

SAQATM JOURNAL

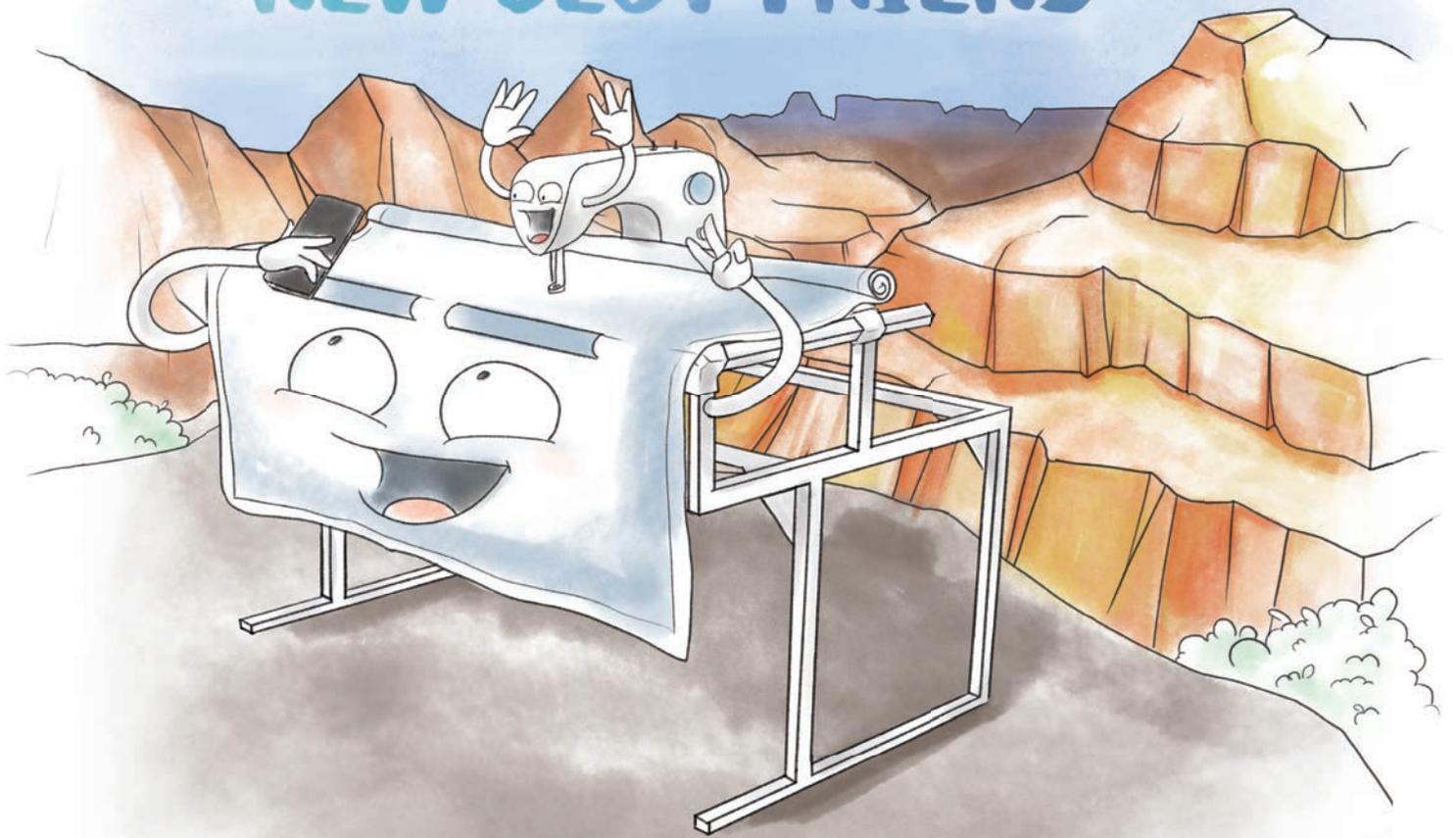
STUDIO ART QUILT ASSOCIATES

2020 | Volume 30, No. 3



INSIDE: 2020 BENEFIT AUCTION • UNUSUAL MATERIALS • BEYOND THE MIRROR • JURIED ARTIST SHOWCASE • VALERIE C. WHITE • TEACHING VENUES NEAR AND FAR • MEMBER GALLERY • 4 COMMON CORNERS • ONLINE TEACHING

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Steampunk Puppy LE 01/10
 12 x 12 inches | 2020
 Available in SAQA's 2020 Benefit Auction



QUICK NOTES

To find out more about SAQA, contact Martha Sielman, executive director, by phone at 860.530.1551, or by email at execdirector@saqa.com.

Explore varied resources on our website at www.saqa.com. Annual membership levels for U.S. and international members, listed in USD, are: Artist/Associate, \$80; Juried Artist, \$145; and Student, \$45 (must present full-time student ID).

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. (SAQA) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the art quilt. Through exhibitions, resources, publications, and membership, we seek to increase appreciation for the art quilt as a fine art medium and to support our members in their artistic and professional growth.

The SAQA Journal is published four times a year. To submit articles or story ideas, contact Diane Howell, SAQA Journal editor, at editor@saqa.com. Review submission guidelines at www.saqa.com/journal-submit.

For delivery questions, contact circulation@saqa.com.

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Current events foster time for reflection

by Deborah Boschert



On my design wall, there's a piece of rust-dyed fabric stacked on top of a teal commercial print. I'm trying to figure out what they're saying to each other. It's been important for me to make time for creating art during the first several months of my term as president of SAQA. It's been a time full of both enrichment and challenge. The complex realities of the pandemic and continuing cultural and political reckonings happening all over the world impact us in different ways. As an organization, we're exploring ways we can adapt.

For me, this moment also elevated

development to members with different experiences and needs.

An excellent example of our varied membership is our upcoming annual Benefit Auction. Thank you for all your donations! With nearly 500 art quilts, it's an absolutely stunning display of talent. There's diversity within the themes, materials, techniques, and styles. Some designs are subtle and contemplative. Others are passionate and provocative. Several include realistic imagery, but others are expressed more abstractly. It's an excellent representation of SAQA as a whole.

equally excited about the response to our recent all-member survey. It will provide a different kind of analysis of SAQA and its members. I hope you've enjoyed the snippets of responses we've shared on our social media channels and in recent member emails. In the next issue of the *SAQA Journal*, I'll share more about how the survey was developed, the process of compiling and sharing the results, and some early insights. Toward the end of the year, we'll have a full member report and an article where we'll hear from staff, board members, and committee chairs about how they will use the survey data.

It's been so fun talking with you at our monthly Live Chats. I love seeing your art and reading the engaging conversations on the SAQA Members - Only Facebook group. I am still perusing all the fabulous content on our new website. I've got several upcoming dates in

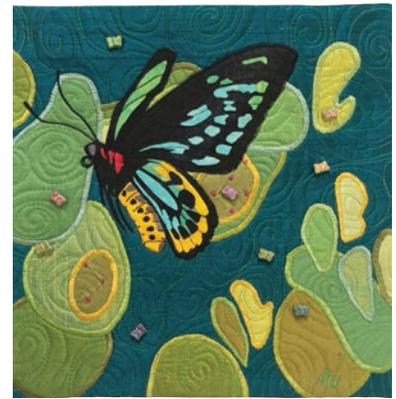
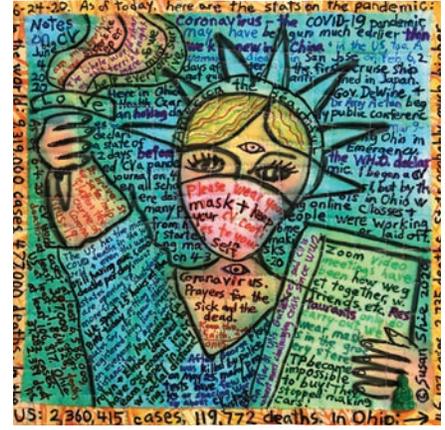
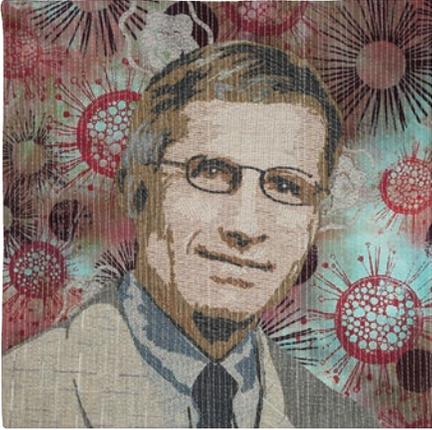
my calendar for webinars I'm looking forward to attending and exhibitions I'm hoping to enter. I know you're finding ways for SAQA to fit in your creative life too—including reading through this newest issue of the *SAQA Journal*. ■

“For me, this moment also elevated my desire to understand more about what it really means for all people to have opportunities to reach their potential.”

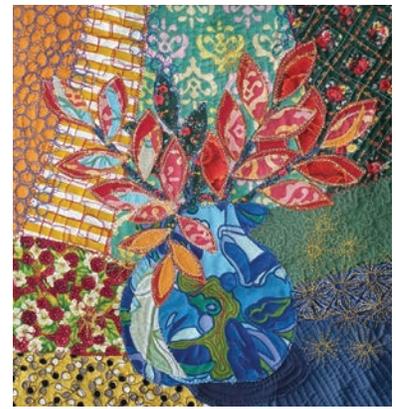
my desire to understand more about what it really means for all people to have opportunities to reach their potential. I've been asking myself what that might look like for SAQA and our goal to provide educational, professional, and community

I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of an organization with so many varied skills, experiences, and interests while still sharing the common passion for art quilts.

If the auction is a visual example of SAQA and its members, I am



2020 SAQA BENEFIT AUCTION



**SEPTEMBER 11-
OCTOBER 4, 2020**

A record number of art quilts—nearly 500—are up for grabs in SAQA's most-anticipated fundraiser. These small works typically raise \$60,000+ to support our exhibitions, educational programs, outreach, and more.

Get ready to win. Find your favorites at www.saqa.com/auction.



Learn about our new bidding platform at www.saqa.com/auction

Finding purpose, community in an upside-down world

by Diane Howell

During a recent Zoom meeting, a member of my local art-quilt group showed us her latest work, including a small quilt and jewelry. Then, after discussion of a studio tour cancellation due to the Covid-19 pandemic, she said: "I don't know why I'm making them."

Are you making and questioning?

Everyone's reaction during a time of crisis is different. No matter the response, acceptance of an altered reality creeps into our daily routines, directing unexpected outcomes. For a while, I was cleaning figurines and sorting linens to put out at the next antique market. The store I'm associated with hosts a collectibles fair six times a year from September to April, the period when Phoenix weather is tolerable and winter visitors flock to the Valley of the Sun. But this preparatory task now seems pointless, not to mention a waste of price tags. My focus is redirected to gathering goods into boxes, some to donate, some to sell on consignment at the store,

and some to place at the end of the driveway for neighbors.

So habits are being changed. In some cases, new habits are being supported with existing technology. The pandemic is providing an impetus to respond to our upside-down world with creative solutions that were right in front of us all along. The most obvious change is the explosion of online workshops. Teachers who have never taught live online are refocusing class materials, setting up video equipment, and finding receptive students. In this issue, four SAQA members share how they use Zoom and other tools to provide workshops to individuals and guilds. The benefits for all are many, and the trend is expected to continue long after pandemic restrictions are lifted. At the same time, there will always be a demand for in-person learning, and this issue provides a travelogue of the most unusual places our members have taught classes and workshops.



We found many reasons to celebrate making and sharing in this issue. A relatively new group, 4 Common Corners, brings together quilters from the states known as the Four Corners: Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. Learn how this invitational group of artists creates work to introduce viewers to their enchanting region. We also explore the use of unusual materials through a story that interviews ten SAQA members about their trendsetting work. Margaret Abramshe provides a wonderful overview of the elements of design. Featured artist Valerie White explains how her *Roots and Refuge* series takes us on a metaphoric journey through the human soul, and Chawne Kimber provides us with much to think about as this issue's *Inspired* artist.

The times might be changing, but our desire to tell stories and move forward is wired into us. It is why I know we'll never run out of creativity to cover in these pages, and why I know my friend will keep on making work in the face of pandemic cancellations. Me? I hope to run out of excess figurines by December. I'm going to need more boxes. ■

Frances Murphy
*Living is Easy With
Eyes Closed*
12 x 12 inches | 2020

This piece is one of almost 500 art quilts in our 2020 Benefit Auction. Read the stories behind it and our adorable cover quilt on page 35.



Reminiscence

by N.K. Quan

Chawne Kimber
Autumn is Wistful
 72 x 69 inches | 2016

I WANT
 FRIED CHICKEN AND I WANT
 SCUPPERNONGS AND I WANT
 HAM AND BISCUITS AND I
 WANT GREENS AND I WANT
 FRIED OKRA AND I WANT
 BLACK-EYED PEAS AND I WANT
 CORNBREAD AND I WANT
 CHERRY PIE AND COFFEE AND I
 WANT CIGARETTES AND
 BOURBON AND I WANT SWEET
 GLANCES AND I WANT THE SUN
 ON MY FACE AND THE GRASS
 ON MY SKIN AND COLD TOES
 AND FROGS IN THE MUD AND
 BIRDS IN THE TREES AND A
 LEAF IN THE AIR AND TO SLEEP
 FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.

Two friends reminiscing about their hometown is the inspiration behind Chawne Kimber's *Autumn is Wistful*.

The concept for the art quilt comes from the moveable-type menus that are commonplace in old delis and barbeque restaurants throughout the Southern United States. Kimber says she had the design and technique in mind for months before she found the right words in a poem written by her friend, Autumn Kent. The poem revolves around the concept of home, as referenced by the foods and experiences of Southern life in America. Its rhythm and words create a joyful and carefree moment in time, one when simple, everyday things bring happiness.

The quilt has four layers of cotton, comprised of the usual backing, batting, and patchwork, topped with jersey knit. "In the South, we tend not to hide all of our flaws and so the exposed knots of the quilting and appliqué stitches convey the roughly hewn lives we lead," says Kimber.

While seemingly simple in appearance, the many layers are replete with implications if you are willing to notice them. The poem is straightforward in meaning, but within the design, fabric choice, and color selection is a story of struggle, apprehension, and courage. Indigo, the main color featured in the quilt, was chosen to represent the masculine shell of the poem's author. The use of reverse appliqué for the letters reveals the floral pattern of a vintage Laura Ashley bedsheet. Surrounding each "I" is pink stitching.

"Through these illustrative words of the 'home' that reared Autumn Kent as a male externally, the quilt symbolically reveals Autumn's emergent persona." When the quilt was started, Kent was starting a gender transition.

The practical but improvisational style of quilts that were created by her great-grandmother were Kimber's first contact with the art quilt medium. Influenced by the Gee's Bend quiltmakers in Alabama, the quilts could be

found on the family's beds when she was growing up. They became "a sort of Holy Grail" of workmanship for Kimber.

Kimber describes her style as mid-century modern with a twist. She composes minimalist patchwork designs using intricate improvisation. The design elements of *Autumn is Wistful* show the influence of fashion designer Alabama Chanin, who made reverse appliqué T-shirts and other couture using exposed knots. "The quilt, to me, can serve sometimes as a canvas for illustrating phrases, feelings, and poems. The quilts in practical form are warm and cozy objects that either further emphasize the message or sharply contrast with the message. In both instances, there is a strength not found in other media."

Kimber resides in Easton, Pennsylvania. ■

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

In Stitches

Marianne Williamson

Summer Heat 2

72 x 27 inches | 2019

Photo by Gregory Case Photography



Donna Deaver

View from the Water: Amsterdam

21 x 36 inches | 2019

Jeanelle McCall

Secret Self

15.5 x 15 inches | 2019



Barbara Schneider

Circle of Life

18 x 18 inches | 2019

Joan Sowada

Morning Walk

67 x 33 inches | 2014

Photo by Ken Sanville

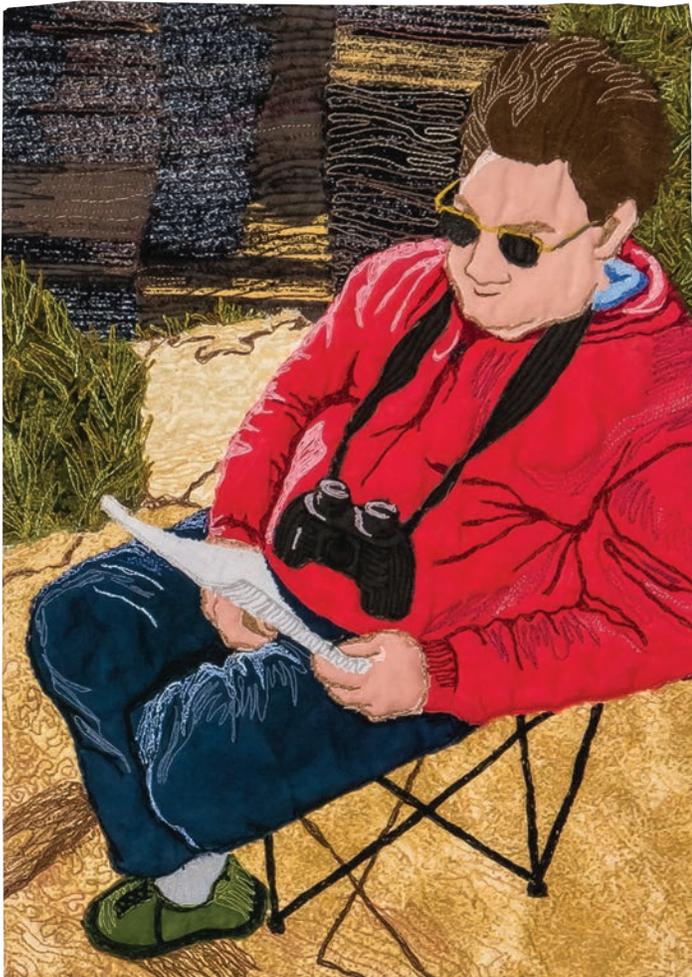


Margaret Phillips

Pete

10 x 7 inches | 2014

Photo by Jay B. Wilson



Linda Syverson Guild

My Mother's Eyes

5 x 23 inches | 2019

Valerie C. White

Series provides colorful refuge rooted in metaphor

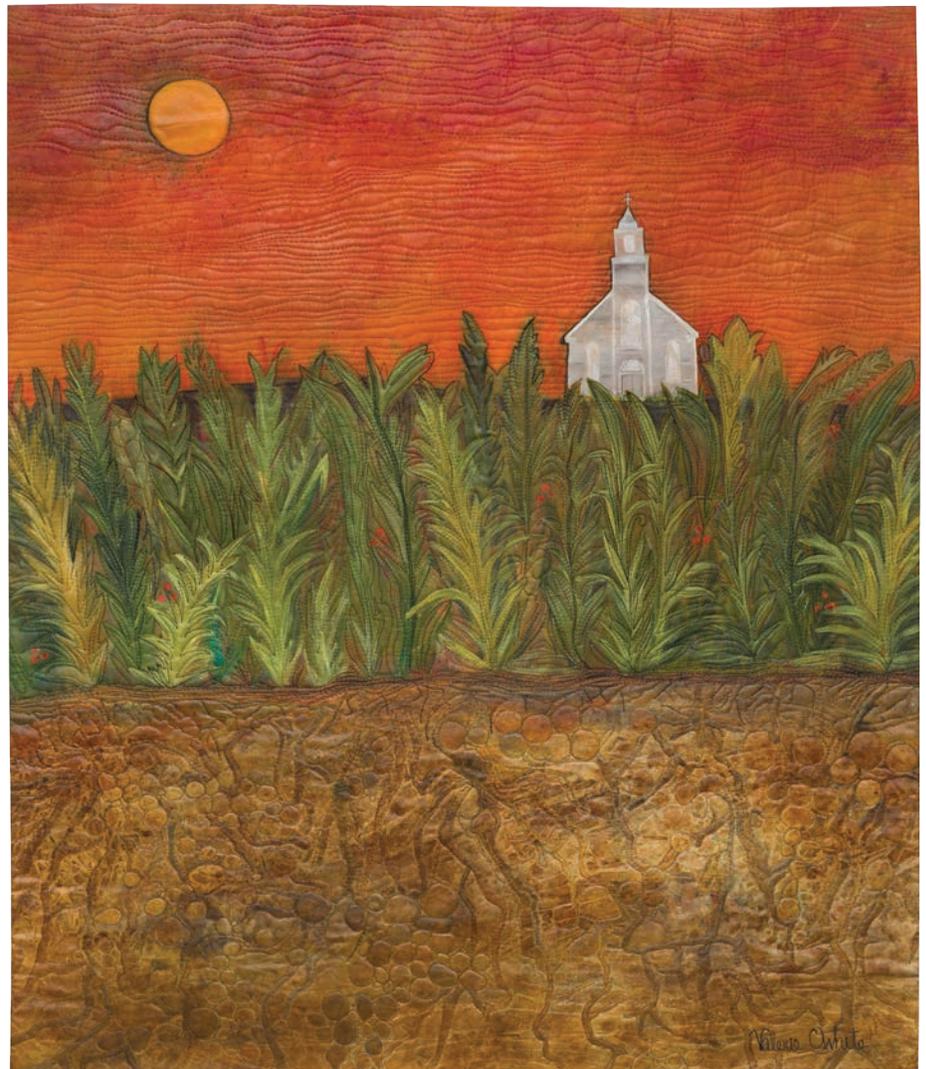
by Cindy Grisdela



The work of Denver-based Valerie C. White is rich in meaning.

In her long-running series, *Roots and Refuge*, the SAQA Juried Artist introduces viewers to a full cast of people, many appearing metaphorically as roots. Some are skinny or fat, some are young or old, some are black, white, yellow, or orange. Her work conveys a clear message about humans: “They’ve got to survive, even when entangled, and sometimes only then.”

The *Roots and Refuge* series began in 2005, and White expects to continue to explore its many facets. In it, she asks whether the shapes and colors of roots are influenced by where they grow, or whether roots that are under a church are different from those that are under a school. Working in a series is important to White, because it allows her to push the subject in



House of Prayer
37 x 32 inches | 2019

Sweet Solitude

32 x 38 inches | 2020



Tree Study #1

12.5 x 12.5 inches | 2019



different ways. “Moving forward with the work, I thought it was time to include figures. These figures reflect all of humanity and their origin is unknown. I want the work to express how much we are alike as people and the common themes we experience on this planet that transcend cultural barriers. Wouldn’t it be grand to sit on a tree stump surrounded by wildflowers?” White asks. Her answer is seen in one of her latest pieces, *Sweet Solitude*, where a lone figure is doing just that.

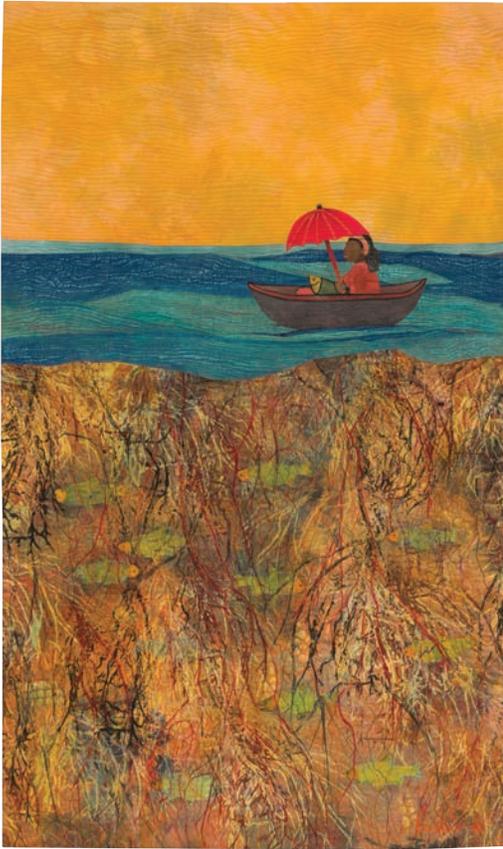
House of Prayer is another good example of White’s style. The larger, upper portion of her composition includes a church and a grouping of plants arranged as a landscape. The bottom third of the piece is devoted to the root structure under the soil that supports and nourishes the landscape. She used acrylic paint, mono-printing, and dense stitching to add dimension and texture to the work.

In *Tree Study #1*, the tree shapes take up a larger portion of the composition. White reproduced the shapes from one of her drawings using an electronic-cutting machine. Paint and stitched lines define the tree’s supporting roots and tendrils.

White studied art at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and taught art in the District’s public schools for a number of years. She was a painter, but the tactile nature of stitching drew her to textile art. She tried crewel embroidery and appliqué, but neither allowed her to adequately tell her stories. When she tried quilting, she initially felt hampered by the rules of traditional quilting, and she didn’t enjoy making multiples of the same block.

A chance meeting with an art quilter led White to review her sketchbooks from her college days. Although she had never considered using their imagery in her quilts, she was intrigued with some of the ideas she rediscovered.





Catch of the Day
40 x 30 inches | 2018

After she began studying with art quilt instructors, including Claire Benn and Leslie Morgan, at the Crow Timber Frame Barn in Ohio, the *Roots and Refuge* series was born. “That [study period] was the key that turned the lock,” she says. White began entering some of her work into juried shows, which is how she met Jane Dunnewold, a surface-design artist who has authored such books as *Art Cloth* and *Creative Strength Training*. Dunnewold encouraged White to take classes at her studio in San Antonio, Texas, a practice White now continues with annual, one-week retreat sessions.

White credits her studies with Dunnewold in helping her to verbalize her stories. By writing down the words about how we are all connected under the earth, despite our pretenses and outward differences, White found clarity for what she wanted to say through her signature series.

She uses both paint and stitch to share her stories. Textile paint, dye, and markers all find their way into White’s work. Over time, she has questioned if it is acceptable and legitimate to paint the fabric rather than dye it. “Now, I’m okay with my paint.” While some would say that if the fabric is painted, it doesn’t need to be stitched, White loves the stitching process.

“I must stitch—it’s my favorite part—I’ve learned that using the machine adds a sensibility and aesthetic that I must do.”

She quilts primarily by machine, and recently upgraded to a Bernina Q20 to make the process easier. She enjoys hand-stitching the facing down at the end because she finds that holding a quilt in her lap when it’s almost finished creates a special moment, especially if it might be the last time she sees the piece.

Her stitching is on full display in *Rescue*. The painted background of



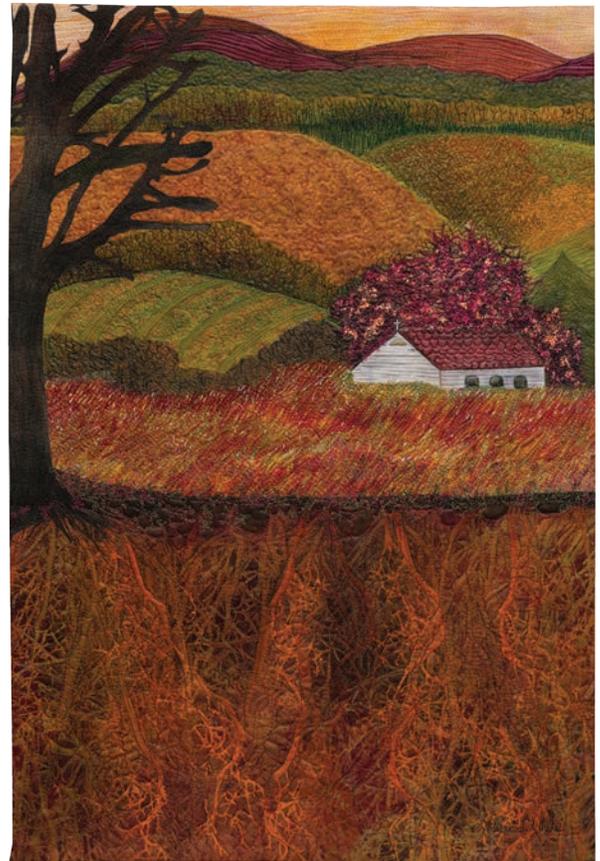
Rescue
31 x 42 inches | 2015



Emerging for Tea
40 x 43 inches | 2016



Collective Memories
30 x 30 inches | 2015



In the Valley Sanctuary
37 x 29 inches | 2019

the girl holding a bird is rich with texture created with stitching motifs. And in *Catch of the Day*, White accents the sky and sea surrounding the girl in the boat with dense stitching lines, as well as the secret world below the water.

She also is interested in African symbols and masks, as shown in *Collective Memories*. This piece features a landscape with trees, roots, and a

stylized approach to African imagery. *Emerging for Tea* is a more representational piece, featuring three African women surrounded by painted and stitched foliage. The bright patterns of their clothing and headdresses contrast with the more subdued background, making them appear to glow.

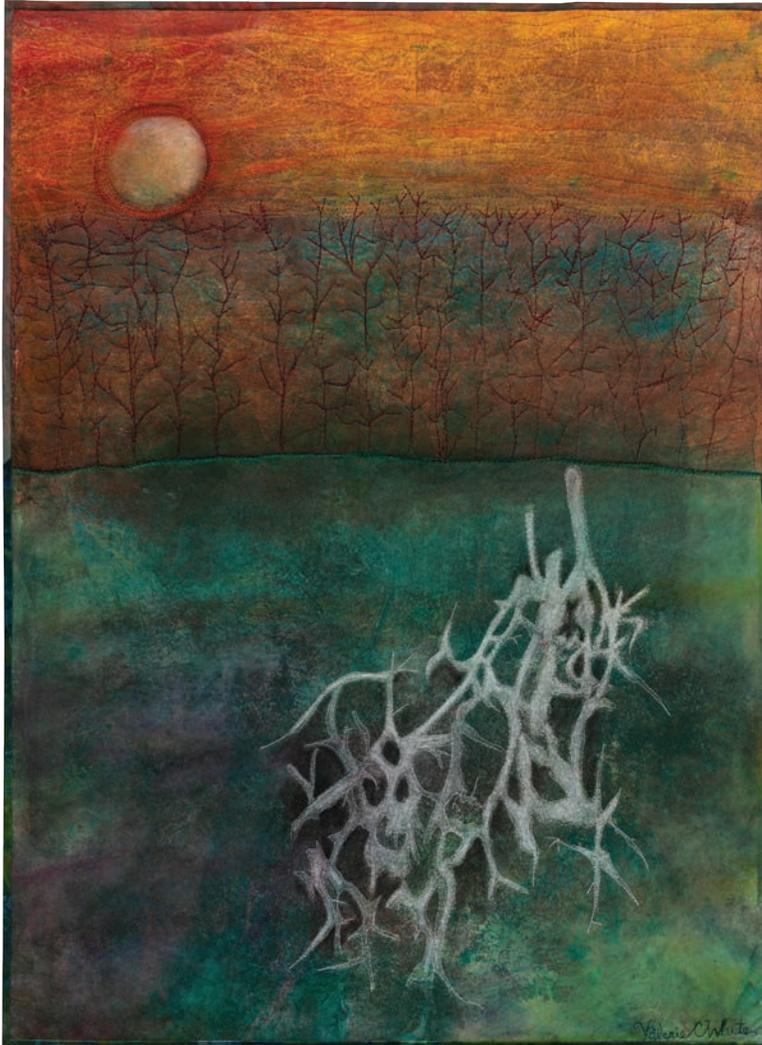
White is most productive in the afternoons, so she does her water aerobics exercise in the morning and

starts work in her studio at about 2 p.m. She often works until 10 or 11 p.m. before stopping for the day. She pieces on a Bernina 180 set up in her basement studio. The studio has two design walls with track lighting, a large cutting table, and space for painting and dyeing.

She uses the internet to explore techniques, such as Gelli plate and monoprinting, inspired by

Ancient Root

29 x 21 inches | 2019



her graphic design work in college. When science improves, art improves too, White says. Paints that take longer to dry allow her to manipulate her materials in a new way. White takes notes about palettes that interest her and where she wants to go with a particular piece. Her work has been strongly representational, but she wants to be less formal in her approach. No matter the technique, “I appreciate and insist on good craftsmanship.”

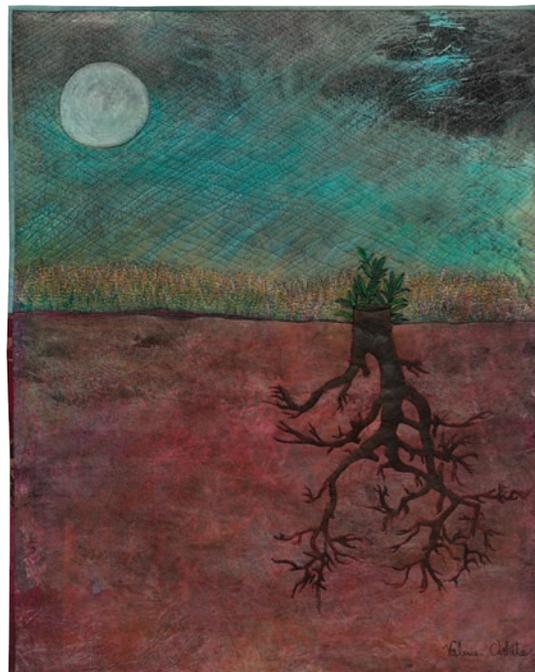
White teaches and lectures about her surface-design techniques, including using disperse dyes to transfer images onto fabric, paint sticks, silk screening, and monoprinting. *In the Valley Sanctuary* (page 13) showcases a rich landscape anchored by a church that is positioned off center, juxtaposed with rolling hills above and roots below. White used acrylic paint, textile paint, Inktense pencils, and free-motion stitching to create this piece. *Ancient Root* and *Mystic Stump* are two recent pieces that have an otherworldly quality to them, focusing the eye on images that we usually overlook.

She encourages other art quilters to give themselves permission to play and explore. The more time you spend making art, the better the work will be. But, she cautions, “Don’t expect to make a masterpiece or go to *Quilt National* immediately.”

White expects to maintain her passion about art quilts as she continues in her art practice. “It’s a gift, and I want to be as productive as I can—it’s important to me.” ■

Cindy Grisdela, a SAQA Juried Artist, resides in Reston, Virginia. You can view her work at www.cindygrisdela.com.

Mystic Stump
27.5 x 21 inches | 2019



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Our redesigned website is up and running!
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- Virtual galleries curated just for online viewing
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Registration will open in January 2021.

www.saqa.com/conference



Mel Beach's class in a bowling alley meeting room offered a comfortable learning environment.

The joy of unusual teaching venues

by ZJ Humbach

The ideal quilting classroom is large and airy with plenty of tables, numerous outlets, and good lighting.

Or is it?

When the ideal isn't available or affordable, teachers and guilds who think outside the box find pleasant surprises.

Mel Beach of San José, California, can testify to this statement. A guild asked her to teach workshops at McHenry Bowl in Modesto, California. "The bowling alley had a fabulous room for weekend birthday parties and was available for a reduced rate on weekdays. The pizza café was perfect for lunch orders during class. Once the [classroom] door was closed, the sound from the bowling lanes was minimal, with an occasional burst of cheers when a league member scored a strike or picked up a spare. It added a fun, festive element,

as I thought the bowlers were all cheering for us!"

She found another interesting teaching venue in the West Valley Animal Shelter in Chatsworth, California. "It was a fabulous space with ample parking and accessibility to the workshop space and nearby restrooms. During lunch, we could visit with the dogs and cats available for adoption. It was a great opportunity to introduce the quilters to the animal shelter, and perhaps their experience will lead to future adoptions or volunteering."

The timing of Beach's workshop coincided with wildfires in the San Fernando Valley, so extra flexibility was required. The shelter had empty cages in the back of the workshop space in case of an evacuation order. Luckily, that did not occur during the workshop, and Beach was able to



McHenry Bowl in Modesto, California

rearrange the cages to accommodate the quilters. “Teachers need to arrive early and be prepared to adapt as needed.”

Norrie MacIlraith of Urbandale, Iowa, and Leslie Hall of Rochester, Minnesota, encountered animals when they held a natural dyeing class for Upper Midwest Alpacas. The venue was a large barn at High Prairie Ranch in Dennison, Minnesota. “Barb and Harry Biron, the owners, were raising 40 alpacas. We could hear them softly bleating all day. A rooster with his hens strolled through regularly, along with several cats. It was a truly lovely day with breezes drifting through the barn. The flowers in bloom outside provided a discussion on which could be harvested and used for natural dye,” MacIlraith says.

The barn provided ample room for lecture space, worktables, vats for dyeing, and bales of hay to display items. The difficulty came when a circuit breaker blew—the only one supporting the barn. “We adjusted by staggering the dyeing during the day. We learned a valuable lesson: always check the number of electrical circuits at a venue before making a commitment.”



West Valley Animal Shelter in Chatsworth, California

Marijke van Welzen of Vlaardingen, Netherlands, experiences a church venue on a higher level whenever she teaches at Martinikerk (Martin’s Church) in Doesburg, Netherlands. “The church is from the 13th century. Most of it is still authentic. There are some modern additions [including] two glass skyboxes with large tables, chairs, and electrical sockets,” says van Welzen. “One skybox even has a small one-person elevator to get to it. The other only has stairs.”

Despite the roominess and magnificent view that the skyboxes provide, the venue is not perfect. “I usually work with sewing machines, but it would have been too much of

a hassle for these workshops. There is not a lot of parking nearby, and participants would have to walk too far with their sewing machines. Many come by public transport,” explains van Welzen.

“I think of a new workshop for this venue each time. We’ve done hand embroidery, made fabric postcards, and worked with paint on black-and-white fabrics. The key is to be creative.”

Creativity led to success for Valerie Funk of Terre Haute, Indiana, when she taught her first class. The venue was The Golden Frame, a frame shop in her hometown. “The space was small, and no supplies were readily available. I taught a raw-edge

Alpacas were part of the fun at a natural dyeing class in Minnesota taught by Norrie MacIlraith and Leslie Hall.





Marijke van Welzen has the pleasure of creating classes well-suited to the 13th century Martinikerk (Martin's Church) in Doesburg, Netherlands.

Sometimes you have to be willing to take a risk to obtain an unusual venue. Misty Cole of Bowie, Maryland, had her eye on a tiny mezzanine gallery in the College Park Aviation Museum in College Park, Maryland, a Smithsonian Affiliate Museum and the oldest continuously operating airport in North America. "I cold called this museum about a small exhibit. Instead, they invited me to exhibit as a long-term solo show in their newly renovated downstairs gallery. It was an opportunity on a scale I never anticipated," says Cole. "I was also invited to plug into all the public programs the museum has on its regular calendar."

Karol Kusmaul, of Inverness, Florida, learned that sometimes the venue picks you. The staff of Camp E-Nini-Hassee, located in Floral City, Florida, invited her to teach at their wilderness camp for troubled teenage girls. The girls are grouped into teams to work, learn, and play together, and they sleep outdoors in primitive shelters.

"I dealt with very few behavioral issues as the girls had to earn the privilege to attend a supplemental class. I did have to count needles and scissors when I had a student with a history of cutting herself with sharp objects. I taught small art quilts, quilted postcards, and, finally, lap-sized quilts. The quilts were theirs to keep, but many planned to give them to a family member," Kusmaul says.

Karen Steklasa Matze of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, also didn't pick her venue. Moraine Park Technical College, a local college where Matze worked, asked her to teach a life skills course at the nearby Taycheedah Correctional Institution. The medium-to-maximum security



appliqué technique using fusible web that did not require sewing machines. Most [students] purchased a fabric kit from me, but I packed extras in case someone forgot something." Not all of the students were quilters. Some were artists simply looking to explore a new medium. "This

beautiful little shop had a variety of artwork hanging on the walls, which was inspiring. Several participants decided to forego quilting their pieces and left them at the shop to be mounted and framed. Don't say no to a location because it's not like what you are used to. Great things can still be created!"

Shirley Sparks of Pauanui, Coromandel Peninsula, New Zealand, found that a willingness to adapt means you can enjoy a terrific venue that others might overlook. The local fire brigade building has a meeting space that is warm in the winter and has lots of natural light. It also has a small kitchen along with space for the fire engine.

"There is a lovely group of ladies who are keen to learn new things in the local area instead of having to drive long distances to do a class. The stitching group uses this meeting place twice a month. When the fire alarm goes off, we stay out of the way and see the action as the men and women rush for their gear and the engine."

facility houses adult females convicted of a variety of crimes, including murder.

"I came to know the inmates fairly well. As it got closer to the holidays, they would proudly show me the scarves and mittens they were knitting for loved ones," recalls Matze. "I went through extensive screening and briefings, including knowing when to notify the guards and the location of the panic button."

The only problem Matze encountered was a pair of missing scissors. "The women knew I had the right to call the guard. What was trouble for one would be trouble for all. I asked that the scissors be replaced and turned my back so it could be done anonymously. When I turned back around, the scissors were back in their place."

Suzanne Evenson of Inverness, Florida, taught a class that explored the process of making art as an element of developing self-esteem at the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville, Ohio. "My advice for anyone considering teaching in a prison is to get to know the people as individuals, not inmates. Treat the participants as you would any student on the outside. There are rules, rules, rules. An attitude of flexibility and adaptation is essential."

Evenson's sessions were held in the corner of a gymnasium, where she set up tables and chairs. "Despite the openness of the space, there was an atmosphere of intimacy as the women sorted through pieces of fabric to make selections for their fabric collages. While most quilters share feelings, frustrations, regrets, goals, hopes, and dreams around fabric, much of the discussion here focused on the essential



Martinikerk (Martin's Church) in Doesburg, Netherlands.

life changes needed to not return to prison after their release. It was one of the most rewarding and memorable teaching experiences of my life. I experienced joy in that setting."

Unusual venues aren't limited to buildings. The environment often makes the venue unique. Sue Dennis of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, has traveled many hundreds of miles between various remote Outback locations to teach quilting. "One remote group met at the Country Women's Association Hall, McKinlay. The women would come from Outback properties called cattle stations to attend weekend workshops. It was a chance to get together with friends and have time away from home."

The challenges at this venue included a lack of air conditioning and keeping the children who accompanied their mothers away from rotary cutters, scissors, and pins. "No one complained. These were tough women, and this was their fun time. We just got on with things. We also had our dinner in the pub opposite the hall, which is where the opening scenes to the popular movie *Crocodile Dundee* were filmed."

Terry Aske of New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, faced

the opposite weather extreme while teaching in Inuvik, just north of the Arctic Circle in the Northwest Territories of Canada. Flying from Vancouver to Inuvik takes two days with an overnight stop in Whitehorse, the Yukon Territory's only city and the nearest location for quilting supplies.

"The second leg is on a smaller plane that didn't warm up enough to take off our coats. The weather was very cold, -30 to -40 degrees Celsius. For about 30 days in December to early January, the sun doesn't appear above the horizon. After 30 days of darkness, the residents celebrate the return of the sun at the annual Inuvik Sunrise Festival. I arrived at 1:30 in the afternoon, just as the sun was rising!"

The greatest takeaway about teaching in an unusual venue is that quilting and art are about joy. Each of the above venues provided new inspiration and different perspectives for the teachers who embraced them. ■

ZJ Humbach is a freelance writer, quilting and sewing teacher, and professional longarm quilter. She owns and operates Dream Stitcher Quilt Studio in Thornton, Colorado.

Beyond Borders

Teachers find rewards in outreach projects

by ZJ Humbach



A class taught by Jo Van Loo took place under a tree in Iseguero, Uganda.

Phyllis Cullen combined craft projects with her time as a volunteer doctor in Nicaragua.



Quilters are known for participating in community outreach projects. Some extend their assistance well beyond their neighborhoods to reach across borders into other countries to help those in need.

Phalombe, Malawi, Africa, is a long way from Kingston, Ontario, Canada, where Pamela Allen lives. "Phalombe is a small rural area with no real economic center. People subsist in small clay brick houses with none of the amenities we take for granted, such as a bathroom," says Allen. "Women tend gardens, look after their many children, cook over a fire, do laundry in the river, and carry water from a communal well for approximately two miles."

A man who had been going to Phalombe for several years to organize well digging saw Allen's art. He recommended her to Gemma Brugha, the founder and sole organizer of the Likulazi Project, which focuses on HIV/AIDS education, home-based palliative care, orphan support, and community development. With

Likulazi sponsoring her, Allen spent four weeks in the village teaching quilting.

"There was a large room for gathering, but no tables or chairs. The women just took that all in stride, and everything was done on the floor. I could not speak the language, but Gemma Brugha was a wonderful help. The women became very relaxed and friendly once we got underway. Lots of giggles and talking amongst themselves," Allen says.

Other than language, the main problem was availability of raw materials. "I brought a huge suitcase full of everything we would need: fabric, needles, embroidery cotton, scissors, and drawing materials. Some of the women walked twenty miles to learn how to make fabric art. They made amazing work, and I was able to sell almost all of it and send the money back to them. I came home very changed by the experience."

Sue Dennis of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, accompanied her husband

to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where he managed an office for an international consultancy. Dennis volunteered to teach at the Mongolian Quilting Center, which helps disadvantaged women earn a living making patchwork items to sell at the center, Mongolian craft fairs, and international locations.

“Winter is not the tourist time of the year in Mongolia,” laughs Dennis. “When going from the heated apartment to the center, I would wrap up very well for the extreme temperatures of -15 to -25 degrees Celsius as I walked 1.5 kilometers each way.”

Her students were disadvantaged adults who came from poor socio-economic backgrounds, were single parents, or had a physical disability. “I didn’t speak Mongolian, and only one or two women at the center spoke English. Selenge Tserendash, the director and founder of the center, served as my interpreter.

The workroom had limited space and equipment, and the students shared everything. Some sewing machines were electric, but most were manual and operated with a handwheel.

Dennis taught principles of the color wheel, table runner, and square-in-a-square quilt. “My greatest reward was seeing the tutors and students put this newfound knowledge into subsequent designs. I even appeared on Mongolian morning television before Christmas to promote the center and the products for the Christmas Fair.”

For Jo Van Loo of Phoenix, Arizona, a volunteer gig led to more such teaching opportunities. “I traveled to Iseguero, Uganda, with my brother when he attended an educational conference there. I volunteered to teach the women of the village beginning quilting. We each had squares



Pamela Allen (right foreground) taught fabric art in Malawi, Africa, in a room with few amenities.

that we sewed together and made a community quilt. We hand quilted it sitting in a circle under the shade of a tree,” Van Loo says.

On another occasion, she decided to have a group of ten students each make a potholder. “I prepared ten canvas bags of supplies and had twelve students show up,” says Van Loo. “The goal was to provide my students with some skills to make things to sell. I taught a potholder because it is a quilt from start to finish.”

As part of the class, the students learned embroidery stitches and hand appliqué. “I taught under a big tree, and we did all the sewing by hand. We sat on a bed of straw. If we dropped a needle, it literally was a needle in a haystack,” laughs Van Loo. “I went home each night feeling tremendous gratitude because I have never taught people who were so eager to learn.”

After Uganda, Van Loo learned about Haiti Peace Quilts and

see “Beyond Borders” on page 46

Advice for Adventurous Teachers

Teaching in remote locations is not for everyone, but if you’d like to try it, here’s some experienced advice:

Pamela Allen: The best way to encourage a fun, happy outcome is to be aware of local social realities. I was careful not to wear any revealing clothing such as shorts or skimpy tops. I also ate the same local fare of rice and beans every day. Laugh a lot!

Sue Dennis: Smile. Be adaptable. Use whatever is available. Go with the flow and enjoy a unique experience.

Jo Van Loo: The best way to handle any issue is with a smile and a sense of humor. Don’t be discouraged. One co-op I started was not successful while another one I started is still active today.

Phyllis Cullen: Don’t expect perfect conditions. Consider the limitations a challenge and create something out of whatever you have. Don’t expect perfection. Completion is not as important as process. Let your imagination wander and expect the unexpected. It’s usually way better than what you planned.

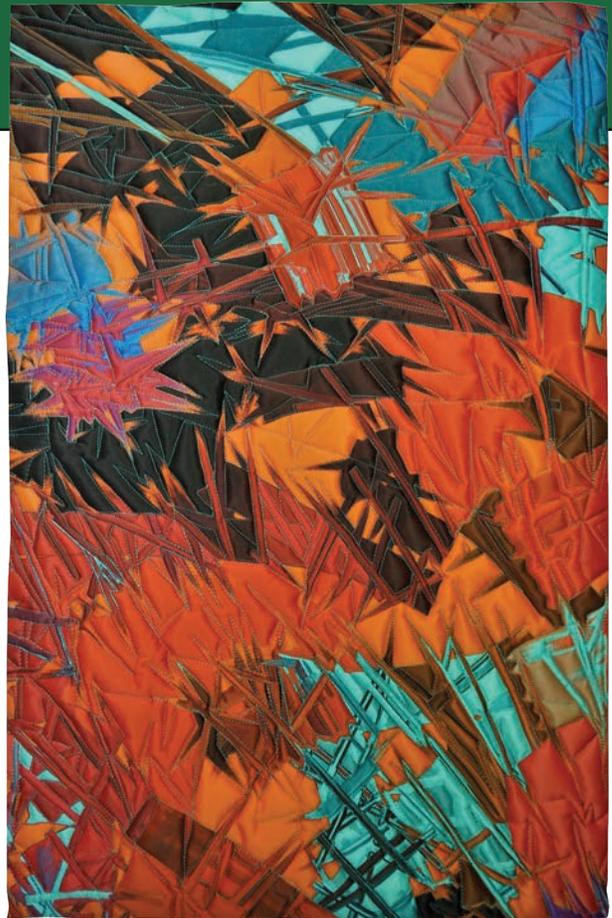
4 Common Corners

by Michelle Jackson



Vicki Conley
Totems and Pods

30 x 20 inches | 2020



Betty Hahn
Thorns

30 x 20 inches | 2020

In only one spot in the United States can you stand in four states at the same time. Commonly called Four Corners, it is where the Southwestern states of Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico meet at right angles.

Rich in beauty and history, this region is where majestic red clay canyons and rugged bluffs stretch to meet a bright turquoise sky. Ancient ruins and stories of early peoples flavor today's architecture and way of life. Here, the past is preserved and its beauty cherished as a legacy to be passed on to future generations.

This expansive area inspired the formation of 4 Common Corners, an invitational group of fiber artists. The group brings together divergent

viewpoints and artistic styles to create exhibitions that celebrate the region's beauty and promote its members' artistic practices.

The group's current exhibition, *Thorns and Spikes*, depicts the beauty and danger of our region, where sharp thorns, fangs, stingers, and spines abound. This particular exhibition showcases a wide variety of techniques. Block and Thermofax printing are combined with improvisational piecing in Vicki Conley's *Totems and Pods*. Betty Hahn creates digital paintings and prints them on silk before layering and machine quilting them, as seen in *Thorns*. And Nicole Dunn's *Red Thorns* is a modern adaptation of colorful and prickly organic shapes.

There are currently thirteen artists in 4 Common Corners. Arizona residents are Anne Moats, Frances Murphy, Debra Goley, and Betty Hahn. Colorado-based artists are Sandra Hoefner, Diana Fox, and Bev Haring. New Mexico is represented by Vicki Conley, Michelle Jackson, Shannon Conley, Nicole Dunn, Lynn Welsch, and Lynn Rogers.

The group collaborates on four themes per year to produce memorable exhibitions that introduce

viewers to the scenic byways, remote landscapes, and the essence of the people of the Four Corners region.

The group's work can be viewed online at www.4commoncorners.com and on Instagram at [4commoncorners](https://www.instagram.com/4commoncorners). ■

Michelle Jackson is a SAQA Juried Artist who resides in Sandia Park, New Mexico. You can view her work at www.quiltfashions.com.



Nicole Dunn
Red Thorns
30 x 20 inches | 2020



Michelle Jackson
Clarecup Cactus
30 x 20 inches | 2020



Lynn Welsch
Century Plant Joy
30 x 20 inches | 2020

Juried Artist Showcase is a gallery of work produced by artists who have each been named a Juried Artist member of SAQA. A Juried Artist is an artist who has successfully presented a portfolio to the Juried Artist Review Panel. This portfolio includes a selected body of work and documentation showing a professional approach to art.

Barbara Barrick McKie
Macleays Honey Eater of Australia

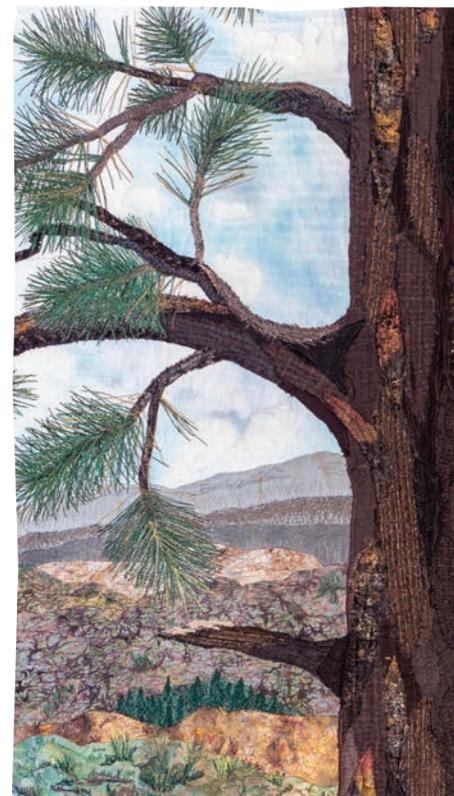
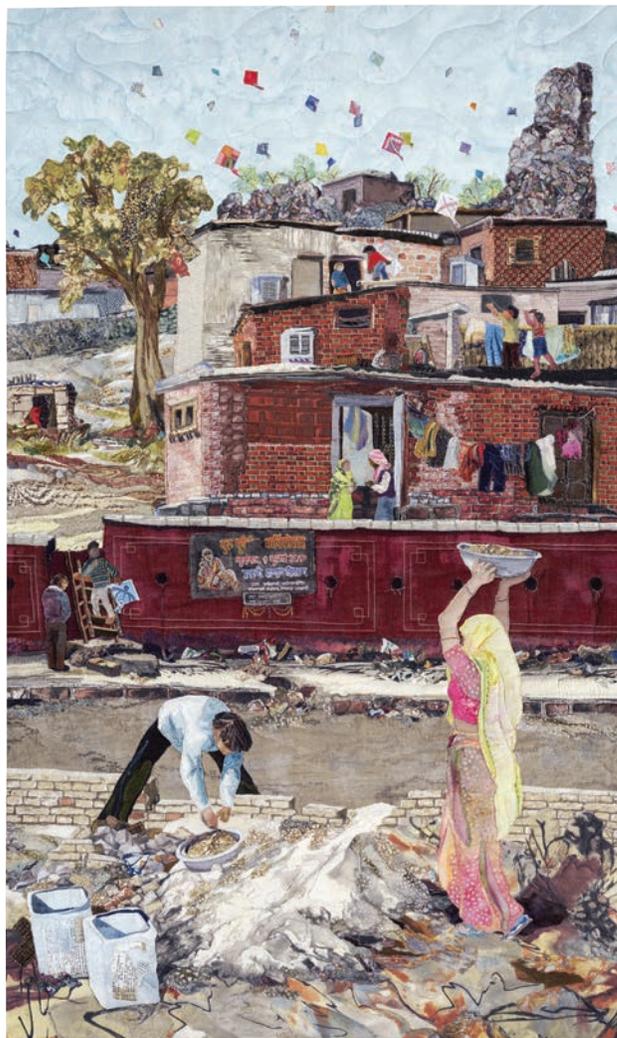
26 x 26 inches | 2019

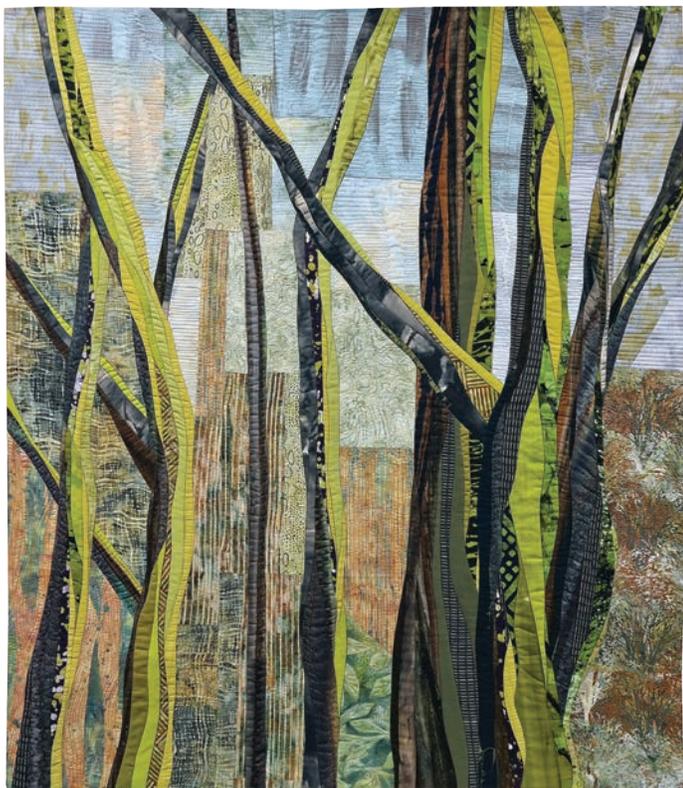


Susan V. Polansky
An Ordinary Day

50 x 30 inches | 2018

Photo by Boston Photo Imaging





Hilde Morin

Embracing Moss

42 x 37 inches | 2018



Kate Themel

Spiraling

52 x 34 inches | 2019



Dorothy Raymond

Solitude

29 x 53 inches | 2018

Photo by Allan Snell

Unconventional Materials Equal Fabulous Work

by Laurie Fagen

SAQA members continue to imagine and create avant-garde fiber pieces using unusual items that range from tampons and goose biots to wire, paint, paste, and epoxy. The resulting works are often three-dimensional, and always intriguing.

Ten SAQA members share their stories of how they incorporate a host of materials into their art practices:

Winged beauty Linda Fjeldsted Blust

Flamboyant, three-dimensional birds are Linda Fjeldsted Blust's passion. "I've been sewing all my life but never made a quilt," she explains. "I studied art, fashion design, and pattern drafting, so when I retired from [ballroom dance] costuming to focus on textile art, it was only natural to continue using the same materials and techniques that I was familiar with."

The Reno, Nevada, artist uses various metals for her bird armatures. Bird legs and wings are supported with 16-gauge galvanized steel wire and piano wire threaded through brass tubing. She wraps floral tape around the wire to add thickness, then twists knobby Scrubby yarn by Red Heart around the legs and toes for instant width and bountiful texture.

Her fowl bodies are cotton fabric packed tight with Poly-fil and stiffened with Mod Podge Stiffy or Aleene's Stiffen Quick to provide extra body and avoid fraying. To apply, she paints the stiffener on with a brush or pours it in a bowl to dip fabric into it.

Then there's polymer clay for claws, beaks, and other embellishments, and Angelina fibers to add sparkle without stiffness. She uses the Coiling Gizmo by Artistic Wire to make tight curls of wire, string, or embroidery floss; she recommends soaking the string or floss in Stiffy before curling.

Blust's favorite feathers are goose biots that are often used for fishing flies. "They're strong, spiky, and can be curled."

Her latest preferred material to work with is Jacquard's PearlEx Powdered Pigments, mixed into acrylic paint and clear lacquer for a natural-looking shimmer with a grainy texture. She's intrigued by and may experiment with Fosshape, and has been told it's easier than buckram for making three-dimensional structures.

She says she hadn't thought of her textile sculptures as quilts until SAQA members pointed out they meet the requirements of being layered and stitched. "I am delighted that SAQA has accepted them. "It's such

an inspirational group of creative people."

You can see more of Blust's work on her website, wildthingsbylindab.com

Live wire Jayne Bentley Gaskins

Jayne Bentley Gaskins, a SAQA Juried Artist from Reston, Virginia, is "fascinated with the possibilities of wire in its many forms." She uses linear wire to create stiff lines, something not possible with threads, and even hand stitches with it.

"Bendable flat surfaces, such as chicken wire and screens are great as apertures for sculptures and they also produce interesting textures on flat works, as does wire mesh." Gaskins has used fabric stiffeners and heat-activated composite materials such as Wonderflex and Fosshape, but finds the wire easier to control.

To create layers of shadows in her work, she has experimented with cool fluorescent tubing and LED light bulbs. "I found that the fluorescent



Linda Fjeldsted Blust
Desire



Jayne Bentley Gaskins
Rising from the Ashes

tubing works beautifully as a layered accent with transparent fabrics as well as a light source for shadow effects.”

You can see more of her work at www.jaynegaskins.com

Emulating nature Denise Oyama Miller

Creating three-dimensional shapes from nature is a specialty of textile/mixed media artist Denise Oyama Miller, a SAQA Juried Artist from Fremont, California. She attaches wool roving to Artfelt, a tackable paper that disappears with boiling water, to create wool-felted material. Then Miller uses the resulting felt to create rocks with Fosshape, a nonwoven synthetic polyester fiber that can be shaped into various forms with heat.

Miller also creates realistic leaf shapes, embellishing fabric and cheesecloth with acrylic paint and Derwent Inkintense pencils and “lots of quilting/thread painting.” She says Golden Acrylic 400 Medium helps with the shaping.

For mixed-media collage wall quilts, Miller often incorporates fabric, paper, and paint.

You can view her work at www.deniseoyamamiller.com.

Bending new shapes Elaine Filyk

Another Fosshape convert is Elaine Filyk of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, who winters in Arizona. She first stitches Fosshape between two layers of fabric, then applies a hot steam iron. She uses various items to create the shape she wants.

“The product becomes hard and stiff during this process, but it’s light and holds its shape,” she says.

She also recruits her husband to make molds for her. To echo the shape of littala glass, he made a circular base that holds dowels that she can shape over. *Frozen* was made using this mold; it was juried into Canada’s Grand National Fibre Art and Quilt Exhibition.

“Great fun experiments!” she adds. “I have lots of others in my head.”

You can find Filyk’s work at www.fibreartnetwork.com.

Taxing challenge Holly Brackmann

Using an unconventional material such as feminine hygiene products “speaks to a personal story” for SAQA board member Holly Brackmann, a retired textile and art history professor and author of *The Surface*

Designer’s Handbook. Originally a weaver, the Ukiah, California, artist now focuses on art quilting and surface design, and uses items such as tampons to convey a message in her wall pieces.

Her research discovered there is a de facto tampon luxury tax in the majority of the United States, while products such as candy, sodas, adult incontinence pads and erectile dysfunction products are not taxed. While in recent years several states have made tampons tax-exempt, Brackmann wants to challenge the tampon law with her quilts. “The tampon tax affects women disproportionately and is a burden to poor women on the fringe of society,” Brackmann explains. “It’s one way to change the sexism that persists in much of society, with males thinking about women as being ‘on the fringe.’”

Her *Tampon Tales and Tails* depicts free-form female reproductive anatomy with tampons as fringe, “with images of women around the world demonstrating against the tampon tax, plus relevant quotes about tampons.” She also incorporated Puja strands from India, a religious offering; indigo, potassium permanganate, and fiber-reactive dyes; textile paints;



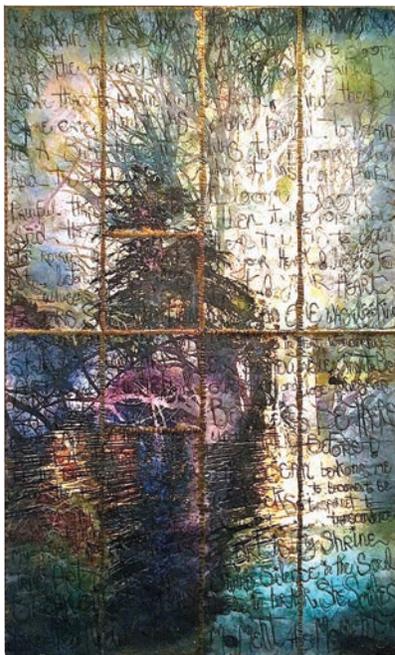
Denise Oyama Miller
River Rock



Elaine Filyk
Frozen



Holly Brackmann
Tampon Tales and Tails



Wen Redmond
Continuing the Conversation



Rhonda Crist Schmeltzer
Dusty Lavender



Lena Meszaros
Tornado

Photo by Flavia Raddavero

ink-jet pigments; embroidery floss; cotton fabric; batting; and sewing thread. Other techniques used are digital printing, Thermofax screen printing, hand dyeing, shibori and random dyeing, hand embroidery, and machine stitching.

You can view her work at www.hollybrackmann.com.

Beyond printing **Wen Redmond**

Printing on fabric has long been part of Wen Redmond's art practice. This SAQA Juried Artist began printing on various digitally prepared surfaces, such as digital broadcloth, digital canvas and digital organza, as well as using inkAID, a water-based coating applied to the surface to make it ready to receive inkjet ink. Then she wanted to "make it more personal," and discovered molding paste, a combination of marble dust and polymer. She spreads a thin layer of a lightweight paste on interfacing and adds texture with bubble wrap, string, stamps, found items, and more. The piece is dried, the inkAID is applied, and after it's dried again, it's ready to print. Redmond finishes it with a protective coat of liquid or spray satin varnish.

"Yes, you can sew through it," she says.

Redmond's love of nature is reflected in her pieces. The segments are edge-painted and hand-knotted together, and include glass beads, lava and gloss mediums, and paint-stick accents.

Her printing process is detailed in her book, *Wen Redmond's Digital Fiber Art: Combine Photos & Fabric - Create Your Own Mixed-Media Masterpiece*, as well as in a DVD.

You can learn more about her work at www.wenredmond.com.

Poured paint **Rhonda Crist Schmeltzer**

Poured paintings are popular in the acrylic and watercolor world, but Rhonda Schmeltzer of Worland, Wyoming, has devised a technique for pouring paint on cotton fabric. She uses Jacquard Textile Color paint with Floetrol, a latex-based paint additive, and coconut oil for creating "cells" in the poured paint. "Creating the cells is what makes the process fun. The cells are the unknown surprise that happens after the paint is poured onto the fabric."

Schmeltzer has created a video on her process, and it can be found on Youtube at tinyurl.com/Poured-Painting-on-Fabric.

The artist incorporates her poured paint fabrics with original photographs of her beloved Wyoming surroundings as printed by Spoonflower along with her Procion hand- and ice-dyed and painted fabrics.

For more information on this artist, visit www.artquiltsbyrhonda.com.

Happy accidents **Lena Meszaros**

Another artist experimenting with poured painting on fabric is Lena Meszaros from Orsay, France. She has found successful results depend on many factors:

- The kind of fabric: relatively rigid and smooth surface, whether smooth or glossy, thin or thick.
- The brand of paint, consistency of the mixture and additive liquids, such as Liquitex, Floetrol or glue, dilution with water, or the amount of silicone drops.
- Whether the piece is created in winter or summer.

"It's a joyful process, full of surprises," she says. "[But] you have to

nevertheless accept that result is 50 percent due to chance and not to your will.” So, Meszaros also pours on both sides of a transparent plastic tablecloth, with the front forming the rock, and the back for the sky. “To bring out the ransacked form, the plastic was cut using a soldering iron.”

One piece became a happy accident when she knocked over a binding machine, and thousands of small pieces of fabric fell into the still fresh paint. Her first thought was “What a disaster!” until she envisioned an image of a hurricane carrying shredded objects, and added a handful of her trash into the mix, resulting in *Tornado*.

Still other quilt embellishments used by this French artist include wood, metal, paper, cardboard, foam, and Angelina fibers. She also has embossed metal with papers from chocolates consumed during Christmas, then distressed them with a soldering iron.

Playing with plastics
Elizabeth Ferry Pekins

The addition of plastic bags in Elizabeth Ferry Pekins’ artwork created concern that she might “accidentally suffocate” her children. She’s quick to point out she is not making bed quilts, and finds the discussion of plastics in quilts to be “an interesting way for people to learn more about the quilt as art, not as bedding.”

“I love the way the plastics allow light to enter the fabric when hanging away from a wall. I want people to be drawn in to look up close from all sides. I also enjoy the way a quilt made from lightweight fabrics and plastics moves in a space. When people walk by it or the air conditioning or fans come on, it moves and sways. I often leave threads hanging long

from the piece for just that reason. It adds movement.”

The Lampasas, Texas, artist also enjoys working with the non-toxic, liquid fabric stiffener Terial Magic, which she uses to make cheesecloth stiff and easy to layer, so she can stitch both by hand and machine. She says the amount of stiffness can be controlled by the amount of stiffener used.

“Terial Magic is uniquely better than traditional stabilizers, because it is sprayed on to give fabric paperlike qualities for easy cutting, pressing, and stitching.”

Caps and bubble wrap also find their way into Pekins’s art, which can be viewed at www.bybethstudio.etsy.com.

Curiosity reflected
Susan Lenz

An “ongoing love affair” with old keys, nails, wooden thread spools, and anonymous photographs means that they often end up in the work of Susan Lenz of Columbia, South Carolina.

Using soldering irons to melt holes in fused polyester stretch velvet on a recycled synthetic packaging felt is a technique that she began using in 2004, but a more recent material Lenz is using is UV-filtering epoxy. Besides protecting the work from fading through exposure to sunlight, the epoxy mimics the gloss of a photograph or the glazing material over a work of art on paper, and it appears “untouchable ... close at hand but also faraway.”

Lenz says there is a “curiosity factor” when viewing these pieces because of the reflective, almost water-like sheen that is not expected with fiber.

“One isn’t immediately sure what medium it is,” she explains. “There is a momentary hesitation, a ‘What is



Susan Lenz
The Spirit Moves



Elizabeth Ferry Pekins
Childhood

it?’ sort of question that seems to require a little more time.”

See Lenz’s colorful work at www.susanlenz.com. ■

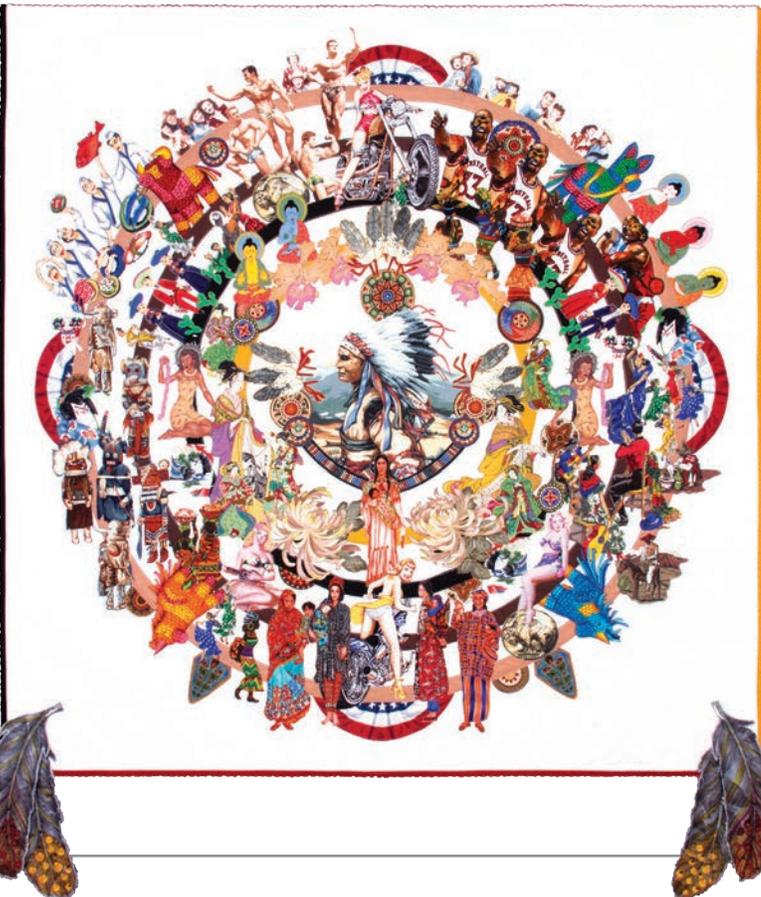
Laurie Fagen of Fagen Designs is a writer and fiber artist. She is a member of the SAQA Arizona Region. You can view her work at www.FagenDesigns.com.



Heather A. Hager
Heartbroken
34 x 30 inches | 2017



Meredith R Grimsley
The Dress Don't Fit
60 x 30 inches | 2017



Deborah K. Snider
Color Wheel: Stereotypes
50 x 41.5 inches | 2006
Photo by Harold D. Snider

Design principles hone compositional skills

by Margaret Abramshe

The elements and principles of design form a background language that allows artists to construct and deconstruct compositions. Because many quilt artists begin their journey without formal art training, they rely on an intuitive understanding of these concepts. This approach may serve them well in the short term, but core art concepts are important for artists to know as they move forward in the art world.

The basics

The first step to master the concepts is to know the vocabulary. The elements of art include line, shape, color, value, texture, space, and form.

A line can be thick, thin, straight, or curved. It can change direction (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) and can display variety (zigzag, dotted, or wavy). A line is defined by starting and stopping points.

Shape is an enclosed element that has length and width, but is flat. There are two general categories of shape: geometric and organic. Examples of geometric shapes include squares, triangles, trapezoids, rectangles, and circles. Leaves, amoeba, or raindrops are examples of organic shapes.

Color is organized on a color wheel, a tool which defines each color's relationship to other colors. Examples of color relationships are warm/cool, primary/secondary/tertiary, and complementary. The name of a color

is a hue. Color intensity refers to the lightness (tint) or darkness (shade) of a color and also to whether a color has a bright or dull quality.

Value describes a quality of lightness to darkness, or density, of a color. A value scale is the primary tool for understanding this concept. Values have practical applications in composition. For example, a landscape uses atmospheric perspective by placing the light values in the background and dark values in the foreground. Changes in value used in portraits create the illusion of a three-dimensional surface.

Texture is the perceived surface quality in a work of art. It can be smooth or rough, bumpy or slick. Textures can be real or implied. A real texture is rough burlap. A rubbing of burlap is an implied texture.

Space creates the illusion of distance on a flat surface. Compositions organized with a foreground, middle ground, and background are examples of the use of this element. Overlapping one object or a horizon line also creates space in a composition.

Architects, artists, and engineers use a systematic process for creating space on a flat surface called linear perspective, which can be rendered in one-point or two-point perspective. In either case, vertical lines remain vertical, but horizontal lines change. One-point perspective uses a single point on a horizon line. The horizontal lines angle toward that point from

above and below the horizon line.

Two-point perspective uses points on either end of the horizon line. These points anchor the horizontal lines to the left or right of the vertical line.

Form is an object which can be measured by length, width, and depth—shorthand for three-dimensional. Forms include cubes, cones, or cylinders. Like shape, form can be organic. Potters, sculptures, and glass makers express themselves through form.

Show 'n' tell

Let's look at some simple examples of the elements of design. In Figure 1, there is a single element of design—shape. In Figure 2, by adding another shape in a different value and overlapping the two shapes, there are now three elements of design: shape, value, and space. Adding elements of design increases the visual interest and complexity in the composition.

The principles of design define how the elements of design are organized within a composition. Unlike the elements of design, there are some modest differences in the vocabulary list describing the principles of design. The list I use is movement, emphasis, unity, contrast, balance, pattern, and rhythm.

Movement is a visual pathway which leads the viewer through a composition, often to the center of interest. A repetition of a single element, such as color or shape, can

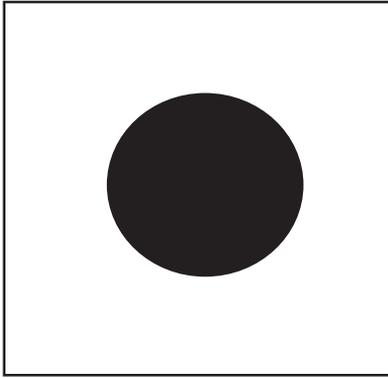


Figure 1

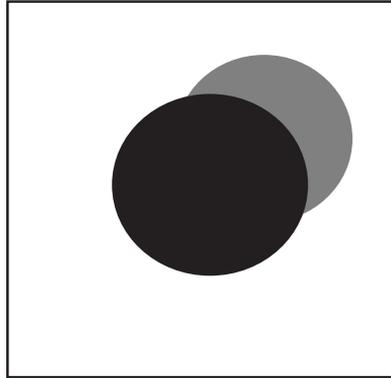


Figure 2

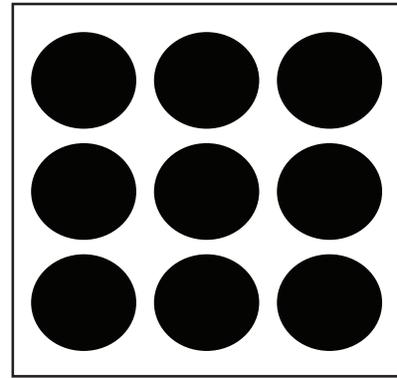


Figure 3

create a sense of movement. In representational compositions a road, a line of trees, or a flock of birds can be used to create movement.

Emphasis is the focal point in a composition. Think of it as the area in the composition where the artist wants the viewer to look first. An example is using a single-colored shape made up of black lines.

Unity, sometimes called harmony, is a quality of cohesiveness in a composition. Using colors next to each other on the color wheel is an example of unity. Using exclusively organic or geometric shapes also creates unity.

Contrast is an arrangement of opposite elements in a composition. Using color complements that are opposite each other on the color wheel creates contrast in a composition. An artist can use scale by placing a large object in contrast to smaller objects. Warm colors placed in a cool background also creates contrast.

Balance is the distribution of visual weight in composition. There are three types of balance: symmetrical, radial, and asymmetrical. Symmetrical balance distributes weight evenly on each side of a central axis. A face is an example of symmetry. Radial balance distributes weight evenly from a center point. A mandala uses

radial balance. Asymmetrical balance is uneven balance and is considered pleasing in genres such as still life or landscape. In a still life, asymmetrical balance can be created using an odd number of objects which take up two-thirds of the total space.

Pattern and visual rhythm are often confused. Visual rhythm is formed with the repetition of elements to create a visual tempo. An example is a field of wheat that looks like it is blowing in the wind.

Pattern also involves the repetition of elements in either a regular or irregular arrangement. The purpose of pattern is to increase the visual interest in the surface. Architecture uses pattern to embellish the surface of a structure. Traditional quilters use pattern to embellish a functional object.

In Figure 3, there is a single element of design: shape. The shapes are arranged in a simple pattern. The balance is symmetrical and there are no other principles of design operating.

By adding the additional element of color in Figure 4, the composition is changed. The balance is asymmetrical and there is a point of emphasis. There are four principles of design operating in this simple composition: emphasis, pattern, contrast, and asymmetrical balance.

Figure 5 has three elements of design: color, shape, and value.

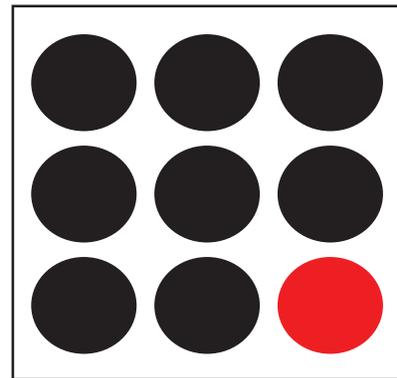


Figure 4

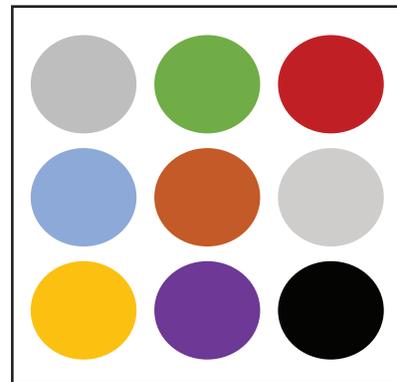


Figure 5

Changing values in the shapes unifies the composition. It changes the pattern to irregular, and subjectively may create a visual rhythm. The composition has become more complex and visually interesting by simple changes to a limited number of elements.

Exercise creativity

Being able to identify the elements and decide how they are organized within the principles of design is a creative muscle that needs to be exercised until it becomes automatic.

To exercise your understanding of art elements and principles, practice deconstructing a composition. Start by picking out the elements. Next, identify how those elements are used in a composition. This can be done as you walk through a gallery or museum with a friend, taking some notes, as you attend a critique group, or by keeping an art journal.

Applying understanding from one composition to your own work is a shortcut to making good design choices. A quilt I made called *Gdańsk* uses the same compositional choices as Van Gogh's *Cafe Terrace at Night*: contrasting color and a strong visual pathway.

Various shades of orange and blue shades dominate the composition. Because these colors are opposite each other on the color wheel, they create a pleasing high contrast that attracts attention. Because the boats and buildings get smaller as they recede to a single vanishing point at the upper portion of the picture plane, they also create an illusion of space.

Recognizing visual potential is helped by understanding the principles of design. This quilt began as a photograph taken on vacation.

What drew me to this particular scene as a potential art quilt was the natural visual pathway along the docks.

Grounded inspiration

Intuition and inspiration are an artist's starting points. Technical skill and a firm grasp of materials are critical. Composition is the third leg that gives the artist the power to make confident design choices.

The elements and principles of design are the framework for success. These design terms are not rules or merely a vocabulary list. When they become second nature to the artist, they open myriad possibilities. ■

Margaret Abramshe is a SAQA Juried Artist who resides in Saint George, Utah. You can view her work at www.metaphysicalquilter.com.



Margaret Abramshe
Gdańsk

40 x 31 inches | 2020

2020 SAQA Benefit Auction

Fundraiser offers heartfelt stories for everyone



Mel Dugosh, *Safe Inside*



Karena Nelson, *At Loose Ends: A Response to Covid-19*

A recording-breaking number of quilts—nearly 500—are sure to enliven the 2020 SAQA Benefit Auction, open September 11 through October 4. Our highly anticipated, reverse auction raises thousands of dollars for our exhibitions, publications, and education outreach.

This year's auction lineup of 12 x 12-inch quilts, made and donated by SAQA members around the world, range from abstract to representational and include techniques both intricate and bold. One compelling factor in all of them is the story behind each one. This year, the stories often reflect the nature of our times, including issues related to health and politics.

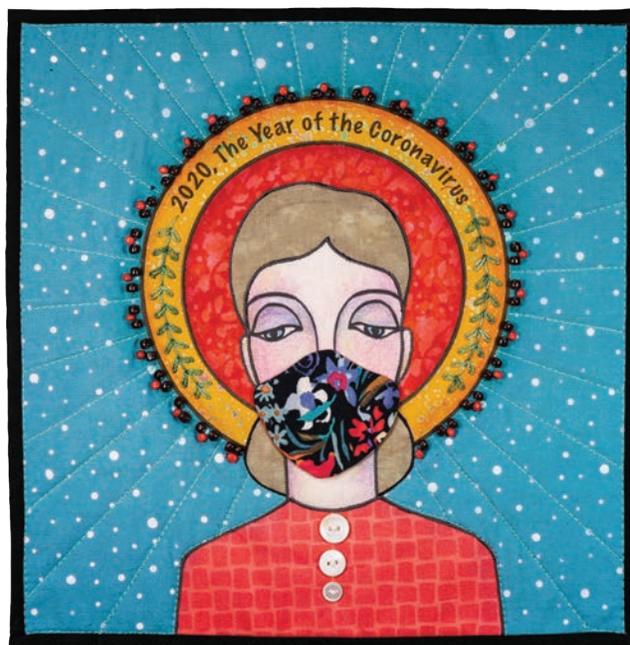
Enjoy the back stories of seventeen of these fascinating works. To pick your favorites from the entire lineup, and to learn how to bid on our new auction platform, visit www.saqa.com/auction.

Let's focus on the message and start with the topic on everyone's

mind—the pandemic.

Covid-19

Terry Grant of Beaverton, Oregon, has been inventing her own modern saints for a couple of years. "I knew that 2020 was a year that would go down in history, and I wanted to focus on that. Thus was born *Saint Corona*, inspired by all the heroic health-care workers and makers of masks, many within the ranks of SAQA. To my surprise, I found there really was a Saint Corona, who was a martyred saint. Though she was not associated with illness or pandemic, there is a small town in Austria where people prayed



Terry Grant, *Saint Corona*

to her statue for healing during the Plague."

Grant decided to add a removable mask, and remembered that she had purchased a packet of small magnets on a whim. "They worked perfectly,



Gabriele DiTota, *Nature's Cure*

and I had everything to make my donation quilt without having to leave my studio. Thank goodness for our deep stashes!"

Mel Dugosh from Hondo, Texas, made *Safe Inside* as she sheltered in place early this year. While her favorite technique is traditional appliqué, she moved away from that familiar and comforting style as summer approached. "I've decided to take up fusing art quilts because tragedies are mounting and

Linda Syverson Guild, *Tea Time*



Susan Brewer, *Mates for Life*

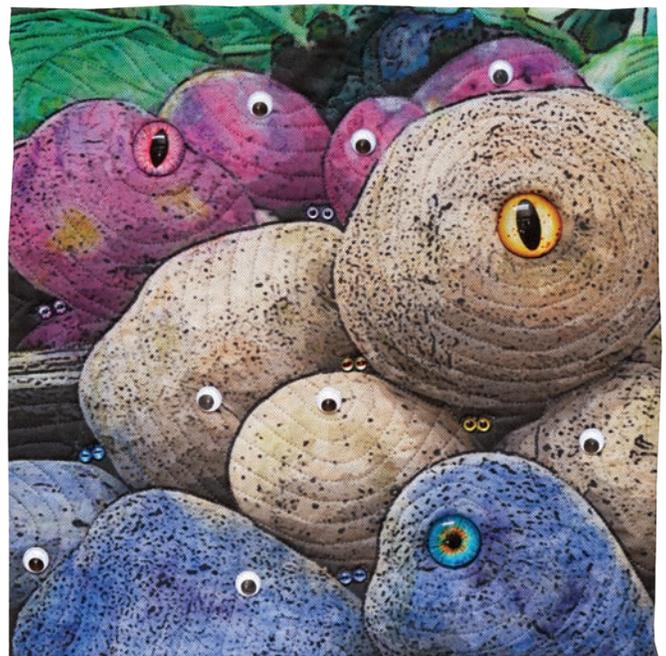
happening quickly this year! My cat may be safe at home, but I am out protesting because black lives matter."

Karena Nelson's quilt *At Loose Ends: A Response to Covid-19*, was made as she sorted out being restricted during the pandemic. "I had been using thickened dye to screen print patterns of tangled lines and asemic writing. While trying to adjust to the rearrangement of my life under shelter-in-place orders, I felt the urge to slice the patterns into small

pieces. Rearranged with much more negative space, the fragments seemed to better capture our new normal," says this artist from Evanston, Illinois.

Frances Murphy of Surprise, Arizona, had cataract surgery during the time she worked on her *Living is Easy with Eyes Closed* (pictured, page 6), which provided two important elements: a shot of creative energy from being around people and clear vision in her left eye. "I finished [the quilt] without using my glasses once!" The

Stephanye Schuyler, *Potato Eyes II*





Maria Stoller, *Dandelion*

quilt was influenced by the flood of information and disinformation coming from radio and television. “I saw the design of the quilt as waves of water (information) washing over all of us. To me, it was easier to just shut off all of the confusion and chatter and retreat into art and creation rather than getting swamped by pandemic politics and election politics.”

Gabriele DiTota, from Melbourne, Florida, has found it hard to get into the groove of creativity due to the coronavirus crisis. So she decided to deviate from her usual palette to create *Nature's Cure* in reds and oranges using deconstructed screen printing. She wanted her piece to scream danger, to include the words fear and freedom and a version of the coronavirus. “Yet, as I constructed the background, I was aware that I was fortunate to have a backyard with a small pond, grass, flowers, and trees to take refuge in during this time. Nature became a refuge, a cure for the restlessness and a balm for my fears.” The ferns are photograms created in her yard with the wet cyanotype process.

Beautiful to behold

Many of our auction quilts tell a tale of beauty and peace, such as *Mates for Life* by Susan Brewer of Bloomington, Indiana. “This quilt is taken from a larger one that combines my interest



Judith Trager, *Bright Angel*

in non-traditional wedding ring quilt designs and the life cycle of cardinals. These beautiful birds mate for life and each year share in building their nest and raising their young.”

When *Tea Time* by Linda Syverson Guild of Bethesda, Maryland, was conceived, the design included cameos, old earrings, and buttons. “But as the stitching progressed, the design simplified itself, becoming a solitary experience. *Tea Time* is an old-fashioned pause in a person’s hectic day. It advocates the need to give back to oneself, even if it is only ten minutes cradling a mug of tea.”

Lisa Walton of Sydney, Australia, wanted her quilt to create calm. “The world is such a mess at the moment, I wanted to show that there is still peace and beauty around us. I feel a sense of calm as I look at my meadow with the butterflies everywhere.”

Just for fun

Visual puns provided by Laura Wasilowski of Elgin, Illinois, always bring a smile. In *Reading Lamp #2*, she depicts a curious lamp reading a book while the normal occupant of the chair has been called away. “I often animate inanimate objects to lend humor and whimsy to my designs.”

Equally delightful is Stephanye Schuyler’s *Potato Eyes II*. The mischievous quilt by the Portsmouth, New

Lisa Walton, *Butterfly Meadow*



Naomi S. Velasquez, *L'oiseau*



Maria Shell, *VOTE!*



Laura Wasilowski, *Reading Lamp #2*





Hampshire, artist is based on a photo of potato bins taken at a community farmer's market where she volunteers. The eyes in the quilt represent her wandering thoughts about the starchy tubers' eyes, she confides.

On our cover this issue is *Steampunk Puppy LE 01/10* by Kestrel Michaud of West Melbourne, Florida, one of the cutest canines to ever grace an art quilt. "This little spaniel patiently waits for his human to finish readying the ship for flight. He knows he'll be going with her since he even has his own pair of goggles for safety. He doesn't care where they're going; as long as he's with his girl, he'll be happy. In real life and fantasy, dogs are always the same."

Dances with nature

Maria Stoller from Zurich, Switzerland, created *Dandelion* because she looks forward to the annual arrival

of this harbinger of warm days. "To celebrate this event, I have combined this dreamy portrait sewn on organza with painted fabric, embroidery, and drawings and prints of dandelions on paper."

In the Redwoods by Katie Quinn from Reno, Nevada, was created with insight from Katie Pasquini Masopust's online Color and Composition class. Quinn's piece is based on a photo and uses an unexpected color scheme to create abstraction. "I feel this helped me create more depth in the piece and a lightness in it."

Bright Angel is a maquette for a new piece being created by Judith Trager of Portland, Oregon. Here, she continues to work with the kimono shape and impressions of her time in a gorgeous natural setting. "This little kimono once again brings to mind my time

in the Grand Canyon. I was delighted with 'shrinking' this shape and form."

Naomi Velasquez's *Loiseau* lets the viewer decide its true nature. "I am fascinated by the way that we constantly adapt to change and are continually reconfigured by our experiences and influences," the Pocatello, Idaho, artist says. "I am consumed with the process of creating, deconstructing, and then redefining a new composition to communicate the depth of our complex, multifaceted lives. This piece represents an abstraction of a bird flying free above all of the data that we have consumed during these past months."

Get out the vote

Maria Shell of Anchorage, Alaska, finds voting to be an urgent action, as do Californians Kris Sazaki and Deb Cashatt, who design together as the Pixeladies.

Shell says, "Each election feels more critical than the last, and the 2020 election is no exception." As articulated by Cashatt, Pixeladies's artist statement backs up that sentiment: "We, the people, have the right to vote. Period."

Enjoy more quilts at
www.saqa.com/auction. ■

How the auction works

The 2020 SAQA Benefit Auction opens on Friday, September 11, with Diamond Day, when any quilt is available for \$1,000. The first bidder wins.

The rest of this reverse auction is divided into three sections with a new section open each Monday. Bid prices start at \$750 per quilt and drop each day until they reach \$100 on Saturday. The following Monday, the bidding pattern repeats until the auction closes on October 4. The first bidder wins.

Throughout the auction, any quilt can be purchased for a buy-it-now price of \$1,000. For more details and info on our new bidding platform, visit www.saqa.com/auction.

— Diane Howell, SAQA Journal editor.

Join the online teaching revolution

by Diane Howell



Live online workshops are all the rage, driven by the Covid-19 pandemic and the availability of virtual meeting platforms—but the format’s many benefits are certain to make it a permanent option for learning.

You can join this teaching revolution with a relatively small investment in equipment and some time.

Tools you need

Lyric Montgomery Kinard, who produced videos in her North Carolina studio before the pandemic, already owns professional light stands with high power bulbs and diffusers, a boom arm, a lavalier mic, and a tripod. However, she says that the minimum setup requirement is two camera orientations. This can be achieved with a camera phone or tablet over your workspace (a goose arm clamp will make this possible) and a computer with a built-in camera and mic to talk to students.

Cindy Grisdela of Virginia has such a straightforward setup. She created it when in-person workshops were cancelled and a guild asked if she would teach online. “I used my iPhone with a small gorilla tripod on a small table and a stack of books for the video. Fortunately, I have good light in my studio, both natural and overhead, but I did invest in a ring light to get more targeted lighting on what I was doing, as well as a gooseneck bendable holder for my phone.”

In Maine, Sarah Ann Smith uses her laptop as her command center, her iPad as her overhead camera, and her iPhone to capture an over-the-shoulder view of sewing machine work. A

DIY stand with a Unistrut holds her iPad, and a clamp and boom arm with a bracket hold her iPhone. She uses tape to mark where the overhead camera best captures her and where it provides a wider view of her demonstration table. She also has lights and three light stands.

Mel Beach’s setup in California is similar. She uses:

- A laptop camera pointed at her face to open and close workshops and for most questions and answers.
- Two Google Pixel Android phones for overhead demos and stitching at her sewing machine.
- An adjustable camera mount suitable for most tablets.
- A droid camera app to sync the devices wirelessly and switch between them.
- A second monitor to display the participant list, chat box, and mute function. An internet tab is also kept open here to find resources and add them to the chat box. “This way, I can see all participant screens on my laptop screen and watch for any raised hands.”
- Various light sources, including a large window plus three overhead lights. A professional lighting system is equipped with five bulbs and a softbox to add lighting to her main demo area; typically, two or three bulbs in this setup are on at a time. A small ring light clips onto her laptop for evening lectures. Her sewing machine has an added LED lighting strip on its throat space.

Course updates

While the right equipment is a primary component in online teaching, a review of class offerings and updates to support documentation are also vital.

Class offerings need to be reviewed for online suitability. Smith adapted her Absolutely Positively Perfect Bindings easily. “[But] those [classes] that require preprinted fabric and threads that I offer in a kit may need to be rethought, since shipping isn’t always reliable now.” Kinard, at least for now, has pulled a class that includes supplies she brings, and added back a sewing machine class since everyone has a machine in their home studio.

With regard to paperwork, Kinard updated all of the teaching info found on her website. She clarified key contract items, including whose Zoom link is used, the teacher’s time zone, and clauses on intellectual property rights. Groups who hire Kinard are not granted permission to record the sessions.

Smith says she adapted her Keynote presentation—an Apple program similar to PowerPoint—with additional slides to flesh out step-by-step instructions. She also added more detail in her handouts to compensate for not being there in person.

How people capture information for later use also needs to be planned. In person, Smith encourages participants to take photos of samples. Online, she shows larger samples via a slide show and smaller ones on the overhead camera. She invites students to take screenshots and also stages step outs in her demo area. She keeps the overhead camera on the samples



Lyric Montgomery Kinard's in-studio teaching setup includes professional lighting.

during practice sessions so students can refer to them.

Other tips

It's easy to see that more verbal communication is needed for virtual success. Beach starts off her workshops with a brief intro to Zoom. "Usually I am very good about reading body language and noticing when a participant is confused or unsure, but that is a bit harder to detect on Zoom. So I let students know they need to speak up if they have questions or need my attention." To keep things moving, she lets students know to select thumbs up, which indicates that they understand and she can move on. Raised hands or jazz hands get her attention. The chat box is for questions that aren't urgent or that can be added to a "parking lot" for later discussion. "Remind participants to unmute to ask questions that are more timely," Beach says.

Also, polls you set up within Zoom allow you to gauge participants' experience levels, Beach says. You can then adapt pacing and content and engage students during demos.

So participants have time to print handouts, Beach emails the documents to them one or two days in advance. She includes a copyright notice on the handouts and in the body of the email, and articulates the copyright information again at the start of each workshop.

Practice runs

Preparation is great, but nothing beats a test run. Beach ensured her setup had proper lighting and that her voice could be heard over a sewing machine. She still encountered hiccups during her first full-day workshop. "I forgot to plug in my phone so my battery ran low just before lunch, and [the phone] started to overheat from the extra

lighting and warmer summer temperatures." She was able to switch to her second phone while the first one recharged and cooled.

Smith tests her workshops by offering the first session free in exchange for honest feedback. This is how she became acutely aware of issues of internet service and bandwidth. One of her class testers had to drop out because internet service to her house was subpar the day of the workshop. Smith says that one way to manage bandwidth is to have students turn off their cameras to allow more room for teacher presentations. And, it's good to remember that a lot of screen activity will come your way as the teacher, making it is easy to miss someone's request to return to class if their internet drops. "Some teachers are able to hire a second person to help manage that side of things. In the future, if a student is tech savvy, I

might offer them a reduced or free class in exchange for keeping an eye on the assorted extra windows," she says.

Pricing

Our sources find that maintaining your pricing structure is also important because of the investment in equipment and the greater copyright risk associated with sharing content online.

"Most teachers that I know are maintaining their current lecture/workshop prices as we are presenting the same quality content," Beach says.

"They are paying for our depth of knowledge and our skill of teaching that knowledge," Kinard says, who points out getting ready for online teaching does take time. "For the two days I just taught, I spent two months recording and writing and getting ready."

Online approaches

Workshop formats vary, with some presented live via Zoom and some a blend of recorded and live action. For her first class, Grisdela combined Zoom with the online teaching platform CourseCraft.net. "I gave the guild program chair a link to the online course platform so students could access the material, then scheduled a Zoom meeting with the students to introduce the class, talk about color and fabric choices, and answer any questions they had. Then they worked through the lessons on their own. I scheduled another Zoom meeting the next day so I could give them feedback on their progress. Each student showed me their designs using their phone or tablet and it worked very well. They could chat among themselves and ask questions as well. In live classes all on Zoom, it works much the same way."

As pandemic restrictions lift, a guild might set up a classroom to

work with a live remote teacher. "It is a matter of having both teacher and guild personnel technically savvy enough to manage it, along with adequate internet bandwidth to make it reliable," Smith says.

Other combinations are also likely. "There is a possibility for a hybrid model where some participants gather together while others watch from home," Beach says.

Surprise benefits

Online workshops can allow for quicker pacing of demos, according to Beach. Several factors may account for this: students are home working on their primary machines with plenty of space; they don't lose time waiting to use equipment; there is less chatting; and not as much time is lost gathering participants for the next demo. This increased pace also can allow time for bonus demos.

Another pleasant surprise is that teachers can still provide personal attention through online teaching. "Because students have a front row view to all the demos, they seem to pick up on the techniques more quickly with significantly fewer glitches," Beach says. She has even been able to help students with tension issues in her free-motion quilting class by asking them hold their sample up to the screen. She



Mel Beach provides a tight shot of her machine demos and has setups prepared on easy-to-handle trays.

can then pin or spotlight it for full-screen viewing and troubleshoot the problem.

Timing can be more flexible with online teaching too. "Typically, workshops are designed to be six hours per day to minimize additional costs for travel and lodging. Many participants start to overload ... around the four- or five-hour mark," Beach says. "Online teaching affords the possibility of chunking workshops into smaller lessons that are easier to digest, with the option of scheduling a second or third chunk several days or even weeks apart."



Sarah Ann Smith provides an over-the-shoulder view of machine demos.



Mel Beach uses two monitors to better follow student activity.

Benefits for all

The most obvious benefit of online teaching is affordable access to teachers that live far away from their students. Costs for travel, lodging, and venue rental are eliminated. "I'm on the East Coast, and I've heard from some guilds on the West Coast that they look at virtual teaching as a bonus they would like to continue, because [it allows them] to have teachers that they couldn't have if they had to pay for airline tickets and lodging," Grisdela says.

Beyond affordability is increased access. Individuals with health issues,

limited mobility concerns, or who serve as caretakers can attend online workshops with more ease. Organizers have fewer setup and other duties, which allows them to take part in the workshop.

For teachers, traveling time is saved and it is possible to book multiple classes on the same day, especially if they are in different time zones. "Since I am not limited to two suitcases for flights, I can incorporate more samples and tools, and present more demos on my sewing machine," Beach says.

Online teaching is expected to continue and to evolve. New possibilities abound and one thing is certain: It is here to stay. ■

Diane Howell is the editor of the SAQA Journal. She resides in Chandler, Arizona.

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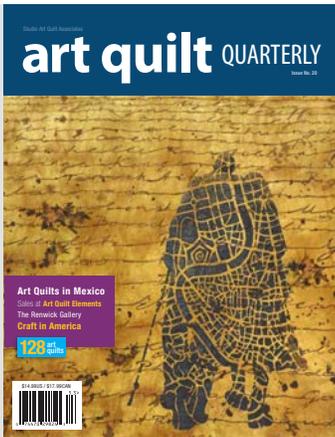
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In Memoriam

Amy Witherow

Amy Witherow of Campbell, California, passed away in June from pancreatic cancer. She is survived by her husband, Kevin Ahern, her stepson, Colin Ahern, and three siblings.

Amy's art quilts illustrated her love of nature. She was an avid kayaker, and she and her husband traveled throughout the Pacific watershed to enjoy the fast-paced river sport. Her professional career ranged from graphic design to technical publication management at Silicon Valley software firms.

She was an active member of SAQA and other quilting organizations. We will miss Amy's creative spirit and her friendship. Our thoughts are with her family and friends.

Joseph Horansky

Longtime SAQA member Joseph Horansky of Warminster, Pennsylvania, passed away last year. He and his wife, Ruby, were frequent contributors to our Benefit Auction, a tradition Ruby continues to uphold this year with *Out in the Field*.

Joseph's giving nature will be greatly missed, and we extend our condolences to his family and friends.

Sandy Snowden

Sandy Snowden of Bracknell, England, passed away in August from pneumonia. Sandy delighted viewers with her versatile work that ranged from art quilts to wearable art. Her wonderful approach and cheerful spirit will be greatly missed. You can see her work at www.sandysnowden.com, and in this year's Benefit Auction, which includes her heartfelt piece *Ramshackle: Distancing*.

Legacy funding helps ensure the future of SAQA, an organization supporting artists and promoting the art quilt medium internationally. The gift is also an easy way for me to say 'thank you' for facilitating my growth as an artist.

— Nelda Warkentin



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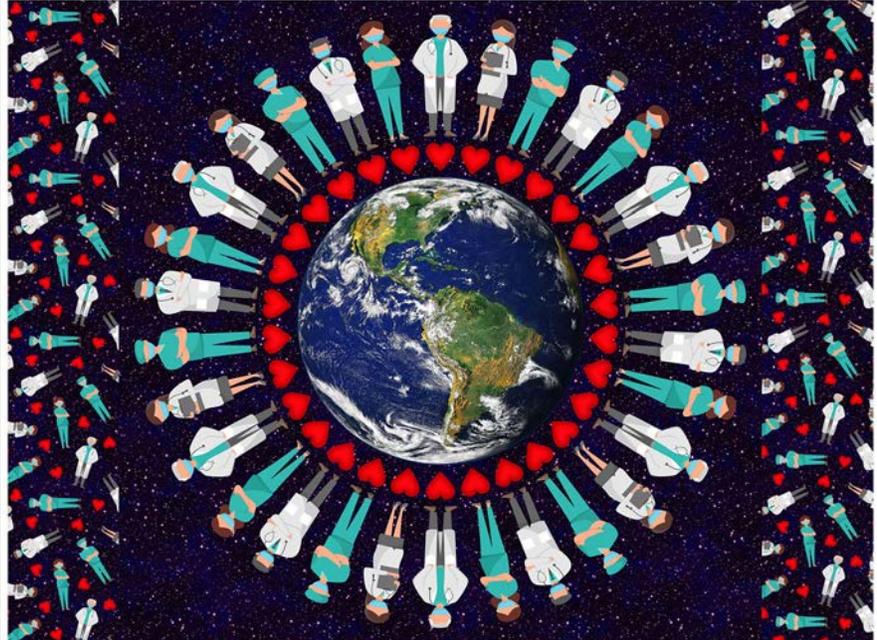
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Christine Aaron, *Vestiges II*, 2019

Beyond Borders

from page 21

volunteered to go to Haiti—twice. “The second time, I was teaching a group of women how to make crazy quilts. I speak English and Spanish, but the Haitian women spoke French so I taught with a translator. I jokingly said that if you ever know about a Spanish-speaking group that needs help, call me.”

Two years later, Van Loo received a call from Nancy Davies, who wanted to start a co-op in Nicaragua. “Her son had married a Nicaraguan woman, and then passed away from cancer. She wanted to help the women in the country her son loved,” says Van Loo. “We met at the airport in Miami, Florida, for our first trip, and I learned that she did not know how to sew. So she became the director for NicaHandmade, and I became the director of education.”

Van Loo taught beginning quilting in Managua, Nicaragua, and continued to teach more advanced techniques as the women improved. “At first, Nancy and I would bring back the quilts the women made and sell them to our friends. As the women got better, they started selling them at the local markets. They didn’t make very much money and began selling little items like quilted purses.”

Van Loo continued meeting with the group regularly until there was political unrest in the country. At that time, the U.S. Department of State no longer recommended travel to Nicaragua. The co-op continues today and sells their handmade items through the NicaHandmade website.

Phyllis Cullen of Ninole, Hawaii, is no stranger to volunteering at remote locations. “I guess I can

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Sue Dennis of Australia taught at the Mongolian Quilting Center.

teach anywhere. I volunteer as a physician in a lot of places around the globe, and as long as I am there, I usually agree to requests to teach crafts as well. One interesting venue was a little hospital at Ingenio San Antonio, a sugar plantation with a rum factory deep in rural Nicaragua.”

Cullen says the plantation had a third-world feel to it, where people lived in grass-roofed huts with no furniture. “Patients were at least two to a bed. During long periods of recuperation for burn patients, being able to create something was both fun and therapeutic. It also provided a great stress reliever for volunteers and local staff members. In between my duties, I tried to squeeze in as many classes as possible.”

Language usually was not a problem. “I spent a lot of time teaching local anesthesiologists in Spanish. Occasionally, the words for art were missing from my vocabulary. One day we were discussing batiks, and I couldn’t remember the word for wax. So I just said, ‘the stuff candles are made out of.’ The students supplied the word, but later when one of them couldn’t remember the word for batik, she was reminded by the others, ‘you know, the candle fabric!’”

Cullen held classes wherever she could. Often it was in the staff eating area, surrounded by surgical supplies. Sometimes it was in the small surgical recovery area, or in the staff housing great room. “Lighting was iffy. Daylight was our best bet. We did collages on cardboard from empty surgical supplies boxes using surgical drapes, rags, old clothing, paper, plastic, or other found materials. Bits of yarn, thread, and bird feathers became embellishments.”



Despite the limitations, the classes were very successful and enjoyable. “My task was to help everyone achieve their own image of what they wanted and to make suggestions on

how to achieve their goals. I learned that if a project doesn’t work out or a stitch is wrong, no one bleeds, no one gets infected, no one dies, and no one is going to sue you!” ■



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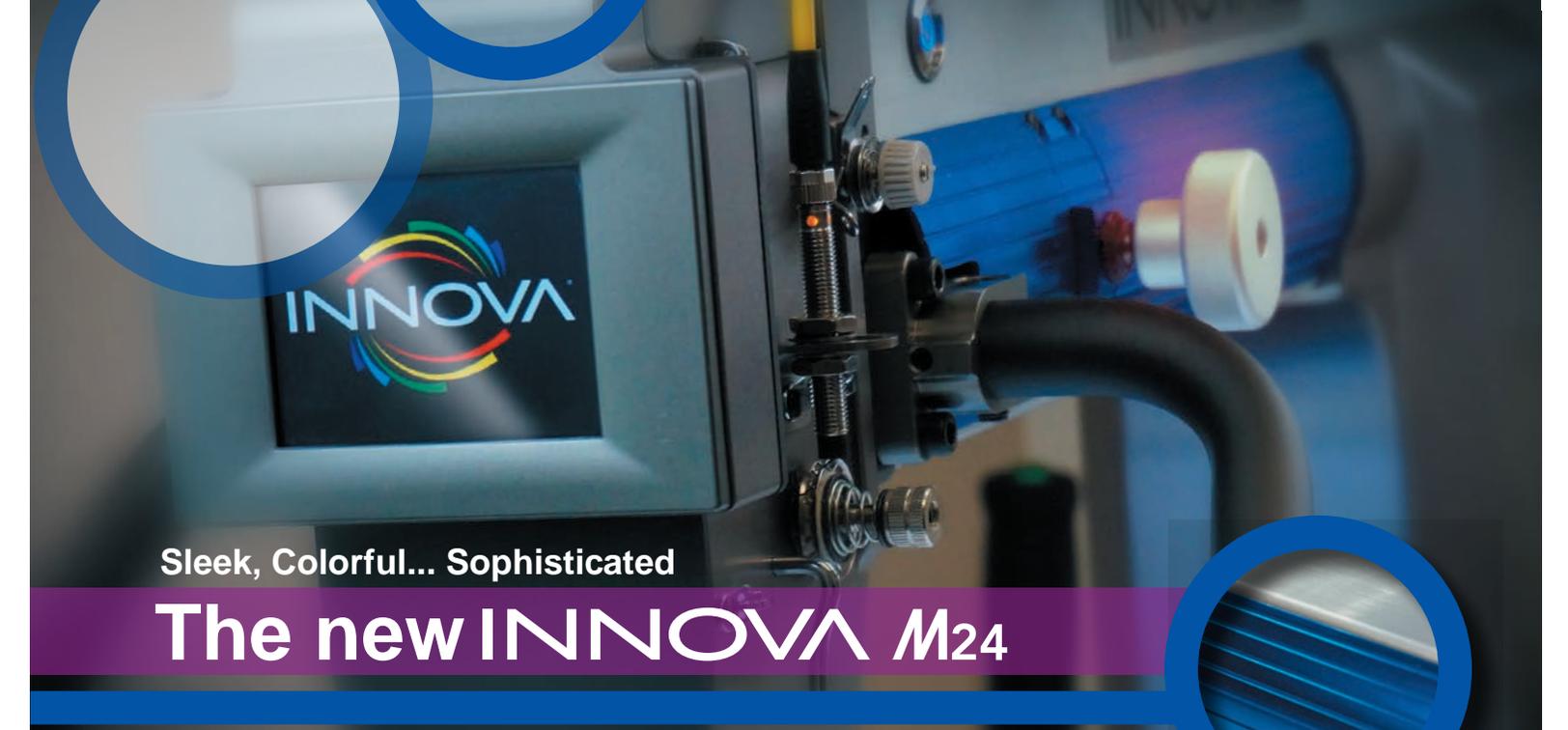
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Conversations with the Boss, detail by Kerri Green



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