

Make your art pay

Niche markets create multiple income streams

by Cindy Grisdela

Editor's Note: Our featured artist, Elaine Quehl, is a grand example of finding and embracing niche marketing within the art quilt world. Here are the stories of several other artists who have used their creative talent to find new income streams related to their main artistic endeavor.

Is being an artist a viable business proposition? Or is the concept of the “starving artist” the truth?

Certainly it can be more difficult to have a successful business as an artist than working 9-to-5 in an office environment. You have to wear all the hats: boss, employee, marketing guru, and customer service representative. But it can be done.

Not everyone wants to make their passion for art into a business, because then it might feel more like work. But there are definite benefits to following your passion and making it pay. Maybe you won't make enough to buy a big house and vacation in the south of France, but you can create multiple streams of revenue to make your art pay.

First, invest the time to create the best art you are capable of. Learn about the principles of design and how to create interesting compositions. There is a wealth of information online to help you

educate yourself, or you can take classes—either online or in your community. Consider taking art classes, not just quilting classes. Fiber art is like any other art medium, and doing it well requires a working knowledge of design and composition concepts. Even if you choose to break the rules, you should know what they are.

Then get yourself and your work out into the world. You certainly will not be able to make money if you spend all your time in the basement creating art, no matter how wonderful it is.

The Internet is a huge help in getting your work out there. Set up a website, be active on social media, apply to exhibits. Offline, look for local places to show your work, like your local library, retail establishments with a gallery space, farmer's markets, or art walks.

Selling your original work usually won't generate enough income to make a living, although some artists are able to do it. In a workshop at a SAQA conference in Denver several years ago, Colorado artist Carol Ann Waugh talked about how she structures her business. She estimated that only 10 percent of her income comes from sales of quilts and the other 90 percent from other sources.

What can you do to bring in money besides selling your original work? Think of opportunities to

create different streams of revenue. Some of them will be active, like teaching or lecturing, for example. Some will be more passive, like creating a pattern and selling it online or licensing an image to be reproduced on a scarf or pillow.

Frieda Anderson, of Elgin, Illinois, is an award-winning artist with a successful business teaching and selling hand-dyed fabric and patterns. “I treat it like my job,” she says. “I'm in the studio every day with a long list of ideas and things I want to do.” When she's at home, she spends an hour or so every day dyeing her fabrics. She sells them at her workshops and from a booth she shares with fellow artist Laura Wasilowski at two of quiltdom's largest events—American Quilter's Society's QuiltWeek in Paducah, Kentucky, and International Quilt Festival in Houston—and one or two other venues each year. The booth presence also leads to teaching opportunities.

Frieda also has a line of more than 20 patterns uploaded to Craftsy.com. This is a great example of a passive revenue stream. Once you create a pattern, you go to your account at Craftsy and upload a pdf. Craftsy doesn't charge for listing patterns, nor does it take a commission when the pattern sells. The customer downloads the pattern, pays for it through PayPal, and the money, minus a small transaction charge, is deposited into

Reading list

Two resources to give you more ideas about multiple streams of income:

Art, Inc.: The Essential Guide for Building Your Career as an Artist

by Lisa Congdon

“Starving” to Successful: The Artist's Guide to Getting Into Galleries and Selling More Art

by Jason Horejs



Floris Flam sells her hand-dyed socks and other items through her co-op gallery and various local and regional shows.

your account. There is little work involved after the pattern is created and uploaded, except for whatever you decide to do to send potential customers to the site.

Melbourne, Florida, artist Ellen Lindner also teaches, both in person and online. She sells patterns and writes articles for publications. Her advice for artists wanting to expand into alternative revenue streams is: "Jump in and try it!"

"Many options require no financial output. Remember, too, that everything supports everything else. If you have a quilt hanging in a prestigious fine art show, it may not seem like it helps you sell patterns, but it does. The prestige and publicity you gain from the former help with the latter and vice versa. If you're marketing patterns, you are also putting yourself in the public eye and exposing yourself to other opportunities. Do

everything with professionalism, even if it's a free presentation to a group of third graders," Ellen advises.

Bethesda, Maryland, artist Floris Flam hand dyes her own fabrics for the original art quilts she makes. While she's dyeing the fabric, she also dyes other items, such as bamboo socks and cloth napkins. She sells them at various local and regional shows she attends each year. Floris belongs to a co-op fiber art gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria, Virginia. When she joined the gallery in 2002, she made art quilts and wearable vests. The vests didn't sell well enough to make them worthwhile, so she transitioned out of those and into smaller items that could make nice gifts, like business card cases, silk scarves, and fabric bowls. "Card cases are my best seller," she says.

There are a number of avenues to create income out there, but look for those that you would enjoy doing. When Ellen was transitioning her quilt hobby into a business, she didn't know which revenue stream might work best, so she pursued all of them: selling via her website and galleries, teaching, and writing articles. She soon found that teaching was the best option for her and she focused on that, while also realizing that gallery representation was not right for her at that time.

Talking about the smaller gift items she sells, Floris noted, "The small stuff I don't do if I don't enjoy it." She likes dyeing and playing with color, so dyeing socks and napkins is a logical extension of what she does anyway.

Debra Jones, a portrait artist from Scottsdale, Arizona, pursues two other niche markets with her painting. In



Watercolor artist Debra Jones expanded her business by adding commissioned pet portraits to her offerings.



in addition to portraits of people, she paints pets. Pet commissions are one way she has expanded her business, as some clients would pay for a painting of a beloved pet instead of, or in addition to, one of themselves.

Debra also paints generic animals which she sells through a print-on-demand site called Fine Art America. After completing a painting of a running Yorkie, for example, she photographs the painting and uploads it to the site. They print, frame, and send the image to the customer and give Jones an agreed-upon percentage of the sale.

Linda Jones (no relation to Debra) is a watercolor and acrylic painter in McLean, Virginia. She supplements her income from original art by teaching and also by making note-cards from her favorite paintings. She sells the cards both individually and in boxed sets. She photographs the painting immediately after finishing it and uploads the image to her computer. She formats and prints the cards herself and puts them together with envelopes in cellophane sleeves

or boxes in odd moments when she has free time.

The cards have led to sales of original work when customers see an image they like and ask if the original is available. If the original has been sold, sometimes the card will lead to a commission of a similar subject.

One question many artists with multiple streams of income wrestle with is how to balance their time between creating original work and doing the work that brings in regular income. Some, like Floris, work in spurts when the need arises. "If I have a show coming up, I might do three dozen socks and three dozen sets of napkins, plus card cases," she says.

Frieda dyes every day she is at home so she maintains a regular inventory. It can take three years to create a large original quilt, working on it a little bit at a time. When she has breaks from her teaching and show schedule, she takes time to devote her full attention to her art. She gives herself room not only to work, but also for failure in case the

initial idea doesn't work out the way she envisioned.

Ellen does business activities in her home office and creates her work in her studio. She estimates that about 60 percent of her time is devoted to business and teaching pursuits, with only 40 percent being active studio time.

Debra says she spends all of her waking hours thinking of opportunities. She doesn't do much teaching, but she's often asked to donate work to charitable organizations for auction. She always sets a reserve price as a floor for the bidding, and she asks to be present at the event so she can do demonstrations and talk to attendees to educate people about her process. "I need to explain to people why I am a necessity," she says.

Be open to opportunities that may come your way and say "yes" if you can. "I weigh every opportunity and see where it leads me," Debra says. ▼

Cindy Grisdela is a SAQA JAM living in Reston, Virginia. See her work at cindygrisdela.com.



For love or money

Tips to build a career as a teacher on the go

by Lyric Montgomery Kinard

A traveling quilt teacher enjoys a soul-feeding profession. To join this collegial club, plan your approach so you streamline the process and avoid pitfalls. In this first of two articles on the subject, I'll explore motivation, potential class offerings, and practical tips to navigate the field.

There are as many reasons to teach as there are teachers. Four main reasons are: earning income, enjoying travel, meeting new people, and sharing your knowledge. Understanding your motivation lets you develop your style. Here is a rundown of each factor and tips to consider.

Money matters

Do you need the money? Teaching is not one of the better-paying professions. For every day you teach, you spend many days running your business. If you need to support yourself, learn to maximize your profits and still offer a wonderful experience. You will need to gain serious marketing skills plus have the stamina and organization to regularly work back-to-back gigs.

If teaching will be a pleasant side hustle, you may be more concerned with guarding your time. Estimate how much time you want to devote and know your limits. Many teachers overbook themselves, get burnt out, but still have obligations a year or two into the future. Also, make sure to reserve time for family events as well as to create your own work.

Caring to share

If you want to share, evaluate your technical skill level. You don't have to be perfect, but you need

the skill and experience to help students overcome difficulties. You also have to have the ability to think ahead about each student's progress and help them avoid stumbling blocks.

Remember, the primary goal of teaching is to share your ideas. Students are there to learn from you. The very best teachers don't hold back information. Copyright covers your publications, but it's a good idea to gently remind students that it is unethical to copy and share your handouts and patterns. There are easy ways to protect your publications, such as watermarking handouts or patterns.

Think honestly about how you best interact with people. If you are an extrovert, develop entertaining lectures and work with structured group activities. If you are an introvert, you may focus on courses that provide individual attention. Both personalities make wonderful teachers, and both will need to be patient with a wide variety of people. Talk to other quilt teachers. When they share their "most difficult student ever" story, ask how they handled the scenario. Also, watch teachers in action. Put yourself in situations where you must diplomatically help someone with a difficult personality.

Know that a teacher is always "on." You are educating and entertaining. Students expect you to be as wonderful, enthusiastic, and generous in the hall as you are in class. I include a note in my hostess instructions that I need to be in my room alone by a certain hour so I can wind down and rest. Nobody has ever been offended by this request, and it has allowed for graceful retreats.

Going places

Do you love to travel? Can you manage long drives or dragging luggage through multiple airports? Your physical strength and stamina may determine the supplies you bring to a workshop. You are likely to arrive at your destination after staying up late the night before to pack and getting up ridiculously early that morning to catch your flight. Many times the women who escort you are elderly and cannot help with luggage. Once you are in the car, you might be whisked off to dinner, followed straight-away by an evening lecture. A late night with a talkative hostess could follow. Then by morning you need to be ready for a full day of teaching.

There isn't always time in your schedule for sightseeing, especially if you cram in a full schedule of gigs. Even so, I find that when I can schedule an extra day, someone is always willing to show me the best of their hometown.

Lesson plans

Do you have something unique, interesting, or popular to offer? I believe there is rarely anything new, but I don't let that stop me from sharing. You might do something in an unusual way, or you might be adept at a technique that has high interest.

Do you want to teach projects or processes? You can focus on one or do both at the same time. You don't have to be the only teacher in the world covering your subject, but you cannot copy the work or technique of another teacher.

Do you mind teaching what you do over and over and over? Students have a sixth sense for knowing when a teacher is disinterested. If you are easily bored, figure out how to make your class interesting to teach repeatedly.

If you love teaching projects, do you have patterns to teach your favorite techniques?

Many larger conferences want fresh classes every year. Developing new patterns is a way to accomplish this. If you teach a standard technique, this is a fabulous way to make your classes your own.

Think again about how much stuff you want to transport. Do you want to bring everything? I guarantee every class will have at least one student who

brings the wrong materials and you must be prepared for that. Are the supplies you use easily accessible or hard to find? Not every student will have access to a quilt shop. I use a lot of art supplies so I bring almost everything. They love the short supply list, and I have yet to hear a complaint about the supply fee. But if you use materials that most

quilters have on hand, have the students bring everything.

Be aware that if you teach sewing classes, you will need to help with every kind of machine. It slows down a class when one student does not know how to operate their machine or if one breaks down.

Practice makes perfect

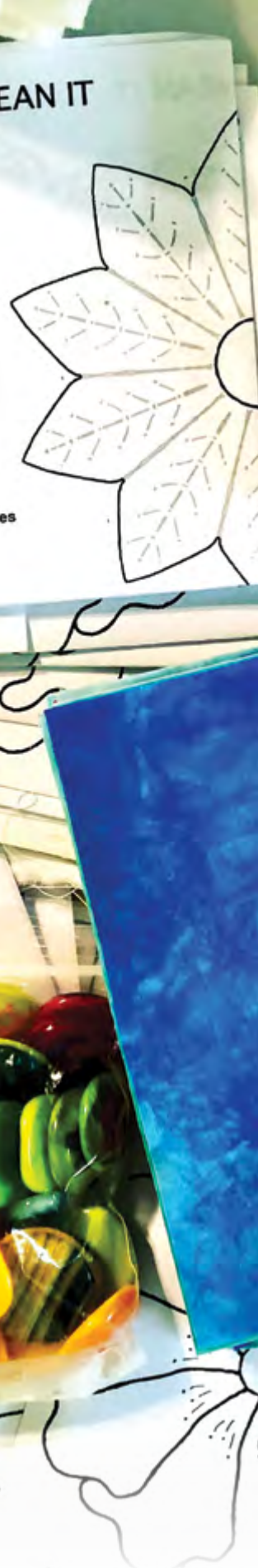
After you choose your classes, hone your teaching skills. Creating and teaching are two different skills. You must communicate clearly and present your material in an organized fashion. Every student has a different learning style, and you need to understand how to reach as many as possible with your presentation style.

Develop your class structure first. Write out detailed steps and practice saying them aloud. Write down every supply used, how much time it takes you (triple the total for beginning students), if the class lends itself to kits, and how much space each student needs. Determine if you need to

Understanding your motivation lets you develop your style.

Photo illustration by Lyric Montgomery Kinard





charge a supply fee. These notes form the first draft of your presentation and course particulars; they are also a starting point for clear handouts.

Next, I create a detailed outline for myself. It includes what step I will teach when and lists equipment, supplies, and techniques to be covered in each segment. If you teach handwork, consider a screen and projector to display live demonstrations. If you teach surface design, do you need access to water or hard flooring? No matter how neat you are, someone will spill paint and you will be left to clean up. It's just part of the job.

Once you have an outline, find students to do a practice run. Select friends with a range of skill levels and interests who will provide reliable and honest feedback. If you can teach a timid beginner and capture the interest of a confident rule-breaker at the same time, you are getting somewhere. Every time you teach, ask for feedback. I call this "suggestions for improvement" and I ask specific questions, such as, "What supplies would you rather the teacher bring?" or, "What technique needed more or less time?"

Watch for local opportunities to teach. Art centers, senior centers, and youth programs are great places for beginners. Your local guild would probably jump at the chance for an informal workshop as you develop your skills.

If you start at a local quilt shop, make sure you establish a win-win arrangement. You need the experience, but the shop needs to pay the rent. Come prepared to help bring in new customers and make sure your class uses supplies the shop offers. You can request the shop order supplies if it doesn't normally carry them.

I strongly suggest you take classes from teachers with a good reputation. Take notes on how they organize their time and supplies. Listen closely to

how they get their ideas across and watch how they interact with students. You are not copying their content, but you are learning what will and will not work for your teaching style. Never be afraid to ask questions. I find that quilting teachers are some of the most generous people I've met.

Marketing savvy

Once you are confident, spread the word. Use every avenue available to promote yourself. It is almost impossible to be successful without a website. Both guilds and students will appreciate an easily accessible site with clear descriptions and photos of each class, an easy way to contact you, and as much hiring information as you are comfortable

sharing. I am a proponent of putting it all out there. It saves hiring entities asking basic questions about dates, pricing, and supplies, and it saves you responding to those questions.

Make sure you offer a consistent, informative email newsletter and that your website has a way to subscribe to it. Your students want to get to know you and your art. They are more likely to take or request your class if they feel they know you. Blogs are not dead and are a good way to share your story. Use whatever social

media you have to get the word out.

To expand your teaching opportunities, take part in statewide guild meetings, give a demo at the International Quilt Festival, and send printed brochures or emails to groups you want to teach for. My favorite way to advertise is to write articles for magazines. They have a broad circulation and you get paid for your effort. Just keep in mind the magazine then owns the article and you cannot use those exact words or illustrations as handouts for your own class without permission.

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Love or money

from page 26

I never imagined I would end up doing what I do now. I can't think of a more satisfying profession. I'm my own boss, I get to travel all over the world, and I spend time playing with wonderfully creative people. Even after all the time and struggle it takes to get to this point, as soon as I enter a classroom I often think: "I can't believe I get paid to do this!"

In my next article, I will give details on how to operate your teaching business, including information on contracts, communication, equipment, merchandising, and organization. ▼

Lyric Montgomery Kinard is a SAQA JAM who resides in Cary, North Carolina. Her book, Tips for Traveling Quilt Teachers, is available from Amazon.com.



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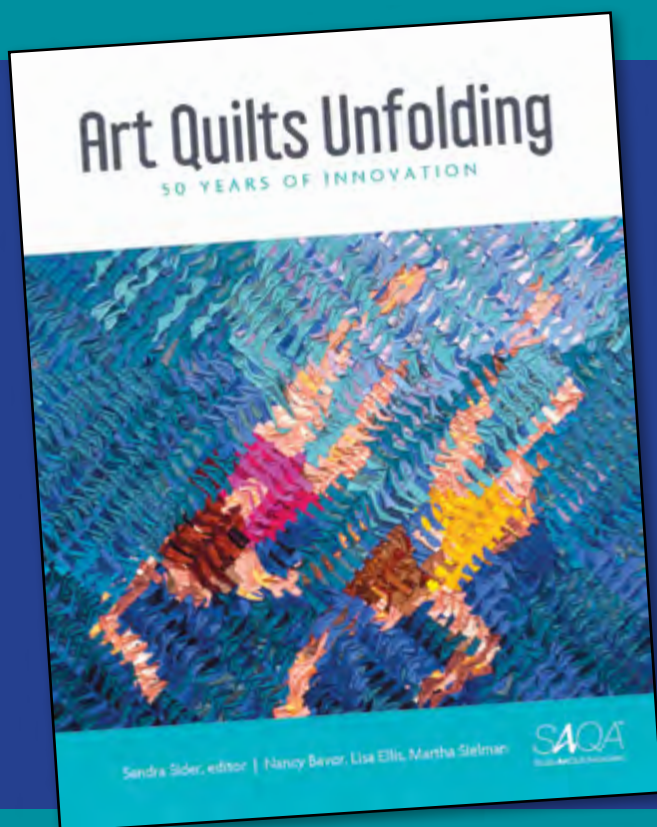
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Success is in the details:

Contracts, equipment, and a good night's sleep

by Lyric Montgomery Kinard

Ah, the life of a traveling quilt teacher! The glamour! The fame! The riches!

If you find yourself doubled over laughing, you are already on this fabulous journey and know its truth. This profession involves days of slogging through airports with too much luggage and not enough time to eat. Hours are spent ordering supplies, shipping, and packing. Time is dedicated to communication, marketing, and paperwork—enough time to make you long for the services of a good secretary. Yet, we love to share what we do with students.

Once you have polished your classes and created a website, you will need to expand your skill set. A traveling quilt teacher is first and foremost a business person. Present yourself as a confident professional to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Contracts

The first step is paperwork. Only work with a signed contract, and make sure it covers all important details. Keep it sleek and simple or highly detailed. I include everything that is important to me to set clear expectations and avoid miscommunications.

Note: My contract can be found at lyrickinard.com/teaching/hiring-information. You have my permission to use it as your template. Also on that page is information for hiring entities, including a flyer entitled *The Care and Feeding of Lyric*.

Most often larger conferences will ask you to sign their contract as will some guilds. Remember, these documents are negotiable. If there is something you'd rather not work without, ask to add

it to their contract. Reasonable negotiation is not frowned upon.

Your contract should include:

- Name and contact information for both parties.
- Date, name of course/lecture, and fee.
- Costs to be covered, such as mileage, airfare, lodging, and food.
- Signatures and dates from both parties.
- Cancellation clause.

I include additional terms too, each chosen to avoid a horror story I experienced or heard about from other teachers. My extras include:

- All contact information for a second liaison with the guild. You are working with volunteers. You might book up to two years in advance. They move on, so have a way to contact the hiring group.
- Website for the hiring group.
- Class and lecture venue specifics, including times, physical address of class space, and phone number for venue.
- Specific room requirements for lectures or classes, extra materials fee to be charged to students, class size limit, and per-student fee for extra students above maximum class size.
- Request that you are sent copies of all information posted by the hiring group about your class, especially supply lists. You must double-check the supply lists and class descriptions sent to students. I have had the hiring group change my

course description and leave things off the supply list without consulting me.

- Specifics about airline charges, including baggage, overhead bin fees, requiring that you book your own flights, etc. How early will you purchase tickets? I always get a spoken green light from the guild before booking a flight. I also always try to fly Southwest Airlines as they [as of this writing] don't have change fees and fly two bags free.
- Shipping. If your class requires supplies that must be shipped ahead, do you want the guild to pay for that? I don't charge the guild, but I include the cost in the supply fee. For extra merchandise, the teacher should cover all shipping costs.
- Lodging. Will you accept a home stay? I do, but require a private bathroom, a bedroom with an interior lock, and no pets or children. Require a hotel if you are more comfortable in that setting. Include brand suggestions, interior door entry, and on-site breakfast or food if you need it. The cheapest hotel in an area is not always a safe place to stay.
- Will you be paid for "off" days between classes? The hiring group should cover lodging and food if you need to be there a day without working. Will you need an extra day to catch up if you travel through several time zones?
- Choose in advance how to split costs if multiple guilds share you on one trip.
- Food. You may ask for a per-diem on travel days and any other specific requirements that keep you healthy and at your best.
- Sales. Some guilds ask for a percentage of your sales; I don't do sales splits. Do you need an assistant or a table for displays or merchandise? Some guilds require a "gift" for their library or as a door prize.
- Cancellation fee/date. I don't charge a cancellation fee if there is a disaster no one can avoid, and I try to reschedule. Because I take limited engagements and turn down other groups for a

reserved date, I charge a cancellation fee. Determine how much lead time you need to book another gig if the guild doesn't fill the class. Get written confirmation of a cancellation.

- Should you charge a booking fee? I only hold spots with a signed contract and a paid booking fee, which I can waive. My fee is small but nonrefundable, and is deducted from the teaching fee. I find the fee avoids cancellations.

Equipment

If your classes require sewing machines, do you need to bring yours? Can the guild provide a specific model? If you are a brand ambassador, often a local shop can provide a floor model. Also, gain experience with many different machine brands. There is no such thing as a machine class without a mechanical issue.

You also need really good luggage. You will likely have 150 pounds of stuff, with only a tiny corner of space reserved for highly packable clothing. I purchase expensive luggage with a lifetime repair guarantee, such as Briggs & Riley or Victorinox. My bags have lasted for years and I don't worry about them falling apart on the conveyor belt. If your luggage is not waterproof, pack quilts in a watertight plastic bag. I've recently discovered packing cubes, zippered cases that fit inside your suitcase. Each class I teach is now organized in its own packing cube.

My best piece of luggage is a rolling briefcase used for audio-visual equipment. It fits under the seat of the smallest puddle jumper plane. I never check my projector.

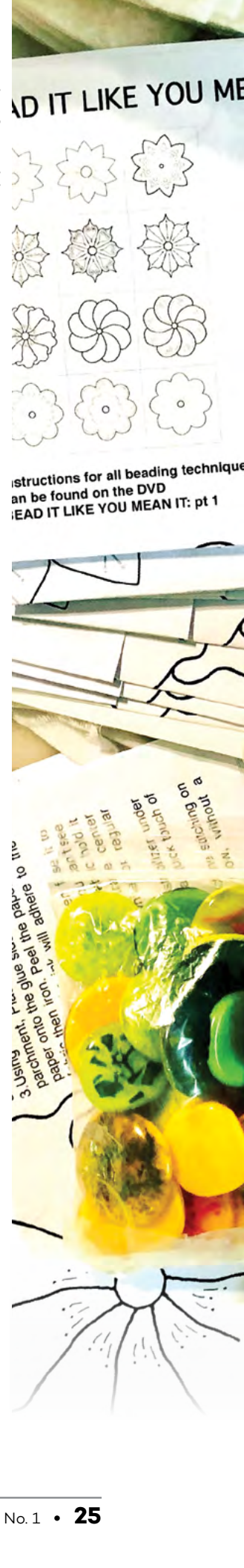
For more packing specifics, type equipment into the search function found at lyrickinard.com.

Electronic Gear

Audio/Visual

Most teachers bring their own projector if they give slide lectures. They are fairly affordable, portable, and useful during classes and lectures. I have a lightweight digital projector with high lumens

Photo illustration by Lyric Montgomery Kinard



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Success

from page 25

and great color correction that I purchased from projectorpeople.com. Describe what you need to do, and the company makes sure you receive the optimal machine, connecting cables, and knowledge to use them.

I teach many close-up handwork techniques, so I project live demos. You can record demos ahead of time and play them on a loop, which allows you to skip setting up a tripod and video camera. It is much easier to teach beading or detailed stitching when everyone sees your demo at the same time on a large screen from the comfort of their seats. Ensure that your hiring group knows you need a screen and an outlet.

Computer/Tablet

I keep my lectures on my iPad and download a copy to my smartphone

and a USB stick. If you use a stick, save your material in several formats, including PowerPoint, Keynote, and numbered pdf or jpg slides. If your equipment fails, you will be prepared to use borrowed equipment. Quick tip: Set your device so that it cannot automatically install updates while you are on a trip. You don't want to be stuck waiting for your lecture to reload or to possibly lose it altogether to a buggy update.

Extra nice items

Consider investing in a lavalier mic and speaker. I've taught in convention center basements with forklifts running next door and construction outside, and in cavernous arenas with an adjacent motorcycle racetrack. If you teach multiple days,

you don't want to lose your voice from shouting.

Merchandise

DVDs, books, postcards, dyed fabrics, and patterns add to your income on the road. Price everything so people know the cost. How will you sell your wares? The guild has hired you to teach, not to open a shop. I set out merchandise, but I don't spend time selling it. I provide invoices and collect them at the end of class along with any supply fees. The invoices list prices and collect email addresses of students who want to subscribe to my newsletter. Make sales convenient! My sales doubled when I added a Square card reader.

Get a License

You're a professional. Get a business license, register as a sole proprietor or LLC, and get a sales tax number so you can order your supplies wholesale. It is perfectly reasonable to sell those supplies at retail prices.

Kits

If you prepare kits, pay yourself for your time. Students appreciate having the right supplies. This is especially important at large conferences where people must travel to attend. When teaching at guilds, I often make kits optional. I'll bring enough for the class and either sell the extras or use them for the next class.

Extra Supplies

I often bring extra supplies used in class. The supply fee covers consumables, but I bring extras to sell to students who love the technique enough to head home and work on it.

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Publications

Students are a perfect target audience for your publications. However, books are heavy to tote. DVDs are light, but many people no longer have DVD players or slots in their computers to play them. You never know how many books will sell, and it is a pain to ship them home, especially if you already shipped them to the event. I bring a few copies and have a postcard printed with the book cover on it. Students can order the book from me, and I pay the cost of shipping via USPS media mail.

Backups and Disaster Plans

It pays to think through worst case scenarios ahead of time. Ask Melinda Bula, creator of the Fabulous Fusible Flowers technique, about the time the train shipping her class kits derailed, or ask me about the time the screen for my slide lecture was placed under a huge skylight at high noon.

Have a fully charged phone when you get off the plane to access information and call your contacts once you arrive. I bring the hard copy of my contract sheet with me and keep it in my AV bag. Invest in a little battery pack/phone charger, and keep your cables with you. Make sure everything you need is backed up and available on the cloud.

I hope this information helps you hit the ground running. If it seems overwhelming, take it one step at a time. Choose the most important steps for you to get ready, and begin!

Bon Voyage! ■

Lyric Montgomery Kinard is a SAQA JAM who resides in Cary, North Carolina. Her book, Tips for Traveling Quilt Teachers, is available from Amazon.com.



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Online teaching opportunities abound

Study up to find your lesson plan for success

by Katie Shaiken

The number of online teaching opportunities is growing, affording quilt artists great potential to reach a broader student base. But the most important step for success in this field may be the plans you make before you start a cyber classroom.

Before you apply or start your own enterprise, plan what you want to accomplish for you and your students. Research what kind of online classroom you desire before you apply for a teaching position or start your own venture.

The first step is simple. Go old school and listen to the voice of experience. Online education may be the new thing, but many artists have already made it their own. Some art quilters have created their own platforms for online teaching, and some teach through established sites and schools. Each avenue allows the teachers to bring their subjects

to a large number of interested students, and each platform offers varied opportunities for teaching and learning.

Existing platforms

Dena Crain, a quilt artist and teacher in Kenya, teaches through the website QuiltEd Online, formerly known as Quilt University. Dena has taught quilting since 1994, and she co-founded the Kenya Quilt Guild. She has taught Guild members in Nairobi, Mombasa, and other cities, and began online teaching in 2002 to reach a wider student base than her remote location afforded. Dena has continued to add and refine content ever since. QuiltEd Online offers continuous enrollment, so there are no opening or closing dates for workshops. Dena teaches students as they progress through the classes at their own pace. QuiltEd Online is run on a

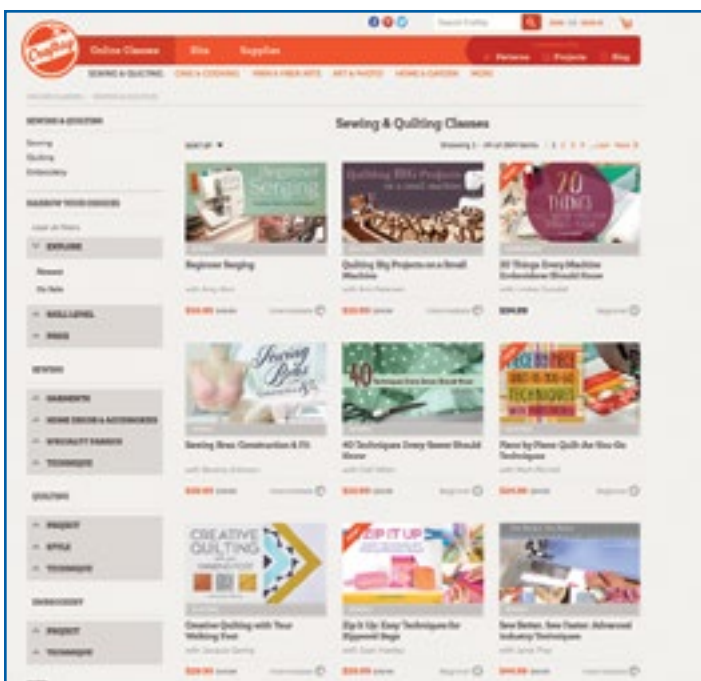
WordPress blog with lessons only available to bona fide students. QuiltEd Online also works with other online quilt teachers to prepare classes to offer on the site.

Carol Ann Waugh teaches through a site called Craftsy (craftsy.com). Currently she is teaching three classes: Stupendous Stitching, Snazzy Stitched Portraits, and Stitch and Slash. Craftsy is based in Denver, Colorado, and its offerings have exploded in the last four years to offer hundreds of classes in quilting, sewing, embroidery, cake decorating, cooking, knitting, crocheting, spinning, weaving, drawing, painting, photography, woodworking, gardening, jewelry, paper crafts, and more. Academy of Quilting is an online teaching site that has been around since 2008. It offers a variety of lessons, including wearable art, beading, applique, creative designs, and other subjects. It accepts applications for new classes and teachers (see sidebar) and has two main class structures. Teachers can either propose an on-demand class or a scheduled class. On-demand classes have rolling enrollment, and are accessible around the clock. Scheduled classes run 4-10 weeks, and a lesson is posted every week. Each class structure includes a question and discussion section and a digital gallery space for posting work. Upon acceptance of a proposal, Academy of Quilting uses a contract to hire teachers as independent contractors.

Creating your own platform

Many artists create their own platforms to offer online classes. Jane Dunnewold (www.janedunnewold.com) has taught on Craftsy but teaches most of her classes through her own website. Jane has taught in classrooms for 25 years and has added online teaching to make information available for people who can't travel or afford an in-person workshop.

Jane has a media manager who facilitates the classes by registering students, posting weekly entries,



and monitoring the online Open Studio. Through Open Studio, Jane and her students share ideas and Jane comments on every student's submissions. Jane wrote her curricula, organized her supplies, and recorded the video segments that are posted weekly. Jane might add additional recordings based on the direction the class takes and the questions students have. She loves the freedom to mold her classes based on student involvement and needs.

"It's a delight to see the interactions among people who don't know each other. I have found it to be a rich and wonderful environment and very rewarding. Not what I would have predicted about online learning," Jane says. She credits her success to limiting class size so she has time for those enrolled. She finds this approach helps create real connections between instructor and student.

Lisa Call's (lisacall.com) advice for starting to teach online is, "Make a plan just like you would with any other teaching endeavor. You've got to know why you want to do it and how to make it work, or you'll get in over your head fast. As with all things business, it's all about customer service. Teachers need to keep that front and center in their thinking in order to succeed."

Lisa used her computer science background to create her own platform to teach online. She had been a teacher for many years in that field and has also taught art and life coaching. She has been teaching online for three years. By creating her own interface, she was able to

structure it to meet her needs. Lisa teaches classes not on technique but about honing one's skills as an artist: developing work in series, art theory, and being an artist. Lisa also offers Co-Active® life coaching. Because she doesn't partner with an institution or established site to teach online, she has the autonomy to teach classes with graduate level material and high expectations.

Lisa teaches four or five classes at a time but limits class enrollment to 10 students so that each student gets her full attention. Her advice to someone looking to start online teaching is, "Figure out what you have to offer that's unique to you. What is your gift? Not just about art — what are your life experiences that you can bring to your students?"

Susan Shie (www.turtlemoon.com) has been teaching since the early 1980s in graduate school at

Kent State University School of Art. She has taught drawing, painting, and writing since 1989. Susan began teaching online at the beginning of this year. She chose to use Facebook as her online classroom and created a private Facebook group for her students. Each student creates a Facebook album to file work throughout the course. Susan said she spent a considerable amount of time setting up the Facebook group and additional time on administrative tasks such as receiving registration and payment from students. She also created video demonstrations that she posts on Vimeo, which students access with a password. Susan creates a weekly lesson, offers a daily idea or suggestion, and posts her own work along with the suggestion.

"Online classes are kind of like the commuter students back at college.

see "Online teaching" on page 36

Online Teaching Opportunities

Several websites look for online instructors. No idea is too small if you are looking to start your online teaching career. You might consider applying to:

The Academy of Quilting (run by Arbee Designs)

Apply at arbeedesigns.com/quilt-designers.

Annie's Craft Store (www.anniescatalog.com)

If you would like to teach a class, send an email to class.suggestions@anniescatalog.com. Include your bio, a description of the class you would like to teach, and a link to your website.

Craft U (www.craftonlineuniversity.com)

Interested candidates should send their resume/CV and cover letter in Word or PDF format to universitycustomerservice@fwmedia.com with the subject line Craft University Instructor Application.

Craftsy (www.craftsy.com)

Complete a Craftsy Instructor Course Proposal Form at www.craftsy.com/courseproposal.

QuiltEd Online (quiltedonline.com)

Apply to teach at (quiltedonline.com/teach).

Online teaching

from page 17

Their inability to participate fully in person is sad, but on the other hand, like the commuter, they can keep the rest of their life going while taking the class," she says. Susan is happily spending many hours responding to and interacting with her students in her first online class, Lucky Drawing 101.

With all of the many options for online teaching, that bit of old-school advice still rings true: do your homework. These veteran online teachers suggest making very detailed plans of your proposed classes and how the content will be delivered online. ▼

Katie Shaiken is a SAQA supporter based in Tewksbury, Massachusetts.

Exhibition survey from page 30

Running second and third are quilt museums, and smaller museums and galleries.

The Exhibition Committee is pleased to learn, based on the survey, the criteria that SAQA members use when deciding to enter a call for entry are on track with current development of calls and placement of upcoming exhibitions. The recent call for *My Corner of the World*, with a broad theme and generous size variances, meets many members' preferences, based on this survey. The exhibition will premiere at the Stratford Perth Museum in Ontario, Canada.

The Committee has formed a subgroup of members to further study the development of new relationships between SAQA and recognized

museums, art centers, and galleries in attempt to address the survey requests for such venues. Additionally, the Committee will attempt to post calls for entry 12 months before the deadline, giving members more time to develop and create new work.

The Exhibition Committee wishes to thank all members who took the time to complete the survey and share their personal opinions. The Committee intends to continue to develop exhibitions that address the issues and concerns of the membership, and create exciting exhibition opportunities for all members.

If you have any thoughts or questions regarding SAQA exhibitions, please email Gwyned Trefethen, chair of the Exhibition Committee, at gwynedtrefethen@mac.com. ▼

Gateway Canyons Presents **ALEGRE RETREAT 2016**

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Welcome to Calvin Park

A straightforward school assignment yields creative fiber art

by Diane Howell

Calvin Park Public School in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, needed a welcome sign—one to fit a 14x8-foot stairwell!

Rising to the challenge was fiber artist Pamela Allen, also of Kingston. Through an Artists in the Schools grant funded by the Ontario government, she directed teams of seventh and eighth graders to make a giant collage work that both greets visitors and tells the Calvin Park story.

The kids instantly took to Pamela's freewheeling style. For three weeks

in 2003, approximately 10 students at a time worked in one of four daily shifts to create a 12x8-foot sign that reflected their proud view of their school.

The approach

The first task was to define parameters—other than location and medium. The kids settled on three panels filled with people and a fourth panel that said, "Welcome to Calvin Park." The students maintained focus in part through the location of their work

space, a borrowed storage and resource center graced by two library tables. For a design wall, Pamela hung a large piece of felt over bookcases.

Then they got busy making individual elements for the panels. Feet, hands, faces, and musical instruments all came to life, to be later mixed and matched into fanciful combinations.

The process

The students' enthusiasm was maintained with some shortcuts to



traditional quiltmaking. Students chose a background fabric and were shown how to tear a proper square. Then they selected high contrast fabrics for elements such as faces. Fabric preprinted with eyes helped quickly turn the students' own oval-shaped cut pieces of fabric into heads. Rather than fuse their freehand-cut shapes

onto a background, Pamela switched them to glue sticks, which readily moved the work from design to hand stitching.

Batting had been glued to the background squares to ensure texture for the appliqué process. However, raw-edge appliqué and the ladder stitch were soon replaced with a

running stitch done with darning needles. Three-strand embroidery floss ensured a noticeable and colorful stitching line no matter the skill level.

After the combinations were selected, bodies were made whole with fabric shapes that represented torsos, legs, and arms. The resulting



“people” were attached to their backgrounds—thrift-store sheets. The musical instruments then completed the composition. Continuity between the panels was ensured with special additions, such as an overlapping hand.

Back in her studio, Pamela spray basted each panel into a traditional quilting sandwich. While she did most of the quilting, some of the students also quilted small portions by machine. The binding was done by folding the backing to the front. Then the students secured it with a running stitch. The final flourish was embellishments, including school crests, buttons, beads, and jewelry. The quilt was signed discreetly by all the makers with a Sharpie marker.

The bonus

More than 45 small quilts were made from elements that didn’t make the final cut for the sign, but made a wonderful exhibition on their own.

And not just the kids got to participate. Many adults were part of the support system. The project was helped financially with donations from parents of old clothes, fabric, and sewing supplies. A local fabric store donated the batting.

All in all, a kid-powered success!



Pondering kid-friendly projects?

SAQA Journal editor Diane Howell asked members what projects they had undertaken with kids, and they pulled projects from their vaults to prove what kids can do—which is a lot! One of the most ambitious projects was a project led by Pamela Allen in Canada. Here are more SAQA-member-tested projects that are fun and may awaken the fiber artist within your students, whether those students are present at a public event, a school classroom, or your own kitchen table.

Susan Lenz
Columbia, South Carolina

Fiber bookmarks. Using an embellisher, materials include a stiff Pellon interfacing cut into strips, acrylic yarn, and tiny triangles of felt. In just minutes, the project is complete. It can be accomplished even by kids of kindergarten age.

Diane Howell
Chandler, Arizona

Fabric portraits. A picture of the student inspires great results. Materials include a photo, tracing paper, and prefused fabric scraps ranging from fun prints to a large variety of skin tones. Lessons include learning how everything—nose, shadows, hair—is a shape; that the print in the fabric helps build the picture; and to ignore busy elements in the picture. A less-involved project is fabric postcards where the kids free-hand cut shapes based on a theme, such as winter fun.

Cindy Grisdela
Reston, Virginia

Color and design principles. Teach the basics and then put the principles to work to create 12 x 12-inch pillow tops. No sewing machines allowed in your classroom? Even if your kids are required to sew by hand—and they are new to needle and thread—wonderful nontraditional works are still the result.

Nancy Billings
Coral Gables, Florida

Gelli printing with various resists. This is a project where the resulting fabrics are made into pillows stitched together on the machine and then stuffed.

Regina Dunn
DeLand, Florida

Stitch your own story books. Students embroider “stories” onto small fabric pages that will be sewn together into a book. All the stories come to life via hand stitching with a treasure trove of embroidery threads.

Gerrie Congdon
Portland, Oregon

Fabric printing. Students use Thermofax screens, stencils and stamps to create one-of-a-kind fabrics, or T-shirts, as seen above.

Fused compositions. Hand stitch the resulting pictures à la Laura Wasilowski.

Elaine Millar
Portland, Oregon

Drawstring bags. Students use kits that include pre-cut fabrics and cording to construct the bags on a sewing machine. They also learn how to properly press as they construct the bags.

Book publishing made easy

with CreateSpace print-on-demand services

by Allison Reker

You've pulled together an amazing collection of artworks. Maybe it's for your own solo show, or it's a larger exhibition that features many different artists. Either way, the exhibition presents you with the opportunity to capture the big picture in a book that can be shared, used for promotion, or sold to help cover costs.

One way to meet this creative opportunity is CreateSpace, an easy-to-use publishing platform where you can create portfolios or exhibition catalogs with no up-front costs. There is no need for special software or design expertise. Additionally, CreateSpace is directly affiliated with Amazon, and your books can be made available on that site and many other online bookstores.

Getting started

Pull together both written and graphic content, keeping in mind that various factors, including the length of the book and how much color it contains, play into the printing costs and the sale price. If you need help, there are many free resources available through the services dashboard, including advice on creating content, formatting, marketing, and more.

A variety of templates and design choices are available for both the interior and the cover. For users with limited experience, the templates ensure your book has a clean, professional design and layout. For those who have the skill to create a print-ready book file on their own, you only need to upload two pdf files, one for the cover and one for the interior.

Cover and interior images

For an exhibition catalog, having clean, properly sized, print-quality images is extremely important. Photos that look great on a computer screen might not look so great in printed material. To prevent production delays and lots of frustration down the line, carefully review the image guidelines provided by CreateSpace. Your images must be at least 300 dpi in order to print well. Any cropping, color correction, or other modifications must be made before the file is uploaded.

For Karol Kusmaul, creating the catalog for SAQA Florida's regional exhibition *Stitched: Embracing the Quilt as Fine Art* was a learning experience. "It seemed a bit daunting at first, but with a little coaching and determination, it was not terribly

difficult," she says. When she realized her images seemed out of focus, she was able to get some helpful advice from Bobbi Baugh, a graphic design professional in the Florida region.

When working to design the catalog itself, Karol first sketched out on paper what to place on each page. This allowed her to see how the content would flow in the available space.

Editing and proof copies

CreateSpace offers editing services if you need them, but they aren't free. If you're trying to keep production costs to a minimum, do this on your own; it's always a good idea to enlist others to help. While CreateSpace might alert you to issues related to print quality, it does not point out typos and formatting errors. What you send is what gets printed.

Once your final cover and interior files look exactly the way you want them, submit your files for review. Save them in pdf format, and upload them through your member dashboard. There are step-by-step instructions to guide you through the entire process.

The CreateSpace team members turn your files into a proof in about 24 hours. If they find any issues, they ask you to correct them and resubmit. Otherwise, you are given the option



to review and approve your proof through an online viewer, or you can have a printed proof copy mailed to you. To receive a printed proof, you must pay for the production and postage costs. Of course, it takes additional time to receive, but having your book in your hands is well worth the extra expense. You can see how it actually looks in print, and you have the option to make corrections before it is available to the public.

Stitched is but one SAQA regional exhibition catalog produced using CreateSpace. Patricia Porter from SAQA's Northern California/Nevada region created a catalog for another regional exhibition, *On the Fringe* (see page 16). She says of the experience, "We really liked the process. Like any printing, your visuals will be as good as what you sent. The process is super easy."

Distribution channels and pricing

While you are waiting for your proof to be created, there are more decisions to make, including which distribution channels to sell through and at what price. The system shows you how much it costs to produce each book, but you must determine the best sale price. Set it high enough that you make some money for your efforts, but not so high that your book is unaffordable for your target audience.

How much of a royalty you receive depends on which channel your book is purchased through. For instance, the royalty is higher from a book sold directly through the CreateSpace store than it is through Amazon. The tradeoff is more people are likely to buy through Amazon, where they can

bundle it with other purchases or take advantage of free-shipping options. The more distribution options you choose, the more potential buyers you reach.

You make the largest royalty by ordering and selling the books on your own, but that option can have considerable up-front costs, and you could end up stuck with a pile of books you can't sell. The beauty of print-on-demand over traditional printing is that you can easily avoid this problem by directing people to buy your book online. SAQA's Massachusetts/Rhode Island region chose a balanced approach with their regional catalog, *Currents*. Sue Bleiweiss, who co-created the book with Nancy Turbitt, notes, "Once the approval process was done, we ordered a dozen catalogs to have at our opening and let the members of the region know they could order theirs directly through Amazon if they wanted. The biggest benefit was that we didn't have to commit to ordering a bunch of catalogs up front, and we had the option of doing pretty much any size book we wanted."

Discount codes are another available option for regions that want to make their catalogs available for sale at different venues. These can give a discount, either in dollars or a percentage, to any individual or retailer who wishes to purchase directly from the CreateSpace store, where each book is given its own customizable sales page.

Final thoughts

CreateSpace gives both novices and experts a wide range of options for creating and printing books. Paid services are available, but not necessary, to get a professional-looking finished product. The guided step-by-step

Other print-on-demand publishers

CreateSpace is one of many print-on-demand publishers. Before you commit to any one company, it's important to consider your options. Depending on what type of material you want to publish and how you want to distribute it, some may offer advantages others do not. Pay particular attention to how much your book will cost to print, as that affects the sales price and your royalties.

Additional companies to consider:

- **Blurb** (www.blurb.com)
- **Lulu** (www.lulu.com)
- **Lightning Source** (www.lightningsource.com)
- **48 Hour Books** (48hrbooks.com)
- **AuthorHouse** (www.authorhouse.com)

process makes it easy to go from conception to reality in a relatively short amount of time, especially in comparison to traditional publishing.

The book designer has complete control over everything—design, sales channels, and pricing. Once a proof is approved, it's available for immediate sale through the CreateSpace store and within a couple of days on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or other online book retailers. An e-book version can be added if desired. Even with the completely free publishing option, top-notch customer support is available by email or phone anytime help is needed. All of these benefits make CreateSpace one of the most flexible, cost-effective options for producing limited numbers of exhibition catalogs.

Allison Reker is the SAQA membership coordinator and editor of our weekly eblast publication Fiber Art Friday. She resides in Beavercreek, Ohio.

Self-publishing a portfolio book

by Cindy Grisdel

How do you present your art to the world, outside of your website? Over the years I've tried various methods of putting together a portfolio of my work to present at shows or to galleries, from simple photographs inserted in a standard photo album to a large black spiral-bound portfolio with custom pages of my work, to a digital photo frame. None was completely satisfactory.

During the SAQA Visioning Conference in May 2011, I visited Carol Ann Waugh's studio in Denver and saw two portfolio books she had self-published. Maybe that would be the answer. I have used Shutterfly (www.shutterfly.com) for many years to create photo books for friends and family—much easier than printing out pictures, keeping them organized, and finding time to put them into photo albums. But I wanted to try something a little different for my portfolio.

Waugh uses Blurb (www.blurb.com) to create her portfolio books and says the process is very easy. The first step is to download the free book-creating software onto your computer. Although it's possible to create your book entirely online, Waugh says the downloaded version has better editing features. There are helpful tutorials available in either version to get you started, ideas for inspiration, page templates, and step-by-step guides.

Virginia Spiegel of Byron, Illinois, used Blurb to create *Wild at the Edges: Inspiration from a Creative Life*, showing images of her work alongside the photographs that inspire her and text

about her journey as an artist. "Blurb is easy to use, but I would recommend watching their tutorials once or twice to save time on the learning curve," Spiegel advises. "The first book is the hardest, of course."

Before you begin, Waugh suggests putting the photos you want to use into a separate folder on your computer. "Otherwise the program wants to upload all your photos, and in my case that would be over 10,000!" This is a good exercise because it forces you to consider exactly what you want to include in your portfolio. Recent work only or older pieces as well? Sold work or just work that's currently available? How often will you update your book? Waugh's portfolios for 2010 and 2011 each include several years of work.

Good photography is essential to show your work to its best advantage. Review the images to make sure the photo quality is what you want it to be, and decide on a uniform presentation. I'm not a photographer, so I have my work shot by a professional, always using a neutral background. If your images have different backgrounds, consider cropping the edges to avoid distracting from your art.

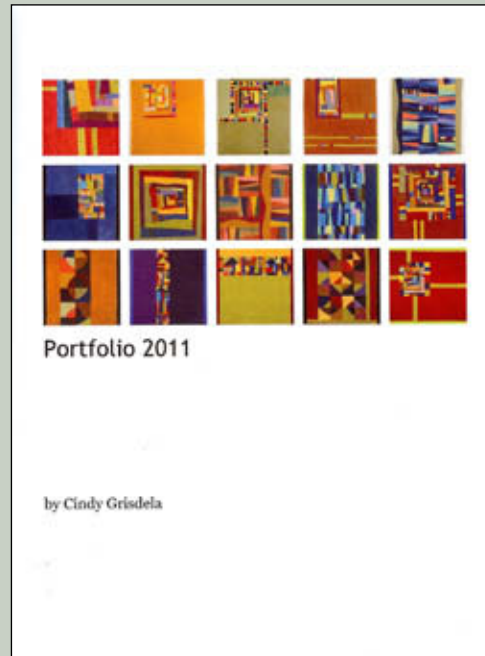
Whether or not to add text is another consideration. Do you want to include information on inspiration or other details with each image, or devote a page or two at the beginning to talk about your creative work and just give titles under each piece? Remember, the more text there is on each page, the smaller the image will have to be. Waugh recommends writing your copy first and saving it

without any formatting. Then, after you have used the Blurb software to set up fonts and type size, you can copy and paste the text.

I decided to try Blurb, and following Waugh's advice, I moved high-resolution photos of my work to a separate file on my computer and wrote the text I wanted to include—one page at the beginning of the book describing my art, my inspiration, and my process, plus two pages at the end with resume information. Then I was ready to begin.

The Blurb software walks you through the process of creating your book step by step. First, choose a title and the size of your book—it can range from 7 x 7 inches square to 13 x 11 inches landscape. The size can be changed later if you wish. Next, decide whether you want to use a standard layout, with "Guide Me" choices like portfolio, photo book, or journal, or just "Wing It" (create as you go). Spiegel says she always chooses "Wing It" over "Guide Me." You still get individual page templates, but you can arrange the placement yourself. She says, "I have found that while background colors and other bells and whistles are tempting, plain white really shows off the photos best. Simplicity is good."

The next step is to upload your photos and start arranging the photos and text. Each page has a suggested format, or you can choose other options from the toolbar on the left. If you get stuck, there are good help topics and FAQs to help you resolve the problem or question. For example, if your image resolution isn't



Front cover and title page

high enough for the size photo you want to include, the software will let you know and give you options for fixing it.

Once you've added your photos and text, you'll want to preview your book. A handy option allows you to see one page at a time, a two-page spread, or the entire book laid out in thumbnails on the design wall. This is a good opportunity to make sure the flow of images and text is what you intended. It's also a good time to check the pricing options for the number of pages you have.

Blurb offers a page-range pricing system. Books with up to 20 pages have a set cost, then the price goes up in increments for additional pages, from 21–40, 41–80, 81–120, and so on. If your book is on the lower end of a range, you'll have to decide whether it's worth it to cut a few pages to get the lower price. Other self-publishing services like Lulu (www.lulu.com) offer a per-page pricing system, plus a binding fee. The price per page depends on the size of the book, whether it's in color or black and white, and the paper quality. Shutterfly has a combination system; the first 20 pages are a

set price, then there's a per-page price for each additional page. Be sure to read the fine print to avoid surprises at checkout.

Pricing is also dependent on the type of cover and the paper quality you choose. Most services offer a range of cover choices from soft-cover to hardbound with an image-wrapped cover; some even offer the option of an e-book. These decisions are typically made at the end of the process. It's worthwhile to give some consideration to the use you intend for your book. Is it simply a catalog of your work to show to prospective purchasers or maybe to a gallery? Do you want to give it as a gift to your top clients? Or would you like to try to sell it, either on the publisher's website or on your own at events you participate in?

Blurb and Lulu have a bookstore where you can offer your book for sale. You can allow the book to be sold on the site at the base price, or you can set your own price and keep a portion of the increase over the base price. Read the fine print on the site before choosing this option. Blurb has various mechanisms for promoting your book, like a widget to put on

your website, blog, or Facebook page that takes interested visitors to the Blurb bookstore.

Once you've finished adding your images and text and have decided on your book size, the type of cover you want and the paper quality you'd like to use, it's time to proofread your work. Although it may seem like you're finished, don't skimp on this step! "You must be a relentless proofer of your book," warns Robin Kent, a photographer in Virginia who sells a self-published book of his images of Washington, D.C. "You'll be amazed at what can slip through, even with multiple reviews," he adds. Proof the work on the computer, print out a copy and review it again, spellcheck it, and give it to a friend or relative to read for content, Kent advises. Once you're satisfied, order one copy of the book and review it again to make sure you're happy with the cover, layout, and paper quality.

I ordered my book in hardcover with an image wrap and was pleasantly surprised with the crispness of the images on the page. There were a few minor details that I would have changed—the title doesn't show up

See "Self-publishing" on page 30

Conceptual from page 10

to new ideas and possibilities.

I like to work conceptually, and these pieces satisfy me in that regard; however, I also do have to think practically. It is a reality that we, as artists, have to make money to support our art. Therefore, I do take into account the salability of my piece. Even though my *Features Fade* pieces are an installation, there is something left of each piece when it has completed its cycle of deterioration. Each is contained within a “frame”; they can be hung on the wall and can be purchased. It has been a slow process getting galleries and exhibition juries to understand what’s happening with my pieces. I’ve found that having professional photographs taken of the works at various angles and including special details has helped. I’ve also

considered lighting and done what I can to capture different stages in the melting process. Short time-lapse videos of my work also help people understand the craft that goes into the work as well as how it unfolds in time and space.

In describing the organic nature of my process, I hope to give a little inspiration to other artists. I believe that the more you reflect and discuss your ideas, the more clearly you understand how your work is experienced by others. Sharing ideas is another way of continuing our journey of creating art. ▼

SAQA active member Heidi Field-Alvarez of Richmond, Virginia, has her Metamorphosis video online at youtu.be/nGvha2KszUc. Her website is www.heidifieldalvarez.com.

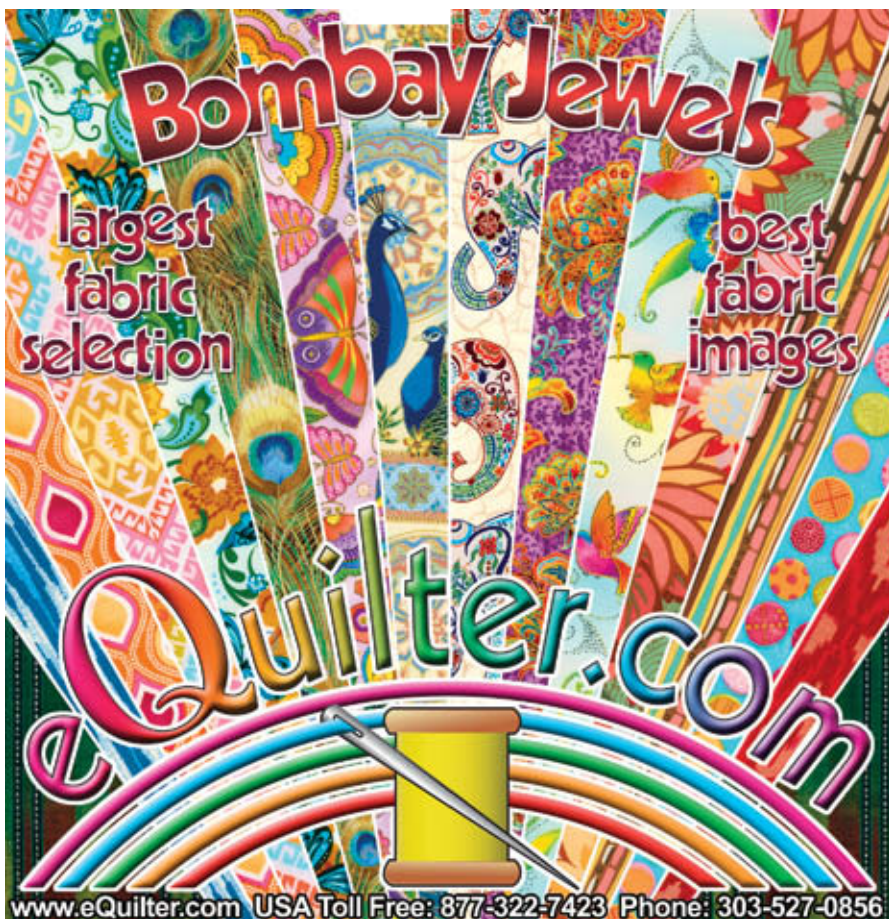
Self-publishing

from page 19

on the cover as well as I would have liked and there are some layouts that I would have done differently. But I can go back in and fix those issues for the next one.

I displayed the portfolio at my open studio in October 2011 and got great feedback from visitors, so I consider my initial foray into self-publishing a success. Perhaps you’ll consider self-publishing a portfolio to showcase your art as well. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Cindy Grisdela is a quilt maker who likes to use bold colors. She lives in Great Falls, Virginia, and her artwork is in the Torpedo Factory Art Center and the Chasen Galleries in Richmond, Virginia. Her website is www.cindygrisdela.com.



To publish or to be published

That is the question — Part I

By Carol Ann Waugh

Getting “published” is exciting. Having your name on a book is a permanent mark on our society and may far outlive you in history. It’s a way of saying, “I was here and I made a difference.” I think that’s why so many people are attracted to writing, blogging, YouTubing, and creating a page on a social networking site. And, being published means that you are automatically an “expert” in your field—something that opens many doors.

So, let’s assume that you’ve reached the stage where you’ve created a body of unique work, or you’ve developed or invented a new technique or a new twist on an old technique, or you have a book idea that’s new to the art quilter’s market. How do you go about getting published?

There are basically two ways to get a book out into the market. One is to get an established publisher to agree to publish your book, and the other is to publish it yourself.

This article will focus on the advantages and disadvantages of being published by someone else.

Trade book publishers have been around for a long time and have developed tried-and-true processes for choosing the books they publish each season. It is almost impossible for them to deviate from this process. Because they have a history and know what has sold and what hasn’t, they rarely take a chance on something that deviates from their model. But the inside truth is that only 1 or 2 out of every 10 books published are successes, and publishers can never tell which books in their list will take off and which won’t. Knowing their publishing models could be a big advantage in selecting the right publisher for your idea, but it’s not always easy to find out unless you have a relationship with an editor or agent who is privy to this information.

The good news is that many art/craft publishers are very open to receiving proposals from authors and many times have guidelines posted on their web sites. An analysis of recently published titles of art quilting books shows that publishers are now looking for:

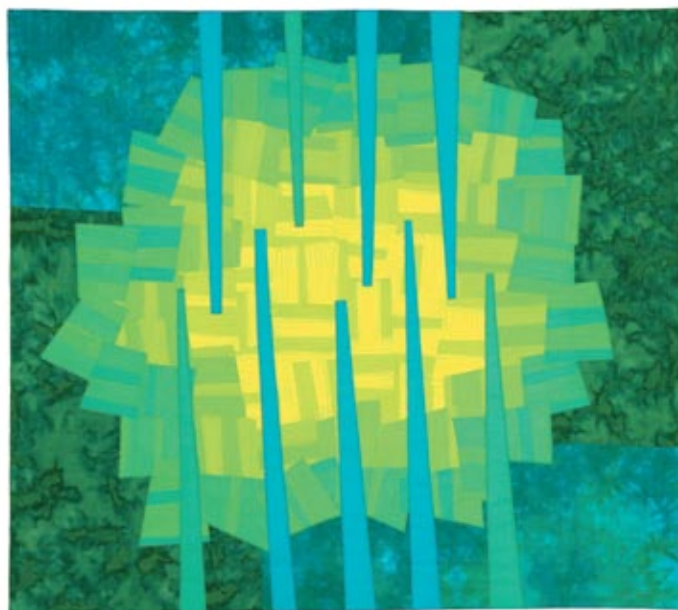
- New techniques or themes
- An author who is a teacher and so can market the book
- Projects that will appeal to readers
- Other books that can be developed into a series from your artwork

Getting published is not an easy task. Before contacting a potential publisher, here are some things you can do that make you appear publishable:

- Establish a web site for your artwork to show you take yourself seriously
- Build a resume showing several years of commitment to your art (awards won, acceptance into juried shows, speaking engagements, articles you’ve written, etc.)
- Develop a well-researched book idea (know the competition and define your niche)

There are many advantages to going the traditional route. The primary advantage is that you don’t assume any financial risk. In fact, good publishers will offer you an advance on royalties to defray costs associated with creating the manuscript. In addition, they will pay for photography, illustration, copyediting, design, and manufacturing—in short, all the expenses of getting your book into inventory. During this process, you will be guided by an experienced and helpful editor who will make suggestions and offer ideas to improve your book along the way.

The second thing a publisher brings to the table is an established distribution and marketing system. This ensures that your book will get reviewed in the right publications and will be available to bookstores, libraries, and specialty markets



Yellow Submarine

25" x 28"

© 2007 Carol Ann Waugh

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through wholesalers and book distributors. Because they also take on the responsibility of warehousing and invoicing, you don't have the "books in the garage" syndrome.

And perhaps the nicest advantage is the ego trip you get when someone else thinks you're good enough to be published.

The disadvantages are few but important. First, you probably won't make much money from your book. Most books published never pay more than the advance, because the book doesn't sell enough copies. Say for example your book is priced at \$25. Most sales occur at 55% off the retail price, so this means the net price of your book is \$11.25. You get 12% of net sales. So, for every book sold to a retail store, you would receive \$1.35. To make up an advance of \$5,000, you would need to sell 3,704 books. To make \$50,000 per year, you would need to have the publisher sell more than 37,000 books per year. I doubt

whether many titles reach that level.

The other disadvantage is the loss of control over the cover, price, and internal design—maybe even the title—of your book. The publisher generally has final say on those issues and may make decisions that do not present your work in the way that you would like. ▼

Editor's note: Part 2 of this series will continue this topic with a discussion of self-publishing. Look for it in the next issue of the SAQA Journal.

SAQA active member Carol Ann Waugh has spent her entire career in the publishing industry. She co-authored 3 books on quilting in the late 1970s and early 80s, during the bicentennial-induced quilting renaissance. She also wrote a book on roller skating, but that's another story. Carol started and sold two publishing companies. Today, she earns her living as a publishing consultant and is developing a career as an artist. She is a co-rep for Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. Her web site is www.carolwaughquilts.com.

Kiwi from page 29

Happy Villages in both fabric and paper. A primary school teacher in Rotorua sent me photos of her 9- and 10-year-old students making villages out of colored construction paper and crayons. Quite impressive!

The words may be new and the meanings slightly different, but the language of colors, shapes and lines is universal. Our world knows no boundaries when we can all speak the same "language." How lucky we are as artists that we are able to communicate in this manner.

SAQA professional artist member Karen Eckmeier is an award winning fiber artist, teacher and author. Her latest book, Accidental Landscapes (2008), uses her layered topstitching technique to "accidentally" create luscious fabric landscapes. Happy Villages (2007) demonstrates her approach to collaging step and window shapes that mysteriously evolve into unique villages. She lives in Kent, Connecticut, and her web site is www.quilted-lizard.com.

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To publish or to be published

That is the question — Part II

by Carol Ann Waugh

In the last issue, I talked about the advantages and disadvantages of having a traditional publisher publish your book. This article will help you to decide whether self-publishing is the route for you to take.

At one time, there was a stigma associated with self-published books, but new technology like Print on Demand (POD) and new suppliers like BookSurge and LightningSource have changed that perception over the past few years. Today, it's difficult to tell the difference in quality or content between traditionally published and self-published books.

Becoming your own publisher entails learning some important new things, but there are many resources out there to help you. Before you jump in, I'd like to share some overall information about this important decision.

First of all, there are many "vanity" presses who will try to get your business. These shops are one-stop companies that will take you through the publishing process and charge you between \$15,000 and \$20,000 to

get even one copy of your book into print. These companies have been around for a long time, and in my opinion they are a complete rip-off for authors. Most of these companies overcharge for providing limited services and require that you sign over all your rights in the process. In addition, they do nothing to help you sell your book other than provide a media kit and a list of publications you have to contact on your own. It's hard to separate the vanity publishers from a real publisher, but the general rule of thumb is find out who is paying whom.

Publishing your own book isn't rocket science. All you need to do is understand the process and find the best people to do the job.

The first thing you need to do is complete a book proposal as though you were submitting one to a traditional publisher. This will be your initial test of concept. Is there room in the market for your title, and do you have a good way to market it? Once you and your friends (yes, circulate this around, show it to book store buyers, quilt store buyers, etc.)

agree that the book is unique and has a good chance to sell, you need to do the hard part. Write the book.

The first draft should be written (no photos, illustrations, or anything special) to the best of your ability. Don't stress over it too much, because the next step will help you in the process.

Hire a freelance editor. You want to find someone with experience in editing craft and art books. Editors can do many things to help you refine your book. They can act in many different roles: developmental editor, coach, content editor, copyediting, indexing, proofreading, substantive editing, and even help with writing. You can also find editors who serve as project editors, who can help you with the entire process from conception through finished book. There are associations of these editors, such as the Northwest Independent Editors Guild and the Freelance Editors' Association of Canada (FEAC). These are good places to start to find someone you can work with.

The next step is to hire a graphic designer. Often, the editor you have chosen will have connections with designers they've worked with in the past. Most traditional publishers use freelance designers, so it's fairly easy to find designers with experience in designing craft and art books. Just look at your own library of books. Often these designers are given credit on the inside of the book.

Once your manuscript is finalized, you'll need to decide how you are going to illustrate your book: how many and what kind of illustrations you need. Often the graphic designer can either execute the photos and illustrations or knows someone to recommend. You'll need to decide how you are going to print your book, because the design specifications are sometimes particular to each printer.

Six Degrees of Separation

40" x 42"

© 2007 Carol Ann Waugh



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Expanding from page 24

satin stitch to finish the edges.

The purses were well received at the 2008 SAQA Conference trunk show in Wayne, Pennsylvania. With encouragement from Carolyn Lee Vehslage and Deidre Adams, I approached the Dayle Dunn Gallery in Half Moon Bay, California, about selling them. When Dayle saw my purse design, her word was “exquisite” and she called it “functional art.”

About a year ago, I decided I wanted to learn more about curating textile exhibitions. Working with the nearby San Jose Museum of Quilt & Textiles seemed the obvious choice. I contacted Deborah Corsini, the curator at SJMQT. It has been a terrific opportunity. Learning how professional exhibitions are hung,

and the work behind the scenes, is very exciting. The team I work with is extremely professional. All members of the curating team are involved in some way in textiles, whether it is teaching, costume design, or quilting.

The physical work of hanging an exhibition can be grueling. Normally, the first day is spent taking the previous exhibition down, packing it up, and shipping it out. On the second day, it's exciting to place the new artwork on the walls.

The opportunity to see all the exhibited works up close has been completely gratifying. After volunteering for a year, I approached the SJMQT store director, and now my *Opera Purses* are on display in their museum shop. I am currently look-

ing for more exposure for the purses, either in print or in another gallery. I'm sure that if I keep working toward this goal, it will happen.

I want to thank SAQA and its membership for being so supportive and open. I enjoy attending meetings and I always come away with the feeling that the sky is the limit. SAQA has given me the knowledge that, yes, I can achieve my artistic goals if I work at them. The day I became a professional artist member was a turning point in my artistic career, one more step up the ladder of my plan. ▼

SAQA professional artist member Bonnie J. Smith lives in San Jose, California, with her husband of 37 years. Her blog is www.bonniejofiberarts.com.

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There are two things you need to think about when printing your book: the number of copies you think you'll need in the first six months, and your available financial investment. Obviously, the more you print, the less the unit cost of each book, but the more you'll spend in total cost. Printing 3,000 books will cost you thousands of dollars upfront (not to mention the cost of storing all those books). POD offers you a low-cost way to get a small inventory, but the unit cost increases substantially. Check out the POD printers such as LightningSource and BookSurge, as well as short-run printers like Hignell Book Printing (Canada) or Edward Brothers.

Once you have suppliers in place, begin developing your marketing plan. The Small Publishers Association of North America, and PMA: The Independent Book Publishers Association can help. Both offer annual conferences where you can make contacts with other publishers and climb the learning ladder quickly.

There are many advantages of publishing your book yourself, including

the ultimate satisfaction of learning new things and seeing the result of all your work. There is nothing like opening up that first box of books and thinking, “I did it all myself!”

The biggest disadvantages of publishing your own book are the upfront financial investment and the time to complete the process. It doesn't take many books to break even on the financial investment, and after that, you can make some serious money. Let's say you are a teacher and teach 200 students a year. If you sold them each a copy of your book at \$25 each, that would bring in an extra \$5,000 a year on top of

your teaching fees. If your book cost \$10,000 to print, you'll break even in two years.

Whichever way you choose to get published, I hope you find a way to add your voice and expertise to the quilting world. We all want to hear from you! ▼

SAQA active member and CO/WY/UT SAQA representative, Carol Ann Waugh from Denver, CO, has co-authored three books on quilt making. Carol has started and sold two publishing companies (unrelated to quilting). Today, she earns her living as a publishing consultant, and is developing a career as an artist. Her web site is www.carolwaughquilts.com.

Resources:

BookSurge: www.booksurge.com

LightningSource: www.lightningsource.com

Northwest Independent Editors Guild: www.edsguild.org/

Freelance Editors' Association of Canada (FEAC) www.editors.ca/about_EAC

Hignell Book Printing web site: www.hignell.mb.ca

Edwards Brothers web site: www.edwardsbrothers.com

Small Publishers Association of North America: www.spannet.org

PMA: The Independent Book Publishers Association: www.pma-online.org

Creating a successful book proposal

by Susanne Woods

Have you been dreaming of seeing your name on the spine of a book? Are you considering putting together a book proposal but just don't know where to begin? What if I told you that book publishers want to find you just as much as you want to find them? It's true. Who says? Well, I do. I am Susanne Woods, the Acquisitions Editor at C&T Publishing.

As Acquisitions Editor, I am on the front lines of the publishing process and serve as the major advocate for a book proposal throughout the presentation process. I act as the liaison between the potential author and our company and have helped dozens of authors go from potential to print. However, I do sometimes forget how intimidating the publishing process can appear to a first-time author.

I want to help encourage all of you to submit your book proposal to C&T. So, I'm answering the top 10 questions I'm most often asked in the hopes that I can help remove some of the mystery that surrounds the book-publishing process. Ready? Drumroll, please...let's go!

Do I have to have the book written before I submit? Nope. Be sure to confirm this by taking a look at the guidelines publishers have available on their website (ours are at www.ctpub.com/client/client_pages/submissions.cfm), because each publisher does work a little differently. At C&T, we only request a sample chapter. That being said, we do want to see renderings or photographs of the work or technique you plan to feature in the book, but certainly not the entire manuscript.

How important is a social media presence? Don't listen to everything you hear about the importance of social media. Is that a big relief? Good. If you don't have a blog, didn't sign up on Pinterest, have never even heard of Twitter, and your work is amazing, I want to hear from you. But if social media isn't up your alley, try to create a strong presence through teaching, writing patterns, entering regional quilt shows, writing magazine articles, creating a fabric line, etc. Marketing your work doesn't necessarily *have* to be through social media, but anything that might both show your commitment to your work and demonstrate consumer interest in your style, your creations, and yourself will add strength to your proposal.

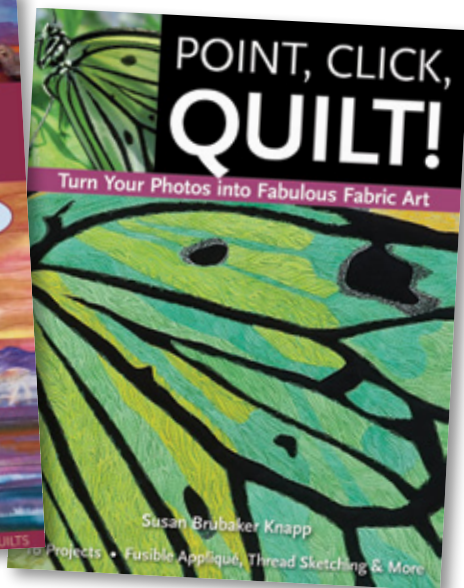
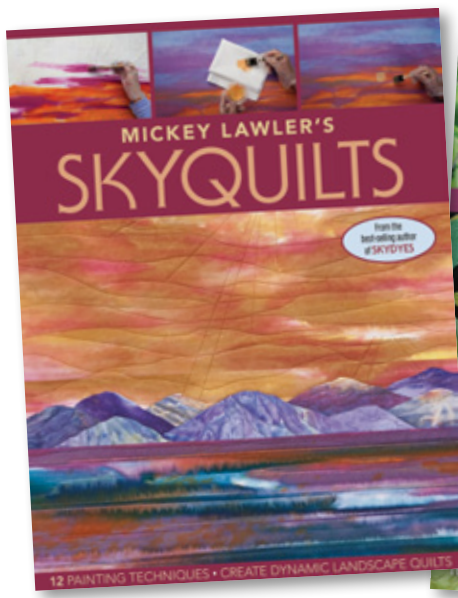
What if I'm too busy to work on a book? Ride the wave, period. The best time to publish and establish yourself is when you are busiest—when you have a teaching schedule fully booked 18 months out, when your pattern business is really taking off, or when you have just been offered your own exhibition at a gallery. The more components you can coordinate to advertise at the same time, the less time it will take you in the long term. It's a lot easier to really gain a groundswell of excitement about your work if you can juggle all the balls at once.

How do I find the right publisher? A great place to begin is by looking at your own bookshelf. What company do you purchase the most books from? Then, do your homework with regard to the publisher you want to work with. The more you know about

the list of titles they currently publish, the better able you will be to sell yourself as a natural fit. Also, take a look at where the publishers advertise themselves. Are they advertising where you want your book to be seen? Probably the best way to find the right publisher is to ask around. Ask a published author who you see as a peer. This is a small industry, and most authors are more than happy to share their publishing experiences with others.

How long will the publishing process take? Be prepared for the manuscript to take six months to a year to create. Once C&T agrees to offer a contract, the timing varies. For us, it really comes down to what the author wants. Many of our authors have other jobs, travel and teach classes, or have family commitments. We want to make the process of writing a book as enjoyable as possible. We include a lot of milestones in the writing process, and each author works with his or her own dedicated creative team throughout. An average timeline from contract to a book on the shelves is about 18 months. But if the topic is timely and we want to get it to market as soon as possible, we can shorten that timeline to 12 months.

What if I'm not quite ready to publish yet? Whether the book you have in mind is pattern- or process-based, now is a great time to demonstrate your ability to effectively teach. C&T has refused many proposals where the core work is good, but the student work isn't. If you can't teach it, you can't publish a high-quality instructional book. Either online or in



person, establish yourself as an effective instructor.

Publishers like to create books representing collaborative projects, and magazines are always looking for innovative content. Being a contributor to a collaborative book is a great way to get experience working with a publisher and to gain exposure for your work. If you see a series of collaborative titles you like, don't be afraid to get in touch with the publisher and ask to be invited to submit to any upcoming collaborative projects. If you have a blog or a shop, or are creating a few patterns, take time to reflect your personal style in your branding. You can use this to support a consistent look in a book proposal.

Lastly, and this is the BIG one: take high-resolution photographs of all of your work. If you sell a piece, if you lose a piece, or if your work is damaged in some way, it's gone. We often include a gallery of the artist's work in our books, so being able to draw on this resource when you're ready for publication is invaluable.

What makes a winning proposal?

There are a lot of factors that can make for a successful proposal. The biggest one is the work itself. We can overcome a whole host of issues if we are all bowled over by the work itself.

Aside from that, follow the submissions guidelines. I can't say this enough. It's kind of shocking how many people don't. I have to present proposals to many groups, so when a potential author has taken a more "creative" approach to their proposal, it is much more often a negative than a positive. I acquire 60 books a year—over a book a week. I appreciate everything the author can do to help me be as efficient as possible.

What if I'm rejected? Even if I've invited an author to submit a proposal, it's a fact that we do reject far more proposals than we accept. But artists are always progressing; so if your work has changed significantly in the years since you last submitted, try again! The best way to prevent rejection is to be sure that you're gathering some honest feedback regarding your proposal from people you trust prior to submitting.

What about self-publishing? This is a tricky question and one I'm passionate about. When a publisher offers you a contract, they are automatically on your side. You have just hired a team. I would much rather work with artists who see that when they sign a contract, they just hired an editor, a designer, a photographer, a stylist, a printer, an inventory controller, a

sales team with awesome contacts with top accounts, a publicist, and a marketing team. Each of them is working to help your book see the highest sales they can achieve. Most of us don't have the necessarily capital, all those skills, or those contacts. As a result, I'm usually against self-publishing. Even if you don't choose C&T for your proposal, find a publisher who is ethical, has high-quality products, and treats their designers fairly.

How much input will I have in the look and feel of my book? We offer our authors the opportunity to review every stage of the process—from copyedited pages, to sample photography, to the book design. We create a collaborative relationship so that our authors are proud of their finished book and want to publish with us again. Not every publisher does this, so be sure to ask first!

And a bonus piece of advice: Show me the money! When deciding on a publisher to submit a proposal to, look at the retail prices they charge for their books. The money you see from your book will be based, in part, on the retail price. A lot of publishers try to keep their prices low, around \$25 for a 256-page book. Because C&T is a premium publisher, we would set the retail price at \$25 for a 96-page book. Same money, half the work.

If I didn't answer *your* question, let me know! I love my job, welcome questions, and can be contacted at susannew@ctpub.com. ▼

Susanne Woods is the Acquisitions Editor at C&T Publishing. The company website is www.ctpub.com.

Why blogging still matters

Heart and soul of artistry revealed in online journals

by Abby Glassenberg

A blog is an online journal that typically includes both pictures and text. Blogs have become such an entrenched part of the online community, you may be wondering if starting or continuing a blog holds relevance. The answer is a resounding yes.

For an artist, a blog can be a way to record your studio practice, share tips to help readers learn new skills, reflect on your creative journey, connect with a community, and market your work. Often your blog is the dynamic part of an otherwise static website because it's frequently updated. The new content allows visitors to see works in progress and

learn your thoughts on a wide variety of topics.

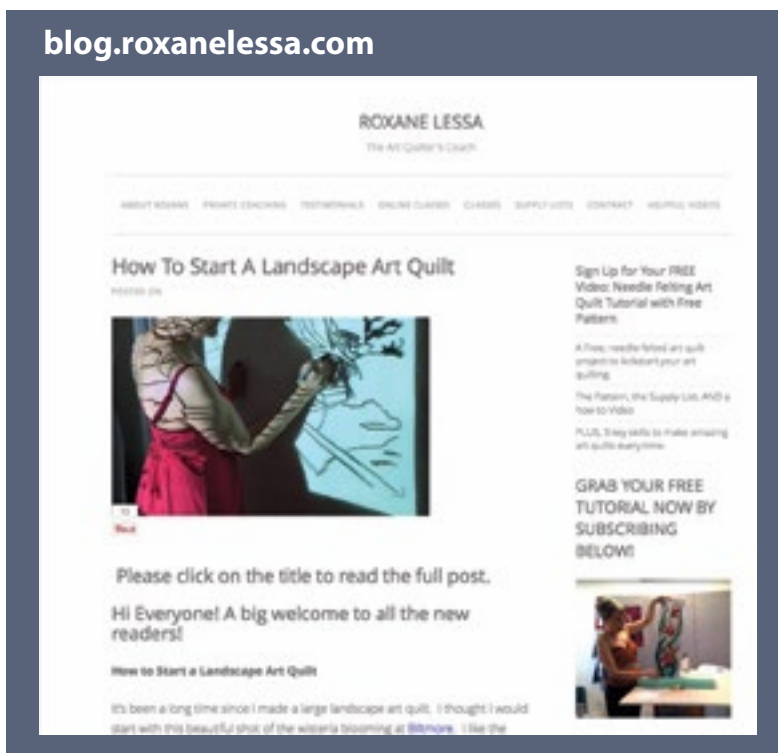
Getting started

Roxane Lessa set up her blog in June 2010 and has been posting at least once a week ever since. "I decided to start the blog to write about why and how I made my fiber art pieces," she says. "The whole point of my blog

is to inspire and teach quilters to be more adventurous and create works of their own that reflect their points of view." For Lessa, there have been no drawbacks to blogging. "I think it's very useful for me to put into words what my process is. It's helped me define my message and decide what's most important."

Blogs are created on a software platform that is specifically set up for online journaling, such as Blogger or WordPress. Learning to use the software can be a hurdle, but don't let that get in your way. Consider hiring someone for a few hours to get you started. Textile artist Ellen Lindner paid for assistance to get her started on a WordPress blog. "I got the help of a web designer to set it up because it was easy for her and it cost me very little," she says. Once it was ready, Lindner was able to easily create posts and update the blog on her own.

If you don't want to pay someone, consider asking a friend or family member to help you start a blog. Kathy Loomis worked with a friend to set up her Blogger blog. "She had a blog and sat with me for several hours





while I went through every step of the layout and design. It was great to have somebody sitting there to show me how the platform worked. It only took me a couple of days before I figured out how to add new things and improve the layout," she says.

No matter which blogging platform you choose, be sure to learn to upload images to illustrate your posts. Quilting is very visual so it's key that those images be large on the screen. Aim for 700-1,000 pixels wide.

Clara Nartey points out that starting a blog is actually the easy part. "Getting it set up was definitely not hard. What was hard, though, was showing up every week with a topic to write about."

Figuring out what to write

Once you become a blogger, you'll need an ongoing flow of content for blog posts. Many new bloggers find it helpful to brainstorm a list of potential post types that they can pull from. These might include tips or tutorials, reflections on your latest

finished work, works in progress, exhibit reviews, student work, trends and observations about the quilting world, interviews with other artists, research into art history, stories about your family or travel, and advice to other art quilters about lessons you have learned. A blog post can be very short with just an image and a few sentences, or it can be an in-depth article. This is your journal, so you get to determine the type and length of the posts.

Roxane writes about a variety of topics on her blog. "I generally write about exhibits I've seen, quilt shows I've been to, classes I've taught with examples of student work, and lots of colorful pictures to illustrate," she says. "Some posts are quick and take about 30 minutes, and some take a couple of hours." Roxane advises being generous in what you share. "The more you can share your knowledge, the more valuable you'll be to your readers. Share without fear of someone 'stealing' it. Stingy content is of no use to anyone."

For Clara, a blog is a place to explore the more emotional side of being an artist. "I write about the struggles, fears, exhilaration, rejection, and validation associated with creating," she says. "All are emotions creative people feel but sometimes don't have an avenue to express. Using my creative journey as an example, I try to make other creatives see how not uncommon their own creative journeys are."

Using Analytics to guide future content

Once you have a dozen or so posts published on your blog, you can begin to look at the data showing how many people visit and which posts are most popular. This information is available for free from Google Analytics, or, if you're using WordPress, from a plugin called Jetpack. If you have a particular tutorial that's getting more clicks than any other post, creating another tutorial on a related topic will grow your readership. By the same token, if a



particular post has gotten a lot of comments or Facebook shares, that's a good indication that you should create more content in a similar vein.

Once you get into the groove of blogging, you can determine how frequently you would like to post. Some bloggers publish new content three or four days a week while others might update their blogs three or four times a month.

Some bloggers decide on content spontaneously according to what they're working on or thinking about on a particular day, while others prefer a more structured schedule. Keeping a simple editorial calendar where you can jot down post ideas for the days and weeks to come is a great way to stay organized.

It's a good idea to publish on a regular schedule. Roxane says, "Consistency is key, because then your followers see you as reliable and trustworthy." Clara echoes this sentiment. "Although I know my readers will forgive me if I miss my schedule, I like to stick to it," she says. "It helps me be organized and keeps me accountable to my readers to have an

expectation of receiving an article at regular intervals."

If you're going to be traveling for a period of time, you can write posts in advance and schedule their publication. "If I'm planning a long trip away from home, I get my posts done in advance. I don't like to have the

blog disappear just because I'm on vacation," Kathleen says.

Many artists fear that blogging will be a time-consuming task that will take them away from their studio work. Clara once felt that way. "When I first considered blogging, I thought I could never find the time to do it. I couldn't find enough time to create art. How, then, was I going to blog?" She realized that the trick was to come up with a realistic schedule she could stick with. "It's better to set a schedule that's comfortable for you than one that you will not be able to keep. A schedule helps at the beginning because we're creatures of habit. After you've formed the habit of writing, you can relax your schedule as needed. It takes a while to figure out what you're comfortable writing about, so don't give up too soon."



The benefits of blogging

Although blogging does take time and effort, the rewards can be numerous. Many artists use their blogs as a tool to reflect on their work and solidify their thinking. Clara says, "Blogging has helped me articulate better what I do and why I do it. As much as you may think you know why you do something, you will be surprised how much you learn about yourself when you sit down to write about it. Blogging helps you sort out and synthesize your thoughts."

Blogging can also be a way to connect with a community of people who share your interests, no matter where they might live in the world. Deborah Boschert started her blog in 2004 at a time when her family was relocating frequently due to her husband's military service. "Building local relationships was difficult, but online there are no barriers," she says. Over time Deborah has shared stories about her family, travel, and art making and has seen numerous benefits from connecting with her community in this way. "My audience isn't just buying my artwork, they're buying my ideas, teaching style, and experience," she says. Kathleen has found similar benefits of connecting with an online community. "Through my blog I keep in touch with my art pals, and I make new art pals. I act as a mentor or guide to lots of people. Many people say they like my online personality and feel they know me even though we've never met."

A blog can also serve as a living portfolio that can help you get new career opportunities as an artist. A popular blog can raise your visibility in the fiber art world, promote your

teaching career, and lead to paid work. Through relationships made on her blog, Deborah was invited to contribute to *12x12*, a book published by Lark Crafts in 2011. When quilts from the book were exhibited at International Quilt Festival Houston that year, hers was included.

Finding and keeping up with blogs

If you're fairly new to blogging, it's helpful to become a regular reader of other blogs in your niche. There is no holistic directory of blogs, so the best

*You will be surprised
how much you
learn about yourself
when you sit down
to write about it.*

—Clara Nartey

thing to do is to visit the websites of artists you like and look to see if they have a blog. If you find an artist on Facebook or Instagram, take a moment to click over to their website to investigate.

Keep up with new blog posts from the bloggers you follow with a feed reader such as Bloglovin' or feedly. These readers are free services that create an ongoing digest of the latest posts of the blogs you follow so you can see them all in one place. Both Bloglovin' and feedly have mobile

apps that allow you to read the latest posts from the blogs you follow on your smartphone as well. In the process of reading blogs, you'll inevitably discover new post topics you would like to write about on your own blog.

Driving traffic to your blog

A blog is a public journal, and most bloggers would like to have readers visit to read and interact with their content, but readers don't just flood in once you begin a blog. You will have to do some ongoing work to bring them to your posts.

Consider what people might be searching for when they do a Google search related to art quilting. Try to include those keywords in your post titles so that your blog post comes up in online searches. This is part of search engine optimization—the science of how websites are ranked in search results.

You also can drive traffic to your blog by linking to your posts from other social media channels. If you have a Facebook artist's page, post an image and excerpt from your latest blog post and a link back to it. Pinterest is a strong traffic driver to blogs. Well-lit photos with a vertical orientation do best on Pinterest, so try to include at least one Pinterest-optimized image in each post. Even if you're not active on Pinterest yourself, your readers will pin your posts to their own boards and that action will drive traffic back to your site.

Invest in blogging

When you first begin blogging, it can feel like you're talking to an empty room. If you can find value in having

see "Blogging" on page 38



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Blogging from page 17

a place to record, reflect, and show your work as it evolves, blogging will be rewarding for you no matter what your readership. As Roxane says, "Don't be afraid to start a blog, and don't worry whether anyone will read it. The process of writing about your work is valuable and is of value to anyone who collects or buys your work, as well. I've heard from people who read my blog that they enjoy it and have learned from it. That alone makes it worthwhile for me." ▼

Abby Glassenberg blogs at whilesheaps.com. She designs sewing patterns, creates podcasts, and writes newsletters about the sewing industry. She recently co-founded the Craft Industry Alliance (craftindustryalliance.org)

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Blogging

A guide for getting started

by Mirka Knaster

Part 1

If you've been encouraged to expand your visibility as an art quilter by blogging but feel inhibited in taking the leap, you're not alone.

Just as not everyone is comfortable with public speaking, not everyone enjoys public writing. However, you won't know unless you give it a try. Hearing about my own experience might help you to overcome your reluctance. And the guidelines I provide can facilitate seeing your way through the decision-making process to actually getting started.

Why blog?

Although I've been a published author since 1974, I didn't consider myself a likely candidate to become a blogger. After my last book came out in the fall of 2010, I was elated that I could finally devote myself fully to textile art. Enthralled by the range of colors, textures and patterns that textiles offer, sitting at a computer to put black marks on white paper seemed much less appealing. In addition, while I've worked on computers since the 1980s, I didn't know how to create and run a blog. I also felt shy about publicly sharing what I ordinarily keep private in a journal or discuss only with close friends.

After listening to Carol Ann Waugh at the 2013 SAQA conference in Santa Fe, I came home with a different attitude. Since I was already indulging my interest in art in general, why not share my reflections? Still, I didn't start immediately.

Because I had much to deal with, including a month-long trip to Asia, I decided to launch a blog in the new year, after the holiday season, when I'd be in my studio with reliable Internet access. Besides, I didn't feel like having deadlines, even though self-imposed, while traveling. Thus, despite my initial reservations, I wrote my first blog post about art at the beginning of 2014. I did it for a specific reason.

I created my website *mirkaart.com* to have a place where people could see my contemporary textile creations when I couldn't display them in person or through photographs. I created my blog site *exploringtheheartofit.weebly.com* to explore art in general. For some people, that might not be a good fit, but it's exactly what works well for me because I'm seriously interested in the art part of fiber art, mixed media art, and art quilts.

What do we share with other artists—painters, sculptors, dancers, ceramicists, musicians, composers and writers? What is it about the creative process, no matter what the medium, that unites us in this project of artistic expression? What are our differences? What can we learn from other artists that would translate to our work with textiles? How can their experiences in the art world help us to be better represented in it?

Keenly curious by nature, I can't resist exploring the world of art (and craft) that I'm engaged in. As I satisfy my desire to learn, writing helps me clarify my thoughts. I get excited when I discover connections between what I create and what others have created, especially in different times and cultures. I surprised myself by deciding to share them with a larger audience, to initiate a conversation around the questions that arise in my mind as I read a book, view an exhibit, or involve myself in a project. I also love having the opportunity to incorporate images.

That's why I set up a blog. You may have a host of other reasons:

- You have ideas you want to share—about art quilts in general or your work in particular.
- You want to help others by teaching what you know—sewing and dyeing techniques, tips about entering shows, connecting with galleries, art centers, and festivals.
- You'd like to be in touch with a larger community, even internationally.
- As someone who's up on the latest in art quilting, you want to summarize and pass along what you glean from readings and exhibits.



- You're considering writing a book, but the project seems daunting. Blogging is a way to get your feet wet, gain experience in small increments, and accumulate material.
- You just want to be able to express yourself, even inspire others with your own and others' stories about overcoming obstacles. If you're funny or quirky, you might help others laugh about the creative process we're so passionate about.

Why not to blog

There are lots of good reasons why you should blog. There are also two major reasons why not to blog.

It won't make you money if that's what you're after. Ads could generate some income, but only if people click on them. Donations from dedicated followers are another source of income. They might pay for some fabric but won't make a dent in the mortgage.

It probably won't make you famous. Though you never know: it has happened for a few people. Don't

start a blog because you crave popularity and envision a huge following after your first post. Remember that slow growth is still growth.

It's important to reflect about why you want to blog. If the reasons are fame and fortune, you're likely to be disappointed. Good things can come out of the experience, but blogging probably won't make you a multimillionaire or the host of your own TV program.

What to blog about

When I had to pick a topic for my doctoral dissertation, the advice I got was to choose something I was highly motivated to research and write about. Otherwise, I'd be grudgingly sloggling my way toward a Ph.D. The same is true in blogging. If you don't care, why should your readers? They can sense your enthusiasm or lack thereof.

Given the reasons for blogging listed earlier, stop to ask yourself some questions:

- What is my concept/idea for the blog? Do I want to focus only on my art—my process, my techniques, my inspirations—or something else entirely?
- What am I most interested in? What do I want to explore?
- Do I want to clarify in words and images how I work so I'll be better able to teach in person or on a video?
- What am I really good at? What can I share with others? For example, can I offer strategies for overcoming fear in creativity, solving technical problems, collaborating, or attaining goals?
- Do I want to entertain readers?
- Do I want to write content with lasting value or offer current news items that are soon out of date?
- Is the topic I've selected already blogged about extensively? If so, what can I add that's different, or do I need to come up with another topic? Is there something I'd like to read about but haven't seen in other blogs?
- Is my topic broad or deep enough so that I can blog regularly, or will I soon run out of what to say? Can I come up with enough ideas for at least the first year?

Consider your audience and how to treat them

Before you start writing, it's essential to consider whom you're writing for. If it's only for yourself, it's easier to keep a journal. If it's for others as well, who are they? Who will be interested in what you have to say? Ask yourself, "Who is my audience:

people I know, people in my field, or a wider group?"

To create a readership, I sent out an email inviting friends, relatives, colleagues, neighbors and acquaintances to visit my new blog. I provided a link in the email, so all they had to do was click to get there.

Don't be surprised by who might be interested. Because I write about art in general, not only about textile art, I have reached out to people who may not be artists themselves but probably appreciate the arts. Contacting lots of folks from my past led to unexpected connections. A woman I went to high school and college with is a former kindergarten teacher. Since we don't discuss art, she didn't seem a likely candidate for my blog. However, she not only reads it, she also sent the link to her sister-in-law, who used to be a docent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It turned out that another old college friend, another educator, had been involved for decades in creativity programs in her state.

Take a chance, for you never know what good can come of it. Announcing your blog is a great way to reconnect with people. Maybe you can't see your old friends in other parts of the country, but they can keep up with you—where you've been, what you're doing, what you're thinking about.

Once you have readers, be respectful of them. Even if the people you address are your friends, relatives or neighbors, follow certain rules of conduct:

- Don't be inappropriate, nasty, offensive or gossipy. This isn't a place to chitchat about others. Remember that your words will be seen around the world.
- Be considerate of the privacy of others. Before writing about people who are not public figures, I ask

permission to quote or otherwise mention them. You can always refer to someone as "a friend," "a colleague," "another art quilter." Do not use private photos without permission unless they're already public.

- Consider what you're willing to share about yourself. Too much information identifies where you're located. If you don't want strangers to knock on your door, be careful about what you write.
- Remember that not everyone who reads your blog will be in agreement. If you have difficulty with criticism, gird your loins! Keep in mind that, if you invite comments on your blog, you should also have the option to monitor and delete them.

When to blog

How often to blog depends on your temperament and schedule. Some people blog daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or only sporadically. Select the timing that's right for you. Don't overwhelm yourself with yet another commitment that you dread. Deadlines are useful to keep you on track, but they shouldn't tyrannize you. I'm not interested in blogging if I'm going to wind up resenting it as yet one more burden to bear.

Since everyone is fully engaged in her/his life, visiting your blog daily probably won't be a high priority. Weekly or monthly posts are more likely to be read. Try to be regular, but it's also okay to be flexible. You can always let your readers know that you're taking a break for a while.

How you organize and maintain your blog has a lot to do with your personality. If you're the planning type, you can prepare several posts to go out like clockwork. Although I began by posting weekly, at a certain

point, I decided that I didn't have to maintain that schedule. For example, before, during and immediately after the 3-day weekend in which I had an open studio and then packed up the house to move out for a remodeling project, I literally didn't have a spare minute in which I could sit down to type. When things settled down a bit, I prepared something for the following week. Besides, I don't delude myself that my readers have so much extra time that they are waiting on tent-hooks until my next post appears.

Since this is not an income-earning business and I'm not beholden to editors and their deadlines (which I was for decades), I can call the shots. If I know I'm going to be away and unable to pull together a post, sometimes I write one ahead of time, so that when I arrive home I can send it out right away. But I also might change my mind because of what I experienced on that trip. I know that some people plan their editorial calendar far in advance, but I am more of a spontaneous creator, whether with fabrics or with words. I keep a file folder thick with material I've collected, along with my jottings, so that I can always write a post. ▼

Editor's note: The second half of this article will appear in the Spring 2015 issue. Stay tuned for more information on various blogging platforms, finding and using images, staying committed, and more.

When Mirka Knaster became a textile artist after decades as a published writer and editor, she couldn't imagine ever limiting herself to black marks on white paper again. Blogging about art allows her to integrate her creative skills from both fields. She works and plays in her studio on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean in northern California. You can view her award-winning textile art at mirkaart.com, her writing at www.mirkaknaster.com, and her blog at exploringtheheartofit.weebly.com.

Blogging

A guide for getting started

by Mirka Knaster

Part 2

See Part 1 of this article in the Winter 2015 SAQA Journal.

Now that you've made the commitment to start a blog—you have the topic and audience in mind—what's your next step? You need a platform, a place where you write your posts and insert images.

Platform Options

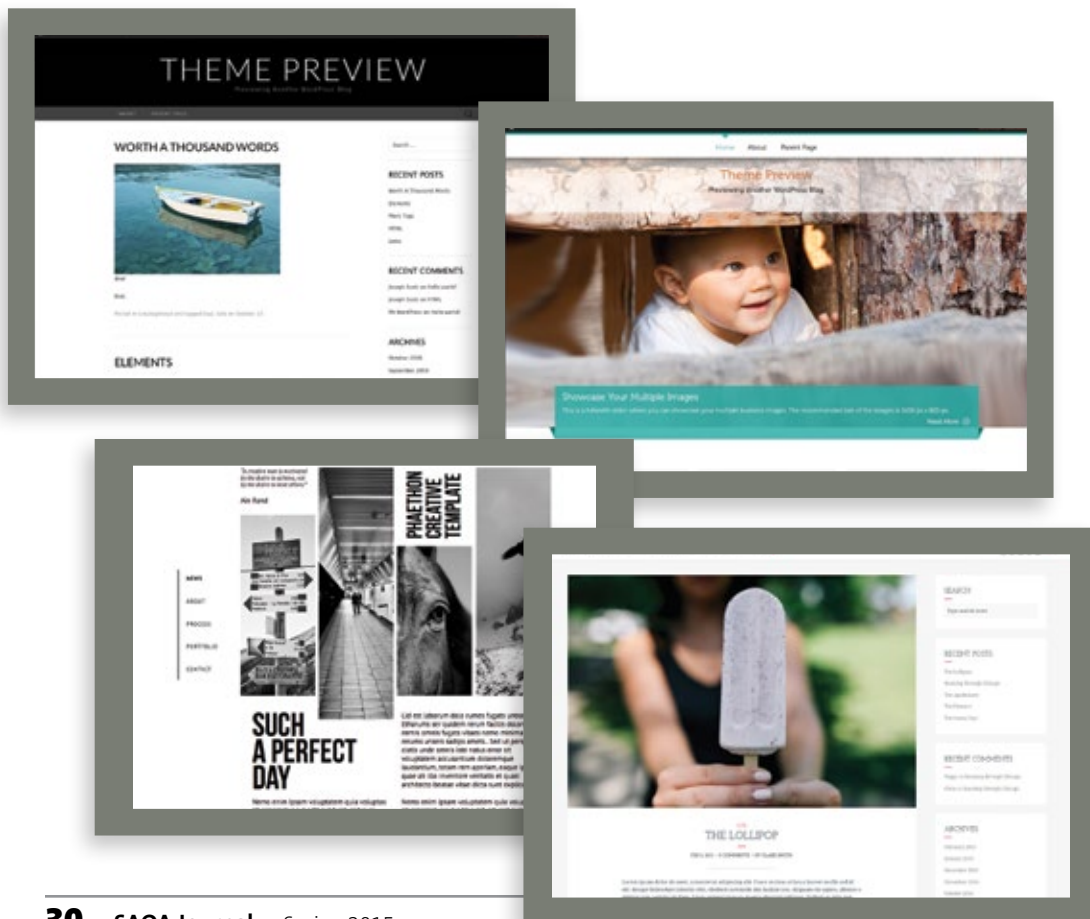
Platforms can be simple or sophisticated, free or charge a basic monthly fee. The major platforms include WordPress, Tumblr, Squarespace and

Blogger. Others are minimalist platforms, such as Postagon, Svbtle, Ghost, Wardrobe, Postach.io, Medium, Jekyll, Anchor, Bolt, Silvrback, Hexo, Roon, Posthaven, Scriptogram, Penn.io and Droplets [see mashable.com/2014/05/09/16-minimalist-blogging-platforms]. You can also blog on Google+.

With so many possibilities available, how do you choose the one that's right for you? First, what look

and feel do you want your blog to have? Should it be congruent with your website, if you have one, or would you rather have something distinctly separate? The best way to determine your direction is by looking online at a variety of blogs. Which ones are you attracted to for their aesthetics, content, tone? Which platform do they use?

Then check out the different platforms to see which is a good



Popular blogging platforms offer a number of templates, or themes, to help get you started with your site. Wordpress alone has over 3,000 different free themes to choose from.

fit for you. To find out more about each platform, go to the individual websites, view the templates, check out ease of instructions (e.g., tutorials), and note whether there are costs involved. If you find this too intimidating, enlist the aid of a friend or family member who's already familiar with setting up a blog. Or you can hire someone to help you. I turned to Colleen Ward in Oregon (chward99@hotmail.com) after a textile artist in Hawaii recommended her. She held my hand through the whole process as I opted for SquareSpace, then selected the template, font, colors, theme, images, and so on.

If you need a blog site with more options than what the free ones provide, you can pay a fee. Even when you get a free site, you still have to pay for your domain name and web hosting, something you're probably familiar with if you have a website. I use weebly.com for free and have it linked to my website, for which I pay a minimal annual fee of \$96. You can have a separate blog site and no website, or integrate the two.

Tip: When you decide on a platform, be sure it includes a mobile version. Increasingly, people look at the Internet more often on their iPad or iPhone than on their desktop computer.

Picking a Title

Maybe you already have a title you're eager to use. Check online to be sure somebody else hasn't already claimed it. If you don't have a name yet, try free-associating on paper. Make a list, look it over, and pick the one that best suits what your blog is about. Or you could simply call it by your own

name or the name of your art quilt business.

I came up with the title of my blog by throwing out some ideas while hiking with a group of friends. They responded to my thoughts and offered theirs. Finally, I settled on the one I have: "exploring the heART of it" (exploringtheheartofit.weebly.com). One friend suggested caps for ART.

Gathering Images for Your Blog

It's important to keep your site visually appealing. Most people don't want to read text alone. Look for images—your own or someone else's—that complement what you're blogging about. If you're discussing a

I have the
opportunity
to engage in a
conversation
with others.

technique, provide photos or a video of the process. If you're referring to someone's work, include a photo of that person or her art. If you're reflecting on an exhibit you attended or a place you've visited, bring people to it with pictures or a video. There's nothing like seeing what you saw to make your reader feel part of the experience.

The Internet is a cornucopia of images. You can download a lot of

them, but check that you're not infringing on copyright in order to avoid possible legal hassles. Unless I'm using my own photos, I always cite the source of the image I've posted. It's also best practice to get permission before using the image (and to keep a record of that permission or correspondence). On weebly.com, after I download an image, there is a caption option where I can identify the photo and the URL where I got it.

Keeping Your Blog Going

Ideas can float into your awareness at any time, anywhere. Keep paper and pen with you, or a mobile device, so you can jot them down as they bubble up. My own ideas come from what I'm experiencing—a book I'm reading or listening to, a discussion I had with someone, an interview I listened to on the radio or online, an article I came across in a magazine, an exhibit I attended, an email I received, or simply questions that arise as I hike or swim, work in my studio, or drive. I love when people post comments about what I've written. Their musings may lead me to think about another angle on the topic, get a book I'm not familiar with, consider a show, and broach a new subject. Instead of keeping my thoughts to myself, through the blog I have the opportunity to engage in a conversation with others.

Because of my innate curiosity and a strong desire to learn, I'm never at a loss for ideas. I keep a folder on my computer as well as a paper file folder full of clippings and reflections. I look through them to see what I've collected on a subject. Often, an

inspiring quote alone is enough to stimulate me to write about a topic.

Tip: If you're providing information, be sure to check your facts. I made a mistake about a Latin word and one of my readers corrected me in her comments. I make a point of verifying quotes and dates. There are many quotes circulating virally that are attributed to the wrong person. There are sites online where you can determine accuracy.

Attracting More Readers

When I first started to blog, I sent out an email announcement each time I created a new post. That took a lot of time. I had to review my entire list of contacts so that I emailed the right individuals rather than annoy

everyone in my address book. I didn't want to set up a separate folder until I knew who was interested in the blog. Because this winnowing process is tedious and time-consuming, I signed up for a free account with MailChimp (mailchimp.com) to organize my list. It enabled me to insert a subscribe option on my blog for readers to sign up on their own. It also allows people I don't know to subscribe to the blog when they chance upon it or are referred to it. Another option is to offer your help in subscribing them. Remember how busy most people are. If you do something for them, it's more likely to happen. I don't presume that it's acceptable to add someone to the list without permission, so I send an email requesting it

first. (For more on email newsletters, see page 27.)

Tip: If you don't get responses, ask your readers to check whether your emails are being treated as Spam, Promotions or Junk, and to change that status.

I continue to attract new readers through a variety of ways. When I meet people, I tell them about the blog and offer them a card. Or I provide the link through an email when corresponding with someone, even though I list my website, blog site, and email address below my name at the end of the email. Always include a link in your correspondence as well as in comments online.

You can also create more visibility by commenting on another blog.

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boy and cat by Jennifer Day


dog by student, Lois Polborn

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When I read an article or blog and sense a connection with the person writing it, I email my thoughts and mention my website and/or art blog. In turn, that person might refer someone else to visit my sites. If you participate in the SAQA Yahoo discussion group, you can announce your blog to other members. Don't forget to send an announcement to your alumni magazine and other relevant publications, most of which now have an online presence as well.

By having plug-ins on your blog site, readers can let others know about your blog through Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Recently, I was delighted when someone contacted me to ask whether it would be acceptable to put something from my blog on her group's Facebook page.

Conclusion

Considering that I preferred to play with cloth, dye and thread rather than sit at a computer, I've been amazed by how much I enjoy blogging and even look forward to creating the next post. These days, modern technology allows me to write with a palette of colors, fonts and images that was not available when I published my first book. I hope you will enjoy blogging too. If you don't, then maybe this is not the best vehicle for expressing yourself or promoting your art. And that's okay. Just find what works for you. ▼

Mirka Knaster works and plays in her studio in northern California. You can view her award-winning textile art at mirkaart.com and her writing at www.mirkaknaster.com. Her blog is exploringtheheartofit.weebly.com.



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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.