SAQA Journal

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. ▲▲▲ Volume 22, No.1 ▲▲▲ Winter 2012

Traveling Red Ants *(detail)*

50 x 22 inches

©2010 by Jack Brockette

see page 8

In this issue...

Thoughts from the president

by Sandra Sider

Prior to our Denver conference in May, the SAQA Board of Directors spent two intense days discussing long-range planning for SAQA. Our Vice President, Kris Sazaki, chairs the long-range planning committee, and I would like to share with you the major topics we covered. Both the board and Kris's committee are currently working to prioritize the various issues we identified.

- **Membership**—increase diversity and international membership, increase outreach to art professionals
- **Regional representatives**—increase funding for activities, improve mentoring of regional exhibitions
- **SAQA Board of Directors**—develop leadership skills, create an advisory committee
- **Definition of "art quilt"**—broaden the definition in response to the members' survey results
- **Conferences and special events**—consider demographics and members' needs in planning, partner with other art organizations
- **Exhibitions**—evaluate the number and quality of exhibitions offered by SAQA, increase focus on major art museums, include more scholarly essays in our catalogues
- ***SAQA Journal* and other publications**—develop special issues, increase online and video publications
- **SAQA website**—redesign the site to make it the "go to" place for information about quilt art, add extensive searchable database(s), improve SAQA-U
- **Marketing and other publicity**—encourage more critical reviews and place more advertising in art publications, engage social media, hire a public relations consultant
- **Education committee**—explore online exhibitions and interactive exhibition components, determine possible subcommittees for various audiences
- **Fundraising**—diversify donor base, increase our funding from grants, develop the endowment fund, encourage legacy donations from members, hire a part-time development specialist
- **Finances**—increase the reserve fund and reconsider its investment strategy, determine investment strategies for the endowment fund via the new endowment fund finance committee

While we discussed many other topics, these are among those that will be addressed within the coming year, with an evaluation of our progress by late March of next year, prior to the 2012 conference. As always, we look to our members for inspiration and constructive criticism. Now is the time for you to contact the board of directors with any comments and suggestions pertaining to our long-range planning: board@saqa.com. I truly would appreciate hearing from you. Also, please let me know if you would be interested in working on any of our committees concerning the above topics. Some of you have distinct talents and skills that would help us implement our long-range goals. We welcome all the help we can get!

Don't miss SAQA Journal's *exclusive online-only content! This issue:*

Writing on cloth
www.saqa.com/membership.php?ID=2000

The Gone Sleeveless art quilt hanging system
www.saqa.com/membership.php?ID=2001

The joy of Zen quilting
www.saqa.com/membership.php?ID=2002

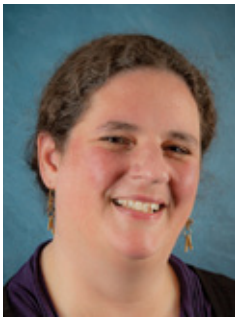
photo by Larry Goldstein

Correction:

Laurie Swim's *In the Gut* was inadvertently shown reversed in the Spring 2011 *SAQA Journal*. The correct orientation is shown above.

Report from the SAQA executive director

by Martha Sielman



What a year it's been! We now have almost 3,000 members living in 33 countries around the world. We put on a wonderfully enriching and inspiring conference in Denver, accompanied by a showing of the ***Sightlines*** exhibition. We premiered four new all-SAQA exhibits: ***Beyond Comfort***, ***Layers of Memory***, ***Masters 2***, and ***Sense of Adventure***, as well as seven traveling trunk shows and many regional exhibits. We traveled SAQA exhibits to 19 venues, including five museums, twelve quilt festivals, and two corporate headquarters. We also arranged for 50 of the trunk show pieces to become a permanent part of the Michigan State University Museum's collection.

We produced catalogs for ***Beyond Comfort*** and ***Sense of Adventure***, as well as *Portfolio 18* and our wonderful *SAQA Journal*. We added 37 new reps for our regions and invited Judith Trager, Nancy Bavor, and Dorothy Raymond to join the board. We raised more than $130,000 for SAQA's Endowment Fund and over $53,000 in our Benefit Auction. We opened our own shipping facility in Ohio and held a two-day board retreat in Denver to start the process of putting together an effective long-range strategic plan for SAQA.

This is an amazing organization because it runs on people power—your power. Whether you volunteer your time to help put on regional events or donate a piece to the Benefit Auction, whether you help with our fundraising appeals or participate in a discussion online, you

see "Executive director" on page 26

Meet your new board member: Dorothy Raymond

I began sewing in grade school, making my first garment—a gathered skirt of printed cotton—in fifth grade. Fifth grade was also when I decided I'd be an attorney when I grew up. Sewing and practicing law never seemed inconsistent; in fact they were quire compatible.

Throughout my career as a corporate lawyer, I made most of my own clothes, including tailored suits. Being an in-house lawyer, including the chief legal officer for two different companies, provided another creative outlet, requiring me to come up with different ways of approaching problems and situations in order to make things work for my client and keep the company out of trouble. I also learned that I had to make legal concepts understandable to non-lawyers, otherwise my advice would fall on deaf ears.

While chief legal officer of a research and development consortium funded by the cable television industry, I began to focus on how to establish and protect ownership of intellectual property. Intellectual property is defined as property that is a creation of the mind; copyright, which protects the expression of a creation, is a kind of intellectual property. I taught Introduction to Intellectual Property Law at the University of Colorado School of Law, which gave me a broader understanding of copyright issues, including what constitutes copyright infringement of an artistic work.

I now practice law part-time in the areas of intellectual property and antitrust. My office is in my home and my client contact is mostly through the Internet. My sewing room/studio is down the hall from my office.

And, while I still make most of my own clothes, my days of making Chanel-style suits to wear to a board of directors meeting in New York City or an ensemble for a gala dinner are over. I still have the scraps from all those garments in my stash, however, and bits and pieces appear frequently in my art quilts. I like to play with fabric and thread in creating textile appliqués, using predominantly free-motion embroidery techniques. I love making fiber art using color and texture to create three-dimensional landscapes. I am still a novice when it comes to the art quilt world, and consider my membership in SAQA to be essential to developing my professional skills.

I am honored to be on the SAQA board, where I can put my legal skills to use for the benefit of SAQA and the studio art quilt world.

Alegre Retreat: An unforgettable experience

by Abigail Kokai

As the recipient of the Young Emerging Artist Award at the 2011 Alegre Retreat at Gateway Canyons Resort, I never imagined how incredible the whole experience would be. The award provided an inspirational, educational, and informative journey at an inspiring location. The community of quilters and artists attending the retreat welcomed my attendance and encouraged my work. It was an opportunity I would recommend to any young quilt artist.

I am currently an MFA candidate at the Savannah College of Art and Design, focusing in the area of fibers. I heard about the YEA Award through a school bulletin. The retreat sounded as if it was specialized for art quilters. The heart of my work was directed towards fine art and quilting, and I had established a body of work exploring quilting as fine art; the retreat sounded like a perfect opportunity to further explore my thesis work, so I submitted an application. A few weeks later I received a very exciting email — I had been selected for the award. It just so happened that the dates of the retreat took place during my spring break at school.

The trip to Gateway, Colorado was an adventure. I flew into Denver and bussed down to Grand Junction. I had never been to Denver before; the skyline of the Rockies as seen from the airport seemed so massive, yet crisp. The ride along I-70 was geological eye candy. Seeing the landscape up close and being able to experience the changing composition of the rock as we traveled along the highway made me more and more excited about getting to Gateway. I had seen some images of the resort on the website and it looked absolutely gorgeous; to think, I would be spending a week there.

Once I arrived at Gateway Canyons Resort, I realized the location couldn't fully be described through photographs; it needed to be experienced. Just walking around the grounds, the ever-changing scenes of the surrounding landscape stimulated every sense in my body. I couldn't take two steps without stopping to absorb the composition of the landscape, the colors, the wind dancing across my skin, the bite in the air, the flutter of last autumn's leaves skipping along the ground … it was like shedding an urban skin and feeling the natural earth once again.

The opening reception of the 2011 Alegre Retreat was my introduction to the community of artists and quilters. I didn't know anybody, but within a matter of minutes I felt completely at home in this new environment. We shared a common thread through our love of fabrics, and it was obvious we all really wanted to be there. Whether we wanted to learn a specific technique or work with a specific teacher, we all wanted to push our individual artistic practices and express ourselves. And we did.

I took a class with Katie Pasquini Masopust. I had been exploring illustration in quilts by painting and stitching on the surface. Katie was teaching a class called "Painted, Stitched Canvas," so it seemed like the obvious choice for me. However, I wanted to wholly embrace this opportunity, so I decided I was going to set my thesis work aside. This was my spring break, after all. Katie was an energetic teacher and introduced us to many tips, tricks, and techniques. It was all we could do to keep up with her. As the days passed, I noticed how much each of my classmates had really opened up through their work. We had daily critiques in class about our work, and countless conversations outside of class about art, quilts, and life.

Every day was filled with activities. My personal favorite was hearing the lectures from the teachers. Every day, a different teacher would give a formal presentation of his or her own work. I began to see that the artists' work and their quilts were something more than just made objects and specific materials. Their work was a reflection of who they were as artists. The objects they made recorded their experiences: expressing thoughts, concerns, responses, and desires documenting a cultural period.

We had the opportunity to see many original works up close and in person. It made me realize that time and technical precision are also part of the story for the makers. The ornate construction of their artwork reinforced the intended message through an articulated voice.

It was enlightening to hear the stories of how each teacher started making art quilts. It really made me think about my own journey into art quilts and why I had chosen this medium. Following these presentations, we would go back to the classroom, and I would return with the aspiration

Abigail's work in progress during the 2011 Alegre Retreat

to express the cultural attitudes that affected and defined me.

The topics discussed by the teachers and the experience I was having at the retreat began to be reflected in my own work. I worked on three small pieces, adhering to the techniques demonstrated in my class, but I also included personal concerns and utilized personal techniques, such as illustration, graphic design, and a written story. I wanted to join my classmates in exploring new methods, but I also really wanted to follow the methods presented by the teachers in expressing my experience at the retreat. I paid very close attention to the technical construction of my work, and worked extra hours to achieve a high level of precision.

I knew I wouldn't be able to fully address the cultural issues I was interested in or master the level of technical precision that was being demonstrated by the teachers within the limited time of the weeklong retreat, so I created work with the goal of recording the things I had learned. By the end of the week, I had created three of my very own "documents" recording the lessons and the experience of the Alegre Retreat.

I pushed myself in the classroom and found myself completely inhaling every moment of the experience at the Alegre Retreat. I looked forward to breakfast with classmates and had lunch with different attendees every day. It didn't matter who I sat with; by the end of the week, everyone was family. Each night, with expansive vistas of the mesas under a star-speckled sky, the walk back to my room provided a visual dessert for the day.

The 2011 Alegre Retreat provided an experience I will never forget. It is a community, an education, a landmark, a muse, and a friend. Many thanks to the generosity of John and Maureen Hendricks for making the experience possible and supporting the Young Emerging Artist Award. I encourage any art quilter to experience the Alegre Retreat at Gateway Canyons Resort.

Katie Pasquini Masopust (www.katiepm.com) is scheduled to teach at the 2012 Alegre Retreat. Further information about the Alegre Retreat can be found at www.alegreretreat.com. ▼

Abigail Kokai lives in Georgia. You can view her work at www.abigailkokai.weebly.com.

The Alegre Retreat Young Emerging Artist Scholarship is available to artists under 30 years of age at the time of the retreat (April 15, 2012). Scholarships cover expenses for a shared room, food, classes, and lectures.

To be considered for the YEA scholarship, interested artists must submit 10 images of their work, accompanied by a one-page essay explaining what it would mean for them to attend the retreat. Two YEA scholarships will be available for 2012: one sponsored by Maureen and John Hendricks to encourage young artists to enter the field of art quilting, and the other sponsored by Sandy Chapin, a 17-year attendee of the retreat, in honor of her mother-in-law, Elspeth Hart.

A third scholarship, the Alegre Retreat Annual Scholarship, is also available. The submission requirements are the same; however, there is no age restriction for artists interested in applying.

Materials for all three scholarships must be received by February 29, 2012. Winners will be announced by March 5, 2012. Submit your information to Tammy Anderson, Gateway Canyons Resort, 43200 Hwy 141, Gateway, CO 81522.

Creating a successful book proposal

by Susanne Woods

Have you been dreaming of seeing your name on the spine of a book? Are you considering putting together a book proposal but just don't know where to begin? What if I told you that book publishers want to find you just as much as you want to find them? It's true. Who says? Well, I do. I am Susanne Woods, the Acquisitions Editor at C&T Publishing.

As Acquisitions Editor, I am on the front lines of the publishing process and serve as the major advocate for a book proposal throughout the presentation process. I act as the liaison between the potential author and our company and have helped dozens of authors go from potential to print. However, I do sometimes forget how intimidating the publishing process can appear to a first-time author.

I want to help encourage all of you to submit your book proposal to C&T. So, I'm answering the top 10 questions I'm most often asked in the hopes that I can help remove some of the mystery that surrounds the book-publishing process. Ready? Drumroll, please…let's go!

Do I have to have the book written before I submit? Nope. Be sure to confirm this by taking a look at the guidelines publishers have available on their website (ours are at www.ctpub.com/client/client_pages/submissions.cfm), because each publisher does work a little differently. At C&T, we only request a sample chapter. That being said, we do want to see renderings or photographs of the work or technique you plan to feature in the book, but certainly not the entire manuscript.

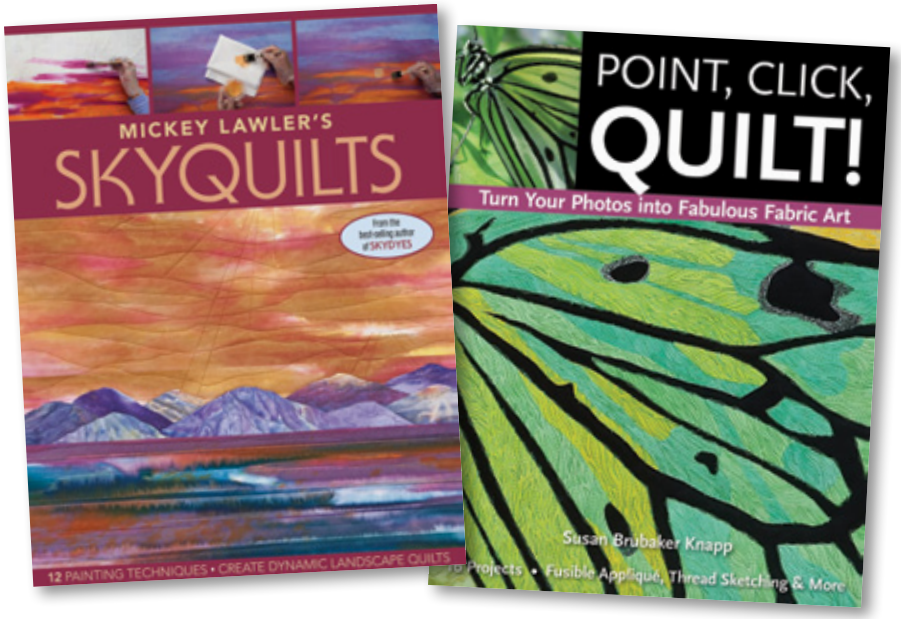
How important is a social media presence? Don't listen to everything you hear about the importance of social media. Is that a big relief? Good. If you don't have a blog, didn't sign up on Pinterest, have never even heard of Twitter, and your work is amazing, I want to hear from you. But if social media isn't up your alley, try to create a strong presence through teaching, writing patterns, entering regional quilt shows, writing magazine articles, creating a fabric line, etc. Marketing your work doesn't necessarily *have* to be through social media, but anything that might both show your commitment to your work and demonstrate consumer interest in your style, your creations, and yourself will add strength to your proposal.

What if I'm too busy to work on a book? Ride the wave, period. The best time to publish and establish yourself is when you are busiest—when you have a teaching schedule fully booked 18 months out, when your pattern business is really taking off, or when you have just been offered your own exhibition at a gallery. The more components you can coordinate to advertise at the same time, the less time it will take you in the long term. It's a lot easier to really gain a groundswell of excitement about your work if you can juggle all the balls at once.

How do I find the right publisher? A great place to begin is by looking at your own bookshelf. What company do you purchase the most books from? Then, do your homework with regard to the publisher you want to work with. The more you know about the list of titles they currently publish, the better able you will be to sell yourself as a natural fit. Also, take a look at where the publishers advertise themselves. Are they advertising where you want your book to be seen? Probably the best way to find the right publisher is to ask around. Ask a published author who you see as a peer. This is a small industry, and most authors are more than happy to share their publishing experiences with others.

How long will the publishing process take? Be prepared for the manuscript to take six months to a year to create. Once C&T agrees to offer a contract, the timing varies. For us, it really comes down to what the author wants. Many of our authors have other jobs, travel and teach classes, or have family commitments. We want to make the process of writing a book as enjoyable as possible. We include a lot of milestones in the writing process, and each author works with his or her own dedicated creative team throughout. An average timeline from contract to a book on the shelves is about 18 months. But if the topic is timely and we want to get it to market as soon as possible, we can shorten that timeline to 12 months.

What if I'm not quite ready to publish yet? Whether the book you have in mind is pattern- or process-based, now is a great time to demonstrate your ability to effectively teach. C&T has refused many proposals where the core work is good, but the student work isn't. If you can't teach it, you can't publish a high-quality instructional book. Either online or in



person, establish yourself as an effective instructor.

Publishers like to create books representing collaborative projects, and magazines are always looking for innovative content. Being a contributor to a collaborative book is a great way to get experience working with a publisher and to gain exposure for your work. If you see a series of collaborative titles you like, don't be afraid to get in touch with the publisher and ask to be invited to submit to any upcoming collaborative projects. If you have a blog or a shop, or are creating a few patterns, take time to reflect your personal style in your branding. You can use this to support a consistent look in a book proposal.

Lastly, and this is the BIG one: take high-resolution photographs of all of your work. If you sell a piece, if you lose a piece, or if your work is damaged in some way, it's gone. We often include a gallery of the artist's work in our books, so being able to draw on this resource when you're ready for publication is invaluable.

What makes a winning proposal? There are a lot of factors that can make for a successful proposal. The biggest one is the work itself. We can overcome a whole host of issues if we are all bowled over by the work itself. Aside from that, follow the submissions guidelines. I can't say this enough. It's kind of shocking how many people don't. I have to present proposals to many groups, so when a potential author has taken a more "creative" approach to their proposal, it is much more often a negative than a positive. I acquire 60 books a year—over a book a week. I appreciate everything the author can do to help me be as efficient as possible.

What if I'm rejected? Even if I've invited an author to submit a proposal, it's a fact that we do reject far more proposals than we accept. But artists are always progressing; so if your work has changed significantly in the years since you last submitted, try again! The best way to prevent rejection is to be sure that you're gathering some honest feedback regarding your proposal from people you trust prior to submitting.

What about self-publishing? This is a tricky question and one I'm passionate about. When a publisher offers you a contract, they are automatically on your side. You have just hired a team. I would much rather work with artists who see that when they sign a contract, they just hired an editor, a designer, a photographer, a stylist, a printer, an inventory controller, a sales team with awesome contacts with top accounts, a publicist, and a marketing team. Each of them is working to help your book see the highest sales they can achieve. Most of us don't have the necessarily capital, all those skills, or those contacts. As a result, I'm usually against self-publishing. Even if you don't choose C&T for your proposal, find a publisher who is ethical, has high-quality products, and treats their designers fairly.

How much input will I have in the look and feel of my book? We offer our authors the opportunity to review every stage of the process—from copyedited pages, to sample photography, to the book design. We create a collaborative relationship so that our authors are proud of their finished book and want to publish with us again. Not every publisher does this, so be sure to ask first!

And a bonus piece of advice: Show me the money! When deciding on a publisher to submit a proposal to, look at the retail prices they charge for their books. The money you see from your book will be based, in part, on the retail price. A lot of publishers try to keep their prices low, around $25 for a 256-page book. Because C&T is a premium publisher, we would set the retail price at $25 for a 96-page book. Same money, half the work.

If I didn't answer *your* question, let me know! I love my job, welcome questions, and can be contacted at susannew@ctpub.com. ▼

Susanne Woods is the Acquisitions Editor at C&T Publishing. The company website is www.ctpub.com.

Jack Brockette

I grew up on the Texas prairies on a farm where my father raised cotton, corn, and maize. I went to a one-room schoolhouse until I was 10. By that time, my father had his own construction company, and I moved from school to school while he followed the construction of the Trinity River levees. When I was eight, my grandmother, mother, and I started painting on the same day. I still have my first oil, painted on an 8x10 oil board.

My first memory of creating art, however, occurred when I was five. My mother took me with her to a quilting bee, and I remember sitting under the stretched quilt. My mother pushed the needle down to me and I pushed it back to her, never missing a stitch and keeping the same spacing from stitch to stitch.

In high school, I was always asked to create posters and signs, and I was in the school's band. I continued painting even after I became a bank employee at the Texas Bank & Trust in Dallas. I checked and typed monthly reports for the $10,000-and-over loans. By going to school at night, I completed courses at the American Institute of Banking and was ready to begin my life in banking. Five years in the business, however, helped me decide to go to college. I attended Howard Payne University and received a twirling scholarship as drum major for the marching band. I had a triple major in business administration, art, and secondary education. After graduation, I applied for a teaching position in business. In those days, teaching appointments were announced in the *Dallas Morning News* the first Sunday in August. You can imagine my surprise to learn that I would be teaching

Swarming Dragonflies *(front and back)* **52 x 50 inches**

Dragonflies at Sunset
75 x 45 inches
full *(left)* **and detail** *(above)*

art at Greiner Middle School—where my favorite aunt was also teaching.

Although I loved the classroom, I harbored the ambition to become art supervisor of the Dallas Public Schools. In pursuit of that aim, I applied to graduate school and was granted a fellowship at the Rhode Island School of Design, where I studied weaving and silk-screening. From RISD, I went to Rosary Hill College (Dameon University) in Buffalo, New York, where I established the textile program and taught Freshman Design. I was director of the art gallery and introduced my college community to the latest work being produced in fibers and other craft media. In 1973, I bought an old meat market and turned it into a weaving studio and gallery, Creative Fibers and Gallery 656. This was the first gallery to exhibit fibers and textile arts in that area. Lenore Davis, Sas Colby, Nancy Belfer, Carol Swartzart, and Skye Morrison were among the exhibiting artists.

I have always balanced my creative life with my teaching career. During my 40 years of service to education, I have taught art to students from kindergarten through graduate school, beginning as a Dallas middle-school art educator, serving as its art supervisor for 350 K–12 art teachers, and ending in 2003 with the Irving Independent School District, where I was the lead teacher for all secondary schools. In the course of this career, I was constantly trying to come up with new ideas to share with my students and encouraging them to expand their interests so that they would have a storehouse of subjects from which to draw in their own art. I saw many of my students become professional artists and helped many prepare for enrollment in some of the top art institutions in the country. I find much gratification in maintaining my relationships with my former students and take great pride in their art careers. At the culmination of my teaching career, I was awarded Irving Teacher of the Year, Texas State Teacher of the Year for my work

continued on next page

Through a Glass Darkly
52 x 52 inches
full *(left)* **and detail** *(below)*

with special-needs students, and was chosen as one of 30 teachers throughout the U.S. to receive the Robert Rauschenberg award at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. This award, certainly, is the highlight of my teaching career.

Besides my dedication to education, I have always pursued my own art interests. When my aunt took me to the Starlight Operettas in Dallas in the 1940s, I paid special attention to the costume designs—and then reproduced them on our eight milking cows back on the farm. I spent weeks attaching fabric scraps to bailing wire and forming it into flounce skirts for the cows to wear. I fashioned headdresses of ribbons and flowers. The cows vigorously rejected my art creations and bucked and kicked their way out of the barn. Needless to say, my father was not pleased, but these first tentative efforts led me to a lifelong career in the textile arts.

For 15 years, I focused on weaving, but in 1989 I was invited to participate in a show in Silver City, New Mexico, honoring the Mimbres Indians. I faced one major obstacle: the deadline was two months away—not enough time to weave something for the show. I had served as visiting artist at the Southwestern University of New Mexico in '74 and '75, and I knew the museum director would be on the lookout for one of my wall hangings.

I decided to make a quilt—an art form I had never attempted. With the deadline fast approaching, I enrolled in a class at Jo Parrott's Not Just Quilts shop (Dallas), walked in with a set of designs, and asked whether appliqué, paint, or silkscreen would be the fastest technique to use to complete a quilt and meet the Mimbres show deadline. In a serendipitous moment, Jo introduced me to Polly Johnson, hoping she could prepare this untutored, naïve artist in the art of the quilt. In that moment, my future as a quilter began: I finished the Mimbres quilt and shipped it off with a day to spare. Then I drove to the International Quilt Festival in Houston, joined SAQA, bought fabric, and took a weeklong quilting workshop with Nancy Crow.

Within a year, I finished 39 quilts, 20 of which were bought by a gallery in Waco and published in its collection catalog. I volunteered with the Quilt Guild of Dallas and began to fulfill one of my childhood dreams: I started making quilted jackets and completed a jacket every month. As a result, I was invited to the Fairfield Fashion Show at the next International Quilt Festival, and created garments for several shows. Several garments, including my jackets, were published in the *Woman's Day* premier issue of *Wearable Art*, in *SewNews*, and in *Crafts*.

Since retiring in 2003, I have dedicated my time to producing

art. I hand dye, print, and paint silk organza, and piece random shapes together using ⅛-inch French seams, a technique called *pojagi*, to create a series of transparent quilts. Initially, I worked with two layers of silk, cut into random shapes, and sewed together using free-motion quilting, to create a series I called *Line Interrupted*. However, I believe that a quilt requires three layers. I now combine three layers of hand-dyed silk yardage in contrasting hues, each layer enhanced by embroidered imagery, and quilt them together with free-motion sewing. I have been investigating the design possibilities of bugs and insects and their multiple manifestations in the natural world, and I have focused lately on dragonflies, ants, bees, mosquitoes, and black flies. I create the insect designs on the computer and send them to my Bernina 180. I am currently working on a series of *Red Ants* transparent quilts, and I'm especially interested in the design options of the weaver ant. My *Dragonflies at Sunset* is shown in Karey Bresenhan's *Texas Quilts III*, published September 2011.

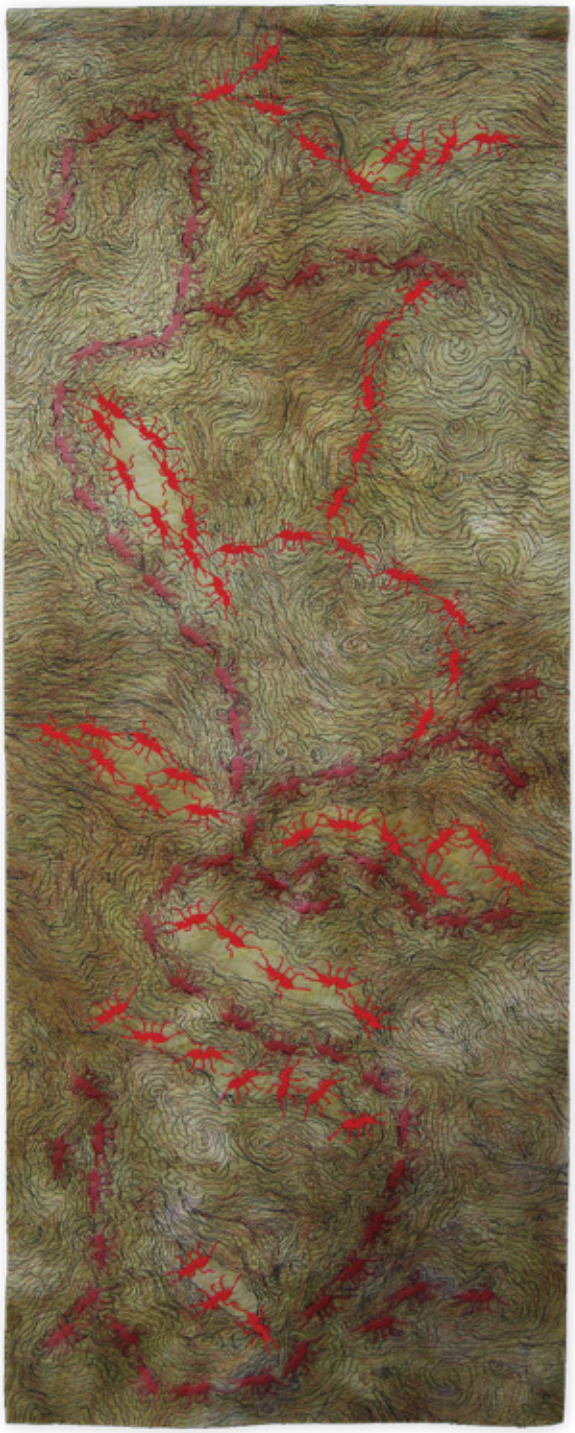
My studio space has been transformed in the last few years, as we moved into a new home in 2005 and reduced our space by 1,000 square feet. I now sew in a 10x10-foot room and dye my fabrics in the garage. I use plastic freezer bags for dyeing and work on smaller pieces that I can add as a design develops. Periodically, our dining room is dismantled, and I move in sewing machines, sewing table, and quilting equipment.

In 2005, I contracted myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune system disorder that leaves me tired unexpectedly. I have learned to adjust my sewing schedule to accommodate the unpredictability of my illness, but it has caused me to rethink the type of art I can produce with limited space and time. The distractions of myasthenia have prompted me to concentrate fully on the creative process and to apply myself to the work with high expectations to complete a project in a limited amount of time. I find my work more intensely involved with color, and the digitizing process allows me breathing room to rest and regain my energy. I am working larger now, and I layer the transparent quilts to create three-dimensional works that hang away from the background to allow the play of light to enhance the color of the transparent fabric.

My career as a quilter has resulted in multiple awards and honors. I have participated in juried shows held by SAQA, the Texas Federation of Fiber Artists, and Dallas Area Fiber Artists since 1977. I have won many Best of Show awards, Juror's Award of Excellence, and Juror's Award of Merit. I look forward to contributing to the textile arts as I grow in my own work. I will continue to experiment with the possibilities of digital design and the juxtaposition of hand-dyed transparent silks.

I am married to Ann H. Brockette, Executive Director of Surface Design Association. We have three children and five grandchildren. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Jack Brockette is a textile artist living in Dallas, Texas. His website is www.brockette.com.



Traveling Red Ants
50 x 22 inches

Who cares about your work?

by Nancy Bavor

In the throes of the creative process, and frequently because of the need to meet an exhibition deadline, many artists don't take time for an important part of the process—documenting their work. Documentation isn't glamorous, and some think it's drudgery, or worse, unnecessary. But to art historians, it is of vital importance. This group cares about you and what you are creating. I am a textile and quilt historian and an American Quilter's Society certified quilt appraiser, qualified to appraise new and old quilts.

I am influenced by stories such as that of Pine Eisfeller, two of whose quilts were selected to be among the 100 best quilts of the 20th century. Her work and story would have remained unknown were it not for the efforts of quilt historian Joyce Gross to track down prize-winning quiltmakers from the late 1930s and 1940s. In 1980, Joyce discovered Pine living in a trailer in Paradise, California, surrounded by her amazing work.

Because of Joyce's efforts, Pine's quilts and legacy have been preserved. However, that's not always the case. In my work, I see a lot of older quilts; very few are ever signed or bear any indication of who made them. For the most part, their creative and social histories are lost. Most studio quilt artists sign or attach labels to their quilts, but it's important to capture more than just this type of information—both for historians and for future appraisers.

Quilt artists began charting new territory in the art and quilt worlds in the 1970s and continue doing so today. You are a part of an elite group of studio quilt makers and artists. What you are doing, both as an individual and as a part of a larger fiber art community, is important to current and future scholars. Therefore, it's imperative to capture information about you and your work now, and to be sure you realize the documentation you provide does or will have value for current and future historians. Let me repeat: what you are doing is important. Right now no one knows how important it will be a hundred years from now, but I like to take the long view. You need to document your work.

In her book *Pioneering Quilt Artists*, Sandra Sider quotes Susan Shie, who says, "I believe that what we've done in our art will be appreciated more as a movement when art historians look back on it. People can't see it as

Deborah Boschert's quilt labels help to document her artwork for future historians.

clearly now, but it is very profound and solid." I personally think Shie has understated the case. Art and quilt historians are already looking back to the beginnings of the studio quilt movement and recognizing its significance. But without documentation, the picture won't be as accurate or complete.

I hope knowing that present and future scholars and historians care about your work and its place in the continuum of art and quilt history will help to convince you that it's worth taking a little more time to record what you are doing. But what kind of information are historians interested in?

Your work: First and foremost, take good photographs of your work! This may seem obvious to some of you, but again, how often has an exhibition or shipping deadline meant you compromised or skipped this step? If you sell the quilt, what information is permanently attached to the quilt? At a minimum, it should have your name, date, title, and where you made it.

Creative process: Do you take photos, write notes, or keep sketches of your work in progress? The creative process is fascinating and can reveal a lot about how an artist's mind works and the cultural background of creation.

Materials: What materials do you use? Where do you get them? What may seem obvious now may not be so a few decades in the future. The types of material available to you today are quite different than those of 30 years ago, and what is commonly used in 2050 will be radically different than today's materials. Historians can look at this information and learn a great deal about various art- and quilt-making trends. We know from talking to quilt artists working in the 1970s that good-quality cotton fabric was scarce during that time, unless you liked cute calicoes. Many struggled to find solid colors and all-cotton fabric. For those of you who were making quilts in the 1970s and early 1980s, this isn't necessarily news, but 50 years from now, understanding the limitations of designs available due to fabric industry fashion during this period will help explain to future researchers why many artists began dyeing their own fabrics. The range of colors possible with hand-dyed fabrics is also reflected in the work they made. Available materials directly affect the appearance and design of artwork.

Future conservators will also want to know what materials and chemicals you used—especially when it comes to fusibles, paints, and other innovative media.

Techniques: Conservation concerns also apply to technique. How did you do it? Many surface design techniques are familiar to us today, but what about in 50 years? A hundred years from now?

Sketchbooks and preliminary sketches: Do you keep a sketchbook? Do you keep preliminary drawings for your work? Sketchbooks can be valuable documents that provide a fascinating glimpse into the artist's mind and show how styles develop and mature over a career.

Do you keep a journal? This is more personal than a sketchbook, and might include brief notes about what is going on in your life. What inspired a particular work? General artist statements are great, but comments about individual inspiration offer a more personal insight.

Resumes: Even outdated resumes can be interesting documents. For example, I used them in my thesis research to see when and where some of the artists I interviewed exhibited or taught in the 1970s and 1980s. The recent resumes that were available to me often abbreviated their activities during these years; without old resumes, the information I was looking for would have been unattainable. What I learned was that in the 1970s and 1980s, quilt artists exhibited much more frequently in art museums than in the 1990s. They also participated in mixed-media shows—both mixed "fine" art and mixed "craft" media. Participation in quilt exhibitions, whether art quilt or mixed traditional and art, were in the minority. After the late 1980s, this trend reversed. I gleaned all this from a few old resumes.

Similarly, keep copies of your old artist statements. Not only does looking back on them help you, but they will also provide information to others about how your work has evolved.

Exhibitions and publications: Participation in a specific exhibition may not seem significant at the time, but becomes more so later on. For

see "Who cares" on page 27

Use your studio time effectively

by Cindy Grisdela

Do you schedule regular hours in your studio or do you wait for inspiration to hit before going to work? Many artists grapple with this question on a regular basis. Much depends on the artist's own style or temperament, so what works for one artist might not be suitable for another. For this article, a number of SAQA professional artist members shared their insights on using studio time effectively. Perhaps one of these strategies will help you become more productive.

Ann Brauer has been supporting herself making quilts for 30 years. She goes to her studio located outside her home in Shelburne Falls, Mass., from 10 am–5 pm Wednesday through Saturday and 12–5 pm on Sunday. "I love having regular hours," she says. "I know when I should be at the studio and when I don't have to worry about being there." Dominie Nash of Bethesda, Maryland, agrees. "I treat my studio work as a job," she says. "I get there as early as I can in the morning, after checking email, and stay 6–7 hours. I schedule errands, appointments, etc., after my studio time whenever possible, as I'm most productive first thing in the morning." Dominie's studio is about a 30-minute drive from her home, and she works there on weekdays.

Many artists find having dedicated studio space in their homes allows them to tap into their creativity better, even if they don't have a prescribed schedule. Eileen Doughty of Vienna, Virginia, is in her studio, an extra bedroom in her house, almost every day of the year. She says, "I don't think the schedule is as important as having my own room so readily accessible, with no need to clean up or put away things. Linda Beach of Estes Park, Colorado, also doesn't have a set schedule for her work. "I enjoy spending every moment I can in my studio," she says. "Right now, I'm working approximately four days per week, 6–7 hours per day—strictly as studio time for my art." Other tasks, such as clerical work on the computer related to her business or hand sewing necessary to finish her pieces, are reserved for evenings and other odd moments when she can fit them in.

Gloria Hansen, of East Windsor, New Jersey, also works in her home. She says, "My collective 'studio' is really all over my house." Her living room has been converted into an office, her printer is in the little-used dining room, a room in the back is for sewing and other artwork, and she has a "wet" workroom in the basement for fabric dyeing and painting.

One drawback of having a home studio is that it can become difficult to separate creative space from office space. "My home studio is also my office, so it's easy for me to spend way too much time at the computer," says Floris Flam of Bethesda, Maryland. Charlotte Ziebarth of Boulder, Colorado, says that although her computer is in her home studio, she doesn't check email first thing in the morning. Instead, she spends the first hour of her studio time with a cup of coffee and her knitting, in front of her computer set to a slideshow of her own photographic images. That way, her head is filled with inspiration to start her day.

Other artists fit their creative life around a day job. Mary Beth Bellah works as a full-time artist, but also holds down a full-time day job at the University of Virginia. She doesn't schedule regular studio time. "I need to work my art in all around me in my day-to-day life," Bellah says. "I find the only way I can keep creative momentum going is to have a variety of projects going at the same time, so whenever I can grab the time, I can work on the project at hand." A basket of projects goes with her almost everywhere, and whenever there are a few minutes of downtime, she pulls something out of the basket to work on. Cyndi Souder is a freelance proposal professional in Annandale, Virginia, and she has a similar approach. She fits her studio time around her unpredictable work schedule. "I'm in my studio every chance I get. If I'm home during the day, I'm in my studio. If my husband is working late, I steal time in my studio. Free on a weekend? I'm in my studio."

Taking multi-day workshops or retreats is another way many artists get into the creative flow. Flam goes on an artist retreat with friends twice a year, and she also attends an annual week at Quilt Surface Design Symposium. "I find that these times away let me focus on creativity without any distractions," she says. "When I get home, I'm energized and am able to focus better in the studio." Bellah also

Cindy Grisdela in her studio.

schedules time for creative retreats once or twice a year. She emphasizes that these are unstructured events, rather than workshops or classes, where she can work on her own for several days without the usual responsibilities of work, home, family, and pets.

What about times when there's no creative spark? Almost every artist has episodes when it feels as though the well is dry. At these times, sometimes just showing up in the studio or other creative space will do the trick. Hansen sets a timer for 20 minutes when she's faced with a task she isn't looking forward to or when her muse has temporarily deserted her. During that time, she'll look through her supplies or her sketchbooks, or perhaps doodle on paper or on the computer. "Anything to get myself in gear to create," she explains. Eventually something clicks. "I love the periods of time where creativity flows for weeks and weeks at a time, and I don't like the periods of time when nothing is flowing. But I do know that's my cycle, and I've learned to work with it," Hansen says.

Beach agrees. "I think it's very important to make and spend time working at your art even when you're not feeling particularly creative," she says. If the ideas aren't flowing, she spends time sorting her fabric or doing some other routine task in her studio. Sometimes just doing nothing is beneficial. Nash says, "I need to be in the studio in order for something to happen, even if I spend a lot of time staring at the walls."

Brauer sells at craft shows part of the year. Her studio schedule over the longer term changes depending on whether she's getting ready for a show, filling orders from a show just past, or creating new work. "Each year the schedule varies depending on shows I have and orders I have, but I welcome the change in the rhythm of my work," she says. "It's important to know when you work best to enhance your productivity. If you're a morning person, it's best to schedule creative time in the morning and more mundane tasks later in the day when you have less energy."

Some artists take regular "inspiration dates" where they go to see art in a museum or gallery, even if it's art outside their preferred medium. Or, like Ziebarth, they pick up a camera and take photographs of interesting scenes, people, or shapes that may serve to jog their creativity

see "Studio time" on page 28

Tiziana Tateo

Fleurs Exubérantes

40 x 40 inches | ©2007

www.tizianatateo.it

A wild garden where exuberantly-colored flowers grow.

Kathleen McCabe

Protea

31 x 41 inches | ©2009

kathleenmccabecoronado.com

The Protea in my garden blooms in the spring, glowing in the sunlight.

Linda Jean Strand

Poppies

26 x 33 inches | ©2011

The inspiration for this quilt was a trip to the Denver Botanical Gardens. The design is from original photos, digitally manipulated, and printed in the studio.

Kate Themel

Blood Iris (Iris sanguinea)

46 x 33 inches | ©2011 | www.katethemel.com

This lovely flower grew spontaneously in my front yard. I was lucky enough to spot it and take a photo of it the day before a huge storm destroyed it.

Pat Durbin

Begonia Picotee Lace

41 x 50 inches | ©2009

The center portion is painted with heavy threadplay over the image. It was then quilted to accentuate the sculpted flower.

So you think you want a mentorship

How it works and how to make it happen

by Leni Levenson Wiener

When I was a SAQA New York co-rep and asked regional members what they most wanted out of SAQA, a common response was mentorships. Although there is a tremendous benefit to having a mentor, the very word seems to mean different things to different people.

Mentorships fall into two categories: structured, time-limited, project-oriented pairings that are part of an academic education, and those that are more casual. Many art schools now have mentorship programs, the details of which will vary by institution. For most SAQA members, it's the more casual, ad hoc mentorships that are most relevant and, therefore, where this article will place its focus.

So what is a mentorship, how do you get one, and how does it work?

What distinguishes mentorship is the influence of a more experienced teacher (or, in our case, artist) providing feedback and guidance to a protégé. At various points in our artistic careers we all need, or want, a mentor. Emerging artists, and those who have reached a crossroads in their career, often seek assistance from another artist whose opinion they respect. Art can be a solitary pursuit, and a relationship with a valued teacher can introduce a fresh approach that can help us work through artistic blockages.

There are no rules that define how a mentorship should work. The specifics of each pairing are as unique as the individuals that form them, and each evolves to fit the needs of mentor and protégé. These relationships can be short lived or lifelong, they can be highly structured and time consuming, or more loose and casual.

For the person receiving the mentoring, the advantages seem obvious. Seeking input from a respected colleague can change an artist's viewpoint and provide perspective. Mentors can help expose their protégés to new ideas and new ways of working, and can help provide the courage and inspiration to move forward.

Not everyone can be a good mentor, and not everyone can be a good protégé, either. If either of the two sides of the equation falls short, the mentorship will fail.

Remember that a successful mentorship must always be based on mutual trust and respect.

For a mentor to be able to help you, you must be open to criticism, value the information being given, and be willing to work towards stated goals. You must also have a clear picture of what those goals are and what you expect to learn from the mentor.

A mentor must be willing to generously share ideas and techniques, and have a desire to help another person grow as an artist. Mentors must be diplomatic, conversant in the medium they are teaching, thoughtful, and good listeners. All the mentors I interviewed while preparing this article told me that what gave them joy and satisfaction was watching their protégés grow and develop, and seeing how they subsequently began to see their work in a different light. This is the very reason some artists teach, and it is not surprising that all the mentors I spoke to were teachers—either formally trained educators or artists who teach classes and workshops.

Deciding you want a mentor is only the first step. Before anyone else can assist you, you need to make several important decisions. Why do you want a mentor at this time? Where specifically do you need help; what is holding you back? What are your short-term and long-term goals? Do your questions really require a mentor, or could they be answered another way? Is it feedback, critique, or more general guidance you really need? These are important questions you must answer for yourself before you can determine if what you really want is a mentor. And if you do, you must then be able to communicate those needs so the mentor can provide the appropriate assistance.

Once you have determined that you want a mentor and what you hope to accomplish together, the next step is to find one. With the exception of one person interviewed for this article who volunteered to mentor a young girl whose promising work she had seen in an exhibit, all

the people I spoke to found a mentor on their own—and the mentorships developed simply because they asked. The mentors all told me they agreed to become a mentor because they liked the person who asked for their help and felt that person was talented, serious, and willing to work.

Finding a mentor is a little like dating, but unfortunately, there are no Internet dating sites for mentorship (wouldn't that be nice?). No one will ask you if you would like to have a mentor and no one will fix you up with one. Most protégés find a mentor by asking someone they already know—perhaps they've worked together on a project, are in the same guild, or have met somewhere and felt a personal connection. Remember that a successful mentorship must always be based on mutual trust and respect.

If you want a mentor, think about a person who would be a good match and go seek them out. If that person says yes, you're on your way. If not, start again and move on—but with no hard feelings. There are lots of valid reasons someone may not want to be a mentor, so don't take it personally. Respect the no and ask someone else.

After establishing the mentorship, both mentor and protégé need to work out short-term and long-term goals and a schedule and format for meetings. Some mentors will recommend artwork to study, exercises to perform, or small goals to meet. In other cases, mentors answer questions when asked, provide critiques,

see "Mentorship" on page 29

One mentorship in action

Deborah Schwartzman's experience with her mentor, Deborah Warner, professor emeritus of fiber arts at Moore College, is a fine example of how mentoring can work. Schwartzman had been very successful with her representational depiction of nature, but hoped her art could evolve into something new. Her goal was to work with Warner to find new ways to express her muse and continue to grow as an artist. The mentoring process leading up to the creation of *Fragmented Nature I* will serve as our example.

Because she didn't know what direction she wanted to take, Schwartzman began, on Warner's advice, by identifying and studying works of artists she admired. The intent here was to consider the possibilities of expression. Then, during a trip to Barcelona, Schwartzman saw Gaudi's work and knew she wanted to apply a mosaic approach to fabric.

"I came home so excited — ready to jump right in. But Deborah slowed me down and suggested I do studies first," says Schwartzman. And so she did. For example, Schwartzman began to experiment with different ways to create the look of grout between tiles. She also took time to deliberate on other aspects of the piece she wanted to make. She asked herself questions: Should all the grout colors match? Should the tile sizes be consistent?

At each major step in the process, Schwartzman shared her studies and thoughts with Warner. "Deborah either validated what I was doing or helped me to find ways to explore solutions to a problem." Even after the piece seemed complete, the two continued to meet and refine their feeling of the final piece, leading to the addition of two blue flowers to create a stronger visual flow within the piece.

"By working with a mentor, I became more empowered", says Schwartzman. "Deborah's role was constructive — critiquing and informing. It's easy to get trapped in your vision and skill level, within your comfort zone. But working with Deborah has helped me break out of my own box and reinvigorated my art."

Fragmented Nature I
30 x 30 inches ©Deborah Schwartzman

Photographing art quilts

By Kerby C. Smith

Do you know the number-one reason why most art quilts are rejected from quilt shows? I'll let you in on the secret and give you a simple and easy way to make sure it never happens to you again.

At the larger quilt shows, the jury sometimes only sees the image of your quilt for less than a minute on the first round. That's right—you have only seconds for the judges to be grabbed by the image of your quilt. If the photograph of the quilt is blurry or too small, if it is not hung square, if it has other objects in the picture that distract from the quilt (yes, we see you have a cute cat), if there are strange color casts, or worse, if it has muddy colors with no distinction between the main image, background, and border, it doesn't get a second glance from the judges.

The number-one reason most juries reject a quilt from a show is because of a poor photograph. It does not matter how good your quilt is; if the image of it is poor, the entry goes straight into the rejection pile.

Here are five things you need to do so that you'll never have your art quilt rejected by a jury again because you took a poor picture:

1. **Camera basics.** Learn how your camera works. There are thousands of digital cameras and they all work differently. If you want a great picture of your quilt, then you need to read the manual that comes with your camera. You need to know where the menus are and how to choose the best options for photographing your work.
2. **Your camera should be like the Rock of Gibraltar**. Use a tripod. Shooting pictures of quilts is a specialized form of product photography. It requires that the camera be lined up with the quilt so there is no distortion from the lens in the picture. Depending on your light source, you may need a long exposure. An inexpensive tripod is one secret to making it easy to get great pictures of your quilt.
3. **Here comes the sun**. Having the right kind of light, whether it's natural or artificial, is the key to great pictures. What the jury wants to see is an evenly lit picture of your quilt from top to bottom. Ideally, the light should be from a single source and it should cover the quilt from corner to corner.
4. **Hanging out with your quilt**. Unless you are submitting pictures of wearable art, the jury just wants to see your quilt on a neutral background. Use a bare wall with nothing around the quilt. The wall needs to be larger than the quilt and the quilt needs to be flat against it.
5. **The best place to photograph your quilt**. Photograph your quilt directly in front of the camera, with the center of the camera lens aligned with the center of the quilt. The back of your camera needs to be parallel to the quilt. The easiest way to do this is to use a level and a tape measure to square the quilt on the wall and your camera on the tripod.

What kind of camera should you use? The short answer is: the best camera you can afford.

In the digital camera world, quality is usually measured in megapixels. To get a good image to submit, you need a camera that shoots images of at least six megapixels. These days, it is difficult to find a point-and-shoot camera of less than 10 megapixels. But remember, use a tripod. Before you buy your next digital camera, look to see if it has a tripod socket on the bottom of it. Many point-and-shoot cameras have tripod screw sockets.

Here's a simple 10-step method to get great pictures of your art quilt.

1. **Hang the quilt.** Pick a white wall and hang or pin the quilt so it's flat against the wall and square to the floor. Use a level to get the top of the quilt parallel to the floor. Remember that most cameras shoot a rectangular image. Hang your quilt so the longest side is horizontal to the floor. This is a good idea especially if you are using the built-in flash on your camera. Most software used to download your camera images to your computer allows you to rotate the image so the quilt will have the correct orientation in the image that you will submit.
2. **Find the quilt's center.** First, use a tape measure to find the center of the quilt from left to right. From this center point, place the center of your tripod on a line that is 90 degrees perpendicular to the quilt wall. Position the tripod at

a location where the normal lens of your camera will fill the frame of the camera viewfinder or LCD viewing screen with the quilt. The second measurement is to find the center of your quilt from the floor so that when you place the camera on the tripod, the center of the lens is at the same height as the center of the quilt.

3. **Level the quilt.** Using a small line level, get the back of your camera square and level with the quilt. If you have lined everything up correctly, the quilt should be centered in your camera's viewfinder or LCD viewing screen.
4. **Light the quilt evenly.** As simple as this may sound, it's actually very difficult for you to see differences in lighting. Your brain takes what your eyes see and then balances it out. If you are using a single light source, such as the flash on your camera, take the quilt off the wall and shoot a picture of the blank white wall. If you see dark edges, then the flash unit is not evenly lighting the wall and will not light your quilt properly.
5. **Use enough light.** If your quilt is not evenly lit, get a larger flash unit, two lights, or shoot in open shade. If you see odd color on one side of the white wall, it may mean you're getting light from another source such as from a window or other lights in the room. In this case, turn off other lights in the room, black out windows, or shoot at night.
6. **Use two lights.** If your single light source is not large enough to evenly light your quilt, then you may want to use two lights. You can use two electronic flash units or two or more photo floodlights. Place each light at a 45-degree angle to the center line of your quilt, and at equal distances from the quilt, so that the quilt is equally lit.
7. **Take the picture.** Go into the menu on your digital camera and set it to shoot at the highest resolution and largest file size available. Most juried shows require both an overall picture and a smaller detail of your quilt. If you have a large file at the highest resolution and you forget to take a detail of the quilt, you may be able to crop a detail from the overall image to submit with your entry.
8. **Get the color right.** The color of the image is determined by the white-balance adjustment for the camera. Most cameras are set to auto white balance. The software that determines the auto white balance varies in how well it works in different brands of cameras. If you are using the camera's electronic flash for your light source, you will want to switch the white-balance setting to flash.
9. **Use advanced techniques.** Most digital cameras have five or more settings. For the best results, move the camera dial from the auto settings to the "A" or "aperture priority" mode so that you can select the f-stop and the camera will select the shutter speed. The higher-number f-stop settings like f/8 to f/16 give you more depth of field in the image. This is especially important if your art quilt has embellishments on it and you want everything to be sharp in the picture.
10. **Correct the color.** Many quilt show rules state that you are not to alter the image that you shoot. Computer technology can enhance the digital image so that your quilt looks better than it may under normal conditions. However, you do want the jury to see the correct color of your art quilt. You can achieve this without digitally enhancing your image. For instance, if the light you use to photograph your art quilt is open shade, it produces a blue color-cast. I recommend using a gray card when shooting the picture and removing the blue color-cast by balancing the image to the known "gray" on the card. This is an advanced technique that requires knowledge of programs like Adobe® Photoshop® or Photoshop Elements. ▼

Kerby C. Smith is an active SAQA member who teaches digital photography to quilters at conferences like Empty Spools Seminars at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, California. Together with his wife, SAQA member Lura Schwarz Smith, he has co-authored **Secrets of Digital Quilting—From Camera to Quilt**. *Their website is www.thedigitalquilt.com.*

2011 Quilt critique photo essay

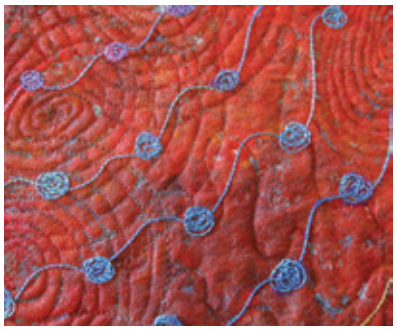
Since becoming SAQA president, Sandra Sider has been donating much of her time traveling around the country to organize quilt critiques for SAQA groups. If you are interested, please contact your SAQA rep about planning a critique session. This is the first in a series of photo essays from these critiques. Sandra visited Delray Beach, Florida, in February; Portland, Oregon, in April; Los Angeles, California, in May; and led a critique in New York City in August.

Virginia Lefferdink explains how she displays one of her new three-dimensional quilts, ***Red, White, and Blue***. This quilt prompted a discussion about the difficulties of photographing such an open design containing both white and dark colors. We determined that a neutral gray background would be best. (Delray Beach)

Marianne R. Williamson asks for advice about completing her ***Babbling Brook*** (work in progress), as (bottom to top) Virginia Lefferdink, Sandra Sider, and Candice Phelan study the quilt. This group suggested that the bright whites in the lower right corner might be slightly toned down to create a better sense of balance and unity. (Delray Beach)

Gerrie Congdon discusses both scale and visual texture in her shibori fabric. Viewers remarked on the energy resulting from Congdon's use of complementary colors (green and red), as well as the tension produced by tilting the grid. Our group recommended that this artist pursue the compositional approach in ***Prairie Fields*** in a much larger quilt, with more variation in scale. (Portland)

Teresa Shippy (yellow dress) and Felisa Lyons point out the stitched embellishment enhancing Shippy's recent ***Pistol Packing Mama***. Looking on are (left) Sandra Lauterbach and (right) Julie Schleuter. (Los Angeles)



Detail from Teresa Shippy's ***Pistol Packing Mama*** illustrating couched yarn laid over the quilted surface. Linear aspects of this additional physical texture contrast with, and thus emphasize, the mass of color in the background, especially with a cool blue over bright red.

Nancy Bryant revealed that her recently completed ***Gingko in Twilight*** was a source of frustration as people were reading the oversized leaf as a skirt or broom. While the quilt's construction demonstrated Bryant's technical expertise, she felt that her initial concept had failed. By simply rotating the quilt 90 degrees, we transformed the motif into a leafy form. (Portland)

Nancy Bryant, ***Gingko in Twilight*** rotated.

Benedicte Caneill explains how in ***Units #32: Jazzy Blues*** she has begun shifting scale and inserting flashes of curved elements to enliven her signature grid quilts. We noted how the yellow strips "pop" across the surface to create visual movement. Our group suggested that Caneill could experiment with positioning a larger square slightly off-center to provide a focal point. (New York City)

Arlé Sklar-Weinstein points out the deconstructed image of a police "Caution" tape in ***Urban Sprawl: Caution*** (work in progress). She explained that her images of oversized stitches derive from close details photographed in quilt exhibitions. We liked the materiality of her imagery and encouraged the artist to complement this concept with large hand stitches in her quilt. (New York City)

Why I became a blogger

by Susan Christensen

I am blessed with a wonderful studio in a "register of historic places" building located on a scenic old boardwalk/bridge in Petersburg, Alaska. During the all-too-short summer months, visitors and tourists find me easily. Their often-asked question, "Do you have a website?" was the driving force behind hiring a professional graphic designer several years ago to give me and my work a polished Internet presence. My web designer friend updates the information on the site at my request, approximately every six months. But I found myself longing for a more immediate way to get my work "out there" without having to go through someone else. I wanted the ability to show my latest work, both completed and in process, and to show what inspires and influences my work.

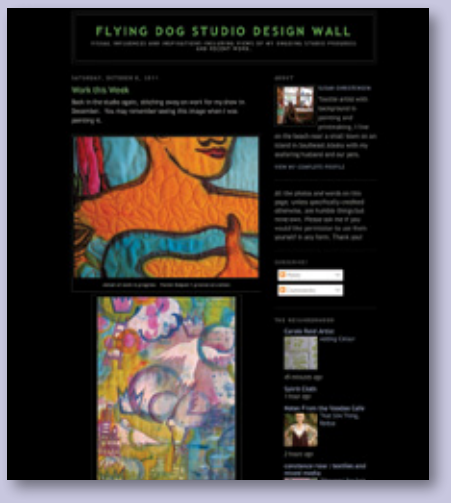
I was also feeling the pinch of geographic isolation. Although I love Alaska, my remote island location keeps me hidden away from regular personal contact with the art world. Most of my artist friends here in this small island town tend to be gone most of the winter, deepening my sense of separation. Access to the Internet is great for vicarious travel to museums, galleries, and artist websites. Why not for social connection, too? I decided to do some research on blogging.

My investigations began during a visit to my parent's house in Denver, Colorado, where I spent hours thumbing through back issues of my mother's *Artful Blogger* magazines. (My mom is a polymer clay artist and lifelong crafter). A helpful little book by Tara Frey, *Blogging for Bliss*, was lying around my mom's studio, and I read that, too. I began making addictive visits to many wonderful artist blogs, making notes of what I liked and didn't like. I found an online "blogging for beginners" workshop and signed up immediately. The presenter stressed the importance of having a definite focus for your blog. She also stressed the importance of writing from your heart, using your natural voice.

One of the first exercises we were given was to examine our top five favorite blogs. We were asked to list what we liked about those top five that kept us coming back. The things I most liked then are the same things I like now: I find myself most attracted to blogs that are heavier on pictures rather than words. Content that resonates with my own interests, written in a friendly, humorous, and natural voice, keeps me checking back regularly. I like bloggers who share their studio processes along with their artistic accomplishments. A focus on art making—rather than a diary of family and social events with the occasional mention of studio happenings—draws me. I also like links to other sites, book recommendations, great quotes, and responsiveness to my comments.

When I got home to Alaska, I wrote a detailed statement about what I wanted my blog to be, do, and look like, based on the blogs I loved reading most. My goals: to connect with an online community of like-minded artists who share a similar aesthetic, to build traffic to my website, and to increase visibility of my latest work including documenting my studio practices and inspirations. I opened a Google account, got on Blogger, chose a basic template, created my

see "Blogger" on page 30



Susan's blogging topics include photos of her work as well as posts on technique.

FiberPhiladelphia 2012: Come early, leave late

by Carolyn Lee Vehslage

FiberPhiladelphia 2012 is coming this spring. During the months of March and April, Philadelphia will be jam-packed with fiber-related exhibitions and events throughout the city and surrounding areas. As of September 2011, 25 events have been posted on www.fiberphiladelphia.org. SAQA/SDA's joint conference will be there as well, occuring at the apex of the events, March 30 through April 4.

FiberPhiladelphia is a growing enterprise, and its mission is "To enrich the Philadelphia region by exhibiting innovative textile art, supporting the advancement of education and awareness within the field of fiber and textile studies and promoting community participation through city wide projects, workshops and lectures." This year, FiberPhiladelpia is partnering with two nonprofit organizations: InLiquid is a membership group dedicated to providing opportunities and exposure for visual artists and designers, and Philadelphia Art Alliance is a nonprofit arts center dedicated to the advancement and appreciation of innovative contemporary craft.

Some of the major events scheduled for FiberPhiladelpia 2012 include the 8th International Fiber Biennial from March 2 to April 28. Ruth Snyderman and Frank Hopkins have selected 50 artists to be featured in this survey of fiber art. Rick and Ruth Snyderman have dedicated space for this biennial fiber exhibition on both floors of their Snyderman-Works gallery at 303 Cherry Street, in the Old City section of Philadelphia.

Two other special exhibitions on the circuit for the first time are the juried exhibition ***Outside/Inside the Box*** and ***Distinguished Educators***, both at the Crane Arts Building from March 2 to April 15. Jurors have selected works for ***Outside/Inside the Box*** that transcend disciplines and blend textile traditions with cutting-edge technology and/or historic concepts with a contemporary perspective. The ***Distinguished Educators*** exhibition is an invitational of artwork from highly respected fiber artists including Pat Hickman, Deborah Warner, Carol Westfall, Lewis Knauss, and Warren Seelig.

Celebrating its tenth anniversary is ***Art Quilt Elements 2012***, co-directed by Cindy Friedman and Deborah Schwartzman. The jurors for this biennial exhibition were Elizabeth Barton, quilt artist; David Revere McFadden, Senior Curator of the Museum of Art and Design in New York City; and Sandra Sider, curator, quilt artist, and SAQA President. SAQA/SDA conference attendees will be able to join in the opening reception festivities for AQE and be on hand when this year's prizes are awarded. On view at the Wayne Art Center, the exhibition opens March 30 and runs through May 13.

Other art quilt-related exhibitions during the month of April include Fiber Revolution's ***Botswana Collection*** at the Brandywine Print Workshop on the Avenue of Arts near the Kimmel Center; ***Neurology: Two Views***, a traveling exhibition of works by Kirsten Fischler and Carolyn Lee Vehslage, can be seen at the Burrison Gallery at the University Club at Penn on 36th Street on the University of

see "FiberPhiladelphia" on page 31

Silence 48 x 69 inches ©2009 Shin-hee Chin Chinmoku

Executive director from page 3

are the power behind SAQA's success.

I hope you'll consider joining with me in ensuring that SAQA will have continued success by planning to leave SAQA a legacy in your will. I found it very easy to set up. My lawyer just added a paragraph to my will and I signed it. By ensuring that the Endowment Fund continues to grow in this way, we can be assured that SAQA will continue to promote the art quilt and provide support for art quilters for years to come. If you'd like more information about legacy donations, just let me know and I'd be happy to send you more detailed information.

In 2012, I hope that you will enter your work for consideration in the upcoming call for entry for ***A Sense of Scale*** and ***Beyond Cloth***. Let the exhibition committee know if you have an idea for a new theme or if you know of a good venue to exhibit. Check out the upcoming gallery themes for the *Journal* and send in your work. Contact Carolyn with ideas for articles. We're always looking for topics and artwork to showcase in the *Journal*. Please send in your donation for this year's Benefit Auction—this is SAQA's largest annual fundraiser, and it's also tremendous fun! And I hope that you will join us in Philadelphia for the joint SAQA/SDA conference ***Identity: Context and Reflection.*** It's a great way to meet your fellow quilt artist members and to be inspired by their enthusiasm and shared knowledge.

This is your organization—make it the best it can be!

Surface Design Association

The Surface Design Association is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to education,research, critical thinking and promotion in the field of Surface Design. Members receive the Surface Design Journal and SDA Newsletter.

Surface Design Association
P.O. Box 360 Sebastopol, CA 95473-0360
707.829.3110 surfacedesign@mail.com
Send $7 for a sample copy of the Surface Design Journal.

www.surfacedesign.org

ALEGRE RETREAT
GATEWAY CANYONS

Gateway Canyons Resort Presents
Alegre Retreat ~ An Annual Art Quilt Conference
April 15th to April 22nd, 2012
Featuring:

For more information or to make a reservation – Please call 866-671-4733 or 970-931-2458
43200 Hwy 141 | Gateway, CO 81522 | www.gatewaycanyons.com | www.alegreretreat.com

Who cares from page 13

example, artists exhibiting in the first ***Quilt National*** in 1979 probably didn't realize they were participating in a groundbreaking event. You should keep records of all exhibitions and accompanying publications, as well as copies of books, magazines, newspaper articles, blogs, and websites that feature you and your work. Where and what types of media coverage feature your work also will help scholars to paint a picture of the art quilt movement.

Sales records: How much or how little do you sell your work? Do you actively promote sales? Who sells your work? Do you have a gallery? Website? Future (and some current) scholars are interested in how artists use the Internet and social media to promote themselves and sales of their work. Finally, if you do sell your work, do you know who bought it?

Related activities: What else do you do that relates to your art? Do you write books or articles about your work or studio quilts in general? Do you curate exhibitions? Do you teach? What? Where? Who are your students? For example, future historians may be interested in looking at Nancy Crow's class lists. How many of today's quilt artists have been influenced not only by her work but also by her teaching? In the future, will we be able to identify a "school of Nancy Crow" much like we identified a "school of Rembrandt?" This would be an interesting research topic.

Today's quilt artists, along with current and future historians, must be partners in the endeavor to document the historical continuum of studio quilt making. Without accurate recordkeeping on the artist's part, that documentation will be impossible. While the task may seem daunting, an assessment of what you are currently recording or saving may reveal that you are already doing a lot of what I've mentioned. So the next time you debate whether or not to spend a few extra minutes to organize your preliminary sketches, take extra photographs, or make notes about a work in progress, remember, there are scholars who DO care about what you are doing. ▼

SAQA board member Nancy Bavor is an art historian and quilt appraiser. She lives in Los Altos Hills, California.

A Must for Serious Art Quilters

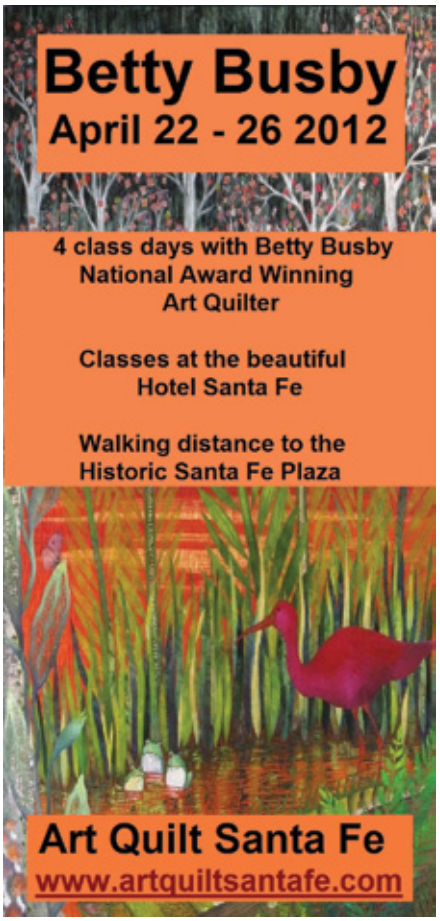
IAPQ

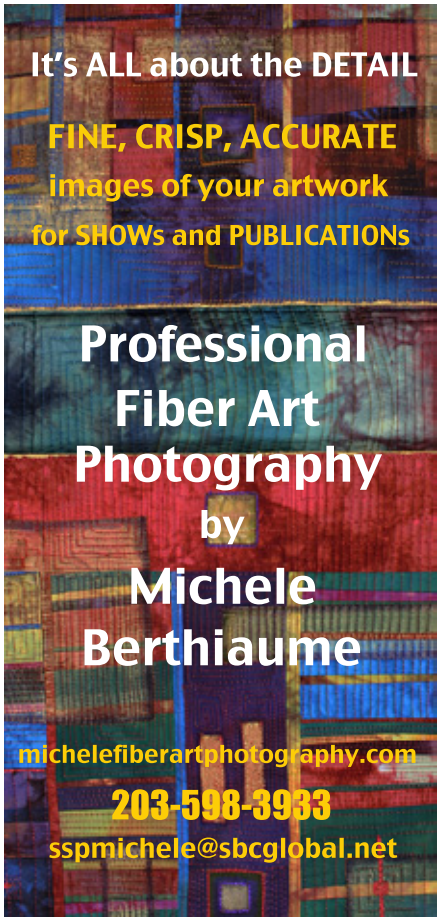
Whether you've been in business for years or you're just starting out, you'll find the resources you need to create your own success at the IAPQ. We'll show you how to:

- make more money quilting
- market your business
- build business and professional skills
- manage your finances
- take advantage of Internet technology
- work smarter
- network and more

Don't miss this opportunity to uplevel your quilt business

Sign up for our valuable starter resources at
www.professionalquilter.com
www.IAPQMasterMind.com





Studio time from page 15

later. Others make lists of things they want to accomplish on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. This strategy can help keep track of creative goals as well as business tasks like show entries and getting work photographed. Hansen, a businessperson and award-winning artist, writes down her goals in a school-type composition book and reviews them every day. She credits this practice with helping her focus on what's important. She's learned that if she wants to get things finished, she needs to write them down and then show up and do the work.

Doughty finds that inspiration seems to happen outside her studio. "I often think of projects and solutions to problems when I'm not in the studio, like when I'm doing dishes or walking in the neighborhood woods or driving," she says. "Studio time is more for the physical making of things, and the creative germination happens when I'm not in that room," she explains.

Creativity is not a gift that's available only to some and not others. As these artists demonstrate, it can be nurtured through the practice of showing up in your studio or other creative space on a regular basis and giving the ideas in your head time and space to germinate and flourish. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Cindy Grisdela creates contemporary art quilts. She lives in Great Falls, Virginia, and her website is www.cindygrisdela.com.

QBL 2012
Quilting by the Lake

July 16 – 28, 2012

32nd Annual Quilting Conference

Onondaga Community College
Syracuse, NY

faculty

Judi Blaydon	Philippa Naylor
Elizabeth Busch	Sue Nickels
Rosalie Dace	Elin Noble
Nancy Eha	Betty Pillsbury
Valerie Goodwin	Kerby Smith
Judy Langille	Anita G. Solomon
Jeannette D. Meyer	Melanie Testa

www.quiltingbythelake.com

Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center
NYSCA
205 Genesee Street, Auburn, NY 13021 (315) 255-1553

Mentorship from page 19

or make suggestions. Still others will simply provide feedback and encouragement. The way the mentorship works will depend on the mentor and protégé, their needs, and comfort levels.

Some of these relationships happen face to face, but more and more in the digital age they are taking place over great distances. Email and the ability to send images easily make mentorships more convenient and less time consuming. Periodic or scheduled email communication and phone calls seem to be the method of choice in the twenty-first century.

Speaking to mentors and their protégés, I discovered something quite interesting. In all cases of non-academic mentorships, the relationship is far from structured. Almost all of the respondents told me that although they may have set out to communicate on a regular schedule, life seems to get in the way, and the relationship in reality is very on and off. This is an indication that these mentoring arrangements, unlike art school mentorships, are much more casual than I suspect most people realize.

Working with a mentor can provide valuable support and direction, expose you to art you may not have seen, and can help you explore new techniques. But working with a mentor will not solve all your problems and automatically make you a better artist. Mentorship requires that you work even harder than you might on your own. While exploring your own ideas and inspirations, you must also follow the direction of the mentor. If you are not self-motivated, don't expect the mentor to keep you on track. A mentorship alone will not replace hard work and self-reflection. An artist grows from within. A mentor can help break down what's working and what isn't, and spark new ideas. But in the end, all artists must make the final decisions about the direction of their work and how to achieve their own vision.

Personal one-on-one attention from a mentor can be very valuable, but if you are unable to find one, don't despair. The information you crave is often available in other places. Many people who think they need a mentor find their questions can be answered in other ways. Assistance can come from membership in a professional group like SAQA (the SAQA Yahoo! group is a wonderful source of information from other artists), obtaining a professional critique, or joining a smaller group of like-minded colleagues you can turn to for advice and answers. Guilds, critique groups, and small networking groups are wonderful sounding boards for feedback and a place to gain the support of other artists. If you have no such group in your area, think about starting one. You might find someone in that group may one day become your mentor, or you theirs. ▼

I would like to thank the following SAQA members (and their respective mentors or protégés) who assisted in the research for this article: Karen Goetzinger, Katie Pasquini Masopust, Deborah Schwarzman, Judith Trager, and Carolyn Lee Vehslage.

SAQA professional artist member Leni Levenson Wiener is a fiber artist and book author. She lives in New Rochelle, New York. Her website is www.leniwiener.com.

Fiber Art Now | Get inspired & connected

Contemporary Fiber Arts & Textiles Magazine

www.fiberartnow.net

- Discover the latest news & resources
- Get inspired by exhibitions, articles & photo essays
- Stay connected to contemporary fiber arts & textiles

Tree Skirts: Annual Rings, Liz Alpert Fay

blog page and published my first post—SO easy! Now I just needed readers.

Those in the know claim that one of the most important keys to building readership is consistency: good writing, great photos, and regular postings. I determined to post a minimum of once a week to begin with. I soon built up to three times a week, always posting on Wednesday no matter what other days I might have something to say. (If you need to take a break from posting for a while, it's a good idea to let your readers know you'll be "off the air" and when you plan to be back.)

Another way to gain followers is by reading and commenting on other artists' blogs. Intelligent, insightful responses to the posts of your fellow bloggers are how relationships are built, and, for me, relationships are the big payoff of social networking. It's like penpals on steroids!

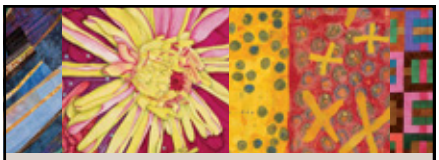
In the interest of not getting totally consumed by cyberspace, I limit my Internet wanderings (including email) to a specific length of time each day. When I find an artist blog that grabs me, I bookmark the page and check back with them daily for a month or so before I commit to following them. This gives me a chance to see if they post consistently, if they sustain my interest, and if they respond to my comments in a friendly way. Once I add myself to their site as a follower, I write a personal email introducing myself, letting them know I enjoy their posts, and asking them to visit my blog. Don't be shy about contacting other bloggers, who are generally a gregarious, generous, and kindly lot with a "the more the merrier" attitude.

A great deal of inspiration and camaraderie is to be had from blogging. Participation in a larger artistic community is very refreshing and it challenges me to have something worthy of writing about going on in my studio each week. There is a definite feeling of accountability involved in blogging, and that's a very good thing for me, living in geographic isolation as I do.

My blog has drawn more viewers to my website. I have had several sales directly from people seeing new work posted on my blog. I have every expectation that as my readership continues to grow over time, so will sales, as well as other opportunities to have my work recognized. International friendships, inspiration from participation in a worldwide artistic community, and a sense of accountability are a few of the benefits I was hoping for when I started blogging—and I haven't been disappointed.

If you're looking for a wider audience for your work, amazing inspiration, and a broader artistic community to hang with, join me in the blogosphere. Your blog is sure to be a creative and inspiring extension of your work. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Susan Christensen has an MFA and works in many different medias. She lives in Petersburg, Alaska. Her website is sjchristensen.com and her blog is sjchristensenblog.blogspot.com.



details of quilts by Susan Willen, Velda Newman, Charlotte Bird and Kent Williams

QUILT VISIONS 2012:
brainstorms

Call for Entries
January 1— February 13, 2012
online entries only
www.quiltvisionsbrainstorms.org

VISIONS ART MUSEUM
Contemporary Quilts + Textiles

2825 Dewey Road, Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92106
619-546-4872
www.visionsartmuseum.org

FiberPhiladelphia from page 25

Pennsylvania campus.There will also be open studio times with quilt artists Dianne Koppisch Hricko and Bette Uscott Woolsey at the Crane Arts Building.

Other fiber-related events will be in abundance. There will be knitting, crocheting, and weaving "bombs" throughout the city. A weaving bomb occurs when artists spontaneously take over an area and, like performance art, make their fiber art in public. These artists often create temporary pieces, such as the covering of a tree or bridge in knitted patterns, or weaving fibers through sections of a chain-link fence. Kathryn Pannapacker has been bombing Philadelphia for years, leaving behind little gems of weaving throughout her travels around the city.

So come to the SAQA/SDA conference several days early and plan to leave several days later. Meet your fellow SAQA members and take in the feast of fiber that Philadelphia has to offer this spring.

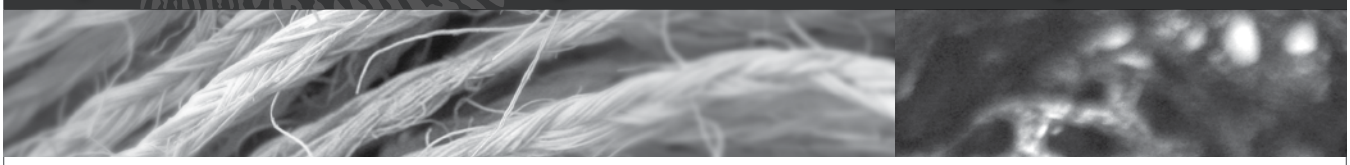
For studio visits, Dianne Koppish Hricko can be reached through her website: dkoppisch.com/about.html.

Bette Uscott Woolsey can be reached through her website: www.bettewoolsey.com. ▼

SAQA Journal *editor Carolyn Lee Vehslage is a fiber artist who often creates her work on her sailboat and powerboat. She lives in Sicklerville, New Jersey, and her website is clvquilts.com.*

Identity: Context and Reflection

A joint conference of Studio Art Quilt Associates and Surface Design Association



March 30 – April 1, 2012
Philadelphia Marriott West
West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania

Opening keynote: **Bruce Pepich, Racine Museum of Art**
Closing keynote: **Bruce Hoffman, Fiber Philadelphia**

Registration and program information is available at
surfacedesign.org/conference/conferences
and **www.saqa.com**

SURFACE DESIGN ASSOCIATION

SAQA
Studio Art Quilt Associates

SAQA
Studio Art Quilt Associates

P.O. Box 572, Storrs, CT 06268-0572
Address Services Requested

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 470
SANTA ROSA CA

Quick Notes

To find out more about SAQA, contact Martha Sielman, executive director, (860) 487-4199; execdirector@saqa.com; or visit our website at www.saqa.com. Annual membership: active (U.S. and international) $60, professional artist members $125; student (full time, with copy of ID) $30.

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. is a nonprofit 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. Email articles to editor Carolyn Lee Vehslage at clvquilts@yahoo.com.

Deadlines for articles:
Summer: February 1
Fall: May 1
Winter: August 1
Spring: November 1

Journal gallery page themes and deadlines:
The human form: May 1, 2012
Earth: August 1, 2012
Wind: November 1, 2012
Fire: Feb 1, 2013

You can help SAQA save on printing and mailing costs by choosing to read the **Journal** *online only. Go to www.saqa.com/members-amend.php and choose* **Online Journal Only**.

Board Members

President
Sandra Sider, Bronx, NY

Vice president
Kris Sazaki, Sacramento, CA

Treasurer
Nelda Warkentin, Anchorage, AK

Secretary
Linda Colsh, Everberg, Belgium

Jacqueline Atkins, Allentown, PA
Nancy Bavor, Los Altos Hills, CA
Linda Beach, Estes Park, CO
Peg Keeney, Harbor Springs, MI
Mary Pal, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Dorothy Raymond, Erie, Co
Judith Trager, Boulder, CO
John M. Walsh III, Martinsville, NJ

Executive director
Martha Sielman, Storrs, CT

SAQA Journal

Editor
Carolyn Lee Vehslage, Sicklerville, NJ

Associate editor
Vivien Zepf, Thornwood, NY

Art director/graphic designer
Deidre Adams, Littleton, CO

Printed in China