

# SAQA<sup>TM</sup> JOURNAL

STUDIO ART QUILT ASSOCIATES

2021 | Volume 31, No. 4



**INSIDE:** MEET COLLEEN ANSBAUGH • LET ILLUSTRATIONS SPEAK •  
ART QUILTS IN IRAN • ART RESIDENCIES • INSPIRED: BEV HARING  
• STUDIO RENTAL • JURIED ARTIST SHOWCASE • EXPANDED  
MEMBER GALLERY • WHISPER QUILT PROJECT IN OREGON

# IN THIS ISSUE

## FEATURE ARTICLES:

Art quilts in Iran .....	5
Featured Artist: Colleen Ansbaugh.....	12
Whisper Project speaks volumes in Central Oregon.....	24
Kestrel Michaud: Illustration tells the tales.....	28
Robbi Eklow: Renting an art studio .....	32

## COLUMNS:

Editor's Notes.....	3
Thoughts from the president.....	4
Art Talk: Susan Lenz on residencies that click.....	18
Inspired by inanimate objects: Bev Haring.....	39

## GALLERIES:

SAQA Global Exhibitions: <i>Microscape</i> .....	10
Member Gallery: <i>Emergence: Cautious Steps</i> .....	16
Juried Artist Showcase .....	22
Member Gallery: <i>Emergence: Hope Prevails</i> .....	26



## SAQA NEWS

In Memoriam: Jacquelyn Brinkman, Anne Datko, Marilyn Lone, Anna Marie Peterson, Marti Plager, Els van Baarle, and Laura van den Braak ..... 37

## ON THE COVER:

Iina Alho  
*For There Is Always Light II*  
15.5 x 18 inches | 2021

## 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](mailto:execdirector@saqa.com).

Explore varied resources on our website at [www.saqa.com](http://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](mailto:editor@saqa.com). Review submission guidelines at [www.saqa.com/journal-submit](http://www.saqa.com/journal-submit).

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# A story of emergence wrapped in hope

by Diane Howell

I have looked forward to this issue for months. It was to be the issue when the world emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic. I imagined people welcoming a vaccine as the lockdowns and restrictions retreated into memory. People on every continent would be protected from this disease and I, often content in my own little world, would not have a looming need to purchase more masks. As I write, my new box of masks is slated to arrive on Wednesday.

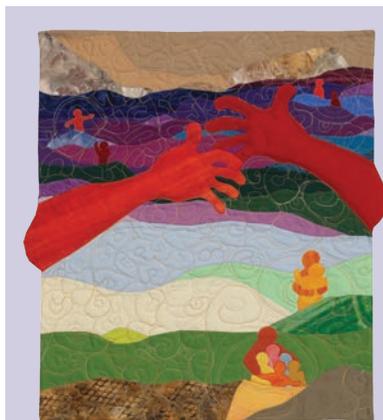
I believed in this outcome enough to plan this issue's *Member Gallery* around the theme *Emergence*. The art quilts submitted for this theme show a glimmer of hope, but also a strong reaction to being confined—a dichotomy of emotion. There were so many entries that I decided to expand this department with images presented from two different viewpoints. One section clearly documents the anxious times we lived through. The other offers a look at renewal and connection, albeit cautious and still on Zoom some days. The overall message is that we are not unscathed, but we know that the sun rises every day. The work is terrific. Turn to pages

16 and 26 to see these two powerful galleries.

But that wasn't all I planned for you to enjoy on the topic of emerging. People are starting to travel, dine, and study away from their screens. Susan Lenz has written a noteworthy *Art Talk* column on how to find an art residency that will spark new creative energy for you. Get tips on how to apply for your dream residency on page 18. Robbi Eklow tells us how she knew when she needed a studio away from home on page 32. Kestrel Michaud penned an insightful article on page 28 on the power of illustration in art quilts. Her examples show how incorporating nonverbal storytelling techniques into your work will amplify and clarify your message. This same storytelling arc is echoed in the work of Bev Haring, the subject of this issue's *Inspired* column; written by N.K. Quan, this column is on page 39. The featured artist article on Colleen Ansbach drives home

the point that being open to new directions can change your work for the better; see this profile by ZJ Humbach on page 12. The Central Oregon Local Connection created quilts through a Whisper Project that have emerged ready for exhibition; see a sampling of these works on page 24. Finally, art quilts from Iran are on our radar in a second story by ZJ Humbach that starts on page 5.

How do you plan to exit the pandemic? Whatever your choice, you've made it this far and deserve kudos for keeping your health and your sanity. I felt panicky when I saw people starting new businesses during the pandemic, while I plowed through with my usual assignments, minus the rock 'n' roll bands in my life. Now, I realize that whatever path one chose to travel through this pandemic worked for that person. On the brink of emergence, there is the opportunity to find kindness, connection, and wisdom. Grab that opportunity and hold it dear. ■



Candace Hackett Shively

*When Hugs Return*  
21 x 19.5 inches | 2021

Photo by David W. Shively

# SAQA Seminar: Highlights kicks off 2022

by Deborah Boschert

As we enter a new year, I am especially excited about the *SAQA Seminar* that will take place over ten weeks early in 2022, with registration opening in January. Launched in 2016, *SAQA Seminar* is an annual project produced by the Education Committee just for SAQA members.

This free program is designed to provide opportunities to learn about a particular topic, share expertise, ask questions, have conversations, and meet new people. A multimedia collection of content is released via weekly emails. Information includes links to articles, resources, video conversations, and more. *SAQA Seminar* is not a traditional retreat, workshop,

and experience in the themes we explored. I loved researching and preparing for these conversations by studying each person's body of work, choosing specific artworks to discuss, and picking their brains about process and inspiration. The *SAQA Seminar* team will highlight some of those conversations in the upcoming *Highlights* sessions. I'm eager to revisit them myself—and there will be new conversations with some of those same artists so we can hear what they've been up to since the original recordings.

All content is available to members on the SAQA website, but it's fresh and fun to have a collective structure

to review the information. Members who register for *SAQA Seminar* will receive a weekly email with links to articles, interviews, recommended

activities, and dates for two live discussion meetings. These virtual get-togethers will give members an opportunity to talk about the week's content, share ideas, and dive deeper into the information.

For the first few years of *SAQA Seminar*, I had the great pleasure of recording several video conversations with artists who had expertise



and experience in the themes we explored. I loved researching and preparing for these conversations by studying each person's body of work, choosing specific artworks to discuss, and picking their brains about process and inspiration. The *SAQA Seminar* team will highlight some of those conversations in the upcoming *Highlights* sessions. I'm eager to revisit them myself—and there will be new conversations with some of those same artists so we can hear what they've been up to since the original recordings.

One of my favorite parts of *SAQA Seminar* is the excellent slide show galleries that are compiled each week to fit the topic. I'm looking forward to scrolling through stunning images related to all the previous themes. I'm eager to see intricate stitching, dynamic surface design, compelling compositions, expert professional examples, and eye-popping color.

Watch your SAQA Member News emails for the link to register for *SAQA Seminar: Highlights*. Don't miss out on this valuable member benefit. I look forward to hearing what topics you find informative, sharing inspiration, connecting in virtual discussions, and adding more ideas to my own creative process. ■

“I loved researching and preparing for these conversations by studying each person's body of work, choosing specific artworks to discuss, and picking their brains about process and inspiration.”

class, or conference. It's virtual and self-paced. You choose what to read, watch, and engage with.

During *SAQA Seminar: Color* in 2021, hundreds of members participated, and we were thrilled by the enthusiasm and energy surrounding the project. For the upcoming year, the Education Committee will harness that energy and direct it back to

# Patchiran offers art quilt classes, exhibitions in Iran

by ZJ Humbach

Michelle Gilder had no idea the impact she could have when she moved in 1986 from Derbyshire, England, to Tehran, Iran. “My Iranian husband had just finished his education in power engineering, and I had completed my studies in printed and woven textiles when we decided to move to Iran. He set up an engineering company, and I opened a dress-making venture.”

Gilder immersed herself in the rich art culture of Iran and studied watercolor painting, miniature painting, and drawing under master instructors. Gilder also became qualified to teach English as a Second Language and completed the Persian/Farsi Language Course at the Persia Language Institute at Tehran University.

“I have always been a sewer, so in 2001 I decided to begin teaching patchwork and quilting in my home. Patchwork and quilting as we know it in the west did not exist in Iran. No one was teaching it,” recalls Gilder. “Iranian women all sew and love to learn new things. We initially had twelve women, typically in the morning one day a week. I had sewing machines everywhere, even in the bedrooms!”

In the meantime, Gilder began working for BERNINA Switzerland in Iran as the head of the training department. “BERNINA knew we had a patchwork group and asked us to have an exhibition to promote the machines. After a year of hard



*Maryam Tabatabaie (standing) and Michelle Gilder of Patchiran*

Photo by BERNINA UAE



Fatemeh Safdari  
*An Iranian Village in the Time of Covid*  
 27.5 x 33.5 inches | 2020

work with the ladies from my initial group, we decided there was enough work to exhibit,” says Gilder. “The exhibition was a huge success, and the demand for classes and workshops was incredible.”

Gilder decided to move the classes out of her house and into an approximately 300-square-foot rented house, which functions as a sewing studio, a kitchen, an office, and even a prayer room. “Word quickly spread, and soon we were holding classes in the mornings every day. Before we knew it, we had to add afternoon classes three days a week.”

Iran presents cultural and political considerations for Gilder and her group. One of the Iranian women, Maryam Tabatabaie, is a traditional Muslim and adheres to the religious rules, including wearing a hijab, unlike many Iranians. Tabatabaie, who had studied graphic design, stepped forward and managed the administration while Gilder taught and designed a formal curriculum. As her sewing skills progressed, Tabatabaie added teaching classes to her duties, freeing Gilder to expand the program.

“Maryam helps smooth my interactions. No matter how much I integrate or fluently speak the language, sometimes I need a native Muslim to counterbalance the ideological differences,” explains Gilder. “Once we decided to formalize the instruction, she was invaluable making sure we didn’t unintentionally offend the Iranian authorities and arouse their suspicions of anything western. We chose the name for our group with care. The Farsi term ‘parche pachazi’ means ‘checkered fabric,’ so in 2005 we officially became Patchiran.”



Farzenah Raaji  
*From Kerman to Kyoto*  
 18 x 16 inches | 2018



## Leila Aghashahi

### **Mysticism**

56 x 30 inches | 2007

Photo by Michelle Gilder

The main goal was to start an educational program that could tap into the skills Iranian women already have as sewers, primarily making garments and kitchen accessories for marriage dowries, and expand their growing interest in patchwork, quilting, and machine embroidery. Gilder deliberately designed Patchiran as a planned educational program. Each student starts with hand patchwork and quilting, and then moves on to machine patchwork and quilting followed by design. This ensures each student is well acquainted with the tools and fabrics before taking on more complicated techniques.

Along the way, BERNINA and the Iran Ministry of Education organized a symposium entitled *Technology in Sewing*. One of the speakers was Jenny Bowker of Australia. The symposium was such a success that Bowker returned in 2005 to teach a 10-day class of intermediate students.

The government wanted her and the BERNINA staff to evaluate the students and recommend those who could go on to become teachers in their regions.

“As we became more and more popular, I soon realized that Patchiran could have a serious impact on Iranian society and women’s lives at the grassroots level,” says Gilder. “Charity organizations were asking us to train some of their workers so they could go back and teach others in their organizations to help women create self-sustainable incomes.”

Gilder and her team kept expanding the Patchiran curriculum into a complete 18-month diploma program. In 2014, City & Guilds recognized Patchiran as an official learning center. The designation is significant as City & Guilds is a worldwide education and training organization. Founded in 1878 in the



## Maryam Tabatabaie and Michelle Gilder

### **Golestan**

38.5 x 38.5 inches | 2014

United Kingdom, it offers accredited certifications for coursework ranging from arts and crafts to engineering.

“One of the requirements for Patchiran is that everyone follows the same curriculum until they decide if they wish to pursue the certificate courses. We sponsor all of our teachers and others who show promise,” says Gilder. “We’ve had at least 300 students become teachers throughout Iran, but students who are enjoying the classes simply for craft are very welcome as well. We have a wide variety of workshops including design, color theory, textile dyeing, appliqué, and hand and machine embroidery.”

Over the years, Gilder has seen many changes in Iranian quilting. “We finally have rulers, cutters, and mats readily available through Olfa, although we had to persuade them to import them. When we first started classes, women had to import small



Marzieh Akbari (left) and Maryyam Pishvaie received the City & Guilds certificates in 2019.

amounts of commercial western fabric from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Now the bazaars have caught on and are importing all the brands of quilting fabrics, and several of our students have opened fabric shops,” says Gilder. “What I am seeing is that women who need commercial fabrics and tools are having a ball while women who have progressed to a higher level are making use of the traditional fabrics, dyes, and designs that are available here.”

It took Gilder years to get the women to this point. “The women originally wanted to do only western designs and fabrics as they were a novelty. I’ve worked hard to teach them techniques that they can use to take advantage of the gold mine of decorative arts and designs around them and incorporate their culture into their quilts,” says Gilder. “I have been here for more than 35 years, surrounded by rich textiles, and I never cease to be amazed at

the wealth of culture, history, and inspiration in Iran.”

Gilder leads by example, and her quilts capture the beauty of Iran. Most of her work tends to be projects for her workshops. Others are collaborations with the Patchiran staff or students. The tiles in the Golestan Palace in Tehran inspired *Golestan*, which was made in collaboration with Tabatabaie.

Gilder has taught workshops using everything from antique treadle machines to computerized machines and is excited to share modern technology with her students. “Iranian embroidery is steeped in centuries of tradition. While intricate hand embroidery is the standard, many of the women are enjoying learning how to digitize designs and use state-of-the-art machines. Introducing traditional embroidery into my own work has shown them the way to combine beautiful embroidery with their pieced blocks,” says Gilder. “My aim is to get

more of a collaboration among patchwork, quilting, and embroidery going, particularly with the City & Guilds classes. Combining these skills can only lead to more great work.”

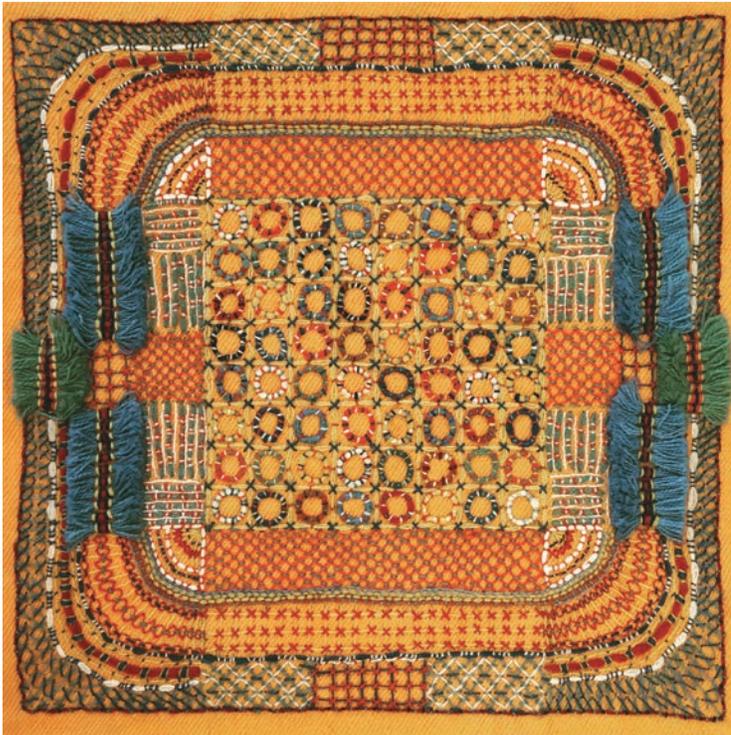
Iranian quilting is definitely different than western quilting. “Keep in mind that Iranians write from right to left, which creates a different design perspective. The colors and design elements may be different than western choices and may even appear strange and busy,” explains Gilder. “Plain and simple doesn’t mean much here—the more decorative and colorful, the better.”

When it comes to exhibitions, Patchiran routinely hosts national exhibitions and has participated in several international ones. “It has taken a while for my students to grasp the concept of copyrighted work, international exhibition requirements, and creating an original work rather than simply making a quilt from a pattern. The concept of a

Michelle Gilder

**Contemporary Embroidery inspired by traditional Pateh Doozi**

12.5 x 12.5 inches | 2020

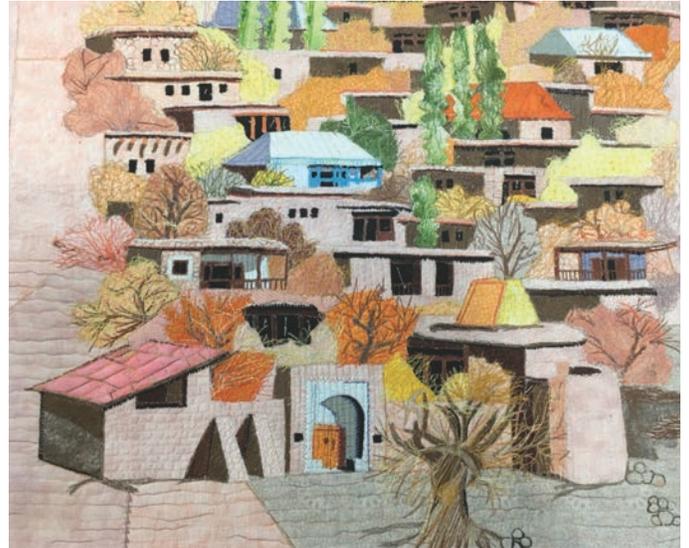


Zahra Yazdananah

***Ode to Parviz Kalandari***

Detail | 2018

Photo by Michelle Gilder

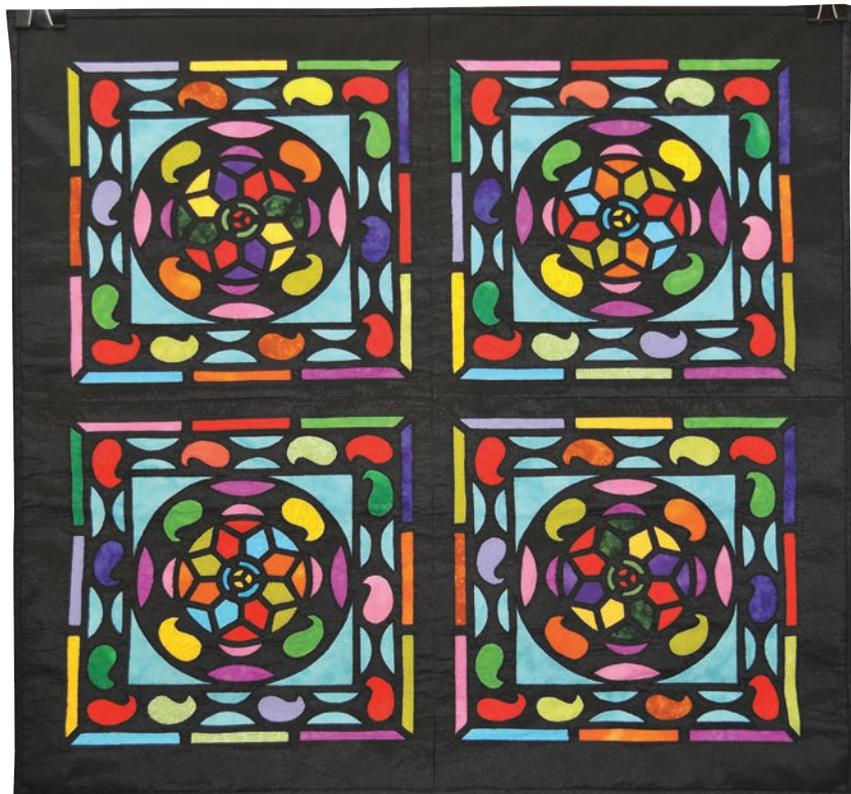


copyright has a different cultural connotation. In Iran, to copy a master craftsman is to pay homage," says Gilder. "To encourage participation by as many students as possible, we enter original works into competition and show quilts derived from another artist's pattern as exhibition pieces."

Gilder and three other expatriates from different countries felt they needed to organize a more extensive group to coordinate the work being done and started Middle East Quilt Artists (MEQA). Their goal is to encourage more nationals in the Middle East to learn quilting and exhibit their work internationally.

To date, more than 5,000 students nationwide have benefitted from in-person classes, but Patchiran extends far beyond the walls of its modest brick-and-mortar facility. Patchiran classes are available on national television broadcasts and through educational DVDs. The organization also

see "Patchiran" on page 34



Zahra Seifi

***Mamaghan***

30 x 30 inches | 2007

Photo by Michelle Gilder

Selections from

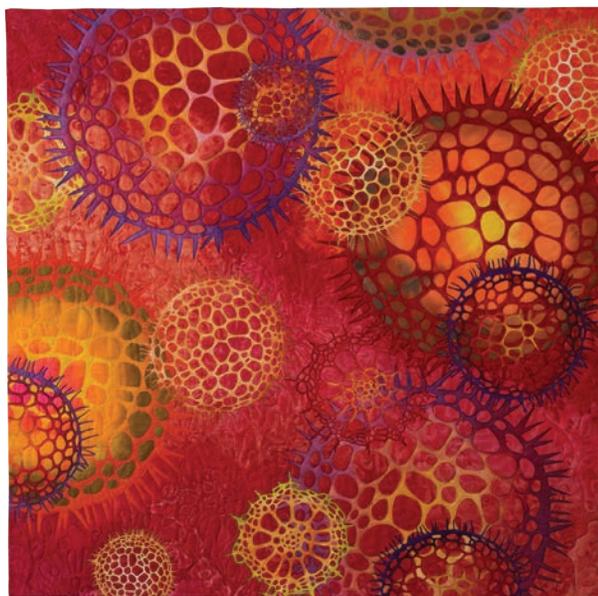
# MICROSCOPE

The known world stretches beyond what we see with the unaided eye. Microscopes, magnifying glasses, and virtual imaging techniques reveal a world of complex beauty that provides artistic inspiration. Works in this exhibition explore subjects at high magnification, capture tiny wonders at the microscopic level, or zoom in on larger objects to show small details.

The juror for *Microscope* is Linden Gledhill, an artist and scientist who explores the physical world at different image scales and fragments of time. The exhibition benefactor is Frank Klein.

The first installation of *Microscope* was at the 2021 Quilt Festival/Houston. It will tour through December 2024. For exhibition details, including upcoming venues to see *Microscope* in person, visit [saqa.com/microscope](http://saqa.com/microscope).

*Note: Contact venues prior to visiting to ensure they are open.*



Sandy Gregg  
***Channeling Ernst Haeckel 3***  
43 x 43 inches | 2017

Photo by Joe Ofria

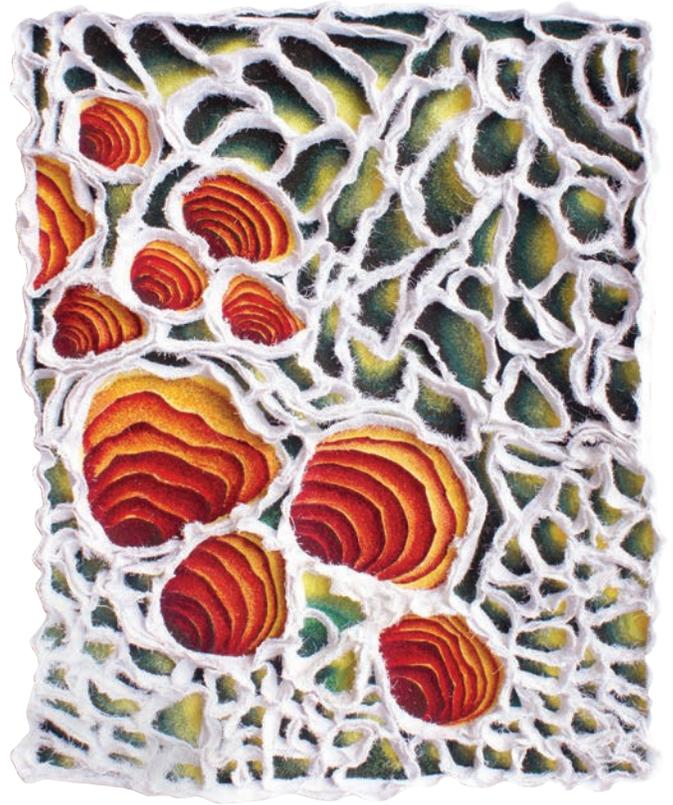


Debra E. Shaw  
***Coagulation***  
39.5 x 30.5 inches | 2021



Bob Mosier  
*Xylem Plant Cell*  
36 x 24 inches | 2021

Inspiration photo by Dr. David Furness



Deborah Haviland  
*Cotton's Secret*  
42 x 34.5 inches | 2021

Inspiration photo by Mike Rice, Jr.



Margaret Lowers Abramshe  
*DNA*  
38 x 35 inches | 2020



Donna Lee Rice  
*Intensify*  
47 x 33 inches | 2021

# Colleen Ansbaugh

Midwest artist sets joyful path to success

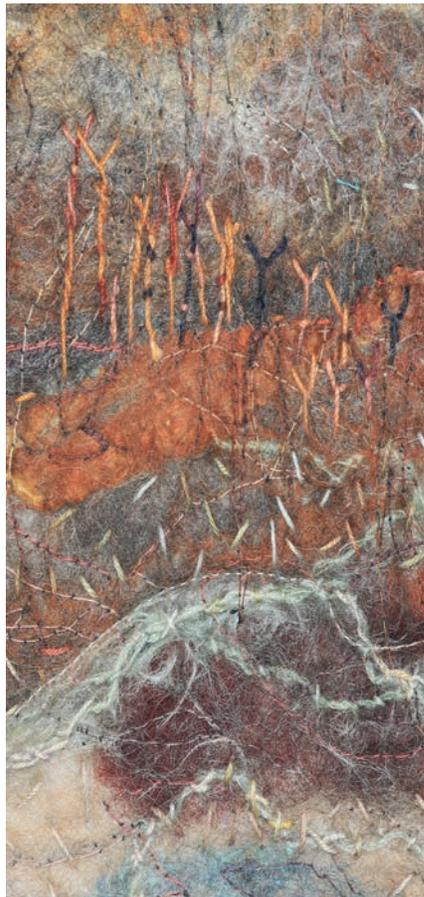
*Colleen Ansbaugh works in her studio with input from Lily, one of two canine studio assistants.*

Photo by Robert Ansbaugh

by ZJ Humbach



**Snow Walk**  
30 x 18 inches | 2019



**Snow Walk**  
Detail

Life in the middle of the Nicolet National Forest in northern Wisconsin is both beautiful and challenging. The scenic views of ridges, trees, and boulders provide unlimited inspiration. The lack of high-speed internet and distributive phone service are minor irritations that are a way of life for the “up North crowd,” which includes Colleen Ansbaugh of Wabeno, Wisconsin. She and her husband, Chip, live a simple life on the shore of Lake Otter with two spoiled spaniels, Lily and Misty.

Ansbaugh retired five years ago after spending twenty years in the industrial cut and sew industry. Her responsibilities as a fabric converter included setting up and dyeing greige goods. While employed by an office furniture manufacturing company, Ansbaugh was involved with improving fire retardant fabric finishes and the wearability of office furniture. Additionally, she served on the corporate design team, which picked out colors, textures, finishes, and fabrics for office

furniture. Ansbaugh also worked in data management for thirteen years.

Since retiring, Ansbaugh devotes more time to helping others and promoting the quilting arts. For over five years, she has been one of the two Illinois-Wisconsin SAQA regional representatives. During that time, she worked on two exhibitions. *Blue and Other Hues* was held in conjunction with a local jazz festival in a big, beautiful community building in Plymouth, Wisconsin. “We wanted to encourage all regional SAQA members to participate, particularly those who had never exhibited their work. Anyone could submit an entry, and there were no entry fees. Whatever they wanted to turn in, we accepted. Blue was great, jazzy was great—we just wanted participation. They only had to pay shipping costs.”

The latest exhibition, *Midwest Views*, is a juried exhibition that showcases the states of Illinois and Wisconsin. “We were able to work with the Maryland-North Carolina region and hitchhike on their printed catalog, *Imagining the View*. This joint effort promoted both of our shows.”

Ansbaugh’s other passion focuses her efforts much farther from home. She is actively involved with Project Advocacy, a program that teaches African women embroidery techniques as a means to support themselves through free world trade.

“These women have never been exposed to needle arts,” says Ansbaugh. “In 2021, I assembled fifteen of their embroidered blocks into a quilt titled *Zimbabwe Covid* that is now on display in Wilmington, North Carolina, to raise awareness of this important program. I then did another quilt featuring one embroidered block for their benefit auction.”

Retirement also enables Ansbaugh to spend three to four hours each day in her studio, located on the middle level of her home that is built into the hillside. “I no longer have coworkers and a boss. Instead, the dogs are my constant helpers and supervisors and tell me what to do,” quips Ansbaugh. “Don’t put anything on the floor. They will lay on it!”

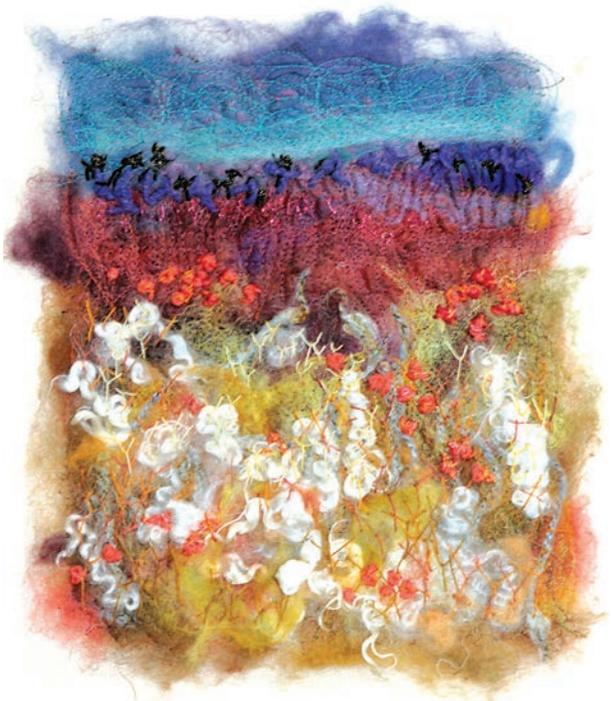
The studio features two waist-high tables, one for ironing and another for cutting, constructed from racking systems and Formica tops. The shelves are adjustable, and more can be added as desired. “My fabric is stored on another open-shelf racking system. I used to use plastic bins but could never get at my stash easily. Now I don’t have to remember what’s in each bin, unstack it, and repack it. I put up white curtains to hide the mess and to keep the light from fading my fabrics.”

The remaining space is occupied by sewing machines. “I have an older 17-inch Nolting Fun Quilter longarm machine for finishing my traditional cotton bed quilts. I bought it used, and it works great. I can’t use it on my wool pieces, though, as the hopping foot catches. For those, I use my older Pfaff domestic machine.”

The studio has lots of windows that overlook the lake. “The natural light is what makes my studio wonderful, and I am surrounded by inspiration. I can’t help being captivated by the landscape. Glaciers carved out a massive trail along the Great Lakes and littered the area with huge boulders. In addition to woodlands that change with the seasons, we have marshes and bogs, which are my favorites. White winter snow piled on top of bouncy burgundy-colored bog bushes is extremely fascinating to me.”



**Deer Creek**  
30 x 18 inches | 2019



**Way Side**  
14 x 11 inches | 2016



**Coast Line**

12 x 12 inches | 2020

Part of Ansbaugh's routine is to paint for one full day each week, using either watercolors or acrylics, to expand her color knowledge. "Originally, I painted everything as realistically as possible. As I explored painting styles, I found I was drawn to impressionism and started incorporating that style into my fabric artwork," Ansbaugh says. She finds that pursuing new mediums and new environments spurs her creative soul. Besides painting, she enjoys photographing the nearby landscape. "My photos are my starting point. I use them to make simple sketches that are very basic to capture the general shape of the landscape."

Then it's on to the wool. "I steam, roll, and felt, and then cut into shapes, but not necessarily in that order. It just keeps going together. I use woven

wool and rovings and layer the colors to create an impressionistic piece. The rovings tend to have a life of their own, so you have to herd them up and keep them in place. I find the best way is to place four or five felting pads underneath and move the pads as needed while I punch. I prefer this to using my felting machine, as it's easier to control the movement."

Next, Ansbaugh steams the piece by wetting it with hot water and soap and rolls and unrolls it multiple times. Then she felts it again by hand to get it as flat as possible before layering the piece with cotton batting and a backing.

"I used to collect these old linen tablecloths from thrift shops and overdye them, but I found there was no resale market, so now I use them as backings for all of my art quilts.

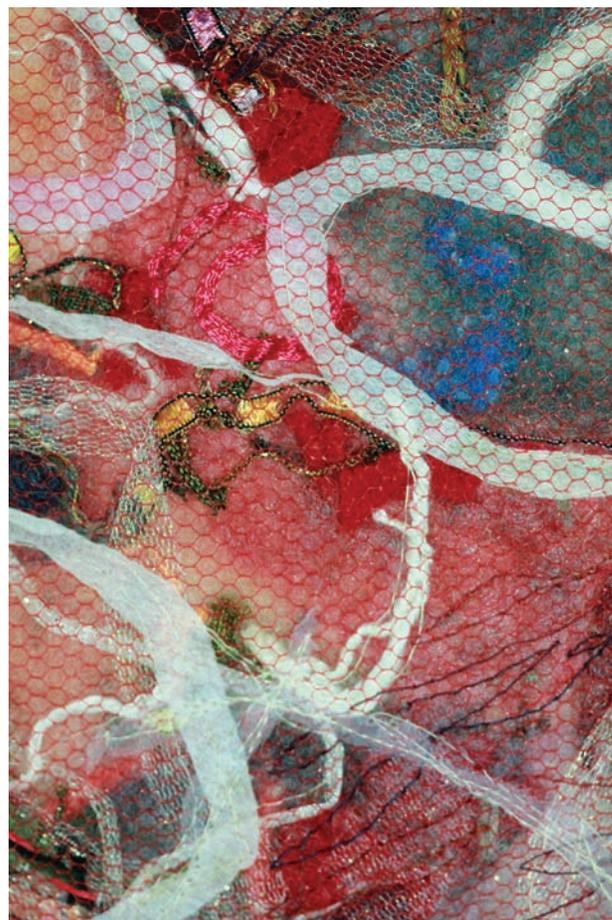
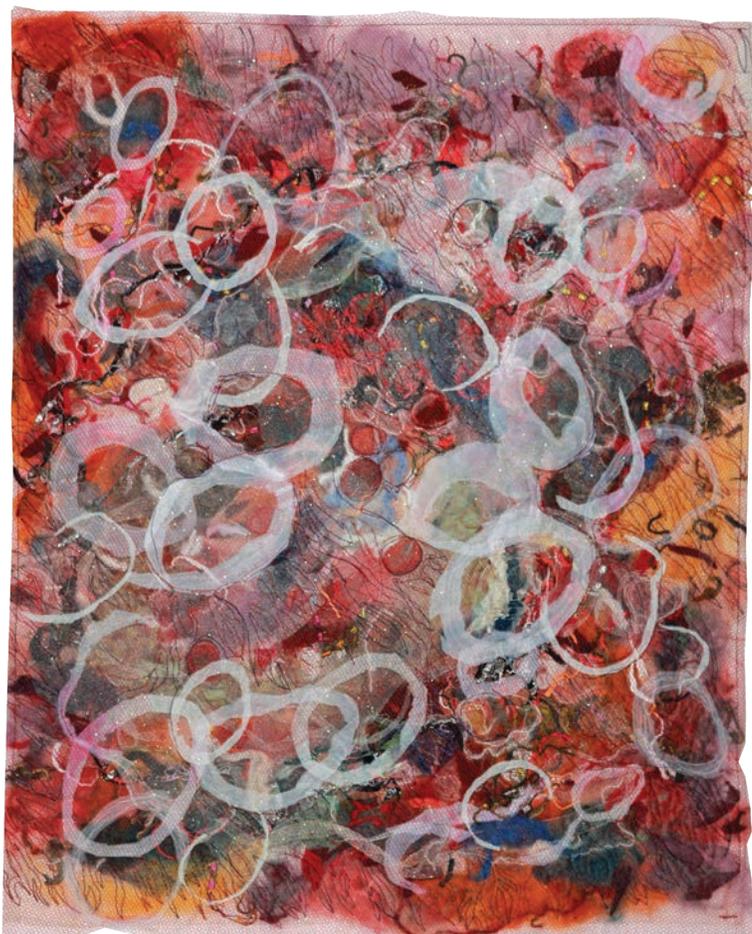
Some have holes and coffee or gravy stains—oh well, it's a back, who cares," laughs Ansbaugh. "I either cut around these defects or leave them."

Her signature is lots of threadwork, relying on pearl cotton in a variety of weights. Her favorite technique is to start with a simple utility stitch, perhaps a blanket stitch or overcast stitch, and distort it so it doesn't look like the original design. Machine stitches create shapes, such as riverbeds and hills, while hand stitches add the details.

Ansbaugh typically works in a series of five or six pieces, spending one to two weeks on each piece. She prefers working with smaller pieces that she can do in her lap while sitting in her easy chair. "The work just evolves. I only start with a general concept and size and let it flow. I have no idea how it will end, just the direction. The pieces relate more to each other with a common size, color, or theme. Then I drift in another direction."

The smaller 12 x 12-inch pieces feature a finished edge that is either zigzagged or buttonhole stitched with yarn and mounted onto a museum-style wrapped canvas. The larger 20 x 30-inch pieces have a ruffled edge of exposed netting. "The netting gives a soft appearance, like fog rolling in around the artwork. It's a fun finish. We [quilters] get hung up on edges, either a traditional binding or faced artist edge. An unusual edge that is unique to your work makes your piece stand out."

Like many quilt artists, Ansbaugh hand dyes her wool. "I loved the look of hand-dyed wool but couldn't afford it, so I learned how to do it myself. I quickly realized that hot water is a relative term when creating dye-fast fabric," recalls Ansbaugh. "I once pressed some older fabric with a new professional steam iron, and the fabric



### **Hot Sugar Cells**

30 x 24 inches | 2017

### **Hot Sugar Cells**

Detail

bled. An old label on thread that stated 'boilfast thread' gave me an idea. I put all of my hand-dyed fabric into boiling water and was amazed at how much dye came out. Now I boil all of my fabric as part of my dyeing process."

Occasionally Ansbaugh even dyes her own thread. "My mother loved to crochet, and after she passed, nobody wanted her thread. I had boxes of natural crochet cotton and couldn't bear to throw it out. It looks similar to pearl cotton and handles like embroidery floss, although it has more resistance and is a bit more difficult to pull. It works, so I decided to use it. I always have a little bit of dye left over from dyeing fabric so I use it to dye the crochet cotton."

Ansbaugh is a self-taught artist who makes it a point to be independent.

She prefers to focus on her own ideas, approaches, and work. "I like to keep it fresh and not be stuck in a rut. I used to work with cottons and silk and took a sharp turn in the road with wool. A friend's brother has a sheep ranch, and she had more rovings than she could ever use. She gave me some, got me hooked on wool, and now I have an unlimited source. I submitted my first wool piece, *Hot Sugar Cells*, to *Quilt National* in 2017 and was accepted, so I guess that proves I took the right turn."

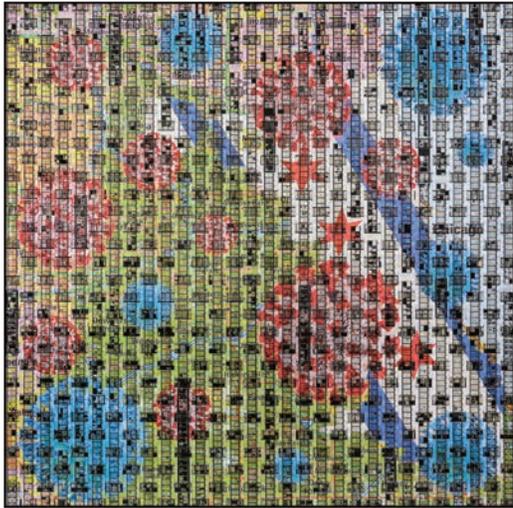
This new path with wool has created a completely different look and feel in Ansbaugh's work. She still does cotton pieces, but likes to mix it up with different fabrics, particularly vintage and found materials. "I think my next venture will be using these fabrics together in a collage. I like

to explore and see what something is going to do. My advice whenever someone offers you something is to just say thank you, use it, and see where it takes you."

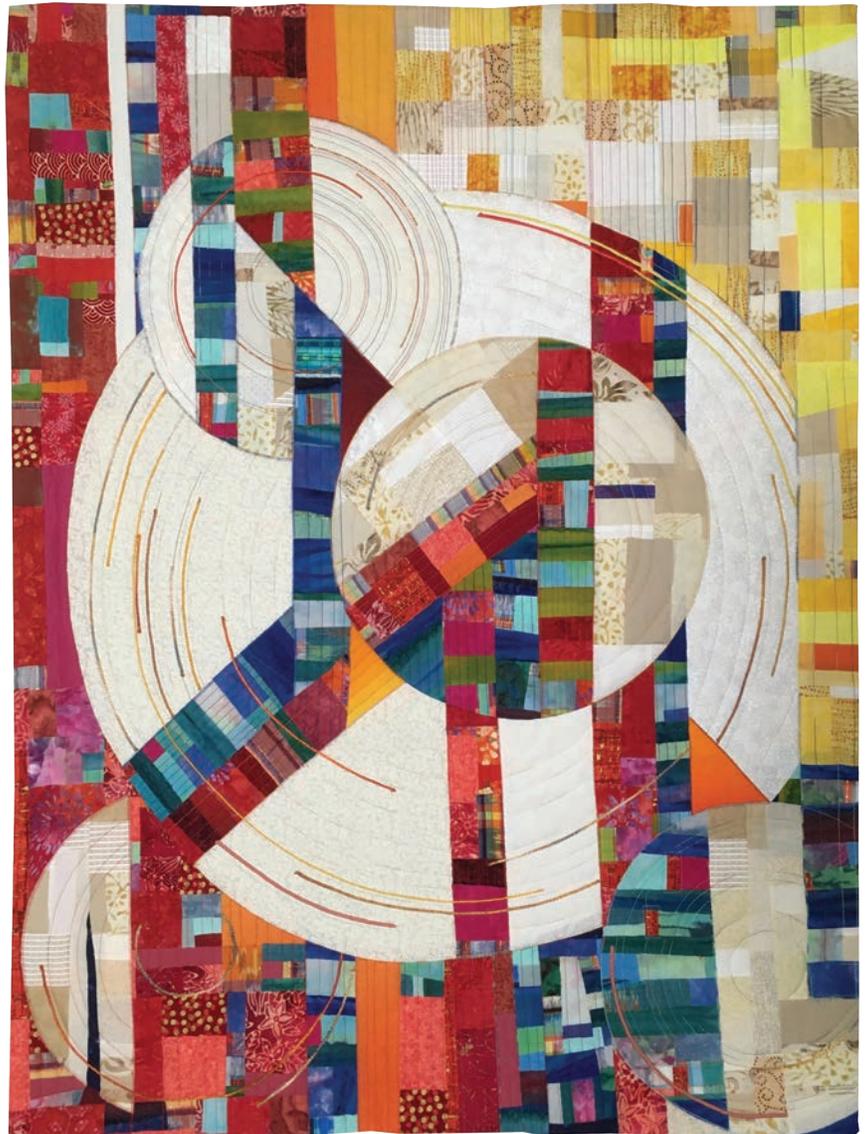
Ansbaugh's life since retiring is everything she imagined: helping others, creating her art, and being surrounded by the beauty of the northern landscape. "Every day is a blessing. I make an effort to remind myself of the goodness in life as I create. It's all about enjoying the process and less about finishing the piece. My favorite piece? It's definitely the next one!" ■

*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.*

# *Emergence: Cautious Steps*



Arturo Alonzo Sandoval  
*Confined City in the Age of  
Covid-19, No. 1: Chicago*  
59.5 x 60 inches | 2020



Anne Bellas  
*Temps du confinement  
(Time of lockdown)*  
42 x 32 inches | 2020



Karen Schoch  
*Choose to Stand in your  
Strength and Dignity*  
44.75 x 31.5 inches | 2020



Maggie  
Vanderweit  
*We're Zoomin'*  
6 x 8 inches | 2021



Irene Koroluk  
*Traversing the Night*  
31 x 46 inches | 2020

Photo by Bruce Champion



Roxanne Schwartz

*Waiting*  
53 x 31 inches | 2020

Photo by Dana Davis



Lena Meszaros

*We are all Lights*  
42 x 36 inches | 2020

Photo by Flavia Raddavero

*Susan Lenz led a three-day public art project entitled The Clothesline Project on the grounds of the historic Frijole Ranch house. The interactive activity was part of her time as an artist-in-residence at Guadalupe Mountains National Park in west Texas.*

# UP IN THE AIR

## Research, persistence yield well-matched art residencies

by Susan Lenz

I wrote this article as I sat in a provided studio apartment as the artist-in-residence (AIR) at Guadalupe Mountains National Park in west Texas. For a month in late summer 2021, I hiked the park's many trails, enjoyed beautiful sunrises and Milky Way nights, and sought inspiration for new work—or at least refreshed my creative spirit in designated wilderness areas.

Basically, my AIR was a slice-of-heaven-on-earth in exchange for presenting a three-day public art activity called *The Clothesline Project*. I adore art residencies and actively seek out similar opportunities. I've learned plenty about how to find the right fit.

I don't just apply to any AIR program. I research an opportunity before I attach the first image to an application. Thousands of programs worldwide offer art residencies. Some only accept musicians, writers, or dancers. Some are strictly for artists working in glass or clay. There are invitation-only

residencies. Some residencies last six months or a year, while others have a maximum two-week stay. Some have hefty participation fees, others are fully funded, and still others provide a stipend. Each program is different, and no one website lists all of them. Before you dive into the residency process, it is important to know why you want to be an AIR. Reasons are far-ranging and include:

- Educational opportunity to learn a specific skill or get feedback from experienced mentors
- Time and space to develop a new series or create work for a specific exhibition proposal
- Isolation from the pressures and stresses of your day-to-day life
- Immersion in different culture or environment
- Chance to focus on personal insights and new directions
- Avenue to engage a wider audience

- Ability to crowdsource materials or find participants for a hands-on project
- Opportunity to present a workshop, give a lecture, collaborate with other artists, and/or network
- Desire to write a book

Knowing what you want from an art residency helps you to narrow down your list of potential programs. It is equally important to be acquainted with the mission of each hosting program and what their expectations are for accepted artists. Almost every program provides this information. It might not be clearly defined, but it's there. You can learn plenty by reading the residency information and application requirements, but I also gain insight from website pages outlining the history of the program, the nonprofit organization's mission statement, linked articles documenting community outreach, and even online

*Susan Lenz's hike along Devil's Hall Trail led her to this stunning ravine of 100-foot-high limestone cliffs. The hike was one of many outdoor experiences she had while an artist-in-residence at Guadalupe Mountains National Park.*



reviews. Taking a look at the staff listing is a good idea too.

When I visit an art residency program's website, I look for a roster of past participants. Take, for example, the Chianti Foundation's art residency program in Marfa, Texas. I visited this unique art mecca on my return trip home. It was a wonderful visit, but I will not be spending time and money on an application. Why? The three artists accepted for 2021 all had work in past Whitney Biennials at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, international museum exposure, and significant grants. Most of the artists accepted in the last several years have MFAs from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, The Cooper Union in New York City, or other top-tier art schools. I lack this sort of resumé and would not be a good fit for this program, but there are plenty of other promising programs for me.

The Artist Communities Alliance website ([www.artistcommunities.org](http://www.artistcommunities.org)) is a good source to discover AIR programs. Another listing hub is Rivet ([www.rivet.es](http://www.rivet.es)). Many AIR programs use CaFÉ to receive submissions ([www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org)). On CaFÉ, I use the available search functions to narrow selection by criteria such as upcoming deadlines or even a particular country. On CaFÉ, there's an option for art residencies. When I find a potential program, I sign up for the organization's newsletter. That way, even if I don't apply immediately, I have information sent directly to me in the future.

Once I've found a program that seems like a good match, I study the application requirements. If a

question has a specific word count, I don't write more. If images or documents are to be formatted in a specific way, I do so. There is no sense in breaking the rules. Most programs are highly competitive; a selection committee can easily dismiss applications from artists who didn't bother to follow guidelines.

Many applications require letters of recommendation or at least names and contact information for references for you and your artwork. Be very diligent in this step. Make sure your references have agreed to provide this service, are easily reached, and have a habit of responding before the application's deadline.

Quality images of top-notch artwork are essential. Photos showing your neighbor holding up your art quilt in your living room aren't a good idea. Select your strongest, cohesive body of recent work. If you don't have good pictures, hire a professional photographer. These images are generally the first thing a jury panel evaluates. For many AIRs, this is round one in the selection process.

Round two is just as important. These are Word documents/PDFs which can include a resumé, project proposal, statement of intent, biographical information, and/or an image checklist. After all, many selection committees have three types of members: an organization administrator, a local community leader, and an artist. Written paragraphs need to appeal to the brain, not just visually to the eye. I find it best to approach this part of the application with the hosting organization's goals in mind. I want my application to be in alignment with the programming, mission statement, and overall values of the AIR's organization.

When writing a project proposal, I look for ways to directly connect to the specific place, surrounding community, and how my ideas will benefit more people than just myself. When applying for a residency in an isolated, rural location, I explain why this change of environment is important to my future work and how that work will positively reflect back on the organization. These documents provide a way for me to demonstrate the appropriateness of my

application and the fact that I did “my homework” regarding the opportunity. If possible, I explain why I want the art residency but also what my art residency can and will do for the organization. It is also a good idea to have a non-artist friend review your application. Additional insights and suggestions can lead to a better application.

Elizabeth Jackson, program manager of Interpretations, Education, and Visitor Services at Guadalupe Mountains National Park, says: “We are looking for quality art, but also how it will engage the public. We are looking for proposals that connect with the park and how that work will translate to our visitors.”

Jackson found my proposal to be spot on to earn a turn as an AIR. For three days over Labor Day weekend on the grounds of the historic Frijole Ranch house, I provided my hands-on activity. Park visitors traced and cut out

their hand prints on the back of found fabric to which I had previously ironed a heat-activated adhesive. These hand prints were ironed onto my stash of vintage household linens and hung up. Conversations focused on the benefit of line drying clothing. The project enhanced the experience of walking through the old stone structure. It was easy to imagine the early pioneer families who once settled the area. They certainly did their laundry using the natural spring water and a nearby clothesline. Participants told stories of their grandparents using wash boards and were amazed that their children had never used a clothesline or an iron. My art residency was a win-win for the park and for me. Best of all, it engaged the public, an important part of the park’s mission for its AIR program.

I think it is helpful to note that even though I’ve had more than a

few successful art residencies, I do not bat 50 percent on my applications. Last year, my application for an art residency at Shenandoah National Park was one of more than 800 applications submitted for six spots. Twelve people were interviewed, including me, but I wasn’t one of the top six.

I enjoy being part of AIR programs because of the change of pace, the time for self-reflection, and the chance to have new experiences far different from my normal lifestyle. I will continue to apply, and I encourage anyone interested to apply too. Do your research and don’t get discouraged. An art residency can change your creative life! ■

*Susan Lenz is a SAQA Juried Artist who resides in Columbia, South Carolina. You can view her work and read her blog at [www.susanlenz.com](http://www.susanlenz.com).*

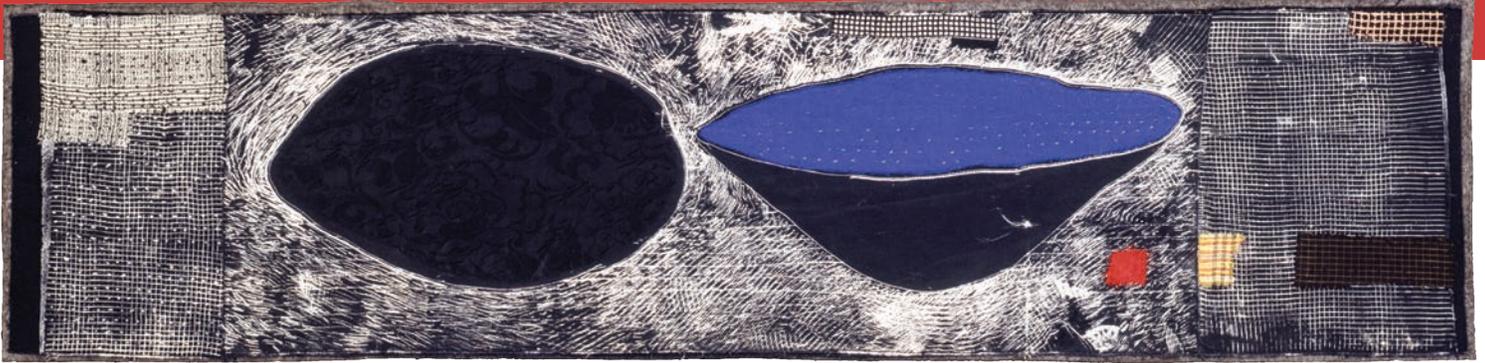
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*A Lake, A Bowl* by Dorothy Caldwell

## SAQA delivers the power of art

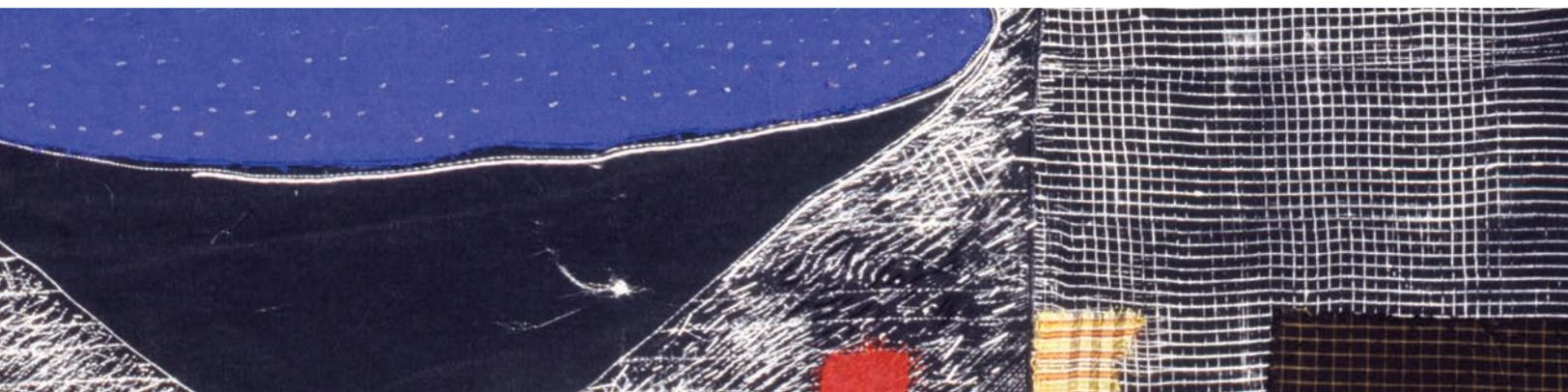
Help keep SAQA exhibitions on the road. Your support connects art quilts with museums and other venues around the world. In 2021, with many venues closed due to Covid-19, SAQA still traveled 12 exhibitions to 23 venues, launched 6 new virtual galleries, and had 24 regional exhibitions traveling.

Your donation helps make this possible. Our annual exhibition cost is approximately \$225,000, but only \$50,000 is earned through jury fees, catalog sales, artwork sales, and exhibition rental fees. That's why you are vital to our mission.

Help hundreds of thousands of people continue to view our exhibitions.

Invest in the power of art.

Details: [www.saqa.com/donate](http://www.saqa.com/donate)



*Juried Artist Showcase* is a gallery of work produced by artists who have each been named a Juried Artist of SAQA. A Juried Artist 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.

**Julia Graber**  
*Balcony at Twilight*  
12 x 10 inches | 2021



**Linda Waddle**  
*Still Standing*  
42 x 55 inches | 2017



**Catherine Timm**

*Festival of Fall Colours*

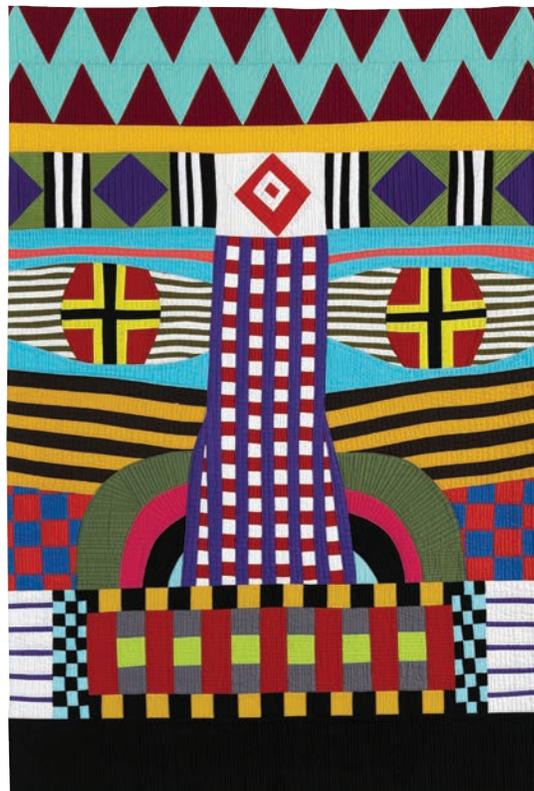
28 x 35 inches | 2020



**Cara Gulati**

*Undulant Blossom*

51 x 38 inches | 2020



**Maria Shell**

*MASK*

40 x 30 inches | 2020

Photo by Chris Arend

# Whisper Challenge fosters connectivity in Oregon

by Jean Wells Keenan

Members in our Central Oregon Local Connection participated in a second Whisper Quilt challenge in 2020, a successful activity that led to exhibition opportunities in 2021.

With the arrival of Covid, it turned out to be a perfect way for our group of more than thirty people to stay connected and creative while also immersing new members into the group.

Here is the process we used:

- Each participant agreed to make a vertical quilt that measured 30 x 18 inches in their assigned month and to keep the quilt a secret.

- Participating members were randomly divided into groups of five, and the project lasted five months.
- The first person in each group created a 30 x 18-inch quilt in a one-month time frame. They had the freedom of a blank slate to create whatever they wanted. A label was not added at this time. We asked members to journal about their piece as they worked so that they could write an artist statement. The quilt was then passed to the second person in each group with no conversation.

- The second person responded to the first quilt and created a piece. The response could be visual—color, line, or content—or conceptual. The second person kept the first quilt until the reveal get-together. The second quilt was silently passed to the third person in the group.

This process continued until all five quilts were completed. In each group, the last maker had the fourth and fifth quilts at the end.

The reveal was interesting because everyone got to see earlier responses. There were surprises! As

## Group 3



The SAQA Local Connection of Central Oregon held a Whisper Challenge where participants were divided into groups of five. Each person made a quilt measuring 30 x 18 inches, and all were completed in 2020. Results from three of the groups are shown here.

### Group 3, left to right

**Betty Gientke / *Urban Reflection***

**Kathy Kutansky / *Because of Friends***

**Mary Stiewig / *Color of the Woods***

**Martha Phair Sanders / *Whispering Past***

**Leotie Richards / *Japanophilia***

the reveal progressed, members read their artist statements. Conversations arose about process as well as content and technique. Members then took their own pieces home and added a label with the following information: title of quilt, maker, group number, and position in the group.

These quilts were shown at the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show in 2021 and exhibited on the gallery wall in The Stitchin' Post. We hope to have them travel to other shows as well.

Participants had a positive experience to the challenge. Robin Green said, "I felt a kinship with the quiltmaker [ahead of me] as if she was cheering me on while I looked at her quilt day after day." And Betty J. Gientke said, "Being first in my group, I wanted to create something very unlike me." ■

*Jean Wells Keenan is a SAQA Juried Artist who resides in Sisters, Oregon. You can see her work at [www.jeanwellsquilts.com](http://www.jeanwellsquilts.com).*

**Group 4, left to right:**  
**Robyn Gold / *Home Sweet Gold 2***  
**Karen Hewer / *Barkin' at a Knot***  
**Jean Wells / *The Ghost Tree***  
**Donna Rice / *Full Bloom***  
**Robin Green / *Prism***

**Group 5, left to right:**  
**Marion Shimoda / *Pieced, Appliquéd & Stitched***  
**Patti Stewart / *Sewing Circle***  
**Joyce Brown / *Working with the Chakras***  
**Jody Rusconi / *A Gift***  
**Dianne Browning / *Light in the Canyon***

**Group 4**



**Group 5**

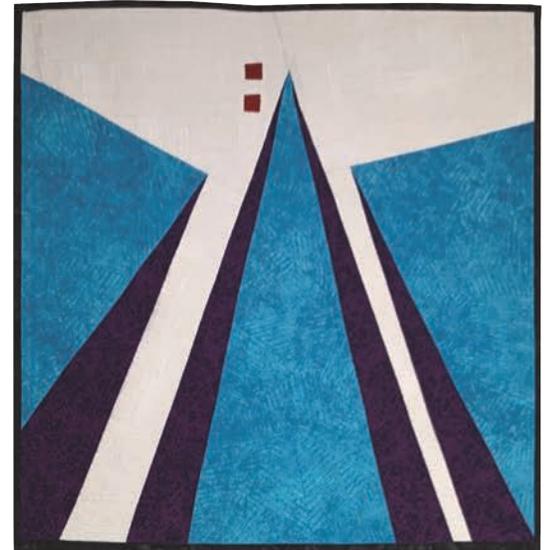


# *Emergence: Hope Prevails*

Aynex Mercado

***Waiting for Better Times***

30.5 x 35.5 inches | 2020



Jayni Bloch

***Dawn***

24.75 x 24.75 inches | 2021

Photo by Gerald Bloch

Cynthia Steward

***Eruption***

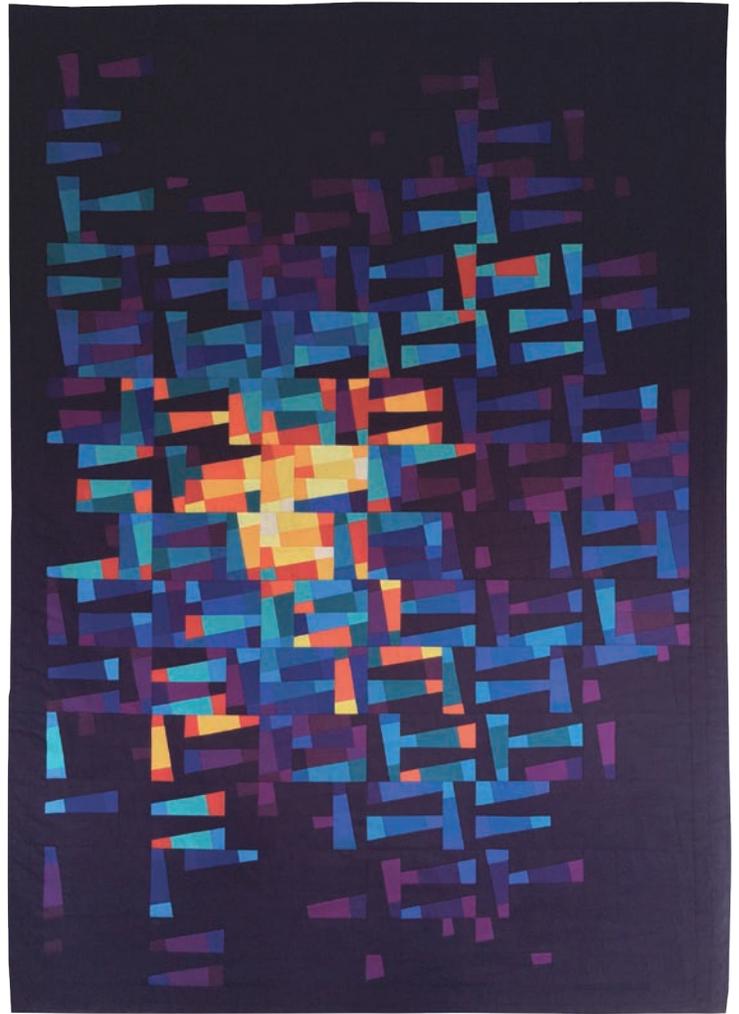
59 x 19 inches | 2020



Betty Busby  
*Awakening*  
31 x 16 x 16 inches | 2019

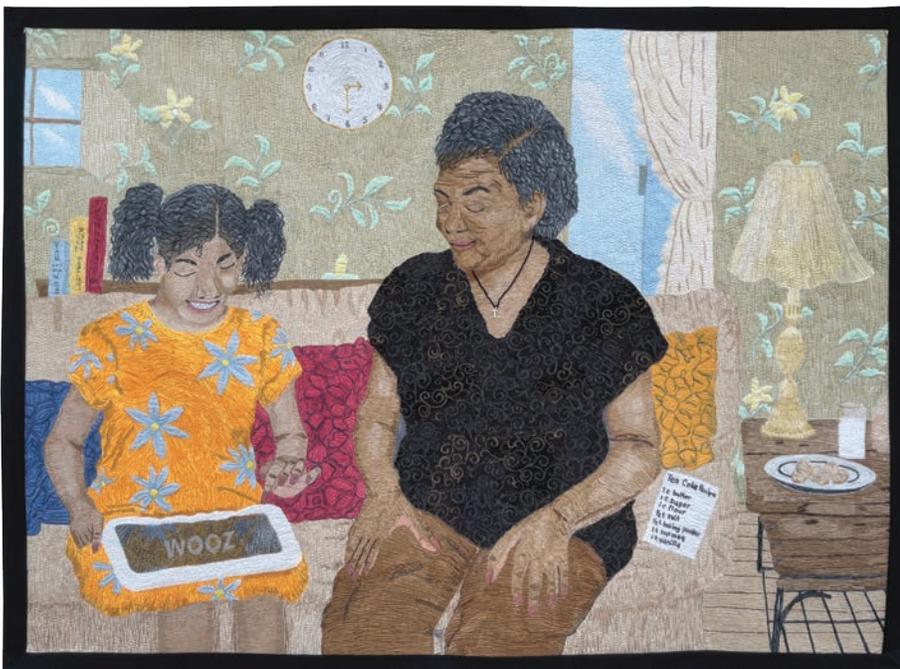
Alexandra Kingswell

*Hope*  
73 x 53 inches | 2018



Edith Gross

*Connected: Give a Little, Get a Lot*  
30 x 40.5 inches | 2021



Denise Konicek

*Distant Horizon*  
47 X 47 inches | 2020

Photo by Mark Flannery



Kestrel Michaud  
*Great Egret*  
26 x 10 inches | 2006

# USE ILLUSTRATION TO MAKE YOUR ART QUILTS SPEAK VOLUMES

by Kestrel Michaud

From digital icons to political cartoons, from comic books to even fine art, the art of illustration is synonymous with visual communication.

It's storytelling through art: a symbol indicates when to cross the road; a painting of a knight fighting a dragon tells a tale; and a drawing in an IKEA instruction booklet shows how to assemble a TV stand. Illustrations are works of art that effectively communicate the artist's story, emotion, concept, process, interpretation of a text or idea, and more—all without words.

Historically, illustrations were first created as artists' visual explanation of a topic for inclusion in printed media, such as magazines, books, teaching materials, promotional posters, or brochures. Contemporary illustrations can be created from a wide range of techniques and styles, including—but not limited to—drawing, painting, digital media, collage, quilting, or even 3D modeling. Depending on their purpose, illustrations can be realistic or abstracted, technical or impressionistic. Anything goes, as long as the artwork communicates without a written explanation.

Although not all illustrations are fine art, the concept of communicating through visual means has a practical use for fine artists: there's no guarantee the judge, jurors, or show attendees will read our artist statements, especially for the larger shows that receive hundreds of submissions. If we incorporate the principles behind the art of illustration into our fine art, we will no longer be reliant on the accompanying write-up to explain our work. Our illustrated quilts will speak for themselves.

Since all art is visual and illustration is visual communication, all art is—to some degree—illustrated. Illustrations can have varying degrees of complexity and effectiveness, but those two factors are not necessarily correlated. *Great Egret* is an example that falls on the simple end of the spectrum. This was a fabric picture with no stitching that I made in high school when I first explored fabric as an artistic medium. The subject and technical construction is uncomplicated. It's a great egret sitting in a tree, made from 150 pieces of fused appliqué fabric. It's not a photograph or a photorealistic reproduction; I've interpreted this bird in my own

artistic style, and yet it is still recognizable as a great egret. Simple? Yes. Effective? Absolutely.

Another simple yet effective illustration is *Fragrant Climb* by SAQA member Ellen Lindner. A staircase climbs from the lower right to the upper left of the quilt. Giant leaves overlay the stairs in the lower left while clumps of flowers cascade down from the top right. Lindner's style is much looser than my own—the leaves and flowers are stylized interpretations of their living counterparts—yet the fragrant, tropical vibe is unmistakable. The splash of large, lush leaves; the cluster of oversized, gaudy flowers; and the bright, tropical color palette make it easy to imagine a beach house in the Florida Keys. The viewer “gets it” without any written description necessary.

A less simple example of an effective illustration is *Adopted*, an acrylic painting I made during one of my illustration classes in college. *Adopted* is imaginative realism, meaning it is a realistic artwork depicting an imaginary subject—in this case, a dragon. A mother duck has her ducklings out for a swim, but one of her hatchlings is not like the others. The poor little dragon is clearly unsure about getting wet.

I wanted my audience to relate to this imaginary creature, so I gave my baby dragon a very human gesture. His eyes are as big as they can get, his neck is fully extended to give him a closer look at the water, he's holding Mom's feathers with both claws, and even his tail is wrapped around her neck for safety. The little dragon is cute in a way any child would be when faced with something unknown. We understand and sympathize with his predicament. *Adopted* is slightly more complicated



Ellen Lindner  
*Fragrant Climb*  
36 x 24 inches | 2017



Kestrel Michaud  
*Adopted*  
10 x 8 inches | 2012

due to the inclusion of a creature that doesn't exist, but it still exemplifies an effective illustration.

On the far end of the complexity spectrum is *The Last Call*, a quilt that I have designed but not yet created as of writing this article. The image printed here is my digital appliqué template. *The Last Call* is a very complicated illustration, because my goal was to convey an intangible concept: bad tidings, foreboding danger, and a general sense of impending doom. There is no physical reference for feelings, so my challenge in designing this picture was to get the viewer to feel a specific emotion by using things that *do* exist as physical objects. There are, however, clichés, omens, and symbols that reference bad luck, ill tidings, and creepy otherworldliness. There's quite a bit to unpack with this design, so let's break it down.

"It was a dark and stormy night" is a classic literary cliché, but an actual dark and stormy night sure does set an ominous stage. The lightning bolt is connecting the ground, and the glow emanating from where it disappears behind the trees implies something has caught fire. We can't see the fire or what has been damaged, but seeing the visual implication is enough to help set the unsettling mood. The trees themselves are off-kilter. The tilted horizon they suggest adds additional drama. The building is not a high-end venue. It has a broken window, the stone walls are rough, and the wood looks weathered and unkempt. The words on the sign were roughly carved, and the name of this establishment is *The Last Call*—a reference to the final chance to order drinks before a bar closes, but also generally implying "the end is coming." The raven itself portends death,

and illuminating him from below gives the bird a creepy appearance. It also creates an oversized shadow that rises up the side of the building. Even the three-point perspective I used to draw this picture makes viewers feel like they are looking up at a looming specter of evil.

The examples I've shown so far have all been representational leaning toward realism. What about abstract illustrations?

On the uncomplicated end of the illustration spectrum, take a look at Lindner's *Christmas Cactus*. Looking at the technical composition of this quilt, the entire design is created from approximately eighty quadrilateral shapes of fabric spilled across a solid black background. This is an abstract quilt. Yet the color choices and the arrangement of those fabric pieces communicate that the Christmas cactus is in full bloom. What's more, we don't need to see the pot it's in, nor the rest of the room where it's located, nor any indication of light and shadow. Lindner has stripped away all the realistic frippery of the physical plant while still preserving the essence of a Christmas cactus. This is a simple quilt design, but a highly effective illustration.

Conversely, an example of a complex abstract illustration is Lindner's



Kestrel Michaud

*The Last Call* digital template

48 x 36 inches | 2021

*Miscommunication*. Just like *The Last Call*, the idea portrayed by this quilt is intangible. The notion of miscommunication exists as a concept, but the act itself is not a physical object. Communicating the essence of such a concept is challenging. Let's break it down:

The background is made from horizontal strips of repeating shapes that represent speech patterns. All languages are made from repetitious sounds. Even languages we don't understand have a cadence we can hear, and that rhythm is represented by the regimented patterns of parallel lines and evenly spaced dots in the background.

If the background represents communication, the two-colored shapes definitely represent the "mis-". Nothing about these two shapes is the same. One is round and the other is angular. Their colors are on opposite sides of the color wheel. The circular



Ellen Lindner

**Christmas Cactus**

34 x 30 inches | 2021

shape is filled with a disjointed grid pattern while the angular shape is filled with a nebula of color. And yet, the semicircle just barely touches the single corner of the angular orange-and-yellow shape. They meet in the middle, but there is no understanding given or taken. Nothing about the circular shape is carried into the orange shape, or vice versa.

The star of the show is a thick black line taking a path from top to bottom. Just like a reel of film that has been tossed to the floor, this line is all over the place. It has curves and angles, it's thick and thin, and it bends back over itself. If this line were a conversation, all parties involved would be very frustrated with each other.

The design elements used in this quilt are simple, but the amount of planning that went into figuring out how to apply those elements in order

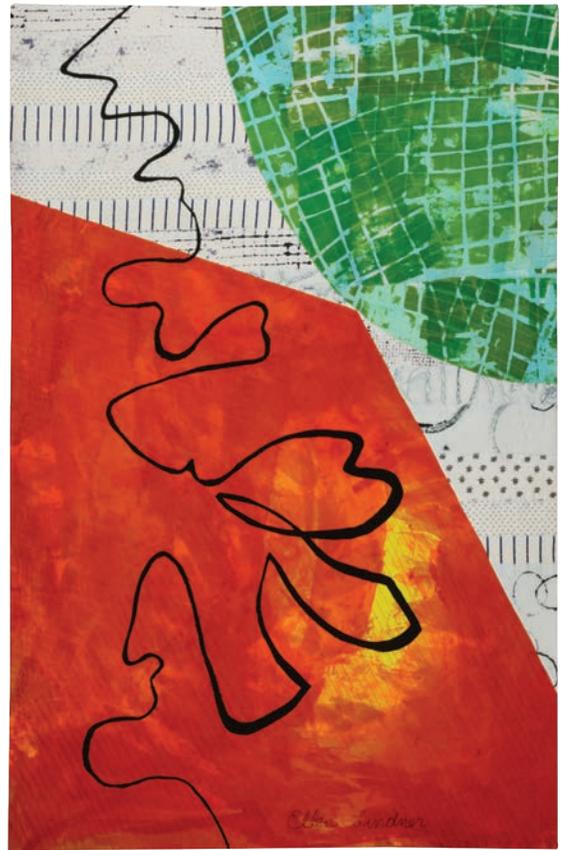
to share the intangible idea of miscommunication makes it a complex work. It's ironic that a quilt named *Miscommunication* communicates that idea so effectively.

**Where to start?**

To start turning your own art into illustrations, start simple. Recreating a photograph in fabric using your own style is a great place to begin.

As the ideas you want to share via your art get more complex, so too will the method needed to communicate them. Brainstorm ideas. What real-life objects relate to your concept? Make spider diagrams or keep lists of ideas. Do Google searches. How have other artists portrayed your concept? Try to incorporate some of those ideas into your design.

The most important advice I can give is to solicit input from others. You are going to have a clear



Ellen Lindner

**Miscommunication**

36 x 24 inches | 2018

understanding of your own art, but the point of making an illustration is for other people to read your creation the same way. There is no shame in asking other people what they think. Get feedback. Run your ideas by friends and family, or post online in the SAQA - Members Only Facebook group.

Making illustrations is a skill learned through exercise just like any other. There are no instruction manuals for creating illustrations from fabric. But for references to creating illustrations in traditional media, two textbooks I had in my illustration class in college were *Fun with a Pencil* and *Creative Illustration*, both by Andrew Loomis. ■

*Kestrel Michaud is a SAQA member who resides in West Melbourne, Florida. You can view her work and read about her classes at [www.kestrelmichaud.com](http://www.kestrelmichaud.com).*



# MOVING OUT

How to know when you need a studio away from home

by Robbi Eklow

My husband and I had a four-bedroom house in the Chicago suburbs for thirty years. My quilting took up a good portion of the space: quilt and fabric storage was in my daughter's room, books in our bedroom, sewing machines and more fabric in my "dry" studio, and my longarm in the basement. I also dyed fabric in the basement. It worked well for us; we each had our own space, mine up and down the stairs and his in the family room and kitchen.

At one point, I looked at a commercial space to move my longarm and quilt stuff. I thought a studio would provide a good place to have people come over and quilt. But I realized that I preferred to be at home in the winter or when it was dark. I didn't think I'd use the studio space enough to justify the rent and the additional internet, electricity, water, and heat bills.

Several years ago, we began researching a move to Omaha, Nebraska, to be near our daughter's family. We'd sell the house, rent an apartment, and figure out what we wanted to do. I didn't want to get rid of all my quilting stuff, especially my full-sized longarm. My friend, Frances Alford, recommended a visit to the Hot Shops Art Center. I stopped in while apartment hunting

in Omaha and found that it felt like home. The Hot Shops building manager told me to keep in touch because studios rented fast. One day, I was offered a studio big enough to accommodate my longarm. The longarm was moved out of my basement and into my new studio.

The Hot Shops Art Center is a special place. It is named after the glass studio, metal foundry, iron forge, and ceramics studio which make up the "hot" core of the facility. These studios are located in a one-story building. Two additional buildings—one three-story structure and one four-story building—are creative spaces for painters, jewelers, tinkerers, an architect, and more. There are about eighty artists in the center. The smallest studios are about 100 square feet; mine is 700 square feet.

The building is open to the public during the day, but artists can be in their studios whenever they want. When artists are there, they usually leave their doors open for visitors. Students tour the center and event rooms are available for weddings, meetings, and other activities, whose attendees often tour the building. If I am on a deadline, at work on my longarm, or just feel antisocial, I can

lock my door and hang a sign that states that I am on a deadline.

Collaboration and education are important in this building, so I've arranged my studio keeping that in mind. There is a window from the hallway into my room, and my longarm is parked in front of it so that visitors can peer in and see a quilt in progress and watch me stitch. Finished quilts hang on the wall opposite the window for visitors to view. My dyed fabrics are arranged on shelves next to my working wall. I left one quadrant mostly open, which is nice if a group comes in, and I enjoy the empty visual space.

Sometimes I do feel like a goldfish, so I moved a stack of storage drawers to provide a "hidden" space so that I can eat lunch in private. Because visitors have started to look in my storage drawers, I keep sharp objects out of the way.

Being surrounded by other artists is great. I can ask someone else their opinion on a quilt and get an answer that is purely artistic, instead of being informed by the quilt police. Once I showed someone my quilt in progress and commented that I could now see a design element I should change, but that it would be a lot of work. He



***Robbi Eklow's 700-square-foot studio at The Hot Shops Art Center in Omaha, Nebraska.***

said something about being an artist who is willing to put in the effort; he was right, so I made the change.

We sometimes borrow tools or supplies from each other. When someone asks me for a scissors, they have to tell me what they are cutting and I pick out the correct implement for them. Other artists have helped me dismantle and repair the longarm.

On the other hand, I'm easily distracted, and it took a while to learn that I can work while someone else visits with me. I can't talk and longarm, but I can talk and bury threads. I even keep sodas in a refrigerator to lure other artists. If I want to take a break, I can wander around and see someone else. In general, though, if I am at my studio, I get quilt work done, and if I'm at home, I get distracted. I don't keep a desktop computer at the studio, but I have a laptop I can bring when I need a computer to create art.

The Hot Shops Art Center is part of a former industrial area that is being revitalized. I have a concrete floor, so I put down area rugs to cover most of it. I have beautiful exposed brick on two walls, and a beautiful wood ceiling. I have hung bulletin boards to create a working wall that is 10 x

12 feet, and another that is 15 feet wide. I use the larger wall to display quilts, but I can clear it for photography or to use the quilts for a lecture. In the winter, my studio can become very warm, as the building's steam pipes pass through it first. I decided on those warm winter days to wear summer clothes and pretend I'm on vacation.

My studio is my second place. I usually go there to work on a quilt, but sometimes I just go to get out of the house, to socialize with other artists, or to let my husband have some space. I also have a small studio in our apartment, where I can watch television and work on small projects. During the pandemic, my Hot Shops space was a saving grace. The building was closed to the public, but artists could go in, work, and socialize a bit too. We usually wore masks and stood far apart. I didn't let very many people in my studio, as I didn't want to wear a mask all day.

At one point during the pandemic, one of the other artists texted me that she was part of a pop-up art gallery that was going to be up only that night. Six artists showed their work and I had a chance to converse with each one. It was a very special evening and there was a brief thunderstorm

in the middle of it. In all the years I lived in Chicago, I'd never been to an opening like this. I wasn't part of the art community in Chicago, but here in Omaha I am part of the community and feel comfortable. The same energy isn't present in my home studio. When I walk into the Hot Shops, a switch turns on in my brain and I am in a more creative mode.

When should you look for studio space outside your home? Here are some suggestions:

- Your quilt stuff won't fit in its allotted space in your home and your family refuses to give up their bedrooms for fabric storage.
- Family members take your scissors to open soup cans.
- You are easily distracted by other activities at home, such as email, loading the dishwasher, checking Facebook, etc.
- The dog/cat/toddler keeps playing with your fat quarters.
- Family members don't respect a closed door.
- Family members think it's funny to sneak up on you while you are listening to music and free-motion quilting.

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see "Moving Out" on page 38

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## Patchiran

from page 9

reaches out through its website, and by publishing articles in the national sewing magazine, *Kook*. Since Covid-19 curtailed drop-in interaction at their facility, Patchiran initiated groups for each class on social media to provide ideas and encouragement.

“Patchiran is self-sustaining. After we pay the rent and our teachers’ salaries, we put all our earnings back into the organization. We have no sponsorship from the Iranian government or from any foreign embassies,” states Gilder. “We are thankful, though, for the support from several sewing machine companies, particularly for providing prizes for our exhibitions and technical support for the computerized machines in our classrooms.”

Patchiran has definitely changed lives, one student at a time. From small businesses to commercial endeavors, from making and selling items at bazaars to becoming teachers, Patchiran students are having an impact. Many have created their own quilting communities outside of the Patchiran community and expanded the circle of influence.

“One of the outcomes we really value is that Iranian women can earn an income and help support their families as well as be creative. The international academic recognition for women has been a bonus and has most certainly impacted their self-esteem,” exclaims Gilder. “These women are superb students. Diligent, competitive, and hardworking—incredible!” ■

*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.*





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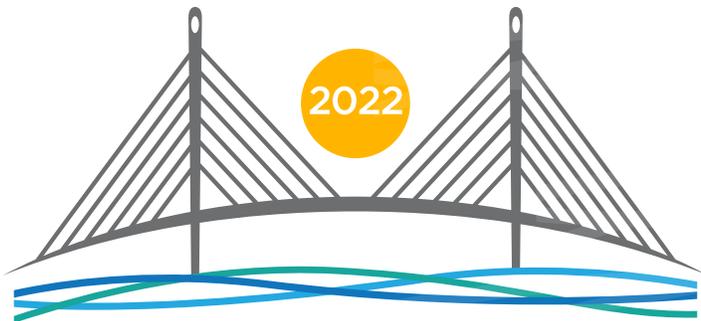
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*Trace of Memory, Color detail by Eunhee Lee*

# SAQA CONFERENCE



## BRIDGING *the* GULF

FABRIC TO FINE ART

SAQA VIRTUAL CONFERENCE: APRIL 29 - MAY 7

Our next Annual Conference, *Bridging the Gulf: Fabric to Fine Art*, is going virtual! Due to continuing concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, this 2022 gathering will once again be an online affair. Our Special Events Committee is working to provide dynamic speakers and engaging presentations mixed with the excitement of Whova—an online event service that lets you interact with fellow attendees and track your conference activities.

Details: [www.saqa.com/conference](http://www.saqa.com/conference)

# SAQA CALL FOR ENTRIES

*Share your artwork with the world!*

SAQA™ GLOBAL EXHIBITIONS

**HAVEN**

CALL FOR ENTRY: January 1-31, 2022

ART EVOLVED:  
**INTERTWINED**

CALL FOR ENTRY: July 1-31, 2022

**PRIMAL FORCES: WIND**

CALL FOR ENTRY: September 1-30, 2022

Minimalism

CALL FOR ENTRY: November 1-31, 2022

VIRTUAL GALLERY

**BUG MANIA**

CALL FOR ENTRY: January 1-30, 2022

*Textile Expressionism*

CALL FOR ENTRY: April 1-31, 2022

**REFLECTIONS**  
ON SPIRITUALITY

CALL FOR ENTRY: July 1-31, 2022

For complete details on all exhibitions, visit [www.saqa.com/calls](http://www.saqa.com/calls)

**CORRECTION**

Our sincerest apologies for an error that ran in SAQA Journal Vol. 31, Issue 3. These two images should have appeared in *Member Gallery: Outsider* as they do here.



Keri Mills  
*Shattering Ceilings*  
30 x 32 inches | 2020

Photo by Mom and Dot Photography



Lorna Morck  
*Lines, Letters & Ladders*  
30 x 24 inches | 2009



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## In Memoriam

Several SAQA members passed away in recent months. We are saddened by the loss of each one, and we offer our condolences to their families and friends.

**Anne Harmon Datko**, passed away at the age of 87 on October 21 in Ogden, Utah. Prior to moving to Utah in 2018, Anne worked at the Research Institute for Advanced Study (RIAS) in Baltimore, Maryland; the University of Edinburgh, Scotland; National Institute of Mental Health/National Institutes of Health, also in Bethesda; and CREES, US Department of Agriculture, from where she retired in 1999.

Anne had a passion for art quilts and was instrumental in establishing a small group of fiber artists in Utah. SAQA was one of the charities she requested memorial contributions be made, and we are deeply appreciative of that gesture.

**Marti Plager** passed away on Oct. 6 at the age of 80. Marti was born Martha Merle Lewis on February 26, 1941, in Des Moines, Iowa. After a few moves, her family settled in Ankeny, Iowa, where Marti met her husband,

George. She graduated from Iowa State University in 1962 with an honors degree in Economics Education.

The couple lived in several cities as military and civilian job assignments changed. In Louisville, Kentucky, Marti was introduced to quilting, which became her passion. Her art quilts were accepted into prestigious quilt venues such as *Quilt National* and *Art Quilt Elements*.

**Jacquelyn Brinkman**, 61, of Newburgh, Indiana, passed away on September 1. She was very active in the quilt world and served as president of the Raintree Quilter's Guild in Evansville, Indiana.

Jacquelyn was a registered nurse and worked at a hospital with postpartum and OB/GYN patients before becoming a school nurse. Recently, she worked part time with BERNINA of Evansville.

**Laura van den Braak** of the Netherlands passed away in March. Her love of art quilts will be greatly missed.

**Marilyn Lone** recently passed away in Woodinville, Washington. Her colorful works

were a visual delight that displayed her creativity. In a 2019 interview published on [www.createwhimsy.com](http://www.createwhimsy.com), she said: "I believe creative people feel free to try different techniques, methods, media and experiences."

**Anna Marie Peterson** of Sun City, Arizona, passed away on September 10, a few months shy of her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was the mother of Betty Hahn. Her positive outlook lit up every room she entered and her artwork was always intriguing. She will be greatly missed in the Arizona and New Mexico art communities.

**Els van Baarle** of the Netherlands also recently passed away. Her work with textiles and paper was not only eye-catching but inspiring. Trained as a textile teacher, she spent many years in education. Later, she led courses in adult education and vocational training for textile teachers.

Her work was exhibited internationally, and she taught and lectured in South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, France, Switzerland, Germany, United Kingdom and Belgium.

## SAQA Seminar HIGHLIGHTS

January 24-April 1, 2022

Enjoy the best of all the SAQA Seminars! All five themes—*Stitching, Surface Design, Visual Design, Your Professional Toolkit, and Color*—will be covered in two-week segments with updated materials and interviews. As an Education Committee program, SAQA Seminar: Highlights is free to members.

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Alisa Banks, *half*, 2014

## Moving Out

from page 33

- If you have to listen to your partner tapping their fingers on the kitchen counter one more time ...
- You need an outside space to teach.

Before moving, consider these factors:

- Can you afford the rent and additional costs if you aren't selling your work or using the space to teach? Will you have to sign a lease?
- If you do need to teach or sell your work, is this a good venue for that?
- Do you feel safe in the space? Will you want to work there in the evenings?
- Can you control access to your space? My studio is in an art center where tours sometimes come through when I'm not there. I'm comfortable with that; I just keep valuables put away or at home.
- Do you need to work in solitude? I'm comfortable with people coming in. I'm good at answering questions about my work. People sometimes think it is a shop, so I explain that it's my place to create art and that I do that for myself, not really to create goods for sale.
- If rent isn't an issue, consider if it's worth the effort to move all of your stuff. Consider that you might need a second set of your favorite tools, one for a home studio and one for an offsite studio.

In the end, I'm delighted to be at the Hot Shops Art Center. It was a good decision for me, and even if we move to larger living quarters, I would still want to be there. ■

*Robbi Eklow is a SAQA Juried Artist member residing in Omaha, Nebraska. You can see her work at [www.robbieklow.com](http://www.robbieklow.com).*

*Beside the Still Waters by Elaine Ross*

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INSPIRED BY

# Inanimate Objects

by N.K. Quan

**Bev Haring**  
***The Weigh In***  
16 x 12 inches | 2020

Ever feel energy from an old hat? How about a set of keys, or a treasured family quilt?

Bev Haring often finds an inanimate object to be imbued with a spirit of its own derived from a previous owner. Objects and their uses make her think of the hopes, dreams, and disappointments of their former caretakers.

"Having spent a lot of time writing when I was younger, I tend to think that my art pieces tell a story. The objects become the characters in the story."

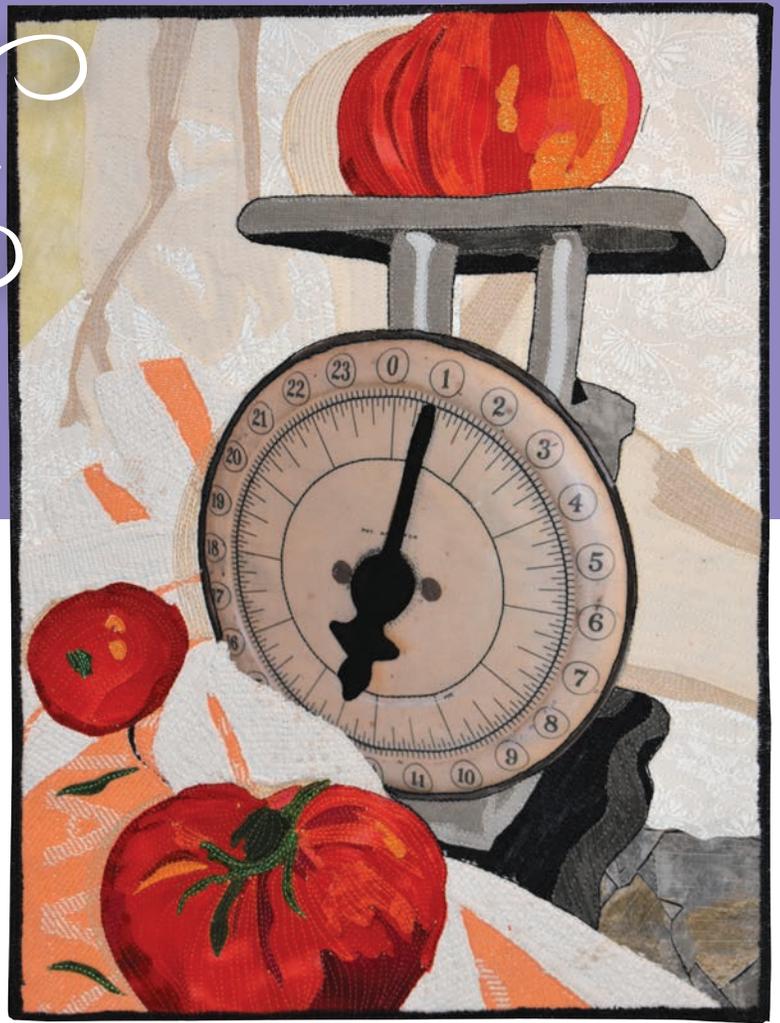
That spirit of awareness is alive in *The Weigh In*, a nostalgic remembrance of Haring's grandmother. As a child, Haring would help her grandmother harvest and weigh the season's tomato crop on an old scale. In bringing this memory to life, Haring also showcases her style, which she describes as impressionable realism. Some parts of the quilt are extremely realistic while other areas give viewers just enough information to understand the environment around the main character.

To enhance the nostalgic feeling of the piece, Haring deployed a favorite device: manipulating depth of field. This is an optical technique that generally

focuses attention on an object in the foreground. Here, Haring creates a dream-like feeling by keeping the piece's main character—the face of the scale—in sharp focus while the background is softer and less intense in color. The softer background is achieved by putting a piece of silk organza over the art quilt's entire surface before placing the main character atop the silk.

"I use this soft focus to remind viewers that they are looking at an impression of an object or scene, and not a precisely detailed photograph, and to invite them to think more deeply about the hands that made and used the object."

Since the scale is the main character, it was important for its face to be clear and realistic. Haring's self-imposed size limit launched her search for a technique to create that realistic face. After experimenting with embroidery and paint, Haring printed part of the photograph of the scale face onto fabric and then fused it over the rest of the piece.

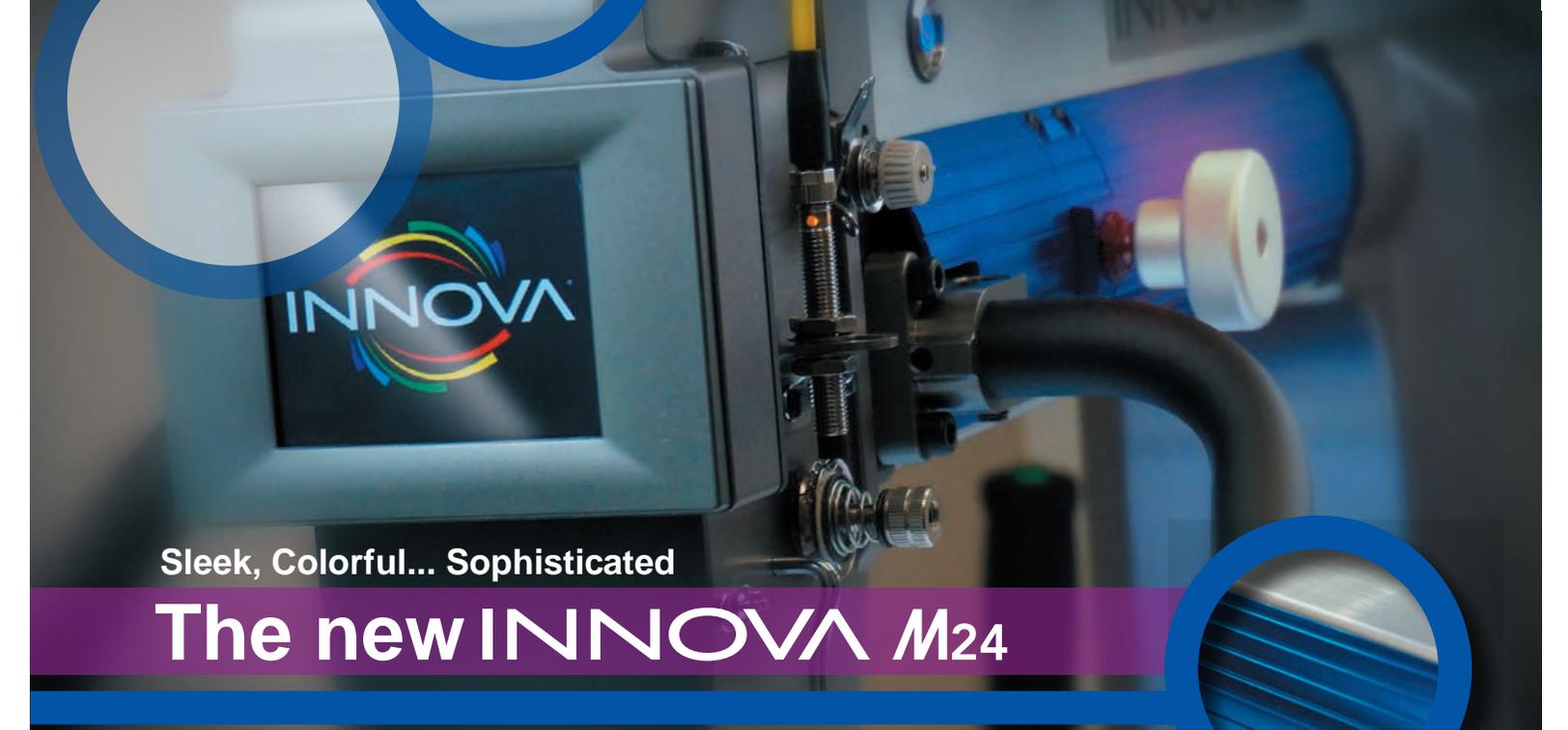


*The Weigh In* is part of an ongoing series that honors old objects. The series is designed to be small in size and mounted on stretched canvas. All of Haring's pieces are based on a photo or photo collage that is manipulated in Photoshop. After printing elements to a specific size, the quilt is made up of several layers of painted or printed surfaces and often finished with hand embroidery.

A self-taught artist with many amazing mentors, Haring learned from her grandmother that creating is a form of entertainment. She is rarely without sewing, knitting, or embroidery work in her hands. Perhaps her tools will one day be her inspiration.

Haring lives and creates in Longmont, Colorado. ■

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



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