

SAQQA *Journal*

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In Good Company

172 X 143cm
by Ruth de Vos

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Thoughts from the president

by Lisa Chipetine



Dreams...they do come true. Five years ago I had a vision of becoming a future SAQA president. On my 47th birthday, I became the 4th president in SAQA's history. I can only

hope to match the accomplishments of Yvonne Porcella, Katie Pasquini Masopust, and Judith Content. I sincerely thank the SAQA board for their trust and never-ending support. This organization has given me joy, friends, and a true purpose in life. I want to express special gratitude to my colleague and friend, Martha Sielman, for her patience and support, both of which can never be fully repaid.

I believe in leading by example, so in October I officially launched the *Visioning Project*. Lucky for us,

we have an army of vital, passionate, enterprising members who are willing to take the leap, set aside their fears, and embrace the challenge of completing one of the goals in their respective visions. We have embarked on our individual journeys with a safe-haven support group comprised of other *Visioning* team members.

One of my greatest joys is the SAQA mentorship program. The collective sharing of knowledge and experiences always surprises and enlightens me. We are fortunate to have so many individuals willing to "pay it forward" to ensure that future professional artists have the tools they need to succeed.

My other key initiative is to develop a plan to take SAQA into its next 20-year development phase. Technology will play an important role, and I will be calling on all of you to assist me in testing new ideas, communication platforms,

and all-around brainstorming. This organization has worked so hard to become what it is today—efforts we cannot take for granted. Now that we're in an age where very few actually produce anything with their hands, we must find a way to educate our youth by communicating on their level, stimulating their interest, and obtaining their input on how our medium can become meaningful for them. Also, by reaching out to the academic community, I'm hopeful that we'll start to build this process and turn the medium of art quilts into a widely respected, recognized, and sustainable art form.

I'm always available to hear your ideas, issues and successes. My focus has been and shall remain "you." Nothing makes me happier than when my cell phone rings and I hear, "Lisa, I did it!" As the *Visioning* motto says: "Welcome to Success!"

Board report

By Penny McMorris



As board secretary, I am also the nominating committee chairman. My nominating committee members, Pokey Bolton, Eileen Doughty, and I are extremely

pleased to welcome our newest board member, Carol Taylor, a SAQA member from Pittsford, New York. If you attended the 2009 conference in Athens, Ohio you may have taken Carol's mini-workshop, for which she collected and presented data on the sales history of many successful art quilters. As an active artist, Carol has a heavy teaching schedule, so we're delighted she could make time to join us.

Since the board's mandates are to listen to our members, lead SAQA forward, and oversee its direction, we consider each new board member an important addition to the organization. Each board member serves a three-year term which can be renewed for another three years. When a vacancy arises, we seek a replacement who will mesh nicely with the other board members and add needed perspective and expertise, as well as contribute time to a committee or two.

When I joined SAQA's board about four years ago, it was suggested that it should have more member representation. We took this idea seriously. Now five of our latest seven board members are active SAQA artists: Linda Colsh, Peg Keeney, Sandra Sider, Carolyn Mazloomi, and now Carol Taylor. Our decision-making

is enhanced by their wide range of knowledge about collecting, exhibiting, pricing, curating, fund-raising, business, and grant-writing. The non-artist board members contribute significantly through their diverse quilt, business, and art-world knowledge.

We meet monthly via phone conference and with committee members as needed. Minutes of the meetings are posted on the SAQA web site in the *Members* section. Our only face-to-face contact comes once a year in a session held during the SAQA conference.

The board is looking forward to meeting face to face with each of you March 19-21, 2010 at the *Reinvention* conference in San Francisco as well as at the Spring 2011 conference we're planning in the Denver area. Save the dates!

Report from the SAQA executive director

by Martha Sielman



SAQA will raise membership dues beginning January 1, 2010. It's been three years since the last increase, and SAQA has

not been immune to steadily rising expenses. Active membership dues will now be \$60, and professional artist membership will be \$125.

While dues may be rising, the value of being a SAQA member is also increasing in a number of different ways. In 2006, when we announced the last dues increase, we were still printing the *Journal* in black and white. Since then, we've been able to

print in full color. We've increased the number of traveling exhibitions from 3 in 2006 to 10 exhibitions traveling to 17 venues in 2009. We've moved to an annual conference that can be located in different parts of the U.S. We've added monthly mentorship calls and the resources of SAQA-U. And SAQA is now advertising in *American Craft*, *AmericanStyle*, *Fiberarts*, and *Selvedge* magazines, as well as selling art quilts through our exhibitions and the online SAQA Gallery.

The coming year is filled with new opportunities. In 2010, SAQA will travel 11 exhibitions to 21 venues, meaning that well over 200,000 visitors will see these exhibitions of our art. The *Portfolio* will shift to a new

and exciting format, grouping the works by theme rather than alphabetically. The *Visioning Project* is off to a roaring start, and people are working to meet their professional and creative development goals and then setting new ones. The *Reinvention* conference in San Francisco is almost filled and will be a wonderfully invigorating experience for everyone attending. The regional representative ranks have been expanding rapidly, as more and more volunteers want to start organizing events on a local level in their areas. And we expect our membership numbers to pass the 2,500 mark near the end of the year.

I'm very proud of how SAQA has grown, and I'm looking forward to a great 2010!

From the editor

by Carolyn Lee Vehslage



Everyone's talking about social networking these days, but once you've signed up for Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, and Twitter, and

"friended" everyone you know, how do you use it to promote your art? ArtBiz Coach Alyson B. Stanfield shares with us 30 ideas of what to put in your newsletters, blogs, and status updates. Alyson gave a very interesting keynote speech on the business of being an artist at the 2009 SAQA conference. DVDs of this and the other conference panels are available through the SAQA Bookstore.

Our series on teaching continues as Leni Levenson Wiener shares her experience about teaching in Taiwan.

Deb Cashatt and Kris Sazaki, professionally known as the Pixeladies, share how they turned SAQA's 20th anniversary trunk shows into a teaching opportunity for SAQA regions to educate people about our art form. They have excellent suggestions about how you can use the trunk shows effectively.

Meet our feature artist, Ruth de Vos from Australia. I had that pleasure at the SAQA conference in May, and, like the *Quilt National 2009* jurors, was impressed with her art quilts. We learn about her life, raising her young family, and her passion for creating her intricately pieced artwork.

SAQA's *A Sense of Humor* juror Pam RuBert writes about three interesting pieces from the exhibition that debuted at International Quilt Festival in October for our series on composition and design. My goal is to encourage our SAQA members to

think of design principles when they are developing their art quilts. Also, when working on a piece, we now have the opportunity for critique online. Sandra Sider writes about her business, QuiltCritique, and gives us examples of suggested improvements in several pieces of artwork.

Going green is a hot topic not only for the environment, but for art quilters as well. Monona Rossol of the Art, Crafts & Theater Safety organization discusses what we should be investigating when we buy products that are labeled "green."

As always, my hope is that each *Journal* issue provides information that is pertinent to you as a professional artist. If there is a topic that you would like to see addressed, or an upcoming artist that we should spotlight, please let me know.

Just because it looks funny doesn't mean it's not well-designed

by Pam RuBert

Recently, I was invited to be the juror for the SAQA exhibition titled *A Sense of Humor*, which premiered at Houston's International Quilt Festival in October 2009. The theme of the show was "Laughter makes the world go round."

I didn't set up criteria for design or humor before I viewed the submissions, preferring to keep an open mind and to evaluate each work on its own merit. However, as I wrote in my juror's statement, I did have the following standard that I expected the artists to reach:

"To create humorous art, an artist must do more than tell a joke. The message must carry the flavor and personality of the artist. Artistic choices and techniques must be brought together and honed into a cohesive experience."

The quilts I selected for the show ranged from figurative to abstract. Some incorporated words to express humor, others relied solely on visual humor created through imagery, and still others communicated humor in the form of a playful and experimental approach to materials and techniques. Unfortunately, from digital images, it can be difficult to evaluate stitching, construction, and texture, all of which are essential elements of quilt art. Therefore, many of my choices were based largely on color, composition, and visual impact.

One wonders what Herculean feats were required for Laura Wasilowski to create *Threading the Needle*, but we can appreciate her gentle humor at approaching the task. By placing the ball of twine to the left and allowing it to break out of the picture-frame, she emphasizes an exaggerated contrast between its large size and the tiny camel. This off-center composition is more dynamic than a symmetrical one would have been and also creates an active negative space—a much more interesting effect than had she merely floated the foreground objects in the middle of an empty background.

One loose strand of twine squiggles along the edge of the quilt, leading the eye up to the camel which,

though small, is the most important icon—then down the strong diagonal needle, and then back to follow the path of the rambling twine again.

She chose a triadic color scheme—purple, green, and orange—using cool, dark purple shades in the background. This makes the warmer and brighter orange and green colors in the ball of twine visually pop out, giving the ball a three-dimensional feeling and the quilt more depth.

The smaller, busier texture of the woven orange and greens that make up the ball randomly changes direction, communicating an artistic rather than literal expression of what string or yarn looks like rolled into a ball. High contrast and the changing diagonals of the woven patterns make this area more active than the larger but more muted grid-based pattern of purple stripes in the background. Wasilowski has used all these techniques to give organizational structure and sharp definition to an image that appears simple but is actually quite complex. With less skillful handling, it could easily have become chaotic.

Joan Sowada's *Late Bloomer Learning to Surf* also uses composition to create lively imagery. The exaggerated woman strikes an animated pose that is humorously reminiscent of a skater or surfer's pose. Her posture emphasizes her eagerness to lean forward into new technologies, while at the same time looking slightly off-balance.

The patchwork construction of the background draws inspiration from the tradition of crazy quilts, but Sowada's dark-to-light organization also enhances the emphasis placed on her character's having risen up out of the darkness and moving towards her leaning pile of high-tech tools.



Threading the Needle
55" x 30" ©2009 Laura Wasilowski



Late Bloomer Learning to Surf
43" x 28" ©2008 Joan Sowada

These tools and playthings are composed of dark fabrics. The angle of this dark tower of tools looks precarious and at the same time visually balances the dark diagonal of the lower right corner. The woman's legs are oddly shaped and of a light color that contrasts with that same dark corner, helping to emphasize the woman's movement and adding visual depth to the quilt.

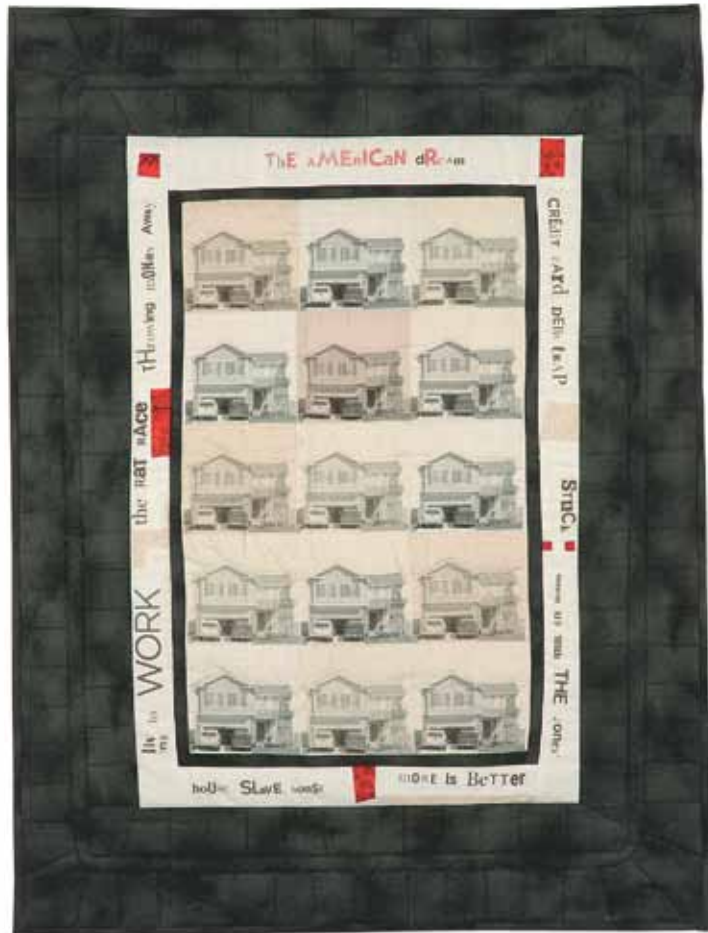
All of these design elements fill the entire pictorial space and keep the eye moving throughout the composition. As a finishing detail, Sowada chose to bind the quilt in an irregular shape, one that echoes the upward and forward-leaning motion of the woman.

In *The American Dream*, Laurie Brainerd uses text not as a label or title, or in a cartoon balloon to indicate speech, but as an artistic element. In a primarily black-and-white

composition, she highlights the main theme words with red, then repeats that red in small, irregular spots of color that keep the eye moving around the entire composition.

The repetition of almost identical images of a house with a two-car garage creates an interesting balance between the pleasant structure and stability of block quilts and the boring repetition and the anonymity of a suburban subdivision that has too much conformity. Words that wrap around the houses are made up of a mixture of typefaces of different sizes, weights, and densities. Brainerd turns the words into design elements that add visual interest while at the same time conveying poetic hints of personal associations that may or may not go along with the archetypal theme of the American Dream.

The gray-black border is wide and proportioned to balance nicely with



The American Dream
35" x 26" ©2008 Laurie Brainerd

the white interior central image. The border cloth color imitates asphalt and is stitched in a pattern that vaguely alludes to a road map of house lots in a subdivision or to automobile tire treads.

With more space and time, I would love to write about each of the artists in the show and how they have successfully created humorous art that is well designed and a pleasure to explore. I hope you all have the opportunity to view the entire exhibition, either in person or through the catalog. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Pam RuBert creates humorous art quilts and drawings. She lives in Springfield, Missouri and her web site is www.pamrubert.com.

tACTile – Six artists working together

by Jenny Bowker

In 2000, six Canberra, Australia quilt artists formed a group that would work together to create an exhibition intended to travel for two years.

Dianne Firth, Beth Miller, Helen Gray, Beth and Trevor Reid, and I all live in Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory. We had known each other as individual artists, and some of us had worked and exhibited together before. We really wanted a format that would enable us to make our own work, but also to work together on one collaborative project in each exhibition that we put together. We were willing to take quite a wide slant on the idea of a collaborative.

Dianne Firth is the head of the

School of Landscaping Design at the Canberra University. Her work has been shown in *Quilt National* several times. A talented and well-known contemporary quilter, Dianne brings a dense knowledge of design and the workings of the art world to the group.

Beth Miller has been working in patchwork for 30 years. She came through the more traditional quilting channels to art quilts and has a marvelous knowledge of techniques and the quilting world. She has moved effortlessly into creative and inventive work.

Beth and Trevor Reid work together constantly as collaborators. Trevor's talent is drawing and design, and he prefers to stitch by hand, to paint

and to dye fabric. Beth is a magical machine quilter and they are extraordinary in the way they work as a team.

Helen Gray has travelled and studied with some of the greatest international teachers and her work is the “edgiest” of the group. She boils silks with eucalypts and makes subtle, intuitive, emotional pieces. She uses her sewing machine to draw into the fabric.

I am the newest to quilting but have been travelling and teaching internationally for seven years. I am married to a diplomat, now retired, and my travels are integral to my work.

In 1999 I talked to Helen Gray and Beth Miller about organizing a small working group to meet every Friday

Beth and Trevor Reid's *Hot Lava* series holds the attention of a viewer at the Textile Art Show in Brisbane.



in one of our houses. We called the group Triptych. We made it a priority to be there, to work each time on a single project making a small piece on that day, and continue this for one year. Sewing machines were set up on the dining table and cutting was done on a kitchen bench.

Each Thursday evening an email was sent out by the hostess of the week stating the next day's project and telling us what to bring. If one of us was unable to attend, the other two members used the time to visit a gallery. Sometimes we would all have a day in the country and then spend the next three weeks making work based on that trip.

In retrospect, it's easy to see that we almost ran a City and Guilds type of course. All three of us found that year invaluable.

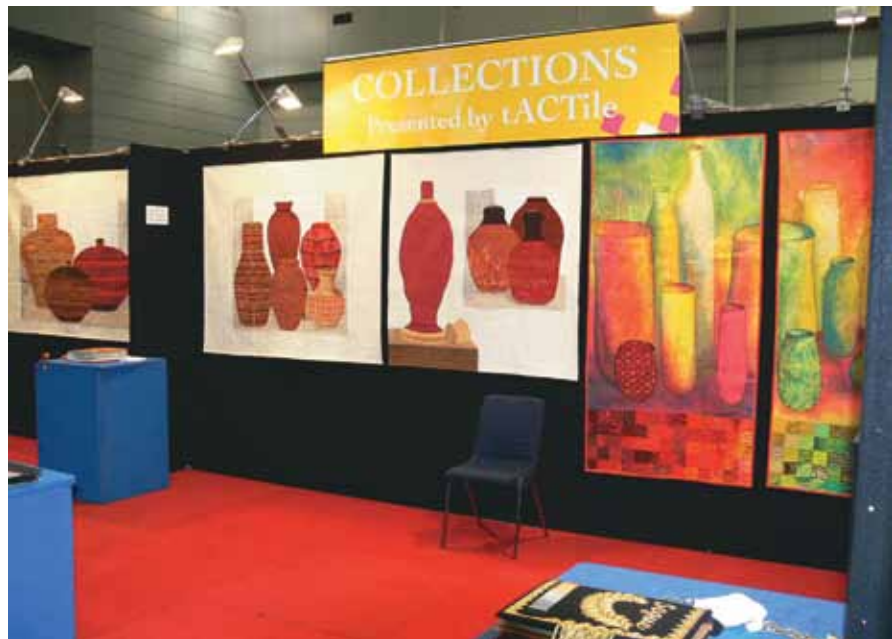
It was a natural progression to want to take the idea further. When Dianne Firth contacted us, along with Trevor and Beth Reid, about setting up a small group to make an exhibition that would travel, we were all keen. The group was called tACTile. The name reflected the medium we chose to work with and the fact that we were all living in the ACT—the Australian Capital Territory.

We decided to create a new exhibition every two years and we agreed we would develop a theme of some sort but would do our own work within that framework.

Pathways

tACTile's first exhibition, *Pathways* (www.tactilequilts.com/five2/pathways/index.htm), was greatly influenced by the project *Hive* (www.arsaut.com/hive/) from the United States.

Hive was a truly magnificent project, and while I had written to Pat Autenreith to ask permission to borrow the idea, we had always intended that ours would be different. For *Pathways* each artist made large pieces to fill a seven-meter length of wall on any subject that could link to the theme "Pathways." We decided to each make



56 tiny quiltlets, each 20 centimeters square, which would be put together as an 8-meter grid in the way that *Hive* was put together.

We had originally intended to insert a gray pathway through the work to integrate it. On the final day when the work was laid out, the pathway was inserted—and it looked terrible. In the end, with the pressure of time and an exhibition to deliver, the collaborative piece was put together exactly as *Hive* had been put together,

with a checkerboard of the final two rows of each person's work.

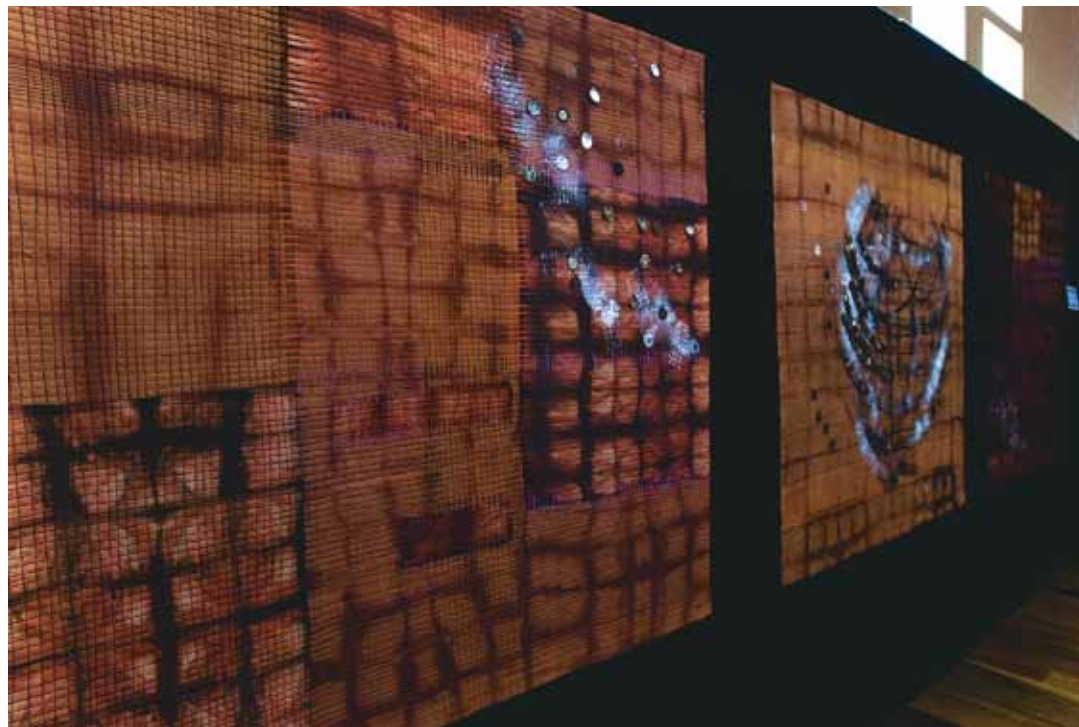
5²

Trevor initiated the next exhibition: 5². He based it on the idea that when an artist sees work by another, there is often a feeling of desire to create something similar, or wondering what might be done with the same subject or technique. 5² started with the idea that we would each make

See "tACTile" on page 32

Helen Gray's silk pieces are inspired by Aboriginal baskets. The works are eucalyptus dyed, overpainted and hand stitched.

photo by David Mason at Textile Art in Brisbane



Ruth de Vos

I am a textile artist, but to explain how or why I have become one is not easy. Nor is it easy to explain why I work with fabric rather than paint or paper. I am and I do because I have to. I don't remember a time when I did not have ready access to fabric, needle and thread, or when I wasn't planning my next (ten) sewing project(s). And I can't conceive of my life not making and stitching. I am at my best as a wife, mother, friend, and housekeeper when I am actively busy with my quilt-making. I'm sure there are many other quilt makers and artists who can relate to that.

I grew up with a needle in my hand. Mum was always busy making something out of nothing—clothes, toys, textile wall hangings, and other home decorations—all from remnants and recycled fabrics. While she sewed, I made doll's clothes and other things for my sisters and me. When I was twelve, a lady in our church gave me an old sewing machine (powered by hand) which I used to make my first quilt, and which later served me well for sewing my own clothes through my university years.

Although I was familiar with artistic textile wall hangings from the many custom-designed quilts my mum made for our house and for her friends, it was in high school that I really started to consider quilt-making as an art form. At this time (1995) I was introduced to the quilts of SAQA member Wendy Lugg at a large local gallery. I suppose it was partly my innate love of fabric and stitch that drew me to her work over the ceramics, drawings, paintings, sculpture, and collectables with which it was displayed. Inspired by Wendy's work, I produced my first art quilt as part of my final year art course requirement. The quilt featured hand-printed fabric in earth colors, pieced to represent leaf litter. In hindsight, it is a rather



sorry quilt, but I was pleased with it at the time and consider it one of my key pieces.

After studying science and engineering at university, I took up sewing again with the birth of our first child and since then have been sewing and making things with every spare minute, focusing on quilts for the past five years. In 2005, I received many positive comments on a quilt in a local quilt show and was encouraged to pursue quilt-making more seriously. Joining a local contemporary quilt group has been extremely valuable in terms of being inspired and stimulated by others, exploring ideas and getting feedback as well as meeting other artists of like mind. From some of these people, such as SAQA members Wendy Lugg and Margery Goodall, I've learned much about working in a professional manner as a textile artist, especially with regard to things like copyright and entering and organizing exhibitions.

While I've always enjoyed sewing for its own sake, I work best with a goal in mind. When I first started making textile artwork I set myself three goals: to put together a solo exhibition, to start selling my artwork, and to have a quilt accepted

into *Quilt National*.

I am humbled by how my work has been blessed. All three of those goals have been met. My exhibition *Eucalypts in Focus* in early 2008 was a wonderful experience. My husband was a huge driving force behind the exhibition, encouraging me in the beginning when it was just a small idea in my head. He remained positive about the whole thing through two years of fanatical dyeing, cutting, and stitching. He calmed my doubts about whether I should go ahead, playing art critic as each quilt took shape, and putting up with late dinners because I forgot about the time. There were many times when I probably would have given up on the idea if it hadn't been for my husband's encouragement and support.

At many points throughout this journey I had concerns about the whole thing. Sometimes they were practical questions about what to do next or how to go about a certain process. Do I send a CD of images to galleries to consider, or do I take some physical artworks in for them to see? What is the most cost-effective way to promote the exhibition? To whom should I send press releases and how pushy should I be? How long should

the exhibition run for? What prices should I place on the artwork? What is the best way to hang it? Who should I ask to open the exhibition? Thankfully, my issues were solved by finding people to answer my questions. More difficult were doubts about whether my work was of a high enough quality to display in a solo exhibition, whether anyone would be interested in taking a look, and who did I think I was, anyway, putting on a solo exhibition? I still lost sleep over this in the weeks before the exhibition opened.

Although the planning, organizing, and preparation of the exhibit was a huge project, my experiences of the exhibition itself from opening night onwards were well worth it. It was wonderful to meet so many interested and interesting people—fellow textile artists, quilt makers, artists, art patrons, and interested members of the public. A further bonus was that quite a number of quilts sold during the exhibition, including a couple of large pieces.

Working towards this solo exhibition early on was important to me as a sort of kick-start to quilt-making as a career. I wanted to work on a theme so that I would have the opportunity to more fully develop my ideas, producing a cohesive body of work. I looked forward to a solo exhibition as a means to showcase this body of work.

I enjoy developing themes in my artwork. I see ideas for quilts in everything, so selecting a single theme also helps me to focus on something. I consider several things in choosing a theme. My worldview is important. My art flows from my passion for God's creation and from my ever-increasing awareness of the glory of God, as it is evident in His design, creation, and preservation of the natural world. How everything works and fits together—the laws of nature, the interrelationships between animals and/or plants, and the God-given role of man in the natural world all inspire me to further explore new ideas and designs.

I also want to work with subject matter which speaks to me personally and is available to me in my immediate environment. My solo exhibition *Eucalypts in Focus* was aimed to draw attention to the beauty of what we see every day: eucalyptus trees are standard fare in Perth, Western Australia. Through these works, I have developed a greater awareness of the beauty of this part of nature; for example, in the veins that produce pattern and texture on a eucalyptus leaf, and in the huge variety of color to be found on a single gum tree.

Looking for new challenges and observing my children at play, I am slowly investigating a new theme, exploring child-like wonder. As a mother, I'm privileged to observe that awe of little children discovering for the first time things which we as adults have long since taken for granted.

Having decided on a theme, I do a lot of sketching. This is a time for feeling my way. It's fun, but it can be frustrating because I don't know how long it will take to develop several quilt designs I'm happy with.

I am thankful to be living in the age of digital cameras, as I like to take hundreds of photos of my subject matter as a reference throughout the whole design process. At first I draw without too much intent, familiarizing myself with the subject matter. Then I start developing my ideas, trying various alternative designs and stylizing my drawings so that they lend themselves to the style of quilts I like to make; specifically, to machine piecing. This process takes place in my visual diary, which is an important record to me. I constantly refer back to original ideas and inspirations as recorded there. By the end

Continued on next page



Weeyawwww, weeyawwww!
117 X 119 cm ©2009



Vye 160 X 148 cm ©2007

of this stage, I have a collection of all kinds of sketches: photorealistic, for familiarization of subject, line drawings done with piecing in mind, quick thumbnail sketches and bold marker drawings for developing overall layout, simple design layouts, and detailed line drawings done with the quilting in mind.

When I think I have a final design which looks right and expresses what I want it to, I wait for a bit. I want to be sure that the design addresses the principles and elements of design. I not only want my quilts to be good quilts, I want them to be good art. There are currently several things I'm specifically looking for in my finished designs. I want to see contrast of tone and scale. I also want to see various layers of interest, so that the viewer's

eye is caught from a distance and drawn to take a closer look. I want the viewer to then be rewarded by a layer of interest that can only be appreciated up close.

When I'm happy with the design, it is developed by computer or by hand into a pattern that can be pieced. Many of my eucalyptus quilts were drawn on the computer. This has the advantage that they could easily be scaled or otherwise changed, and then printed out to the exact size required. Since then, my quilts depicting animals and children have been hand drawn and scaled using the photocopier. I usually color a small image of the final design with colored pencils as a guide for selecting fabrics. More recently I've been taking a photo of a clean line drawing

of the finished design and coloring it in using computer-aided painting tools. I'm very happy with this step, as it's much quicker than coloring with pencils and allows me to easily change colors with a few clicks of the mouse.

My quilts are all machine pieced and machine quilted, sometimes with screenprinting before or during the piecing. Although I'm sometimes tempted to introduce a variety of other techniques, I enjoy the challenge of limiting myself to these techniques and seeing how far I can push them. The nature of the work is such that each artwork is almost completely designed before I get started cutting out the fabric, leaving only a little room for adapting and developing the design down the track

through screen printing or embroidery or quilting.

At the end of the design phase, I end up with a paper pattern that is the actual size of the finished quilt, as well as a small-scale color plan. The full-size design is then traced onto the sticky side of thin iron-on interfacing. This interfacing becomes my working pattern. I add notch markings to all the seam lines to enable me to match the pieces again later.

The next stage in the quilt-making process involves cutting the interfacing into individual pieces and ironing each piece onto the correct color fabric. I try to do this in small sections so that I only have to manage thirty pieces at a time rather than thousands. Once a piece of interfacing is ironed onto the correct fabric, I cut around it, leaving a seam allowance. It is not necessary for the seam allowance to be exact, because in the piecing stage I match the edges and notches of the interfacing rather than of the fabric. The interfacing remains in the quilt. I find this method allows me to achieve smooth and accurate piecing.

Then the piecing begins. As with traditional piecing, the pieces are placed right sides together. Curves are clipped where necessary, and using lots of pins, the notch markings on the interfacing pieces are carefully matched. By stitching exactly on the edge of the interfacing I should have a perfect seam. The whole quilt is pieced together in this manner. I love this piecing stage of the quilt. I find it very therapeutic, and it's fun for the whole family to see the quilt take shape.

After the quilt top is ironed and then sandwiched with batting and backing fabric, the next major stage is the quilting. I do all my quilting by machine, almost entirely with free-motion stitching. I believe the quilting is a very important part of the process and try to make my quilting designs relevant to the pieced images or subject matter. I like to add an extra level of interest

to the quilt if possible, for example by including embroidered images in the background. I also like to play with doodling different continuous stitching lines into the background of the quilt to add texture and contrast. Sometimes I draw some of the quilting lines onto paper first. The paper is pinned in place, and the quilt is stitched through all layers. The paper is later ripped off with the help of blunt tweezers.

To begin and end a line of stitching, I pull up the bobbin thread to the top of the quilt so that it doesn't get caught up in the stitching. At the end of the quilting stage, the quilt is a hairy mess of threads. These are tied together in pairs and threaded back between the layers of the quilt to give a neat finish to the quilting. This can

My system enables me to pick up my work for ten minutes, if that's all I have, and still make progress.

take many hours and is my form of nighttime relaxation.

I like to work systematically. I like to break down my quilt-making into manageable tasks, with specific daily or weekly goals for what I'd like to achieve. This is why the design phase can be frustrating, as there can be no rushing things.

I have also come to realize that it's only because of this systematic approach that I'm able to make artwork while caring for my children at the same time. I am now a full-time mother of three, with number four on

the way, and my quilt-making time is a bit less than what I would like to be. My system enables me to pick up my work for ten minutes, if that's all I have, and still make progress. I can't rely on several hours of uninterrupted time in the studio on a regular basis, so most of my work is done in 15-30 minute timeslots between or through whatever else is happening in the house. Very often we all sit around the dinner table, drawing, coloring, sewing, and chatting. I like that there are various stages of the quilt-making process, which I can enjoy while also interacting with the children.

I've also found that it works well for me to have three quilts on the go at a time: one cut out and ready for piecing, one sandwiched and ready for quilting, and one quilted, ready to have all the loose threads knotted and tied away. I do piecing upstairs in the studio, quilting downstairs at the dinner table, and tying off the threads happens by hand, snuggled up on the couch at night. This way, no matter how the kids or I are feeling, there is usually an activity I can make progress on. This approach also helps me to avoid the big dip I would otherwise hit after finishing a large quilt and having to get going on a new one.

As home duties take more and more of my time, I sometimes consider putting thoughts of quilt-making out of my mind for a while. But I soon become difficult to live with, and my husband sends me back into the studio. So I continue to draw and plan and cut and stitch when and where I can, and I try to wait patiently for a time when I can spend more time and energy on this passion of mine. The next solo exhibition is already brewing and bubbling in the back of my mind. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Ruth de Vos is a textile artist living in Mt. Nasura, Western Australia. Her blog is www.theshapeofstring.blogspot.com and her web site is www.ruthdevos.com.

An adventure in Taiwan

by Leni Levenson Wiener

In the fall of 2008, like many other SAQA members, I received an invitation to participate in the first Taiwan International Quilt Exhibition, or TIQE. At the time, I joked to my friends that my quilts get to go to more exciting places than I do. To my surprise, in February 2009 I received an email from Lin Hsin-Chen, the exhibit organizer, asking if I would be interested in coming to teach two workshops in conjunction with the exhibit in April. I said, "Yes!"

I had no idea what to expect of a workshop in Taiwan—what the students' level of expertise would be, what supplies would be available to them, or what it would be like to teach a class of 35 students through an interpreter. I spent many sleepless nights wondering if I would get there and find that I wasn't prepared or that they would come without the correct supplies.

My worries were unfounded. The students, who came from all over Taiwan (many staying in hotels for a week in order to take workshops), all had new, high-end machines, beautiful assortments of fabrics, and even

notions and gadgets from Japan that I had never seen. Some were quilt book authors or quilt teachers, others were housewives, but all came to class with highly developed skills in piecing and hand appliqué.

The work of the Taiwanese artists in the exhibition dealt mostly with nature themes or architecture. My two workshops were "Faces in Fabric", teaching basic fabric collage and raw-edge machine appliqué techniques as related to faces; and "Faces in Thread," focusing on thread painting. All the students were familiar with free-motion sewing techniques, so thread painting was a quick and easy jump for them to make. Because most were already skilled at hand appliqué, the transition to machine appliqué was also easy for them to grasp. The idea of learning how to do a face was a novelty to them.

My interpreter, Huang Wen-Ying, a weaver and head of the fiber department at a local art college, Tainan National University of the Arts, was terrific. Although she had no experience with sewing, as a fiber artist she rapidly came to understand what

I was teaching and was often able to explain some of the concepts beyond simply translating my words. We quickly fell into a rhythm that worked much more smoothly than I had expected. By the end of the first workshop, I was referring to her as "my voice."

It has often been my experience teaching in the U.S. that students are so focused on the piece they produce in a workshop that they're not willing to make bold choices; this was not the case with the students in Taiwan. They were so excited to be letting loose and trying something new that they embraced the process, rather than wanting to produce a result that looked like my sample. At the end of each day, we put their pieces up on the wall, and I was pleased and surprised at their work. They were thrilled.

Many of the students in my workshop wanted to know how to choose colors and had basic questions about techniques and composition. Near the end of the second workshop day, I decided to take them on an ad hoc tour of some of the pieces by the

Students at work. Standing at the front is my interpreter Huang Wen-Ying.





One of the many beautiful temples tucked into the business district in Tainan City, where the exhibit took place.

Students enjoyed taking pictures after class.



international artists in the exhibition. Without planning it ahead of time, we walked through the exhibition and I randomly chose pieces to talk about—works by Karen Kamenetzky, Lisa Chipetine, Jill Jenson, Noriko Endo, Bella Kaplan, M. Joan Lintault, Linda McCurry, Mirjam Pet-Jacobs, Elaine Quehl, Joan Schulze, Tiziana Tateo, Deborah Gregory, Jette Clover, and Katherine K. Allen. I was able to discuss themes, composition, color choices and how color can set a mood, and some techniques with which they were unfamiliar. This tour attracted not only the exhibition volunteers, but many of those attending the exhibition at that time. They asked questions, and many took copious notes.

At the end of each class day, drawings were held to give away little gifts. This was always followed by picture taking. The Taiwanese love to take pictures—first the entire class, then each student with me, then combinations of students with me, even pictures of my husband, who accompanied me on the trip. The picture-taking at the end of each class often ran as long as 45 minutes.

Hsin-Chen Lin, the exhibition organizer, and her very capable executive director, I-Ying Lin, couldn't do enough for my husband and me. Three people were assigned to the classroom just to assist me where needed, whether it was setting up the

computer and screen for me to show slides to the class or bringing me tea, coffee, and water throughout the day. While I was teaching, Hsin-Chen's husband, Wu, took my husband on a tour of Tainan City with Noriko Endo (the other workshop teacher) and her husband. Every night we were treated to wonderful dinners and were driven

everywhere. I was showered with gifts from the sponsors, the organizers, and even the students. I felt like a rock star.

The workshops were run in conjunction with TIQE, Taiwan International Quilt Exhibition, held in Tainan City in the southern part of

See "Taiwan" on page 34



In the entry to the Taiwan International Quilt Exhibit: Leni Levenson Wiener; Hsin-Chen Lin, president of TAQS and organizer of the exhibit; I-Ying Lin, executive director TAQS, standing next to *Formosa Taijiang* by Hsin-Chen Lin.

Using SAQA's 20th anniversary trunk show as a teaching tool

by Kris Sazaki and Deb Cashatt

SAQA is having one heck of a 20th birthday! Part of its celebration is the traveling trunk show, designed to help showcase SAQA and its mission to “promote the art quilt through education, exhibitions, professional development, and documentation.” So, you might ask, what is the trunk show and why would my region want it? There are a total of three trunk shows, each consisting of 61 8-inch square art quilts matted and mounted on foam core. SAQA's 20th anniversary trunk show is a testament to the vibrant and diverse group of quilt artists who make up SAQA today.

Benefits of the trunk show

There are many reasons to bring the trunk show to your area. For one, it's a great way to view the work of a large number of SAQA artists all in one place. Because of the way the quilts have been prepared, you can analyze each quilt up close and read the artist statement. The size of the quilts makes it easy to look at several quilts at a time to invite lively discussion. You can conduct quilt critiques among your members, hold a mini art appreciation class, or use some quilts as models in a hands-on workshop. At the very least, viewing such diversity of style, technique, and composition will inspire your regional members to broaden their own artistic expression.

The trunk show in your region

Jamie Fingal (Southern California co-rep) hosted an open house at her studio this past June. SAQA members had the opportunity to leisurely view the art included in the trunk show. Jamie was fascinated by the different ways people approached the art: “Some just looked at all the pieces without even turning them over to

see who created them. Others flipped them over to identify the artist.” An open house works well with members who want to view art at their own pace. You can also work with local galleries and associations to hang the trunk show at their respective venues.

Charlotte Bird brought trunk show B to the *Quilt Visions* annual meeting in San Diego, California, in September 2009. Artist members facilitated a discussion about the various techniques presented in the trunk show and then demonstrated a couple of them. This type of activity helps bring the SAQA name to a wider audience.

As the representatives of the northern California – Nevada region, we brought trunk show B to our May 2009 quarterly meeting to use as a teaching tool. We first arranged the quilts on long tables and allowed about 30-45 minutes for the members to peruse the collection. We then facilitated a quilt critique. This exercise was designed to promote our members' critical viewing of quilts

as art. It proved so popular that we brought trunk show C to our August 2009 meeting, where we repeated the quilt critique format. An added benefit was that some of our members brought guests who joined SAQA after seeing these incredible works of art. If your region does not hold regular meetings, this might provide a special opportunity.

The trunk show used as quilt critique

The trunk show serves as a wonderful tool to sharpen your members' critiquing skills and to encourage their growth as artists. The quilts are easy to handle, allowing for flexibility in conducting a critique. Since we held two critiques, we were able to experiment with different formats. We divided the members randomly into groups of five during the first meeting and then groups of eight during the second and gave each group a batch of quilts to work with. We noticed that when the members were in smaller groups, more members participated in the discussion.



Although we encouraged the groups to look at the art quilts in whatever manner they saw fit, we distributed a viewing guide we had adapted from the Incredible Art Department at www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/Files/crit3.htm. When viewing the art quilts, we asked the members to consider their first impression, a detailed description of the piece, an analysis of the piece based on the elements of design (color, shape, line, texture, space, form, value) and principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, movement/rhythm, unity, variety), their interpretation of the quilt, and their conclusions about the work.

The dynamics of the groups were as varied as the number, but each one quickly found its own way through the quilts. Some groups viewed one quilt at a time, following the viewing guide. Others viewed all the quilts at the same time, comparing and contrasting individual pieces.

One group of eight found itself breaking up into pairs to discuss one quilt and then coming together to discuss all the quilts again as a group. Some people approached quilts as fiber artists, analyzing the different techniques, while others chose to be art viewers, focusing on the piece in its entirety. One group even had a spirited discussion of the attached artist statements and whether or not they found them valuable. At the second meeting, we quickly divided the quilts by color to see if that would influence how the groups viewed them. Sometimes it did (especially when the mauve-gray group was discussed), but we could not always say it made a difference.

Reactions

It's difficult to look at these trunk show quilts and not be awed at the



immense talent within SAQA. Jamie Fingal said she appreciated how artists created pieces that represented who they are as artists: their style, their colors, their identity. Eva Cooper felt the unanimity of format kept the focus on various techniques, textures, and details. Joyce Compton expressed the views of many critique participants when she asked, "Isn't it wonderful that art allows us to see different things in one piece?"

The SAQA trunk show also lets us consider what sets art quilts apart from other art. Alice Conn remarked that a couple of pieces looked as if they had been executed in a different medium (painting) and wanted to see "the fiber." For Winifred Dell'Ario, the "quilt" element was what she was looking for in each piece: "Something should draw one's hand to the piece." No matter what direction your viewing of the SAQA 20th anniversary trunk show takes, you will come away with a new appreciation of the interplay between artist and viewer.

Trunk show details

Each show comes packed in a plastic trunk with wheels for easy transport. The trunk contains the quilts, a comment book, quilt index, return shipping label, and Velcro® straps to aid in displaying the quilts. Curator Vou

Best and her cadre of volunteers mated and prepared the quilts so that viewers can hold each quilt without damaging it.

To order the show, contact Vou Best at vbestdaja@aol.com. Please pass the hat when you show the works and send the donation to SAQA (P.O. Box 572, Storrs, CT 06268-0572) to help offset the cost of shipping. All three trunks will be available until March 2010 when some of the quilts will be archived at the International Quilt Study Center (www.quiltstudy.org). The remaining quilts will be available through the end of 2010. Trunk shows have already been viewed in Australia and Nova Scotia. Arrangements are underway for other regions, so contact your regional representative to find out if one is coming your way. ▼

SAQA professional artist members Kris Sazaki and Deb Cashatt are fiber artists collectively known as the Pixeladies. They both live in Cameron Park, California, and their web site is www.pixeladies.com.

The Discovery Tour – Arroyo Arts Collective

By Connie Rohman

Surrounded by hills and bordered by the Arroyo Seco, the Northeast Los Angeles neighborhoods of Highland Park, Mt. Washington, and Eagle Rock are vibrant, eclectic communities, home to one of the largest concentrations of artists in Los Angeles. Every year, the Arroyo Arts Collective (www.arroyoartscollective.org) holds their open studio art tour, the Discovery Tour, on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. The Collective is a grassroots community-based organization of Northeast L.A. artists: fiber artists, painters, photographers, sculptors, ceramicists, assemblage artists, collage artists, film and video artists, computer graphics artists, writers, poets, musicians, and installation artists. Participants cover the tour expenses from membership dues and a 10% commission from all tour sales. Proceeds from the tour benefit art programs at a local high school.

The Mt. Washington and Eagle Rock neighborhoods were the seat of the city's first cultural center at the turn of the century. Charles Fletcher Lummis established Los Angeles' first museum here, and the USC School of the Arts was founded at the stained glass and art studio of William Judson. These interesting neighborhoods and the Discovery Tour are mentioned in the recent edition of the travel guidebook *The Rough Guide to Los Angeles*.

Charles Lummis' historic home is the traditional starting point for the Discovery Tour. Visitors can roam through this early Arts & Crafts 1898 home built by Lummis, with its hand-crafted wood furniture and stone walls, before they grab a map, look at the photos of the tour artists' work, and head off for the studios. The Lummis home and gardens is a great place to hang out for the day, both for the craftspeople in the courtyard who sell their wares and for the

volunteers who sell tickets and maps to tour-goers.

The Arroyo Arts Collective Discovery Tour is a well-oiled machine. In 2008, 390 advance tickets (\$10 each) were sold via the website and a local store, and 272 tickets (\$15 each) were purchased on the day of the tour. The tour had 144 artist participants, with more than 662 people spending the day roaming in and out of artists' studios and homes. I had approximately 150 people tour my home.

People drove or walked and were also able to hop on one of the four free shuttle buses that carried approximately 30 people at a time around the neighborhood. The shuttle bus schedule was worked out to include as many studios as possible on routes that were each about two hours long. About one third of the visitors came to my studio on the shuttle. 2008 was the first year we had shuttles, and I loved having a group of people come in all at the same time, talking excitedly about the art they had been seeing. It's a hilly, hard-to-navigate area, so the shuttle buses were an excellent option for those who didn't want the adventure of finding places themselves.

I have been a member of the AAC for eight years and have participated in the Discovery Tour for the last five. Once every fall, I clean my house, madly finish as many new art pieces as possible, and turn my downstairs into an art gallery. All of our family's art collection comes off the walls, and my work goes up. On the day of the tour, I welcome people and spend the afternoon talking to them about my art, how and why I make it, and where I find my inspiration.

Most years I'll sell three or four medium-sized (about 24" x 36") art quilts, while smaller pieces (approx. 9" x 12") sell best if people are new to my work. I also have small items

(hand-dyed or felted scarves, unique sock creatures, mugs with my work printed on the sides) so that people can pick up holiday gifts for \$20-\$50. One year, I sold absolutely everything I had off the walls, even my three huge wall-sized expensive pieces. I wish I could replicate whatever was in the water that day! Still, I have a couple of collectors who buy work from me every year. It's great to have an annual open studio on a set weekend so that your clients know when they can see your new work.

The art tour is one of the defining events in the neighborhood and brings people from all over Los Angeles to this part of town. I've made valuable friendships with other artists in the area. When I recently curated an art exhibition for a local festival, I was able to contact some of those artist friends and invite them to show in the exhibition. The tour also gives me a chance to promote fiber arts as a medium in the fine arts world. Many visitors on the tour are unfamiliar with fiber art, and I love to explain why I have chosen to work in this medium.

Our hard-working board members start organizing the tour in April. They send a letter to all AAC members at the beginning of August with a calendar of due dates and an application. Every year the AAC board tries a few organizational changes to help the tour run more smoothly. This year's changes include an improved web presence and suggestions on how to make it a satisfying experience for the artist participant, including:

- Invite other artists to show at your studio or house. We have found that most viewers choose locations where there are multiple artists. With so many artists on this widely spread-out tour, this is especially important.



Connie Rohman (center) with a studio tour visitor.



- Invite your artist neighbors to be part of the tour or invite non-artist neighbors to open their houses to artists so your location will be part of a cluster, which are also the most visited sites.

Publicity is done by volunteers who sell tickets, send postcard invitations, and print up the tour map/program. The Arroyo Arts Collective website has all the information about the annual tour. In addition to the invitation, I usually send out another postcard with an image of my own work on it to my personal mailing list, with a hand-written note to encourage people to come to my studio. About half of my visitors come because of this personal contact.

In November, two weeks before the tour itself, a preview exhibition of small works from the artists is held at a local art gallery. It's a great way for people to find those artists whose work they are drawn to. Of course, all of this work is for sale. This small works exhibition is also part of the monthly NELA (Northeast Los Angeles) Second Saturday, a monthly art gallery crawl. The exhibition garners publicity for the Discovery Tour as well as giving artists a chance to show their work in a gallery setting.

With all the foot traffic, I like to have one or two other people assist me during the day, helping with taking money, writing down people's contact information, and watching that nothing leaves the house that shouldn't. We have a two-story house and with my studio on the

second floor, I try to have someone upstairs just to keep an eye on things and answer questions about the work if needed. That frees me up to stay downstairs and spend my time meeting, greeting, and engaging with people about my work.

I've found that the more people know about the process, inspiration, and concepts behind my work, the more they feel connected to it, and frankly, they're much more likely to want to purchase it. It's hard to walk up to a complete stranger and strike up a conversation, but you can always start off by saying, "Can I show you something about this piece you're looking at?" Then it's time to talk about how I dyed the cloth, what inspired me to create this piece, etc. If I can get one person engaged in talking about my art, other people will usually drift over and listen in, sometimes asking their own questions. I've even been known to spontaneously "explain" to my husband or children something that I want a nearby tour-goer to hear. It's all about breaking the ice and making people feel comfortable.

It's important to present the open studio as professionally as possible in the hope that people will feel more relaxed, like they're at a gallery, rather than in someone's living room. This means having the following:

- A guest book for comments and sign-ins by the front door on a small table with flowers and my flyers, cards, and postcards.

- Clean, clear labels next to each work with title, size, materials, and price. Use a large typeface to make it easy to read.
- Closed doors for rooms that are off-limits with a sign that says "Please do not enter."
- A couple of bowls of nuts and M&Ms for fueling up art tour-goers. They are not usually interested in standing around for long periods of time (there are a lot more studios to see), but they appreciate having a nibble to sustain them.
- Clutter-free rooms to try to evoke the gallery feeling, as well as to showcase the work.

The Discovery Tour is hard work for all those involved, but well worth it. I have a deadline every year to have finished new work to exhibit on the tour. I've made artist friends in my own neighborhood. And every December, I have an updated mailing list, new work, and a clean studio. Thanks to my involvement with the Arroyo Arts Collective, I have had exhibitions in local art galleries, and new curatorial and jurying opportunities. If you're ever in Los Angeles the weekend before Thanksgiving, please check out the Discovery Tour for yourself! ▼

*SAQA professional artist member
Connie Rohman is a fiber artist living in
Los Angeles, California. Her web site is
www.connierohman.com.*

Developing and organizing a two-person exhibition

by Patricia Gould

It all began in December 2007 when Jean McLaughlin Cowie, a SAQA member from Silver City, New Mexico, approached me with the idea of organizing a two-person exhibition to propose to galleries and museums. We met in January 2008 to look at images of our work to use in a proposal and write up an exhibition statement. While Jean and I both create landscapes, her work is more abstract and has a brighter palette, and my work tends to be more subdued and impressionistic. After carefully looking at both our portfolios side by side, we came up with the title—*Double Vision: Two Unique Insights in Fabric & Thread*.

Over the next few months, we each scoured magazines and online resources for venues we might approach. After reviewing their submission guidelines, we made dozens of phone calls to galleries all over the country. We paid particular attention

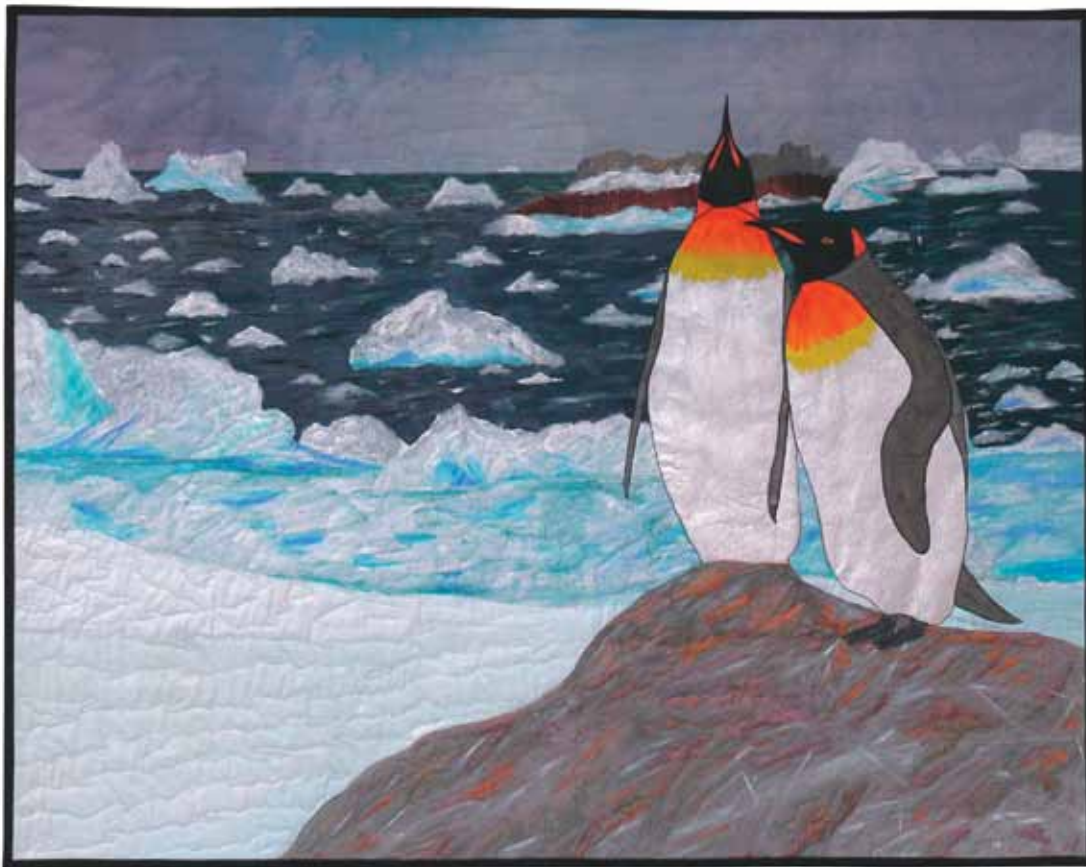
to local venues to learn which might be accepting proposals for our type of art. Big or small, we contacted each gallery that seemed appropriate. Jean managed most of the contact with the venues, and I handled the actual proposal submissions. At first we thought we would choose 10 or 12 images to submit, but as time went on and we both created new work, our image list became a work in progress, adapted to whatever the venue asked for and what the space would allow. Of course, our résumés had to be updated but our artists' statements and bios mostly stayed the same for each submission. Some venues asked for publicity printouts, so we provided postcards, brochures, and articles in the portfolio. It is important to submit exactly what is requested. If the venue asks for a one-page résumé, don't send them a two-page résumé. If they don't want the pages stapled, don't staple them.

Each opportunity will have unique presentation requirements (digital formatting, hard copies, or CDs), so be sure to follow their guidelines and present everything in a visually pleasing, professional package.

Jean and I shared the workload on this venture, and we split the expenses totaling about \$250 for postage, printing supplies, binders, and CDs. We made a point of presenting our portfolios in very nice binders with a printed cover that we designed to highlight both our work. I also made CD labels with our artwork. I included high-quality photographs, if requested, in addition to the digital images. At the very minimum, we included a cover letter, the proposal statement, both our résumés, artists' statements, and bios. All these documents had our contact information clearly at the top with our graphic logos. We always sent our proposals by USPS Priority Mail (www.usps).



Color on the Wind 26" x 44" ©2007 Jean McLaughlin Cowie



A Pair of Kings

34" x 43"

©2009 Patricia Gould

com), allowing us to track delivery. It is so easy to print out the bar-coded labels with Click n' Ship, which includes free delivery confirmation and is cheaper than paying at the counter. We also included a pre-stamped priority or first-class return envelope large enough to return our portfolio.

We kept a spreadsheet of all venues, including a deadline for submission (if applicable), city, contact person, submission fees, exhibition fees, and proposal items to include. With a spreadsheet, you can add and delete venues as you progress, and this is a good way to keep all the information in one place.

After contacting about 40 venues, our proposal went to 31 of them, including museums, city art centers, college art galleries, and a few commercial galleries. Patience is essential in waiting for reviews and replies, and it is also critical to follow up with emails and phone calls. There is a delicate balance between appropriate follow-ups and annoying badgering, so don't pester your contact too often. We received twelve replies that declined our proposal, thirteen never

responded despite our follow-up calls and emails, and four confirmed exhibitions. In addition to the four two-person exhibitions, we were invited to participate in a group multimedia show at the Fitton Center for Creative Arts in Hamilton, Ohio.

Once we were granted an exhibition, we made it easy for the venue to promote the exhibition, accept our artwork, and display it. We provided high-quality images for postcards and other publicity, and a spreadsheet inventory of our artwork with thumbnail images, titles, dimensions, dates, prices, and insurance values.

Always send your work in sturdy, reusable boxes. When shipping multiple boxes, it's good to include a list of all the artwork in each box with thumbnail images so packing for return shipping is less hassle. Jean and I both have extensive experience with exhibiting in fine art venues, so we have always provided hanging rods or slats with holes drilled to accommodate nails, screws, or monofilament for the venue to professionally hang our artwork. The hanging devices are labeled with our names and the title of the artwork, so it's

easy for the staff to match the rods up with the artwork.

Two of the venues in which we exhibited are commercial galleries in New Mexico. This made it possible for us to meet with the gallery owners in person, deliver our work, and attend the opening receptions, which included providing some of the refreshments. Upon delivering our work to our first New Mexico venue, Johnson's of Madrid, we found we needed to actually hang the show—something we'd never have known if the gallery had been far away. It's important to check out potential venues first hand if at all possible to avoid this kind of surprise. Be prepared to help in any way to make sure your show is hung in a professional manner. At the Unsettled Gallery in Las Cruces, we shared the gallery for a month-long exhibition with one other mixed media artist in a beautiful space.

The first out-of-state exhibition was at the Craddock-Terry Gallery in Lynchburg, Virginia, that ran for seven weeks in 2009. The gallery is a 2,600 square-foot, non-profit

See "Two-person exhibition" on page 35

SAQA member gallery: *Thread painting*

B. J. Adams

Variations on 'T'

30" x 46"

©2009

www.bjadamsart.com

This is the letter 'T' from my alphabet series. It is up to the viewer to identify each of these unrelated T images.



Melani Kane Brewer

Esperanza – Hope for the Tamarins

25" X 25" ©2009 | www.melanibrewer.com

This piece was created for the *Global Visions* exhibit at the Nature Conservancy Blowing Rocks Preserve in Jupiter, Florida. We were asked to depict various areas where the Nature Conservancy is hard at work to preserve land and the plants and animals that inhabit these areas. I love monkeys, so I chose to do the Golden Lion Tamarin that lives in Brazil. There are only about 1,000 of them left in the wild.

Sylvia Naylor

Late Fall in the Woods

9" x 18"

©2007

www.sylvianaylor.com

I love to walk in the boreal forests in the fall. Although the peak colors had long since passed, there was still beauty in the woods.



Barbara Barrick McKie

Eye to Eye 22" x 33" ©2009
mckieart.com

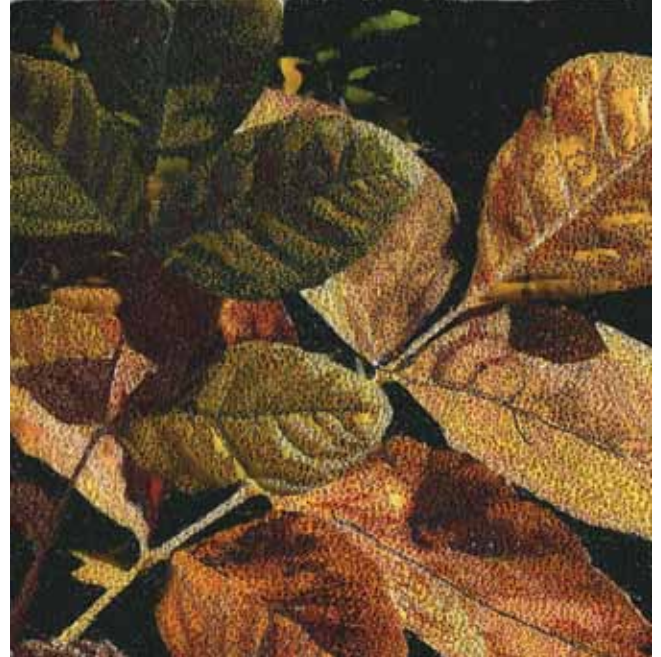
We were on a boat trip in Namibia when we saw four male lions on the banks of the river. This one was a bit apart from the other three, and I loved the light coming through his mane. Our guides told us that these were the first lions they had seen in the park for over a year. We just kept looking at them and they kept looking at us...eye to eye.



Ilse Anysas-Salkauskas

Crocus 11 8" x 9" ©2007

I live in the province of Alberta, Canada, near the Rocky Mountains, and we have long, cold winters. The prairie crocuses flowering in our fields are a welcome sign that winter is over and spring is on its way.



Carol Watkins

Leaves 6" x 6" © 2009 | www.carolwatkins.com

Pattern, shape, and color seduce me as I hike open-space trails around my home. This is from a photo taken looking up into a tree. Color contrast was heightened and the image printed on fabric. Thread painting is a meditative experience, and I lose myself in the process for hours at a time.



Online critiques focus on composition, color, and texture

by Sandra Sider

Since the fall of 2008, Lisa Chipetine and I have been running an independent business offering online critiques of contemporary quilt art. These critiques are facilitated by dialogues among the participating artists, many of whom are members of SAQA.

QuiltCritique.com (QC) has three levels of webinar participation: Active participants (\$20 fee), whose quilts are critiqued and who anonymously join in the discussion; Silent participants (\$5 fee), who can listen and view the images but not speak; and Subscribers, whose \$10 monthly fee entitles them to be silent participants and to watch our archived programs at their convenience.

Each semi-monthly program, which lasts one hour, usually features one quilt each from five artists. In this article, I am pleased to share three quilts that were revised as a result of suggestions in QC programs. All three artists are members of SAQA.

In the QC process, Lisa (our producer) emails me digital images of each quilt to be critiqued. Most of the artists submit a quilt that “doesn’t seem quite right.” Sometimes the case can be extreme, such as: “I spent a month on this thing, I hate it, but I’m in too deep to quit! Help!” After studying the original images, I manipulate the overall view in Adobe Photoshop Elements, incorporating my suggestions pertaining to composition, color, and texture. These suggestions are intended to stimulate discussion and to encourage artists to take a close look at the quilt. They are most emphatically not meant as rules that must be followed. In fact, for some quilts, the participants have tweaked or disagreed with my suggestions, contributing much better ideas. When that happens, I consider QC to be a real success.

Let’s take a look at the quilts. Most of the quotations here are from our online archives, without any

attribution because the anonymous participants are identified by number rather than by name. The artists whose work was selected for publication, in both the “before” and “after” versions, are Jane Broaddus, Katharina Litchman, and Laurie Swim.

Jane Broaddus creates wildly expressionistic quilts combining naturalism and abstraction, often incorporating eyes, which she finds fascinating. In *Hex II*, the central motif is an eye with hexagons radiating out from it. The artist, who believes that “you can never have too much embellishment,” had only begun embellishing the version of her quilt emailed for the QC program. I suggested changing the color of the iris to orange to make the eye a bit spooky. I also suggested repeating the zigzag texturing in paint, both around the eye and in the outer border, to create more linear movement and lighten the mass of the composition. Her own zigzags of brown on orange used tonal contrast

Hex II by Jane Broaddus, before and after.





Urban Landscape by Katharina Litchman, before and after.

well, and my idea was to have the same sort of contrast in additional linear embellishment.

Responding to my suggestions, one of the participants remarked that all the “radiating shapes seem to vibrate, drawing the viewer’s eye outward from the center.” The original version is relatively static, with movement from the periphery toward the center—but we need to remember that this was a work in progress. Broaddus was considering ideas to complete the quilt, which is why she submitted it to QC for a critique. Her final version quivers with visual energy, attenuating the central focus of the eye. Instead of replicating the zigzag, she drew loops, curves, and dots with paint to expand the surface. Especially effective are the sections of yellow curves dancing around the marbled fabric, establishing a rhythmic pattern that balances the curves encircling the eye. Broaddus has created an incantatory quilt, mysteriously captivating.

Katharina Litchman’s quilts, inspired by buildings, usually feature windows in the composition. This time, in *Urban Landscape*, she was working in pure abstraction, developing relationships among the rectilinear forms. She constructed

this quilt using mass and color, with subtle visual texture in the hand-dyed fabrics. Although I suggested changing the border to a soft green, which I thought would help to project the composition toward the viewer, she decided to keep the lighter border, which works beautifully now that other alterations have been made. To my eye, the bottom central area seemed weak compared with the strength of the rest of the composition. I suggested replacing the light gray ground with black and inserting two diminishing rectangle strips to create a sense of depth. Because the black shape at the upper left border was slightly distracting, I also suggested inserting a strip over part of the black background.

One of the participants commented that having black at the center bottom makes everything “float,” thus activating the surface. Another artist remarked that the two additional strips at the bottom “echo the layering and rectilinear nature of the quilt” in an interesting way. *Urban Landscape* exemplifies the design principles for contemporary quilt art provided in the QC web site: primary principles of texture, line, color, and mass, and secondary principles of contrast, repetition and variation,

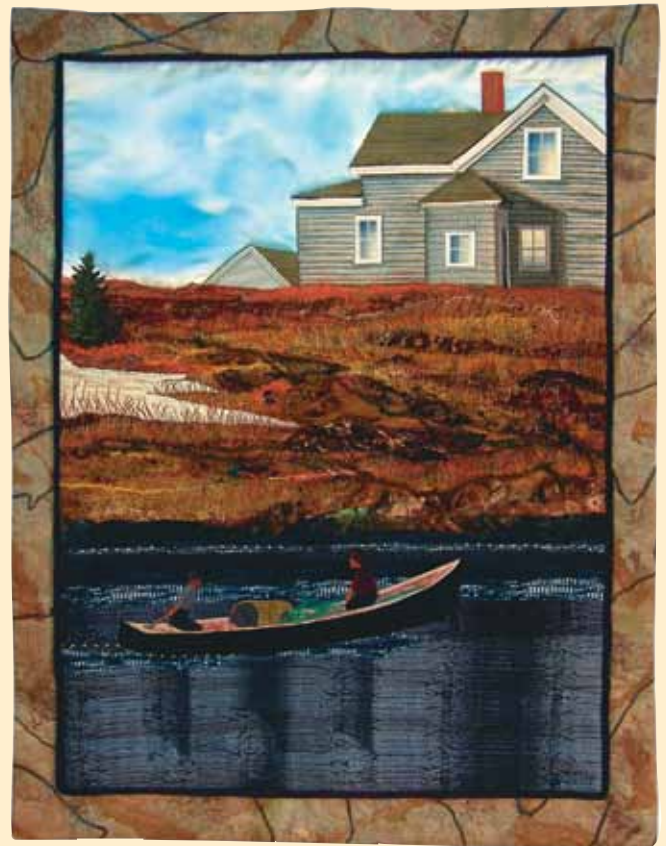
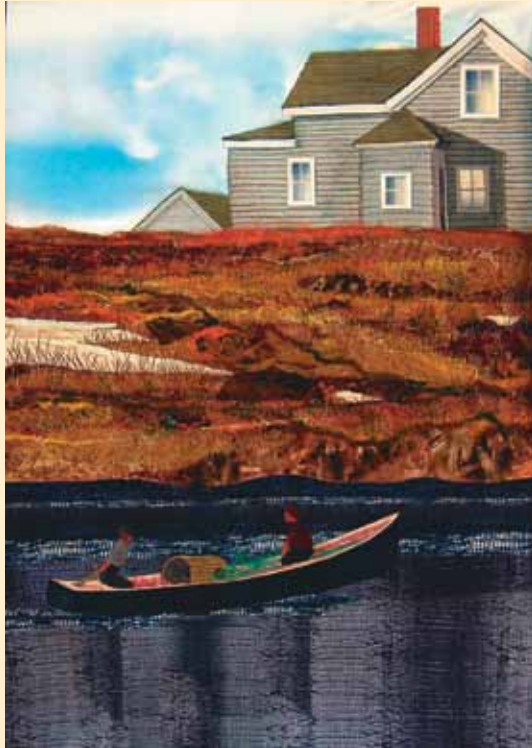
balance, and focus. While Litchman built the surface through color and mass, balancing and repeating shapes, the linear element of her quilting intensifies the solidity of her buildings. The quilt needed only a focal point, now present in the central section.

Laurie Swim’s pictorial quilts often depict water, with luminous reflections of objects and light. Her quilt *Make-and-Break* is one of three in a series titled *Land, Sea, and Memory*. The *Make-and-Break* was a small engine in the early 1900s that, in the artist’s words, “revolutionized how the inshore fishermen worked without having to depend on the wind to get around.” This quilt has two focal points, the boat and the house, with the viewer’s eye moving between them. But the composition prior to the critique was stymied. As Swim herself stated in an email sent after the QC program, “When you showed the ‘Photoshopped’ version, I could see what was wrong right away. The piece was divided into three separate sections and needed cohesion.”

I suggested deleting the two small white rocky areas in the middle ground and inserting two groups of evergreen trees—one above the large rocky outcrop at the left and

Continued on next page

Make-and-Break
by Laurie Swim,
before and after.



the other just at the water line at the right. The trees were copied from evergreen trees in another quilt found on Swim's web site. My idea was that the trees, with their pointed shapes, could help direct the visual movement around the composition. I was also concerned about the hard edge of the water line, which abruptly separates the water from land. The base of the trees could ameliorate that abruptness.

Other participants also felt that the quilt needed more transition from foreground to middle ground to background, and that a tree or trees were appropriate for the composition. One artist remarked, "Where water meets the land, it might benefit from some softening to give it more connection between the two zones." Swim responded that she had already begun reworking the shoreline to create this very effect, darkening and blurring the edge. In the final version, *Make-and-Break* maintains its focus on the boat, but now the fishermen seem

more unified with the entire scene. As I often remark in the QC programs, quilt artists who choose to work with naturalistic compositions should feel free to take artistic license, but within the bounds of optical logic. Swim has successfully accomplished that feat in this quilt.

An interesting result of QC is that more artists are now using photo manipulation software as they work on their quilts, taking process photographs and experimenting digitally with different arrangements of pieced and appliquéd elements, as well as different color combinations. Melody Randol, who participated in one of our programs, says that the most important thing she gleaned from the discussion was hearing dialogue that addressed specific design elements. "Good critique is based upon not only knowing what doesn't work and why, but also knowing how to express and articulate ideas. Using the common language of design elements and principles enables us to offer

input and feedback."

Lisa and I hope QuiltCritique.com might inspire quilt artists to become more informed about composition and more creative with color and texture. To that end, we are offering SAQA members a free month of our subscription service. Simply email Lisa at lchipetine@gmail.com to request this offer.

For another quilt reworked after a QC critique, see *Naiads* by SAQA member Sarah Ann Smith. She discusses the benefits of the critiquing process at length on her web site at www.sarahannsmith.com/weblog/?p=1919. ▼

SAQA Vice President Sandra Sider is an author and quilt artist. She lives in The Bronx, New York and her artistic web site is www.sandrasider.com. Lisa Chipetine and she co-own www.QuiltCritique.com.

Survey results: Artists seek business and marketing training

By Deborah Fell

In preparation for teaching the *Business Aspect of Art* at the international level at Quilt Surface Design Symposium in June 2009, I designed and implemented a survey to get a more comprehensive picture of the state of business pertaining to art quilting.

The survey was generated through SurveyMonkey.com from February through April 2009. This web site hosts surveys that have less than ten questions for free; more than that requires a paid subscription. The software is user friendly, and survey results can be made public online.

My survey resulted in 145 respondents with a 93% completion rate. Responses were anonymous and came from the United States, Europe, Canada, and Australia. The 30-question survey focused on several topics.

Results were compiled using the statistical results from the survey:

- 50% of respondents said they make art because they love it
- 33% identify their medium as art quilts; 33% identify their medium as fiber art
- 50% consider themselves artists
- 50% work full time as artists
- 94% cannot support themselves financially through their artwork
- Approximately 40-50% of respondents spend about 50% of their time on business related activities
- 95% of respondents have studios; 89% have studios in their homes
- Most artists are not deducting their studio space for taxes
- 69% of respondents belong to SAQA
- About 25% of respondents are represented by a gallery, with 38% of

those satisfied with that experience

- Over 50% have obtained art training on their own through classes and workshops; 75% have attended national level workshops; QSDS was mentioned most frequently
- 51% of respondents are using Berninas, and 10% of respondents are using long-arm machines
- 94% have work available for sale, and 62% sell their work primarily through word of mouth
- 70% of respondents use a formula for pricing their work; 46% price their work by square foot
- Respondents indicated that all major shipping carriers were used with 48% reporting that FedEx was most reliable
- 79% of respondents have entered a major show; 77% have been rejected from a major show
- 77% are taking their own digital photography for show entry; only 3% reported that they were using slides, 60% of respondents felt they needed more training in digital photography, and 96% felt that it would be very helpful if all major shows had similar digital entry requirements
- 95% use computers for their art business; 69% are using PC's; 75% of respondents have web sites
- Over half would like to learn more about running a business. 62% have never taken a business class; 73% said they would take a business class if they had the opportunity with the following topics in order of interest: marketing, technology, pricing, and photography

The results of this survey tell us several things about the continued

development of our art. One, most of us make art because we love it. Second, without utilizing current technology, our field will be left behind. The debate over the terms "art quilt" and "fiber art" is alive and well and is not near a resolution. Most artists are selling their work through word of mouth, and this makes marketing skills extremely important. The survey indicates a strong desire to receive more training in the business aspects of art, including marketing, buying, selling, and photography. Most of the respondents want to sell their work, although the majority do not support themselves financially through artwork sales. Again, this is indicative of the need for more business training in the field.

Most respondents have studios in their homes, and about 50% of studio time is spent on non-art activities. Most respondents are not represented by a gallery. The Internet has changed the traditional approach to selling and exhibiting work. Technology is here to stay, and it's important to grow and keep up with new trends. We must be life-long learners.

The survey reminds us of some things to remember. When you feel like you're struggling financially, know that you are in good company. Learning business skills is within reach, and many of us want to increase these skills. And remember the statistics the next time you get a rejection letter— you are not alone. Our field is in the middle of its own evolution— isn't it exciting? ▼

SAQA professional artist member Deborah Fell is a studio artist committed to the art quilt medium. She lives in Urbana, Illinois, and her web site is www.deborahfell.com.

Quilters' Save Our Stories: Ten years of saving quilt history

by Karen Musgrave

My love affair with stories began early in my life when I would sneak out of my bedroom and eavesdrop on my parents' Friday-night gatherings with my aunts and uncles. My uncles, especially Uncle Bob, were gifted storytellers. I learned that each of us chooses the stories we weave into our families and our communities through personal life experience.

My love affair with quilts began when I made my first quilt in 1973. So it was only natural that I would combine my love of quilts and stories by becoming involved in Quilters' Save Our Stories (QSOS). It is a very real way for me to give back to a community I love, elevate women and this art form, and satisfy my seemingly insatiable curiosity about people.

We can learn many things about a quilt by viewing it, but listening to the maker completes the story. Capturing the quiltmaker's own words saves that story for the future.

The intent of QSOS is to preserve these stories. This unique oral history project of the Alliance for American Quilts documents the makers of quilts in a meaningful way. QSOS has created a broad, accessible body of quilt making information. Recorded interviews are available at www.allianceforamericanquilts.org/qsos/.

I became involved near the beginning of the project. It was launched in October 1999 at International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas, with the support of Quilts, Inc. After that first two-day training and series of interviews, I realized that what was needed was a downloadable how-to manual, so I began a year of writing. The manual has undergone three updates since its first appearance in 2000 and will continue to evolve and grow along with the project.

The project's original partner and archive was the Center for Material

Culture Studies at the University of Delaware. When the University decided to move in a new direction, the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress became our archive, thus insuring that this resource will be forever preserved.

We are fast approaching 1,000 interviews online, and I'm proud to say that I have conducted nearly 300 of them. Even more amazing is that this has all been done by volunteers, and more people and guilds are joining the project all the time. The interviews include quiltmakers of every type, from those who simply dabble

*Quilts are
community; people
gather together to
make them and
experience them.*

to professionals. Additionally, these interviews show us the complexity and diversity of quiltmakers throughout the world.

More than 250 interviews of SAQA members have been conducted. With the help and support of Eileen Doughty, Jennifer Solon, and Catherine Pascal, the interviews have been linked from SAQA's website and wiki. Catherine Pascal has done an excellent job redesigning the SAQA Q.S.O.S. page (www.saqa.com/news/Interviews.aspx) in celebration of SAQA's 20th anniversary.

The interviews have gone way beyond their humble beginnings. The information shared is being used for master and doctoral theses in women's studies, material cultures, and African

American studies. Writers are using the interviews for their books and magazine articles. Guilds are using the interviews to select speakers and workshops. Collectors and quilt lovers are logging on to consider purchases. Long-lost family members and friends are reconnecting. From all over the world, visitors to the web site are being inspired.

The process has been an eye-opener and learning experience for the people interviewed. Sue Reno says, "I was, naturally, a bit nervous when beginning the interview, but it went very smoothly, and the questions and answers had a logical flow. I felt validated by the finished transcript; it helped me self-identify as a serious artist." Many people have commented how much they have learned about themselves. Sherry Boram says, "I learned from the interview that my need to create is much deeper than I realized. Even though making art quilts is my hobby, if it were required to stay alive, it would be no more vital to me than it already is."

Many people ask me why we should care about preserving and sharing quilts and their voices. I believe that quilt stories illustrate the history of our country, express love and sorrow, and link generations together. Quilts are community; people gather together to make them and experience them. Quilts are art; these beautiful objects raise our spirits. Quilts teach; they are tools for learning about the world. Recording our stories is the gift that Quilters' Save Our Stories gives to the world. ▼

SAQA active member Karen Musgrave is a volunteer interviewer for the Alliance for American Quilts, www.allianceforamericanquilts.org. She lives in Naperville, Illinois, and her blog is connectionsbykaren.blogspot.com.

Organizing a retreat

by Liz Kettle

There's something magical about a retreat experience. The idea of uninterrupted time to focus on your art is incredibly alluring. Retreats connect us with other artists who are on the same solitary journey. Friendships blossom and enrich our lives. Thinking about these concepts led me to the great adventure of hosting a retreat called Textile Evolution.

The idea to host a retreat was born, as so many ideas are, around a table. Three fellow fiber arts teachers and I gathered over coffee and brainstormed ideas. The "what ifs" were flying fast and furious. Someone asked, "What if we host a retreat?" Everyone agreed it was a great idea! We decided to split the work and the profits.

One of the key considerations for a successful retreat is the location. Should it be in a hotel or retreat center? An urban or rural setting? The proximity to major transportation is important to consider as well. A resort or "destination" location is a bonus but usually adds to the cost. We were lucky to have a beautiful new hotel just down the road. It was not too expensive, and there were

two airports within an hour's drive.

Next, we considered the date. Fall in Colorado is beautiful. The problem was that it left us only five months to plan and promote it. Our enthusiasm for the retreat won out. The hotel had a date available in October, so we booked it and paid the deposit.

We knew that promoting the retreat would be tough without a budget for advertising, but we had mailing lists, online connections, guilds, and fiber art groups to contact, in addition to our own loyal students. We started talking it up, and feedback was great. Students were interested, so we were on a roll and picking up speed.

Then there was the inevitable glitch. A major conflict arose for one teacher, so we had to change the date. Many calls were made to the hotel but were never returned, teaching us our first lesson: once they have your non-refundable deposit, they may not be willing to change the dates.

On to plan B—what the heck was plan B anyway? Second lesson: always have a plan B. A mad scramble to locate another suitable retreat center actually turned into a bonus for us.

We found a retreat center that was less expensive, more focused on the retreat experience (no TVs or phones), and in a beautiful setting. Moving the date to spring gave us more time to promote the retreat. Multiple problems solved!

Then we started thinking about liability. What if someone trips and falls or cuts themselves with a rotary cutter? Time for us to do some liability research. Most retreat centers and hotels have insurance that covers falls and other accidents on their premises. A simply-worded release on the student registration form is generally sufficient to cover any other liability issues.

With that taken care of, we were able to move on to the next matter, which was telling the world about our exciting adventure. Our web designer, an artist himself, was willing to wait to be paid until after the retreat. We considered our choices for processing payments and opted to use PayPal to accommodate credit cards and debit purchases. Next on the list was a bank account to deposit all the money that we hoped would be coming our way.

Before we could open that bank account, we had to define our business structure. A simple partnership seemed the clear-cut way to go. But when we got down to details, two teachers were not able to commit to a partnership for different personal and financial reasons. This was a major problem, as it would be unprofessional if we decided to drop the whole thing after talking it up all over the place. So after much thought and careful consideration, I took on the entire business commitment and risk myself. Being the sole organizer simplified the business licensing and bank accounts. Now, we just needed some students to sign up.

Every day, we read the dire



Show and tell with Venisa Gallegos, Liz Kettle, and Cat Mikkelson.

See "Retreat" on page 36



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30 ideas for newsletter or blog content

by Alyson B. Stanfield

Everyone's blogging, Facebooking, and Twittering today. Ever wonder what you should be writing about in your posts and tweets? Well, here are thirty ideas to get you started.

1. Your art technique or medium—if unique, understandable, interesting
2. Expanded information on one of your subjects
3. Your new work and how it is relevant to the community or larger art world
4. New exhibit of other artwork related to your own
5. The history of a color, art medium, or technique
6. Art and politics
7. An upcoming fundraiser for a local arts organization
8. Art education
9. Donations of artwork you made for a charity auction and why
10. Public funding of the arts
11. A new public sculpture in town
12. An interview with a curator or collector
13. Creative projects for those who are not artists
14. Feature article on a nonprofit organization you have donated to or that has a mission you agree with
15. Rebuttal to an art review in the newspaper (while you're at it, send it to the paper as well)
16. A review by you of an art exhibit
17. Anything related to your niche market
18. Kids' projects that relate to your art, such as an outline drawing they can color or a hands-on activity
19. A new material or resource, especially if your newsletter goes out to a lot of artists
20. Review of a book or movie about art
21. Great moments in art history
22. How to care for art
23. Quotes about art
24. Notes about an art lecture you attended
25. Media coverage of the arts (or lack thereof)
26. Calendar of your upcoming exhibits, programs, or events
27. A recent award or honor you received
28. New gallery representation
29. Recent purchases and commissions (only public collections, unless you receive approval from individuals)
30. Great web site links, wacky links, or just plain helpful links

*Alyson B. Stanfield is an author and art coach from Golden, Colorado. She was the keynote speaker at the 2009 SAQA Conference. This list is excerpted from Alyson's book, *I'd Rather Be in the Studio! The Artist's No-Excuse Guide to Self-Promotion*. Her marketing ideas for artists are at www.ArtBizCoach.com and www.ArtBizBlog.com. A DVD of Alyson's SAQA conference presentation is available through the SAQA Bookstore.*

Green – It ain't necessarily so

by M. Rossol

Today, we all want to buy “green.” That includes trying to buy environmentally friendly products and supplies that we use to create our art quilts. By looking for green claims on product labels or seals, we think we’re purchasing products that are safer for ourselves, our families, and the planet. However, this is not always the case. Here are a few things to consider:

“Green” in the product name is no guarantee.

There is no copyright on the word “green.” Investigate green products the same as you would any other product.

“Green” never means “good for the environment.”

Be skeptical of advertising that says a product is “good” for the environment. The only products that benefit the environment are those that were never produced. Every product damages the environment in some way by being manufactured, packaged, and shipped. The best you can hope for is products that are less damaging.

“Green” usually means “less damaging.”

Green products usually are designed to do less damage to the environment than the particular products they replace. For example, new air-conditioning gases were developed to be less damaging to the ozone layer. These gases still destroy ozone, but they do it so slowly that some scientists think Mother Nature will make ozone faster than it is destroyed. But they don’t improve the ozone layer or the environment.

“Green” products may only fix short-term problems.

Many green products are developed to fix obvious, specific, short-term environmental problems, such as

smoke in the air or dead fish in our waterways. But some of these short-term fixes could have unexpected long-term consequences. For example, when the old phosphate cleaning detergents acted like fertilizer in the environment and caused algae to bloom and fish to die, we replaced them with phosphate-free and biodegradable detergents. But the biodegradable enzyme detergents were found to cause serious allergies in some people.

In another instance, the NPEs (nonylphenol ethoxylates) in phosphate-free detergents are now known to release a chemical into water that scientists think causes deformity in the sex organs of fish and other aquatic life. Europe banned the NPE detergents, and activists in the U.S. are trying to do the same.

“Green” may mean “untested” for long-term toxicity.

It is estimated that there are roughly 100,000 chemicals used in our commercial products. However, only about 900 chemicals have been fully assessed for their potential to cause cancer and/or other consequences from long-term exposure. An even smaller number have been evaluated for their ability to cause birth defects or long-term organ damage. It is very likely that untested chemicals are in green products too. Even worse, chemicals for which there is no toxicity data can be labeled “nontoxic.”

“Green” and “natural” are not the same.

Products derived from natural sources are not always safer and greener than synthetic ones. Turpentine, molds, poison ivy, hemlock, and tobacco are natural or derived from natural sources. Ricin, a toxic substance that has been used by terrorists, is derived from the castor bean plant; it is about

a thousand times more toxic than any synthetic chemical known.

Natural products, such as foods, can be particularly damaging to the environment. For example, a spill or release of milk to a stream or waterway will cause bacteria to thrive and may ruin the ecology.

“Green” and “fast” are incompatible.

Cleaning products that instantly dissolve grease on contact are not soap. They contain solvents. All solvents, both synthetic and natural, are toxic.

“Green” products may be more toxic to you.

Do not assume that what is safer for the environment is necessarily safer for you while you use the product. For example, the phosphate detergents were very safe for people to use, while some of the new phosphate-free detergents are less so. For another example, the new gases they inject into your air-conditioner are better for the stratospheric ozone layer, but more toxic to you.

“Organic” may just mean “hydrocarbon.”

Technically, “organic” means the chemical is based on carbon and hydrogen. Tobacco, petroleum, plastics, and your body are all made of hydrocarbons. Unless manufacturers certify that the natural ingredients in the product were grown without certain fertilizers or pesticides, the word “organic” is meaningless on the label. (The term “organic” on a food label has a different meaning than when this term is used on a consumer product. Organic foods are supposed to be produced without or with limited use of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers).

Products that are burned can’t ever be green.

Greenhouse gases and toxic substances are always created when

See “Green” on page 37

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. would like to thank its generous sponsors for supporting our exhibitions, publications, and educational outreach programs in 2009.

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Reinvention

March 19-24, 2010

Reinvention — A life in the arts is a constant process of invention and reinvention. Techniques change, new materials emerge, inspiration evolves along with the world in which we work. Artists reinvent themselves as they mature or change creative paths. It's an exciting time to be a creative individual and change is in the air.

A conference co-sponsored by Surface Design Association, Studio Art Quilts Associates and San Francisco State University Art Department – Textiles. Participants must be members of either SDA or SAQA.



Location: Seven Hills Conference Center, San Francisco State University Campus, San Francisco, Calif.

Events

- March 19-20, Fri.-Sat.** Conference
- March 21, Sun.** Studio and museum tours
- March 22-24, Mon.-Wed.** 3-day workshops

Information available on surfacedesign.org and saqa.com.

one piece on any subject, 1.5 meters on each side. Though there were six of us, Trevor and Beth always work as a team, and so would count as one.

Each would bring our piece to a meeting, show the others, and give a photograph of the work to everyone. Then we would go away and make a small piece—72 centimeters square—based on that image, idea, or technique. A final larger piece would be made by the original artist to complete the hang.

Eyeline

The next exhibition was *Eyeline*, originated by Dianne Firth. Her idea was to take a line that was at the traditional eyeline in a gallery, about 1.5 meters above the floor, and let it enter and leave each body of work at that point. As the line moved through the work it could do whatever the artist wished. In this work, the collaborative element would be the small link pieces—20-centimeter

square staccato pairs at the beginning and end of each body of work to help to feed the line into the next work. The artists each had five meters of space to fill as they wished.

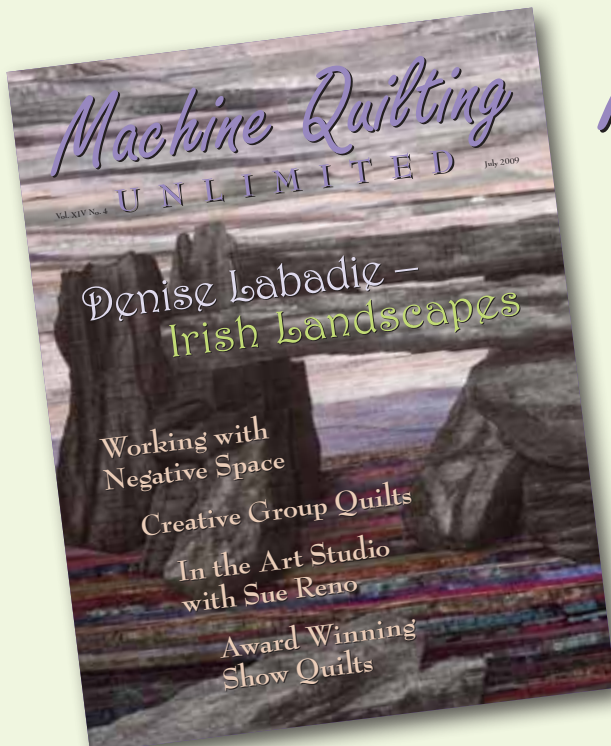
(Editor's note: *Eyeline* was the inspiration for SAQA's *A Sense of Direction: Sightlines* exhibition.)

Collections

Our current exhibition is *Collections*. Subject matter for this was not restricted as long as it fit the theme and filled four to five meters of wall space. While the artists initially agreed that we would restrict the work to three pieces each, some of us broke pieces into diptychs or triptychs. This time, our collaborative element was truly shared. We had often regretted that we did not have some of each other's work, so the collaboration started with a letter-size gift piece. Then we turned our gifts into a book, adding as much or as little as we chose.

tACTile has a following—a group of galleries who regularly ask for our work. Every two years, Expertise Events launches the newest exhibition at the Australasian Quilt Convention. The exhibitions have huge advantages. They are easier to move than a show of paintings, as all the work fits into two suitcases. They arrive with hanging instructions and all necessary labeling about us, the current exhibit, and each piece. Like many textile artists, we have found it difficult to break into conventional art galleries. However, those who host the exhibitions find that the work attracts a different audience, and this is helpful for those whose funding is based on number of visitors. Sales have been a bit slow because the work is required to travel for two years, and potential buyers are reluctant to commit to a quilt that might come back a little travel weary.

tACTile also exhibits at quilt shows to pique the interest of a more



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traditional audience. The travelling exhibitions have increased the profile of each artist, both separately and as part of the group.

At the moment the work has stayed in Australia, but if a group were interested we would consider sending it to other countries. For more information, email tactile@tactilequilts.com.

The brainstorming and the buzz of talking regularly to a group of artists who like and admire one another has been hugely inspirational. My favorite time is always the night we bring together all the new work—often the first viewing of some of it—and lay it out as we would like to see it hung. It's really exciting, and each exhibition seems to be better than the last. I recommend that you set up a group of your own. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Jenny Bowker is a quilt maker and teacher. She lives in Garran, Australia, and her web site is www.jennybowker.com.

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Taiwan

from page 13

the country. This was a dream of Hsin-Chen's for over ten years, and three years of work resulted in a beautiful exhibition of art quilts from around the world. The international artists were all invited to participate, and many sent several pieces. The Taiwanese artists were juried. The show was heavily promoted in Taiwan, and the turnout was amazing—over 5,000 people on the opening weekend and average attendance of about 1,000 people a day. School groups were brought in and families attended. Unlike shows of this kind in the U.S. that seem to attract mainly women, this show seemed to be of great interest to everyone.


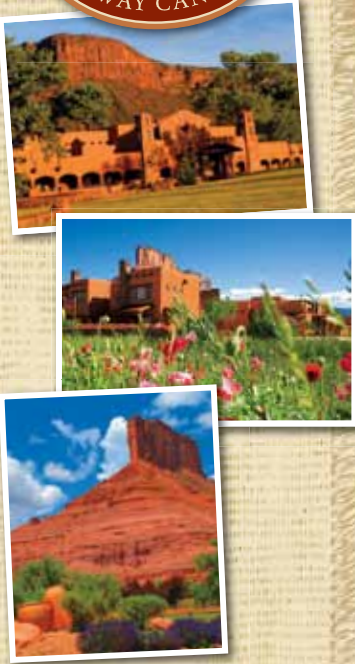
I was surprised to see the work of the Taiwanese artists. Many of their art quilts are hand appliquéd on pieced backgrounds and were flawlessly executed. Hsin-Chen, who has several large pieces in this

show, has had a piece accepted into *Quilt National* this year and has just become SAQA's first member from Taiwan.

Obviously, an opportunity like this doesn't come along often. The students in my classes in Taiwan were thrilled to be taking a class with an American art quilter, but they had no idea how much more exciting it was for me to be there. Truly, an experience I will never forget. ▼

SAQA New York co-rep Leni Levenson Wiener is a fiber artist, quilt teacher, and author of Thread Painting (Krause 2007) and Photo-inspired Art Quilts (Krause 2009). She lives in New Rochelle, New York and her web site is www.leniwiener.com.

Editors's Note: The catalog for the TIQE exhibition is available through the SAQA bookstore.

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Two-person exhibition

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exhibition space. Having seen online photos of the gallery showing its 170 linear feet with high ceilings and great light, we were honored to acquire an exhibition in this space.


Although we didn't get to the opening reception, the curator did send us some photos, one of which appeared in a *Washington Post* article by a travel writer who did attend. The gallery curator has applied for funding to reimburse us for one half of the shipping expenses, which cost us each about \$250.

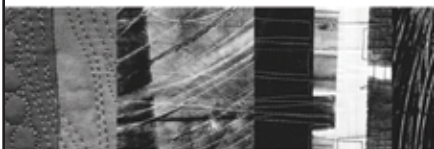
The final installation of *Double Vision* will open in April 2010 in a city-owned art gallery housed in the Reed Whipple Cultural Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. The exhibition will be up for 10 weeks, and we're pleased for the opportunity to show our work in such a large, beautiful venue.

Although sales have yet to occur from these exhibitions, our work is getting widespread exposure across

the United States. We have shared the time, energy, expertise, and expense of this two-year adventure, which has made it less intimidating and more affordable. We can now post four two-person exhibitions on our résumés. The advantages of working with a partner on exhibition proposals went beyond simply sharing the expense; it provided the opportunity to get critical input from each other, as well as moral support to try something we might have been too timid to attempt individually. Jean and I are both optimistic that our hard work and determination will bear fruit in the form of future opportunities for both of us. ▼

SAQA professional artist members Patricia Gould of Albuquerque and Jean McLaughlin Cowie of Silver City, New Mexico, are studio artists. Their web sites are www.angelfiredesigns.com and www.paintedrockquiltdesign.com, respectively.


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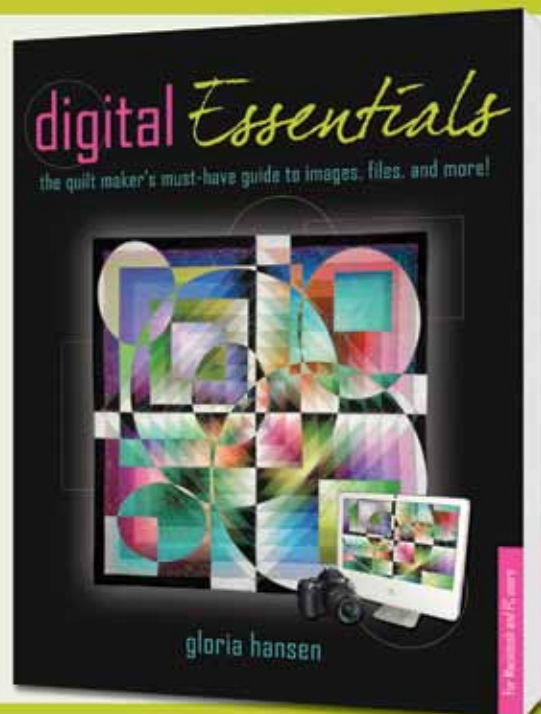
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Retreat

from page 27

economic news in the paper. Every night, we checked to see if anyone else had signed up. We received a few questions, so we knew people were looking, but they weren't signing up. Our cancellation date was fast approaching. I was determined not to cancel the retreat. All my number crunching was based on 35 attendees, and we had only five confirmed students.

What tricks could I pull out of my proverbial hat? Let's add a teacher! It may seem counter-intuitive to add an expense, but with the soggy economy people just were not traveling for recreation and the locals had taken many of our classes already. I needed a fabulous teacher who would entice more local participants. Fortunately, Laura Cater-Woods had an open spot in her calendar the weekend of our retreat. My right-hand woman, Ruth Chandler, and I decided we were willing to work for free if we needed to.

Were these changes enough to make it work? Almost. I contacted the retreat center and was able to negotiate a reduced rate. When I stopped to look at the big picture, I realized that if I cancelled I would lose \$500 in deposit money. If I were going to lose money, I would rather lose it by putting on the retreat than by cancelling, which would dampen our hopes for future retreats. So I booked Cater-Woods, and we kept plugging away at spreading the word. Within a week we had enough students to make it work.

The week before the retreat, Chandler and I met at the retreat center to finalize our plans. We learned that the center was no longer able to accommodate specialty diets in the menus offered. This was terrible news. We had quite a few students and teachers that needed special diets. Sharing meals is an important part of building community within a retreat.

A trip to the Whole Foods Market catering department gave us new possibilities for feeding the entire group healthy food at a lower cost than the retreat center offered. The staff at Whole Foods was wonderful to work with and accommodated all the dietary issues. Plus, the food was delicious.

The week before the retreat was filled with gathering items for goodie bags, rounding up assorted dining supplies, making lists, and watching the weather reports. Springtime in the Rockies is beautiful but has a high chance of blizzards, and we were slated to get a doozie of a storm. Time for a plan G? Luckily, the storm didn't hit until we were tucked in at the retreat center, and we all enjoyed watching the snow fall. I could even say that it added to the experience.

We had a very intimate retreat with twelve students and three teachers. We dined together, hung out in the evenings, and drank wine with our chocolate. We made new friends and learned from each other. I was able to pay my teachers and web designer. Everyone agreed that it was a truly fantastic experience.

Organizing this retreat changed my life. I've realized that being a retreat organizer is what I want to do. In hindsight, I can trace how long this idea has been swirling around in my head. Lessons learned throughout my life helped to make it happen. The most important lessons were that determination will get you pretty far, that things going wrong can provide opportunities, and most importantly, that friends want to help and are to be cherished.

We can't wait to do it again! Dates are already scheduled in 2010 for two general retreats and a third retreat designed specifically for teachers and artists. Check out the Textile Evolution web site, www.textileevolution.com. ▼

SAQA active member Liz Kettle is a writer, teacher, and fiber artist living in Monument, Colorado. Her web site is www.goddesswithindesigns.com.

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Green

from page 30

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What to do when you see “green” on the label:

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to ACTS, 181 Thompson St., NY, NY 10012. You can also e-mail me with questions about products at actsnyc@cs.com.

3. Look up the ingredients listed on the MSDSs on the internet. Be suspicious of the information you get from the manufacturer, who after all, wants you to buy the products. Give more weight to the information from organizations that have no financial interest in the chemical, such as city and state health departments or federal government agencies.
4. Do not buy products from companies that do not provide ingredient disclosure or who withhold the identity of the ingredients as trade secrets. It is impossible to fully inform yourself about the hazards of chemicals whose identity you do not know.

5. All products that are burned create greenhouse gases and highly toxic substances. This includes wood, coal, oil, cigarettes, candles, and incense.

6. Keep up on information about chemicals and environmental concerns. New and safer products are being developed as awareness grows.

Keep these facts in mind the next time you purchase fabric and supplies such as paints, dyes, and discharge solvents for your art quilt creations. Not only can these products be harmful to the environment, they may be harmful to you also. ▼

Arts, Crafts & Theater Safety President and Founder Monona Rossol is a chemist, artist, and industrial hygienist. ACTS is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to providing health and safety services to the arts. Visit them on the web at www.Artscraftstheatersafety.org.

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I grew up in a home of artists. All of my sisters and my brother sew and quilt. Forty years ago, my mother made what today would be considered art

quilts. She was quite an experimental artist, painting our couch and making a string painting for our living room. My father reinforced my interest in drawing. Once he tore the wallpaper off of our walls and gave us pencils and pastels to draw all over. At the same time, my grandmother and mother were seamstresses and made all of our clothes. I was taught to sew and embroider at a very early age and was told to always keep my hands busy.

I finished my first quilt in 1980. I hand quilted for 23 years, not knowing it was okay to use the sewing machine to quilt! I was in my own little world, not even knowing quilt guilds existed. I lived in Houston for 16 years and worked downtown, and I didn't know a thing about the International Quilt Festival.

I always designed my own quilts, not knowing at the time that a lot of what I did would be considered art quilts. I am disabled and my health is a factor in my quilting. I joke with traditional quilter friends that I have to be an art quilter due to my hand tremors that cause trouble when cutting squares.

I joined SAQA several years ago because I wanted to be a serious artist. I find SAQA-U very helpful and look forward to the *Visioning Project*. I became a co-rep in the area this year, and my goal is to become a PAM.



Tomato
12" x 12"

©2009 Lynda S. Thompson

Lorri Chambers

North Carolina
fairygodmotherarts.blogspot.com



I first learned about the art world at age four, when my artist father bought me a John Gnagy *How To Draw* kit. I drew pictures of everything on every-

thing. There was no Christmas after that without art supplies of one kind or another under the tree. I loved all kinds of art, from pastel and charcoal to painting in every medium. At age ten, I borrowed my mom's 1956 Singer to make some doll clothes and discovered how amazing it was to put fabric together with this machine.

About the same time my grandmother started buying jewelry at tag sales and giving me pieces that were broken. I would recreate them into something else. Thus began my love of beads, jewelry, and glass. I have always loved old things: china, books, linens, lace, and fabrics. So, it just seemed natural to find a way to use some of my stash. Art quilts allow the best of all worlds—you can paint or dye the fabric, you can print out special panels on computers, include photos, embellish with beads, lace, shells, everything.

Art allows you to go places where no one else can go, and paint with whatever is available, from pastels to oils to fabrics and beads—endless possibilities. My life is firmly based in the arts now and I love educating everyone, everywhere to see, feel, and understand the creative side of life. SAQA is an important part of this journey. It validates my love of art quilts and the opportunity to create and share them.



Lunar Love

28" x 20"

©2007 Lorri Chambers



Lady Nolly 30" x 24" ©2005 Margaret M. Hunt

Margaret M. Hunt

South Carolina

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If I am known for anything, it is thread painted fiber art and highly detailed free motion quilting. I've been sewing since I was a small child.

When I was in third grade, I talked my mother into letting me use her Featherweight sewing machine. I have also always painted, drawn, and colored. One of my earliest recollections is the intoxicating smell of a box of new crayons.

I have a B.A. in art from the University of Georgia. After a year of teaching art, I decided to add a masters in reading. I then worked as a Title I reading teacher, and later as a media specialist, all the while creating art of one form or another. In 1972, my first quilt, a Grandmother's Flower Garden, won second place at the county fair. Tired of those thousands of tiny pieces, I created my own design for my next quilt.

My fiber art has received numerous awards, including Best of Show, and has been exhibited internationally as well as locally. My work is part of fiber art collections around the world, most

notably including the Quilts, Inc. collection and the Thomas Contemporary Quilt collection. I have been published in several quilting publications, including *Quilting Arts Magazine* and *Cloth Paper Scissors*. I have also been included in several books including *Creative Quilting: A Page from My Journal* where my first journal quilts were picked as favorites at the International Quilt Festival. *Lady Nolly*, one of 15 quilts juried into the *Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?* exhibition, was also juried into *Considering Quilts*.



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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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