

SAQQA *Journal*

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The Unexpected Beauty of Green 2

by Karen Schulz

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Celebrating volunteers

by Kris Sazaki

I am now perusing the list of Volunteers of the

Year nominations, and I find myself reminiscing about all the volunteers I have met through SAQA. Their dedication always inspires me, and their work on our behalf is remarkable. I made a short list of the volunteers who really had an impact on me when I was new to SAQA. This list is only illustrative of the support I personally have received and treasure. My column doesn't allow the space to list them all, but I hope you know who you are. If you made your own list of the SAQA volunteers who have made a difference in your life, who would you include?

Carol Larson



Carol was the Northern California regional rep when I first became a SAQA member. I was blown away by her organizational skills. She wrote the newsletters, organized speakers for our meetings, and found meeting venues. You name it, she did it. When she asked Deb Cashatt and me to be co-reps at the end of her term, we knew we could do it because we had such a great role model in Carol. I don't know how Carol did it all herself, since I leaned so heavily on Deb to do my part of the job.

Pat Gould



Pat was a staff member, serving as our first regional rep coordinator, but she went above and beyond her staff duties to volunteer on several projects. We got together to find a better (and cheaper) way for the organization to communicate. The board and regional reps were using a costly conference call system. I wanted to find a cheaper and better way to accomplish these tasks, but Pat was the one who did all the research. I found it so gratifying to work with her on this project. Now SAQA uses an online system that not only costs a fraction of what we used to pay but also delivers our webinars. Whenever I log onto a board meeting, I give Pat a silent thank you.

Mary McBride



When I was a regional rep, SAQA organized its first-ever regional rep meeting at the annual conference. Mary volunteered to guide us through this meeting. She made us feel so comfortable and allowed us the opportunity to voice our concerns and offer suggestions in a welcoming and productive atmosphere. Mary made me feel wanted

and appreciated, valuing my volunteerism. She also kept our hands busy with a little hand-sewing project. I still giggle about that. I'm pretty sure she was a teacher at some point in her life.

Jeanne Marklin



I met Jeanne at that first-ever regional rep meeting. We immediately bonded. I was so impressed with the articulate way Jeanne addressed issues and offered solutions at that meeting. I still ask her for advice all these many years later because I can count on her thoughtful consideration. I have forged a lifelong friendship with Jeanne that I treasure to this day. I don't think I would have had that opportunity had SAQA not brought us together.

Linda Colsh



When I first joined the SAQA Board, I will admit it was rather daunting. I found myself among all these artists and business people I had admired, and suddenly we were talking about budgets, exhibitions, and approving a

see "President" on page 37

Times of your life invigorated by creative people

by Diane Howell, SAQA Journal editor



This issue focuses on people you want in your life. It is a joy to remember and honor

people who do things that make our world a better place. In this issue we introduce the nominees for the Yvonne Porcella Volunteer of the Year Awards.

One of the most important influences I have ever had in my life from quilting to cooking was my friend Yvonne Echeverria. We met at a quilt store. She was a fifth-grade teacher with a will like none I had ever seen and a small grandchild in tow with a sophisticated color sense. I was a reporter for the business newspaper owned by the “big” downtown Phoenix publisher.

I was soon to realize her drive had as much to do with efficiency as it did strong opinions. She was a wonder: teaching, keeping track of a large extended family, enjoying her friends, and going all over the state with me to investigate every quilt shop we could find. She liked me, she said, because I was “just odd enough.” I liked her for the same reason. Together we came up through one state guild chapter to become president and vice president. It was her creative energy that helped define the meetings, including a creative challenge that included a long list of rules. She insisted that having guidelines led to creativity. She was right,

of course. Those who took the challenge stretched their creative muscles and made beautiful things.

We spent hours at Borders coffee shop discussing everything from national quilting teachers to the unknown need we both had to hold onto paper, including large collections of those folksy cookbooks written by church and civic groups. We collected them like fiends. She had years of lesson plans. I had years of handwritten notes. And the quilting books!

We had identical taste in the perfect sewing machine to piece quilts—the Singer Featherweight, of course. We each bought one at the same Tempe, Arizona, antique shop days apart. Years later as I lamented—again—the fact that hers had a graduated throat plate, she ‘fessed up that the graduated throat plate on her machine had been traded off mine to make the sale. Our machines shared a part of each other, just like we shared a piece of each other’s soul, although I always

thought our throat plates should be traded back. They never were.

It is not often you find a soul mate, someone with the same temperament, likes, and dislikes. Someone who will worry about you like a parent and love you like your favorite aunt. Yvonne was all those things. And a beautiful quilter who made beautiful quilts for so many of us. The hardest thing she ever had to do was tell her friends she was going to die. But she did tell us, and then beat the odds to be with family for more than a year.

I miss my friend. But the lessons she taught me are still in my soul, underlined in red, our favorite color.

This year, SAQA lost several members, and I hope you join me in honoring their creative spirit. In memoriam we say good-bye to:

Martha Connell

Susan Hendrickson

Judith James

Marialuisa Sponga Archi

Ita Ziv

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Yvonne Porcella Volunteer of the Year Awards

New program honors those who give of themselves to support SAQA

SAQA, as a non-profit, relies on generous gifts of time and talent from our volunteers to carry out its mission. This year, some of our most dedicated volunteers will be acknowledged through a new program—the *Yvonne Porcella Volunteer of the Year Awards*, named after our founder and first president.

The first set of recipients will be announced at the annual conference in Philadelphia March 31-April 3, 2016. Winners will be named in two categories: Outstanding Rep (or Co-Reps) and Volunteer, open to those serving in all other capacities. Nominees were put forward by SAQA members, who were asked to consider qualities such as:

- Exceeds expectations
- Contributes countless hours
- Represents SAQA in an exceptional manner
- Demonstrates exemplary performance in achieving responsibilities
- Has provided a “save the day” moment
- Significantly impacts the organization
- Has volunteered for many years

The SAQA Board of Directors and staff will select the award winners. The winners will receive a recognition certificate and a \$100 gift certificate for the SAQA Store.

The nominees and some highlights from the nominating ballots follow.

Nominees for Rep / Co-Rep

Margaret Abramshe Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah

Margaret revitalized this region and has excelled at bringing fresh ideas and professional energy into her role. She represents exactly the kind of artistic and organizational energy that takes organizations to the next level and ensures participation from others.

Elizabeth Bamberger Oregon

Elizabeth is a dedicated SAQA member who has created an environment where members want to help her organize the state conference, local meetings, and the regional conference. She was instrumental in planning and orchestrating the first statewide daylong conference and has taken steps to make the conference a biennial event. Under her watch, four pod groups were formed. She was instrumental in planning and executing the second statewide exhibit, *Exploring Layers*. She helped the national symposium committee bring the 2015 Fiberlandia conference to Portland and has coordinated SAQA information tables at several Portland area expos and quilt shows.

Sue Bleiweiss Massachusetts/Rhode Island

During her two years as co-rep, Sue did an outstanding job planning quarterly meetings and organizing all the details involved in a juried member exhibition. Our regional meetings have offered both hands-on

demonstrations and professional encouragement. Meeting locations have been thoughtfully arranged to be fair to members in all locations.

Jayne Gaskins / Nancy Billings Florida

These two women have gone above and beyond their jobs as co-reps. In three years, they have spearheaded two seminars and created the Florida pod system. They created and orchestrated the Studio to Gallery conference. Jayne and Nancy have worked tirelessly to bring SAQA members together as a community in the state of Florida.

Ali George Oceania

Ali has worked to lift the profile of the Oceania region, promoting SAQA at quilt shows and events throughout Australia and New Zealand. The newsletters have kept the widespread and often-isolated members informed. The Oceania Mentorship Group (OMG!) designed by Ali has been a success in expanding artistic horizons among members.

Denise Oyama Miller Northern California/ Northern Nevada

Denise is a natural-born leader. She is smart, organized, hard-working and inspires others to give their best. She knows how to delegate work to the right person. She also works with the SAQA exhibition committee and has coordinated the Northern California/Northern Nevada regional shows.

**Christine Nielsen
Atlantic Canada**

Christine has led this geographically dispersed group to hold two regional retreats that included networking and professional development opportunities. A second regional exhibition is enjoying a run that includes five galleries in three provinces. Membership has grown and strong bonds are developing among quilt artists. In addition, her efforts have helped bring two SAQA exhibitions to Canada in 2016.

**Catherine Whall Smith
Connecticut**

Meetings in this region are well-planned, with reminders and meeting notes sent out quickly, thereby keeping everyone informed.

**Nominees for Volunteer
(non-Rep):**

Betty Busby

Betty is a vital component, not only to New Mexico, but for the region. She holds the responsibility of chairing the exhibition committee for SAQA NM and is the coordinator for regional exhibitions. She spurs

members on with creative inspirations for exhibits. She encourages members at all stages of their art-quilting lives to exhibit their work. She searches out new venues and approaches them with professionalism and confidence.

Deb Cashatt

Deb has been a longtime SAQA volunteer, devoting countless hours to the organization as co-rep and as chair of the special-events committee. She has consistently stepped in to take care of additional items, such as producing the conference program.



Elizabeth Bamberger



Sue Bleiweiss



Betty Busby



Deb Cashatt



Eileen Doughty



Georgia French

Eileen Doughty

Eileen has done a great job in every position she has held over the years. She is dedicated, and she has encouraged others to volunteer. She is one of those tireless volunteers who deserves recognition.

Clairan Ferrono

Clairan has been a regional rep, a curator for one of SAQA's traveling exhibitions, and an energetic volunteer in the SAQA booths at events. She works behind the scenes to mentor other SAQA members. She also works tirelessly to assist members to

find exhibition opportunities. Most recently, she has volunteered on the marketing team. She has brought the same professionalism and enthusiasm to writing articles for the SAQA Blog that she brings to every project.

Georgia French

Georgia has chaired the regional grant committee since its inception three years ago. She gives advice to the applicants, makes suggestions for clarification to the applications prior to review, and writes the acceptance and rejection letters. She also volunteers within her region.

Kate Themel

Kate is our former Connecticut SAQA rep. She helped organize meetings and also organizes CT SAQA exhibits. She started and continues to write the CT SAQA blog. During her time as rep, the state group grew, now welcoming more than 50 members at a typical meeting.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers. Your dedication and service have made SAQA a unique and vibrant organization.



Jayne Gaskins



Ali George



Christine Nielsen



Denise Oyama Miller



Catherine Whall Smith



Kate Themel

Karen Schulz

Opposites attract to define endless possibilities for abstract artist

by Cindy Grisdela



Karen Schulz has lived in the same neighborhood of Silver Spring, Maryland, for nearly 40 years. The purple trim on the outside of her home is the first clue a visitor gets that an artist lives inside. Her studio is an extension of her light-filled kitchen, where she has cabinets filled with both commercial prints and her own hand-dyed fabrics, a large design wall, and a Bernina sewing machine set into a large table in the center of the room.

Karen's work is abstract, defined by color, line, and shape. She focuses on figure/ground composition, defined by tensions between opposing forces—squares and circles, dark and light, foreground and background. "I'm totally jazzed by putting together opposites," Karen explains.

In *The Unexpected Beauty of Green 2*, the tension of opposites Karen enjoys exploring is on full display. Dark squares float on a light background, while an abstract green shape with curved edges takes over the foreground. Stitched lines create texture, while couching describes circles and lines that both recede

left: The Unexpected Beauty of Green 2
42 x 25 inches

opposite: Out the In Door
58 x 66 inches

photos: Gulezian/Quicksilver



into the background and also create a secondary focus of energy.

“On an intellectual level, I just fundamentally believe that to live in truth is to hold all possibilities open. To say something is all this or all that never felt right to me.”

Karen didn’t see herself as an artist growing up. Her brother was the artist in the family, although Karen enjoyed sewing and making things. She made her first quilt about 30 years ago for her sister who was graduating from college. It was a traditional quilt, although she made her own pattern.

Karen had a successful career as a clinical social worker with a private psychotherapy practice for three decades. “When I started out, I was just as passionate about that as I am about my art making,” Karen says. But over time, her passion for art took precedence. “When it became difficult to leave the studio to go to the office, I decided it was time to do something else,” she says. Karen closed her practice in December 2013 to devote herself to her art full time.

In many ways, her work in psychotherapy is diametrically opposed to her art. She pointed out that therapy

involves another person, is a verbal activity, and is all about feelings and the story of that person’s life. But creating art, at least in Karen’s world, is done solo in the studio, is rarely about words, and isn’t primarily intended to tell a story or convey a feeling. Of course, both are intellectual challenges and, as Karen chooses titles for her abstract pieces, about words on some level.

Karen’s work usually begins with an image. “In my head I have a catalog of images that haunt me,” she says. It might be a photograph or a sketch. It might be something small that she

Improv
47 x 30 inches

photo: Gulezian/Quicksilver

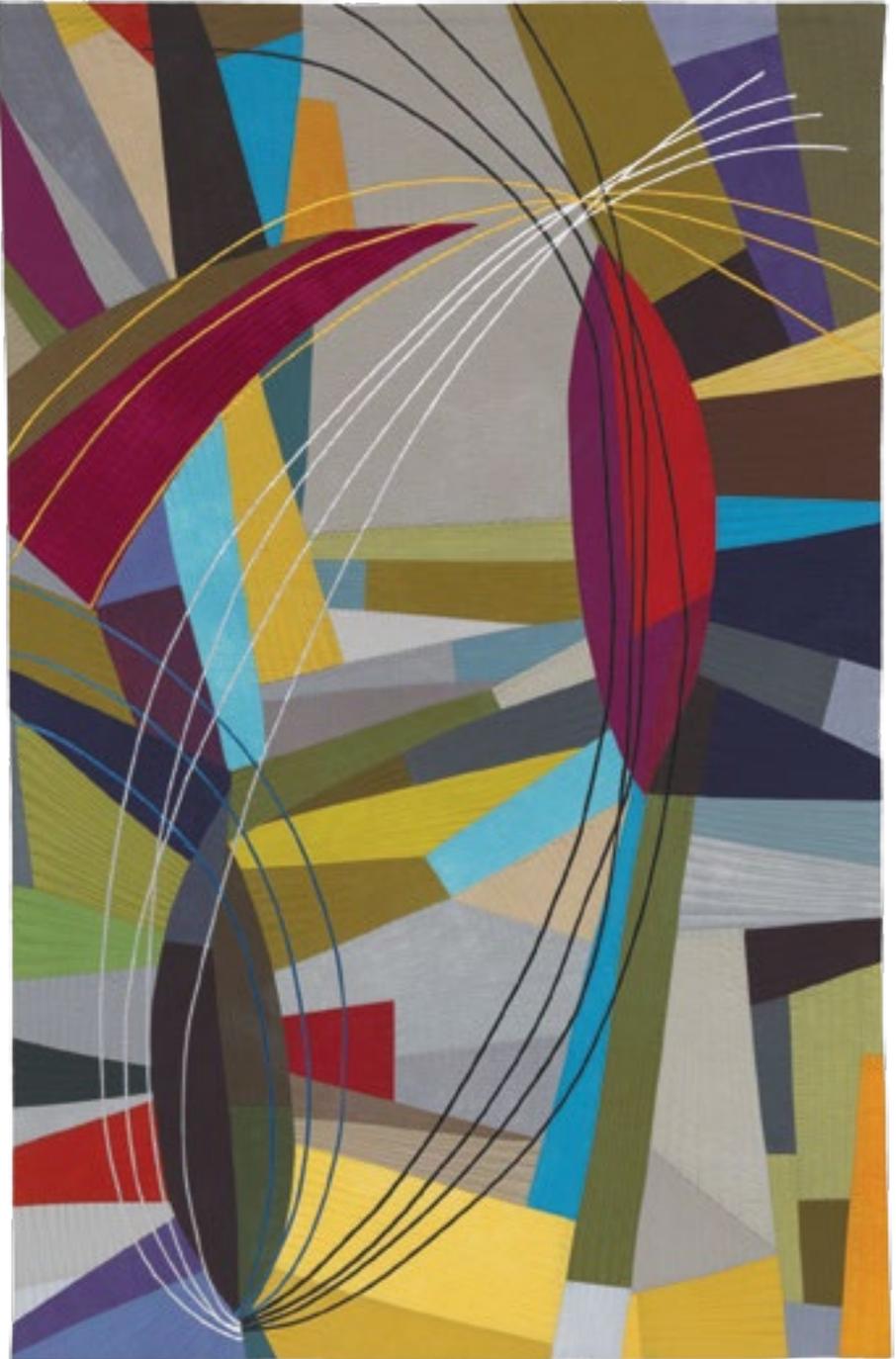
wants to blow up and make bigger, or it might be a small part of a larger piece that she decides to explore on a different scale.

The *Shapes* series began from a small exercise piece Karen completed at the end of a class with Sue Benner. Several years later, she looked at the tiny piece with new eyes and started designing a series of large quilts based on that idea. The small exercise is framed now and holds a key spot in Karen's studio along with other images waiting their turn.

Out the In Door has elements from that series with its dark angular squares and rectangles superimposed over a palette of gold, blue, and purple. Graphic circular stitching lines and couching add contrasting texture and energy.

All of Karen's quilts are pieced rather than fused. "Piecing has taught me about negative space in a different way," she says. She enjoys sewing rather than working with an iron and glue, and the requirement that shapes have to be sewn together in some way is an intellectual challenge.

Sometimes when she's beginning a new design, she enjoys taking a pile of scraps, dumping them on the floor, and then composing on the wall from what she has available. Usually in this case, she will set some parameters, perhaps deciding roughly what size the piece will be and blocking it out on her design wall. Or she might set color restrictions, using just lights,



darks, and brights with no medium or muted tones. "You do have to have some structure for yourself. Limitations can actually be very helpful," she says.

The joyful abandon in *Improv* gives a sense of how this process unfolds. Often she develops an exciting palette she never would have considered. In addition, Karen believes using scraps is an important part of our heritage

as quiltmakers, regardless of the fact many of us now work in a more contemporary style.

Exhibiting is important to Karen, and she chooses which shows to enter based on the juror and the venue. Her *Quilt National 2015* entry, *Girl in the City with Blue Hair*, earned her a Best of Show award, a happy surprise that at first caused her great concern. When she arrived at the

artist's reception, she couldn't find her quilt. A Dairy Barn intern took her to the very front of the exhibit space where the work was proudly displayed. Winning the prestigious award was "a wonderful moment in time," Karen says.

Besides *Quilt National*, she has had her work shown in *Art Quilt Elements* and *Form, Not Function* in 2014, and *Quilts=Art=Quilts* in 2013, among others.

Although Karen has accented her work by stitching with various widths of thread, bobbin drawing, and couching for many years, she has resisted going any further into surface-design techniques. This is a conscious decision. "I have my hands full with shape, color, and how to sew everything together."

Taking classes with master teachers has been important to Karen's growth as an artist. She has studied with Nancy Crow, Sue Benner, and Elizabeth Busch, to name a few. She was excited about a two-dimensional design class that she took recently with painter and art professor David Hornung. However, Karen does not consciously apply the principles of design when she's working. "When I'm doing, I'm not thinking," Karen says. "I just keep at it until I'm satisfied."

For some years now Karen has explored the concept of representing a three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional format. Looking ahead, she sees a new interest in the drawn line to inform her work.

Karen asks, "What is it that is fundamentally a person's mark?" Her studies over the last couple of years, particularly with David Hornung, drew her to expressive line making. These expressive lines brought energy to the piece in a way that she really liked and activated the surface. She likens this to the way she would know her father's handwriting anywhere she saw it, even without his name attached.

The Ellipse is one piece showing larger, simpler shapes as a backdrop

for expressive lines on the surface. "Now I'm not restricting myself to just drawing on top with sketchy lines, but I'm exploring the more deliberate, conscious use of expressive line in my work," Karen says.

"Some people say the key to happiness is to find something impossible to do and then to do it. That's how I feel about art. There's so much to learn and so much to explore." ▼

Cindy Grisdela is a SAQA JAM residing in Reston, Virginia. You can view her work at cindygrisdela.com.



The Ellipse
35 x 25 inches

photo: Gulezian/Quicksilver



Laser-cutting exploration puts new edge on art quilts

by Valerie S. Goodwin

“I am still learning.”

This quote, attributed to Michelangelo at age 87, means a lot to me. I have a personal desire to keep learning and to expand my craft. Since 2013, I have been experimenting with laser-cutter technology and how it can impact my approach to art quilts.

Laser cutting is now widely associated with fashion and textiles. Many contemporary designers, from an assortment of differing design disciplines, have used laser cutters with textile materials. From this technology a “cut-through” design aesthetic is evident. Fashion designers such as Marchesa, Michael Angel, and Zac Posen have created unique cutting-edge fashion using this technology.

The interaction between designer, technology, and materiality is of significant importance. It is always a balance between the designer, the technological capabilities, the tools,

and the behavior of the materials. Digital technologies are now influencing much of the traditional art world, including textiles. Fiber artists have the opportunity to accomplish familiar things in new ways.

Throughout my career, immense professional satisfaction and artistic expression have come from making things by hand. Coupled with this, I understand and have an interest in current technology. Sometimes I am split between using digital technology and staying true to physical hand-made processes.

From my experience teaching architectural design, I know architects have firmly embraced computer-aided design. Over the course of 20 years at Florida A&M University’s Division of Architecture, I’ve seen my architecture students do amazing design work that combines technology with traditional design methods. It’s no surprise

my work as a quilt artist would be influenced in this way.

The laser process

Laser cutters work by aiming a very robust laser beam onto a material that it either etches or cuts, depending on how one creates the digital file. Laser cutters cut materials comparable to other computer-based tools, using a beam of light instead of a blade. This equipment can be used to create fashion pieces, models, toys, and much, much more.

During the summer of 2013, I was selected to do a residency at the Facility for Arts Research at Florida State University. I learned how to create digital drawings using image-editing software, including Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw, and AutoCAD. I also tested more than 30 fabrics on the 30-watt Epilog Mini and the Epilog 60-Watt Fusion laser cutters.



Layering and transparency study using cut paper

My goals were to:

- Learn the challenges and potential benefits of the technology and the machine.
- Create a comprehensive database of accurate speed and power settings for etching (mark making) and cutting with the chosen materials.
- Identify and explore techniques which could be achieved through laser cutting.

Among the materials I tested were cotton, organza, poly-cotton, silk, satin, linen, crinoline, sports nylon, mono-filament, and duck cloth.

In learning the basics of Adobe Illustrator, I quickly became familiar with two simple and key concepts:

Vector: Lines that make up vector graphics are fully scalable images (you can enlarge them without losing quality). Vector images are cut by the laser cutter to create a cut-through, or lace-like, design aesthetic.

Raster: Lines that make up raster images are made of pixels and cannot be scaled up without becoming pixelated and blurry. Using raster

files, the top layer of the surface will be etched off, much like what you see in *devoré*.

I found that learning the software was pretty straightforward. Perhaps it was because I was familiar with similar image-editing software such as Photoshop. It was not difficult to master a few key functions, including drawing lines and shapes, using layers, and setting line widths. I learned several ways to create an image to cut or etch:

- **Creating the drawing in Illustrator.**
- **Carefully hand drawing the pattern** using crisp, sharp lines—bearing in mind the need to create one contiguous shape. I realized the importance of thinking about the image as if it were a stencil so that the pattern would stay together as



Mapped Structures I (detail)
Valerie Goodwin, 2015

one piece or a series of pieces after it was cut.

- **Using the live trace function.** This involves using the software to trace the outlines of a design from an existing copyright-free high contrast image or one's own hand-drawn sketches. These types of images can be converted into vector lines that can be cut, or raster lines that can be etched with the laser cutter.

Some of my early experiments involved laser-cut paper studies. My goal was to examine the possibilities of this technology divorced from the specific behavioral characteristics of fabric. I felt the need to do this before moving on to materials such as

cotton, silk organza, monofilament, etc. I looked at creating patterns, layering, and transparency, as well as 3D texture.

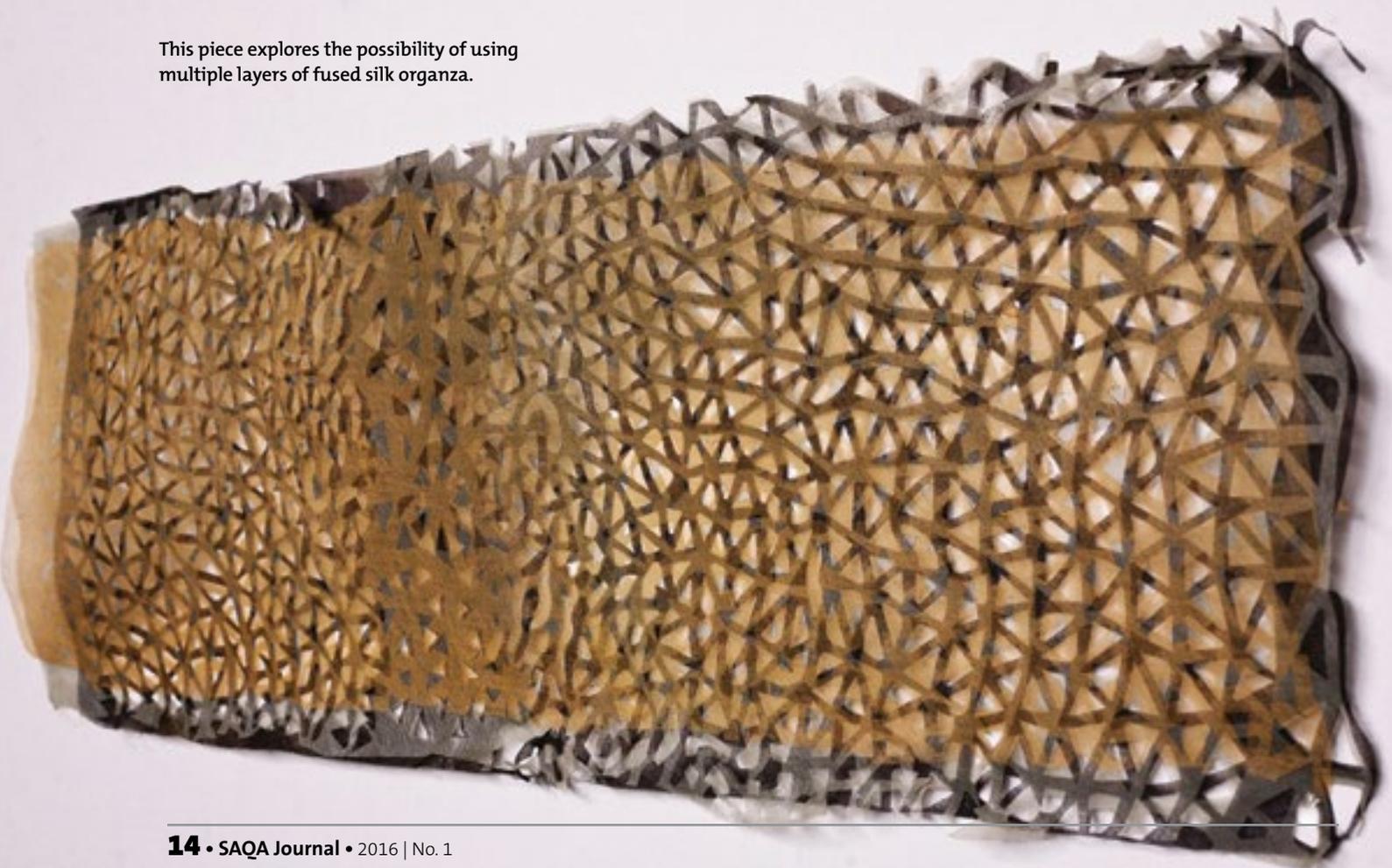
Later on, I created a series of experimental fabric constructions. I wanted to combine what I had learned from the initial trials with the 30 assorted fabrics with the formal design ideas of the paper studies. Some focused on creating layers of solid and void patterns. Other studies explored making dimension and texture. Another involved painting a fabric surface with acrylic paint and etching away some of it to create a beautiful complex pattern. The following provides a glimpse into creating one of these studies using a hand-drawn design. It summarizes how I created

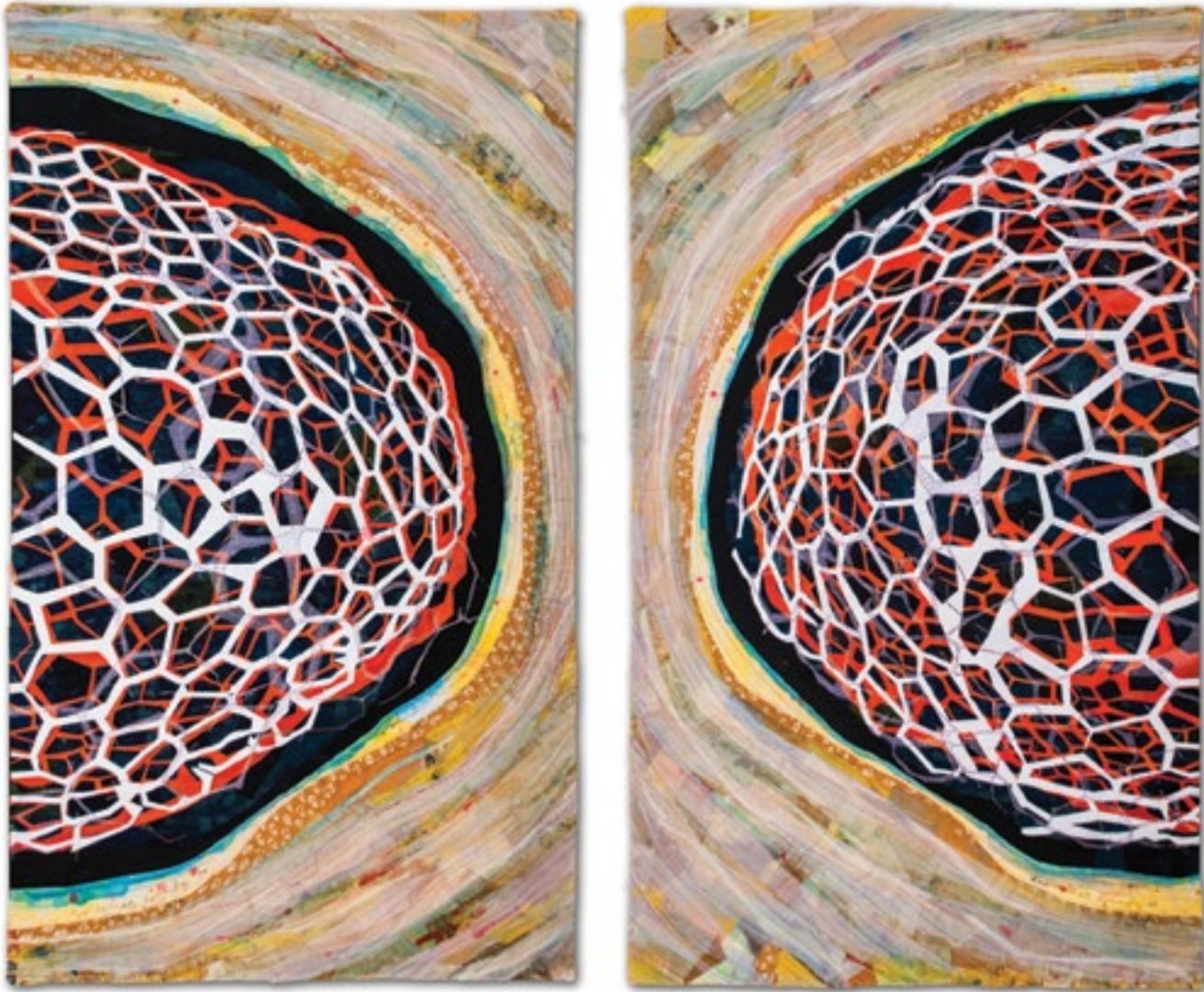
laser-cut work based on layering and transparency.

The file-preparation process

1. Sketched several patterns, selected a few that seemed to work well together.
2. Scanned the patterns as jpeg files and opened them in Illustrator.
3. Used the "live trace" function to create a vector line drawing of each pattern.
4. Set all the lines to the proper weight for cutting. For the Epilog machine it was .001 pt.
5. Patterns were then enlarged to fit the maximum size the machine could cut, which in this case was 40" x 28" inches.

This piece explores the possibility of using multiple layers of fused silk organza.





Approximate Symmetry

Valerie Goodwin
46 x 52 inches, 2015

6. Finally, I saved the patterns as pdf files.

The fabric-preparation process

1. Cut each fabric layer to the desired size. Some fabrics like silk organza seemed to need stiffening to make them easier to cut. I used Terial Magic, a heavy duty fabric stiffener made by Terial Arts.
2. Ironed the fabric and placed it on the bed of the laser cutter. The perimeter of the fabric was secured to the bed using drafting tape.

The laser-cutting process

1. Entered the power, frequency, and speed settings using machine's dialog window. I learned this information during my residency. Some of this information is available in the manufacturer's manual or through resources on the internet.
2. I sent the file from the computer to the machine.
3. I hit the "go" button and watched the magic happen. I should note that I cut each layer of fabric one at a time. However, one can cut multiple layers of fabric.

Gaining technical knowledge has consumed a fair percentage of the time I would normally spend in the studio over the last two years. But along with this focus, many ideas surfaced and were filtered. In some cases, new ideas were generated.

In exploratory design work, there is often little clarity about what the investigation will yield or even whether it might be fruitful. I discovered early on that subtraction (creating voids) was a process for which the laser cutter was well-suited. It can create highly complex solid/void

see "Laser cutting on page 38

Need a website?

Build a great online presence one step at a time

by Deidre Adams

Do you need to create a website to showcase your work? Or do you think it's time for a site overhaul?

Today, we have many options to make ourselves and our work visible online. But where to start? Figuring out the best course of action can feel like a daunting task. Here are three areas of consideration to help direct your decisions:

Are you really ready for a website? If you're still at an early stage in your career, do you have enough content to warrant a standalone website? A consistent, cohesive body of work with a strong, unified voice will make a much better web presentation than a random collection of workshop pieces or experiments that have little in common.

What do you want to achieve with your site? Do you want to sell your work directly from your site, or are you interested in creating an online portfolio for people who ask about your work? Do you want to actively drive traffic to your site? Are you looking to make new connections with people who share your interests?

How much work are you prepared to do yourself? Do you like learning new things on your own? Do you have the time and motivation to learn a new software interface as well as prepare and upload your images? Or would you prefer to stay in your studio and hand off these tasks?

Content

Once you decide to go ahead, think about what you want on your site. There are no hard and fast rules for what to include, but the No. 1 consideration is a clear, easy-to-navigate portfolio. Good-quality photographs are a must, and bigger is better (see "Image optimization" below). Each image should include a caption or credit line with the title of the work, the medium, and the size. If you want to sell the work on the site, be sure to include the price. The price itself can link to purchasing information on another page.

If you have a lot of work, it may be best to divide it into categories rather than loading it all on one page. These will vary by artist, but possibilities include sorting by medium, theme, or chronology.

Other pages

There are no set rules about what pages you should include. You may need more or less depending on your situation. Some possibilities are:

Artist info. Your biography, artist statement, and other information about you and your work. Your viewers want to meet you through your story.

Resume/CV. At minimum, include a listing of your previous exhibitions. If the list is very long, you can label it "Selected Exhibitions" and list the most prestigious. You can also add a listing of collections you are in,

articles by and about you, and any art-related experience you have.

Where to see your work. Current exhibitions, galleries, and other places to see your artwork in person.

Store. If you want to sell from your site, you can either do this from the gallery page or create a separate page just for the available items.

Contact info. Make it easy for people to get in touch with you. Because of the probability of spammers, many people prefer to use a fill-in-the-blank contact form that forwards to their email account, rather than offering an actual email address or phone number. (Wordpress has plug-ins that make this easy.)

Design

The most important consideration for design is the user experience. Think about your audience—this includes everyone from your friends, potential collectors, gallerists, curators, and other artists to complete strangers who land on your site by accident and become interested in your offerings. Can users see immediately





what your site is about, and can they find your work easily? Going with a minimalist look or a flashy animation as your home page might be trendy, but if users don't see menus or an obvious navigation system, they may leave without trying to find your artwork.

Once they do get to your content, is the text readable? Many viewers complain that white type on black is difficult to read. As we age, small or light-colored type becomes increasingly difficult to read. Always keep the viewer in mind and make it easy for them.

Make your portfolio easy to navigate from one image to the next. If each image requires multiple clicks, chances are good that viewers will become bored after looking at just a couple of them.

Your site should showcase your artwork, not compete with it. A busy, cluttered site with lots of elements or multiple fonts might appear dated. The current trend in web design is a clean, pared-down look, often with a single large image, called a "hero

image," that grabs attention. A side note to this is that you can't expect to present one design that will look current forever. Web trends and technology are constantly changing. You should be prepared to at least tweak, if not completely overhaul, your site at least every couple of years.

The possibilities for site design are nearly infinite. If you don't have ideas for look and function, a good way to get started is to look at other artists' sites to get a feel for what appeals to you.

Choice of platform

Social media. At one end of the spectrum are the social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and others. You can definitely show and promote your artwork with nothing more than one of these. Advantages to this method include no cost and built-in social media promotion capabilities, as long as you're willing to put in a bit of work. That work includes posting interesting content on a regular basis and interacting with others. The drawbacks are there can be little to no customization of your galleries, and some people may see the lack of a dedicated website as less than professional.

Group artist sites. Group, or bulk, sites may sound good, promising great exposure on a pre-existing platform where all you do is upload your work and wait for the buyers to appear. They may charge a nominal fee or be completely free. However, again, you'll have no opportunity

to customize the look of your pages. In addition, you may be competing with hundreds or thousands of other artists or possibly showing your artwork alongside advertising. This is definitely not showing your work to advantage.

Website builders. In the last few years, a number of sites offering templated, "drag & drop" website creation have sprung to the rescue of those who know little about design or coding. These include Wix, Squarespace, Weebly, GoDaddy, and others. Some offer the ability to create a free site, but will include their branding and an unwieldy domain/URL unless you upgrade.

All of the major website builders offer some support, whether by phone, email, live chat, or community forums. You can make a wide range of customizations to colors, fonts, and layouts. These features allow you to generate a distinct look even though you start with a choice of basic templates offered by the service. Time will be involved to learn and understand the interface, but most provide good written and video documentation.

Prices vary depending on selected features, but range around \$8-\$36 per month, with savings available for paying on an annual basis. These prices include web hosting. Online store or shopping cart features are available at some price points.

Wordpress. Defined as both an open-source content management system (CMS) and as a state-of-the-art

personal publishing platform, Wordpress originated as a blogging platform. At one time it had strong competition, but it has developed such a wide following of loyal users, supporters, and developers, it's now the platform of choice for more than 16 million websites, from huge global corporations down to small individuals like myself.

A full discussion of creating a Wordpress website is beyond the scope of this article. Pared down to basics, the process involves acquiring a hosting service, downloading and installing the free Wordpress software, choosing a template from either the thousands of free ones or the more feature-rich commercial options, and setting up your pages, menus, content, and plug-ins—add-ons that extend the features of the out-of-the-box Wordpress installation.

Further reading

Do's and Don'ts for Building Art & Artist Websites

www.artbusiness.com/weberrors.html

Artist Websites: How to Increase Your Online Traffic and Keep Everyone on Your Site Longer

bit.ly/IncTrafficKeepVisitors

Comparison of website builders

bit.ly/BuildersCompared

SEO tips

bit.ly/EmptyEaselSEO

Alyson Stanfield's Art Biz blog

www.artbizblog.com

Lots of great tips and information for creating or improving your website

Wordpress documentation

https://codex.wordpress.org/Main_Page

With time and patience, you can build a great Wordpress site on your own. Books, online tutorials, and documentation are widely available. However, some of the screens and options can be difficult to understand. Another possibility is to hire someone to build the site for you and then do maintenance and updates yourself.

Custom site. This will almost certainly be the most expensive option—unless you have some really good friends in the web-design community. Be sure to ask potential designers whether you can do edits and updates yourself. Otherwise, you'll be paying for every addition or change. You'll also have to wait until your designer has time to accommodate you.

Additional considerations

Domain name. It's considered good practice to use your own name as your domain name. This has several advantages, including making it easy for people to search for you. It also allows you to use your own name for your email address—serious@seriousartist.com communicates professionalism and permanence. If someone else already has your name, you'll need an alternate strategy. Possibilities are using a different extension (seriousartist.net, seriousartist.org, etc.), hyphenating your name (serious-artist.com), or adding another word (seriousartistquilts.com). The last option is probably the most straightforward.

A domain name is often included with web-hosting services or site-builder platforms, but if you want to register one independently,

you can find many providers with a web search on “domain name registration.”

Web hosting. If you're building your own site, you'll need a web-hosting service to store uploads and make your website available to users. Bluehost.com seems to be the most consistently recommended hosting service. However, there are many competitors out there, and it's always a good idea to do research before making a final decision.¹ Most hosts offer different tiers of service depending on how much space, bandwidth, and other features you need.

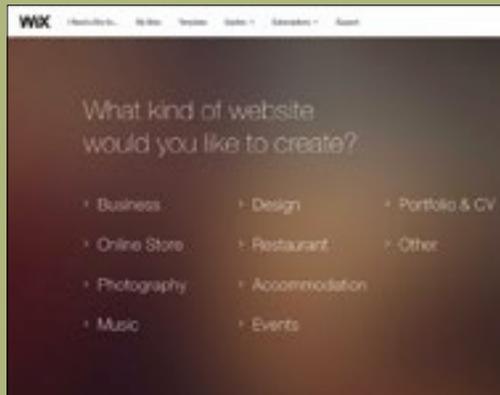
Search engine optimization (SEO). This is the art of making your website more visible to Google, Yahoo, and other search engines. There are various techniques for doing this, including using a good description and keywords in your site's metadata. If you hire someone else to build your site, be sure they can take care of this for you. Otherwise, plan to research how to do it yourself.

Image optimization. As mentioned earlier, having nice big images is important for drawing attention. Viewers really want to see the detail in your work. However, there's nothing more tedious on the web than watching a photo slowly draw down the screen one line at a time. Image optimization is an art of balance—you want to reduce the file size of your image to minimize download time, but still maintain quality and detail. If you have Adobe Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, use the “Save for Web” feature and adjust the quality downward while keeping an eye on how the image quality changes as

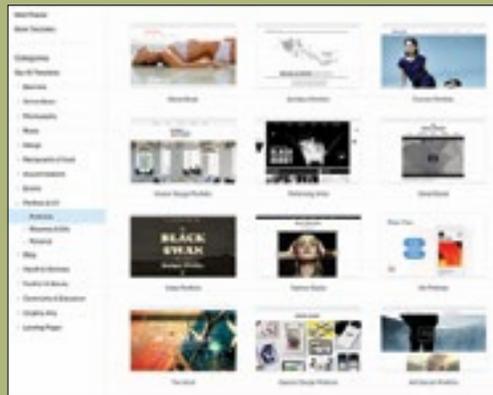
see “Website” on page 40

¹Beware of results returned from a web search on “independent review web hosting companies.” Many of these will be fake affiliate review sites paid by the hosting companies and will show results based not on actual quality but on who pays them the most.

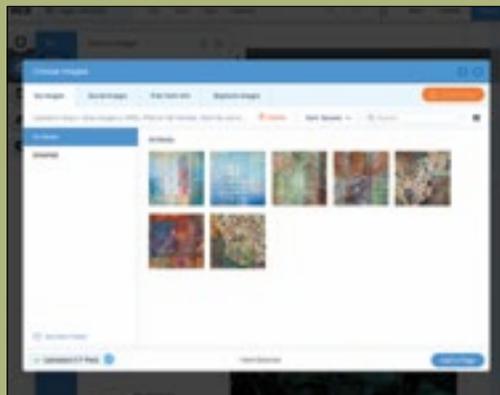
Website builders can help simplify the task



Getting started



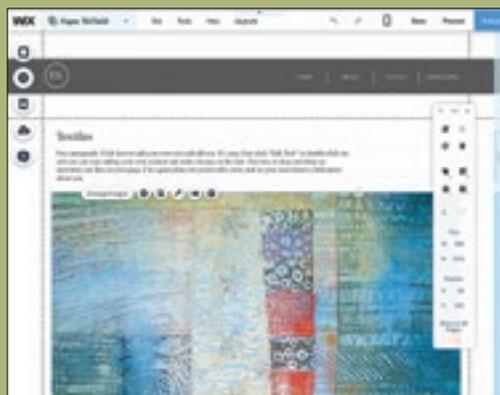
Selecting a template



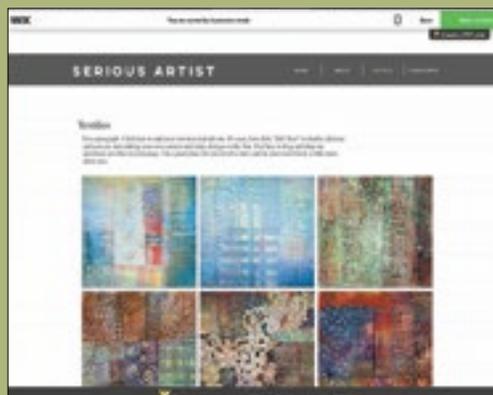
Uploading images



Editing an image

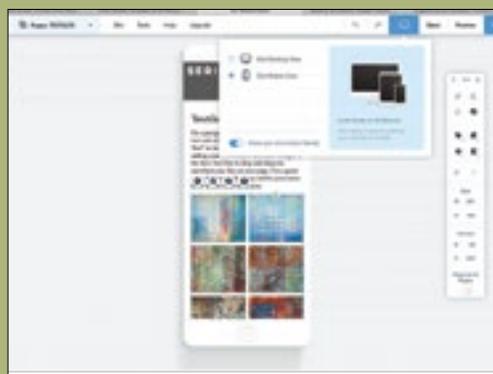


Editing a page



Previewing the site

As of this writing, Wix websites are not fully responsive. Each template does, however, offer both desktop and mobile views that you can edit separately.



Website builders are growing in popularity as people discover they can make a good looking site without spending lots of money or having to know anything about coding. One example is Wix.

Creating a website with Wix is easy. After clicking the big **Start Now** button on the wix.com home page, you'll be asked what kind of site you want to create, thereby narrowing the huge selection of templates you have to choose from. I used **The Artist** (from Portfolio & CV) for this demonstration.

The template comes with prebuilt backgrounds and sample images, making it easier to see how to make customizations. You can add or edit pages and images at any time and in any order.

Site features include a surprisingly robust set of image-editing tools including cropping, color correction, sharpening, and Instagram-like filters.

Every editing screen contains buttons with pop-ups that help you to determine how to use them. The Help menu is always available at the top of the screen.

Because the interface is fairly intuitive, it doesn't take long to create a basic site with a professional look. If you want to dive in deeper, the list of features and options is impressive.

Before publishing, or going live, preview your site in both desktop and mobile mode to see if you need to make changes.

OMG!

SAQA's Oceania mentorship program always a creative surprise

by Ali George

The intent of the OMG! Group is to provide a safe environment for all Oceania members, particularly those new to art quilts, to experiment, take risks, receive feedback and encouragement, and work in a self-paced environment.

The Oceania Mentorship Group (OMG!) was created in response to the changing membership structure within our region. With membership drives resulting in more members, one of the challenges about the “anyone and everyone” approach was how to retain those new members into the future.

Many of our new members were not and are not established artists in the art-quilt genre. Many had been recruited as a result of attending a quilt show or participating in a class facilitated by one of our members. These have been alternating between elements of design and a theme set by a guest artist.

My initial idea was that some of our groups' professional artist members could contribute and support newer members through this forum. It has evolved quite differently from how I envisioned. I now approach an artist within the broader SAQA membership whose artistic merit, work ethic, or body of work has something which I believe can contribute to the growth of our group. Our two guest artists have so far been Sue Reno from Pennsylvania in the United States and Sue Dennis from Brisbane, Australia.

The OMG! works on a challenge which runs for three months. Our four challenges in the first 12 months

of OMG! have been unity (design element), roots (set by Sue Reno), balance (element of design) and adventure (set by Sue Dennis). Members can determine the size or scope of the challenge and their finished pieces. We suggest that 12 x 12 inches is a great size to start with, as it also creates the opportunity to have a Benefit Auction contribution prepared well ahead of time.

Our group was not formed to provide how-to guidance or techniques. There are plenty of books, videos, and DVDs for learning the basics. There are also plenty of workshops available online and in person for those wanting those opportunities. What OMG! offers is another way to obtain the most benefit out of a regionally based membership.

What have been the best aspects? The way our members have engaged with the challenges. Members have expressed an appreciation for being able to share experiments, ideas, effort, and process outcomes within a protective and supportive environment. I'm in awe of the talent that resides in our region, evidenced by the way our members respond to the quarterly challenges.

The biggest problem has been meeting the needs of everyone. Every person has a different perception of

what a mentorship group might look like. SAQA's Visioning Project was a wonderful inspiration for me personally some years ago, and I liked the self-directed but disciplined approach of reporting to myself each month and to the group. The wonderful group Textile Arts run by Oceania member Neroli Henderson is another fantastic forum for engaging with textile artists and art quilters. OMG! sits comfortably in between, but it is not for everyone.

What's in our future?

In addition to quarterly challenges, we are introducing some discussion on how to get your art out there and related small business advice meant to inspire ideas and action by our members. It's very much on a take what you want or need basis, rather than a preachy approach. I'm also hoping that some of our group will be able to find the time to support the OMG! and take it to the next level —perhaps as the launch pad for our own exhibition, retreat, or mini-conference. Who knows? I think that's the magic behind OMG! It's always a creative surprise. ▼

Ali George is a textile and mixed-media artist and is a SAQA Oceania representative.

Featured volunteer:

Elisabeth Nacenta de la Croix

Volunteer's personal strengths, skills expand participation

by N.K. Quan

New to quilting or to SAQA? Don't hesitate to volunteer! That's the advice of Elisabeth Nacenta de la Croix, a SAQA volunteer since 2006. She is currently active on the Museum Study group, part of the SAQA Exhibition Committee.

"Don't let your lack of quilting experience or the language you speak stop you from volunteering. Be open-minded to other artists and don't be shy."

As a participating member of SAQA, Elisabeth wants to give back to the group and to the members who provide her with advice, motivation, and

friendship. "Volunteering is a win-win proposition," says Elisabeth, who lives in Geneva, Switzerland. "It's an opportunity to shape the organization and its activities so that members receive the greatest benefits."

Elisabeth started volunteering in 2006 at the SAQA table in Houston during the International Quilt Festival. Then in 2007, she recognized an opportunity to attract more members by planning *Wide Horizons*, a SAQA show for the European and Middle East region. That exhibition pushed the boundaries of what quilters do and has become a biennial event. She also coordinated the show in 2008 and 2010. *Wide Horizons V* will be held in 2016 in France.

Because of the initial popularity of *Wide Horizons*, she took on the challenge of increasing SAQA membership in the region. From 2011-2014, she was the region's co-rep, joining Lynne Seaman from the United Kingdom. During one of the meet-and-greet sessions, participants commented that it was difficult to communicate with some of the other members because English was the only language used within



SAQA. Elisabeth, who speaks four languages—French, Italian, English and Spanish—set out to remedy the situation by translating the regional newsletter into French and Italian. Soon afterward, German and Spanish editions were added.

"I like meeting other artists, explaining what SAQA is and why it is important for quilters to join," Elisabeth says. "It's very rewarding to be involved in the meet and greets, stewarding a show, sharing friendships and artists' points of view, and spreading the appreciation for textile arts."

Elisabeth started her avocation as an artist in 1992 when her mother enrolled her in a beginning patchwork class as a birthday present. She was a quick study, loved the art, and by 1996 was teaching classes.

As an added benefit, volunteering has increased the visibility of Elisabeth's work inside and outside her own country, which gave her entrée into the *SAQA Portfolio* publications and invitations to many other shows. ▼

N.K. Quan is a Phoenix-based writer and editor.



La traversée du lac

Destiny Innova

By now anyone looking for a longarm quilting machine has heard about the Innova Longarm. It wasn't that way ten years ago, when the major players were companies that are now all but extinct. Lack of Innovation and creativity left the door wide open for Innova. Innova entered the market and quickly climbed to the top of the heap. With the old players hanging on to their dated technology and the new comers entering the hobby segment, Innova was an industrial machine boasting the newest technology, best Innovations with pure leadership and ingenuity. Those heavy cast dinosaurs just couldn't make the grade against the modern technology of Innova. Despite brand loyalty, Innova was able to quickly grow in the market due to their innovative approach to engineering and dedicated customer support. There is more to this story, a family legacy that few are aware of. It is the reason there is no other manufacturer of longarm quilting machines that can compare.



Mike

Neal

Barry

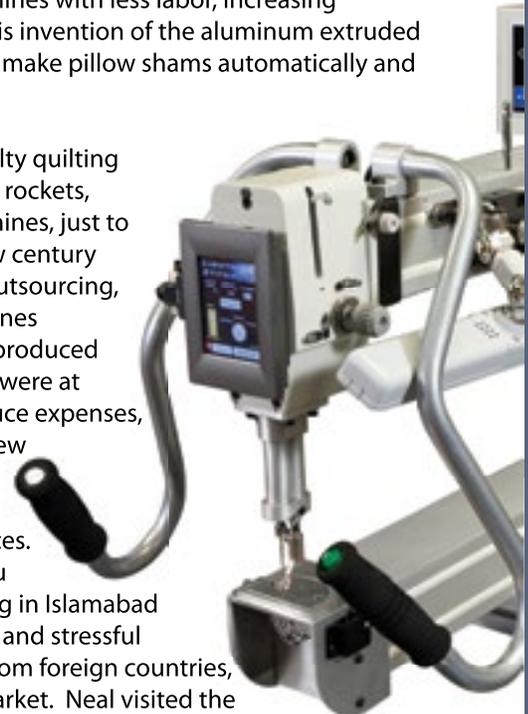
It all started back in the early 1900's when Isaac Schwarzberger brought his wife and two children from Europe to New York. Later they settled in Chicago and his son Arthur Schwarzberger found a job at a local sewing factory called Homemakers. He worked as a sewing machine apprentice and later mechanic. Arthur became very knowledgeable about engineering sewing machines and had an idea to make a machine that could automatically perform crossover stitching lines on quilts. He set to work in his basement in Chicago, building and patenting the first large industrial quilting machines that could quilt shapes and not only straight lines. In fact, the machines he built were so large that he had to cut them apart to get them out of the basement and then would bolt them back together after installing them at a factory they were sold to. Arthur had one young son at the time. His name was Barry. The company that Arthur foresaw as a legacy to hand down through generations was born as AB Manufacturing Co. in the 1930's. As Arthur built machines he built the company and also had another son, Mike. In 1947 the company was renamed ABM Industries and as the family grew the innovating blossomed. The trio worked together through the 50's and 60's building all kinds of machines but mostly quilting machines for the industrial sector. They patented the first ever Video rental machine called Video Vendor now known as Redbox. They created the first ever mini mart gas station. They made machines that put handles on disposable aluminum pans for Tenneco and made machines that put dimples on golf balls. The list goes on and on. Innovative and a little ahead of their time, they were always inventing. In 1968 Arthur passed on suddenly and unexpectedly, Barry and Michael continued to work endlessly. Barry took care of sales and office management, while Michael spent time developing his inventions. Mike was like a wild haired Einstein in the basement of his Chicago home, where he now had a new family of his own. His young son Neal would often catch him up late nights with wires and an etch-a-sketch hooked up to his Apple II plus. Among many family patents, one of Michaels is the first ever computerized quilting machine in 1983.

Neal worked with his father at the factory from a very young age. His first job there was drilling holes into the clamps for holding fabric to the machine frames. The clamps were a special design made by Neal's grandfather, Arthur, and are the same model still used and included with every Innova today. He spent a lot of time inventing and experimenting in the basement with his dad. At an early age Neal won several City, State, and National Science and History Fairs. Neal learned every job in the factory, from janitorial, to service, repair, welding, sewing, answering phones, sales, engineering, and management. When he became a young man his father sent him out on a service call for a large industrial machine.

He flew all the way to Argentina and spent weeks at the mill working on the machine. This was before cell phones, so his father gave hints from the office landline of what might be the cause of the pokies and cruddy stitches, but he wanted Neal to learn by doing. His father taught him many lessons in this manner, often disabling Neal's car (usually before a date), allowing Neal to discover how things work. This method of teaching has given Neal the unique ability to be more Innovative and techno savvy than his competitors. When Neal took the reigns of ABM in 1995 he installed lean principles and refocused the company on its quilting machines. Shedding the video stores and other machines they produced to focus the company and gain market share in its core competencies. Neal surrounded himself with an incredible team of the most loyal hard working and sharp engineers, sewing technicians, programmers, quilters and sales staff. Neal invented and patented the Robo Quilter in 1996. It was the first ever vertical industrial quilting machine. It takes up less floor space so that factories are able to run more machines with less labor, increasing productivity. But even more significant and unknown to Neal at the time was his invention of the aluminum extruded modular longarm sewing machine in 1998. The machine was originally used to make pillow shams automatically and later became the Innova of today.

Over the years Neal and his team at ABM have developed many different specialty quilting machines including machines used for insulation blankets on the space shuttle, rockets, Freightliner Trucks, Cummins diesel engines, jet engines and wind turbine machines, just to name a few. Truly impressive! ABM International was going strong into the new century until NAFTA was enacted. American textile factories were shutting down and outsourcing, moving overseas where productions costs were at a minimum. Soon the machines engineered by ABM were in the hands of foreigners and became copied and reproduced at a lower cost as well. By the end of the 20th century sales in America for ABM were at an all time low. The factory nearly shut down completely. In an attempt to reduce expenses, Neal moved the factory from Chicago to Houston, with barely a skeleton of a crew remaining. Neal, always the most determined individual you are likely to meet, got on planes and went overseas to sell his machines. He traveled to Pakistan and India, China, Equador, Saudi Arabia, U.A.E, Mexico, Turkey among other places. If you ever have the opportunity to sit down for dinner with Neal, he will tell you countless stories regarding his forays into the world with great humor. Surviving in Islamabad or Karachi to riding trains in Mumbai, from foreign food, to compromised water and stressful encounters that all took their toll. After several stays at the hospital on return from foreign countries, Neal was near his wits end when a good friend suggested the home quilting market. Neal visited the now local Quilt Market and found this flourishing bustle of an industry right here in America. The fit was perfect from the start and best summed up by his late uncle Barry who said "boy are we dumb! How did we miss this?"

ABM entered the market at the Houston show in 2007. It took guts and perseverance to enter a market where customers are fairly brand loyal. With hard work, advancements in technology, and superior customer service, INNOVA soon made a great impact on longarm customers. The Innova brought to the home industry a new easy moving system with sealed bearings, oil-less components, and revolutionized stitch regulation with Lightning Stitch. Innova is the only company that creates their robotics in-house, from software development to electronics manufacturing. The competitors continue their quest to answer the call to excellence but keep falling short. It's not an easy task, as Neal never sleeps, and there is always something new just around the corner. The result is a much improved set of choices for the consumer as ABM prepares for its fourth generation of quilting ingenuity and prowess.



INNOVA RED® VORTEX BOBBIN INSIDE

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Innovative Quilting Systems



since 1947

www.innovalongarm.com



Maria Billings

The Bride

90 x 60 inches | 2015

www.mariabillings.com

Much to my surprise, after being a widow for 17 years, I got married this year; so definitely "something new" in this quilted self-portrait.



Lora Rocke

Play Fair

33 x 18 inches | 2015

www.lorarocke.com

Inspired by a series of photos taken of a young woman lounging on the lawn, my goal was to capture her elan and her attitude.



Michele Hardy

Directions #18

24 x 29 inches | 2015

www.michelehardy.com

I recently began working in new ways, re-working previously incomplete works into something completely new. The combination of organic lines along with the structures of the grids in my *Directions* series is inspired by maps, aerial views, and natural and urban landscapes.



Patricia Anderson Turner

Suction

40 x 30 inches | 2015

www.patriciaturnerart.com

Social media is certainly something new to all of us; yet already 1.3 billion people worldwide are active monthly users of Facebook. We spend an average of 18 minutes per use which works out to an astonishing 393 million hours per month.

Christine Hager-Braun

Wall of Depression

43 x 43 inches | 2015

www.soularpowerfabricart.com

Despite the fact that about 22% of Americans suffer from mental health problems, these problems are pretty much a taboo topic. This year I started a series about figurative walls in the context of mental health issues to encourage a conversation — a new direction in my work.



Vel Garrick

Kimmie's Dragonfly

77 x 76 inches | 2013

www.velgarrick.com

From a distance, a dragonfly scene is observed. Going in closer, you can see thousands of tiny novelty print pieces.



Upcoming themes and deadlines:

Adventure: April 1, 2016

Raining Cats & Dogs: July 1, 2016

See submission guidelines at

www.saqa.com/calendar-detail.php?ID=3469

Turn on the podcasts, turn up your productivity!

by Abby Glassenberg

Give a listen to just one podcast. Then try another. Perhaps just one more. You will soon be enjoying a growing entertainment trend filled with shows that cater to your interests on your schedule.

What is a podcast? It is an independently produced radio show aired digitally. The word comes from the combination of iPod and broadcast. Podcasts are available to everyone to download for free, on demand, from iTunes and other listening apps for smartphones like Stitcher for Android products. By sidestepping the traditional gatekeepers of mainstream radio, podcasters are able to produce shows on niche topics that appeal to enthusiasts of all sorts, and to distribute those shows to a global audience at the click of a button.

“Podcasts for me are magazines with ears,” says quilter Jen Frost. “The flexibility of flipping through a magazine is brought to you in auditory format. Because you’re able to be up and about when listening, they’re perfect for the gym, in the car, or even folding laundry.” Frost also listens while sewing in her studio, enjoying the company of quilters in conversation while she works.

Frost is not alone in her excitement about podcast listening. Over the last few years the number of podcasts available for download and the number of podcast listeners has increased exponentially. The Pew Research Center reports the percentage of Americans who have listened to a podcast sometime in the last month has almost doubled from 2008, from 9 to

17 percent by January 2015. According to an Edison Research report, 33 percent of Americans 12 years or older say they have listened to at least one podcast.

There are now shows on nearly every topic and every style imaginable including many shows made especially for people who sew and quilt. Most quilting podcasts are interview style, focusing on a particular quilter’s creative journey or on a particular technique or experience, although some sewing-focused shows take on a different format such as a regular conversation between co-hosts.

Learn and connect

Ivete Tecedor, co-owner of the fabric shop Gotham Quilts in New York, has become an avid podcast listener this year. “I like to listen to podcasts because for me they’re like reading non-fiction. I love learning new things and I read a bunch of non-fiction, but podcasts let me learn while doing something else that requires my vision,” she explains. “I like feeling productive, and podcasts help me feel extra-super productive!”

SAQA member Linda Colsh agrees that podcasts help her learn new things and be more productive. “When I’m listening to art podcasts, I have to have a pencil close at hand because I find there’s always a reference or two that I want to chase down later by Googling, same when reading the newspapers or magazines.”

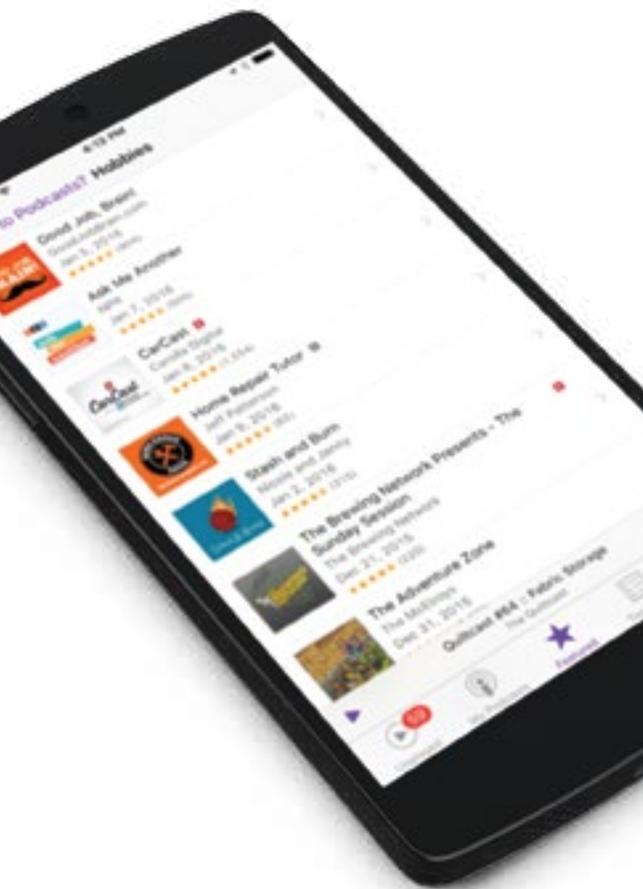
Unlike traditional radio, podcasts are available on demand, which

means you can tune in to your favorite shows when you’d like to listen most. Frost especially loves the ability to stop and start a show whenever she needs to, so that she doesn’t miss anything. “If something comes up while you’re listening, you can pause the podcast—almost like putting a magazine down—and come back to it when you’re ready,” she says. Tecedor also loves podcasts for their portability. “Being able to always have them on my phone makes it easy to pop one on while I’m waiting in line at the post office or wherever.”

The beginning

Many people were introduced to podcasts for the first time in the Fall 2014 when an National Public Radio (NPR) spinoff show called *Serial* became the medium’s first breakout hit. The show traced a riveting investigation of an unsolved murder of a Baltimore-area teen, and 1.5 million people downloaded each episode. Quilter Angie Wilson was one of them. “*Serial* was my gateway drug to podcasts, but now I’m fully addicted and it’s been great across the board for getting inspiration and motivation from a variety of places,” she says. She’s branched out to listening to a variety of different shows. “I like to listen to the stories of people and what makes them do what they do—I find it encouraging and inspiring for living a life less ordinary.”

Quilter Alyce Blythe was not sure that she’d like podcasts before listening to *Serial*. “I’ve never been the kind of person to be able to focus on



Podcasts to explore

Podcasts are a way to hear about new techniques and opportunities, to stay inspired, and to feel connected to a larger community of artists and makers. If you've never listened to a podcast, or if you're interested in finding some new shows to try, here are 10 podcasts you might want to start with. Enter the title into the iTunes search bar, or try the Stitcher app if you have an Android phone. Enjoy!

Modern Sewciety

American Patchwork & Quilting Podcast with Pat Sloan

The Quiltcast

Quilter on Fire*

The Slightly Mad Quilt Lady

While She Naps (produced by Abby Glassenberg)

Hip to Be a Square

Thread Cult

Quilting ... for the Rest of Us

*Be sure to catch episode #10 with Martha Sielman, SAQA's executive director.

just aural input so I was rather skeptical about listening to podcasts," she recalls, but after friends raved to her about *Serial* she decided to give podcast listening a try. Now, listening to podcasts is part of her studio routine.

Easy startup

Serial and other NPR spinoff shows are professionally produced in high-tech recording studios, but most podcasters create their shows in a more humble environment. Podcasters can record right from their own homes using relatively inexpensive audio equipment. A microphone, a set of headphones and basic software for recording and editing audio is all you need to create your own show. Publish the recording to iTunes and the show is instantly distributed to listeners all over the world.

Producing a podcast is a terrific way to grow an online community and connect and learn from experts in your field. When listeners hear your voice they get to know you in a new

and intimate way. Many podcasters find that this special connection with guests and listeners leads to terrific new opportunities and new professional relationships.

Brandy Maslowski makes a popular interview show for quilters called *Quilter on Fire*, formerly called *Canadian Quilt Talk*. She enjoys the process of making a podcast. "People love to be featured especially if they have a new product, book, or class to promote. We always have a blast recording the audio and I have made some wonderful new friends," she says. "The new connections with incredible people in the industry are invaluable, too."

SAQA member Charlotte Scott produces a podcast called *The Slightly Mad Quilt Lady* and has reaped similar rewards from the experience. "I've been amazing by what I get out of producing a podcast. It's opened doors for me that wouldn't have happened otherwise. I've recently had two public speaking invitations

because of it, I've got to meet very well-known quilters who I probably wouldn't have had the courage to approach otherwise, and suddenly I'm the well-known one at local meet and greets. It's done wonders for my profile," she says.

Sewing and quilting are typically solo experiences. Through podcasts we can lessen the isolation we sometimes feel working in the studio. As Blyth says, "Listening to a podcast is similar to watching something while sewing, but without the need to keep looking at the screen and getting distracted. And it's amazing to be able to listen and learn more about and from your favorite quilters and designers without needing to travel or pay for classes." ▼

Abby Glassenberg designs sewing patterns and writes about the sewing industry. Her books include Stuffed Animals and The Artful Bird. She is based in Massachusetts.

SAQA's 2016 exhibitions travel the world

Our mission to promote the art quilt through exhibitions will be met in 2016 with 16 SAQA exhibitions installed in at least 33 venues, including 10 museums, nine international venues, and 14 quilt shows in the United States.

Our international exhibitions will place our members' work in nine countries on four continents, as well as 16 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. In 2016, SAQA will see its first exhibitions in Canada, Australia, Spain, Czech Republic, Taiwan, and Germany. Our first international museum booking also will happen this year in Canada.

Five of the 16 touring exhibitions will only be displayed in museums; 11 of the 16 exhibitions have been in or are scheduled to be in at least one museum during their run; and seven of the 16 exhibitions have been or are scheduled to travel to countries other than the United States during their run. What's more, of the five new exhibitions being developed for 2016, three will debut in museums.

SAQA exhibition venues for 2016 currently include:

Texas Quilt Museum, La Grange,
Texas, Jan. 7-March 27

AQS Quilt Week, Phoenix, Arizona,
Feb. 11-14

AQS Quilt Week, Daytona Beach,
Florida, Feb. 24-27

San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles,
San Jose, California, through
February 28

International Patchwork Festival,
Sitges, Spain, March 10-13

Stitches & Craft Show, Rosehill
Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales,
Australia, March 3-6

Original Sewing and Quilting Expo,
Atlanta, Georgia, March 10-12



Sacred Threads

2017 Biennial Exhibit
July 7-23 :: Herndon, VA
(outside Washington, D.C.)

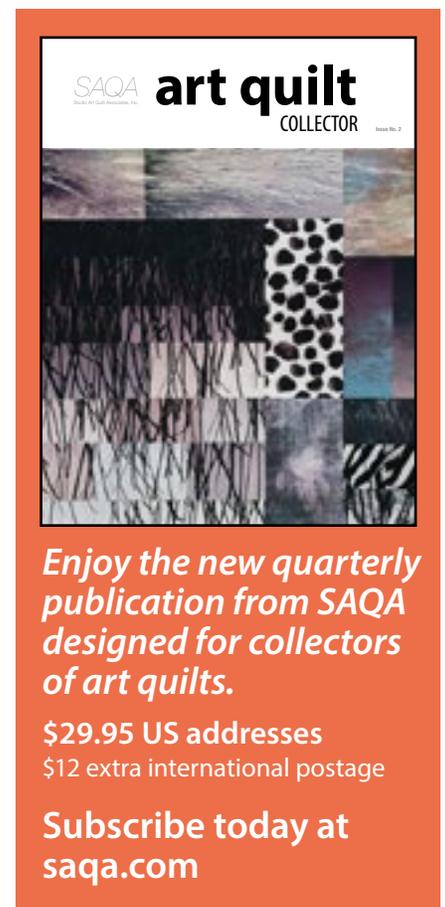
Call for entries:
Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, 2016

Check the website for dates and locations of the traveling exhibit.
Georgia, North Carolina,
California, Texas, Kentucky
2016-2017

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AQS Quilt Week, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, March 16-19

Original Sewing and Quilting Expo, Lakeland, Florida, March 17-19

Stitches & Craft Show, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, March 17-20

Original Sewing and Quilting Expo, Cleveland, Ohio, March 31-April 2

Original Sewing and Quilting Expo, Worcester, Massachusetts, April 7-9

International Quilt Festival, Chicago, Illinois, April 7-9

Morris Museum, Morristown, New Jersey, through April 10

Quilt Expo Beaujolais at ParcExpo in Villefranche sur Saône, France, April 13-16

The Textile Museum, Washington, D.C., April 16-Sept. 4

Australasian Quilt Convention, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, April 14-17

AQS Quilt Week, Paducah, Kentucky, April 20-23

Taiwan International Quilt Exhibition 2016, National Tainan Living Art Center, Tainan City, Taiwan, April 30-May 29

Stratford Perth Museum, Stratford, Ontario, Canada, May 21-Aug. 14

America Quilts Expo, Des Moines, Iowa, May 26-28

Ruth Funk Center for Textile Arts, Melbourne, Florida, May 28-Aug. 27

Grants Pass Museum of Art, Grants Pass, Oregon, June 10-July 29

Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington, West Virginia, June 25-Oct. 2

Gerald R. Ford Museum, Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 1-Aug. 31

AQS Quilt Week, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Aug. 10-13

Festival of Quilts in Birmingham, United Kingdom, August 11-14

AQS Quilt Week, Chattanooga, Tennessee, Sept. 14-17

International Museum of Art and Science, McAllen, Texas, Sept. 24-Jan. 8, 2017

AQS Quilt Week, Des Moines, Iowa, Oct. 5-8

International Quilt Festival, Houston, Texas, Nov. 3-6

Join us in Center City Philadelphia, PA – March 31 to April 3, 2016

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More details online at
www.saqa.com/conference

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Urban Textures

by Luana Rubin

Editor's note: Luana Rubin, owner of equilter.com, curated this exhibition. It began with a fabric-design competition also curated by Rubin and sponsored by SAQA/Andover Fabrics. The winning fabric designers were SAQA members Elizabeth Brandt, Laura Wasilowski, Martha Ressler, Shandra Belknap, Janice Paine-Dawes and Linda Engstrom. SAQA's royalties from the fabric collection's sales support future exhibitions. The fabric line is available in stores and through eQuilter.com.



It is very exciting to see the Urban Textures project come full circle. The fabrics created from SAQA artists are now made into art quilts by more SAQA artists! It has been an honor and absolute pleasure to work on this design project, and to see how the visual musings of six designers can engage another tier of creativity from within the organization.

Creativity is a spiral, and in a community one idea will always lead to another. We don't have to be a teacher to inspire others. All we have to do is share our vision freely so the next person can pick it up and remake it from their perspective. The beauty of the outcome here is a collection of personalities, who input the textures of the urban landscape, and produce a wide range of visual thought processes from abstract to representative.

My thanks to all of the artists who participated in this challenge! You inspire me.



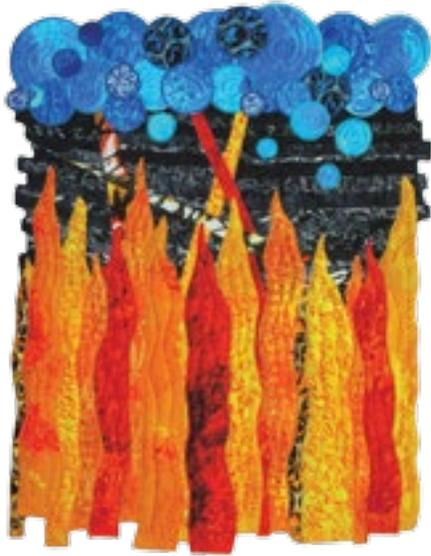
Carol A. Churchill
Art Arising From The Ashes



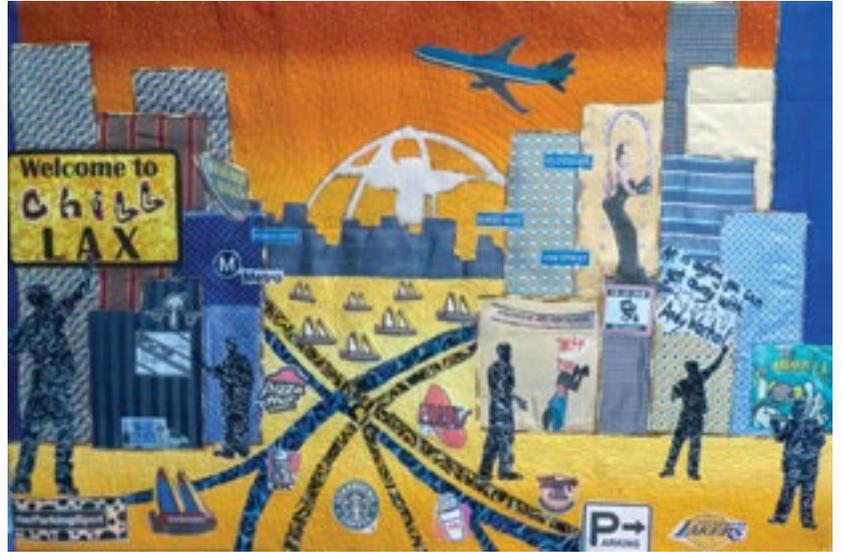
Pamela M. Pandolfi
Sea Monster

Cathy Miranker
Gridlock at Sundown





Anne E. Severn
Wind Howls, Fire Rages, Rain Wins



Carol A. Churchill
Urban Graffiti "LaLa Land" Style



Georgia B. Heller
Urban Chic



Cathy Miranker
Megalopolitan Graffiti



Michele Sanandajian
Urban Flower Cell Series, #1

Urban Textures



Barbara Triscari
Dreaming Up a Quilted Dream



photo by Mark Gulezian

Linda Syverson Guild
Urban Deco



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Top 10 features of the SAQA website

Navigate the SAQA website with confidence! Webmaster Jennifer Solon offers this guide to the many wonderful features our site offers (along with the top navigation button to click first).

Member Resources (Members)

A treasure trove of informative topics is found in this members-only section. Enjoy:

- Access to online copies of every *SAQA Journal*
- Mentorship Recordings and Webinars
- Details about the Visioning Project, SAQArtique, and Mentorship Programs
- Information for New Members (but so helpful for everyone!)
- How to Maximize your SAQA Membership
- Frequently Asked Questions

Calendar / Calls for Entry (Resources)

Listing of SAQA and non-SAQA exhibitions with filter and search functions.

Juried Artist Gallery (Artwork)

Rotating slideshow of 50 random images from our Juried Artist Members. Click an image to learn more about the artist or search for an artist in our directory.

Online Galleries (Artwork)

Themed virtual exhibitions, selected by guest curators each month. More than two dozen to choose from!

Art Services Directory (Resources)

List of arts professionals that include workshop teachers, lecturers, artists, and more!

Exhibitions (Artwork)

Details about current, past, and future SAQA exhibitions, including slideshows.

News & Events (About Us)

Includes featured news items and quick links to our Calendars / Calls for Entry.

Resource Articles (Resources / Art Quilt Resources)

Includes topics such as art and photography, marketing, and professional development.

mySAQA (Members)

Where to manage your SAQA membership, update your contact information, view orders, and access our membership directory.

Who We Are (About Us)

Find out more about the staff and volunteers of SAQA — including Board Members, Regional Reps, and committee members.

And, a big bonus to the above list, is the **SAQA Store (Resources)**, which offers everything from art quilts to publications. You can even make a donation and pay select fees through the store.



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Congratulations Contemporary QuiltArt!

30-year anniversary celebration includes symposium

by Patricia Belyea

This year, Contemporary QuiltArt Association (CQA) celebrates 30 years of art quilting in Washington state, located in the United States Pacific Northwest region.

When the group started in 1986, non-traditional quilts were considered revolutionary. At that time, Lorraine Torrence was teaching contemporary design classes at the In The Beginning quilt shop in Seattle, Washington. Torrence and store owner Sharon Yenter organized a four-lecture series on The Art Quilt with speakers Nancy Dice, Buff Hungerland, Suzanne Kjelland, and

Laura Reinstatler. About 30 people attended.

Those who gathered wanted to form a group as the concept of art quilts was just emerging. The quilt shop donated space for monthly meetings and CQA was born as the Northwest Association of Quilt Artists. The 36 original members desired to share their artistic expression in fabric with the public. Encouraging each other, members developed their own visual styles and artist statements to mount their first show in 1987 at Edmonds Center for the Arts in Edmonds, Washington.

Over the last three decades, CQA has grown in size and stature. It now has 110 members and has published three books, presented three symposiums, and exhibited nationally and internationally. It has continued its monthly meeting schedule, which includes an artist presentation and the CQA Showcase, a sharing session when members talk about their work. Today, the group meets in a classroom at Seattle Pacific University.

On April 16, CQA will present a one-day Quilt Art Symposium in Tacoma, Washington. Three experts in the field will answer the question:

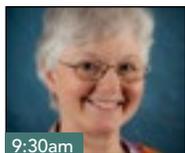
One-Day Symposium
April 16, 2016
Washington State History Museum
Tacoma, WA



What's Next in Quilt Art?

SPEAKERS

What have you learned and what do you think is next?



9:30am
Dr. Sandra Sider
Texas Quilt Museum
La Grange TX



10:30am
Cathy Izzo
Art Quilt Gallery
New York City NY



lunch
Kris Sazaki
SAQA
Sacramento CA



Meet and hear from CQA artists participating in the current **Cutting Edge: Art Quilts in Washington** exhibit.



Stay to mingle and munch at the opening party of the CQA exhibit.

QuiltArt Symposium is presented by Contemporary QuiltArt Association, Washington state's premier art quilt association. ContemporaryQuiltArt.com

\$75 per person
Includes Symposium, lunch and entry to the Museum

To learn more and register:
QuiltArtSym.com

What have you learned and what do you think is next in quilt art?

The morning kicks off with Dr. Sandra Sider, museum curator of the Texas Quilt Museum in La Grange, Texas, and a contemporary quilt artist, author, and critic. Midmorning, Cathy Izzo of Art Quilt Gallery in New York City contributes her perspective as a gallery owner who has mounted 48 shows at her Manhattan gallery. After lunch, Kris Sazaki of Sacramento, California, addresses the same topic drawing from her experience as SAQA board president.

The symposium venue is Washington State History Museum in Tacoma, Washington, where CQA artists also are participating in a major exhibit — *Cutting Edge: Art Quilts in Washington*.

The symposium coincides with the opening day of the show. In the afternoon, CQA members will participate in a live tour to speak about their works in the exhibit. The day will end with an opening party.

CQA invites any SAQA member interested in what's next in quilt art to attend the symposium. The day promises to bring together like-minded artists seeking to understand what the next generation of art quilting will create. To learn more, please visit www.QuiltArtSym.com.

Patricia Belyea is immediate past president of Contemporary QuiltArt Association and is a SAQA JAM.

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Sylvia Pippen.....	June 27-July 1
Philippa Naylor.....	July 11-15
Lyric Kinard.....	July 25-29
Jean Wells.....	August 1-5
Sue Benner.....	August 8-12
Jane Sassaman.....	August 22-26
Sue Spargo.....	Aug 29-Sept 2
Gene Shepherd.....	Aug 29-Sept 2
Judy Niemeyer.....	Sept 26-30
Susan Brubaker Knapp.....	October 3-7
Gwen Marston.....	October 10-14
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We are also pleased to announce the North American debut of SAQA's Two by Twenty challenge! Check out www.road2ca.com for more information about 2017!



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SAQA has provided support, counsel, information, inspiration, and joy over the twenty-seven years I have been a member. I have learned enormously from others in the organization. It has given me an opportunity to share my talents and dreams, and to help others do the same. I want SAQA's work to continue after my lifetime—the work of educating people about the art quilt and providing a “home” for artists like myself who are seeking to express themselves through art quilts. That's why I've left a gift to SAQA in my will.

—Judith Trager,
Board member, SAQA Legacy Circle donor

**Is SAQA in
YOUR will?**

Join Judith in supporting SAQA's future! Contact Jean Tutolo, SAQA's Development Director, for details about how you can give a legacy gift.

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President from page 2

conference in a particular city. I felt like the little fish in the big pond. That didn't last long because fellow board member Linda Colsh took me under her wing. I could ask her anything, and she would have just the right answer. I was asked at my very first meeting to become vice president, which meant at that time I would become the next president. It was Linda (and Judith Content, a former president of SAQA) who mentored me through that process. I feel like I still learn from Linda how to be the best board member and am so grateful for her mentorship.

Let me close by saying that the little gestures count, too. I have been a SAQA member since 2004. My first regional meeting was in February 2005, and I remember it like it was yesterday. Deb and I (the Pixeladies) had just done a show-and-tell of our latest work and had lamented that we did not have enough money to buy the printer we needed. After we sat down, a hand pulled my shoulder back, and a voice whispered in my ear, "Get out the credit card and buy that printer. You two really have something there." That voice belonged to Cara Gulati, who turned out to be our first SAQA friend. That was only the beginning of the support and friendships Deb and I have built along the way as SAQA members. I know this will continue even after my term as president is over. Thanks to all of you and congratulations to our nominees. What a stellar list!

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Laser cutting from page 15

patterns with reasonable cost and efficiency, allowing the designer to think about the behavior of light and shadow in addition to other material effects. I also learned that sculpting or creating a 3D quality with the fabric could be exploited.

Responding to what I'd learned about using this technology, I found myself altering the course I had originally set for myself. The paper and fabric studies offered the challenge of finding the courage to push my artwork in unanticipated directions. I now find myself faced with many critical questions such as:

- Does this technology mean I completely abandon the use of batting to push the concept of layering and transparency?

- How can I (or should I) exploit a potential focus on light and shadow as well as texture?
- How should it impact my use of hand versus machine stitching?
- How should it impact the materials I use, since certain fabrics give better results?
- Is it okay to let my work move away from previous topics and interests? Will I lose my artistic voice as a result?

I am relishing the process of understanding how this process can redefine and reinvigorate my work in terms of design intent, process, and construction techniques. Working back and forth trying to balance the technological with the human made is very satisfying. In the mix has

been the discovery of new design inspirations. The parallels between manmade patterns and maps and those found in plant life and other biological structures have sparked my curiosity.

I am currently working on a new series based on natural and man-made structures or maps using the laser-cutter technology to create "layered lace" that gives the illusion of depth. For example, I have begun to examine the structural patterns of the cornstalk, the banana stalk, and the pine needle. I also continue to invent street grids of imaginary places, but use the laser cutter to create intricately cut solid-void compositions.

Work is now ongoing to prepare for an upcoming solo exhibit at Gensler Architects in Washington,

Call for Entries

Evolutions Quilt Challenge 2017

Juried by Martha Sielman

EVOLUTIONS 2017 is an open challenge to all quilters and fiber artists in celebration of yesterday's traditions and tomorrow's innovations. Evolution can be defined as growth—a process of continuous change, from lower to higher or from simpler to more complex. Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum challenges you to create your concept of an evolution quilt. Interpret evolutions any way you choose—on a personal level, on a global level, or perhaps related to changes and growth of your favorite means of creative expression, the quilt.

**First prize: Solo exhibit
at the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum**

Online entry period October 1-31, 2016

All finalist quilts will be exhibited January 26 through April 25, 2017



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D.C., in Spring 2017. I will exhibit my work to the public, architects, vendors, and craftspeople as part of the firm's rotating artist program. I also will teach a workshop to architects on how to laser cut fiber art as part of a continuing-education program.

Please stay tuned. I plan to offer workshops on use of the laser cutters tailor-made for the art quilter in the near future. ▼

Valerie S. Goodwin is a fiber artist and associate professor of Architecture at Florida A&M University's School of Architecture and Engineering Technology in Tallahassee, Florida. She is also author of *Art Quilt Maps: Capture a Sense of Place with Fiber Collage - A Visual Guide*. She currently serves on the SAQA board of directors. Visit her website to learn more about her artwork and fiber art workshops at www.quiltsbyvalerie.com.

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Website from page 40

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Blogging. Whether you might ever want to blog is something you should consider when deciding how to build your site. Blogging is, of course, a built-in feature of every Wordpress website and is available on most web-builder sites.

These days, it's nearly impossible to further your art career without some kind of web presence. Start now by building a useful, compelling, and navigable site. You'll be on your way to sharing who you are and what you do. ▼

Deidre Adams is the graphic designer of your SAQA Journal and many of SAQA's exhibition catalogs. She is also a textile artist and painter with a studio in Denver, Colorado. See her work at deidreadams.com.



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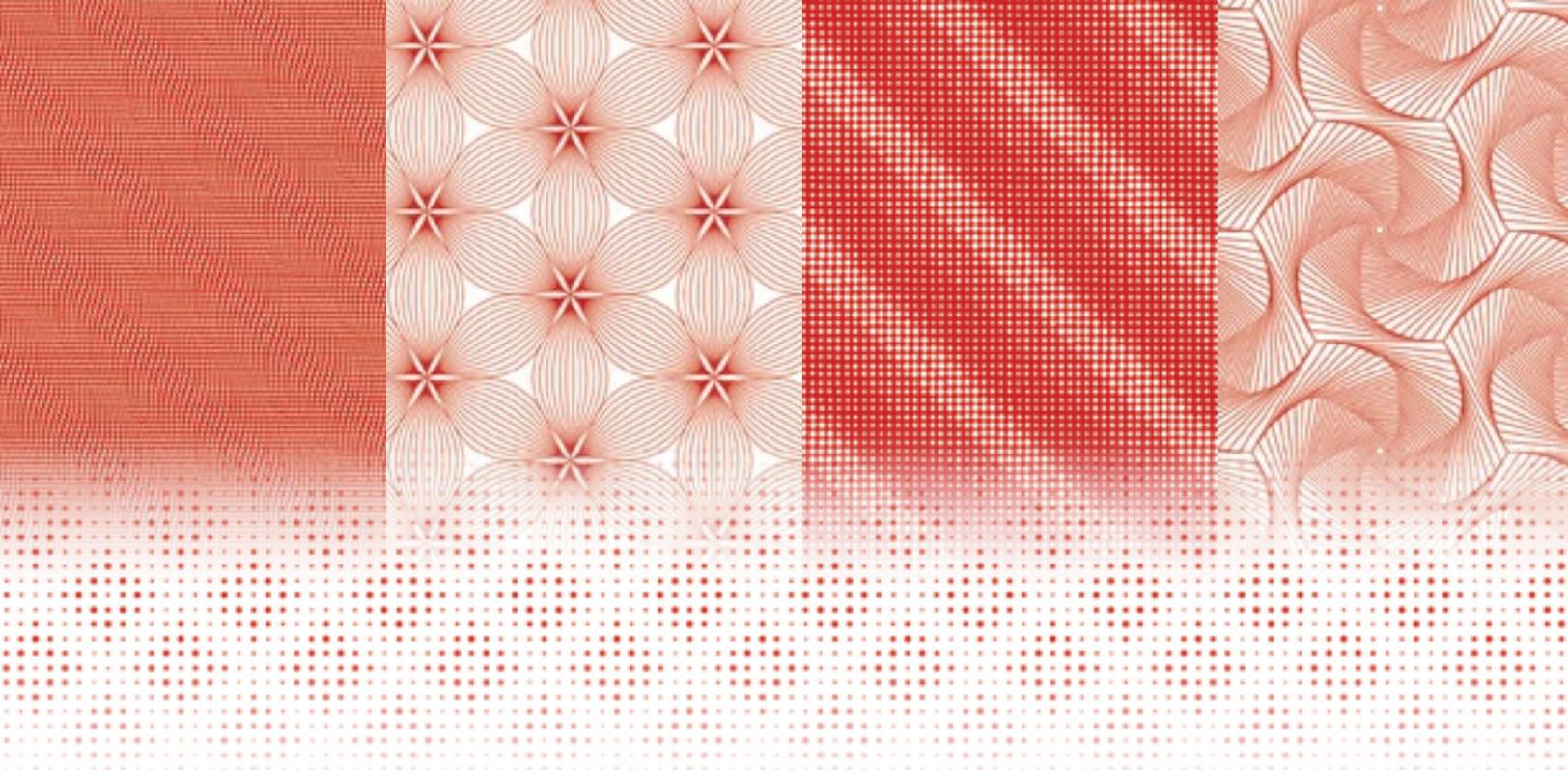
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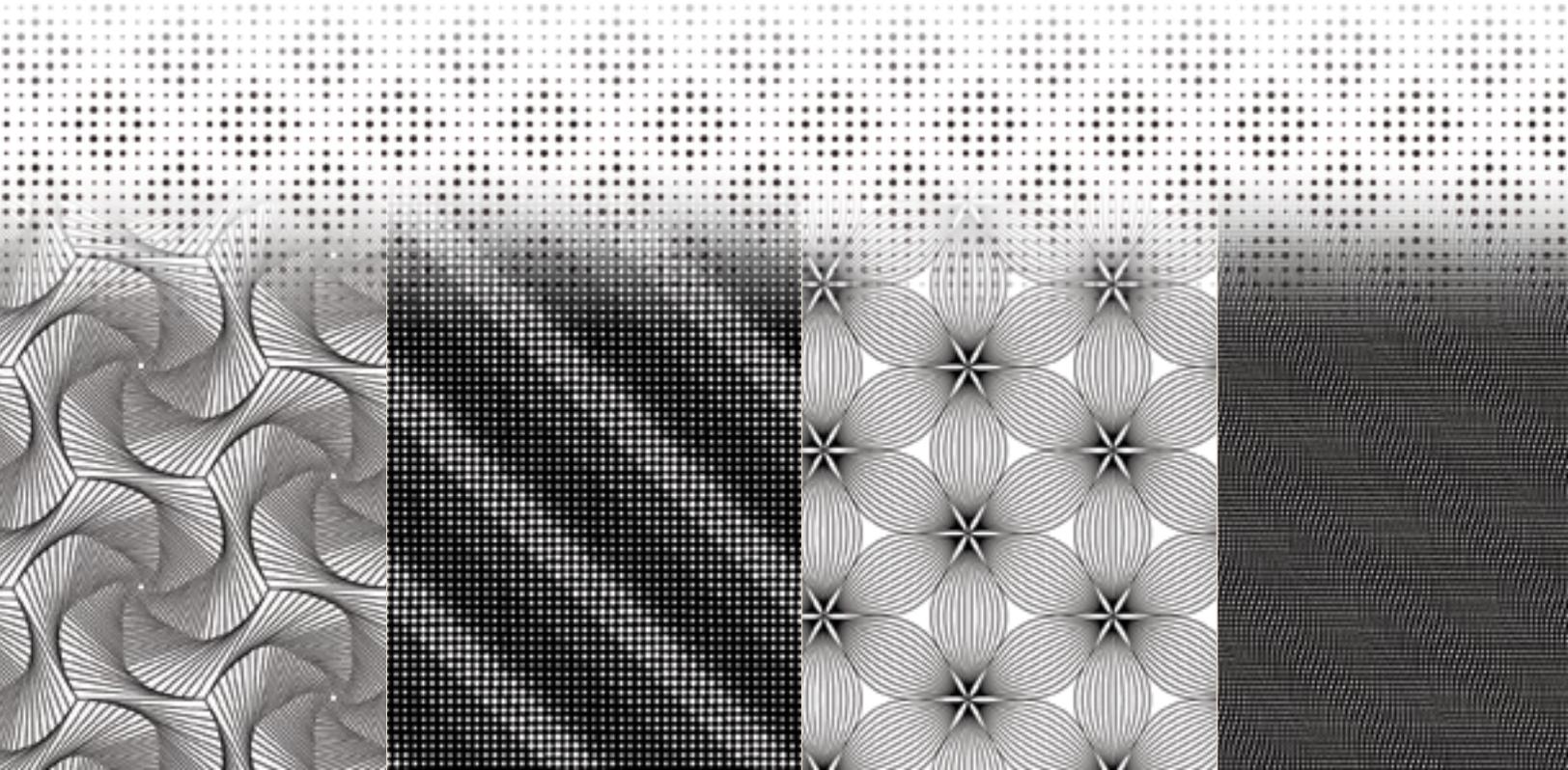
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To find out more about SAQA, contact Martha Sielman, executive director, at 860-487-4199 or execdirector@saqa.com. Visit our website at www.saqa.com. Annual membership (U.S. and international): artist/associate member, \$70; arts professional, \$95; juried artist, \$135; student (full time with copy of ID), \$35.

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. (SAQA) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the art quilt through education, exhibitions, professional development, documentation and publications.

The *SAQA Journal* is published four times a year. To submit articles, contact the *SAQA Journal* editor at editor@saqa.com. See the submission guidelines at www.saqa.com/resources.php?ID=3289.

Deadlines for articles:

Summer 2016	March 1, 2016
Fall 2016	June 1, 2016
Winter 2017	Oct. 1, 2016
Spring 2017	Jan. 15, 2017

For information about advertising in the *SAQA Journal*: ads@saqa.com

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Detail: DELIGHTFUL SPIRALS by Robbi Joy Eklow

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Daytona Beach, Florida

February 24–27, 2016
Ocean Center

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

March 16–19, 2016
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Paducah, Kentucky

April 20–23, 2016
Paducah–McCracken County
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Chiaki Dosho

Cherry Blossom 11

2013, 41 x 53 inches (105 x 135 cm)

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by Alex Anderson



“Have you ever stumbled across a product that totally exceeded your expectations? It is one of the best experiences in life. The only thing that can make it better is if you are desperately searching for a solution when you find this product by accident. Such was the case for me.

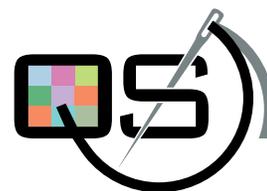
A product I have used for years went through some changes and I found myself searching for a replacement when a friend asked if I had ever tried Floriani products. I contacted several quilt shops before finding one that carried the Floriani products, but once I tried it I fell in love. I couldn't believe these products had existed for years and I didn't know about them.

I phoned the office of RNK Distributing looking for the creator of the Floriani product line, and was referred to Kay Brooks. I explained to Kay how much I loved using the products but I was perplexed that very few people in the quilting world knew about them or had access to them through their local quilt shops. I wanted to change that for the good of the industry.

That was the beginning of Quilters Select™ by Floriani with Alex Anderson. Since that day Kay and I have worked nonstop to choose the world's best quilting products and I have personally tweaked each one of them to assure the perfect performance for my quilters. This line truly is *Made specifically for quilters!*

— Alex

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