

# Pandemic collaboration: SAQA Oregon wrote the book

by Sharon Carvalho and Terry Grant

Back in 2019, Amanda Snavelly, SAQA Oregon's exhibition coordinator, had a curious question—what is possible for future exhibitions? Thinking in terms of new and emerging media, market opportunities, book events, and gallery exhibitions, she wanted to explore new avenues for future shows. With the approval of Oregon's steering committee, Amanda invited several SAQA members who had expressed interest in future shows to form an exploratory group, a committee that over the course of two years hammered out its new book, *Emergence: Fiber Art from Concept to Stitch*.

In place of the usual in-person show, the goal of this exhibition was a book with a fresh spin: focus on the process rather than the end result. The book is an array of artists' stories, photographs, and details about techniques with an intimate view into creating art quilts from the artists' point of view. As in other shows, SAQA members were selected through a jurying process. But this journey differed in that submissions required a written proposal, an artist statement, and images of previous work. The challenge was simple: create an art quilt and prepare your work for publication during a prescribed six-month period. Twenty-one artists were invited to participate.

SAQA's Oregon Region has close to 200 active members in three local groups. The committee included representatives from each. Because of distance and the pandemic, the committee never actually met in the same room but rather met each month online via Zoom, where the members planned and discussed issues and ideas. Led by



Gerrie Congdon, members included Amanda Snavelly, Laura Jaszowski, Terry Grant, Sharon Carvalho, Diane English, and Leotie Richards, who started with the team but had to drop out along the way.

Early tasks were to secure Holly Brackmann as the juror and develop the prospectus, and then to create a process that would leverage the SAQA Oregon website to accept submissions and allow for jurying within the Squarespace website. From September 2020 through February 2021, artists were invited to submit proposals for completing a fiber art piece, taking photos of their process, and documenting the experience in words, all of which would be in the book.

Because of the pandemic's growing severity and increased restrictions, the committee believed that the timing was right for this type of project. Due to the many unknowns about the feasibility and practicality of setting up venues for the usual in-person shows, a book seemed the perfect platform for putting together a show that celebrated Oregon's art and artists. The book was a collaborative effort between the committee and the artists. Terry Grant, an experienced graphic designer, developed the layout. The committee enthusiastically embraced her design, which allowed for numerous photos from the artists to showcase their art and techniques. The book would have approximately 136 pages—six pages for each of the 21 artists—with space for artists to share their studio narratives.

Final compilation of the book was done exclusively online and digitally. The artists posted their narratives and photos in Dropbox. While Grant worked on

images, Carvalho edited the text. The result is a seamless set of stories from the artists' point of view. The artists were amazing, showing extraordinary enthusiasm and dedication for the project. Despite setbacks such as cancer treatments, broken bones, and family emergencies, each artist met the deadline.

When it came to printing the book, the committee chose a print-on-demand service for several reasons, but primarily because the book would be available worldwide on Amazon with no obligation to print or buy a minimum number of copies. With Amazon Kindle Direct Printing (KDP), there was no setup charge and Amazon provided the ISBN number. The website is easy to navigate and provides detailed information about how the book files need to be structured and the required formats. There is one caveat, however. The designer of the book must be familiar with publication software. Although Grant used Affinity Publisher, Adobe InDesign can also

see "The book" on page 100

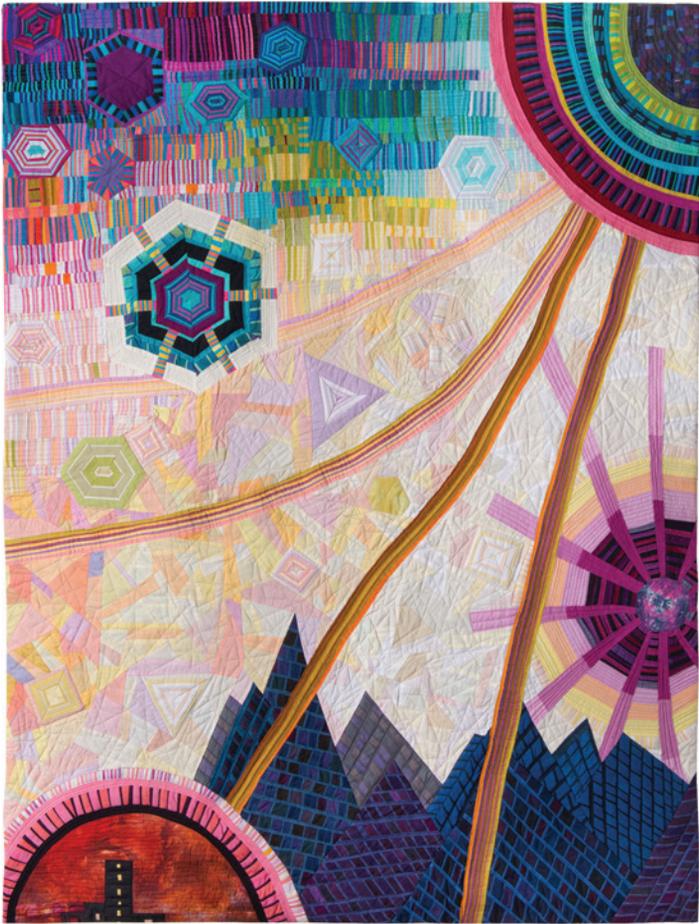


## Lynn Czaban Raising a Strong Girl

40 x 31 inches

Lynn Czaban's intricate patterns and a variety of fabrics achieve the subtle gradations in her life-like faces.





Niraja Lorenz's studio with the explosion of color that led to her complex, colorful art piece.

**Niraja Lorenz**  
**Land of Many Suns**  
51 x 39 inches

**Kathie Kerler**  
**Sheer Joy on Two Wheels**  
44 x 32 inches

Kathie Kerler paints the background for her depiction of a bicycle race.





**Gerrie Congdon**  
**Celebration**  
 36 x 26 inches

All quilts were completed in 2021.  
 Photography of the completed quilts is by  
 Kayley Hoddick, Hoddick Photography.



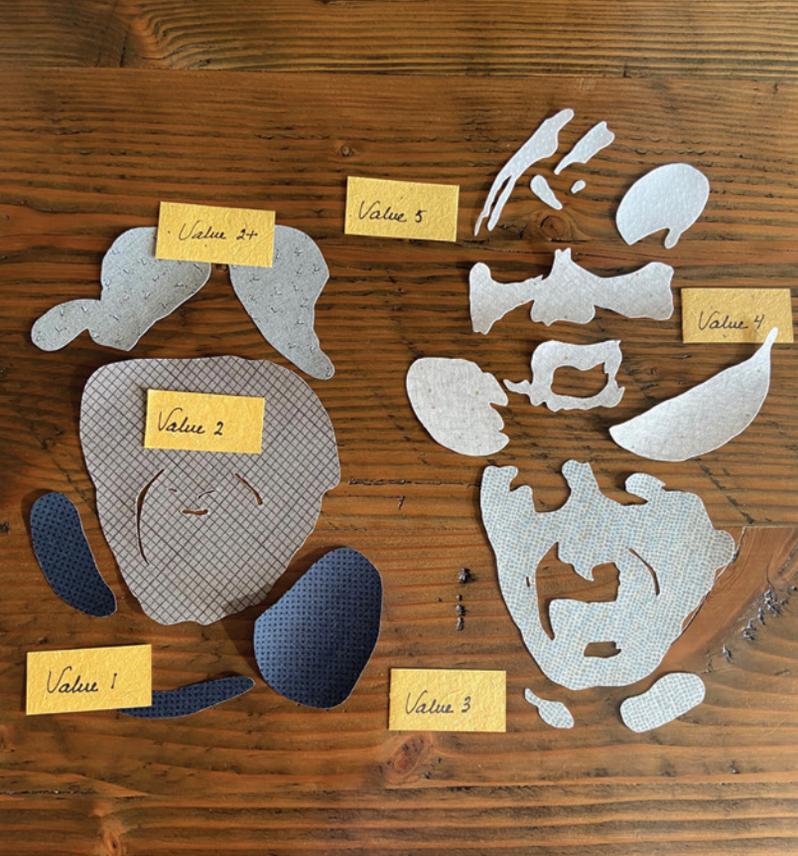
Before assembling individual squares of painted silk into one cohesive piece, Gerrie Congdon added texture by embroidering the pieces.



A distinctive feature of Amanda Snavelly's work is a collection of beautiful and unusual threads she used in the handwork for her triptych.

**Amanda Snavelly**  
**Triune**  
 3 pieces, each 40 x 10 inches

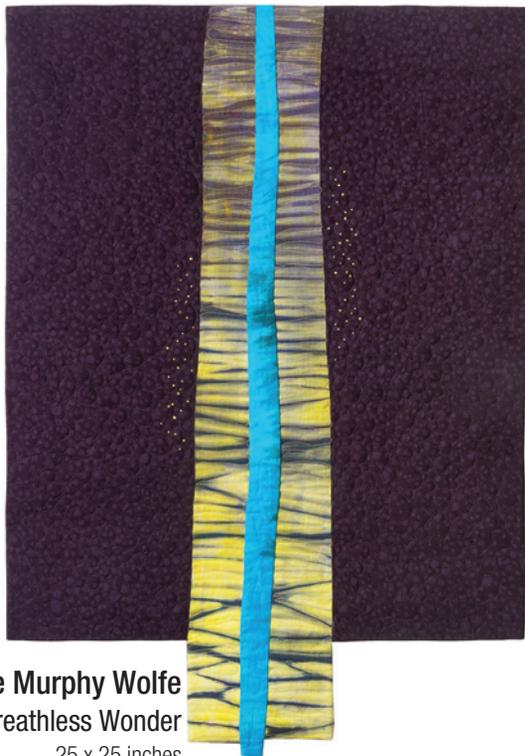




To develop the pieces that make up her distinctive fiber portraits, Sherri Culver creates tonal values using a popular photo-editing software program.



**Sherri Culver**  
**All Eyes on Gracie**  
 33 x 27 inches



**Marie Murphy Wolfe**  
**Breathless Wonder**  
 25 x 25 inches



Marie Murphy Wolfe began her quilt with many textures but found that her inspiration spoke most clearly in a clean, minimalist design.

## **The book** from p. 10

create the types of files needed for publishing. And importantly, printed proof copies can be ordered from KDP for a final check before publication.

While SAQA Oregon hopes to showcase these art quilts in actual exhibitions venues, the *Emergence* book beautifully documents some of the exciting work in the art form today, including how it is done.

[www.saqaloregon.com](http://www.saqaloregon.com)

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*Terry Grant is a SAQA member, fiber artist, and retired graphic designer living in Beaverton, Oregon. You can see her work at [www.terrygrantastic.com](http://www.terrygrantastic.com).*