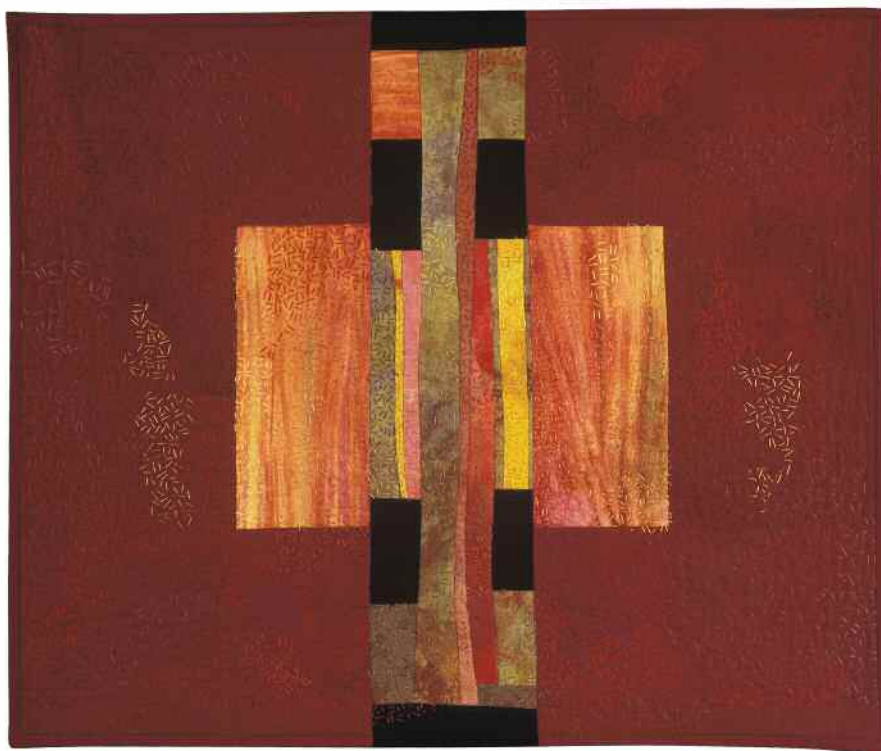


Professional advice

Pricing your artwork

by Judith Trager © 2005

For the past thirty years, I have been actively involved in the quilt world, both as an artist and as a business professional. Since 1990, I have sold 215 art quilts. These quilts have gone to public buildings, corporate headquarters, private homes, health care facilities, universities, and churches. I have built my own studio and remodeled my kitchen with money earned by my quilting. The business of fiber art has enabled me to have a good life



Ancient Textiles: Cochineal, 25" x 29", © 2005 Judith Trager

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doing what I have passion for and get paid for it.

In 1988, we moved to Boulder, Colorado, where I began to make art quilts full time. I began to produce one-of-a-kind pieces. Early on, I learned a valuable lesson that has come back to me time and time again: **Art has no fixed value.**

We are not dealing with a commodity. We are dealing with something that is governed by fashion, taste,

understand. We are trying to muddle through a confusing labyrinth of value, worth, and self-confidence.

Do you *really* want to sell your art?

What are your expectations?

Are they high?

Do you need money to support yourself and your family, or are you doing this just for extra cash?

Does selling your artwork help you to be a more valuable member of the profession?

In 1996, I completed a quilt and mixed media series called *Plastic Flowers in a Mexican Graveyard*. It was colorful, topical, beautiful, complex, and humorous, and I was very pleased with it. It was autobiographical, journaling my life as a child and teenager

See "Pricing" on page 28

Art has no fixed value.

perception, and emotion. We are dealing with trends, sometimes driven by powerful factors we don't

Thoughts from the SAQA president

by Katie Pasquini Masopust
www.katiepm.com



I am so impressed! We now have more than 1,420 members! Thanks to all of you who are talking up this great organization and to the most recent membership drive at the Chicago

International Quilt Festival in April. I want to personally thank each and every one who has volunteered their time and expertise to keep us strong.

The booths that we do each year at the Houston International Quilt Festival and in Chicago have really helped to bring in new members. It is

fun to volunteer at both of these shows and to meet and encourage budding art quilters to join us. We always need volunteers for these events, so let your regional representative know if you will be there. The regional reps do a lot for us by bringing the different regions together to share their members' artwork and information. Call your regional rep and see what you can do to make your area beneficial to everyone. If you travel to teach art quilting, let Martha know and she can send you brochures to hand out to your students.

We are listing volunteers on the web site under "About SAQA: The Gold Star Volunteers." Pitch in and volunteer so that we can add your name to the list.

Membership dues only pay for 60

percent of our budget, so we need donations above and beyond the dues to cover the rest of our expenses. We also need donations from businesses that you work for or have contacts with. There is a donation form on the web site for all donations—look under "Contact." All donors are listed on the web site under "About SAQA."

Businesses are also recognized in our printed materials and can have a direct link from our web site to theirs. Some businesses will match your donations dollar-for-dollar, so check it out.

I am very encouraged by all of the new exhibition opportunities we are involved in and hope that you can send in images to be considered for them. PAM Portfolio 13 is underway as well.

Until next time, happy creating!

Report from the SAQA exhibits committee

By Judith Content, Chair

Committee Members: Arlene Blackburn, Lisa Chipetine, Karey Bresenhan, Kim Ritter, Katie Pasquini Masopust, and Peg Keeney

The SAQA exhibits committee meets regularly on the second Tuesday of every month. SAQA members with exhibition proposals or questions for the committee are welcome to have their items included in the monthly agenda. We now have an Exhibition Proposal Form on the Members page of the web site that can be filled out by anyone wishing to propose an exhibition bearing the SAQA logo. The completed form will be reviewed by the exhibits committee. The committee is working hard to provide our membership with information, contacts, and professional experience to assist in producing high-quality art quilt exhibitions.

Exciting exhibitions already in the works include *SAQA Europe: Breaking Boundaries*, *Transformations: Artists Working with Fibers*, and *SAQA: The Creative Force*. Jurors Inge Mardal and Steen Hougs juried *Breaking*

Boundaries as an exhibition of 25 artists from 11 countries for Patchwork and Quilt Expo X in Lyon, France, June 22-25, 2006. The jurying took place on April 14 in Belgium at the home of SAQA European Representative Linda Colsh, who did a masterful job organizing this exhibition. She reported to the exhibits committee that coordinating *Breaking Boundaries* was a challenging but wonderful experience, and she is thrilled with how the exhibition looks. Thank you to Karey Bresenhan for inviting SAQA to mount this exhibition of European members at Patchwork and Quilt Expo X.

Jane Sauer, owner of Thirteen Moons Gallery in Santa Fe, recently juried *Transformations: Artists Working with Fibers*. Open to all SAQA members, this exhibition will premiere at the Festival of Quilts at the National Exhibition Center in Birmingham, England, August 17-20, 2006. Peg Keeney, SAQA Michigan rep and exhibits committee member, curated *Transformations* and is currently working on several exciting travel opportunities for the exhibition.

SAQA: The Creative Force will be exhibited at the International Quilt Festival in Houston from October 28–November 5. This two-part exhibition consists of invitational as well as juried components. SAQA founder Yvonne Porcella chose 24 works by individuals intimately involved with SAQA in its early years. Juror Paul J. Smith, Director Emeritus of the American Craft Museum (now the Museum of Arts and Design) selected 26 works from 516 submissions to represent contemporary SAQA artists and "the broad spectrum of quilt art today." Martha Sielman, Jutta Halpin, and Lisa Chipetine did an excellent job coordinating the jurying. Deidre Adams is designing a beautiful, full-color catalog of the exhibition, with essays by both Yvonne Porcella and Paul J. Smith. It will be available for sale at *Festival!* and then through the SAQA web site store. SAQA is thrilled that the exhibition and catalog were made possible by a generous contribution by Janome, a SAQA Platinum Corporate Sponsor.

Report from the SAQA executive director

By Martha Sielman

www.marthasielman.com



Today, May 12th, is the two-year anniversary of when I became Executive Director for SAQA. It's been quite a ride. Our membership has grown from 804 to 1423. We've developed a new look and a new web site. We've added new ways for members to communicate through the Yahoo groups and the SAQA forum. There's been reorganization of the regions. We've produced a conference and several exhibitions. We've hosted booths both at Houston and at Chicago. We've produced the PAM Portfolio as a unified book, and starting with this issue will now be producing the *Journal* in full color. None of this would have been possible without the tremendous support that I've received from the board or without the wonderful volunteers that have worked so hard to support this organization. Thank you, one and all.

My last column asked that each of you make a New Year's resolution to try to improve the professionalism of the photography that presents your artwork to the world. I'd like to follow up with some thoughts about how that affects your chances in being chosen in a jurying process. I just helped run the jury process for *SAQA: The Creative Force*. If the call for entry allows three pieces, send three pieces. For *The Creative Force* there were 516 entries, each with a full and a detail shot, so the juror viewed over 1,000 slides. They were viewed twice through before he made his first selections, and while watching the process, I became aware of the importance of sending in three entries, rather than only one. When

you view that many images, which are all very different one from another, it requires a lot of visual work to keep absorbing and processing what you're seeing. Seeing three images (six slides including the details) gives the viewer more time to absorb what the artist is submitting. A single entry is much more difficult to focus upon before the next artist's artwork appears. So next time you enter a juried show, try to send three images rather than just one.

My second observation was that photography makes a difference. *The Creative Force* juror worked hard to focus on the artwork and ignore the following problems which were present: electrical outlets visible in the wall below the artwork, house siding visible next to the artwork, hanging apparatus visible, poorly framed pieces, out of focus pieces, etc. However, some jurors will actually refuse to consider poorly photographed artwork. At the very least, mask off your slide to remove everything except the artwork itself. But if

you are going to spend the time and expense of entering a juried show, why handicap your entry by presenting a poorly photographed piece? Hiring a professional photographer is expensive, but their product is simply going to be better. If you believe in your artwork, then you owe it to yourself to invest in presenting it in the best, most professional manner possible.

My professional photographer produces better slides than I ever could. First of all, his equipment is better: his camera is better, his lights are better, and he has simultaneous flash machines. More importantly, his knowledge and experience are incredibly more vast. This is his art form, and he's very good at it. I don't have that knowledge, I don't have that type of equipment, and most of all I don't have hours and hours to spend setting up and photographing each piece when I could be quilting instead.

Invest in your artwork by presenting it in the best possible way—use a professional.

Letter from the SAQA *Journal* editor

by Carolyn Lee Vehslage

clvquilts@yahoo.com, www.clvquilts.com



Our membership continues to astound me with their willingness to contribute time and expertise for the benefit of us all. The quality of the opinion pieces and of the professional advice articles and the depth of the reviews in this issue are excellent. If you have a topic that you would like to develop or suggest, I'm interested in hearing from you. Don't be shy if you feel you aren't a strong writer; SAQA now has a roster of

people who have volunteered to help.

My gracious thanks to our volunteer proofreaders for the Spring SAQA *Journal* articles and reviews: Glenda Alexander, Nancy Beckerman, Susanne Clawson, Dana Jones, Jake Finch, Barbara Parady, Judy Shelton, and Brenda Smith. If you would like to volunteer as a writer, reviewer, or proofreader, please contact me.

Notes from the board

By Linda MacDonald, Secretary
www.lindamacdonald.com

SAQA is now part of the lecture series at the International Quilt Festival in Houston. Our first selection of lectures will be from Yvonne Porcella, Barbara Schulman, and Katie Pasquini Masopust.

Because many of our members were chosen to exhibit at *Visions* in Ocean-side, California, SAQA is putting together a SAQA meeting for the opening weekend of November 11-12. Katie and Beth Smith are working on the logistics and development.

We have wanted to print the SAQA *Journal* in color for a while. Lisa Chipetine and Beth worked with Global Interprint, Inc. to have them handle all of our color printing needs,

such as the *Journal*, catalogs, and postcards. Having one printer simplifies our procedures and lowers the costs.

Karey Bresenhan and Linda Colsh have done a tremendous job with *SAQA Europe: Breaking Boundaries* to be held at the Patchwork Quilt and Expo X in Lyon, France, June 22-25, 2006. Inge Mardal and Steen Hougs were the jurors. They chose 25 pieces from 167 art pieces submitted by 70 artists. The exhibit will represent work by artists from 11 countries. See Judith Content's report from the exhibition committee on page 2 for more information on shows.

Louise Schiele, our regional reps coordinator, has done a great job drafting the job descriptions for regional reps and for the regional reps

coordinator. These descriptions will go into the Rep Handbook given to each rep.

Nancy Brakensiek and Martha Sielman have put together a report on the Noho exhibition (see below).

Judith, Sue Pierce, and I are collecting names for potential board members. September 30th is the date for new members to come on the board and ones to leave as their terms expire.

The PAM slide show that Katie put together from slides of PAM members' work has been a success. There are eight shows now circulating among the reps. Contact Martha if you are interested in borrowing one. These are for art quilt education and recruitment.

Board members can now be emailed through SAQA's web site.

Report from the SAQA board:

Exposed! Contemporary Art Quilts exhibition at the

When this exhibition was first proposed, the SAQA board felt it represented a tremendous opportunity for the organization to present art quilts to the New York City fine arts community. The board also had concerns about the expense and our ability to organize such an exhibition.

Board member Marilyn Henrion worked tirelessly to organize and promote this exhibition. Many other New York and New Jersey members volunteered to help with several different aspects of the organization needed for this event. *Exposed!* would never have been as successful as it was without their time and expertise.

The opportunity to show in New York was of great interest to SAQA's membership. The juror received 572 works by 221 member artists from eight countries. The Noho Gallery is beautiful but small. The 12 pieces chosen by juror Dorothy Twining-Globus of the Museum of Art &

Design filled the space, while giving each piece the respect it deserved.

Because of the opportunity to reach the New York fine art community, the SAQA board decided to invest in a professional public relations firm, Cultural Communications; a professional catalog designer, Jerry Kelly Design; and bought ad space in several art news magazines. The total costs for the exhibit were \$24,017. This was partially offset by jury fees and catalog sales totaling \$6,516, for a total cost to SAQA of \$17,501.

The PR firm's efforts resulted in publicity, with photos, in the following publications:

Hemispheres (United Airlines' magazine)
Forbes Collector online newsletter
American Style magazine's "Datebook/Galleries" page
Interior Design magazine's web site
House & Garden magazine's web site
Time Out New York listing

Fiberarts magazine's web site
Surface Design web site

And ads in the following publications:

NY Gallery Guide
American Craft's web site
Fiberarts magazine
American Style magazine
Art & Antiques magazine
Gallery & Studio magazine

In addition, over 1,000 invitations were sent to the fine arts community and invitations and complimentary catalogs were sent to collectors, gallery owners, and museum curators.

According to counts by the Noho Gallery staff, more than 1,000 people came to the exhibition—many more than is typical for one of their fiber art exhibitions—despite its relatively short run of only three weeks. Included in that total were members of the art press, curators from the Museum of Art & Design, collectors,

Cheryl Dineen Ferrin has again graciously agreed to coordinate and organize the PAM Portfolio. PAM Portfolio 13 will cover two years. Its next printing will not be until 2008.

For complete board minutes, check the SAQA web site. Look under **Members> Members Home> Log In> Board Minutes**.

The conference committee, chaired by Lisa, is moving ahead with organizing our 2007 conference to be held in Athens, Ohio, in conjunction with **Quilt National 2007**. Many of the same people who volunteered for the last conference are working on this one also.

Penny McMorris and Beth are both looking at the work of woodworkers to create the box that will house *Art Gallery in a Box III*.

Noho Gallery

and representatives from at least four industry organizations: Janome, Free Spirit, Andover Fabrics and Marcus Brothers Textiles.

Two pieces sold from the exhibit, one before the opening and another at the VIP opening.

Two reviews were written. One was published in *Gallery & Studio* and reprinted in the Winter 2006 SAQA Journal, and one will be published in *Surface Design Journal*.

There have been 127 catalogs sold to date out of 1,000 printed. Most of the other catalogs were sent as complimentary gifts to SAQA's and the public relations firm's mailing lists.

Because of the publicity, ads, reviews, catalog sales, and attention by esteemed art members, we feel that we were successful in meeting our goal of introducing the art quilt to the New York community. The SAQA board is now discussing whether, where, and when to mount another gallery exhibit.

Budget report

By Nancy Brakensiek

Fiscal year 2005 saw tremendous growth, as membership increased from 1,000 to over 1,250. The May conference attracted more members than ever before, and the auction was a huge success. These new sources of funds enabled the funding of new ventures: Portfolio 12 was published as a book, print catalogs were done for *On the Wall* and for *Exposed!*, and professional PR and ads were provided for *Exposed!*. A very generous gift from Maureen Hendricks supported the development of the new web site and logo, as well as the long-range planning retreat that took place in July.

2005 Sources of funds:

Membership dues	\$62,825
Conference income	14,383
Auction proceeds	24,654
Donations	32,029
Exhibition fees	8,625
Product sales and other income	6,718
Funds held for Fiber Revolution	2,471

Total sources of funds	\$151,705
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2005 Uses of funds:

Member services, including SAQA Journal, portfolio production and distribution and web site	\$48,789
Administrative expenses, including executive director salary	44,450
Exhibition expenses	18,969
Conference expenses	17,658
Board of directors meeting expenses, including long-range planning meeting	17,382
Expenses against Fiber Revolution fund	2,408

Total uses of funds	\$149,656
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Sources of funds in excess of uses of funds	\$2,049
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Bank Account balances as of 12/31/05

Liberty Bank – SAQA	\$3,846
Liberty Bank – Fiber Revolution	\$3,919
Northern Trust Account (Savings, CREAM and Education funds)	\$35,355

Achieving recognition

By Gwendolyn A. Magee

For most of us as artists, recognition is the yardstick by which we measure our success. However we define it, and that certainly varies from individual to individual, we all want it, crave it, need it, feed on it, and strive to achieve it. No matter how secure we think we are within ourselves, there is no getting around the fact that outside corroboration feels good.

First of all, we have to recognize that there is no cookie cutter recipe that will work for everyone. For example, many will say that being able to sell their art defines success. That may sound good on the surface, but for one person it may mean being able to sell her art in the \$1,000 price range, and for another, anything less than \$10,000 is insulting. Still another person may be thrilled to sell a small piece for \$150.

Digging a little deeper, you may find that the artist selling artwork for \$150 does not think that is the true value of his art. For that individual, success is not defined by the amount of a single sale, but by the recognition that comes when many value the artwork enough to purchase it. Subsequently, he enjoys the reputation that a number of sales helps build for him in his home community. This artist, therefore, is willing to sell at a price that most people can afford.

For others, success is not at all correlated with the selling of their art-

work. Instead, for them, it may be more closely associated with the number and prestige of the venues in which their art is exhibited, or having it archived in museum collections, or featured in newspapers, books, and magazines.

No matter how it is defined, success appears to be linked closely with a few basic elements.

Goal identification

What are your goals? What is it that you want to happen in the best of all possible worlds? Think about your goals. Write them down and be as specific as possible. Review them often.

You have to define for yourself what success looks like. It is critical, whether you are an established studio artist or a novice. If your primary goal is recognition by your peers, you have to identify which group of peers is most important to you: those on a community, state, national, or international level. Are the peers in the quilting community, in the art quilt community, or in the art community? The strategy devised by someone who primarily desires recognition by the national art quilt community will be significantly different from that planned by someone who is seeking broader-based recognition, or for whom being well known and respected in her home community is paramount.

Is your primary goal to exhibit your art to gain recognition (and from whom) or to earn money (quick

money or big money)? Are you willing to sacrifice one goal to achieve another? For how long and at what cost?

Do not put limitations on what you want for yourself and for your art based on what you think is "reasonable." Don't be cowed into thinking that your goals are too lofty. They are yours, and you do not have to justify them to anyone but yourself. You are under no obligation to ever share or discuss them, so you don't have to cringe with concern about what others might think. Your goals may read:

- I want a feature article about me to appear in Hometown USA newspaper
- I want my work to be published in XYZ book, magazine or journal
- I want to win "Best of Show" at Paducah/Houston
- I want to have my artwork juried into *Quilt National*
- I want to be invited to participate in a national invitational exhibition
- I want to exhibit at the Smithsonian
- I want to have a solo exhibition at ABC Museum or Gallery
- I want my art to sell for a minimum of \$xx,xxx
- I want to earn a minimum of \$xx,xxx a year as an artist
- I want to command \$xx,xxx for workshops

*Recognition – Acknowledgement – Approval –
Commendations – Admiration – Honors – High Regard –
Acceptance – Affirmation – Acclaim
Prominence – Esteem – Renown – Accolades – Awards*

These goals must be what you really want. Of course, it would be great to have your artwork reviewed by the *New York Times*, but think long and hard about what would truly be more meaningful to you: a two-sentence mention in the *NYT*, or a four-column feature article written about you in your local newspaper.

If you want to have a solo exhibition at a major venue, it's probably not going to happen if you're concentrating on selling your artwork as fast as you can make it. You will need to build a comprehensive body of work, and it will have to be available for an extended period of time.

Prioritization: Which of your goals do you consider most significant and why? Put this into words and write it out. In terms of meaningfulness to you, what follows second, third, etc.? Identify the goals that fall into the "would be nice, but so what if it never happens" category. This will determine how you approach achieving your goals. Remember that your goals need not be static and carved in stone. Rethink your goals and how they are prioritized at least every six months. It's easy to lose sight of what your big picture is. You have to retain your focus, as well as have the ability to incorporate new thoughts, ideas, or information into your strategic plan.

Timeframe: Are you willing to take a long-term view towards achieving your goals (this of course takes you back to the questions of "... for what are you willing to settle ..." and "what are your priorities")?

Mindset: You have to have an open mind in order to recognize when you're being presented with an opportunity that may help you attain one or more of your goals. Keep in mind that it doesn't always appear in a format that "looks like" what you think it should. You also have to be willing to take advantage of it; otherwise, many "chance" opportunities will be lost.



**Fire and Spirit:
Burnished Soul**

42.5" x 31"

© 2006 Gwen Magee

Do not discount the contacts you make in non-quilt-related places or situations. Attend exhibits of other artists, no matter what their medium is. The people who buy their artwork are also potential buyers of yours.

Recognition in the greater art community, even at the local level, is not going to happen if you make little or no attempt to become involved with it. This means attending art events of all disciplines, becoming involved with art organizations, and taking advantage of the programs offered by your state arts commission. At the

very least, attend museum and gallery openings (and other events held in these facilities) whether they are textile related or not — that's where people with expendable funds and contacts are going to show up. Make the effort to interact with them. It won't take long for people to begin to remember you and to keep you in mind.

Follow up

This is just basic common sense. Follow up on every possible lead you receive, even if it seems obscure. People are so interconnected that you can never predict with certainty where a break may come from. More opportunities are probably lost because of failure to follow up than anything else. And never forget the power of a simple but personal thank-you note. ▼

*Recognition in
the greater art
community is not
going to happen if
you make little or no
attempt to become
involved with it.*

SAQA Mississippi/Alabama/Arkansas/Louisiana representative Gwendolyn A. Magee is a fiber artist, teacher, and public speaker. She resides in Jackson, MS. Her solo exhibition **Journey of the Spirit** will be at the University of Mississippi in Oxford from June 6 to August 27, 2006. Her art quilts can be seen at www.southernartistry.org.

Walker Display System convenient alternative for hanging your artwork

By Kevan Rupp Lunney

The Walker System, by Walker Display, Inc., allows galleries to hang art without pounding nails in the walls, thus eliminating the need to spackle and paint between exhibitions. Some venues want to save time and labor; others have plaster walls.

You can download a catalog and price list with pictures of the various components available for the Walker System at www.walkerdisplay.com.

How does the Walker System work?

The system starts with a strip of molding attached to the gallery wall near the ceiling. Adjustable rods or cables have a hooked sleeve at the top that allows them to hang from the molding. The rods can slide left or right along the molding, and they can be removed just by lifting the hook off the edge.

To hang the work from the rods, there are a variety of hooks and holders that attach to the rods or cables and can be adjusted to the desired height. Some support wires on picture frames, some are trays that hold open or closed books. Every venue seems to have different mounting hardware. My local library has a simple upturned hook that tends to slip down the rod and drop the artwork, so tape is wrapped around the pole. (See the Walker Display catalog for specific information on all the available hardware options.)

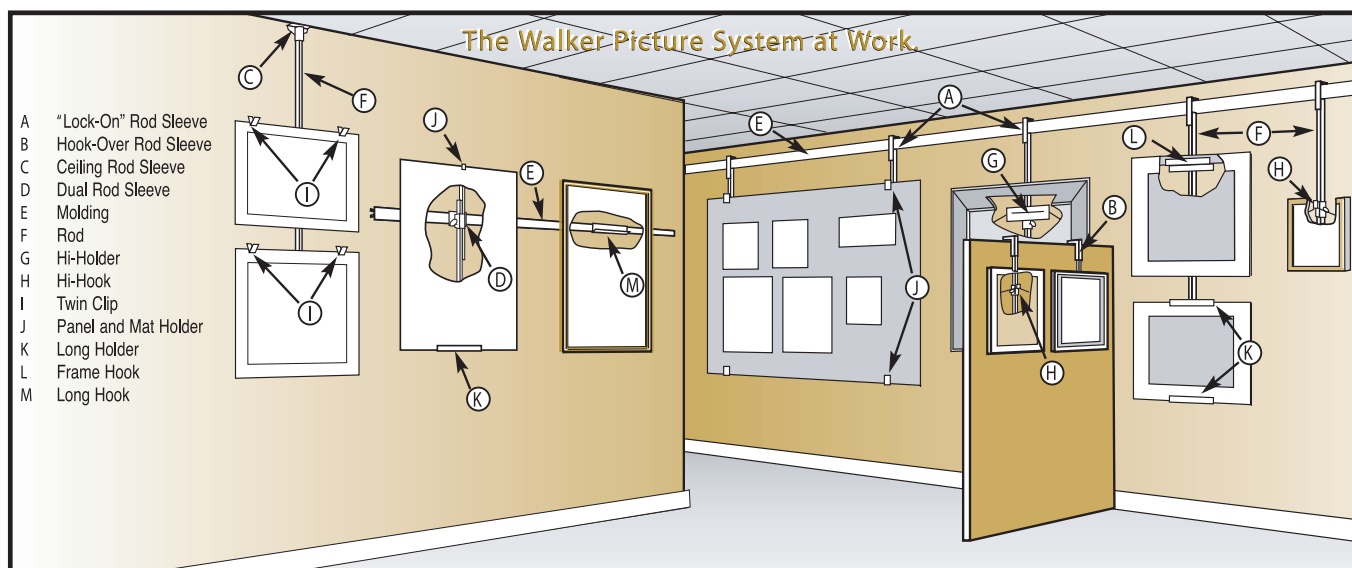
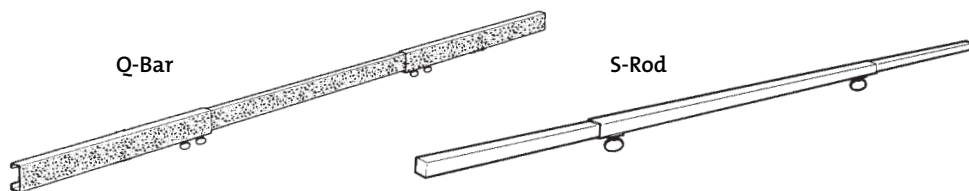
Why is this a problem for quilters? Many of the older models of mounting hardware don't support our typical horizontal rods or slats well. The quilts may tilt or fall off.

Walker Display's Textile System provides a solution with two installa-

tion options. The first involves hook and loop tape (Velcro®). The Walker System Q-Bar (see below) has the hook side of the Velcro already attached, and you attach a length of the loop side to the back of your work. The Q-Bar can be attached to wall brackets or to the rod-and-molding system. Walker says this is "the preferred textile-hanging technique, since it does not interfere with other uses of the textile."

The second method can be used with the traditional sleeve that many quilts already have. Walker sells fixed- or adjustable-length S-rods which can be slipped through the sleeve and hung from wall brackets or from the rod-and-molding system.

There is a third method that can be used with the cables and does not require purchasing an additional Q-Bar



WALKER DISPLAY INCORPORATED • P.O. BOX 16955 • DULUTH, MN 55816-6955 • 800-234-7614

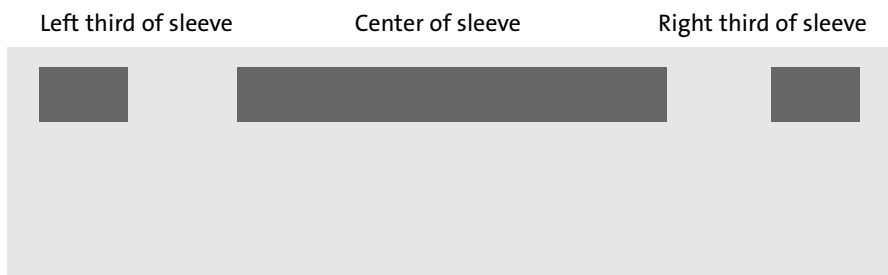


Figure 1

or sleeve rod, although you do have to make your own slat (see sidebar).

If the venue is unable to order the Textile System in time, there is an alternative. Use an expanding curtain rod—one possibility is the Continental rod by Kirsch (www.kirsch.com). Leave spaces in your hanging sleeve to expose the horizontal quilt rod. The Continental rod is white and is very sturdy for very thin metal. Two pieces nest and telescope to adjustable lengths—very handy and economical. They are flat but have a C shape. The top lip of the ‘C’ sits on the top edge of the hook assembly very well.

The Continental rod is designed to hold a curtain or valance about 6” from the wall, so it comes with a plas-

tic elbow that fits into each end and then into another metal piece that attaches at right angles to attach to the wall. The plastic elbow is small enough to be used as an end cap to cover the sharp metal edges.

Large quilts require a Walker System vertical rod at each end so that the artwork doesn’t tip and the weight is supported. This is true of wired paintings as well.

In preparing an art quilt for this hanging method, there must be sufficient space in the opening of the sleeve to have some play to move the hook left to right. For quilts 36” wide or smaller, one space of 8 inches in the center will suffice. Bigger pieces will need two spaces, each 8 inches

wide. Divide your quilt width into thirds and put the spaces in the sleeve in the center of the outer thirds. For example, for a 60” quilt, the sleeve would be measured as 6” + 8” space + 6” = 20” for the left third, 20” for the center third, and 6” + 8” space + 6” = 20” for the right third (see Figure 1).

The next time you encounter a gallery or museum that uses the Walker System, feel confident that your art quilts can hang beautifully.▼

SAQA active member Kevan Rupp Lunney is a mom, creator, teacher, and curator who believes that the purpose of life is to share your gifts with the world. She lives in the 'burbs' of New Jersey. Her artwork is viewable at www.fiberrevolution.com.

Using the Walker Display System with cables and cable hooks

by Deidre Adams

If you display your quilts in your home as I do, you may find the Walker Display System very convenient. I found myself frequently swapping out one quilt for another when sending work to exhibitions or selling pieces, and this was creating a problem for my walls with lots of holes for different size quilts.

The Walker Display System solves this problem and allows maximum flexibility for changing displays. The standard system uses rods which are one-quarter inch square and come in various lengths and colors, or stainless steel cables, which use a slightly different hook, for attaching the work.

I use the cables with standard width quilt sleeves, and I make my own slats from aluminum bars, 1” wide by 1/8” thick, available at the hardware store. These aluminum slats have the added benefit of being thinner than the wooden ones that a lot of people use, so there is less chance of a bulge at the top of the work. I make small holes at each end through which a nail can be driven for standard hanging, or through which a wire can be threaded to hang on the cable hook. In the photo at right, a paper clip has been reshaped into a hook which slips over the Walker cable hook. If the quilt is very large, you may want to use a third cable in the center, which requires a gap in the middle of your sleeve.

SAQA Journal layout editor Deidre Adams is a Colorado artist whose work can be seen at deidreadams.com.



On the Wall: SAQA at Colorado Springs

By Jeanne Lounsbury

My dear friend Yvette and I attended *On the Wall* in Colorado Springs, CO, January 13 – March 17, 2006. She is not a quilter, but she has great design sense and is quite experienced with home decorating. It is interesting to visit an art quilt exhibition with Yvette, as I have a tendency to look at the technical execution and study the pieces from more of a “quilterly” perspective, while she is moved by the artistic value of each piece and how it affects her emotionally. Her perspective opened my eyes to the wide variety of design elements presented in this show.

I was impressed with the diversity of the pieces, both in subject matter and in the use of techniques. It wasn't obvious that the juror was looking for a particular style or that certain techniques were “hot” and in heavy use, as I have seen in other fiber art exhibitions.

Both representational pieces as well as abstract pieces were present, some combining the two genres. I felt that Noriko Endo's *Woodland* and Debra Danko's *Trumpet Lilies*, both representational pieces, were very engaging, and I was looking at an actual forest of trees and a close-up of a trumpet lily. On the other hand, Jill Ault's *Redoubt* and Dominic Nash's *Impromptu 1*, both abstract works, felt much more mysterious and didn't give any clear direction from the artist as to how I was supposed to interpret the piece. Jean McLaughlin Cowie's *Grass Clippings* and Linda Beach's *Dancing with the Chinook* took representational subjects and placed them in an abstract background. For some reason, I felt more grounded with those pieces and felt at ease with their abstract imagery.

The techniques used ranged from basic piecing and fusing to photo

imaging, monoprinting, couching, and beading, with lots of hand-dyed and hand-painted fabric. The overall design of Joan Lintault's *Uncoiling Snakes* begged me to take a closer look, only to discover her amazing use of techniques with beading, fusing, and thread work, which resulted in a fascinating piece that made me spend additional time trying to catch all the detail. Carol Watkin's *Close Encounters II* and *Elegy*, on the other hand, showcased the use of photo transfer and monoprinting on hand-dyed fabric. The realistic photo imagery often jumped out of the artwork at me, forcing me to assimilate it into the actual fiber work.

Many incorporated a bold use of color, such as Carol Taylor's pieces *Revolutions* and *Chromatic Rhythms*, which added to the excitement of the pieces and called from across the room for a closer look. Dimension was created physically, as in Carolyn Lee Vehslage's *Mixed Media Version 1.3: Black and Blue*, which caused me to chuckle at her play with “mixed media” concepts between the electronic world and the fiber world. Dimension was also created by use of value as in Kay Caunt's *Goin' into Town*. I felt as though I were looking through a barn door at the cowboys near the center of the piece.

Obviously, many pieces reflected the personal experience of the artist, especially Gwyned Trefethen's *Breaking through Depression*. Although her piece was abstract in the imagery, based upon the title, I felt as though I knew what she was feeling herself when she created it. Many pieces were more than just a pretty design; the images came from within the artist to create more than a quilt. The

freeform pieces were particularly fascinating, as they involved more personal interpretation from the viewer. Anne Eckley's pieces, *Ice Cave* and *The Land Beyond*, provided an excellent example of this. The differentiation in value caused me to feel pulled into the work, almost as if I were trying to look around the corner for a little more detail and always intrigued by what I saw.

On the Wall proved to be an exhibit for both the quilter/fiber artist as well as the layman who appreciates art and design in all forms. The variety of work and techniques kept my attention and interest. Through this exhibit, I learned that some fiber art is easier to look at and understand than others, but the ones that push this boundary also pushed my artistic understanding and comfort level. The range of images from the modern and eclectic to the soothing traditional allowed for an enriching and positive experience for all levels of art and design understanding. ▼

Jeanne Lounsbury, from Superior, Colorado, is a systems engineer who devotes much of her free time to quilting and fiber pursuits. She is the editor of the *Front Range Contemporary Quilters* newsletter.



Trumpet Lilies

46" x 40"

© Debra Danko

Fiberart For A Cause: fundraising, building community, and promoting fiber art

By Virginia A. Spiegel

Fiberart For A Cause (FFAC) has raised \$50,000 for the American Cancer Society (ACS) in just over a year. Along the way, the project has also built a community of artists and provided an affordable way for many patrons to begin collecting fiber art.

FFAC had a humble beginning with laughably low expectations. My sister is chair of her community's Relay For Life. It is a twelve-hour team event held throughout the United States and is the American Cancer Society's largest grassroots fundraiser. We support the ACS because our Dad is a colon cancer survivor.

In April 2005, I decided to donate more to the Relay For Life, so I offered my fiber art postcards online for a \$30 donation to the ACS. I had seven postcards and hoped to make \$90. Although I hadn't made fiber art postcards prior to this, I was soon making them full time. Eventually other fiber artists began donating their fiber art postcards, often because they or their families had been touched by cancer.

The online list Quiltart was especially helpful in donating fiber art postcards to meet demand. At the end of four months, we had raised \$10,800, thirty dollars at a time. It was important to me to include each artist's name, a link to their web site or blog, and the buyer's name as a way not only to build community, but also to provide exposure to as many artists as possible.

One of the best patrons of the online fiber art postcard sale was Karey Bresenhan, Director of the International Quilt Festival (IQF) in Houston and Chicago. Karey, a cancer survivor, agreed to be the Honorary Chair of FFAC early in the proceedings, and then she decided not only to display all of the postcards that

were sold online, but to have postcards available at IQF-Houston that Festival attendees could choose and take home for a \$30 donation. Karey donated the booth space and all the materials for displaying the fiber art postcards at the International Quilt Festivals.

We raised over \$20,000 in four days, with over 600 donated fiber art postcards, at IQF-Houston in 2005, and another \$18,000 at IQF-Chicago in 2006. The Chicago result is phenomenal when you consider that IQF-Chicago is one day shorter and has half the attendance of Houston.

To date, FFAC has donated over \$50,000 to the ACS. In addition to the donated fiber art postcards, \$300 was raised through an exchange hosted by Carol Fletcher and supported by *Quilting Arts* magazine, which also ran a feature article about FFAC in *Cloth Paper Scissors* magazine.

An additional \$2,900 was raised through the 2005 Invitational Reverse Auction. The annual Invitational Reverse Auction features only nine artists each time, and each artist is given a full web page on the FFAC site. Again, raising funds for the ACS is my main goal, but I also want to feature artists that are very well-known and some that are known more regionally, as well as offering the highest quality fiber art.

FFAC is actively seeking donations of fiber art postcards for IQF-Houston in November 2006. All guidelines, as well as more information about the Invitational Reverse Auction, can be found on my web site, www.virginiaspiegel.com, by following the Fiberart For A Cause link. ▼

SAQA active member Virginia A. Spiegel enjoys making mixed-media books, collages, and sculpture as well as textile art. Her web site is www.virginiaspiegel.com

FFAC Tree postcards, 4" x 6" each, ©2006 Virginia Spiegel



Open studios

Team up with other artists to improve your sales

By Bonnie Peterson

An open studio is an opportunity to show and sell artwork, build an audience, and communicate with the public. It builds and connects a community of artists through the main publication — usually a map, and sometimes a catalog or combination calendar/catalog and website. These paper and web vehicles can extend the benefits to longer than one weekend. An open studio can link you to exhibition sponsors and curators, teaching and media opportunities, and, perhaps most rewarding, other artists.

A brief survey of SAQA artists revealed that the most successful open studio events are run by a central organization or nonprofit arts group. The community comes to expect the open studio event annually, usually in October or May/June.

Several SAQA members participated in the Boulder Open Studios, where 144 juried artists opened their studios on two weekends in October. They reported good sales in general. Proximity to the center of town was a plus. www.openstudios.org

Factors to consider

Start planning a year in advance. Many of the requirements for success are standard public relations drill — web site, business cards, mailing list, postcards, and brochures. Consider having a photo or other display showing your artwork processes. Update your portfolio.

Other considerations are gallery standards — how and where you will display your artwork, lighting, and signage. You will need a nametag and a guest book. Consider non-messy refreshments, extra chairs, and even a space for children to work with art materials.

What type of artwork do you want to sell? Some artists reported selling more items under \$100 than over \$100, but other artists sold every quilt at higher prices. Some sold silk scarves, hand-dyed yardage, and threads.

Other considerations are outdoor signs and recruiting friends or volunteers. Consider your house: do you need carpet protectors or barriers against traffic in forbidden rooms? Do you need to hide valuables? Do you want pets to enter your house? Do you want people to touch your artwork? Get a sales tax license and decide whether you will accept credit cards. Most artists accept cash and checks.

There are many inspiring open studio web sites. Here are just a few:

www.northcoastopenstudios.com

North Coast Open Studios in California is a blend of business and cultural development resources to help artists schedule and plan an open studio, as well as advertising and promoting the event with a web site, maps, calendars, a guidebook, and media public relations for artists. For customers, there are links to travel and lodging information.

www.somervilleopenstudios.org

Somerville Open Studios promotes studio visits by offering a chance to win a prize to visitors with at least 10 artists' signatures on their map. Their web site lists area art gallery and museum exhibitions and offers maps in printed and web formats. Their list of hints for the hosting artist is a good preparation manual.

www.bostonopenstudios.org

Boston Open Studios coordinates open studios for Boston. They aren't all on the same weekend, but the web site is a center for the geographic sub-organizations to promote their open studio (and other) events.

www.portlandopenstudios.com

The Portland, Oregon Metro area's open studio events are in October. East side artists host two weekends and west side artists host two different weekends. Portland's web site links to artists' web sites and offers workshops to help artists plan their open studios.

www.vermontcrafts.com/links/open.html

Some open studios are juried, but the Vermont Crafts Council's web site lists studios open all over the state on one particular weekend. The web site sorts them by location and media.

www.newtonopenstudios.com

Newton Open Studios in Massachusetts has one weekend in May, with a preview party exhibition the prior weekend. Their web site categorizes artists by location and media. The open studio event takes place the same weekend as three other local events: a house tour, plant sale, and Memorial Day Parade.

www.cwos.org

New Haven Open Studios in Connecticut organizes different studio buildings into separate tour days. The list of sponsorships is impressive — universities, banks, hospitals, and corporations.

www.peninsulaopenstudios.org

Peninsula Open Studios in Palo Alto, California, offers each artist a web page with a uniform format for the open studio.

I want to thank the artists who contributed their insight to this article. Now I'm going to start in on my local arts organizations to see if they'll organize this type of event. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Bonnie Peterson is an artist with a studio in the Chicago area. Her web site is www.bonniepeterson.com.

Is an artist-in-residence program something you are considering?

By Nelda Warkentin

I have just returned from a month-long artist-in-residence program and my experience may help you decide whether you will pursue a similar venture.

My residency was at the Weir Farm Historic Site in Wilton, Connecticut. J. Alden Weir, an American Impressionist painter and leading figure in American art, acquired the 153-acre farm in 1882. For 37 years, the farm served as his summer home and inspirational getaway from his apartment and studio in New York City.

When Weir died in 1919, his daughter and her husband took over the farm. Both created art in Weir's studio. They also built a second studio. After they died, another artist couple acquired the property. In the 1970s, a grassroots organization formed to preserve the site. In 1990, Congress designated Weir Farm as a National Historic Site. Today, through artist-in-residence and other programs, the National Park Service and the Weir Farm Art Center carry on the tradition that Weir began more than 100 years ago.

During the month of March, I lived and worked in the 1,100-square-foot caretaker's cottage built around 1850. The cottage had a 400-square-foot studio on the second floor. Having the studio upstairs made working very convenient.

I rented a car for the month. The stipend I received helped with the rental cost. Every other day, I drove to nearby Wilton or Ridgefield to read email, get library materials, work out at the gym, and buy groceries. On these days, I worked in the morning and at night. On the alternate days, I took an hour walk through the woods at Weir Farm and worked in the studio the rest of the day.

Benefits

In addition to enjoying all that the Farm has to offer, such as its beautiful landscape, stone walls, trails, birds, and friendly staff, the residency benefited me in many other ways.

I created artwork using new techniques, images, overall shape, and palette. The residency provided me with time to experiment and work. What would have taken me six to eight weeks to complete at home took me three weeks at the Farm.

I set a personal goal of completing two works during my stay. While my self-imposed goal reduced the amount of experimentation I was willing to do, the goal kept me focused.

Getting oriented to and starting in a new place takes time. I spent my first few days getting over jet lag, setting up the studio, buying groceries and supplies, and learning about the Farm and surrounding area. Using different equipment (table, chairs, iron, design wall, etc.) took some getting used to. In particular, I had never used the sewing machine that I brought. Becoming adept with the machine's special features took time away from creating my artwork.

As I arrived when there was still snow on the ground, nature's colors were largely white, brown, and gray. I don't work in these colors. To get

see "Artist-in-residence," page 14



Early Spring, East Hill
56" x 40"
© Nelda Warkentin

Artist-in-residence from page 13

inspired, I forced myself to look at the line and shape of the woods, terrain, shadows, stone walls, and Adirondack fences. Thus, instead of having a moment in time that inspired me, I designed and completed artwork that reflected what I was seeing. The pieces I created were more like commissions, as opposed to inspired artwork.

Being relatively alone in the cottage with my journal, collection of art magazines, and publications provided by the Art Center, I had quality time to reflect on my artwork and its future. I thought about alternate ways to create my artwork and changes I might make to my studio space at home.

Visits to the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield and the Guggenheim, Museum of Modern Art and Gail Martin Gallery in New York City were welcomed breaks, as well as inspirational. Time spent with the manager of the Art Center Program, an accomplished artist who appreciates fiber art, encouraged me to focus on my artwork in a positive way, both at the Farm and in the future. The offers of support from staff and board members and the expressed freedom to simply 'do my art' let me know that others were interested in what I was creating. This supportive environment made my stay even more enjoyable.

I also confirmed that I am comfortable leaving family and friends for a month to create art and that the experience is productive and rewarding. The break with my normal routine made me realize how distractions at home consume time that could be better spent creating art. While many of those distractions are things I want to do, my residency reinforced that I need to guard my time. I can get more art done if I stay focused.

Considerations

If you're thinking of being an artist-in-residence, the first question you should ask is, "Which artist-in-residence program is right for me?"

There are many residencies. To find them, check out www.artistcommunities.org or do a Google search for 'artist residence.'

To narrow your selection, ask yourself these questions:

- Why are you thinking of being an artist-in-residence?
- What are your goals?
- How long a residency do you want?
- What time of the year will you do your residency? What will the weather be like?
- Where do you want to live/work?
- How isolated do you want to be?

Do you need to have neighbors, email, a gym, etc. to enjoy your residency? Do you want your spouse or family to join you? Will the residency allow this?

- Is a stipend important? Are you willing to be an artist-in-residence without compensation? When you budget for shipping, travel, etc., can you afford the residency?
- What are the living arrangements? Do you like living and working around other people? Would you prefer to be alone? Is the living space satisfactory?
- Is the studio space comfortable and furnished to satisfy your needs?
- Can you abide by the terms of the residency contract? If required, are you willing to give a talk or donate a work?

A residency isn't for everyone. But if you have goals that a residency can satisfy, in all likelihood there is a residency program that will meet your needs. ▼

SAQA Alaska representative Nelda Warkentin is an artist who lives in Anchorage. She will be teaching a class, 'Designing from Nature,' at Art Quilt Claremont, Berkeley, California, in April 2007. Her web site is www.neldawarkentin.com.

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NEW Membership Dues Structure

As of January 1, 2007 SAQA membership dues will change. The new dues structure will be as follows:

Active member (US and International) \$50

Professional artist member (PAM – US and International) \$115

Student member \$25 (for full-time students who provide a copy of their ID card)

ArtQuilts at the Sedgwick/On the Square

by Elizabeth Van Schaick

The seventh exhibition in the ArtQuilts at the Sedgwick program was April-May 2006 at the Philadelphia Art Alliance in Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia. The program switched from an annual to a biennial schedule since the last exhibition in 2004. Jurors selected a body of high-quality, diverse artwork. The exhibition provided a showcase of approaches, palettes and techniques by an international roster of artists. While some pieces concentrated on saturated colors and overt relationships to the soft quilt format, a significant portion explored subtle tones and reached across fiber-art boundaries into mixed media. There was a wide range of interpretations of natural forms, figures, landscapes, and geometric patterns. Much of the art was testimony to the primacy of process to finished product.

The most vibrant, engaging piece was hung in the first room of the exhibition: Kathy Weaver's whimsical *Cyborg Female 6: Cunning Reversal*. The main image was a large female robot figure in bright blues and greens. A yellow spiral encircled the torso and a pink cage-like skirt form. She had breasts, red lips, and a jaunty hand-on-hip attitude. Spikes, spheres and curls accented the figure. She leaned forward from a vivid pink and yellow sky and stood holding a flower amid several green plant shoots.

With reference to metal and joints, clown-like colors and dots, and a purple cone hat, the cyborg was hard-edged and playful at the same time. *Cyborg Female 6* teemed with energy, bringing to mind associations with other familiar robot images: the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*, tin toys and comic-book images of the 1950s and 1960s, Rosie the Robot maid from the television cartoon *The Jetsons*, even

artwork of graffiti artist Jean Michel Basquiat.

Cyborg Female 6 is one of a series of seven. She references complex relationships between technology and nature, between ideas of hard and soft. It was important to Weaver that the robot figure be female and present a hopeful, integrative image of technology rather than a fearful one. Weaver created the new icon by air-brushing on satin cloth with a large segmented paper stencil, then adding appliqué, embroidery and quilting. This design expresses her interests in feminist theory, the integration of robotics into daily life, and the concept of the cyborg—the combination of biological and technological being.

Pam RuBert's *Whine and Dine at Sushi Zen* was another figurative design. Like Weaver's piece, it was striking because of an unusual color palette. Its figures were even more humorous than Weaver's. RuBert, who comes from a background as a cartoonist, used careful appliqué to picture the interior of a quirky sushi café, capturing the casualness and

whimsy of a "retro-funky" style from commercial graphic design. She really pushed odd angles and word and image puns. While a young, black-haired woman perused a menu at a table in the foreground, in the background a patron eyed a squid who eyed him back, a sumo wrestler accidentally bent his chair, and the chefs and staff busily carried on with their work. RuBert's and Weaver's pieces evoked a sense of reworking visual culture from the past.

A recycling theme emerged from much of the artwork in the exhibition. For example, Diane Savona presented a large piece entitled *Worn But Not Out*, a monochromatic cream/beige image of a coat that represented "a formidable old lady." Savona created an integrated, richly-textured garment out of numerous fragments of old Irish lace, embroidery work, and upholstery fabric. The piece worked as a symbol and literal enactment of rescuing and reintegrating previous generations' handwork.

see "AQATS," page 16



Left: *Cyborg Female 6: Cunning Reversal* 90" x 54", © Kathy Weaver

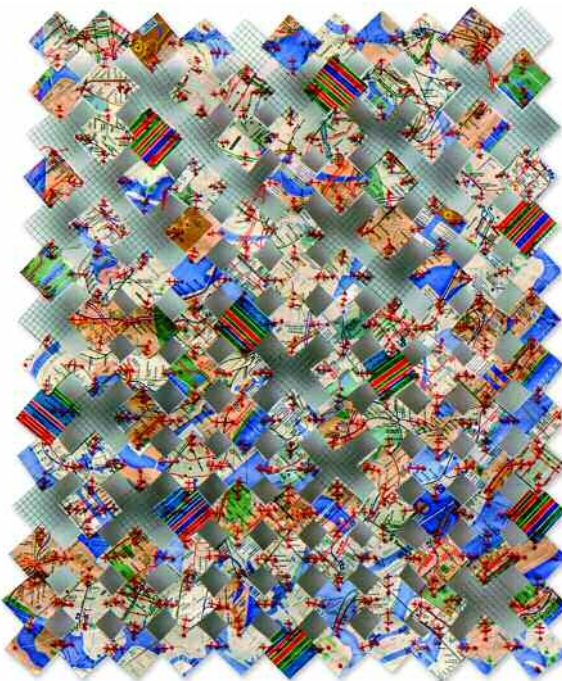
Below: *Whine and Dine at Sushi Zen* 50" x 40", © Pam RuBert



Other artists used unexpected recycled elements, taking them as physical starting points and working through to metaphors for various concerns or new modes of thinking. Bonnie Epstein's *Security Blanket #4* was one from a series that originated from a commitment to using materials that were on hand. This piece was constructed of square pieces of a paper New York Transit map attached with perle cotton thread and stitched together along with pieces of metal hardware cloth. The squares and grid alternated with blank spaces. Hung away from the wall, the piece created patterned shadows on the wall behind it. The artist developed this physical fragmenting and reconnecting as a metaphor for her experience of the emotional fallout following September 11, 2001.

Melva Hightower contributed a similar piece for the committee members' section. *Reclamation 1: Grandmother's Legacy* had a repeat form. Its numerous, nearly identical discs were set in a regular pattern and held together with jute and thread. The negative space created a secondary image. The artist's process of collecting, shredding, pureeing, reconstituting, molding, sealing, and reconnecting paper bore out the impulse to create works from materials and detritus of the day-to-day.

In the same vein, Sue Pierce created a design in a regular pattern that referenced traditional quilt geometry but also played on the unexpected, provoking visitors to shift their mode of seeing in several ways. From a distance, *Expiration Date Varies* appeared to be primarily a solid piece with a sewn square grid, composed from a white background and various color swatches, one in each quilted square. Initially, one could wonder if the colored squares were fabric or postage stamps. They were in fact blue, orange, red, white, yellow, mustard, and green plastic bread bag ties with expiration dates on them, the type of thing we don't consciously register in



Above: ***Security Blanket #4***,
31" x 25", © Bonnie Epstein

Right: ***Prayer Flag***, 63 x 11.5",
© Kristin Hoelscher-Schacker



our lives, or perhaps throw away if we do. The piece challenged viewers to pay close attention to everyday items, to modify mindsets of disposability. Pierce upended the "three-layers" quilt format by using a transparent fabric as the top layer and making the middle layer the visual emphasis, with plastic taking the place of conventional cotton batting.

The impulse to rescue and reconstruct was exploited by Leeza Zavinelli Gawlik in *Roadside Shed*. The image was a ramshackle wood-and-tin-panel shed of a type found in Japan, where the artist lived for several years. Gawlik struck a balance between the representational and the abstract by presenting blocks of light blue, teal, beige, rust, black, seafoam green, and terra cotta. The piece won the Fabric Workshop Jurors' Award in appreciation of the hand-dyed colors and the deliberately placed parallel straight-line machine quilting. Gawlik over-dyed kimono silk with available natural materials. She wrote, "The sheets of tin are similar to my dyed fabrics, giving what is under the surface a second life."

Finely spaced rows of quilting tease

out the ripple and stripe features within the kimono fabric, evoking corrugated tin. There was a parallel between these forms and antique Japanese folk garments made mostly of indigo fabrics and patched, layered and reinforced with sashiko stitching. Gawlik observed that the use of color and construction was primarily economic. She embodied the Japanese aesthetic of finding elegance or beauty in the common and imperfect.

Lisa Call used a similar earthy palette, square and rectangular shapes, and closely spaced parallel straight-line machine quilting in her piece *Structures # 41*. Four main sections of hand-dyed cotton in brownish terra cotta, blue slate, muted reddish terra cotta, and olive green were separated by vertical contrasting bands and subdivided within by horizontal bands. The emphasis was on division and segmentation. While



Above: *Jennnie's Pond*, 36" x 36", © Suzanne MacGuineas



Right: *Torn Forms II*, 43" x 34.5", © Judy Langille

Gawlik concentrated on the idea of patching things together, overlapping, or reuniting pieces. Call created a design that speaks to divisions and blocking off. She said, "The Structures series explores the boundaries we use to divide our world and alludes to both physical structures such as stone walls and fences, whose composition excites me, and psychological boundaries, which we use to keep others from seeing our true selves."

The sense of recycling appeared again in several pieces that incorporated text. Kristin Hoelscher-Schacker's *Prayer Flag* might be described as chant-like. It was both festive and sobering at the same time. Hoelscher-Schacker hand-copied prayers from diverse religious traditions onto flag-like strips of various colors. The artist originally intended the prayers and sutras to voice personal hopes during a relative's terminal illness. They eventually extended to greater gestures toward transformation and reconciliation between groups. The prayers, small icons, images, strung ribbons, beads, milagros, and charms represented an attention to collecting on several levels. They hung freely, could swing and make noise, and will eventually

break down and disperse into the world if left to the natural elements as is customary with prayer flags in Buddhist cultures.

Late Rain represented Joan Schulze's effort to "process contemporary culture, often focusing on opposites — cityscapes versus gardens." She composed the quilt of long vertical strips in white, black, and red, with occasional vertical-diagonal hyphens of long slats in orange with silver paint. The many layers of the material included photographs, text, paper, painted and altered silk and cotton, and glue transfer. This base was then stitched, peeled, and distressed. The result was integrated when viewed from a distance, and engaging and enigmatic up close.

Angela Moll presented a straight pieced collage-like quilt, *Secret Diary 1*, which was similar to Schulze's piece, but she reworked the fragments "to speak about intimacy and communication as well as privacy and isolation." The artist tapped into her handwritten journal, and as with Schulze's approach, rescued text not for semantic purposes but for visual line and metaphor. Moll enlarged the handwriting and created screen prints on fabric. She exploited "ghost images" from second and third pulls

with the screen. The artwork also played out the affinities between making journals and field notes and making quilts.

Another great strength of the exhibition was the numerous examples of original use of existing surface-design techniques. Suzanne MacGuineas interpreted her memories of an outdoor spot in *Jennnie's Pond* by using a non-swirl marbling technique to suggest intense, fresh colors and bubble formations. *Torn Forms II*, by Judy Langille, was awarded the Surface Design Association Award. Imagery of irregular rust and brown shapes mysteriously emerging from black whole-cloth was created through several steps of discharging through a screen over torn-paper masks. Langille laid torn-paper masks on the cloth, then applied discharge paste through a silkscreen. She then over-painted some of the light areas and discharged certain places again.

Overall, the exhibition embraced many subjects and styles and sparked ongoing conversations for artists, fiber-arts organizers, and the visiting public. ▼

SAQA active member Elizabeth Van Schaick is a freelance writer and art-quilt, fabric-jewelry, and paper-collage maker. She lives near Philadelphia.

5th International Fiber Biennial

by Janneken Smucker

Gallery director Bruce Hoffman's suggested theme for Snyderman-Works Gallery's *5th International Fiber Biennial* in Philadelphia, March-April 2006, was "communication, dialogue, and language." This theme drew attention to some fundamental questions inherent in any art exhibition: How does art speak? What happens when it does not speak? Do artists attempt to make fixed statements with their art, or are they in dialogue with the viewers of their art?

Some of the artists represented in this mainstay of Philadelphia's fiber arts scene engaged these questions through the use of text in their artwork, letting words speak along with visuals. In this exhibition, textiles became text; artworks were tattooed with additional meaning in the form of words. Such texts send specific messages to viewers, a process less explicit artwork must do through inference, interpretation, and imagination. These objects of communication, dialogue, and language demand that the viewer reads in a conventional sense, interpreting not just the artist's embedded, symbolic intentions, but also taking in the words and their meanings. However, these written words did not convey the entire messages these artists sent through their pieces. The texts dialogued with the materials, imagery, colors, and forms of the works, as well as with the words comprising the artists' statements, to communicate messages unattainable with text alone.

For example, Amy Orr, in her piece *Home Sweet Home*, offered at first-glance a sentimental message associated with needlepoint samplers. The words, however, did not provide the complete message. Orr's use of chicken bones to construct a message in a format referencing voodoo flags gave the simple message of "home" much deeper implications. Her artist's statement further elucidated these connections, contextualizing the text "bones embody the spirits that haunt New Orleans," suggesting that "home" here represented much more than the feelings conveyed in a simple sampler.

In B.J. Adams' surreal piece, *Contemplating Chaos*, the words floated up off a newspaper as the artwork's central figure embodied the artwork's title. This figure served as a stand-in for the viewer, reading words and creating meaning. Adams clearly chose these words with care: terrorism, war, hunger, crime, and chaos. These terms evoke contemporary fears, as Adams no doubt intended.

The use of these words, however, was perhaps not necessary, as Adams' skillful creation of an array of images, including scissors, a skull, and a hanging knife, evoked many of these same anxieties, perhaps in more subtle ways than her text.

Cynthia Schira capitalized on the subtlety of text in her jacquard woven piece, *Egyptian*. The characters of her text—punctuation and letters rather than words—existed as ghost images that peeked through the woven layers of yarn. Her title provided additional insight, suggesting Egyptian hieroglyphics, the symbols on walls that denote objects and meaning. Here, the message was not straightforward but required deciphering, much like those fading ancient texts.

Two artists, Lisa Lee Peterson and Kate Anderson, drew inspiration from art a bit more recent than hieroglyphics. Each used the form and format of Pop Art to communicate feelings about their role as artists to the



Pop Art: Toying and Dabbling in Art

35" x 42"

© 2006 Lisa Lee Peterson



LIARS (Hey, it's easy to lie! So tell me what I want to hear! and remember you are with us...or...you are against us!
76" x 53"

© 2006 Nancy Crow



Lichtenstein Teapot/Stepping Out
9.5" x 9.75" x 2"

© 2006 Kate Anderson

viewer. Lee Peterson's woven artwork *Pop Art* was the more effective in this endeavor. She recalled the artwork of Warhol and Lichtenstein while communicating her own relationship with her father. Her text, cribbed from a letter her father wrote to her while she attended art school, expressed the ongoing dialogue she and her 'Pop' had about art as a vocation. Anderson presented a similar message in her piece, *Lichtenstein Teapot*, as she examined the high art/craft dichotomy. Her skillfully created knotted basket form could communicate more effectively without its non-too-subtle label: "ART." Here the didactic text overshadowed the form and got in the way of interpretation and imagination.

Both Michael James and Kiyoko Ibe used text in a more nuanced way. Despite quite differing techniques, each recycled text into their artwork, communicating not the text's original message, but a dialogue between artist and found object. In her series of *Japanese Temple Document* pieces, Ibe used a nineteenth-century document from an "unknown village no longer on maps," recycling the paper into a new form while maintaining snippets of text. Ibe was less con-

cerned with the meaning of the characters than with the beauty of the calligraphy and the texture of the paper. With her method of papermaking, she mixed the text into a pulp, removing the text from its context and allowing new meaning to emerge through the archeological bits that remained intact.

James' contrasting technique of developing digital surface imagery resulted in a similar reformulation of text and context. He also used found text in his work, *Hanging in the Balance*, in this case published words (perhaps from a newspaper or broadside) removed from their original environment. Both James' and Ibe's artwork resulted in a sort of collage, with the text playing a supporting role that dialogued with technique, color, and texture.

Several artists used their art in Fiber Biennial to make political statements. Nancy Crow's *LIARS* powerfully used text, as well as color and form, to communicate the artist's sentiments toward the current political administration. She subtitled her artwork: *Hey, it's easy to lie! So tell me what I want to hear! and Remember you are with us...or...you are against us!* Her black pieced letters screamed the

title, while hidden in the background, the word "EVIL" emerged from the hand-dyed fabrics in shades of olive green. Crow's message was not subtle, yet such a potent message merited this abrasive, in-your-face technique.

Crow's artwork, one of the most prominently displayed pieces in the exhibit, fell on one end of the spectrum of works representing Hoffman's theme of communication, dialogue, and language. A viewer could not avoid Crow's message; one had to confront the words and their meanings. Other texts certainly functioned on quieter levels and did not necessarily force the viewer to, in B.J. Adams' words, contemplate the chaos. While not every piece of artwork in this exhibition related directly to Hoffman's theme, all art in fact did communicate and create a dialogue with viewers on some level. This theme allowed artists to emphasize this aspect of their artwork in various ways, creating an exhibit one actively engaged with—reading, as well as inferring and interpreting the messages embedded in the art. ▼

Janneken Smucker is a doctoral student in American Civilization at the University of Delaware and lives in Philadelphia.

Changing the World, One Thread at a Time

By Diane Howell

There is perhaps no better place to view an exhibition such as *Changing the World One Thread at a Time* than at the Tubac Center for the Arts in the springtime. For Tubac, Arizona, a picturesque burg southwest of Tucson near the U.S. border with Mexico, is awash with ripe colors: pinks and oranges and vibrant greens that dance in sunlight and shadow. It is an enriched environment, one that makes even fast drivers slow to take notice of the healing power of the desert.

So against this backdrop, visitors arrive at the Tubac Center for the Arts already primed for peace, ready to tackle the world one thread at a time. Curator Thelma Smith, who brought the successful *Wrapped in Cloth* exhibition to life at the same venue in 2004, delivered on her intent to find artwork that raised questions and made societal commentary. The pieces in *Changing*, displayed Feb. 17–March 26, 2006, examined topics from questionable federal policies to the need for communication between loved ones, all reminders of what's truly important.

The exhibition covered the center's three gallery spaces, made all the more interesting because of varied wall colors ranging from blues in the first room to blood-red and earthy tones in the third.

From the moment you walked into the first hall, you were confronted with something special. In that room, one piece created, perhaps demanded, a moment all by itself: *La Madre #2* by Valerie James. This life-size bust of a woman, cast in cotton, is based on the artist's outdoor sculpture project, *The Mothers: Las Madres*, installed at Tucson's Pima Community College. All of these related pieces pay tribute to those who have died crossing the border from Mexico. They are impermanent works, meant to dissolve as they endure the challenges of rain, sun, and wind, just as many who travel north perish and fade away. It is James' hope that one day we have a world without borders. Her piece in *Changing*, charged with the textural bits found in raw cotton, is striking. It is perhaps the most moving piece in the exhibition, as its very fragility puts a powerful human dimension into the issue of immigration.

Art, as life, has many faces, however. Perpendicular to James' piece is one that made visitors smile once they read the statement from Linda Colsh. Her *Vertical Thinking* reminds us that in a black-and-white world, short people think tall! This piece, with printed images of tall figures that for all the world look like they could be TALL idols, is a wonderful way to remember to stand tall for your beliefs, even in the face of tall menaces.

Eileen Doughty's pictorial view of federal politics, *Taking Liberties at the Inauguration*, shows a gentle dog watching the happenings in Washington, D.C., including armed guards and a helicopter circling the White House. Rendered with the cutting wit of a top editorial cartoonist, it is a piece that makes you want to shout, "Long Live the First Amendment!"

Peg Keeney's *Choices I: Wind or Coal* featured a printed image of the artist's own eyes, imploring visitors to make the right choice.

Janet Schultz's quilt, *Earth 2—Out in the 40s*, continued the theme of power. Her piece, a pattern of earth- and sky-toned fabrics, speaks to living in the country off the grid altogether. Her artwork, as always, is abstraction at its best, wonderfully crafted.

Donna L. Lish's three pieces stood like gray sentinels, three-dimensional protectors created of machine-knitted industrial fibers ordinarily used to make safety equipment for firefighters. The fine craftsmanship was unmistakable. My favorite was *Subtext: Eruption*, with flowing lines that provide a solid link with the earth.

Virginia A. Spiegel's *Four Hundred Songbirds* is a tribute to 400 migrating songbirds who were killed in one night in Wisconsin by communication towers. The towers, abstracted rectangles created with stark color contrast, made the work stand out

Taking Liberties at the Inauguration

30 x 34

© 2005 Eileen Doughty
www.DoughtyDesigns.com



from a distance. The small red embroidery stitches representing the birds give the work its poignancy and powerful message about the need to protect the smallest living things among us.

Similar imagery was found in Monique Gilbert-Oversteyns' *Diversion of the Night*, where again stark contrast makes us think about what lies beneath. The shapes in her piece could be anything, interlocking reality with the veil of darkness. It is a scene where magic could be performed, or danger could lurk.

Canadian artist Pamela Allen's *Eve Under Scrutiny* found a homey place on the red wall in the third gallery. It was one of the most talked-about pieces at the opening, begging viewers to study its bits of embellishment. Apples, babies, a man with a blindfold: did Eve cause mankind's downfall? It's still something to think about!

Denise Yaghmourian's *Jelly Fish*, three cubes wrapped in textured white yarn, transformed simple boxes into playful shapes one can easily imagine floating in the water.

Annie Creek, by George-Ann Bowers, brought visitors back to solid land. This three-dimensional tapestry of cotton, wool, rayon, silk and textile paints, was woven using a triple-weave pickup technique and then mounted onto a wire armature. Bowers found her inspiration in Crater Lake National Park, where there is a creek-eroded ancient lava flow. The fluidity of the piece did battle with the cleverness of its presentation to create perfect balance. The natural feel of this piece, reminiscent of bark, holds great appeal, too.

My Secret Competition, by Lisa Chipetine, explored the exhibition's theme from a personal level. We all have doubts, and they often create a duality that prods us to take chances while at the same time holds us back. The interplay of foreground and back-



Four Hundred Songbirds

18" x 24"

© 2005 Virginia A. Spiegel

ground in this piece make it a successful competition.

Another fun piece was the layered *Betula* by Connie Utterback. Made from heat-fused transparent nylon mesh normally used in the auto-tire industry, it was a showstopper, a perfect lesson in transparency and geometry.

Rebirth, by Scott A. Murkin, dazzled the eye with the brilliant colors of flame peeking through blackened tree trunks. The stark color contrast delighted the eye, drawing attention to this piece that tells the story of survival even after massive devastation.

While Murkin's piece visually keeps flames at bay, *Border Patrol*, by Susan V. Polansky, keeps a soldier trapped behind barbed wire as he walks amidst rubble and fire. The scene allows the artist to declare that the only good place for such a situation is in an art exhibition.

Dijanne Ceva's *Letter from Home*

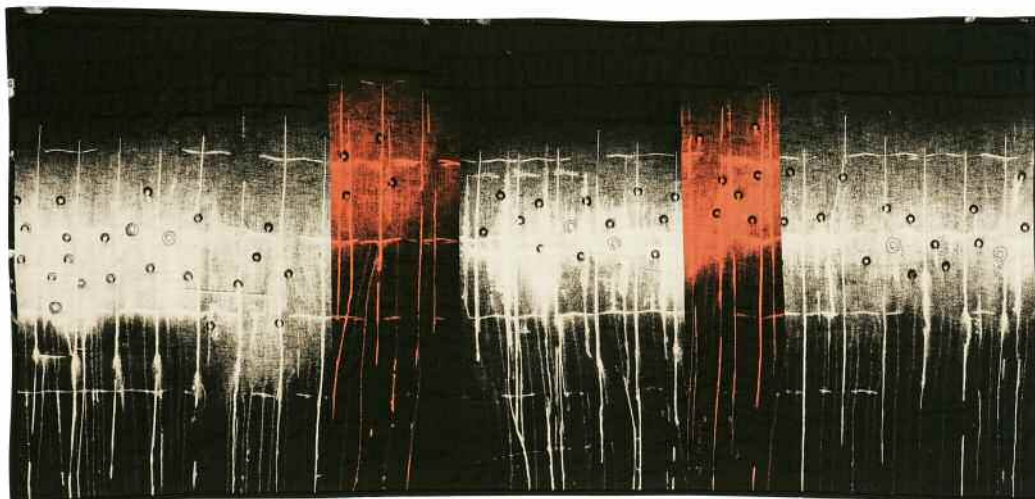
was a delicate piece with the same letter repeated again and again in a delicate grid of threadwork. You wonder if the letter was ever read; did its message get through?

With that piece, it is fair to say *Changing the World One Thread at a Time* had something for everyone. Big and little challenges can look the same, depending upon your perspective. It's often as difficult to write home as it is to take part in a protest.

My view is you do what you can, one day at a time. Every once in a while, you need to be prodded into action, and what more powerful action is there than art? ▼

Diane Howell is the curator for the annual Art Quilts exhibition installed at the Chandler Center for the Arts. This fall, the show will begin its second decade with Art Quilts XI: Stages, Cycles & Fits. Howell is also a free-lance writer and an artist who works in metal, fiber, and beads.

Diversion of the Night, 24" x 51", © 2004 Monique Gilbert-Oversteyns



Folks in Fiber

By Melissa Frankel

F*olks in Fiber* at the Cahoon Museum of American Art in Cotuit, Massachusetts, from March to May, 2006 was an invitational exhibition. Based on the theme of people represented in fiber art, it featured 49 pieces in a variety of media. Beadwork, paper, traditional hooked rugs, embroidery, woven tapestries, and quilts/fabric art were all represented side by side in this museum on Cape Cod.

Guest curator Peg Irish tried to appeal to everyone by including as many different styles as there were media; the brochure for the show claimed that it was “easily accessible.” The styles ranged from what some would call fine art to primitive, or folk art.

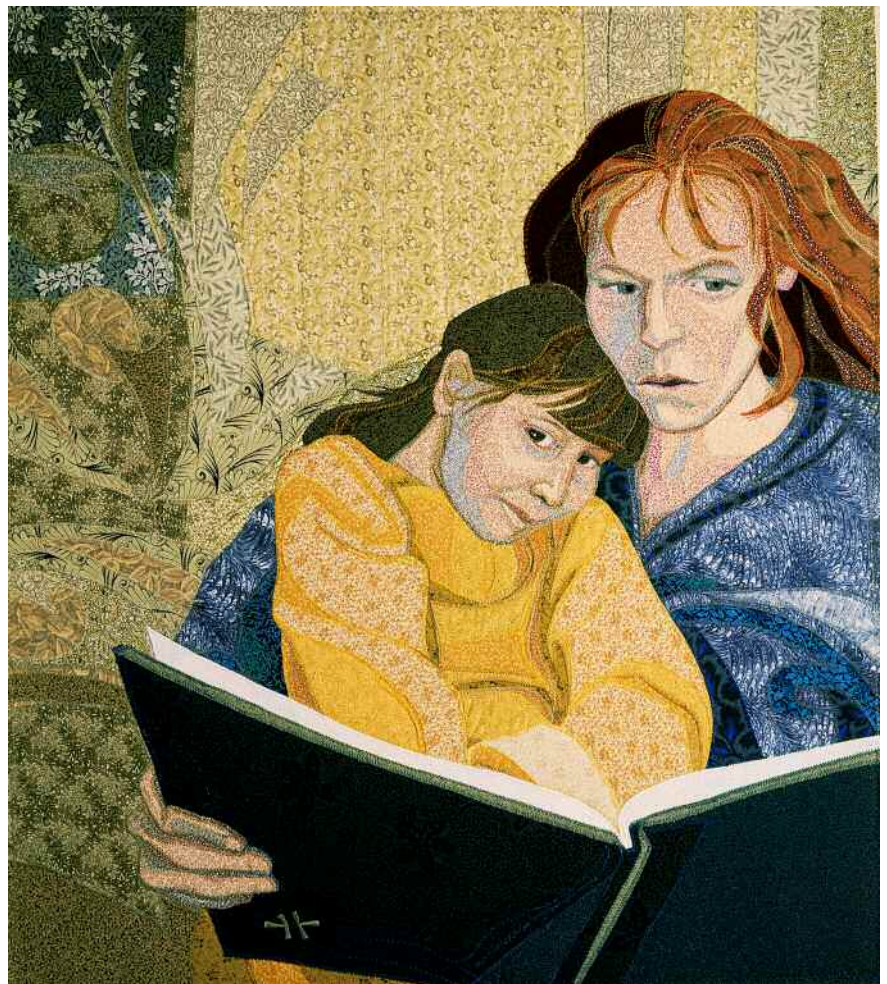
Because of the diversity of styles and media, the exhibition didn’t have much cohesion or impact as a whole, but I found many of the individual pieces interesting and stimulating. One technique that surprisingly was not present in the fabric artwork was the use of paint or dye to render faces

and bodies. With the exception of Hollis Chatelain’s *Thirst*, which seemingly used a hand-dyed whole cloth background, the textile art pieces used only commercial prints and thread to skillfully create three-dimensionality and expression without the help of paint to define details or contours.

Noteworthy textile art pieces were Lauren Camp’s *People on Chairs*, Alice Beasley’s *Tuesday in the Park with George*, Deidre Scherer’s *Mother and Child Reading*, Archie Brennan’s woven tapestry *I Wonder What You’re Thinking*, and Eve Pearce’s tapestry *Four Girls and an Apple; Tangbe, Mustang, Nepal*.

Lauren Camp’s quilted *People on Chairs* is a predominantly blue piece accompanied by a poem. It uses spare

lines and the simple technique of raw-edge appliqué. Despite the impression of being a simple composition of two people sitting side-by-side in beach chairs, it is subtly complex. The piece is divided into two separate units, mounted side by side, with a barely visible separation between the two halves which butt up against one another just off center. One person reaches out to the other and holds their wrist while the other looks away. A fine-lined red box around their heads implies a dramatic separation between them and the surrounding world. The “ordinary” blue and green palette of this piece represents both the regularity of life and the shadows of death or separation. The change in the quilting inside the red box and the angles



Mother and Child Reading

29" x 26"

© 2001 Deidre Scherer

of the person's hand, combined with the accompanying poem, make this piece evocative.

Deidre Scherer's *Mother and Child Reading* captures their intensity of feeling with a close-up of the two subjects' faces, which were rendered using calico prints and thread painting. Hollis Chatelains' *Thirst* employs her impressive quilting to convey a scene of a woman drinking from a spigot. This piece takes several moments to absorb, since the thread drawing creates an image that confuses depth and space by entwining the woman's hands and mouth with the water and the spout, implying the necessary relationship between them.

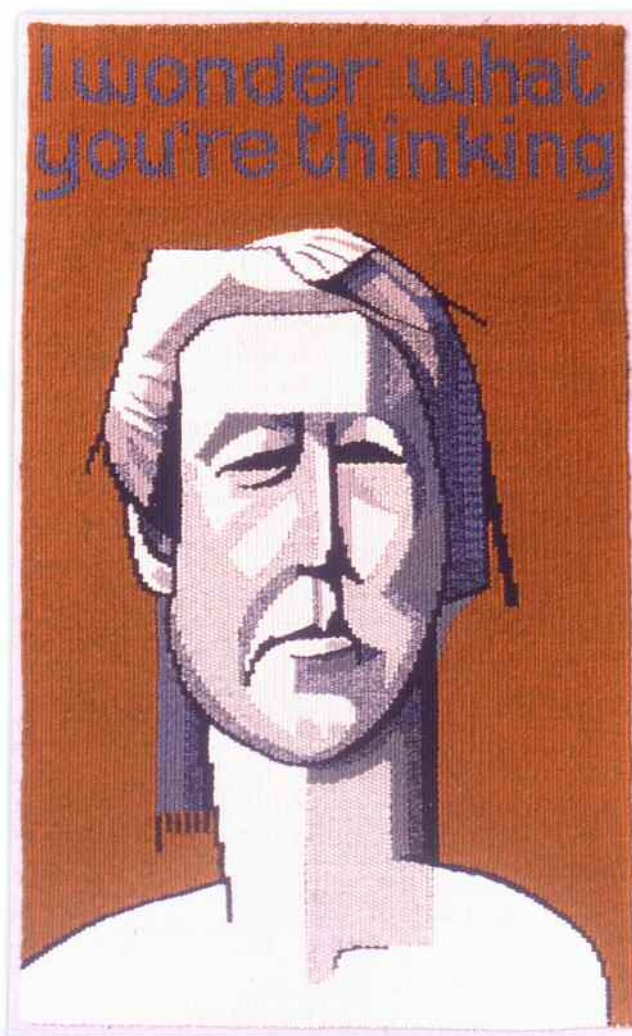
The tapestries *Four Girls and an Apple* and *I Wonder What You're Thinking* were expertly designed and crafted. In *Four Girls*, the suggestion of arid mountains in the distance and the rendering of ragged colorful clothing impart the atmosphere of Nepal while the image of the girls holding onto each other and walking away from the viewer implies the self-sufficiency of this young family. *I Wonder What You're Thinking* is a refreshingly simple and graphic portrait of one man's face up close, with the text of the title woven above it.

While this exhibition wasn't particularly impressive, it does represent the Cahoon Museum's continuing commitment to highlighting fiber art. All of the artwork showed skill and attention to detail, and the selection of art showed a very healthy breadth of styles — maybe a little too healthy for this viewer. Each visitor was sure to find something that they would enjoy. ▼

SAQA member Melissa Frankel is a textile artist and assistant set decorator who spends half the year in Los Angeles, California, and the other half on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Her artwork can be seen at www.melissafrankeldesigns.com.



Four Girls and an Apple
46" x 50"
© 1999 Eve Pearce



Wonder What You're Thinking?
25" x 15.5"
© Archie Brennan

Reflections on jurying the first SAQA exhibition in Europe

by Inge Mardal & Steen Hougs

It was no surprise to us that the artwork entered by European and Israeli SAQA members for the first European SAQA exhibition, *Breaking Boundaries*, would be interesting and of good quality. We knew that the contemporary quilt base in Europe contains numerous artists who are outstanding in terms of artistic expression and skilled implementation.

The surprise was the relatively high number of quilts submitted for consideration by the jurors given (1) the short period from the announcement of the exhibition to the deadline for submission, and (2) the eligibility for participation being based upon membership in SAQA. These limiting factors were compensated for by a combination of Internet usage and

the 54 new members who joined SAQA in order to participate in this exhibition. A total of 167 pieces were entered by 70 artists from 16 countries.

The artwork constituted an excellent basis to jury from—diverse in expression and implementation. It was very engaging and a real pleasure to work with such a European “spread” collectively formed by the individual artworks. It confirmed our view that there is still time to nourish and promote the preservation of regional artistic characteristics, which we believe are menaced by the formidable quilt-related industry that is dominated by enterprises touting their products, whether fabric, haberdashery, literature, or education, which are based on North American quilting traditions.

We juryed *Breaking Boundaries* from digital images. This facilitated the

handling, sorting, and reviewing of the artwork, as well as our final review and verification that the eventual selection was optimal. The jurying assistant, Linda Colsh, who is also SAQA's representative for Europe, along with the Quilts Inc. manager of special exhibits, Vicki Mangum, prepared the jurying process and supported us discreetly and neutrally with additional information when needed.

Reflecting a little further on our jurying experience working from digital images:

- It will allow for a truly international composition of exhibition juries, since it enables individual evaluation by jurors in parallel and irrespective of geographical location. The Internet provides ample means for consolidation of the final selections should consensus meetings in person not be feasible.
- It could be advantageously extended to other SAQA activities, such as the distribution of the *SAQA Journal*, which would enable the introduction of equal membership fees. From a European vantage point, the 25% surcharge on overseas membership fees is not negligible, especially for members in the Eastern European countries, where the GNP is approximately 20% of that of the United States.
- It would put all SAQA members on equal terms concerning the expense of submitting proposals for exhibitions. Fast, reliable, and trackable shipping (e.g., via UPS or FedEx) across the Atlantic, or across the Pacific for that matter, is expensive. In a digital mode of operation, a file transfer of data and images via the Internet is all it takes.

If one considers this particular jurying process as a benchmark for jurying

*Onder Water
(Underwater)*
© Ellen Siemer





Caresse
© Genevieve Attinger

exhibitions via digital images, the results were very positive, particularly in the high degree of flexibility in handling and organizing images and their associated information both before and during the jurying process. The evaluation of each quilt would not have been any different if we had used slides. Working from a digital image base just made the process very smooth and effective.

There is no excuse for not going digital!

We selected 25 quilts, which individually are very good and, as an ensemble, will make an interesting exhibition in Lyon at the end of June 2006—an exhibition supportive of SAQA and attractive for visiting quilters and textile art lovers to view. We are looking forward to seeing *Breaking Boundaries* in person, and we sincerely wish that art quilters in other regions of the world could be given the same opportunity to experience the interesting and diverse collection of artworks being produced in Europe and Israel. Artistic cross-fertilization is

an objective that we believe is very important.

Taking an inward look at Europe, we do hope that European art quilters will continue to produce individually strong pieces of artwork, influenced by the diverse regional and national heritages in which Europe is so rich. This is our vision and hope for a truly international diversity with regard to creation, jurying/judging, and exhibiting of textile artworks.

SAQA should promote such diversity through initiatives ranging from simple practical improvements in communication to the greater challenge of arranging multi-regional exhibitions that tour the world. The feasibility of such exhibitions was demonstrated at the Quilt Expo 2000 in Strasbourg, France, where US artists were represented in the *Art Quilts: America at the Millennium* exhibition in the left wing of the Pavillon Josephine and European artists were represented in the *Quilt Art: Europe at the Millennium* exhibition in the right wing. Both exhibitions were curated



One-Way Journey, © Mirjam Pet-Jacobs

by Robert Shaw. Having these joint, yet separate, exhibitions allowed for the extraordinary experience of comparing, and adding and subtracting impressions, of art rooted in two different regions of the world. It was fantastic and gave a valuable view at the regional level as well.

But this was six years ago. The art quilt world needs such illustrative confrontations for the purpose of artistic cross-fertilization and synergy. We hope that the first SAQA exhibition in Europe, *Breaking Boundaries*, which we juried, will also be a first step for SAQA towards arranging multi-regional exhibitions and championing diversity. ▼

SAQA professional artist members, and husband-and-wife team, Inge Mardal & Steen Hougs reside in Chantilly, France.

Meet your regional representatives

Lisa Chipetine

New York SAQA Co-Representative
lisa@threadplay.com
www.threadplay.com



When Martha Sielman called about the co-representative position available for New York, without hesitation I said, "I WANT IT!"

Taking on this job has been a watershed moment in my life. I consider it "pay forward." Personally, I have been very fortunate to have a multitude of fabulous mentors (including Esterita Austin, Liz Berg, and Sandra Sider) whose encouragement and advice have enabled me to make major strides in a relatively short period of time. I want to be able to give our regional SAQA members the same level of investment and dedication that has been given to me.

I am very pleased to report, along

with my brilliant co-representative, Elizabeth Poole, that the New York membership has grown 115% in 14 months. Jeanne Beck organized an upstate retreat in May. Elizabeth and I hold quarterly meetings at the City Quilter in New York City as well as at The Country Quilter in Somers. Our Yahoo discussion group has created a venue for questions, works-in-progress discussions, and voting issues. I make sure that the membership is kept abreast of juried shows, both in the quilting and art world, and encourage members to enter. Artists new to the medium are welcomed and empowered. We hope to give them the courage and tools to start on their own personal journey. My goal is to educate the New York marketplace about art quilts, while building the largest fiber art network in the state.

My artwork deals with surrealism and abstraction. The titles of my pieces are the inspiration to develop the composition. Powerful color combinations dominate most of my art, exploding into complex images and

creating visual impact. My art is a reflection of my energy, passion, and deep inner emotions. Martha has said about me many times, "There is nothing about you that is restful!"

Elizabeth Poole

New York SAQA Co-Representative
ejp@elizabethpoole.com
<http://elizabethpoole.com>



After receiving a B.F.A. in graphic design from the University of Arizona, I followed it with a B.S. in computer science a year later. My right vs. left brain

keep vying for dominance. That battle has not yet been won. By day I work in information technology at IBM Research in Yorktown Heights, NY, and nights and weekends I work in textiles and related media in Garrison, NY.

I've been making things since my fingers were first able to hold tools, and the only media I have not attempted are metals and stones.



The Gods Must Be Crazy
18" x 18"

© 2005 Lisa Chipetine



Study in Blues
12" x 9"

© 2005 Elizabeth Poole

Fiber snared me early on and that passion continues in many forms. I'm a skilled theatrical costume designer as well as a textile artist. In fact, you can probably trace parallels between my current torso series of wall pieces and my tailoring expertise.

Perhaps surprisingly, my torso pieces aren't created digitally. I make drawings from photocopies of images instead, preferring the quality of line made by hand to the digitally generated. All my mono-printed and painted fabrics are done by hand as well. There's something about getting your shoulders into the work.

Mary Will Sussman

Vermont/New Hampshire/Maine
SAQA Representative
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I have always sewn. I love the way the fabric feels and the way it can be transformed. I started quilting in a traditional manner, but quickly began to deviate. I found that I really didn't care if my points matched, so my quilting has become rather "pointless."

My life can be as complicated as my art quilts. Between teaching both quilting and gymnastics and running our 91-acre farm with hair sheep, meat goats, chickens, one goose, and a donkey, finding time to create can be challenging.

I have always been a teacher and I knew at 10 years old that I wanted to teach. I really enjoy teaching quilting to beginners. As with ballet or gymnastics, you need a solid skill base to work from. Once a student has good sewing and quilting skills, then they can fly on their own. It is exhilarating to see a student grasp a concept and run with it!



Left: *Indonesian Evening*
29" x 27.5"
© 2004 Mary Will Sussman

Below: *Hope Springs Eternal*
30" x 18"
© 2006 Gwyned Trefethen

My goal as a SAQA representative is to educate and expose the public to the world of art quilts and support the artists who create them.

Gwyned Trefethen

Massachusetts/Rhode Island
SAQA Representative
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www.theartquilt.com/gwynedquilts



Experimenting with relative value currently piques my interest. Shifting value from several oppositional directions across a quilt fascinates me.

My value studies frequently begin with simple grayscale palettes. Recently I introduced areas of color in brilliant relief against the contrast of black, white, and gray. One of the pieces from this series appeared in the SAQA exhibition *On the Wall*. An earlier piece, which touched on relative value experimentation, will be included in SAQA's *Transformations*.

I have been a SAQA representative since February 2005. It has allowed



me to get to understand the workings of the organization, to learn from other representatives and SAQA volunteers, and most importantly, to get to know the members from Massachusetts and Rhode Island. I appreciate having the opportunity to work with so many talented artisans.

Pricing from page 1

living in Mexico and my observations of the Mexican-American culture surrounding me in my southwest home.

The gallery that represents me, Victoria Boyce Gallery in Scottsdale, loved the artwork and scheduled me for a one-woman show at the height of the tourist season. We had a great opening with about 300 people attending — wine, food, the whole thing, including mariachis. During the whole run of the show, we didn't sell a piece. Not one. What was wrong? Was the artwork bad? Overpriced? The answers were that nothing was wrong, the artwork was good, but the artwork was underpriced.

The artwork eventually sold over a period of time, and much of it was shown in important venues. A Santa Fe collector bought four pieces. The centerpiece of the show sold to someone in Scottsdale through the gallery six years later. Did I initially feel

rejected? You bet. But was it the end of my career? No way.

Back to you and what you need to do to get there. We're talking about business. Once you're in business, your quilts need to be truly professional: finished, ready to hang, photographed — completely ready to go. Can you meet the demand you create? Have you figured out a way to professionally present yourself and your art?

While you are mulling over these questions, let's ponder the types of sales you might have. There are the obvious avenues, sales to friends and family, which are often the easiest and account for the most repeat sales. Then there are other private placements to collectors and people who have seen your artwork somewhere. Here is where the Internet becomes important, and a professional web site becomes a necessity. I've sold art off my web site to people I've never met. These have been easy sales. The

web site has been an effective and valuable tool.

Other categories of sales include corporate placements, often through art consultants; specialized clients such as health care; sales through galleries and museum gift shops; exhibition sales; catalogs, such as *American Art Collector*; online sales through sites like artistsregister.com; and shows, such as the Smithsonian Craft Fair. I personally do an open studio two weekends a year (along with 143 other Boulder, Colorado, artists) where more than 500 people traipse through my home and studio. The open studio accounts for a quarter to a third of my income each year.

Now that you know where you can sell, and you have your quilts professionally ready to sell, how do you price them? Well ... we need to go back to the first big lesson: **Art has no fixed value.** But there are ways you can ascribe value — competitive value — to your artwork. Remember

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Entry deadline, June 26, 2005.



EXPRESSIONS: The Art Quilt

A worldwide, biennial juried and judged art quilt contest and traveling exhibition. The innovative works selected for this exhibit should be indicative of the diversity of art quilts and demonstrate the unique methods utilized in the medium of quilting today. Best of Show - \$2000

Entry deadline, July 21, 2006



Winter Wonderland: Quilted Dreamscapes

A juried and judged exhibition of quilts with winter themes. Quilts may be abstract or representational, but winter themes should be evident.

Entry deadline, November 27, 2006



For a complete list of upcoming shows, guidelines, rules, entry forms, and timelines visit: www.rickytimes.com, then Shows and Competitions.

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always that you will be competing with your friends, colleagues, and even with the Nancy Crows of the world for the meager art budgets of the average art buyer. And, importantly, art buyers are fickle. They are being courted not only by other art quilters, but by painters, weavers, sculptors, ceramicists, jewelers, collage artists, etc. Don't despair. Through careful research, planning, hard work, and pricing, you can compete.

Here's some of the research you need to conduct in getting ready to competitively price your quilts:

How long have you been in the business?

How many quilts have you sold?

Do you have a record of your sales?

Can you chart what sold for how much and why?

Where are you in your career—emerging artist, mid-career artist, or mature artist?

Where have your quilts been shown?

Have you built your resumé?

Has your artwork received prizes such as those given at Quilt Festival or the like?

Have you been in important exhibitions nationally and internationally (ones that attract the attention of both the art-buying public and the press)? Unfortunately, local shows at small venues don't carry the same importance as big ones like *ArtQuilts at the Sedgwick*.

Has your work been reviewed by national or local media?

Have your quilts been invited to be shown in museums?

Now to the nitty gritty

The easiest way to price your quilts, and probably the best for beginners, is by the square foot. This is simple and you can have one square foot price for larger quilts and another square foot price for smaller quilts since they can actually sell at a higher square foot price. Begin somewhere near \$50 to \$75 a square foot for large quilts and \$100 to \$125 for small quilts. This gives you a baseline from

which to work.

The hardest way to price your quilts is factoring in how long it took you to make the quilt by ascribing an hourly rate to your work. That rate includes design time, sewing time, cutting time, finishing time, etc., and adds in the criteria just mentioned about number of quilts sold, place in career, shows, etc. Remember, quilts take more time to make than paintings but are often less valued by the buying public.

Now, take into consideration regional differences. Quilts can often sell for megabucks in places like New York City and Santa Fe, but for bitty bucks in Saginaw or Billings. Do some research and comparison shopping. Go to exhibitions and galleries and compare other artwork to your own. See what your regional median price

The more quilts you make, the more you sell.

is and how your artwork fits in. Don't look at quilts that don't have those little red dots on the tags. These quilts are *not* sold.

Talk to other artists about how they price. Once a year, my critique group, The Piecemakers, talks about how we price our quilts. We ponder why some pieces sold and what went wrong when some didn't. We come up with interesting revelations—mainly that the more quilts you make, the more you sell.

I price my artwork using the following "spongy" criteria. I use a combination of square footage price, say \$300 per square foot retail, my record of exhibitions and sales, whether the quilt is an "important" quilt, having shown in *Quilt National* or published in the *Fiberarts Design Book*, whether it has been in the media spotlight,

where it has traveled, the complexity, design, and whether the quilt is a "good" quilt or an "average" quilt according to my own personal standards. I price my artwork high enough to make sure it is competitive with other artists on my level, and high enough to make my artwork valuable, not only to others, but to myself.

Now, I mentioned the word "retail." I price all my quilts at retail. I do not have different prices for different clients. Even if it's my brother, I quote him the retail price. I will sell wholesale when I am working with galleries, museum shops, and art consultants. Wholesale price can be up to 50% less than the retail price. You can see where selling your artwork directly becomes an advantage. I also sometimes give discounts to non-profits, such as public hospitals. These discounts can be small, but sometimes make the difference between whether a sale is closed or not.

Does price matter? Yes. Definitely. But sometimes it matters in ways you don't expect. A couple of years ago I saw my sales lagging. I hadn't raised my prices for a long time and couldn't decide what was going on. Recession? 9/11? Not really. How was I to perk up my sales again? Mass mailings of postcards? New web page? Telephone calls to art consultants? Well, all that helped. But what I believe helped most was I increased my prices. I made my artwork more valuable by making it more expensive. My sales climbed and I began to feel my endeavor had a future. I have never looked back.

If you put a price on your artwork that makes it look like *art*, not something from a crafts show, buyers respect you more. If you value your artwork, so will they. And, because we live in America, and America is driven by the profit motive, price says it all.

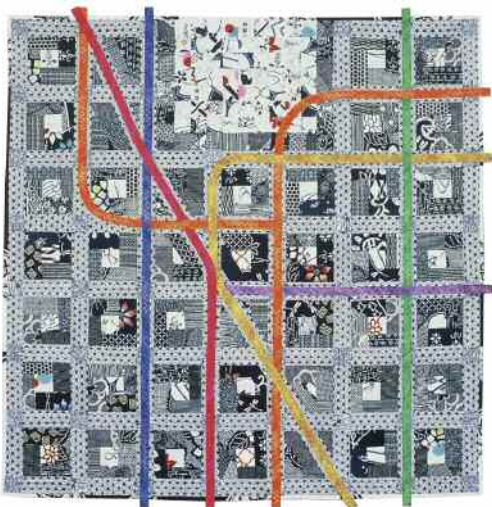
Back to Lesson One: ***Art has no fixed value.*** You need to figure out what the worth of your art is and make it work for you. ▼

SAQA Professional Artist Member Judith Trager is a fiber artist, teacher, and curator living in Boulder, CO. Her web site is www.judithtrager.com.

SAQA members dominate Quilt Visions 2006

Quilt Visions 2006, the premiere art quilt show, will be held again at the Oceanside Museum of Art in California from November 12, 2006 through January 21, 2007. Out of the 43 art quilts selected, 35 of them were made by SAQA members. That's 81% of participating artists. SAQA will be sponsoring a get-together on the opening weekend. For more information on Visions: www.quiltvisions.org

Congratulations to SAQA members selected: Liz Axford, Elizabeth Barton, Elizabeth Busch, Jette Clover, Linda Colsh, Martha Bruin Degen, Joan Lockburner Deuel, Noriko Endo, Laura Fogg, Ruth Garrison, Margery Goodall, Carol Anne Grotrian, Patty Hawkins, Wendy Hill, Harumi Iida, Judy Langille, Robert Leathers, Vita Marie Lovett, Linda MacDonald, Katie Pasquini Masopust, Angela Moll, Ann McKenzie Nickolson, Dan Olfe, Pam RuBert, Dinah Sargeant, Joan Schulze, Susan Shie, Mary Ruth Smith, Karen Soma, Connie Tiegel, Barbara Watler, Nelda Warkentin, Kathy Weaver, Jill Rumoshosky Werner, and Elia Woods.



From 23rd St. to 70th St.
55" x 65", © 2005 Harumi Iida

Transformations: artists working with fibers has finalized its travel arrangements. It will be traveling to four venues:

Festival of Quilts

National Exhibition Centre
Birmingham, England
www.twistedthread.com
August 17 - 20, 2006

Translations Gallery

773 Santa Fe Drive
Denver, CO 80204
303 629 0713
www.translationsgallery.com
November - December 2006

International Quilt Festival - Chicago

Rosemont Center
Chicago, Illinois
www.quilts.com
April 13 - 15, 2007

Grants Pass Museum of Art

Grants Pass, Oregon
www.gpmuseum.com
May 29 - July 27, 2007

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Fiberart For A Cause: Fundraising for the American Cancer Society

Join us in using your talent and skills to make a difference. Fiberart postcards needed for International Quilt Festival-Houston, Nov. 2-5, 2006

Deadline: October 1, 2006

For guidelines, please visit
www.virginiaspiegel.com/NewFiles/ACSMakingFFACPostcards.html

Fiberart For A Cause has raised over \$50,000 through donated postcards offered for a \$30 donation at International Quilt Festival-Houston and Chicago.

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Quick Notes

To find out more about SAQA, call Martha Sielman, executive director, (860) 487-4199; msielman@sbcglobal.net; or visit our web site at www.saqa.com. Basic membership is \$40 a year; professional artist members pay \$105 a year.

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. is a non-profit organization, whose mission is to promote the art quilt through education, exhibitions, professional development, and documentation.

The *SAQA Journal* is published four times a year. Deadlines for articles are February 1st, July 1st, September 1st, and December 1st. Email articles to editor Carolyn Lee Vehslage at clvquilts@yahoo.com

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