

SAQQA *Journal*

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. ▲▲▲ Volume 23, No.2 ▲▲▲ Spring 2013



photo by Mark Frey

Cavern (detail)

by Bonnie M. Bucknam

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Thoughts from the president

by Sandra Sider



In September 2012, I asked Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) members to send me their website addresses so I could look at the content,

design and navigation from the viewpoint of a curator and collector. The response was overwhelming. Nearly 100 SAQA members sent their websites along with their blogs, videos and other types of online information. My first comment is: It's great to have a website! I applaud everyone who contacted me.

Because of the enthusiastic response, I decided to devote two columns to my critique. In this column, I'll look at websites of active members—those who are not professional artist members (PAMs). Next issue, I will comment on sites of PAM members. Many of the comments that follow pertain to all the sites I studied.

Many active members said the cost of creating and maintaining websites is a major consideration. For this reason, the majority of their sites are

what might be called “plain vanilla.” One artist described her site as functional, informative, and without a lot of bells and whistles, which, by the way, often distract viewers rather than enhancing a site.

Content

Let's begin by addressing content. I found typographical and spelling errors in about one-third of the sites studied. This included misspelling the word *Internet* and misnaming our organization, the most common error being *Studio Art Quilt Association* instead of *Studio Art Quilt Associates*. A few sites have *quit* instead of *quilt*—an interesting concept but incorrect. Please check your links to make sure you have our name correct. Make sure at least one person other than yourself proofs all your text.

Content includes descriptions of your artwork. Speaking as a curator and collector, I like to see explanatory notes accompany images of artworks. A surprising number of websites don't include dates and/or measurements (height by width). If you have a gallery of “Recent Work,” dates are not needed, but most people organize

their galleries by style or subject matter. As a curator and collector, I want to know when you made your art. It's best to avoid generic headings such as “Gallery 1”

and “Gallery 2.” There should be logic to the arrangement of your work that is reflected in the naming of your galleries.

Several artists include information about their processes, some through illustrations or videos. I find this useful, especially if the photographs feature the artist's studio or the artist at work. A few sites show only images of works in progress, which can be confusing. A casual viewer might mistake them for finished work.

For SAQA members who teach workshops focusing on projects, it's a good idea to include photos of your students' creations or images of the sort of work students will do in class.

Viewers want to know who you are! Sites that present only artwork and a list of exhibitions fail to intrigue curators and collectors who want to know something about your background and training. I'm drawn to artists' sites with “News” sections, but not if the news is more than a year old.

Design

Let's turn to design. I was frustrated by several home pages with text in flimsy italic fonts and those with pale gray type on pastel hues—very difficult to read. In addition, headings with translucent letters or a shadow effect hinder legibility. High contrast in the text and headings is the best choice. Think of a curator or collector who spends a couple of hours each

See “President” on page 28



For her Sewing Stories website, Heather Stoltz uses a clean layout with compelling photography and explanatory text to attract and inform her audience.

Report from the SAQA executive director

by Martha Sielman



Each year I take a staycation to tackle a spring-cleaning project. This year I plan to clean out the accumulation of stuff in our basement.

While most people are horrified I spend vacation time cleaning, being able to create order out of chaos, to de-clutter part of our home is something I find cathartic. A recent column in the CERF+ newsletter prompted me to add an item to my spring-cleaning to-do list. I realized I need to do an artwork inventory.

CERF+ stands for Craft Emergency Relief Fund and Artists' Emergency Resources (www.craftemergency.org).

This organization raises and distributes funds to artists affected by health issues, fire, and natural disasters and other calamities, and works to increase awareness of artists' needs for emergency preparedness, insurance and long-term planning. The newsletter column stressed the importance of creating/updating your will and planning for what will happen to your art, art you've collected and items in your studio.

The column—quoted here with permission—recommends planning we all need to do. These recommendations were written for people in the United States. Laws vary from state to state and from country to country. You should check with your attorney or other financial advisor to find the best plan for your needs. The need to

plan is important no matter where you live. CERF+ recommends that you:

- Make sure your bank accounts and investments are either joint accounts with your spouse/partner or name a “pay on death” beneficiary. This will allow those assets to be transferred upon your death without going through probate court. When possible, do the same with deeds to real estate and vehicles.
- If you have not done so, draw up a will. If your estate is simple and your assets are going to one beneficiary, you may be okay doing it yourself with a preprinted form. Consulting an attorney is recommended if there is anything complex about your will, but a

See “Executive director” on page 29

From the editor

by Dana Jones



Attending last October's International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas, gave me a chance to see two Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) exhibitions up close. Each day for the several days of the festival, I walked through *Seasonal Palette* and *A Sense of Scale*, always noticing things I'd not seen the day before. It's an experience I wish all SAQA members could have with every exhibition SAQA develops, but that's not possible. So we've decided to share a taste of some of SAQA's

exhibitions in the *SAQA Journal*, starting with *Seasonal Palette* in this issue, pages 20-23.

We hope seeing exciting work being created by SAQA members will push you to try even harder to see the exhibitions when they are near where you live or travel. And we hope you will be inspired in your own art making by seeing more of what others are doing. These pages of the *Journal* will help you see how fellow SAQA members respond to calls for entries. If you have not submitted your art for SAQA exhibitions, seeing the work of others may encourage you to do so.

Don't miss Leni Levenson Wiener's article on the work of the SAQA Exhibition Committee, pages 8-10. You'll

learn the nuts and bolts of pulling an exhibition together from developing a theme to selecting a curator and juror to choosing artwork to dealing with the demands of shipping and hanging fiber art.

If seeing portions of exhibitions piques your interest to see more, you can order exhibitions catalogs from the SAQA website, www.saqa.com/store.php?cat=2.

Let me know how you like this addition to the *Journal*. Initially we will feature exhibitions developed by SAQA as a whole, but we will also feature regional SAQA exhibitions as space allows. Contact me with your ideas at editor@saqa.com.

Del Thomas: Collecting contemporary quilts

by Sandra Sider

When Del Thomas of Placentia, California, purchased her first quilt at a 1985 guild auction, she had no plans to create a contemporary-quilt collection.

"I bought a small quilt by Judy Mathieson because I loved it," Del said. "Maybe a year later, I bought another quilt and then another. They say two's a pair; three's a collection."

The Thomas Contemporary Quilt Collection has grown to more than 200 quilts, including 25 quilts by Ruth B. McDowell and a number of 12-inch x 12-inch quilts purchased from Studio Art Quilt Associates' (SAQA) annual auctions and 12 given

to her by the international Twelve by Twelve group. While many of the quilts are by well-known artists, Del said her collecting is not about acquiring work only by big-name artists. She has clear criteria for her purchases.

"First and most important, a quilt must speak to me," Del said. "I don't care who made it or the technique used. It just has to speak to my heart. I ask, 'Could I be happy with this quilt on my wall if it was the only quilt I could own?'" The answer must be a resounding, "Yes!" Several of the quilts in the collection were made by artists who had never sold a piece until Del purchased one. "I look at

everybody's work whether they've never made a quilt before or have 60 years of experience."

What speaks to Del's heart has changed over time. While she said she's not attracted to "real far-out" pieces, her purchases have become bolder.

"When I first started, I bought more traditional quilts," she said. "I am more attracted to realism, to something I recognize like trees or birds, though as the years have gone by, I've come to appreciate pieces that are more abstract."

Del doesn't buy every quilt that speaks to her. That's where her second criterion comes in.



Middlesex Fells – Late Fall 75 x 95 inches ©1996 Ruth B. McDowell

Rose Garden
56 x 56 inches
©2002 Jane Sassaman

"I have to ask if I can afford it," she said. "I don't have unlimited funds." She strives to get the most for her money.

"I appreciate artists who include prices on their websites," Del said. "When they don't list prices, it's so time-consuming to get them from the artists. Some seem reluctant to give prices. I don't want to bargain."

She finds some of the best opportunities to purchase quilts through online auctions, like the annual SAQA auction and similar auctions held as fundraisers for organizations, museums and guilds.

Del has one final criterion when buying quilt art: Can she store and transport the quilts easily?

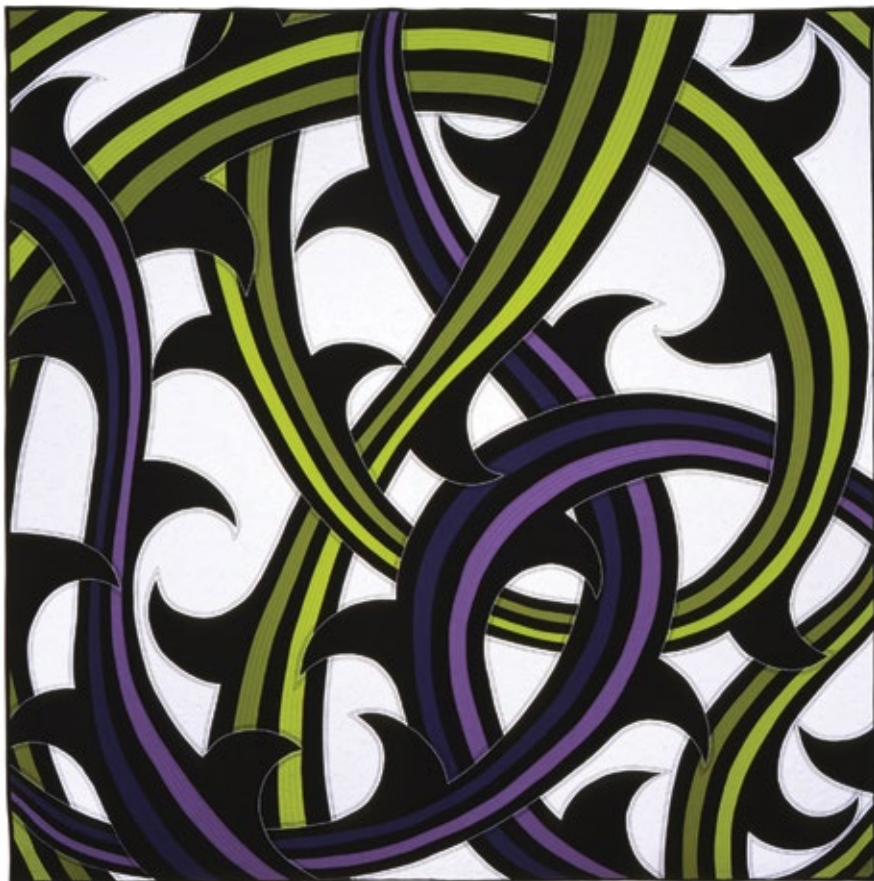
"I don't buy quilts I have to store or ship in crates like paintings," she said. "That means no quilts on stretchers." She also avoids those that have a lot of small items sewn or glued to the surface because they are difficult or impossible to roll without damaging the embellishments. "I have one quilt with shells on it," she said. "One has been broken. As much as I might like a quilt, I can't have anything that has to hang on the wall all the time."

She stores large quilts in a stack on a bed. Others, she rolls onto what she calls *stuffies*—long tubes about the size of pool noodles that she makes from batting scraps covered with fabric.

Finding quilts to buy

When Del began collecting art quilts, she located many by searching magazines. Now she uses the Internet, but she finds that seeing art quilts at shows is still the best way to find additions to her collection. She especially likes to attend large shows because they have more variety.

"When I have time, I browse artists'



Ewe Alone
26 x 26 inches
©2007 Linda Colsh

websites and blogs," she said. And she likes sites where work by multiple artists is featured.

Del rotates displays of the quilts in her home and is generous in sharing her collection. She loans quilts to museums, does presentations at guild meetings, and posts images and comments on her blog (www.delquilts.blogspot.com) every Sunday. Museums and guilds in southern California, where she has lived since 1957, have especially benefitted from her willingness to share.

"Right now, I have quilts with birds on them hanging in my family room," Del said. "I always have a quilt hanging in my bedroom, and my friends enjoy having quilts in their homes once in a while. I also hang quilts in the offices of the Visions Art Museum in San Diego. I periodically change those out so the staff and volunteers have something new to look at."

Recently the large gallery at the museum was named in her honor. In the fall of 2013, the museum will hang an exhibition of quilts Del has purchased since 2007, the last time the museum showed part of her collection.

Pieces from the collection have been shown in museums and galleries in Japan and across the United States. Del sometimes travels with the quilts, lecturing and leading exhibition and gallery tours.

Del as quilt artist

Del is a quilt artist as well as a collector. She began quilting at age 7, making doll quilts with her grandmother. "I used to go with my grandmother to the Grange," Del said. "All the ladies would come and quilt around the frame."

During the late 1970s, her



Chimney Pots 39 x 50 inches ©2005 Elizabeth Barton

experiments in quiltmaking led Del into quilts as art. Her work has been exhibited and published in several books and magazines. She enjoys trying new techniques and prefers to work with commercial cotton fabric, which she pieces and quilts by machine.

Before she began collecting quilts, Del helped organize a local guild,

which exposed her to a variety of quilts and introduced her to a diverse group of quilters. She now belongs to five local quilt guilds.

"I keep up with what's going on locally," Del said. "I like to support the guilds because I think they are important in women's lives."

Del would like to see traditional and art quilters talk to each other



Minstrel 38 x 37 inches ©2004 Sylvia Einstein

more. She's presented several programs that show the relationships between the two genres of quilting but hasn't found many receptive audiences.

"I'm a docent at the Visions Art Museum where people come in and see contemporary quilts for the first time. They can't believe this art exists. Very, very slowly, I'm seeing more interest in quilts as art among non-quilters. Fiber artists are working hard to get their work into art shows that aren't just for quilts so more people will see them."

That can take a lot of creativity, she said, remembering a conversation with one artist who displayed her early work at a plumbing-supply store. Others are showing their work in restaurants, coffee shops, banks—any place that will give them space and guarantee the art is secure.

A glimpse at the collection

With more than 200 quilts, it's impossible for Del to talk about each one. Several of the pieces in her collection are described here.

Middlesex Fells – Late Fall, 1996, by Ruth B. McDowell welcomes viewers down a forest path that leads into the blazing color of autumn trees made from commercial plaid fabrics. By positioning monochromatic tree trunks in the middle ground, Ruth defines a scenic panorama.

Jane Sassaman's *Rose Garden*, 2002, gives a close-up view into natural forms. Inspired by the fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast," Jane translates the oppositions of the narrative into graphic roses and thorns. She uses contrast to create a sense of dimensionality in intertwining stalks.

Ewe Alone, 2007, by Linda Colsh is an example of Linda's use of puns



Coyote Fence
22 x 25 inches
©2001 Susan Else

when naming her quilts. Nominally about a female sheep, this quilt can also be seen as *you alone*. Using photographs and drawings and incorporating surface-design processes, Linda creates a miniature universe in which the ewe ponders her sense of place while standing her ground in a snowy enclosure.

Del owns several pieces by Elizabeth Barton, including *Chimney Pots*, 2005. Antique chimneys produce a rhythmic sweep across the rooftops of a town in Elizabeth's native Yorkshire, England. The stylized walkways and windows glowing with light are made from her screen-printed and hand-painted fabrics, creating a study of space and depth. Elizabeth said of her cityscapes, "I wish to explore the beauty of everyday environments...to create a sense of place but also reveal the dynamic bones of the scene."

Sylvia Einstein's *Minstrel*, 2004, explores what Sylvia calls a "dialogue with the material." She takes advantage of the serendipity that results from fragmenting large-scale commercial prints, letting their patterns suggest the design in a balancing act. Sylvia toys with a grid, disrupting its regularity to create movement

and rhythm. The title *Minstrel* comes from a song in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Mikado," which says, "A wandering minstrel I—A thing of shreds and patches,..."

Coyote Fence, 2001, by Susan Else, evokes boundaries, a recurrent theme in Susan's fiber sculptures. Susan says of her art: "I treat cloth not as a flat surface but as a flexible skin for three-dimensional objects. I use cloth to create an alternate universe, and the resulting work is full of contradictions: It is whimsical, edgy, mundane, surreal and engaging, all at once."

Many of these same adjectives could be used to describe Del's approach to collecting art quilts over nearly four decades. She continues to search for the next piece that will speak to her heart. Even in short blog posts, her enthusiasm for artists and styles new to her is contagious. Add a large dose of generosity in sharing her finds, and you won't wonder that Del Thomas is a moving force in the world of contemporary quilts. ▼

Sandra Sider, president of Studio Art Quilt Associates, is consulting curator for the Texas Quilt Museum in LaGrange, Texas. Her artists' monograph series, The Studio Quilt, is available from www.amazon.com.

New directions for SAQA exhibitions

by Leni Levenson Wiener

As SAQA's membership grows, the SAQA Exhibition Committee is expanding our approach to how and where we exhibit members' work. For many years, we showed our work primarily at major quilt-exhibition venues with only a few museums receptive to art-quilt exhibitions. Now we have set our sights on mainstream galleries and museums in order to bring our art quilts to a wider audience. We are also adding more international opportunities to our list. This has meant we needed to change how we produce exhibitions. These changes have raised questions among our members.

The SAQA Exhibition Committee develops and oversees every exhibition that carries the SAQA name. Exhibition concepts are planned several years in advance and implemented by volunteers who do their best to bring each concept to life.

As we have approached museums to show our exhibitions, we have learned they prefer strong themes. Museums compete for their audience; interesting and compelling exhibition titles bring more viewers through their doors. Most people outside the art-quilt community do not know what SAQA is or even what an art quilt is. Gone are the days when a survey showcase of a variety of pieces was enough. If we want to be part of the larger fine-art world, we need to play by that world's rules.

Curator and juror

Once the theme and working title of an exhibition are established, a curator and a juror are chosen to

implement the plan. The curator is the person who brings the exhibition's vision to life. The curator produces the prospectus; oversees the submission process; sends out acceptance and rejection emails; organizes the catalog; and works with the artists, the venue and the exhibition committee to make sure things run smoothly, troubleshooting problems as they arise.

The juror has a short-term, but important, role. The juror chooses the work that will be in the exhibition; the curator has no say in who makes the cut. Once the juror has

Exhibition concepts are planned several years in advance and implemented by volunteers who do their best to bring each concept to life.

chosen the works or the artists who will make the work, the juror is done. Most often the juror chooses the work "blind," which means the juror doesn't know the names of the artists while looking at the submissions and makes decisions based on the artwork alone.

Sometimes the same person serves as juror and curator for an exhibition.

Such is the case for SAQA's upcoming exhibit, *Radical Elements*. Jill Rumoshosky Werner chose the work as juror and is now curating the exhibition, ensuring her vision for it remains true from beginning to end.

Requesting artwork

The next decision to be made is whether the exhibition will be a call for entry or a call for consideration. Calls for entry ask that artists submit finished work. You either have a piece ready to fit the call or you make one. Your work is either selected or rejected by the juror. Calls for entry usually ask for recent work done within a certain number of years of the deadline.

Calls for consideration ask artists to submit small portfolios of completed pieces that may or may not fit the theme of the exhibition. The juror selects the artists from these portfolios, then the artists make pieces for the exhibition. Calls for consideration have a longer lead time than calls for entry. Artists can be given up to a year to make pieces that fit the theme and size requirements.

Size restrictions

SAQA's move further into the museum world has meant another change that may frustrate members who wish to enter exhibitions: the move to size restrictions. Museums like work that is consistent in size because it creates a harmonious visual arrangement and flow. Some ask that all the pieces be the same size, some just the same height or width.

As those who saw *Seasonal Palette*



photo by Gregory Case

A selection of *Seasonal Palette* quilts on exhibit at the 2012 International Quilt Festival in Houston.

at the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas, last fall will attest, the continuity of same-sized pieces made the exhibition dynamic and visually appealing. We have high hopes that *Seasonal Palette* will appeal to museums and will book into multiple venues over the next several years.

Shipping costs, restrictions

The other important consideration in setting size is the cost and complexity of shipping. Our shipping center in Ohio, run by Bill Reker, SAQA's exhibition shipping coordinator, schedules, manages and ships our exhibitions around the world. All pieces in SAQA exhibitions are first shipped to Bill, who inspects and assembles them to ship together as an exhibition. We own shipping crates in various sizes. Each exhibition needs to fit into a single crate.

Shipping costs are the greatest single expense for any exhibition. As an exhibition is being developed, Bill must decide which shipping crate it will occupy for its traveling life. A single piece that cannot be shipped in the container can add substantially to the overall cost of shipping during the life of an exhibition. This can be as simple as a piece being only a few inches longer than the crate. It could be due to a piece being delicate,

dimensional or consisting of materials that might damage other pieces shipped in close proximity.

In attempting to reduce shipping costs, the exhibition committee has had to grapple with whether or not to limit the inclusion of artists whose work doesn't fit neatly into a shipping crate. In evaluating the fairness of SAQA exhibition opportunities, the committee is aware artists whose work is oversized, dimensional or free-standing have limited opportunities to enter SAQA exhibitions. Bill chaired a committee of artists whose work is challenging to ship and used their input to revise our shipping policy, allowing us to include more members in our exhibitions.

This new policy changes how we approach hard-to-ship work. These artists told us they would rather pay to ship their work than be excluded. If a piece can't be accommodated in the shipping container Bill has earmarked for the exhibition, the artist pays the extra expense to ship it. Members of the committee told us if they know the parameters upfront, they often can make pieces to come apart, fold, roll or be engineered in some way to fit the shipping constraints. If they can't make pieces that fit the shipping crate, artists understand they will pay the shipping cost. Each artist can then weigh the

cost against the value of the exposure and make a decision to enter or not. This new policy can be seen in full at www.saqa.com/membership.php?ID-2182.

Size constraints are not made randomly. The juror and curator work with our shipping center and the venue in which the exhibition will open, paying attention to the linear footage of an exhibition, the number of pieces in the exhibition, whether the exhibition will hang on hard walls or pipe and drape. The height of the ceiling, breaks in the running footage of the wall space and visitor flow can determine size restrictions; the number of pieces in an exhibition; and whether or not the exhibition can accommodate large, free-standing or dimensional pieces. There is nothing more heartbreaking than to see a gorgeous piece that spills onto the floor in a venue with walls not quite as tall as the artist had anticipated.

Long timelines

Another concern of artists is the long time SAQA holds onto their work. This is a double-edged sword. Museums book exhibitions several years in advance and often do not want to book an exhibition until they can see what it will look like. This means your work will be away from home



photo by Gregory Case

Sense of Scale quilts were hung on the outer walls while *Seasonal Palette* quilts were hung on the inner walls of SAQA's exhibition space at the 2012 International Quilt Festival in Houston.

for several years, but the exposure it will receive and the list of museums you can add to your resume may be worth the separation anxiety.

Sightlines is an example. Pieces were shipped for photography in February 2010, the exhibition opened at the International Quilt Festival in Houston in October 2010, and the exhibition is booked to travel into 2014. It was one of the first SAQA exhibitions to have a strong theme. Each artist was directed to create a piece that was 10 running feet, plus four 8-inch x 8-inch pieces—two that lead into the main piece and two that lead out. Museums and audiences have praised the exhibition, which has traveled to venues across the United States over the past several years and is still traveling. I was lucky enough to be included in *Sightlines*. I am thrilled my work is being seen in so many places and pleased I can add eight museums—and counting—to my resume.

Entry considerations

Once all the details of an exhibition are worked out, a prospectus is written and posted. The prospectus explains the exhibition concept, the timeline, and the rules and regulations for entries. When reading the prospectus, pay close attention to the specifics. Too often artists wonder why they were rejected when the reason is that they didn't submit what was required in the format requested. Sometimes entries don't even fit the theme of the exhibition.

When careful attention has been paid to creating the prospectus, an out-of-left-field submission will not change the vision of the exhibition no matter how good the piece is.

Before completing a call for entry, double-check that the piece has not been entered into or accepted to any other exhibition that may overlap with the dates of the exhibition you are entering. For calls for consideration, think about the commitment

time frame and be sure you can stick with it to the end. When someone pulls out of an exhibition, a space is lost that could have gone to another artist.

Once a catalog is produced, it is unprofessional for an incomplete exhibition to be sent to a venue, so SAQA requires each exhibition remain intact for the entire length of the stated travel time. No piece can be withdrawn before the end of the exhibition schedule for any reason.

Contacting the committee

The SAQA Exhibition Committee works hard to advance SAQA's profile in the art world while remaining as fair and inclusive to our membership as possible. The committee works to find ways to exhibit our work at prestigious U.S. and international venues and to produce marketing materials that will assist those who contact museums to present our exhibitions.

See "Exhibitions" on page 30

Looking closely at quilt art

by Jonathan Gregory

When *SAQA Showcase: The Studio Art Quilt Associates Invitational* opened at the International Quilt Study Center & Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska, we were faced with a challenge. Looking at studio-made quilts can move viewers connected with traditional quilting out of their comfort zone. To reduce the intimidation factor contemporary art may have, we personalize such exhibitions by including photographs and brief bios of the artists.

For *SAQA Showcase*, we also decided to try an experiment with our volunteers, including those who serve as docents. If it worked, it would be used during daily tours of the exhibition, which hung from August 3, 2012, to February 24, 2013. We wanted to prepare the volunteers to help visitors look at studio-made quilts differently

than they look at traditionally styled quilts.

At a monthly volunteer meeting before the opening of *SAQA Showcase*, we shared an image of one piece from each artist in the exhibition. The artists included Deidre Adams, Michael Cummings, Gay Lasher, Jan Myers-Newbury, Wen Redmond and Susan Shie. We gave the volunteers no information, just the images, then asked them two questions:

- What do you see?
- What do you want to know?

We asked them not to censor themselves and encouraged them to have fun. They saw so many things—some expected, some definitely not. Their questions were interesting.

After the meeting, several volunteers emailed me to say they enjoyed

the experiment and found it helpful in appreciating the artworks. We encouraged our volunteer docents to repeat the exercise when giving public tours, and I used the exercise during tours for members of the American Quilt Study Group when they were in Lincoln for their annual seminar. I focused their time in *SAQA Showcase* on one piece because they had a tight schedule.

I told the group to take 30 seconds to scan every piece in the exhibition, then meet me in the middle of the gallery. I told them our looking exercise would answer two questions and had them choose the quilt we would look at. As we all faced the chosen piece, I asked, “What do you see?” I asked them to call out their answers in a word or phrase. “Talk over the top of each other,” I said. “Go!”

See “Looking closely” on page 31

Jonathan Gregory leads a gallery tour of *SAQA Showcase* for members of the American Quilt Study Group.



Designing commercial fabric for the quilt industry

by Luana Rubin

Studio Art Quilt Associates is partnering with Andover Fabrics to create a fabric collection that will raise funds for SAQA and give six to eight aspiring fabric designers exposure in the world of commercial textile design. Breaking into this world can be difficult. The Urban Textures Fabric Collection competition will give the chosen designers industry exposure without having to knock on the doors of the many fabric manufacturers. Details of the competition can be found on the SAQA website, www.saqacallforentries.com.

I am often asked by designers and artists, including SAQA members, how they can become fabric designers. They want to understand the process of designing fabric collections and how to break through to obtain a licensing contract with a manufacturer. I'd like to share some of my insights into the process of designing commercial textiles so you will have a larger context in which to consider submissions for the Urban Textures collection. This how-to information applies not only to the SAQA/Andover challenge but across the board for those interested in contacting fabric manufacturers directly.

I came to the quilt-fabric industry after working as a textile and garment designer—work that taught me the technical aspects of fabric production that helped me become a better designer. Working with more than 400 factories in 10 countries, I learned what is and is not possible in production and the difference between being a fine artist and a commercial designer.

I entered the quilting industry as a retailer, an experience that gave me a solid overview of the quilt-fabric industry and trends within that industry, and taught me how important it is to be ahead of the curve on these trends. I can recognize what is trending up, what is oversaturated and what is peaking in the retail market. The most important thing I learned is this: the key to success in designing and licensing commercial fabrics is creating something that will sell.

The process of designing, manufacturing, shipping and marketing a fabric collection is expensive, so

textile manufacturers and distributors look for products they are confident will sell well. Design directors and merchandisers tell me they often review several hundred artist portfolios and submissions before they find one designer to consider. They report that most of what they see from aspiring fabric designers looks the same, has already been done or is simply not salable. The market is so oversaturated with products and artwork, a designer must know industry trends.

As an online fabric retailer, I look at about 150,000 fabrics per year and purchase about 15,000. That means





I have more than 1,000 new products in my online store each month even after rejecting 90 percent of what I am shown by sales reps and companies.

Those participating in the Urban Textures project will submit designs just as they would to a fabric manufacturer with one difference: They will create just one to three designs versus an entire collection. I will do the initial culling of entries and present semifinalists to Andover Fabrics. If you are submitting designs for the Urban Textures collection or to a fabric manufacturer directly, here are things you should know about designing commercial quilt fabric.

Original inspiration

The design must be your own. You may be inspired by a historical source, a pop-culture trend or a life experience, but the challenge is to translate your idea into something others want to buy. One caution: It is easy to believe you have a new idea when in fact you have been influenced by a trend just as it is beginning. Your idea has likely been inspired by the same trend driver as similar designs by other artists. Staying on top of

trends and being “trend forward” means you will bring an idea that is fresh and unique, not the same thing other designers have been showing the company in recent months.

Themes and motifs

Themes and motifs—and color stories—tend to move through a three-year cycle, which includes early adopters, being more widely produced, trending up, trend peaking, trending down, and finally, either trend dying or ideally becoming a basic or standard theme or motif. An example of a motif that has peaked: Owls. The market was saturated with owl designs last year.

Themes and motifs that are in the early stages of becoming trends can be found in such places as fashion runways in Europe or New York City, costume exhibits of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, home-dec trade shows, and pop-culture artwork and graphic design.

Visual references

When pitching your idea for a fabric design or collection that was inspired by things like a work of art, a vintage textile or a weather wall in Italy, it

can be helpful to show the manufacturer photos that serve as visual references to what inspired you. Do not do this for the Urban Textures competition.

Developing color stories

Artwork should be conceived so it can be interpreted in more than one color combination, known as a *colorway*. For blenders or tonals, it will be a range of similar colors from light to dark or a range of analogous colors. Some modern fabrics create a bold overall texture effect with contrasting colors. Look at the colored dots on the selvages of your favorite fabrics to see how depth and color is achieved. Once the first color combination is set, alternate colorways are developed.

Color palette

Pantone is a standard color reference for the industry, but many companies, including Andover, use other color systems. Sometimes the exact color you want is not a Pantone color, so you may submit paint swatches from your local paint or hardware store as color samples.

Andover Fabrics uses its own color reference, so the final color story of the Urban Textures collection will be matched to that color reference for production. One way of unifying designs from multiple artists is through color. Andover and I will develop a color story that will bring the designs together so they will show and sell well together. Our goal is for retailers to buy the whole collection.

Breaking down the colors

Variation of color and value is achieved by breaking the design into color screens, a process similar to posterizing images in Photoshop. If you look on the selvages of commercially printed textiles, you will see colored dots. The number of dots is the number of colors that were used to create the fabric design. For instance, 14 dots means 14 colors and 14 screens were used to create the design. Generally the artist is not involved in breaking down artwork into color separations, but some designers tweak the colors during the strike-off process, which is explained later in this article.

Metallics

Adding an overprint of metallic on a design increases the cost of the fabric. The metallic overprint design often is painted on a clear acetate overlay of the design that is sent to the factory. If you are submitting designs to the Urban Textures project, you can paint a metallic design on top of the colored artwork or on a clear acetate overlay. Whichever method you choose, scan it all together.

Scale

Commercial fabric designs are large, medium or small scale. Blenders

are often small to medium scale, although contemporary blenders are often medium to large scale. Think about how the scale of your design can be used in quilts and how it will look when the fabric is cut into quilt pieces of various sizes.

Manufacturers change the scale of designs when they think fabric will sell better larger or smaller. This is often based on current trends. Large-scale prints have been popular for several years, but small-scale prints are trending up. Sometimes the change of scale achieves a balance throughout a collection. If all the artists selected for the Urban Textures collection submit designs of the same scale, we may scale some designs up or down to create balance. Often a collection is a combination of small-, medium- and large-scale prints.

Repeat

Screens are 24 inches wide, so pattern repeats need to be a width that divides into 24 evenly. A repeat can be 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12 or 24 inches wide. For instance, an 8-inch repeat would repeat three times in a 24-inch screen and a 6-inch repeat four times. There are different types of repeats. Explaining these requires more space than we have here. One good resource on this and other information on commercial

fabric design is *A Field Guide to Fabric Design* by Kim Kight (C&T Publishing, 2011).

For the Urban Textures project, Andover will set the winning designs in repeat, but those submitting designs are welcome to give it a try if they wish.

Collection size

Fabric collections used to be huge—up to 40-45 designs in multiple colorways per collection. Each design in each color is a *sku*. Today most manufacturers are editing collections to be tighter and more efficient. The Urban Textures collection will be six to eight designs with each design printed in two or three colorways. So seven designs could mean a collection of about 18 skus. The size of the SAQA collection will be determined once the artwork is chosen.

Strike-offs

Strike-offs—samples produced by a factory before it does large runs of a fabric—are used to check and correct designs and colors. The factory makes an engraving or set of screens that it uses to print strike-offs in the colors indicated by the designer and the fabric company. The artist and/or design director makes technical and

aesthetic corrections to the strike-offs and may request a second strike-off. Each strike-off is expensive, so if the desired effect can't be achieved in two or three strike-offs, the design may be cancelled.

An experienced designer can anticipate if a design will be difficult to correct in the strike-off process and will discuss this with the company before going ahead. For instance, realistic faces and figures are difficult to produce with screen printing.

For the Urban Textures project, Andover will handle the strike-off process with my final approval.

Self-promotion

Marketing by a designer impacts the success of a collection. This is especially important in our current economy and oversaturated market. SAQA has a built-in marketing machine—its members. Manufacturers look for designers who have a following via blogs and other social media. The designer may create a pattern and make a quilt to show

at Quilt Market as part of the marketing effort. Some designers rent booths next to their manufacturers to promote their fabric collections and patterns that feature their fabrics. Writing articles and designing quilts for quilt magazines is another way designers promote their collections.

Manufacturer marketing

Once manufacturers have invested in producing fabric collections, they are motivated to sell the fabric. They employ layers of marketing to help make a collection successful, including storyboards, fabric header cards, booths at shows, regional sales reps, magazine advertisements and social media.

Once designs and colors for the Urban Textures collection have been decided, Andover will produce storyboards to show quilt-shop owners and other retailers how the fabrics can be used and how the collection relates to current trends. This encourages shop owners to order and sell the fabrics.

Be nice

There is nothing worse than working on a deadline-driven project with a high-maintenance designer. Many manufacturers have a low tolerance for designers who can't work constructively and positively in a team atmosphere. Artists with beautiful artwork but bad attitudes will find it difficult to secure contracts. This doesn't mean you should let yourself be taken advantage of. It does mean you should be professional and have a positive, cooperative attitude. Producing and selling a collection is a team effort. There is little room for big egos in this long and detailed process. ▼

Luana Rubin is the president and co-owner of eQuilter.com with more than 30 years of experience as a designer and retailer in the textile industry. She writes a bi-weekly newsletter at eQuilter.com on topics such as color trends and creativity. She is also a chairholder in the Color Marketing Group and is a licensed designer for Robert Kaufman Fabrics and YLI Threads.

A curated collection

Once the Urban Textures Fabric Collection competition deadline has arrived and all submissions are in, Luana Rubin will do a blind curation of the artwork, which means she will select semifinalist designs without knowing who created them. She will work with Andover Fabrics to make the final selections. Because SAQA and Andover hope the designs will sell well and be produced for a long time as a fundraiser for SAQA, the selection will be a curated, not juried, process. If your design is not selected, it is not a judgment of your talent as an artist, but a choice of what is most likely to sell and generate royalties for SAQA.

The goal is to create a line of textured blenders or tonal prints that can sell as a line of basics that Andover Fabrics can reprint when sales are strong. One design from each of six to eight artists will be chosen, and these designs will be

integrated into one collection with a common color story. Andover and Luana will develop a color palette, set designs into repeat, make decisions about scale and oversee the strike-off process. The designers' names will be printed on the selvages of their designs. The collection is slated to be introduced at the October 2013 Quilt Market in Houston, Texas. Luana hopes the winning designers can meet with her at 2013 Quilt Market or International Quilt Festival in Houston so she can explain more about the process of integrating their artwork into the SAQA/Andover Urban Textures Fabric Collection.

To learn about Andover Fabrics, go to the company's website, www.andoverfabrics.com. Andover is a leading quilt-fabric manufacturer that sells high-quality fabric throughout the world.

SAQA member gallery: *Earth*

Valerie Maser-Flanagan

Crevice #3

37 x 38 inches | ©2012
www.valeriemaserflanagan.com

In the *Crevice* series, my main focus is line. Line in nature may be gentle, taking the path of least resistance, as in dry riverbeds, or it may have the force to crack a rock or draw a deep fracture in the earth.



Patricia Gould

Moonrise, North Rim

46 x 63 inches | ©2009
www.angelfiredesigns.com

I've always been in love with rocks; their textures and colors draw me to them. The Southwestern United States has some of the most interesting and unique formations on the planet, including the Grand Canyon. The North Rim with the full moon rising displays Earth in all its glory.



Ruan Robertson

Beneath the Surface

26 x 32 inches | ©2012

Imagine what a cutaway section of the Earth's crust might look like with the rich variety of the exposed strata. The surface of the quilt is embellished with eight mini quilts.



Bonnie M. Bucknam

Cavern

66 x 39 inches | ©2009
www.handwerktextiles.com

Cavern is part of my *Geology* series of quilts based on the letter "V" or triangles. These quilts are evocative of landforms. I dye my own fabrics and use dense machine quilting to add texture and interest.

Frauke Palmer

Basin and Range II

53 x 40 inches | ©2009
www.physics.ohio-state.edu/~palmer/quilts.htm

Basin and range define the geology of a region of Arizona I love. The horizon is dominated by mountains that rise unexpectedly out of the plains and provide sustenance to the areas that lie below. This contrast evokes the complexity of our lives, each of us depending on the help of others to flourish.



Donna June Katz

Silurian Bedrock

16 x 18 inches | ©2003
www.donnajunekatz.com

This piece was inspired by the geological history of the Chicago area. The bedrock beneath the city streets is made of material that includes the remains of various fossils. The contours of this piece are derived from geological deposits in the area.



From spectator to high roller in the fiber-art world

by Valarie Poitier

When I was asked if I would become a regional representative for Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA), I had no idea what the reps do. Little did I know how much I would grow as an artist and how many opportunities would come my way once I accepted the position. I never imagined I would go from a spectator in the world of fiber art to a high roller.

Such insight came gradually. When asked to serve, my contact with my region's reps had been limited. I initially understood SAQA as a place to find out about exhibits around the country. I had joined because a friend nudged me. I had visited the SAQA website from time to time when directed to it, and I had attended my first regional SAQA meeting as one rep was ending her service and another was starting. It was months before I attended my second meeting.

I didn't feel prepared to be a rep but was intrigued by the offer. Did I have skills or experiences that could complement, serve, improve, empower or encourage Massachusetts and Rhode Island SAQA members? I'd just left a guild whose focus was different from mine and was happily in a small critique group. Did I really want to get more involved?

To help me make my decision, I went online to search the SAQA website. I found more than I had expected. I made a few calls and ran the idea by my art support team. Then I said "yes."

I was graciously welcomed by email, then began learning more and

more about SAQA. I received books, business cards and extra copies of the *SAQA Journal*. I learned how serious SAQA members are about quilts, quilting, art, art quilts, exhibits, promoting artists, meetings, gatherings and conferences. I found SAQA members similar to guild members, whom I love to be around, only SAQA members are focused on art quilting rather than traditional quilting. There was a totally different world of options for me as a volunteer regional rep than I had expected.

I was at a transition in my life, ending a career, recovering from a medical ordeal, looking for ways to use my artistic and administrative skills, and wanting to work part time and create part time. I wanted to spend time with other artists. I wanted to visit galleries, museums and quilt shows, and participate in and teach workshops and demonstrations. I wanted to travel to art venues. I wanted the opportunity to work with like-minded people. I needed a vehicle to support the changes I felt were coming. I wanted a new playground that would allow me to follow my mind, to work the way I loved, to feel great and to show off more than my administrative talents. The arts—it was all there in the arts.

Growing as an artist

When the idea of serving as a co-rep surfaced, I was serving as guest curator for the *No Holds Barred* exhibit at the New England Quilt Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts. There was lots of work and too few volunteers,

probably because like me, members had not taken or been offered an opportunity to see the big picture. My quilting partner and I decided to visit SAQA regional meetings in the four other states involved in the exhibition to drum up participation and support. We attended a variety of wonderful gatherings, which were eye-openers. Every region did things differently.

Marketing the exhibit was exciting. It was empowering to be around others who shared my thoughts and feelings about quilting, art and SAQA. I was getting an idea of who made up SAQA in New England and around the United States.

I find it easier to ask for others than for myself. Must be the Mom gene in me. As I worked to promote others' art, it occurred to me I was as worthy, as eligible, as important to advocate for as those I represented. That self-awareness took time and was stimulated by interacting with others who were doing the kinds of things I realized I wanted to do.

At the time, I enjoyed coming home from work and using my hands to work with textiles as a way to relax, let go, find peace. That did not include exhibiting my art. I was a closet artist who was loving my process.

Upon becoming a SAQA rep, that began to change. When I started working with friends in their studios, I worked less on mind-relaxing projects as a response to what was happening in my life and more as a response to calls for exhibits in



Valarie Poitier leads a workshop for SAQA members and guests from Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire.

which my friends were interested. As I promoted others' work, I was asked what I had to exhibit. Tired of saying nothing, I decided to go for it. An important change occurred. It is now necessary for me to create art to show.

Expanding opportunities

Empowered by the success of the *No Holds Barred* exhibition, I submitted a proposal to lead workshops at the 2011 SAQA conference in Denver. My proposal was accepted. Next I was asked to write an article on the same topic for the spring 2012 issue of the *SAQA Journal*.

I have since joined the committee for the Lowell Quilt Festival held annually in Lowell, Massachusetts. I was asked to create the layout and hang 200 quilts for the *Images* show at the New England Quilt Museum and to participate in a meeting that included the director of the Massachusetts Museum of Fine Arts, the chair of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and other area leaders and educators. I contributed information on the 2012 SAQA/Surface Design Association conference and gathering in Philadelphia and my involvement as a volunteer, quilter and artist. I was

elected to the Board of Directors of the New England Quilt Museum in spring 2012; taught fabric painting at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina; and gave a number of lectures and motivational speeches.

All of this is huge for a closet artist, speaker and administrator accustomed to being in the background supporting and empowering others to reach their goals. One of the greatest lessons I have learned as a volunteer in SAQA is that I do shine alongside my colleagues. I am a fully actualized artist who can lift up others and myself simultaneously.

Going forward

Being a SAQA volunteer means engaging in many tasks, serving our members and being in on the ground floor of opportunities to exhibit. But it is more. It is a chance to express myself on many levels. It is saying "yes" to that which I believe in. It is giving permission to the voice inside. I am living my dreams while being exposed to others who dream even grander dreams.

Who knew? There is something about saying "yes," something about

going for it, something about finding the right place and time to blossom. As a SAQA regional rep, I have gone from creating alone and for myself to taking on challenge after challenge out in the world. I have moved from maybe someday to definitely today.

I now use what I have learned in the workplace, school, seminars and workshops in new ways. I use what I've learned from colleagues, artists, my parents and friends. I have the art life I want. Volunteering as a SAQA rep has given me the arena to play the game as a high roller, not a spectator.

Am I done? No way. The possibilities now extend around the world rather than just around Massachusetts. When my term as a rep is over, I will continue to volunteer. ▼

Valarie Poitier is regional co-rep for SAQA's Massachusetts and Rhode Island Region. She lives and works in Natick, Massachusetts. Her website is www.valariepoitier.com.

Seasonal Palette – Winter & Spring

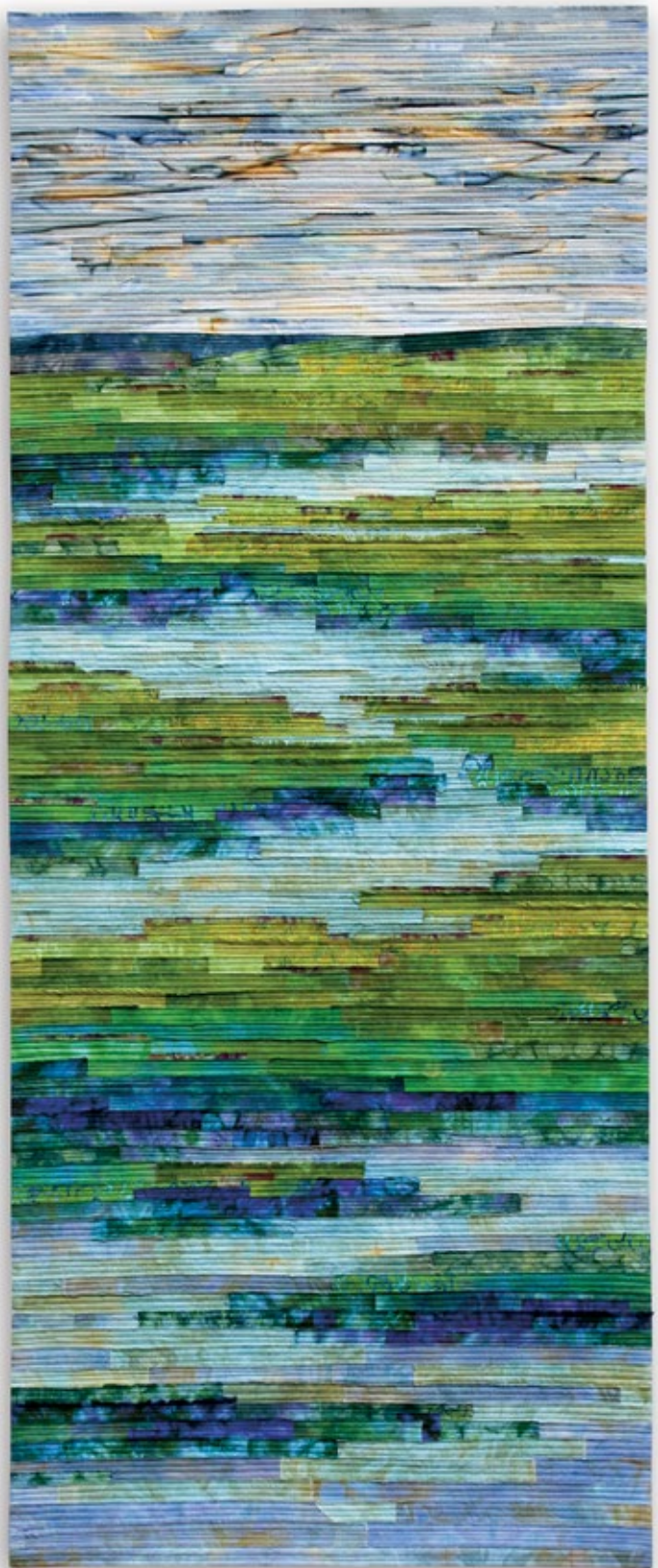


Silent Snow, The Creek Is Singing

Carol Anne Grotrian

Tranquil Marsh – Wild Iris

Elena Stokes





December Dawn
Ruth A. Powers

Ice
Carol J. Moore



Stockholm Winter
Martha F. Wolfe



Delicate Ambiguity
Judith Larzelere

Spring Squared
Kathryn Conte



Cherry Blossom 6
Chiaki Dosho

Seasonal Palette – Summer & Autumn

Reflections of Summer

Jenny Hearn



photos by Gregory Case Photography

Autumn

Geri Patterson-Kutras



Fervor
Maya Chaimovich

Reflections Venice, var.18
Barbara J. Schneider



Tasty Tomatoes
Jeannie P. Moore



Recovery
Hsin-Chen Lin

Returning to the Source
Deidre Adams



Autumn, Brown County, Indiana
Daren P. Redman

Art critique session challenges, encourages SAQA members

by Mary Vanecke

The art world can seem a million miles away from the quilt world, so it was a learning experience for eight Arizona members of Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) when we gathered for a critique session with Miles Conrad, director and curator of the Conrad Wilde Gallery in Tucson, Arizona. Just as importantly, the session placed art quilts in front of a decision maker who did not know much about our medium.

Clare Aylward, Patricia Hastings-Sargent, Sharon Nemirov, Miriam Otte, Aimee Smythe, Peggie Thomas, Janet Windsor and I agreed to submit our work for critique. Some of us are

trained artists; others are self-taught. Several have sold work and exhibited widely while others are emerging artists. Those new to professional critique were a bit intimidated, but we all want to make the best work we can and understand the value of receiving critique in moving toward that goal. We set a budget of \$20-\$25 per piece and determined times we were available. I volunteered to put the critique session together. My first task was to research local gallerists. I began by looking at websites of local contemporary art galleries and visiting some of the galleries.

I found Miles Conrad's resume and

artist statement on the Conrad Wilde Gallery's website. I learned Miles is an encaustic artist who has shown extensively. He has a master's degree in fine art and teaches at a local college. I emailed Miles, including a link to SAQA's website, to ask if he would critique our work and what he would charge to critique eight pieces, one by each of us. His fee was \$175 for the session, which included his prep and travel time and two-plus hours of critique. He asked about our level of experience and what format we preferred for the session. Looking like we had a good candidate to lead our critique session, I set up a time to meet Miles in person at his gallery.

I proposed we use a critique style that is outlined on Jane Dunnewold's website (www.artclothstudios.com) in a tutorial called "Learning to Critique Effectively." Most of the eight of us were familiar with this format and use it to some degree in our self-critique sessions. Miles liked it and said it reflects his style and philosophy.

The group considered Miles' credentials, fee and submission instructions. I gave a bit of a pep talk via email to the emerging artists in our group to ensure they were not too intimidated to participate. Critique sessions can be unsettling even for experienced artists.

Miles asked for our artist statements and high-resolution photos of our pieces a week before the session. We were to bring our artworks to the session. I sent Miles' request to the group members along with links to information on how to photograph



Free Radical IV 38 x 39 inches ©2012 Mary Vanecke

Old Beauty
29 x 25 inches
©2012 Miriam Otte



art quilts (<http://hollyknott.com>) and a blog post on how to write an artist statement. Participants were prompt in getting me photos and artist statements, and I forwarded them to Miles a few days early.

We agreed to meet at my studio, which is well-lit. It has a large, white design wall and can accommodate a table and seating for nine. Many pieces submitted were stretched on frames. These would not hang on the design wall so they had to be propped up on chairs. I would want a better way to show such works in the future.

Participants were anxious about the critique session. Sharon Nemirov summed up how we felt:

“Mixed! I was looking forward to the insights of a professional working artist who is in the mainstream of the contemporary fine-art world. And I was apprehensive. I had to mentally steel myself for the process.”

One benefit of doing this as a group was that we were all in it together. We learned as much from comments about others’ work as from our own.

We introduced ourselves, then Miles explained he wanted a give-and-take discussion. He complimented us on the fact that our artist statements reflected our work. Each of us read her statement aloud as her work was hung. In the future, I would send artist statements and photos to all participants in advance.

Our discussion was wide-ranging, focusing on the work before us and on larger topics, like the marketability of art quilts. Miles agreed the word *quilt* has connotations for marketing that are difficult to overcome. He said

terms like *fabric collage*, *textile collage* or *mixed media on textiles* are good alternatives.

We also discussed the merits of mounting or framing our work. Miles said he thought mounting or framing can help sales, but looking at my piece, *Free Radical IV*, he noted how much he liked seeing the wall behind the open spaces in it. He encouraged us to be mindful about the impact mounting or framing has on a particular piece and its marketability.

Results of critique

The critique session has impacted participants’ work. Miriam Otte said:

“This critique session shifted my perspective dramatically. Miles asked us to ask questions like:

- “How much do I hand to my viewer — the title *Old Beauty* — and how much do I let them work for it?”
- “Do I ask viewers to think about or reconsider a viewpoint?”
- “Do I trust myself to express my thoughts visually?”

Miriam is now thinking less about technique and more about themes and content in her work.

Patricia Hastings-Sargent has reconsidered how she presents her fabric landscapes since the critique. As for me, I am looking for ways to push the three-dimensional aspect of my work to create the illusion of depth. Miles encouraged others to work larger.

Janet Windsor said the most

valuable thing she got from the critique was an affirmation that her work is gallery-ready. "Miles' help in crafting artist statements to be more appropriate for a gallery was great," Janet said.

For those of us who come to our medium with a quilting background, it was amazing how different the critique was from judging of quilts at quilt shows. Miles never looked at the back of the works we submitted; he never counted stitches or checked our bindings. The emphasis of his critique was on the artistic merit of the work, not technique.

Participants agreed that Miles was gentle in his criticism. Some were disappointed he wasn't as hard on us as they thought he should have been. In the future, I will encourage those

who want more tough love to ask for it. This will allow those who are new to the process to acclimate with a softer approach while giving more experienced participants a thorough and direct critique.

Evaluating the session

We each left the session with valuable notes and ideas. I wrote Miles a thank-you note and touched base with participants to find out how each felt about the experience. Would we do it again? Peggie Thomas said it best:

"As a result of this critique, I find myself examining ways to take more risks in my work. I understand my growth as an artist is a process, just as the development of each piece is a process. I will certainly take

advantage of opportunities like this in the future."

Some members are interested in a full portfolio review with Miles or with another critic from the art world. All are willing to engage with other critics who are not experts in art quilts.

As SAQA members, we are ambassadors for our medium. By inviting art gallerists and curators to critique our work and jury our shows, we help SAQA raise the profile of the art quilt, learn a lot about our own work and open up a new world. ▼

Mary Vanecke, a SAQA professional artist member, is an Arizona SAQA co-representative. You can see her work at www.maryvanecke.com.

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Seasonal Palette: Features work by 37 artists celebrating the four seasons and highlighting the materials and techniques they used.

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A Sense of Scale: Includes work by 32 artists and introductory essays by the juror and curator.

8 x 8-inch format, 69 pages, \$20

Art Meets Science: Artist, juror and curator statements complement the 35 pieces featured in this full-color catalog.

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Sense of Adventure: 29 pieces are shown in full color accompanied by artist, juror and curator statements.

64 pages, \$15

Sightlines: Each artist is featured in a four-page spread including an image of their installation, a detail image, an artist statement and an artist bio.

64 pages, hardcover, 6-page gatefold center pullout of full exhibition, \$20

Beyond Comfort: Full-color catalog includes images of 30 pieces and statements from the artists, juror and curator.

64 pages, \$15



Order from www.saqa.com/store.php?cat=2

President

from page 2

week surfing the Web, researching artists for exhibitions or acquisitions. You want to make it as easy as possible for these people to access your artwork. I found home pages presenting images of single quilts, galleries of quilts or an artist's studio portrait most appealing.

As for photos of quilts, many are too dark or too small with no link to enlargements. More than half the active-member sites have no detail images. Viewers must zoom into the overall photo to view details. Unfortunately, in most of these cases, the resulting detail view is out of focus. On a few sites, the quilts' hanging devices can be seen on the top edges or quilts are cropped with no edges showing. We work in a

textile medium; the edges should be respected.

Navigation

Concerning navigation, I found quite a few links that were not working. Check out links every few months. Several sites had home-page headings with broken links, such as "Archived Work" or "Publications." Maintaining your website includes verifying that your headings are active. If you find a broken link that cannot be repaired quickly, note that the page is "Under Construction," or something similar, so your site does not seem derelict. Having a system that allows for content management software (CMS) allows you to make such notes on your websites. Some companies

that design websites include CMS; I suggest you ask about that when shopping for a designer or when you select a platform for designing your site yourself.

Viewers should be able to move from any part of your site to any other part, including the home page, without using the back arrow in the toolbar. Many SAQA members achieve that goal by having drop-down menus or a list of headings along one side of the screen. Quite a few people have created slide shows to help viewers navigate through galleries. That is great when the viewer can stop the show at any point to study a quilt and its detail. Images should not take more than three seconds to load.

Final thoughts

I wish we had space to discuss blogs because I found some good ones. SAQA members are an interesting group, to say the least. Below is a list of the active-member websites that effectively sold the artists and their work to me:

Shelley Brenner Baird:

www.shelleybrennerbaird.com

Jayne Bentley Gaskins:

www.jaynegaskins.com

Jennifer Day: www.jdaydesign.com

Kathleen Loomis:

www.kathleenloomis.com

Carolyn Skei: www.carolynskei.com

Sidnee Snell: www.sidneesnell.com

Heather G. Stoltz:

www.sewingstories.com



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Executive director

from page 3

do-it-yourself package will help you get things organized and will help you identify the issues.

- Think about what you will do with your unsold work, your studio and your collection of other artists' work. An inventory of studio contents and artworks may help maximize the return to your heirs and help secure your legacy as an artist. *A Visual Artist's Guide to Estate Planning* can be downloaded for free from the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation: <http://sharpeartfdn.qwestoffice.net/estateplnbook/estateplanning.htm>.

The need to do this type of planning was illustrated by a call from a friend. When his father, a moderately well-known painter, recently died, my friend was named as the executor of his father's estate. My friend knows that some of his father's recent work sold for good prices, but he has to figure out how to manage and market the body of work his father left. He must figure out how to pay for storage, promotion and estate taxes. He is unsure how to proceed because marketing art is outside his areas of expertise. If his father had left instructions, that would have provided much needed guidance.

I have a will, and as part of it, I have arranged for a legacy gift to Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA). There is a Legacy Circle of donors listed on the SAQA website who are contributing to SAQA's Endowment Fund through legacy donations in their wills (www.saqa.com/fund.php?ID=1). Please let me know if your name may be added.

My will deals with care and support of my spouse and children; it doesn't

cover my artwork or my collection of other artists' work. At the very least, I need to create an inventory of what I own and organize the supporting paperwork that records its value. As I continue to acquire fiber art, especially pieces from the SAQA Benefit Auction, those works will need to be added to the documentation. I need to think about care and storage as well as enjoying my rotating displays. I need to find and organize what I paid for each piece because estate-tax returns in the United States require precise values be assigned to what you owned.

For those of you who are actively creating art, *A Visual Artist's Guide to Estate Planning* states that in the United States all unsold art will need to be appraised to determine the

value of your estate and the amount of estate taxes due from your heirs.

Guidelines for my family on how to dispose of my studio items would also make their job easier. For instance, I'd hate to have my expensive stash of hand-dyed yardage thrown out when there are quilt guilds making items for charity that could use it. Writing up a list of what I own and where I suggest donating it is a good idea.

I urge each of you to do your own long-term planning: write up an inventory of what you have created, consult an attorney about drawing up a will if you don't have one, and think about what will happen to the items you have collected. This process may even inspire you to do some spring cleaning of your own! ▼



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Exhibitions

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If you are interested in being part of the SAQA Exhibition Committee or have questions or comments about SAQA exhibitions, contact me at leni@leniwiener.com. For questions about shipping and the new shipping policy, contact Bill Reker at shipping@saqa.com. ▼

Leni Levenson Wiener is co-chair of the SAQA Exhibition Committee. She is an art quilter, instructor and author of three books with a fourth to be released in 2014. She lives and works in New Rochelle, New York. She has exhibited in the United States and internationally and coaches emerging artists. Her website is www.leniwiener.com.

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Looking closely from page 11

They went. I didn't catch many of their answers, but it didn't matter. They were looking and seeing. When they slowed a bit, I told them to keep going, knowing that deeper seeing often comes after the easy things have been exhausted. When participants did what was natural—moved from seeing to asking questions or making speculations—I asked the second question, "What do you want to know?" Again I instructed the group to call out their questions rapidly. After a short time, they moved to answering their own questions, again a natural tendency.

While they were still enjoying the exercise, I interrupted them to congratulate them for their skill in getting "behind the cloth." I finished

by pointing out several things they may not have seen and answering a few of their "What do you want to know?" questions, but I tried to leave them curious, still thinking.

I haven't used this exercise with children yet, but their unself-consciousness should make their responses refreshing. College students on tour seem more self-conscious in front of their peers and less willing to speak but are clearly engaged. Groups rarely choose a highly abstract piece, but next time they do, I will add a third question, "What does it make you feel?" to encourage the subjective element of viewing art. ▼

Jonathan Gregory is assistant curator of exhibitions at the International Quilt Study Center & Museum at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska.

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Quick Notes

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

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

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