilled and stitched to the surface in a symmetrical design using waxed linen cord.

However, even though I always appreciate the amount of physical labor that goes into most fiber work, I was not overwhelmed by the other work in this exhibit.

"Essence Of Fiber" at the Lakewood Civic & Cultural Center included an exhibit from the Front Range Contemporary Quilters. FRCQ came into existence in 1989. To their credit, from the very beginning the founders of FRCQ recog-

nized that if they were going to be accepted as artists, they were going to have to mount juried shows, bringing a critical eye to the process of exhibiting. This critical eye from a fine art perspective is lacking in much of the quilt world.

A traditional quilt can be exquisite in workmanship, yet never cross the border into something that could be defined as art. However I've had dialogues with quilters who think that just because a quilt exists, it is a work of art. In the fine art world, critiquing is the name of the game. So if you can't handle a critique, get out of the fine art kitchen.

Connie Lehman juried the FRCQ exhibit. There was an enormous diversity of techniques represented including discharge, shibori, batik and hand-dyed cloth, silk screen, marbleizing, potato dextrin resist, acrylic canvas painting and



Lady Sings The Blues © Sandra L.H. Woock paper photo decoupage, and both hand and machine quilting, couching, above the surface embroidery work and applied embellishments.

"Chairs #15: Cerro Grande" by SAQA member Lisa Call, last year's Quilt National cover artist, featured hand-dyed cottons in red/white, red/yellow and red/black combinations, which were then stripped into various sections, cut and reconstructed, achieving a structural whole, then machine quilted, reflecting segments of chairs.

SAQA member Sandra L. H. Woock had two pieces juried in. "Taking Liberties II" and "Lady Sings The Blues" were both representative of her stunning whole cloth discharged, over and resist-dyed work, machine stitched in rayon and poly threads.

Using a combination of red, green and

black hand-dyed shibori and marbled fabrics, Melody Randol machine pieced, appliquéd and quilted "Earthy Elements". Flowing out of a vaguely floral offset central area, the green tones merged into a red and black background reminiscent of a lava flow. "Earthy Elements" was also stitched & stitched & stitched, machine quilting covering much of the surface.

"Love Of A Child", Jo Fittell Coffin's canvas, silk organza and paper piece, is an abstract combination of uneven rectangular shapes with two circular elements built into the design, then painted with acrylics and chalk, collaged, stamped, batiked, machine stitched and airbrushed, with background colors in tan and yellow, and surface areas painted in brown, green, red and black.

"Emerging Spring" by SAQA member Regina Benson was a whole cloth discharged cotton & hand-dyed silk piece in black, white and brown with smaller amounts of red and green uses reverse appliquéd, machine stitching and extraordinary up-on-the-surface, only barely connected at a few specific points, hand embroidery.

My favorite piece was "Bark" by SAQA member Jocelyn Chilvers. "Bark" was by far the most textured piece in the exhibit. It used various fabrics in a reverse appliquéd that was machine quilted, hand beaded and embroidered. It was so unusual that I had to call Jocelyn on the phone to find out exactly how it had been created. She was kind enough to email me a description of her construction process.

"This quilt evolved from the desire to create a piece that would evoke the heavy texture, layers and color of tree bark. It was purely experimental, but became the first of a series of quilts using this technique. I call it Layered Cut-Away. Multiple pieces of fabric are sandwiched together, quilted, and then cut away to reveal various layers of color and value. The top layer of fabric is a loose weave fabric that will fray easily (think cotton or rayon). From handling and/or a trip through the washing machine (as in the "Bark" quilt) the top layer takes on a chenille-like quality. Additional embellishments were then incorporated."

I love texture, and "Bark" was fabulous.

Professional Advice: How To Use Your Computer To Create Exhibit Opportunities

by Martha Sielman, SAQA Exec Director, MarthaSielman.com

(This article was reprinted with permission from The Crafts Report magazine. It was originally published in the August 2004 issue. All other uses are prohibited and all further publication rights reserved. For more information, see www.craftsreport.com)

In May 2002 I had a question: Since it was difficult to find exhibition opportunities for myself, would it be easier to find them for a group of artists? My computer turned out to be the key to answering this question.

As the [then] SAQA rep for CT, NJ and DE, I had a pool of potential partners. I sent out an exploratory email: "Would you be interested in creating a group to market our artwork jointly?"

Twelve artists responded that they were willing to give it a try. One even volunteered to put together a portfolio for us on her computer, and thus Fiber Revolution was born.

In 2003 FR had nine exhibitions. By the end of 2004 FR will have had twelve more exhibitions, and we are already booked for seven in 2005. We have grown to 30 members (a voluntary limit to keep the group's size manageable) and have a long waiting list. Members now also come from MA, NY and PA. We have a group portfolio, slide sets,

postcards and a gorgeous web site at www.FiberRevolution.com.

Being in an exhibiting group is wonderful. Our members have a variety of professional skills in addition to their artistic abilities. We have been able to take advantage of professional graphic designers, professional writers, and professional computer programmers. There are 30 people all working to try to find exhibition opportunities. There is always plenty of artwork available to fill the opportunities that arise, even on short notice. There are plenty of people to help do the work of creating presentation materials, sending out press releases, and hanging the shows. It's easier to get the work done, and it's also more fun. These artists were initially colleagues, but now they've become friends.

FR would not exist without the Internet. When I first conceived the idea of a group-marketing venture, I was able to make the proposal to the members of my SAQA region because of our connection through email. At that time I had met only three of

the members in person. The rest knew of me through my email communication network: weekly member news messages and a monthly fiber art event newsletter. All of the organizing for FR is done via email. Unlike the regular mail, it's almost instantaneous. Unlike a phone call, it's free and can be done at your convenience.

FR started communicating through a Yahoogroups.com list, which was free but the ads were annoying. Then one of our members came up with a better solution. Gloria Hansen designed our web site and set up a group email list through the site. This feature works beautifully to let the group communicate quickly and easily.

The web site has been instrumental in letting people know about our form of art and the diversity of artwork within the group. It is a beautifully designed site that really showcases members' artwork. We have received several invitations to exhibit from people visiting the web site.

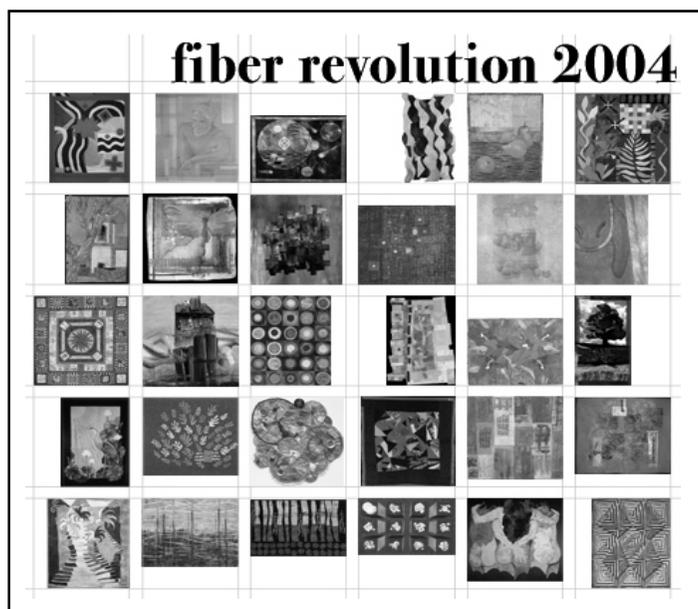
Individual members have been approached about possible sales of artwork and about solo exhibition opportunities.

A group of 30 artists in six states has tremendous marketing power, but nothing would happen without good organization. Initially I handled all of the organizational details, but as we grew it became necessary to delegate more and more. Now many different people take charge of various aspects of running FR: web site maintenance, portfolio preparation, slide library, postcard design, postcard distribution, mailing

list database maintenance, membership list, creating labels for shows, writing and sending out publicity.

Each exhibition is coordinated by the member who contacted the venue with plenty of help from the other members in selecting pieces to exhibit, publicizing the event, installing the artwork and even providing refreshments. It may be hard to believe, but it is ALL organized through our email group. We have developed a form that exhibition coordinators fill out with the details for a venue that it is posted on a members' only page on the web site. This past summer we exhibited in several places at the same time in three states. Careful coordination among the members made that go smoothly.

So, find a few quilt artists and start using your computer to create your own exhibition opportunities! To read reviews and see images of past & present exhibitions visit www.FiberRevolution.com



Review: Selvedge - New Fiber Art Magazine

by June O. Underwood, www.JuneUnderwood.com

Selvedge, the new textile magazine based in the United Kingdom, bills itself as “Textiles in Fine Art, Fashion, Interiors, Travel, and Shopping.” Its second issue, July/Aug. 2004, completes this agenda in a wholly satisfying manner.

The magazine covers its chosen topics in eye-bulging, mouth-watering fulsomeness. Among the many featured personalities and ideas of this issue are Carole Waller, Tracy Emin, and Lucy Orta from the fine arts; Emma Jeffs’ textiles and Christina Kim’s Dosa label in fashion; Gay Daniels’ textile collection and Christina Strutt’s Cabbages and Roses shop for interiors; London, New York, Helsinki and other places for travel; and Katherine Hamnett and Jessica Ogden for shoppers.

Selvedge is glossy and image-packed, with a European size and focus, both of which I find pleasing. The size provides ratios and layouts for the photos that differ from U.S. conventions; the European focus presents galleries, artists, and textiles that do not appear in U.S. magazines. The writing almost matches the ambitious scope of materials and imagery of the magazine.

Christine Kim’s line of clothing, Dosa, is examined in terms of its designer’s underlying preconceptions with “process-oriented value.” The reviewer, Jessica Hemmings, says Kim’s attention to detail is not “detail in the ornamental sense, not the type of detail that hijacks one’s attention, but rather detail that waits to be noticed, even waits to see if it is ever noticed.”

Shades of artist Agnes Martin.

There are reviews of books, critiques of the latest shows, and listings of exhibits and opportunities throughout the UK, Continental Europe and the Americas. An article about Katharine Hamnett by Elizabeth Smith deals with the issue of fair trade textiles. At least two or three other articles in this issue speak to political and social concerns. For example, the article on “Khadi: The Freedom Fabric” by Brinda Gill discusses the political use of a particular fabric in India during that country’s push for independence. Palestinian political embroidery is featured in another story.

Selvedge is published six times a year and costs 20 pounds U.K. or \$85 U.S. for a year’s subscription. www.selvedge.org
PO Box 40038, London N6 5UW UK



Changing Definitions: The Art Quilt at the Arkansas Art Center

Check out SAQA’s monthly Bulletin online at www.SAQA.com. It contains information on calls for entry and exhibition announcements.



Changing Definitions: The Art Quilt at the Arkansas Art Center

Opinion: Inner Sanctions

by Jean Dubois, www.DuboisArt.com

I have a blue plastic fly swatter that my son Steve gave to me years ago after we’d been discussing writer’s block. He’d read somewhere that the best way to deal with the inner devils that are causing the block was to actually physically swat them away. “Here, take this! Take that!” he shouted, swatting away in every direction. I wish you could have seen his demo; it made it look like fun to have inner devils.

But it isn’t fun, and it isn’t just writers who suffer block. All of us are subject to inner sanctions. [Women hear] the old echo of Mother’s warning, “Boys don’t like smart girls.” And men are subject to it too, especially the creative ones who grow up in families where imagination and creativity are somewhat suspect. At one time or another, all of us suffer from those inner sanctions against success, warning of the price we’ll have to pay.

Block can set in any time. It can last for a week, a month, for years. Today, when I jumped out of bed ready to tackle a complicated job I’d finally figured out how to approach, now golden in my mind, suddenly 12 other things had to be done. The floor needed vacuuming. The dishwasher had to be emptied, the newspapers taken for recycling. Sound familiar?

The real obstacle to your success is not your lack of talent or your lack of commitment. It’s your own inner devils warning you about the price of success. And there is a price. Long hours. Hard work. The suspicion that you aren’t getting paid half what you’re worth. And green-eyed monsters – people you thought were friends acting jealous and petty.

So? Get out your fly swatter and swat. There’s nothing sweeter, nothing more satisfying than the rush of joy that comes when you’ve created a work of art.

Reviews: Two SAQA Exhibitions in Little Rock, Arkansas

by Judy Tipton Rush, SAQA member

Upon entering “Uncommon Threads” at the Historical Arkansas Museum, I was immediately impressed with the manner the quilts are hung and lit. Respectfully, each quilt seemed to have its own space and voice. The room was large and quiet with partitions interrupting the viewing area, asking me to investigate further.

My overall impression was that every piece had its own special voice, and I was going to get to hear it. Many of the quilts were edgy and some, because of subject matter, were disturbing. It was interesting to see how each artist interrupted the theme, “Uncommon Threads”.

The museum volunteers noted that many visitors were in awe and stated they were so glad to have the opportunity to see these quilts. A few visitors came out shaking their heads and stating, “Those are not quilts as I know them. They are art!” What an opportunity we had to share that realization with them.



Uncommon Threads at the Historical Arkansas Museum

600+ visitors attended the invitation-only reception of “Changing Definitions: The Art Quilt” at the Arkansas Art Center. As the crowd slowly began to drift around the exhibition, it was fun to just slip up beside a small group and hear their conversation after some cautious observing. “I don’t get it.”... “Oh, I see.”... “I really like this one.”

As the night wore on, individuals were grabbing others, “You’ve just got to see this one” and “Now I get it.” I observed in the quilts many voices of interpretation: most left some allusions to the history of traditional quilting, while others demonstrated experimentation with techniques and application of embellishment. There were quiet pieces that drew you in to discover their subtleties. Then there were the ‘in-your-face’ statements that made you gasp. Over 35,000 people visited the exhibition. (Images of “Changing Definitions” provided by Kathleen McCabe)

Sign up for SAQA’s online chat forum at
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAQA/>

Professional Advice: Artwork Self-Assessment Sheet

by Christine Zoller, Associate Professor and Textile Area
Coordinator for East Carolina University, Greenville, NC

When looking at your artwork, whether in progress or completed, take the time to ask yourself the following questions in order to look at the work with a critical eye:

- o What are the objectives I have set up for myself in completing this work?
- o Look at the major elements within the piece and ascertain whether they are playing a critical role within the work and if the message they are saying is being heard.
- o Set yourself outside the piece if possible; what are your emotional responses?
- o What is the best part of the work? What could be changed?
- o How does this work affect future pieces? Is this piece the first of many, or was all that was to be said accomplished in this work?
- o Look at all the elements of design in this piece and critique it using each one: Line, Shape, Space, Form, Texture, Value and Color.
- o Look at all the principles of design in this piece and critique it using each one: Repetition, Variety, Rhythm/Movement, Balance, Emphasis, and Dominance.
- o Do the methods used work for the concept?
- o In conclusion, does the work successfully complete all the objectives set forth in the beginning? Did the concept change along the way, and was this a good thing?



Uncommon Threads at the Historical Arkansas Museum

Meet Kim H. Ritter, Regional Representatives Coordinator

As an artist, author and curator, Kim is passionate about the art of quilting. She holds her City and Guilds Certificates in Patchwork and Quilting and in Design from the London Institute of the Arts. Her artwork has appeared in publications such as *Fiberarts Design Book Six* and *American Craft Magazine*. Kim is the author of *Quick Quilting*. She has quilts in private, museum and corporate collections. Her quilt "Soil Sample" is currently on display in the US residence/embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. The Friendship Force in Atlanta, GA recently acquired the companion quilt "The Hallowed Ground".

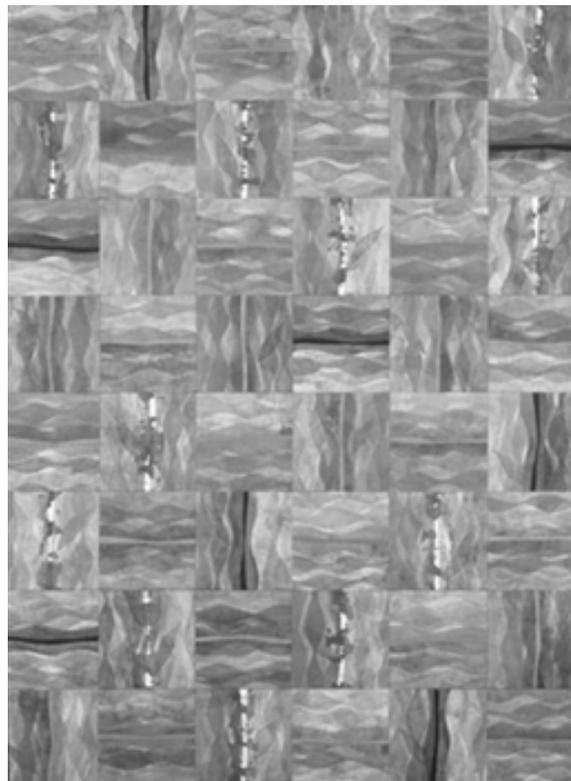


Promoting the art of the quilt is important to Kim. She is active in that role on the local, regional and national level through donating her time to such organizations as Fiber Artists of Houston, SAQA and the International Quilt Association. To increase the exposure of quilts in museums and art centers across the country, Kim has become involved in organizing art quilt shows and is one of the curators of Fine Focus 04,

(www.finefocus.net) a touring exhibit of small format art quilts. Read more about Kim and her artwork on her website www.kimritter.com.



Handy Woman Tools © Kim H. Ritter



Autumn Splendor © Nelda Warkentin

Meet Nelda Warkentin, Alaska SAQA Rep

A design class, which Nelda attended at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art in 1995, connected her with a group of fiber artists and inspired her to become an artist. Two of her works received the Award of Distinction at Quilt Nihon in Japan. One piece is currently on display at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Another, 'Tropical Dream', received the Domini McCarthy Award at Quilt National '03. 'Autumn Splendor' will be on display at Visions 2004 in Oceanside CA, November 7, 2004 – January 16, 2005. Nelda is scheduled to have a two-person show with Emily Richardson at the Gross McCleaf Gallery in Philadelphia PA, March 29 - April 19, 2005.



Nelda writes, "The Alaska SAQA membership is small. In fact, there are only five of us. The challenge for SAQA in Alaska is that SAQA competes with local groups and organizations that already satisfy the need for networking and other benefits SAQA offers. Alaska has galleries, museums and other spaces where fiber artists regularly show their work. Other organizations, such as the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the Rasmuson Foundation, offer grants and other opportunities for fiber artists. Many artists take advantage of these 'in-state' benefits."

Meet Louise Thompson Schiele, Northern California/Nevada SAQA Representative

Louise describes herself as a woman first, daughter, sister, wife, mother, step-mother, grandmother, friend, retired corporate employee and now full time studio fiber artist. Having been involved in quilt making since 1977, Louise has gone from owning her own quilt shop Legacy Quilts to now being totally immersed in the creation of fiber art pieces. Louise raised three children while working full time in the corporate world and supporting a



disabled husband/artist through his good and bad times artistically and health wise. She was heavily involved in creating River City Quilters Guild in Sacramento, in the 70's, along with establishing many quilt exhibits in the Sacramento region. Widowed in early 1999, remarried in late 2000, and retired in 2002, Louise found a new life, new love and herself as a "new woman", all of which affected her approach to her art. Today she is working, selling and exhibiting her work and enjoying her freedom working full time in her studio space in her home in Sacramento, Ca and maintaining her website weezeewear.com.



Man With Squeezebox: Ring of Kerry, Ireland
© Louise Thompson Schiele

When Louise joined SAQA, her regional group was small enough to meet in members' homes. Now it's over 100 members from Santa Cruz north to the Oregon border and picking up the state of Nevada. The group meets four times per year to share resources, accomplishments, and ideas. Each meeting a member is asked to speak about a technique or process. A mentor/mentee program has been established, an e-mail newsletter is published ten times per year by the Regional Rep and group exhibits have been shown in and around the Sacramento area in galleries, wineries, and other venues.

Meet Eileen Alber, Southern California/Hawaii SAQA Representative

Eileen Alber has transformed herself from Engineer to Entrepreneur and role model for quilters in Southern California. Nominated for the 2003 Quilt Teacher of the Year Award from The Professional Quilter magazine, Eileen's dedication to the art of quilting has inspired her students to develop skills in surface design, as well as hone their quilt making techniques. As the owner and primary teacher at The Quilters' Studio, she focuses on providing unique fabric, threads, surface design supplies and interesting classes for her customers to develop their own individual style. Her quilts have been shown in local library galleries and college galleries coordinated by Rose Hughes, director of Quilts on the Wall: Fiber Artists. Eileen's work has also been exhibited at Quilt Festival in Houston, Quilt Expo V in Barcelona, Spain and the Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival.



Eileen says, "Since our region is very large and spread out, many of the members have formed smaller groups that meet on a regular basis. "Fibervision" meets in the Santa Barbara area. "Quilts on the Wall: Fiber Artists" meets in Seal Beach (near Long Beach) and "Extreme Quilters" meets in the Conejo and San Fernando valleys. Many of the members participate in creative challenges that are exhibited in local library and college galleries."

**Sign Up Today for the
SAQA 2005 Conference**



Release 2 © Jeannette DeNicolis Meyer

Meet Jeannette DeNicolis Meyer, Oregon/Washington Representative



I made my first quilt in 1974, dyed my first yard of fabric in 1984, and joined SAQA in 1991. Hundreds of quilts, thousands of yards of fabric, and many SAQA newsletters later, I'm still excited about the expressive possibilities of this layered medium. I teach, lecture, and write feature articles about fiber arts in the US and abroad, and teach semester long classes in the studio school at The Oregon College of Art and Craft. My work has been shown In Fiberarts International, Visions, Crafts National, and shows in Japan, New Zealand, France, Cost Rica, and the US.

The NW region, which includes Oregon, Washington, and Alaska, will meet this December at the Coos Bay Art Museum, to celebrate and support the three quilt shows the museum is exhibiting. In Spring 2005 we will host the upcoming SAQA show, Layers of Meaning, at Contemporary Crafts Museum and Gallery in Portland, OR.

Meet a PAM Member: "J. Bruce Wilcox, United States"

by Elisabeth Fuchs, English translation by Martine House
Reprint permission by Magic Patch, Volume 20

J. Bruce Wilcox is not a man who deals with compromise. Several years ago he dropped everything to follow his creative Muse. Right now he spends the little money he has for food and for the material he needs to create his quilts. But, whatever the difficulties, he assumes complete responsibility for his choices.

When asked about his inspiration sources, Bruce answers that his ideas come from the bottom of his soul. His childhood was not happy: his relationship with other children was always filled with conflicts. According to him, he owes his life to the craft how-to section of the library. At a young age, books offered him an escape. He learned on his own how to sew, embroider, and make dolls. During that time, he also collected a wealth of information about design, shapes, lines and colors. However, he did not make his first art quilt until 1977. Sometime after that Nancy Crow noticed one of his quilts and commented, "not too bad for a man!"

Bruce's art quilts are never figurative but rather abstract. His designs are often based on a geometric grid on which he layers repetitions of a specific design. Bruce uses a wide range of fabrics: cotton, fabrics with mixed content, silk, rayon, thick fabric. Within the same piece, he usually includes a large variety of different fabrics. He has been dyeing and painting fabrics long before it became "fashionable" in the quilt world.

Bruce admits that his piecing techniques are often rather simple. It allows him to design more quilts, even though he does not manage to keep up with his daily flow of ideas! He does not use regular quilting thread to hand quilt. Instead, he quilts with all kinds of fibers: string, two-ply crochet cotton, Size 3 Speed-Cro-Sheen pearl cotton, linen, nylon thread, or synthetic yarns. It all depends on the color he needs for the quilt he is working on. Besides, he does not use running stitches but rather backstitches that have one characteristic: they are at least 1/2" long.

He makes a point of saying his art quilts are not the work of a heterosexual person. He likes to emphasize all the things that make his work, according to him, different from



fly away home © J. Bruce Wilcox

quilts made by women: the use of almost uniquely straight lines and angles, his unusual quilting method, the fact that he is not trying to design something pretty and does not care about coordinating fabrics, etc. The originality of his artistic process, his honesty and engagement about homosexual questions often put him at odds with the quilting world: canceled invitations, never published interviews...

Bruce thinks he has very little in common with this 98% female world, which he has no fear of shocking! What is important to him is to keep working on what he considers a meditative and spiritual path: creating fiber art.

www.jbrucewilcox.com

Meet Board Member Nancy Brakensiek



Nancy is looking forward to working on the Board and providing a collector's perspective. She and her husband, Warren, are contemporary art quilt collectors. They currently own more than 140 works by contemporary fiber artists. Part of their collection is the "Playing With a Full Deck" collection that traveled with the Smithsonian for a number of years. The balance of their art quilt collection is predominantly work by artists from the Pacific Northwest. Nancy lives in downtown Los Angeles and travels extensively. She is a retired Certified Public Accountant and has extensive experience in non-profit matters. She is currently a member of the National Board of Directors of the American Cancer Society, with whom she has been a volunteer for over 20 years.

Nancy believes strongly in promoting the contemporary art quilt medium and the artists. This year Nancy and Warren have created and funded the "Caught Our Eye" award to be given at the opening of Quilt San Diego/Quilt Visions in November and at Quilt National in May. Nancy and Warren believe that a collector's eye can be different from that of a professional judge or museum expert – perhaps more visceral, more retail. There are no formal criteria for their award, the only requirement is that the art must catch their eye.

SAQA says "Thank you!" to our Sponsors for 2004:

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