

SAQQA *Journal*

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. ▲▲▲ Volume 19, No.3 ▲▲▲ Summer 2009



OUEST OU EST
by Britta Ankenbauer

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Thoughts from the president

by Judith Content



Visiting an artist's studio is one of my all-time favorite activities. I seldom pass up an opportunity to see how other artists like to work. Recently I headed over to Santa Cruz

to visit Susan Else's Open Studio in her light-filled Victorian home. Her astonishing sculptures were beautifully displayed in a house transformed into a gallery. I had always wanted a piece of Susan's artwork, and her open studio gave me the opportunity to add *Red River*, a composition of 3D fabric beach stones, to my small-works textile collection.

Robin Cowley, Linda Gass, Miriam Nathan-Roberts, and I are the current members of a small but lively critique group, which meets semi-regularly in one another's studios. Miriam's contagious creativity is reflected in her studio—an amazing collage of

fabrics, works in progress, drawers full of variegated thread, and rubber stamps.

Robin's intimate studio looks out on peaceful Asian-inspired gardens and waterfalls. Her sewing area is painted saffron and lavender, while shelves of vivid fabrics express her love of color.

Linda's new studio is in a former high school classroom in Palo Alto's Cubberly Community Studios. Linda painted her design wall white, but following Robin's advice, painted the other walls green and coral and her floor a bright turquoise blue. These colors perfectly complement her distinctive painted silk wall pieces.

My own studio is a space that began life as a two-car garage. It gained windows and closet space, when it morphed into a preschool sometime in the mid-sixties. When I moved into the space in 1991, I simply painted the walls white, installed grey Berber carpeting, and later added a large picture window for better nat-

ural light. My office is carved out of a corner of the studio, and is painted a warm shade of mango. It's colorful like the rest of my house and garden, and completely different from the serene space I do my artwork in.

Last fall I was given a large commission for a local medical facility, and had to seriously reevaluate my working space. None of my studio walls were big enough to accommodate the commission. I considered renting space, but this was not economically feasible. I considered other rooms in my house with bigger walls—like the living room—but this was impractical especially during the holiday season. I realized I had to be creative with the space my studio had to offer.

I decided to temporarily cover up a small window on the largest wall of the studio. I framed the outer edges of the wall with wood, as if it were a huge stretcher bar, and used a staple gun to attach white denim from floor to ceiling. The design wall's workable space was doubled in this way, and accommodated the commission with room to spare. As it turns out, I love my new fabric design wall. It's practical and professional, and I don't miss the little window (not much light and no view) at all!

(For images of my studio and many others, check out SAQA-U and the November 2008 mentorship forum with Jean M. Judd: *Evolution of a Quilt Studio and Artist.*)



Judith's studio design wall solution with the commission in progress.

Report from the SAQA executive director

by Martha Sielman



I am very pleased to announce that Lark Books has asked me to write *Masters: Art Quilts, Volume II*. Volume I is their best-selling title

in the Masters series, and they were very impressed by the exhibition *Masters: Art Quilts* at the International Quilt Festival in Houston.

By the time you read this, I will have already turned in my list of 50 suggestions for the 40 slots in *Volume II*. If you receive an invitation to participate, please make sure that the images you send to Lark are good enough for print publication. At least one artist whom I had recommended for *Volume I* could not be included because of poor image quality.

If you are a professional artist, you need to have professional quality photography of your artwork. You need to have strong images to submit to exhibitions, magazines (including the *SAQA Journal*), and special opportunities such as this one. The exhibition committee constantly struggles to jury exhibitions where great artwork is submitted but is hard to see because the images are so poor. Deidre Adams, SAQA's art director, has to continually ask members to retake images to get good enough quality for our catalogs and the *Journal*. Please do your art career a favor and make sure that your images are professional.

Having a website with your artwork on it is also a necessary part of being an artist in today's market. When I research artists to include in the *Masters* books, I depend on the Internet

to be able to see a body of their work. Your website is your portfolio, and having a website is as important as having business cards (and yes, you should also have business cards).

Finally, as I worked to create my list of suggestions for *Volume II*, I was reminded of the critical importance of documenting our artwork through printed catalogs. For my research, I pulled out every catalog, SAQA Portfolio, and back issue of an art quilt magazine that I own, and went through each one. I used up several packages of Post-it® notes and ended up with a stack of books more than waist-high. But at the end of it, I felt that I had a strong sense of the art quilt movement since 1979 and that I could make my recommendations to Lark knowing that they represent another group of truly masterful artists.

Board report

by Penny McMorris, Secretary



Economic news is all we hear these days, so the board wants you to know we're always thinking of ways to stretch your dues dollars, while still providing you with the most services

we can. As Martha has reminded us all, membership fees cover only 40% of our operating costs. That means any additional support you give us helps SAQA fund our various exhibitions, publications, and programs. Thanks to so many of you who help us raise money in other ways.

The fun SAQA items on CafePress.com are selling well. Thank you! Your purchase of these cool aprons, shirts, buttons, mugs, and more is stretching

our budget so we can do more. When using these SAQA items, you are displaying our logo, providing a bit of SAQA PR, and spreading the name of our organization.

You can also support SAQA by buying catalogs and books from the SAQA store rather than from Amazon. Sure, you may pay a bit more, but it's like voting with your money. You'll get something back in exhibitions and extra services; something you can't get from Amazon.

And here's another way to promote SAQA and to get art quilts seen by people who may be in a position to buy them. This year SAQA intentionally printed more copies of *Portfolio 15* than ever before, so we could send promotional copies to galleries, museums, interior designers, collectors, and other VIPs. Cheryl Ferrin, who

does such an amazing job designing each *Portfolio*, is also in charge of the marketing plan for distributing these PR copies. Do you have personal connections with collectors, curators, or anyone else you think should know about art quilts? If so, give Cheryl their name and address and she'll send them a copy. Or even better, she'll send you a copy to deliver to them. That's good PR for you as well as SAQA.

Thanks to those of you who have already contributed a piece for the SAQA 2009 Benefit Auction. It's been fun to check the SAQA auction site and see the quilts arrive. Auction action begins Thursday, Sept. 10, 2009. We had such phenomenal success last year. Thanks to all of you who contributed or purchased a piece. Let's do it again!

SAQA's 2008 budget report

by Nelda Warkentin, Treasurer



Even in these difficult economic times, SAQA is in good shape financially. Thanks to you, SAQA is able to educate the public about the art quilt, offer exhibitions, and provide professional development for its members. Your dues, donations, and conference and exhibition fees enable our organization to meet its mission and goals. Thank you.

On behalf of SAQA, I'd also like to thank Pokey Bolton and Jack Walsh, SAQA board representatives, for volunteering their time on the finance committee. Executive Director Martha Sielman is to be commended for keeping the committee well-informed and for preparing financial reports for the committee and board.

SAQA's income and expenditures for 2008:

2008 Sources of funds:

Membership dues	\$124,140
Donations – individuals	26,102
Donations – corporate	22,850
Auction income	41,775
Conference income	24,132
Exhibition fees	7,792
Product sales and other income	49,529
Interest on savings accounts	1,489
Funds held for Fiber Revolution	1,947

Total sources of funds **\$299,756**

2008 Uses of funds:

Member services, including conference, Journal, Portfolio, web site	\$106,225
Exhibition expenses	44,180
Administrative expenses, including salaries, rent, office supplies	135,739
Board of directors meeting expenses	4,390
Expenses against Fiber Revolution fund	1,255

Total uses of funds **\$291,789**

Sources of funds in excess of uses of funds **\$7,967**

Bank account balances as of Dec. 31, 2008

Liberty Bank – SAQA Checking	\$10,987
Liberty Bank – SAQA Savings (savings, CREAM Fund, Education Fund)	60,378
Liberty Bank – Fiber Revolution	4,056

From the editor

by Carolyn Lee Vehslage



How to go about working on a commission piqued my curiosity for this issue. I asked several established art quilters how they handled their clients, their contracts, and even how they priced their artwork. The artists all

gave very insightful answers that will provide you with some guidance when someone asks you to make a unique piece of art.

Starting with this issue of the *SAQA Journal*, we will publish a series of articles on teaching. Jake Finch writes about how to teach in a store. Her valuable guidance includes policies you should establish and how to price your workshops, lectures, and classes. In the Fall issue, there will be an article on how to teach online classes. I interviewed many people who teach quilting and art concepts on the Internet. It was fascinating to learn how they conduct their classes. Our teaching series will wrap up in the Winter issue with an article by Lynne Davis on international classes. If you've taught abroad, let me know so Lynne can interview you as well.

For a long time now, I have had the topic of insurance on my *SAQA Journal* article development list. Elizabeth Van Schaick has taken on that assignment. She interviewed my insurance agent and has answers to the questions we should be asking our insurance providers.

In the past two issues, Carol Ann Waugh taught us about being published by a publishing house and how to go about self-publishing. I thought it would be interesting to have an article on how to promote your book after it's been published. Meg Cox writes about her experience marketing her new book, including her 19-city book tour.

If there is a topic that you would like to explore, please contact me. I am always on the lookout for ideas that will improve your career as a professional artist.

Enjoy the Summer issue!

Care, display, and storage of contemporary quilt art

by Kate Lenkowsky

Are you new to the exciting world of collecting art quilts? This article addresses just a few ways to care for and display fiber art. The display options are endless, but here are some simple suggestions.

If properly installed and treated with the same respect given to paintings, art quilts require little more care than a twice-yearly vacuuming. Routine cleaning of free-hanging fabric art is done by removing it from the wall and vacuuming both front and back through a vinyl screen, or by placing an old nylon stocking over the vacuum hose. If it is seriously dirty, or if you are concerned about embellishments, then cleaning it yourself might cause irreparable damage. Ask the artist or a textile conservator for advice.

Environmental considerations are essential to a proper installation. Placement above heating vents, radiators, and air conditioners may expose fiber art to high heat and excessive humidity, making it susceptible to mold. Lighting should be indirect. Spotlights and direct sunlight cause fading and weakening of the fibers. This risk can be reduced by covering windows with a clear UV filter. Lastly, keep unframed art away from the path of kitchen fumes and smoke.

When you buy quilt art from a gallery or artist, inquire about how to mount it. If the installation is a large one, the gallery may provide this service for you, or provide the contact information for a professional framer. If you purchase artwork directly from a professional artist, the hardware may be included with the sale.

Free-hanging (unframed) fiber art heightens the viewer's pleasure in its texture and appreciation of the artist's technical skill. If you prefer to display your quilt this way but have no mounting instructions, attach a sleeve to the upper back. Slide a

sealed wooden rod or slat, or a metal bar, with nail or screw holes drilled at both ends, through the sleeve. The rod should be slightly shorter than the width of the fabric art. Hang the rod or bar using nails or screws.

Museum curators now recommend using Velcro® to mount large quilts for exhibits, and instructions for doing so can be found on the web site of The Textile Museum in Washington, DC (www.textilemuseum.org/care/care.htm). Velcro should never be applied directly to the quilt back. It should be stitched first to twill tape that is then stitched to the quilt. A display system, such as one available from Walker Display, Inc., is an option for owners who wish to exhibit more than one quilt or to group several together. Some experts advise "resting" large free-hanging textiles by periodically laying them flat.

Framing quilts and using UV-filtered glass or plexiglass reduces the need for cleaning and provides protection from environmental hazards. When framing any textile, make sure that only archival materials come in contact with the piece. Use spacers to prevent the art quilt from touching the glass. Frames are advisable for heavy pieces if they are to be displayed for an extended period of time; otherwise, gravity can distort the artwork's shape. The textile should be stitched to a fabric backing and then mounted in the frame.

When buying quilt art, always ask for care instructions, a list of the fiber contents, and processes used by the artist in its creation. This makes it much easier if professional cleaning or restoration is ever needed.

If your quilt has been damaged, seek assistance from the artist or a textile restorer. While fine art and collectible insurance will pay for certain kinds of damage, the owner may be restricted to a particular restorer.

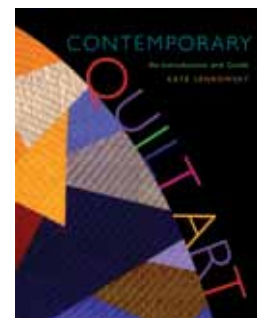
Before buying insurance, make sure that the restorer the company uses is qualified to work with contemporary textiles and will be covered by your policy.

To store quilt art, lay it on a flat surface, keeping it free from contact with unsealed wood, non-archival paper or cardboard, all of which leach acid and will eventually discolor the fabric. Do not store it in plastic that will trap humidity and encourage the growth of mold. If you are layering several pieces, separate embellished ones with a sheet. Don't store your art in a folded position. Some collectors, without a spare bed or floor space store their quilts on muslin-covered rollers. The quilt tops should face to the outside to reduce the formation of wrinkles on the quilt top. Wherever you store them, remember to keep the area clean.

By exercising good judgment about the exhibition and care of your textile art, you will not only receive a lifetime of pleasure from it, but leave a legacy to be enjoyed by others for years to come. ▼

This article was originally published on the web site of AmericanStyle magazine. It has been revised and expanded for the SAQA Journal.

SAQA active member Kate Lenkowsky is the author of Contemporary Quilt Art: An Introduction and Guide (Indiana University Press, 2008). She lives in Bloomington, Indiana and her web site is www.katelenkowsky.com.



Have you ever been approached to do a commission?

by Carolyn Lee Vehslage

It intrigues me to learn how other quilt artists work. With this in mind, I asked several SAQA members to share their stories about commissions. We can all benefit from their experiences.

Anna Hergert (www.annahergert.com) of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada, has been commissioned by both individuals and institutions such as hotels. She finds that clients' interest is almost evenly split between

abstract and landscape art quilts. She prices her commissioned artwork by the square inch, much like a painter would do. Three years ago she started with a rate of \$.80 Canadian (\$.98 U.S.) per square inch for 2 dimensional quilts. Now she charges \$1.25 Canadian (\$1.53 U.S.). For 3 dimensional artwork, she marks her pieces up by 33% of the sum of the height x width.

In her contract she asks for a 30% downpayment upon commencement of the commission, with the next 30% due upon selection of artwork. Usually she designs two or three options and provides mock-ups. The remainder is due upon delivery of the commission.

Anna likes to have a personal meeting with her clients. Afterward, she draws up some simple sketches according to their vision. She arranges another meeting or forwards the sketches via email. Once the client chooses a design, she prepares a storyboard with swatches, a mock-up, and a sketch of the artwork in its proposed space. She then asks the client for final approval.

Anna markets her artwork on her web site, by giving presentations and lectures to groups, and by word of mouth. Her most challenging commission came when a client had seen her piece *Wildfire* in the Whyte Museum in Banff, Alberta, Canada. He contacted her and told

her that he wanted two mirror image pieces based on the artwork in that exhibition.

Because the client was from New Jersey and she lived in Calgary at the time, they communicated via email. He provided the measurements of two windows he planned to hang the artwork into, as well as images of the room with furnishings and a special oriental rug he wanted reflected in the commissioned artwork.

The client first contacted Anna in August of 2004. She prepared the sketches, dyed the fabrics, and designed a mock-up for approval, keeping in mind his colors and situation. He rejected all of her designs, telling her he really wanted an exact replica of the artwork he saw in the exhibition. Anna's artwork is usually one of a kind, and she uses hand-dyed fabrics that cannot be reproduced. Luckily, she had some fabric left from the earlier artwork and was able to produce two pieces that closely resembled the original piece.

After she sent another mock-up, he gave his approval on November 8. She informed him that she would be able to deliver it by January 10, 2005. He persuaded Anna to produce the artwork for his 25th wedding anniversary, which was November 20. Being fairly new to commission work, she let him talk her into meeting his deadline. After very little sleep and working every available minute, she shipped the finished pieces to him via FedEx® three days before the deadline. The artwork spent some time in U.S. customs and was finally delivered to the client and his wife on their anniversary.

Joy Saville of Princeton, New Jersey, accepts commissions for artwork from individuals and institutions. Her commissions are all abstract artwork.



photo by Mary Slusarchuk

Domestic Goddess in Perpetual Motion 78" x 36"

©2007 Anna Hergert
www.annahergert.com

Companion piece to a found-object sculpture by Frank Ducote.



Day One, Genesis 1:1 and Day Four, Genesis 1:14

70" x 195" x 1" (each), ©2003 Joy Saville. Commissioned by the Princeton Jewish Center, Princeton, New Jersey

She charges by the square foot and writes a very detailed, specific contract for each commission. She requires a 50% deposit before she begins, with the balance due upon delivery. The client may see the artwork in progress at a convenient time for both of them, or she will send photos.

Joy doesn't draw or design her artwork before she makes it. She has a conversation with the client to ascertain what they are looking for and why they were drawn to her artwork. It's a process of developing a relationship with the client, understanding the audience, and considering the parameters of the site where the artwork will be installed.

Joy says, "The basis for pricing is whatever the market will bear." Therefore, the artist needs to know the price of other similar artwork on the market. You can always raise your price on the next piece, but it's difficult to lower a price. "I believe I started at \$150 per square foot in the early 1980s. At that time, consultants were working at 70/30 (artist/consultant) or 60/40 and many galleries were 60/40 (artist/gallery). Now, most everyone is 50/50."

"You should try to raise your prices by 5% per year if you are steadily working and producing during that time and if your artwork is being purchased," says Joy. There are many factors that need to be considered,

such as the cost of supplies, site of commission, the artist's reputation, experience, and résumé (exhibitions, awards, commissions, collections, etc.) "At the moment, my price structure varies between \$575 and \$730 per square foot. You should have one price and one price only on a given piece. Do not have a 'studio' price where you sell it for less. Consultants and galleries quickly learn of this inconsistency and will not work with you. You may give a friend, family, or collector a 10-20% discount, but that comes off the retail price."

Joy gets new clients from word of mouth, recommendations from viewers of shows, and from readers of *The Guild* books. She finds working with committees to be challenging because of the many points of view. There-

fore, she makes sure she is dealing with one point person.

Carol Taylor (www.caroltaylorquilts.com) of Rochester, New York, has done commissions mostly for individuals. She has made a total of 488 quilts to date and finds that most people who are interested in commissioning a quilt are usually able to pick one from her existing body of work. She has sold between 10 and 12 quilts to hospitals that have selected the artwork from her inventory.

Her style is abstract, and her clients are mostly concerned about the colors coordinating with the location where they want to hang the artwork. She prices by the square inch, adding extra to the price if there is more specialty work, such as thread paint-

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Confetti Convergence

51 x 67

©2002 Carol Taylor

www.caroltaylorquilts.com

ing, or if all silk materials used in the design.

Carol started pricing her quilts at \$1 per square inch, making a 30" x 40" quilt \$1200. After she sold quite a few and became more well known, she raised her price to \$1.50 per square inch, making the same quilt \$1800. Then she raised her price to \$2 per square inch, so now that same quilt is \$2400.

When working with a client, Carol discusses what they want in terms of color, design, and size, and then she has them sign a contract. She has not had to make any mock-ups or sketches because she has such a strong signature style. She shows her client the work in progress only once, so they know she's working on it, and so she that can confirm that it is meeting their expectations. She says that she really doesn't want a "co-artist" who chimes in every week with new ideas or suggestions about how to vary what she's already done. She feels that there has to be a mutual trust between the artist and the client.

In her first experience doing a commission, the couple told her they had seen her quilts and loved them. When she asked them what colors their room was, they said pink, baby blue, and mint green. She told them she did not work in pastel colors and was willing to give up the sale. They came and looked at Carol's quilts anyway and liked the color scheme in one of her finished quilts. Since she still had fabrics from that quilt, they commissioned her to make that design in a size that fit their space. Who would have guessed they would choose such rich, dark colors instead?

Jacque Davis (www.jacquedavis.com) of Freeburg, Illinois, has only worked with individuals so far, mainly referred by word of mouth. She is currently working on a landscape quilt for one client and is negotiating an abstract quilt for a couple who are building a house. She was commissioned to create a long, flow-

ing abstract piece to hang on a rock-walled staircase.

She prices by the square foot and contracts for a 30% downpayment, with the remainder due when the client is satisfied with the finished piece. She previews fabrics with the client and creates a rough sketch of the piece. If it's a memory quilt, they provide the pictures. She started out at \$75 per square foot and has now raised her price to \$200 per square foot.

Jacque's most emotionally challenging commission was for a friend whose husband died in a traumatic farm accident. The wife gave her five tubs of his shirts to make quilts—one for herself and one for each her four children. Jacque completed the first quilt out of his soft, comfy t-shirts. When she ironed them, she could still smell the scent of the husband on them, and it made her cry. The finished quilt was nothing fancy, just a patchwork of his colorful t-shirts. It suited his personality, and his wife loved it. Although this was a commission, Jacque would not take payment for making it. As his children marry, she will make wedding quilts from his dress shirts.

Katie Pasquini Masopust (www.katiepm.com) of Santa Fe, New Mexico, has done commissions only for individuals who know her artwork. Her latest series is owned by two individuals and decorates their commercial resort. Most of her commissions have been abstracted landscapes. She charges \$500 per square foot and offers a discount to repeat customers. She doesn't have a contract, but her terms are 50% due at the beginning when the client approves the subject matter and ideas, and sometimes even the colors, and 50% when the piece is completed.

Katie often gets a suggestion or a



Triton, 96" x 72"

©2009 Katie Pasquini Masopust.

Commissioned for the Gateway Canyons Resort.

photograph from the client of what they want done. She then does a drawing and sometimes a painting. One time she sent fabric swatches. After the design phase, the clients don't have any input. They see it when it is finished.

Leslie Gabriëlse (www.gabrielse.com) of Rotterdam, The Netherlands, has done commissions for individuals, companies, and institutions. Usually people commission him to do representational artwork or portraits. He prepares a contract with the deadline date, and he prices his artwork by the square meter. He creates a watercolor sketch of the proposed artwork and often shows the client the work in progress. He is well known for doing commissioned artwork, so people seek him out.

One of his most challenging commissions was to create artwork to fill a large atrium space. The building was located in a city that was divided into two sections by a river. Leslie decided to create a triptych called *Water—Land*. All three pieces are 12

feet high and 32 feet wide, with the two pieces representing the land on either side of the water piece. The panels are suspended from rods in mid-air of the atrium. He painted on gauze with a very open weave so that people on one side of the atrium could still see the other side.

Carol Anne Grotrian (www.carolanne-grotrian.com) of Cambridge, Massachusetts, has done commissions for individuals, companies, and institutions. With one exception, everyone who has approached her has been familiar with her landscape artwork, and has requested either a specific location (such as a backyard) or more generic scenes (three 3'x3' seascapes). The exception was an administrator for a software startup who liked her shibori dyeing and had her create a quilt based on their logo, a triangle containing the letters IDE. It turned out well but taught her that she is more satisfied creating landscapes.

Carol Anne says her process of pricing is more voodoo than logic. She compares the new project to her history of sales and tries for about \$200 a square foot. However, really large pieces need to be discounted and small projects need to be factored up considerably. Her minimum price



Pyrotechnics (the Fourth)
144" x 108"
©1994 Carol Anne Grotrian

is generally about \$1800 to reflect the complexity of the process which includes drawing a place, designing the quilt, dyeing the fabric, and then sewing.

She keeps track of her hours and calculates an hourly rate in hindsight as part of her learning curve. She aims for \$15-\$20 an hour. Another issue is whether she is selling directly to the client or using an intermediary art representative. Pricing then becomes a real struggle to arrive at a reasonable price if a percentage goes to the art rep.

Carol Anne does not use contracts with individuals. It is a take-it-or-leave-it process at the end, as long as the quilt fits into her usual marketable work. If it's a corporation, an

institution, or a request for artwork that she couldn't easily market, she gets 50% on approval and the balance on completion.

Carol Anne's landscapes are based on drawings of actual places, sometimes chosen by the client. The sketches are refined in her studio. Clients approve a drawing before she begins. She is willing to adjust the drawing to obtain an approval, but the quilt is seen only upon completion. She has never had a problem with acceptance of the finished work, probably because she does not stray far from the initial drawings where most of the design issues are resolved. She dyes fabric specifically for each quilt so samples aren't available, but commissioners see examples of previously completed artwork.

Carol Anne gets commissions by word of mouth, teaching, her web site, art representatives, and primarily through high-end arts and crafts festivals. The festivals used to be cost-effective, since she covered expenses by point-of-purchase sales of dyed scarves, postcards, etc. In recent years, collectors have diminished and festival fees have climbed, making this a less attractive option. A personal interruption took her away from doing the shows, and in the current economy she has not returned to them. The end result is that she has not had any commissions in the last couple of years.

One of her stories concerns an

Water – Land, 12 feet high and 32 feet wide (each), ©Leslie Gabriëlse.



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opportunity to create a 9x12-foot quilt for a Boston Hospital. It was a larger version of a complex 5x6-foot quilt with a fireworks theme that she had sworn she would never do again. She took on the challenge, which went beyond sheer size to include a requirement that the quilt pass stringent Boston fire codes for new construction.

Unfortunately, her fiber-reactive dyes change color if treated with fire retardants. After a long process of problem-solving, she was allowed to use her fabrics in the top, as long as the batting and backing were made of textiles found in fire fighter clothing. She bought an industrial sewing machine to plow through the layers of what was her first machine-quilted quilt. Her grown son had just moved out, so she could lay the project out in his conveniently sized 9x12-foot room. Since the quilt was too big for her to hang, her final nervous moment was watching the cherry picker lift it into place, where it behaved respectably. She is gratified to hear occasional stories that nurses use the quilt as a goal as they get patients ambulatory.

Stacy Hortner (www.stacysmaterialworld.com) of Allentown, Pennsylvania, has been commissioned by individuals. She has also donated pieces to non-profit organizations. Most of her clients prefer abstract designs. She has had only one landscape, and one "realistic" wall hanging done from a client's photograph of an iris.

Sometimes her clients give her a price range to work in. Some don't even ask about the price until she's finished with the piece. She typically prices her artwork by the amount of time and complexity of the technique she is using. Her quotes have been based on a mix of factors: complexity of design, difficulty of technique, and amount of time to do mundane tasks (hand-sewing the binding, beading, etc). If the technique is new to her, her practice or learning time is not factored into the cost.



Iris Study, 33" x 39", ©2007 Stacy Hortner. Based on a photo by the client, Marianne Phillips.

Stacy usually does not give a price range to a client until she has developed some drawings or sketches and she understands how involved the process will be. If the client changes directions mid-stream and wants something larger, she renegotiates the price.

Stacy does not work with a contract. She will not accept a commission that she finds aesthetically unpleasing to her; therefore, if she does not like the artistic direction the client is heading in, she will not make the piece. After the completion of the work, if the client backs out, she will keep it for her permanent collection or sell it. She has been lucky in this regard; no one has ever refused or failed to pay her. If she ever accepts a commission for either an organization or corporation, she will then use a contract.

She finds that working with a client is a highly interactive process. Some clients know what interests them and present her with materials, a sketch, or a photo. She usually visits the client's house to get a sense of their color palette or views their artwork to see the styles that interest them. She interviews the client about their expectations and vision for the artwork. She then creates sketches

and presents color palettes for them to choose from. Once the initial drawing and colors/textures/fabrics are chosen, some clients don't want to be involved until the unveiling. Others like update photos to check her progress. When she feels the need to change direction in the piece or if the client changes his/her mind, she works closely with them until things are back on track.

Working by commission challenges Stacy to try new techniques. She usually completes the artwork within a prescribed time frame. However, whenever she procrastinates, she knows that she is out of her comfort zone. The best cure for that has been simply to dive back into the project.

Most of her commissions come from word of mouth. Her web site also has provided some work.

Judith Content of Palo Alto, California, has done commissions for individuals as well as for corporate spaces such as lobbies, hallways, and conference rooms. She has also done commissions for collectors, including John M. Walsh III. She is currently working on her first commission for a health facility, her largest commission in some years.

Her corporate lobby pieces have often reached several stories in size,

and have consisted of complex installation systems involving numerous panels suspended in layers from plexiglass brackets or rods. The commission she is currently working on will measure approximately 5'h x 12'w and will be a solid piece suspended from a fabricated metal rod.

Judith usually works with an art broker or art representative when she is undertaking a commission. She asks for a nonrefundable 20% downpayment, with the remainder to be paid within 30 days of the installation.

For all corporate and most residential commissions, she prepares a rendering, typically beginning with a scale drawing of the completed piece. To simulate the colors of the silks, she has developed a technique of pleating paper and applying watercolors and crayons that have the look of her shibori-dyed silks. These papers are painted, cut up, and pieced to create a finished composition. It allows Judith to work out problems prior to undertaking the actual commission.

The renderings are presented to the client or art committee for approval. This is also an opportunity for the client to request changes. Judith stresses that the finished piece will never be an exact replica of the rendering, but it will reflect the design. The rendering is created for a fee of \$500-1000 and remains in her possession. Sometimes she makes a color print of the rendering for the client's collection as a gift.

For private commissions, Judith often makes a special book for her clients. The book consists of images of the piece in progress—the dyeing, piecing, construction, etc. She finds that creating this book enhances the client's appreciation of the piece and is a special treasure for the client to share with friends and family who are curious about the commission. She puts fabric samples into the books as well. She presented one of these books to Jack Walsh. She had shipped his commission (titled *Prism*, measuring 91" x 53") but waited to give him his book in person at the SAQA Con-

ference in Athens, Ohio, in 2007. This provided a wonderful opportunity to go through the entire book with Jack, as well as with his curator Penny McMorris, who was also at the conference.

Judith works with several art brokers and gallery owners who keep their eyes out for appropriate commissions. Sometimes she gets private work because the client sees her art at a friend's house, at an exhibition, in a magazine, or on the web. She won the health facility commission because a friend on their art committee had come to her studio, seen new work, and was impressed enough to suggest that she email images to the art broker in charge of all the artwork at the facility. Judith did so, and the art broker then visited the studio to see her work in person.

Judith finds installation to be the most challenging part of the commission. She uses various methods of installation, generally suspending her work from black lacquered fiberglass rods inserted into clear plexiglass brackets secured to the wall. Corporate commissions can require a professional installation crew.

Her most challenging commission was in the mid 1980s during the Silicon Valley building boom. It involved two 2-storied mirroring pieces in a corporate lobby. Each piece consisted of 27 free-hanging, dyed, quilted, and appliquéd panels. Scaffolding was provided, and an expert crew of building contractors finished installing the first piece by lunchtime. Unfortunately, the second wall was made of something much denser and the drill bits kept breaking off. This was a stressful installation that convinced her to start working on a more intimate scale and to phase out doing such complex commissions.

I hope this article has given you



Prism
91" x 53"
©2007 Judith Content

some insight into how to handle a commission. If there is a topic that you'd like to learn more about, email me at clvquilts@yahoo.com, and I'll be happy to research it for you. ▼

SAQA Journal Editor Carolyn Lee Vehslage is a fiber artist and director of the SAQA regional group Fiber Revolution (www.fiberrevolution.com). She lives in Sicklerville, New Jersey. Her web site is www.clvquilts.com.

Highlighted artist

Britta Ankenbauer

by Linda Witte Henke

Britta Ankenbauer, a native of Germany, relocated from Switzerland back to Leipzig in eastern Germany in 2006. While acknowledging that Leipzig is a wonderful city with interesting people, promising opportunities for trying out new ideas and building up new enterprises, she admits that reunification of East and West Germany has also introduced significant changes.

"The transition has not been easy," she says. "Some of the changes are taking place in visible ways, for instance in the buildings or in the traffic, but the changes in people's lives are more subtle."

"After so many years under another system, people have struggled to accept change and to embrace that change as good. Some people are energized by the changes, others are depressed by them," she explains. "You have to listen with great sensitivity for their feelings about the shifting reality."

After a generation of being separated into east and west, rebuilding relationships can be challenging. Britta says they are learning that it takes time for those relational connections to be reestablished. The parallel development of a more unified Europe has further accelerated the rate of change.

"It is so easy now for people to travel, for artists to exhibit throughout Europe, and for people to work in other countries," Britta says, "but even with these wonderful opportunities come challenges."

Population shifts are one such discouraging trend. "Young people are leaving to find work elsewhere, in West Germany or in other European countries," Britta says. "We have so few children that schools are closing."

Britta's move back to Leipzig had an immediate impact on her artwork. The first and most obvious change

was in her color palette, which shifted from the colors of nature visible in the Swiss countryside to the colors of Leipzig's urban landscape. She found herself studying her surroundings and photographing such things as old buildings, unusual surfaces, and color combinations.

The subject matter of her artwork also adjusted, shifting from harmonious imagery to designs more expressive of the changes, transformations, and challenges that were underway in the city around her. Britta's heightened awareness of the complexity in those variations and transformations has found expression in her art.

She is drawn toward the use of multiple layers as a way to portray this complexity. Employing a variety of surface design techniques such as dyeing, painting, silk screening, photographic transfer, and historical writings, she creates fabrics with many layers of color, texture, and meaning. Those fabrics are then cut apart and reassembled in ways that focus on a particular theme or design and that in a sense imitate the process through which the city itself is being rebuilt. The final layers in her creative process often include stitching and/or application of additional paint.

"Working in several layers conveys



QUEST OU EST (Western or Eastern), 80 x 100 cm, ©2005



photos by
Jens Stolinski
SYNASYS MEDIA

above: *Hommage à un Jardinier 2* (Homage to the Gardener 2), 80 x 100 cm, ©2007; below: detail

a sense of history and of multiple meanings," Britta relates. "It encourages the viewer to move beyond the surface questions and the easy answers to explore deeper themes."

Britta also seeks to portray complexity through her movement away from perfectionism. Acknowledging that she used to seek technical perfection in her artwork, she has since discovered that this does not readily express the chaos that is often a by-product of the complex changes underway in the city around her.

"Life brings some accidents; we must keep our minds open in order to see those accidents as possibilities," she explains. "Now I sometimes leave my seams open or use not-nice colors."

Britta also describes her journey as one of moving away from preoccupation with design elements, principles, and rules. For her, it's more important to be in dialogue with the artwork itself, to be present to the developments that occur serendipitously, and to be willing to respond to those developments with a sense of

adventure.

"Our lives are characterized by a great deal of chaos," she observes. "Should not our art in some way reflect that?"

Britta laments the number of art quilts being created that she thinks hold strong visual appeal but seem devoid of content, and she is disappointed when viewers seem more interested in the techniques employed than in the messages conveyed. Although she is definitely interested in creating artwork that engages viewers, Britta is more concerned with the message of her artwork than with its aesthetic appeal.

"Although my work may evoke conversation about technique, my first intention is always the content of the quilt," she insists. "I want people to look for meaning in my artwork and to see in its imperfection some reflection of real life."

When asked, Britta has a hard time pinpointing the entry of her journey into studio art quilts. Long a lover

continued on next page





Relief, 80 x 106cm, ©2005

of color, pattern, and textiles, she originally started working with fabric, dyes, and resists to create batiks. Meanwhile, she was also building a collection of fabrics that she loved. After seeing some great exhibitions of art quilts, she began to envision possibilities for employing both her collected fabrics and the fabrics she was creating to fashion something new. She learned sewing techniques as a way to make those possibilities a reality.

Because her life has involved multiple relocations, Britta has not had the opportunity to work with a particular mentor or to be part of any quilting or art quilt groups. Her growth has come primarily by way of books, workshops, and personal exploration.

Britta's first big success came when she entered a national quilt contest while living in Switzerland and was awarded first-place honors. Inspired by the theme of the contest—drinking

water—she incorporated pieces of plastic water bottles on the quilt to draw attention to environmental concerns related to water-bottle waste. What she did not expect was that the little plastic pieces would actually add visual appeal to her quilt by reflecting light in an aesthetically pleasing way.

With a background in lifelong learning and group dynamics, progression into the teaching role was a natural development for Britta. Drawing on language skills in German, French, and English, her course offerings address surface design techniques, design and composition, and mixed media art quilting.

"I love teaching," Britta acknowledges. "I especially enjoy having the opportunity to help each student move in the direction of his or her unique style."

Britta recently fulfilled a significant professional goal when she relocated her studio to the local Baumwollspinnerei, a 125-year-old former cotton

factory that now houses artists' studios, as well as space for those artists to display their work for public view. She also recently became affiliated with a small community of Leipzig designers.

Although textile artists are not plentiful in Leipzig, Britta takes full advantage of available technologies to maintain relationships with a variety of artists in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Great Britain.

"I am planning exhibitions together with some of them," she explains. "With others, we are telephoning one another about exhibition possibilities, good catalogs, photographs we've seen, etc."

Britta's efforts to market herself and her art include maintaining a website (www.britta-ankenbauer.de) and blog, cultivating community visibility through her Baumwollspinnerei studio, participating in exhibitions, and achieving recognition through her teaching. She is in the process of

Baumwolltagebuch
(Cotton Diary)
95 x 110cm, ©2007

producing cards and catalogs of her artwork.

Like many artists, Britta struggles to balance life as a professional artist with competing demands for her time and energy (especially in her roles as parent and spouse). Her goals for the future include claiming more time to create exploratory work and to expand her repertoire of workshops. She also intends to delve more deeply into the themes of chaos and imperfection, both in her artwork and as subjects for articles and lectures. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Linda Witte Henke was living in West Germany in 1989 during the fall of the wall. Her website is www.lindahenke.com.



Lesesnacht
(Night in the Library)
80 x 102 cm, ©2008, and detail

Art Quilts XIII: Lucky Break

by Linda McCurry

The *Art Quilts* show is consistently the most viewed exhibition at the Chandler Center for the Arts in Chandler, Arizona each year. This year's show was no exception. Opening on November 7, 2008 to a packed house, the show was filled with eye-pleasing and thought-provoking works that displayed a wide range of styles and evoked a broad range of emotions. Diane Howell, the show's curator, did a masterful job of selecting a body of work that hangs together to present a unified grouping in spite of the artwork's diversity. The show was on display through December 31, 2008.

The theme of this year's show, Lucky Break, was clearly inspirational for many of the artists who featured it prominently in their artists' statements. Particularly touching was the statement that accompanied Pamela

Allen's work, *Mama Ruth*, which recounted a loving foster mother from her childhood. The piece showed Mama Ruth and the 17 little girls she fostered, presented in Allen's warm, witty style. It was embellished with beads and found objects and heavily quilted. It is clear that Allen viewed her time with Mama Ruth as a lucky break.

Judy Berry's work, *Journey to America*, illustrated another type of lucky break: one in which her ancestors' immigration to the United States opened doors for a new, bright future. Berry's use of multiple photo transfer techniques created a pleasing collage in fabric. Other artists used photo printing techniques with great results as well. Sue Reno's *Amanita Muscar*, Pat Owoc's *Love Always*, and Julie Duschack's *Space Boy* were all very effective.

Peg Keeney spoke about a different sort of lucky break in her artist's statement: the kind of break that happened when "I accidentally dropped my chocolate into your peanut butter." In Keeney's case it was sheer fabric falling on a work in progress. The resulting piece was a stunning and subtle work called *Transitions III*, featuring beautiful hand-dyed silks in shades of gold and rust, layered and stitched. The simple shapes invite us in for a closer look and hold us there as we discover more and more complexity.

For some of the artists, the show offered yet another opportunity to extend their well-known series work. Virginia Spiegel's *Boundary Waters #32*, Barbara Jucacki's *Spring Brookside*, Linda Colsh's *Drawing on the Mist*, and Eileen Lauterborn's *Unknown Territory* all covered familiar

right: *Aspens 4*, 34" X 47"
©2006 Brenda H. Smith, www.brendasmithquilts.com

below: *Amanita Muscaria*, 24" x 25"
©2007 Sue Reno, www.suereno.com





themes. Although in each case the work upholds the artists' high standards, many long-standing admirers expressed the desire to see some new ground being broken.

Thelma Smith entered significant new territory with *Debian*, her simple and dramatic expression of the open source software logo, done in silk with heavy hand-stitched quilting and raw edges. This work takes Smith, who established her international reputation as a quilt artist with her *Left Turn Lane* series, in a completely new direction. It was a bold gesture and quite successful.

Although *Leaf Motif* by Kristin Otto uses a simple shape, her adventurous color choices and composition take the work up a notch, and the result is complex and beautiful. Another piece that elevated a simple motif to a level of unexpected excellence was Sarah Ann Smith's *Fields of Gold*. In this work, the quilted plant forms in the foreground brought the theme to life. Brenda Smith's *Aspens 4* also used a simple theme and wonderful color to pull the viewer into a perfect autumn day in the mountains.

Many artists emphasized printing, dyeing, discharging, painting, and other surface design techniques in their work. Barb Wills' *Landmarks #10* used soy inks printed on silk. Lisa Chipetine, in *Waves of Emotion*,

Above left: **Reflections III**, 43" x 34"
©2008 Peg Keeney, pegkeeney.com

Above right: **Space Boy**, 41" x 44"
©Julie Duschack, www.julieduschack.com

Right: **Love, Always**, 52" x 18"
©2006 Pat Owoc, www.patowoc.com

used paint applied to canvas with great swooping strokes that vibrate with energy. Liz Berg used discharge techniques in *Life Circles*, creating a rhythmical composition with a limited color palette. In *In the Ballscape*, Denise Currier used trompe l'oeil to bring us an ant's view of a golf ball on a desert course.

In the final analysis, *Art Quilts XIII: Lucky Break* represented a lucky break for everyone who had the opportunity to see the show. Diane Howell should be commended for her dedication to the art form. Thanks to her hard work and discerning eye, many new fans of art quilting are formed each year when they encounter the *Art Quilts* show at the Chandler Center for the Arts. ▼

SAQA Arizona representative and professional artist member Linda McCurry is a fiber artist. She lives in Gilbert, Arizona, and her web site is www.lindamccurry.com.



Thinking about teaching?

by Jake Finch

Teaching in local quilt shops is a wonderful way to build your reputation as a professional quilter. It's also a great way to both network with other quilt enthusiasts and to improve upon your own skills. Loyal students will continue to take your classes. As your name becomes better known, you'll find bigger venues seeking you out, such as guilds and regional quilt shows that offer workshops. Local teaching is a great way to get started.

My thoughts about teaching at shops are based on my seven years of teaching. I live in Southern California, where there are many shops within a comfortable driving distance. That allows me some flexibility and choice over my working conditions. Other regions of the country might not be as saturated with teaching opportunities. You may have to

compromise more on your working conditions when you first get started.

At my favorite shop, I teach almost weekly. Because of the opportunities I've received from them, I happily accept their standard pay scale. When guilds, retreats, shows, and shops bring me in for special events, I have a separate fee schedule for my workshops and lectures.

There is a strong difference, in my mind, between these types of teaching. For local stores, my goal is to build relationships with the shop owners, the students, and the area guilds. I would rather have repeat students who sing my praises back to their mini-groups and guilds than one-timers who won't remember to recommend me in the future.

My local shop offers me a regular venue and tons of creative freedom to teach what I want, because the owner knows that I have happy students.

They have also hosted book signings at their expense when I've released my quilt books, and other promotional events. In turn, I'm happy for the convenience of the shop, the nice discount I receive, and the ability to count on regular income from teaching there.

The pay structure for teaching at local quilt shops is inconsistent; there is neither an industry standard nor continuity between how shops handle their teachers' payment. It can change depending on the

owner's mood, checkbook balance, etc.

My shop pays me 80 percent of their class fees. The 20 percent that they keep is used for marketing the class. They pay on time and consistently. I know when my check is coming, which is important to me. I usually have a minimum of two students in order to teach a class. They are so good about building excitement for my classes that I tend to have most classes filled.

I have taught at shops that don't have a set fee schedule or who pay an hourly rate. Because of my past experience, I no longer teach at these shops. An hourly rate doesn't inspire me to bring in more students, and it often isn't enough to cover my time and preparation work. I also don't feel it's fair to the shop if fewer students come in.

When I teach at a shop that requires travelling beyond my local area, I offer my regular guild fee schedule. I'll speak to the shop owner, and together we'll determine if she can cover the cost of my fee. Teaching is a long-term effort for me, and I always look at the relationships I'm building and how that will help to get my name out. If I perceive a bigger value in the venue, I might lower my fee to accommodate the shop's ability to fill the class. I charge \$300 plus travel expenses for a 6-hour workshop, and \$250 plus travel expenses for a lecture.

If my fee is \$300 for a workshop and the shop owner tells me she only expects six students for the class, the minimum she would need to charge for the class would be \$50 to cover my fee. (This doesn't include travel expenses, but I'm simplifying the example.)

Most shops in more rural areas can't draw students with a \$50 class



Everlasting Bouquet

51" x 39"

©Jake Finch

from *Comfort Quilts from the Heart* by Jake Finch, published by C&T Publishing (2008).

See "Teaching" on page 34

Why study art?

by Rosemary Claus-Gray

Nancy Crow once posed the question, “Do you know why that is a good composition?” Clearly, she expected me to know. I felt like a kid caught without my homework. My hope that she would tell me the answer faded as she smiled ever so slightly and walked away. The obvious message was that I should know the principles of composition and be able to discuss them. At that moment, I decided I would learn about art and what makes a good composition.

I consulted with Nancy to ask how I could learn more about composition and art in general. She acknowledged that art school could be valuable, but said that it is not the only way to learn about art. She recommended taking longer workshops, especially at some of the arts and crafts schools around the country. She advised taking classes in a variety of mediums and studying with different teachers. She also suggested going to museums, art galleries, and college exhibits to look at all forms of art, not just quilts. She stressed the importance of reading art magazines, art history books, and biographies of famous artists. All of these things would develop my eye to see as an artist.

Pam RuBert is a trained artist now working with the quilt medium. She wrote to the QuiltArt list, “I often hear art quilters say that they want to be accepted by the fine art world, but I am surprised that they seem to show little interest in other fine art. One reason I went to Houston was to visit the wonderful museums that are only a few minutes away from the International Quilt Festival show. If you are serious about making art, you need to look at other art.”

Scott Murkin is a prolific quilter and certified quilt judge. After serving as an IQA judge, he said, “The art categories were the weakest, which

surprised me. There is a tremendous amount of poor design out there as quilters struggle to find their artistic voices. Quilters desperately need to take more design classes and fewer ‘technique du jour’ classes.”

Elizabeth Barton is an artist striving to improve her quilt compositions based on time-tested principles of art. She focuses on teaching compositional skills in her workshops. On her blog, elizabethbarton.blogspot.com, she said, “I think it’s important to have good basic knowledge of composition and design, and how to evaluate a potential design. The emphasis of the workshops I teach is on the importance of learning more about art and the thrill of taking the first steps on a long and fascinating journey. Those who take the class tell me this is the information they’ve been wanting—that they want solid

art knowledge. They want to know why a piece is strong or weak and how to improve it. Many of the students are willing to put in the time necessary to learn more about color, line, balance, and so on.”

Pamela Allen, a Canadian artist and former painter, now creates with the quilt medium and teaches around the country and the world. She uses fine art examples in her classes. She urges the student to look at fine art and see how the work is composed. She asks her students to notice how design elements are combined in fine artworks so that the students can use some of those concepts in their own work.

If you are a quilter who aspires to create art with your quilting, then listen to what artists and the art world is saying to us. I’ll be the first to acknowledge that I have a great

See “Why study art” on page 36



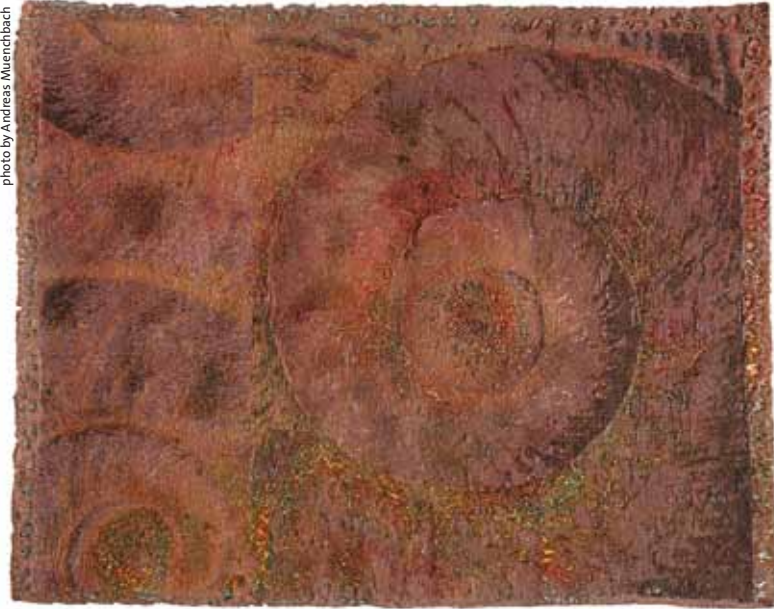
Blue

31" x 20"

©2008 Rosemary
Claus-Gray



photo by Andreas Muenzbach



Terise Harrington

Beginning II, 43" x 26" ©2006
teriseharrington.com

Beginning II is an exploration of color value, dark to light, using only black and white and gradations. I wanted to add depth to a two-dimensional surface by printing a motif in a grid pattern on top of a pieced surface. Stitching adds movement to the piece.



Molly Elkind

Ways of Looking at Dodd Creek
12" x 24" ©2007 | www.mollyelkind.com

This is the first piece in an ongoing series of quilts inspired by hikes along Dodd Creek in north Georgia. This piece features my own photograph digitized and printed on fabric and bead-embroidered.



Deborah Weir

Well Bottom, 13" x 19" ©2009 | www.deborahweir.com

Well Bottom is part of my SERE series which is dedicated to exploring the issue of inadequate and unhealthy water on the planet. The lack of good water is the cause of death to millions, and the availability of pure water is a political football rather than a right. This particular piece looks at what's left: a few drops of water and some mud at the bottom of a tamped well.

SAQA auction: A look behind the bidding process

by Rita Hannafin

3...2...1...zero. The wait is over. It's 2 o'clock and another SAQA Benefit Auction has just begun. Martha Sielman, SAQA's executive director, sits at her desk in front of two computer screens. The bids, time-stamped by the computer, start coming in, setting off a flurry of activity.

Martha notes the winning bids, posts the word "Sold" on the auction page, and adds the sale to the totals on the home page. Then she promptly e-mails the winners and losers and notifies the artist that his or her piece has sold. She enters the credit card information into our secure credit card system.

Martha continually updates the auction pages to indicate what sold, for how much, and to whom. It's a frenzy, but a lot of fun too. It's at least an hour before Martha can breathe, and on the final \$75 days, it can be as long as four hours before things slow down.

I handle the packing and mailing for each transaction, which entails taking the orders, locating the quilts, and packing them into Priority Mail boxes with a personal thank-you note from Martha to each buyer. Every

package is insured for the purchase price. I inspect each piece one last time before saying goodbye and sending it off. We have developed a special attachment to these amazing works of art. Martha makes her daily run to the post office to send off the treasures to locations all around the world.

Anatomy of an auction

Months before, the quilts began arriving, each one greeted with excitement and awe. After the artists are notified that their art arrived safely, we carefully place each piece in a clear plastic envelope for protection. It is then logged into the database.

Once all the quilts have been received, they are sorted into one of three groups and arranged on the website. This makes it easier and faster to process each order during the auctions.

A digital image of each quilt is published on SAQA's website. Eileen Doughty, who organizes the auction on our website, posts the images as thumbnails for easy viewing and downloading. Each square has the maker's name and the title below it.

If the maker has a website or blog, Eileen links to it. The title of the piece links to a larger view of the square.

Eileen provides this advice for donors of squares who want a professional-quality digital image of their piece: "The whole square should be in focus, lit evenly, and not distorted by photographing it at an angle, which creates "keystoning." The image should be submitted as an 800 x 800 pixel jpeg. The image should be taken on a true white background."

The 2008 auction benefitted from the photographic services of SAQA member Barb McKie. With her professional camera, excellent lighting, and trained eye, Barb photographed each quilt. After we left, she compared each piece to its photo to get the color correct. It was truly a labor of love.

Barb also chose a sampling of the squares to be displayed in Houston at the International Quilt Festival. SAQA member Vou Best did a wonderful job of displaying the squares in the SAQA booth and changing them out each day. Being able to show them at IQF-Houston was a great way to introduce them to a broader audience.

How did we do?

This year's auction was a great success by any measure, with several notable improvements over the 2007 results. Overall participation increased, which is a healthy and encouraging trend. This year 234 art quilts were purchased by 101 different buyers. (In the 2007 auction, 73 buyers acquired 139 quilts.) Also encouraging is that 17 quilts were purchased for the opening maximum (\$750) bid, compared to only seven last year. In all, \$41,775 was generated this year, an increase of \$14,525 over the 2007 results.

A survey sent to successful bidders provided some interesting perspectives about what motivates people to buy. Reasons for bidding on the quilts



**Yellow Headed
Blackbird**
12" x 12"
©2009 Ruth Powers

were as varied as the art and included “home display,” a “special gift for a very special occasion,” “building a collection for an artist retreat,” “selecting artwork for a hospital,” and “designing a gallery wall of 12 x 12 pieces.”

Sherry Kleinman loved the auction (both contributing and buying). She said, “I think it’s a great asset for all SAQA members. The chance to visit websites, learn about other artists, and make new friends is priceless. I’ve been e-mailing both the person who bought my donation and the artist who made the one I bought.”

The most popular response to “Are you pleased with your purchases?” was how much better the quilts are in person compared to how they look on the website. It’s hard to see all the nuances of texture and detail from a digital photo, no matter how good the quality of the image.

The question, “How important has the SAQA Auction become in adding to your art collection?” was also asked. Teri Springer offered, “It has been VERY important! I love being able to see so much work by so many different artists and being able to collect a wider variety of work.” She favors the small format because she likes to have all her art on display at one time.

Tommy Fitzsimmons became a collector *because* of the auction. She’s collecting the squares to decorate a massive blank wall in her home and plans on purchasing more in the future. Susan Cargill wrote, “The auction allows me to collect from a variety of surface designers in a smaller format. In particular, I love the stories each person has to share regarding their individual quilt.”

Carol Larson responded, “My personal textile art collection began decades ago with the acquisition of more than a dozen traditional Navajo rugs. The SAQA Auction has enabled me to acquire small pieces of other artists’ work that complement the art we already own. I look forward to what 2009 will bring to the SAQA



Moondance

12" x 12"

©2009 Patricia Gould

Auction and adding more beautiful textile art to my growing collection.”

Maria Shell teaches at a quilt shop in Anchorage, Alaska. “I have brought all of my auction quilts (8) to class. My students love them! The quilts inspire them to check out SAQA and to try new techniques in their own quilts. Having these visual, real, you-can-handle-them samples of a wide variety of artists’ work is great for me and my students. I feel as if the squares are my muses.”

Michele David shared, “The auction is an important venue for me to collect. This allows me to have a diverse collection of fiber artists to select from. As a fiber artist myself, I really appreciate the range of expression and techniques used in the squares.” Michele is impressed by the quality of artwork submitted and appreciates the chance to add to her collection of fiber, glass, pottery, and paintings.

Del Thomas adds, “I have added quite a few pieces from the auction to the Thomas Contemporary Quilt Collection. It is an extra bonus that I’m helping SAQA fulfill its purpose and also supporting artists who may be hesitant about selling their work.”

It’s really easy to bid on a piece. Even I did it this year. I decided to bid sooner rather than later, because I had my heart set on a particular piece. On auction day, I filled out the information ahead of time. I waited at my computer, watched the clock,

and at 2:00 pm EST all I did was click. Martha did the rest. Within minutes I received the confirmation that I won my bid. I was elated! My auction piece, a New York scene, is hanging in a prominent place in my family room next to a print of the Brooklyn Bridge. Instant home decorating. My art quilt collection has begun.

Jean Judd shared the fact that 32 hits on her website came directly from her link on the auction site. That may not sound like many, but as a result of those hits she received a commission and sold another piece. She points out that a Google search for “art quilt” comes up with 1,560,000 sites, so there’s a huge amount of competition. “The more I can link my site to other sites (such as SAQA) the better chance I have of someone actually visiting my site.”

Maria Shell said, “This auction is another way to bring our community together; to support each other. I can’t have Pamela Allen or Kathy Weaver over for lunch, but I can have them on my wall. And having them on my wall encourages me to just go for it! To be the artist that I am. Celebrate that.” ▼

SAQA active member Rita Hannafin is an art quilter living in Storrs, Connecticut. She is the exhibition travel coordinator and welcomes suggestions for new venues.

Selling quilt books in a crowded market

by Meg Cox

If I paid close attention to the economics of publishing, I'd never write another book. The financial aspects and the time required to market a book would put me off doing it.

My first book was out of print within five years. My second book, however, has sold more than 25,000 copies. It pays royalties, but only because the advance was so small.

These books were about family traditions, and eventually I moved on to a topic that excites me even more: quilting. I spent a full six years researching and writing my third book, *The Quilter's Catalog: A Comprehensive Resource Guide*, which came out in February 2008 from Workman Publishing. The book was well-received and became a main selection of Crafter's Choice Book Club. As of this writing, there are more than 60,000 copies in print.

In addition to having written three books published by three different mainstream publishers, I spent five years reporting on the publishing business for the *Wall Street Journal*. From the standpoint of someone who has both covered publishing and been published, I'd like to share some observations that may be useful for other quilt book authors.

The market

The trade journal *Publisher's Weekly* reports that more than 400,000 new book titles were published in 2007 alone. You may not think your competition is vampire novels or *Skinny Bitch in the Kitchen*, but all those books are vying for shelf space at bookstores and for acknowledgement from the media.

In addition, there are a shocking number of quilt books out there. Amazon.com lists about 80,000 quilt books at any one time, and Google lists even more. You would be surprised how many different titles con-

front consumers just at quilt shows. Linne Lindquist, who makes her living selling books at quilt shows, typically carries 1,000 different quilting titles in her booth, *The Craftsman's Touch*. Lindquist says that sales have been trending down in recent years,

The average book in this country sells about 500 copies

and it takes a fresh angle to attract quilters.

Sales numbers for individual book titles are equally discouraging. The average book in this country sells about 500 copies. One major quilt publisher I spoke with said a very successful book for her company might sell 12,000–15,000 in its first year. Only a handful of quilt books reach 100,000 copies over time.

You might be thinking that you don't mind modest sales as long as your book will be on shelves for years, but think again. Many quilt titles only last about six months on the market, especially project books.

Making your book the exception: a hit

If you're still reading this, then I haven't scared you off. Good. Because the truth is, it's incredibly satisfying to write a book and get it published. I'm as addicted to writing books as I am to making quilts. Similar to making a quilt, book writing is an act of creation, leaving a product that often outlasts its creator. Even if your book falls short of being a bestseller, it can

provide a major boost for your artistic career.

Let's assume you've sailed over the first hump and have produced your master opus. Now it's time to make noise. Even before you turn in your manuscript, you should be discussing marketing and promotion plans with your publisher. That includes scheduling a book tour.

I chose Workman Publishing over another publisher promising more money because I know how hard they promote each book and author. Throughout the industry, book tours have dwindled, and many non-celebrity authors like me are left to tour in our own region on our own dime. Workman routinely arranges and funds 20-city cross-country tours for the books they publish.

For me, Workman put together a 19-city tour from Portland, Oregon, to Paducah, Kentucky. They honored my request to schedule more events in quilt shops than bookstores. In many cities where I stopped, I spoke to a guild or signed books at a show. I reached out to non-quilters through appearances on local morning television.

Though I was blessed with an active publisher, I worked at least as hard promoting my book as I did writing it. I understand what it takes to get noticed in a crowded book marketplace. No matter how much or how little a publisher does, the author bears the greatest responsibility for promotion. Here are some tips based on what worked best for me:

Eight tips for marketing your book

Find a business partner to raise awareness. As a new author in quilt circles, I knew I needed help to get quilters and shops to notice my book. Months before my book came out, I approached Benartex, the fabric company, and asked if we could work

together on a national quilt contest.

This contest would be tied loosely to my book, and contestants would have to use some of Benartex's new fabric to enter. Looking back, this was pretty forward of me, but I learned that fabric companies are always looking for something that sets them apart. Because Benartex took full-page ads in quilt magazines for their new fabric, my book cover received exposure too. You might find a local partner, like a quilt shop or a national partner like the manufacturer of a quilting tool important to your technique.

Stamp the image of the book cover on a free giveaway. If you're lucky, your publisher will have some budget for promotion and you can influence how it's spent. I talked my publisher into printing thousands of bookmarks that featured my book on one side, and the nonprofit Alliance for American Quilts on the other side. They agreed partly because I paid for the design of the Alliance side myself. Thousands of these bookmarks were given away at quilt shows, and it gave me something to send to quilt shops for a handout.

Urge early readers to post reviews online. It's viewed as a real rookie move to have a book listed on Amazon.com with few or no reader reviews. It's not against the rules to ask people you know to post something as soon as the book is available for order online. Don't tell them what to say, but get them to be as specific as possible. Many potential buyers really do notice ratings and use the reviews to get an idea of whether the book will be their cup of tea.

Send review copies to loudmouth buzz builders. Ideally, you'll have a publisher that believes in giving away a decent number of review copies. (This offering is something to ask about before you sign a contract.) Make sure they get your book into the hands of the top quilting publications and also into the hands of influential people,

the type of people Malcolm Gladwell calls "connectors" in his book *The Tipping Point*. This list includes popular bloggers, quilt celebrities, well-known teachers, and high-profile shop owners.

Show shop owners how your book makes them money. One of the advantages of going with a major quilt publisher is its relationships with shops. The publisher can help shops build a class around a project from your book. Some of the most successful project and technique books work this way. Since my book is very inviting to beginners and includes some great simple projects, I created a one-page sheet for shops about how they can use my book to grow new customers. Workman let me know which distributors were moving the most copies of my book in the market so I could work with them.

Keep updating your projects. Showcasing current fabrics and techniques makes your book look fresh. If your publisher is putting together a trunk show for shops, consider remaking a couple of them in new fabric that's just hit the market. One of the most popular projects in my book is a simple tied quilt with big squares. I decided to remake the quilt for touring about six months after publication. I asked Westminster Fabric to donate the newest Amy Butler fabrics. This helps the quilt shop sell the fabric they actually stock.

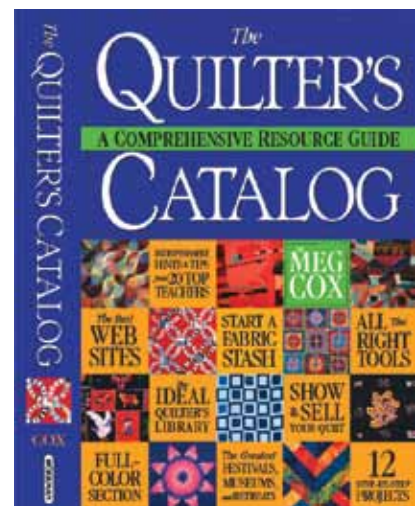
Glue your book to your hand. I'm being only slightly facetious. As much as possible, take your new book everywhere you go. I can't tell you how many times I've run into a friend or a stranger and wished I had my book with me so they could see what I was talking about. I met the wife of a major quilt distributor on a plane, and I didn't have the book with me! Now I always keep a copy in my car, and carry it in a tote bag on the road.

Don't get discouraged. I can't even count all the setbacks I've experi-

enced. My editor had a stroke during the process. Two quilt projects got lost. Many promotion ideas failed. At the urging of the Workman publicist, I made a quilt for Rachel Ray, using all food fabrics. Her producers loved it, but said they weren't doing any more crafts. A *Cooking Light* feature for which I made a quilt fell through. A rave review in *Country Living* magazine was a bust: the book was photographed inside a cute straw tote that obscured the cover, and the title in the caption was wrong. In spite of all this, I keep thinking of new promotion ideas because I believe in my book.

In the end, nobody will make a more passionate spokesperson for your book than you will, so you need to take that job seriously. Because the extra effort I put into marketing my book helped make it successful, I'm working on a sequel to *The Quilter's Catalog*. I loved getting raves from readers, but one of the compliments that made me proudest was when my editor at Workman said she's never had an author work harder. Naturally, I rewarded her with a quilt. ▼

Meg Cox has been a quilter for 20 years and a professional writer since graduating from college. She lives in Princeton, New Jersey with her husband and son. Her web site is www.megcox.com.



The Quilt Art group

by Dominie Nash

Founded in 1985, Quilt Art (www.quiltart.org.uk) is a group of professional quilt artists. Quilt Art aims to extend the boundaries of quilting as an artistic medium, and to achieve wider recognition of the quilt as an art form. Our group holds regular touring exhibitions in Britain and Europe, and has also exhibited in Japan and Canada. A tour of the United States is planned in the future.

To accompany each exhibition, we publish a high-quality catalogue. Quilt Art strives to maintain its unique reputation for integrity of expression and quality of craftsmanship. Each member brings a distinctive approach, and our artwork is diverse and dynamic.

Our group meets quarterly, usually twice in England and twice on the European continent. Group members are expected to attend at least two meetings per year. In between meetings, we maintain a Yahoo group with frequent email discussions. We also keep databases of the various exhibitions and catalogue sales.

Two of the meetings are strictly about business and take place in members' homes for one day. The other two are weekend meetings, and have been held in various locations such as a monastery in England, a residential art center in Denmark, and a guesthouse in Hungary. The weekend meetings are more like retreats, though there is always a business portion of the meeting. Members bring artwork or images to share and discuss.

The membership is continually changing. Anyone may apply to the group. Information on how to apply to be juried by the members, is on our web site. We try to keep the membership number around twenty.

The *Quilt Art 20* exhibition has recently completed its European tour and is in storage awaiting the

U.S. tour. The *Quilt Art 22* exhibition is currently touring Europe, and is scheduled to go to Korea in 2010.

We are preparing artwork for two new exhibits: *Folds, Rolls and Scrolls*, which will have a limited tour beginning at the Festival of Quilts in 2010, and *Quilt Art 25*, celebrating our group's 25th anniversary, which will tour extensively accompanied by a catalogue.

Smaller exhibitions may have a theme and size restriction, but the major exhibitions are open-ended, taking into account the size limitations of most venues. Each artist is given a set amount of running footage, which we can fill in any way we wish, usually with two medium art quilts or one large art quilt. All of these decisions are made by the membership at our meetings.

Janet Twinn coordinates the search for venues in the U.K. She sends a cover letter and catalogue to prospective museums, galleries, and art centers. Since many of the Quilt Art exhibitions contain up to 40 quilts, she has to make sure that the venues she approaches have enough wall space.

Individual members in other countries approach venues that they think might be interested in displaying art quilts. Sometimes a venue will approach the group as well. There are several venues that invite us back when we have a new show to offer. In the U.K. we charge the venues an average of 100 pounds (\$147 U.S. dollars) per week to rent the exhibition. We also earn money from the sales of our catalogues.

In the U.K., we belong to the Touring Exhibition Group (www.teg.org.uk). Their web site explains their services: "TEG is the professional group in the U.K. concerned with all aspects of organizing and touring exhibitions. We are an independent

membership network of galleries, museums, libraries, art and science centers and other organizations committed to exchanging exhibitions as a means of sharing ideas, materials and resources. We aim to tour exhibitions as widely as possible in order to extend public awareness, knowledge and enjoyment of historical and contemporary culture."

Since TEG stopped producing the catalogues announcing exhibitions that are available for tour, we have not found any new venues through them. Now, we have to post available exhibitions online on their web site, and hope that a venue views them.

The *Quilt Art 20* exhibition is currently listed in the catalogue of International Art and Artists (www.artsandartists.org) based in Washington, D.C. This is a non-profit organization that sets up U.S. tours of international exhibitions. We were approached by this organization through their contact with an Irish art center where we had exhibited.

We use a variety of shipping methods, such as local vans between venues in the U.K., and also UPS. When possible, we ask the venues on our exhibition tours to pay shipping to the next venue. Our venues in Canada and Japan paid for all the shipping. For the U.S. tour, we are required to use an art shipper, which will be quite expensive, and the cost will be shared with the touring organization.

One of our members, Charlotte Yde, is a professional graphic artist/book designer. She designs and produces our catalogues and works with another member on the text. She also designed and manages our web site. We have divided up other jobs among the membership, such as public relations, updating price lists for the exhibitions, handling the finances, and so on.



het Keurslijf (Tight)

70" x 95"

©2007 Dirkje van der Horst -Beetsma

We fund the publication of new catalogues through sales of previous catalogs, member dues, and exhibition fees from the venues. We have applied for various grants, but these are hard to come by, particularly because of the international makeup of the group. ▼

SAQA Professional Artist Member Dominie Nash is a full time studio quilt artist. She

lives in Bethesda, Maryland. Her web site is www.dominienash.com.

Current Quilt Art members are Bethan Ash, Wales; Eszter Bornemisza, Hungary; Elizabeth Brimelow, England; Jette Clover, Belgium; Linda Colsh, Belgium; Fenella Davies, England; Ann Fahy, Ireland; Dirkje van der Horst-Beetsma, The Netherlands; Inge Hueber, Germany; Sara Impey, England; Bridget Ingram-Bartholomäus, Germany; Jane Lloyd, Northern Ireland;

Cherilyn Martin, The Netherlands; Sandra Meech, England and Canada; Dominie Nash, United States; Mirjam Pet-Jacobs, The Netherlands; Karina Thompson, England; Janet Twinn, England; and Charlotte Yde, Denmark.

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www.gopackagingstore.com

Boxes for shipping artwork

www.uline.com
www.airfloatsys.com

SAQA University: One year and growing

by Jean M. Judd

SAQA University (SAQA-U) has passed the one-year anniversary mark. This groundbreaking repository of professional development information for art quilters has continued to expand with contributions from Studio Art Quilt Associates members.

The concept for SAQA-U grew out of the monthly mentorship conference calls and quickly evolved into a full blown wiki environment filled with information about the history and theory of art quilts. Other topics include managing the business of art quilting, marketing artwork, and professional development. There is even a feature, SAQArtique, that enables artists to have their work critiqued within a virtual group setting. Resources available to SAQA members through SAQA-U include all past issues of the *SAQA Journal*, calls for entry specific to our medium, SAQA membership listings, exhibition venues, and more.

This information would not be available to SAQA members if it weren't for the vision of the SAQA-U content team, who developed this wonderful tool. Members of SAQA continue to add content to the site. It is an ever-changing, ever-expanding repository of information. See the Winter 2008 issue of the *SAQA Journal* for the article, "SAQA University: A revolutionary way of learning," for more on the beginnings of SAQA-U.

SAQA *Journal* editor Carolyn Lee Vehslage queried some SAQA members who have been using the SAQA-U site. She asked the following questions of the 14 member users:

How often do you use SAQA-U?

What features do you use?

Have you created your own artist page?

Have you added content to SAQA-U?

What other information do you think should be added?

The answer to the first question, "How often do you use SAQA-U?" was the same for everyone: not nearly enough—finding the time is very difficult. SAQA members Jamie Fingal, Dale Ann Potter, Diane Lochala, Natalya Aikens, and I, Jean M. Judd, use the web site on a weekly basis. Other members, like Carol Larson, Kris Sazaki, Carol Ann Waugh, and Vou Best, access SAQA-U at least once a month.

There was a general consensus from the responders that the features they are currently using most often are the mentorship forum, region pages, and resources area. Natalya Aikens uses the SAQArtique area heavily, and if she has a piece up for critique, she may check the critique area every day for feedback. She also listens to the mentorship calls at her convenience when being present during the live interview does not fit her schedule.

Jamie Fingal, Southern California regional rep, says that the region page is her main interest at the moment. She tries to keep the page updated and checks on the membership list frequently. She also uses SAQA-U to

research specific subjects.

Kris Sazaki, another regional rep, also spends a lot of her time on SAQA-U updating her Northern California region's page. She has used SAQA-U to prepare for regional meetings by finding pertinent articles for a specific meeting's focus, such as articles on developing an artist statement.

Vou Best, also a regional rep, spends time keeping the Texas region page current. Although still on a learning curve, she finds SAQA-U very useful. She encourages her regional members to take advantage of the critique group section and recommends Lisa Chipetine's webinar, "How to use the critique groups." Vou encourages her region members in charge of programming for their SAQA Circle meetings to use the information on SAQA-U in planning their programs.

Diane Lochala says she views the artist pages located under the artist index section quite frequently. Each time an artist posts on the SAQA Yahoo site, a new book is released, or new exhibition information is posted, Diane goes to the artist's page



A sampling of SAQA-U's Art History, Theory and Biography selections



Example from SAQArtique, featuring work by Linda Colsh.

on SAQA-U to see what else is new for that artist and to learn a bit more about them.

Both Diane and I use the SAQA *Journal* articles. Being a member for only 3 years, I've been slowly reading all of the SAQA Journals in PDF format on SAQA-U. It's interesting to learn the history of the organization, see familiar names that I didn't know were current or former SAQA members, and see how the organization has grown and changed over the years. Much of the information in the previous journals is still helpful today in my development as an artist.

Most of the SAQA members who responded have either already set up an artist page or intend to set one up in the near future. Keeping the page updated was a task listed by all members as something they needed to do, as they had new information to include.

Personally, I try to update my own artist page every time I'm accepted into a juried exhibition, an article I've written for a magazine is published, or I have anything else that promotes either my artwork or art quilting in general. It's part of my normal process of updating my web site, online gallery, and résumé as new things occur. For me, this makes everything as up to date as possible, and if I need to send something to a prospective client, gallery owner, etc. I don't have to worry about whether the résumé or web site is current.

When asked what other content they would like to see added to SAQA-U, the respondents had some great suggestions. Diane Lochala

suggested more mentorship calls and allowing SAQA members to upload audio and video files they have created. Kris Sazaki would like to see a more streamlined method for uploading images. She found it difficult to locate her uploaded images when she wanted to use them later. Kris also would like to see an easier to use index.

Jamie Fingal would like to have a restricted area where volunteers for specific areas of SAQA would be able to access information on how to do their specific jobs or tasks.

Natalya Aikens would like to encourage more members to set up their artist pages. This is a wonderful resource, a way to find art quilters all in one location. She also thinks that a lot of the information that goes through the Yahoo group could be added into SAQA-U.

Jamie Fingal asked for a complete list of SAQA members who have been guests on *Quilting Arts TV*, as she feels this is relevant information about members and their journeys as fiber artists. This suggestion has now been implemented on the SAQA-U site.

Carol Ann Waugh surveyed her Colorado/Wyoming/Utah regional members, asking whether they had created an artist's profile. Of the 26 members who replied, 4 had completed their profiles and 22 had not. 7 said they needed more training and 6 did not need more training. Half of them (11) said they just didn't have the time to go to the SAQA web site and do anything.

A great addition to SAQA-U would be list of SAQA members who dye

fabrics and are willing to dye fabrics for fellow artists. A list of framers or SAQA members with knowledge of the correct techniques for framing textile artwork would be helpful for those of us who aren't handy in woodworking. A roster of SAQA members who are web designers would be very valuable. The more we can leverage one another's skills, the more time we will have in our studios.

Thank you to the SAQA members who responded to Carolyn's initial email. I hope more members will set aside an hour or two during the upcoming month to take a look at SAQA University and see what's there. Listen to a prerecorded mentorship call that piques your interest, sign up for the next webinar on how to use SAQA-U, attend the next mentorship call, check out some of the artist pages, or read up on marketing yourself and your artwork under the business and marketing section. Just an hour of your time each month will open up a wealth of information for you and help you to expand your horizons in the art quilt world. Maybe you'll find an area that needs more information that only you can supply.

SAQA-U can only be as great as SAQA members make it. We can all have a hand in continuing the vision set forth by the SAQA-U content team. They've done their part by getting this wonderful resource up and running. Now it's our turn to continue its growth and expansion. The potential is unlimited! ▼

SAQA active member Jean M. Judd resides in Cushing, Wisconsin. While carving time out of her schedule to spend in her studio, she is also serving as president of her 75+ member guild and is the publicity chair for their annual quilt show. Her artwork can be seen on her web site, www.jeanjudd.com.

Insuring the product of your creativity

by Elizabeth Van Schaick

When an artist has completed a piece of artwork stemming from her own inspiration, creativity, and time, it may be daunting to think about ensuring its safety. Many artists may put off considering insurance against damage and loss. They may get murky or conflicting information on what restitution is available and under what circumstances.

Above all, it is crucial to have a detailed discussion with an insurance agent and ask specific questions about any policy you have or are considering buying. Standard homeowner's insurance may cover new or old artwork while it is in your home, depending on the policy, and what information or documents the insurance carrier originally required. When entered into an exhibition, art pieces may be covered by the sponsoring organization's policy, but not always.

Below is a recent interview with Christine Johnston, CIC of HUB International of Arizona, who offers some clarification about insurance for new art work. Artist June Underwood contributes some tips about determining insurance values on exhibition paperwork.

Elizabeth Van Schaick: How will a developing artist or art quilt maker know when it is time to take out insurance for the first time? That is, when does it become necessary or highly advisable?

Christine Johnston: There is no set answer for this. Most quilt makers feel comfortable while the quilts are in their home. When they start shipping or taking their quilts elsewhere, that is usually when the first phone call happens.

EVS: So when an artist begins to send pieces to other venues more than occasionally, and generally anticipates income from the artwork,

taking out insurance seems wise. Once an artist is established in terms of reputation or selling prices, are there additional considerations or new types of coverage?

CJ: The policy my company offers is called a basic "Inland Marine" (also known as a "floater") policy. Whenever you are running any type of business, you need to sit down with your insurance advisor to find out if there is other coverage that should be considered. Every person is different in her wants and needs. This particular policy is geared to the quilt world, just like a jewelry floater policy or a musical instrument policy is geared toward a particular area. Each policy has special nuances that are geared to the type of artwork.

EVS: What types of policies exist for insuring the artist's artwork while in her own possession, and while on loan to other locales?

CJ: Any type of Inland Marine policy. This covers items anywhere within a specified area, for us it's the United States and Canada, but each carrier's policy is different.

EVS: What is covered by these policies—what types of situations? What is *not* covered?

CJ: I can tell you what is NOT covered on my policy: wear and tear, deterioration, climate, animals. Those are the major exclusions, but there are others, like war, nuclear attack, terrorism, etcetera. My policy will not cover any type of electronics. There are other policies out there that will.

EVS: Do you have any warnings concerning artists' insurance?

CJ: As with anything, get it in writing. Some insurance agents state the homeowner's policies will cover the quilts. Some carriers will, but most will not if the quilter is doing this as a business.

EVS: Some exhibition organizations may carry insurance that would cover

participants' artwork, but not all do, or they may state limitations. When entering an exhibition, sale, or special event, does an artist who has her own insurance need to ask whether her artwork is covered by the exhibition location or company's policy?

CJ: No. Again, my policy covers anywhere in the United States and Canada.

EVS: What does the artist need to have, in terms of documentation or official valuations, when first taking out a policy?

CJ: Appraisals from a certified appraiser or an established market value. Without these two items, the quiltmaker would only be reimbursed the cost of her material.

EVS: Do you have any contacts to whom you would send artists to get accurate appraisals for these purposes?

CJ: I go to the National Quilt Association web site to find the list of certified appraisers.

EVS: Are you able to say how much insurance typically costs for art quilts of small to medium size? Is it affordable for artists who are not yet making a high income?

CJ: I can tell you what my policy costs. I can't tell you what an "average" quilt will appraise for. My policy costs \$1.12 per \$100 of value. This is \$112 for \$10,000 worth of goods.

Artists need to check conditions and limits on coverage for works of art and be aware of whether a policy covers equipment used in making the work. Sewing machines might be covered under a homeowner's insurance policy or a policy that covers a body of artwork. Not all policies cover the computer, printer, or other electronics that are used to make art quilts. If such items are not included in a separate art business policy, the carrier of

See "Insuring" on page 35

Pattern design for profit

by Jane Dávila

My mother, Claire Oehler, and I opened a quilt store in 1990. We quickly realized that the kinds of quilt patterns we wanted to teach and offer to our customers weren't available on the market, so we set out to design our own. We decided that if we were having a hard time finding the kinds of patterns we wanted - whimsical, fun, brightly colored - that maybe other shops were too, and our pattern business was born.

We, along with one of our employees and my sister, started designing patterns and testing them out in classes. We did a lot of research into printing, packaging, and marketing. We learned the hard way and made a few mistakes, but we built a successful business nevertheless.

If you're interested in designing patterns, there are a few considerations to keep in mind. If you want to create a pattern business, you will need to invest time, money, and energy into building and fostering it, just like any other business. You should be prepared to come out with new designs twice a year, and you should have a marketing strategy. You may need to invest in equipment and software. You'll need to budget for advertising, marketing, and promotion. If you are only looking to supplement your teaching income, then you'll only have to produce a limited number of patterns on an as-needed basis and won't have the time and monetary investment of a full-scale pattern business.

I always design my patterns backwards, starting from the size of the paper. This may sound odd, but working this way can save you money and aggravation. There's nothing worse than coming up with a smashing design that's a pain in the neck to print because it doesn't fit on a standard sheet of paper.

If you are planning to do the printing yourself, you'll be limited to the size of the paper that your printer can handle. Wide-format printers will print up to 13" x 19", but this size paper can be hard to find. However, a wide-format printer will easily print on ledger paper (11" x 17") that can be found in most office supply stores. Standard desktop printers (laser or inkjet) will print on 8½" x 11" or 8½" x 14" paper.

If you choose to have your printing done commercially, the options for standard paper sizes are greater. You will need to check with an individual printing company, but generally 17" x 22", 19" x 25", 23" x 35" and 25" x 38" are standard sizes in the United States and Canada. Outside of these countries, the ISO system applies.

Some designers choose to print all instructions and template pieces on one large piece of paper, and have it folded to 5½" x 8½", while others print instructions on standard letter-size paper and templates alone on larger sheets (as necessary), and again fold everything to 5½" x 8½".

You'll need a page layout program, not just a word processor, to write your patterns. A page layout program like Adobe® InDesign® or QuarkXpress® is used to combine graphics and text into one document. Since most quilters are visual learners, it's very important to illustrate your directions with drawings and graphics.

MARKET BAG



©2008

Country Quilter

It can be extremely helpful to test your patterns in a class, or to send a rough draft to a pattern tester whom you pay to test and edit your directions, yardage, and measurements. Having to recall patterns or send out errata sheets (a list of errors and their corrections) will look unprofessional (although it happens to everyone at least once), so do as much testing and editing as possible prior to releasing a design.

Another thing to keep in mind, if you're planning to sell your patterns to quilt stores, is the size of the finished product—the pattern itself. Quilt shops are very comfortable dealing with the standard 6" x 9" pattern bag. The vast majority of patterns they carry are this size, and their displays and hanging equipment are geared toward it. You risk limiting

See "Pattern design" on page 32

Resources

Quilt Designers Yahoo group with over 1100 members all over the world

Publish Your Patterns! How to Write, Print and Market Your Designs by Nancy Restuccia

THE book for the aspiring pattern designer. This excellent resource covers everything from A to Z - bag suppliers, distributor contact names and addresses, pricing strategies, trade show information, copyright registration and licensing, printing, advertising, and all in great detail.

Pattern design from page 31

your market if your finished pattern is a non-typical size. Your job is to make it as easy as possible for the quilt shops to carry and sell your patterns.

This leads to a discussion of the cover design. Even the most phenomenal quilt pattern will not sell with a poorly designed cover. Photographs should be as large as possible, without clutter or distracting elements. A well-designed cover should grab your customer's attention from a few feet away, and at a quick glance. If you can afford to pay for professional photography, it will be a very worthwhile investment. If you can't, you must be able to produce a high-quality photograph. The expression "you only get one chance to make a good first impression" is really true when it comes to pattern covers. Of course, if your directions are poor and your illustrations confusing, you may not get a repeat sale, so every aspect of crafting a good pattern is important.

Now that you have a beautiful, well-designed pattern, you're ready to release it to the world. You need to think about pricing. As with pricing finished art, you have to think backward from the lowest possible price you may receive to arrive at a retail price.

That lowest price will be given to you by the industry distributors. What you give up in revenue to distributors you gain in volume. It's more cost-efficient to print, pack, and ship one large order as opposed to six small orders. A sale to a quilt shop typically will be at a 50% wholesale discount.

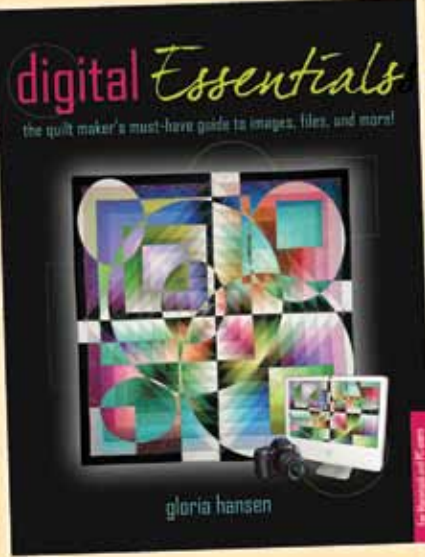
As an example, if your pattern sells to the public for \$8, you'll receive \$4 for each pattern from a quilt shop. Most pattern designers establish a minimum for a wholesale discount, anywhere from 3 to 6 per title, and a minimum total dollar amount. A distributor sells patterns to the quilt

shops at the same wholesale cost as you do, so they get a bigger discount, but they order in larger quantities. The industry-standard distributor discount is known as "50 less 30." This translates to 30% (\$1.20) being subtracted from the \$4.00 wholesale price, or a payment to you of \$2.80 per pattern in our example.

Many distributors expect the designer to pay shipping costs, but you might be able to negotiate a smaller distributor discount in exchange for picking up the freight. Some small distributors work on consignment rather than paying outright (usually net 30 days) for orders. We have chosen not to deal with consignment distributors, but every designer needs to make the decision that's right for their business.

You need to determine your expenses plus build in a margin for profit to arrive at your retail price. If you are not covering your costs and

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realizing a profit at \$2.80 per pattern, then your retail price needs to be higher than \$8.00. However, be careful not to price yourself out of the market. Take a look at competing patterns to see what they're selling for and make sure your prices are similar. This is even more important in today's economy.

There are a number of large catalog companies that also demand distributor pricing, even though they sell directly to the public. Again, this is because of the large quantities ordered. You can set higher minimums for both distributors and catalog companies (24, 36 or 48 per title, for example), to make up for the discount given. The exposure gained by having patterns picked up by catalog companies is invaluable.

So now you have beautiful, well-designed patterns, and you've determined your pricing structure. It's time to let the world know about them.

Marketing is at least as important as every step that led you to this point, maybe even more so. Ads, even small ones, in quilting publications can be very effective.

There are large and small trade shows for the quilting and craft markets. The largest trade show specific to our industry is International Quilt Market put on by Quilts Inc, the company that also holds the International Quilt Festivals in Houston, Chicago, and Long Beach, California.

Quilt Market moves to a different city each spring and is always in Houston in the fall. It is only open to the trade, and attendees must supply credentials to register. It makes a lot of sense to attend a trade show first, either as an attendee, or as a volunteer worker in an established designer's booth, to get a first-hand look at everything that goes into vending at one.

Vending at a trade show is a

significant investment, but it can be extremely rewarding in many tangible and intangible ways. You might have your designs picked up by one or more distributors, you may be approached by magazine editors to submit projects or designs, catalog buyers may decide to carry a design in their next issue, and the networking opportunities are outstanding.

Keeping an eye on the trends in the market can make your next designs stronger and more appealing to buyers. It isn't necessary to follow trends (starting them is even better), but you do need to be aware of them.

You should develop a mailing list of buyers - retail, wholesale, and distributor - and send notices of new releases, teaching and other appearances, and trade show vending. Increase exposure for your pattern company by submitting designs for publication in magazines. When your design is published, the magazine will generally list contact info for the designer, either email or web site. This is free advertising.

Pattern designing can be a profitable stand-alone business, or it can be an excellent supplement to a teaching career. It can be tackled on nearly every scale, from a single pattern produced at home to a full range of dozens or hundreds of patterns printed commercially.

We have seen our business grow over the years to include over 250 patterns and 11 self-published books. We've been to nearly every Quilt Market since 1993 and have met hundreds of wonderful, enthusiastic shop owners from all over the world. The quilting industry offers a lot of career opportunities, and pattern designing can be one of the most creative, fulfilling, and rewarding possibilities. ▼

SAQA New York co-representative Jane Dávila is an artist, teacher, writer, and pattern designer. She lives in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and her web site is www.janedavila.com.

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Teaching from page 18

fee for one day, so we negotiate my fee. I might end up coming down a little in my flat fee, and the shop owner knows how many students she needs to sign up to make it work. We pick a cancellation date that accommodates both of us, and I do my end of the work by getting her marketing materials and samples early on.

I offer kits to the shop owner or a kit recipe for her to use. I discuss pitching the class to the local guilds to draw more attendance, as well as approaching local media and other ways to get the word out. If she's advertising the class and taking deposits, we usually do fine. All of these details are in writing, even if it's only in emails, so there are no questions regarding the arrangements later on.

Guilds are a whole other matter. Being involved in two large guilds, I know that generally guilds adjust

their budgets to accommodate the fees charged by national teachers. These fees often range from \$400 to \$600 per 1-day workshop, plus travel expenses. In my primary guild, we bring in four teachers a year. We work with other guilds to share the costs if a teacher has hefty travel expenses. Most teachers we book are within driving distance. My other guild has a similar system. Our quilt shows and fundraisers are used to pay for teaching fees. A well-managed mid- to large-size guild should be able to pay the going rate for teachers.

Generally, smaller guilds have to be more creative for their programs but still are usually able to bring in a speaker or two to educate their members. For this reason, I generally don't lower my fees to guilds. This is my livelihood, after all, and my experience is worth what I charge. Of course, exceptions can be made when

the circumstances warrant them.

Whether you're an art quilter or traditional quilter, there are other quilters and potential quilters out there who want to learn what you do. We can isolate ourselves very easily when making our art, but teaching allows us to break out of our studios and meet other like-minded people. Like many other teachers, I find I learn more from my students than they probably do from me. ▼

SAQA active member Jake Finch is a quilter, writer, photographer, editor and author living in Simi Valley, California. She has two quilt books out by C&T Publishing: Fast, Fun & Easy Book Cover Art and Comfort Quilts from the Heart. She's also the managing editor of Mark Lipinski's Quilter's Home Magazine. She lives with her husband, daughter, and three cats, who constantly remind her that feeding them is much more important than creating artwork. Her web site is www.jakefinchdesigns.com.

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Insuring from page 30

homeowner's insurance may require that computers and other electronics be itemized on an additional business rider in order to get recompense.

Artist Kim Ritter encountered this difficulty when she lost some equipment to hurricane damage. In addition, she has had difficulty resolving a claim for antique quilts that were damaged. Part of the problem was whether they were classified as "art" or "collectibles." Unfortunately, Ritter's home/flood policy covered "collectibles" only up to \$1500. Also, since the quilts were business-related, they were not covered. Obtaining appraisals beforehand and adding a business rider would have ensured a different outcome.

Declaring insurance value for art venues

Procedures and forms may vary quite a bit from one location to another. Shows like AQS will not allow insurance without a written appraisal, whereas many art venues and craft venues rely on fair market value as grounds for a value. It is important to remember that an estimate is not the same thing as an appraisal. Registration forms for exhibitions and sales will often ask you to declare an insurance value.

According to June Underwood, "If the exhibition has asked for a selling price and the museum gets part of the sales (typically 50% or less), then the insurance value that I would set would be the sale price that I put on the work less the museum's commission. Thus if the retail price was \$100 and the museum took 50%, the insurance value would be \$50."

In many situations, the art may be hung for display only, and the venue does not conduct sales. In this case, Underwood suggests setting the value according to the prices the artist has received for other similar pieces in the past. "You can adjust prices downward or upward from prices for other works if the sizes aren't similar. Figure the price per square inch

or square foot of a similar piece you have sold, adjust accordingly, and make that the insurance value."

What if an artist doesn't have a sales record? "Then I would use a low-ball figure for quilt art in general, something like roughly \$.50 (fifty cents) a square inch or however you like to calculate it. The low-ball price that I cite here might not be quite right in your region of the country, but I think it's close to an average."

Finally, in the event of an exhibit of antique or traditional quilts for which no sales had ever occurred, Underwood suggests that perhaps an average selling price in the region for the kind of quilt being exhibited would be a good estimate. A call to a business that sells vintage quilts might provide some kind of figure.

"No estimate of insurance value is

guaranteed to get you that amount—lots of discussion and negotiation will occur before a check appears in the mail. But at least using the rules of thumb I've given, you'll have a rationale for the value you've put on the work." Even having some documentation will provide better support than having none. Filing documentation and clear, full descriptions in words and/or photographs ahead of time will definitely save confusion and grief if the worst should ever happen. ▼

Elizabeth Van Schaick is a quilt and paper collage artist, a writer, and an instructor at the Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial in Philadelphia, PA.

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Why study art from page 19

deal to learn and I've not yet created a masterpiece of fine art. To get there, it's important to improve one's knowledge and skills, to know and apply the principles of composition, and to evaluate what you've created.

Recognize that learning about good composition takes more than study and visiting museums and galleries. It also takes practice—regular practice. Accept that there will be many pieces that will fall short of your goal of creating fine art. Learn the language of composition and the principles of good design. Observe great art and identify the design principles that help make it great, and then practice applying these principles in your own work. Through serious study of fine art, you have the keys to improving your creative efforts.

SAQA professional artist member Rosemary Claus-Gray is a fiber and mixed media artist living in Doniphan, Missouri. Her web site is www.rosemaryclaus-gray.com.

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Meet your regional representatives

Carol Ann Waugh

Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming
co-representative
www.carolwaughquilts.com



In 1974, I started my first quilt when I needed a new project to complete after I needlepointed a whole couch. Seriously! I went to the bookstore and read everything I could get my hands on about making a king-size quilt. I never start anything small!

After checking out all the traditional patterns, I decided to make something unique. Starting with graph paper and some crayons, I drew out an original quilt design. By counting how many squares, rectangles, and triangles I needed, I used my handy calculator to figure out how much fabric to buy, and merrily went

shopping at the local fabric store. After hours of sewing the different pieces together, I realized I had made a colossal mistake. Somehow, I had miscalculated my fabric requirements by one-half. As I sped back to the store to buy more fabric, I learned my first lesson in quilt making: always buy more fabric than you think you need because it won't be available if you run out.

Well, I realized that if I had made this mistake, so would many quilt-makers who were creating their own patterns instead of following instructions for a traditional quilt. I called Judy LaBelle, an accomplished sewer, and said, "We should write a quilting book!"

Our first book was called *The Patchwork Quilt Coloring and Design Book*. When it sold well, our publisher asked us to write two more. The next two books were *Patchworking: A Quilt Design and Coloring Book* and the *Quilter's Precise Yardage Guide*.

When I joined SAQA, I found

myself so inspired by the work that the membership was producing and the generous sharing of techniques and ideas from the artists on the Yahoo group, I decided to volunteer as a co-rep with Christi Beckmann.

Christi Beckmann

Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming
co-representative
www.freereinarts.com



Although I had artistic interests from a very young age, I was encouraged to pursue the sciences from a practical standpoint. I obtained a B.S. in chemistry/medical technology, and I spent

the first 25 years of my adulthood working full-time in hospitals, research and development (radioactivity measurements), and pharmaceuticals.

continued on next page



above: Ladies Who Lunch, 59" x 49"
©2007 Carol Ann Waugh

right: Geometrix, 38" x 38"
©2008 Christi Beckmann



Meet your regional representatives (cont'd)

I was never fully engaged and always felt I should be doing something else. In the early 1990s, my mother became interested in quilting. I would accompany her on fabric shopping trips and became interested in the colors, patterns, and textures of the wonderful fabrics that were available. In 1996 I took a fence-rail quilting class and was hooked!

My career had transitioned to heavy overnight travel as a cardiac consultant in the pharmaceutical industry. I would bring fabric art projects with me in my suitcase. At night in my hotel room, I did a lot of fusing and cutting.

A few years ago, the economy and my employment became a bit more sporadic. In 2005, with a large amount of support from my family, I had the courage to leave my job to pursue my fiber art. I still work part-time but am having a blast with all my wonderful fabric and new fiber friends.

Mary Andrews

Michigan co-representative
www.maryandrewsartquilts.com



I do both abstract and pictorial work. I am inspired by nature, my family, and travels. I take a lot of pictures. Exploration into my genealogy

has provided me with a multitude of old family photos that are an endless source of inspiration. I have also been known to cut up my old outdated quilts and reconfigure them into something new and exciting. I like to use embroidery or hand stitching in my quilts to add a personal touch.

I have enjoyed meeting other art quilters and together we encourage and inspire each other in several

small groups I attend. Using the Internet, I have been a member of the Fiber Connection Internet group for 13 years. We all started out as emerging artists, and with our daily emails have mentored each other to become professional artists.

My work has been exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally. I started and curated the Michigan Quilt Artist Invitational art quilt exhibit, which promotes quilts as art and brings them to the public in libraries and hospitals around Michigan.

Kathie Briggs is a wonderful co-rep to work alongside. I jumped right into SAQA work with her by organizing a juried show at the Gerald Ford Presidential Museum coming up this summer. We are hoping to meet many SAQA artists during the show. SAQA has a lot to offer art quilters and we hope to reach more of them in our state.



Connections

24" x 31"

©2007 Mary Andrews



Tswana Hope
29" x 31"
©2008 Cindy Friedman

Cindy Friedman

Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia,
and Washington D.C. co-representative
www.cindyfriedman.com



I learned most of the needle-arts as a young child—sewing, embroidery, crocheting—and I was always interested in art, doing lots of drawing and painting. I

earned an Industrial Design degree from Philadelphia College of Art, and afterwards spent several years as an exhibit and trade show designer.

After I went back to Drexel University for a Master's in Fashion program in 1982, I was recruited as faculty and taught there for the next 11 years.

During those years I made some quilted fashion garments in silk and a few baby quilts. Once I decided to focus on making art quilts, it immediately became clear that this combined all of my passions.

Since the mid 90s, I have been making art quilts and exhibiting and selling them professionally. As a member of the SAQA regional group, Fiber Revolution, I took an exhibition of 18 Fiber Revolution art quilts to Africa with me in September 2008. They hung first at the South African Quilt Festival in Gauteng (a suburb of Johannesburg) and then in November made a huge splash debut at Botswana-craft Gallery in Gaborone—the very first exhibition of American art quilts ever in Botswana. We had a great reception and lots of press. The work was shown alongside that of a local group called Kalahari Quilts,

which elevated and enhanced their local status as art quilts.

I am a founding member of the committee that created ArtQuilt Elements (formerly called ArtQuilts at the Sedgwick), and we are in the process of planning for AQE 2010 at the Wayne Art Center in Wayne, Pennsylvania.

As a regional SAQA representative, I am also currently planning a regional conference to be held in conjunction with our AQE opening weekend in April 2010, so remember to look for details to register in the next few months! I hope to meet many of you in Philadelphia in the spring of 2010.



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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. E-mail articles to editor Carolyn Lee Vehslage at clvquilts@yahoo.com.

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