



When does inspiration strike? I never know. Perusing the current Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) Fiber Art Friday newsletter, the *Raw & Reassembled* headline caught my attention. I learned that artist Paula Kovarik manipulates old and new quilts into new compositions. That got me thinking. For years the above quilt top has been folded in the darkness of my closet. Transforming the quilt into a casual coat was my intent. I even bought a pattern, but something held me back. This is an undocumented quilt with no accompanying story. All I know is that someone within my Mom's family made the quilt top, then it was handed down to my aunt and now me. Visually, the quilt top is not appealing, but tugs at my heart as a family treasure. Rather than remake into a coat, I can manipulate the quilt top into a reassembled quilt more to my liking. That's it! A new project! Will it be an art quilt? I don't know, but am inspired.

Rita Farro and I thoroughly enjoyed delving into the dynamic SAQA and its mission. We were so impressed with the programs and resources, we both joined the SAQA. Whether you join or not, be sure to subscribe to the free SAQA Fiber Art Friday newsletter. You just never know when inspiration will strike! Sew SCHMETZ & Grabbit® Too!

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https://ritassewfun.blogspot.com/

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# What Inspires YOU to Sew?







There's an App for That!





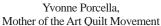














**Kabuki** Yvonne Porcella, 2007

### Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA)

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc. (SAQA) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the art quilt: a creative visual work that is layered and stitched or that references this form of stitched layered structure.

In their first 30 years, SAQA has grown into a dynamic and active community of 4,000 artists, curators, collectors, and art professionals all over the world. Their vision is that the art quilt is universally respected as a fine art medium.

Their website, <u>Studio Art Quilt Associates</u>, is astonishing. If you click on *Events*, you'll find page after page listing scores of exhibitions and calls for entry. One of the most impressive features on the website is their online collection of over 3,500

pieces of artwork that showcase the beauty and diversity of the art quilt medium. They have also put together a curated selection of online galleries.

So, how did this dynamic international organization get its start?

There is no question that California quilt artist Yvonne Porcella is the Mother of the Art Quilt movement. In 1989, Porcella launched Studio Art Quilt Associates from her kitchen table. She sent letters to 50 artists and friends to rally them to her cause. Her goal was to establish a place for art quilts in the world of contemporary art.









Martha Sielman, Executive Director, SAQA

The vision was to create an organization to:

- Promote art quilts to major art publications, museums, and galleries.
- Educate the public about art quilts
- Serve as a forum for the professional development of quilt artists.
- Act as a resource for curators, dealers, consultants, teachers, students, and collectors.

Those initial 50 members were mostly Yvonne's friends and fellow teachers. Members within driving distance of Modesto, California helped her put out a mimeograph newsletter to attract new members. Their membership slowly grew. Porcella served as president for the first 11 years.

The current President, Deborah Boschert, says Yvonne really had such a vision and clarity about our work being elevated as fine art. I think she knew it was going to take all of us working together, valuing our work, teaching others, welcoming others.

When Martha Sielman became the Executive Director in 2004, SAQA had 804 members. With the help of the internet, their membership has grown to over 4,000 members all over the world.

Martha says, We have a fairly small staff, and we all work from home. Seven staff members manage a \$1 million organization with 4,000 members. This is only possible because of our amazing volunteers.







Waxing Crescent Endeavor

Waxing Crescent Meditation

Artist: Deborah Boschert

The SAQA Board of Directors are all volunteers. Within the global organization, SAQA operates largely via committees. They have committees to plan their annual conference, to handle the exhibitions and calls for entry, to do fund raising, and to create educational programming. These volunteer committees are the heart and soul of the organization.

SAQA has 39 Regions, and the Regional Reps are also volunteers. Both Martha and Deborah got their start with SAQA as volunteers.

Martha was living in Connecticut and had her first child in 1988. She made a baby quilt with an alphabet, and after making many other baby quilts, she wanted to try something

different. She fell in love with art quilts, and volunteered to be the SAQA regional rep for Connecticut. There were six members at that time. New Jersey and Delaware joined their small group of artists, and as their membership grew, they began exhibiting as a group. Martha began to realize that she was spending more time organizing and less time quilting. It turns out, Martha really loves organizing, and art quilts are her passion. She has written eight books about Art Quilting. She is working on her ninth book, about fiber artists who are inspired by birds. During the pandemic, she noticed this explosion of art quilts dealing with birds. She put out a call for entries, and received 1,200 pieces of art. She's whittled it down to 350, and is putting the text together.





Rise
Artist: Mita Giacomini

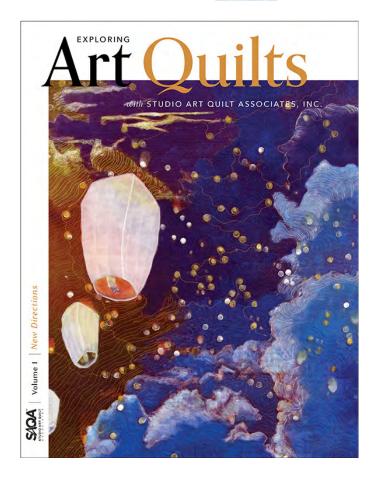


**There Will be a Springtime** Artist: Genevieve Attinger

Deborah also got her start at SAQA as a volunteer. Like many of us, she came into quilting by making traditional pieced quilts using other people's patterns. She started taking workshops and soon moved to drafting and sewing her own designs. Learning other skills, like raw edged fused appliqué, broadened her creative thinking and as she understood the potential, she worked toward developing her own personal style. While living in Maine, Deborah connected with a couple of quilters and they began exploring art quilting together, going to exhibitions, reading magazines, sharing information, and they learned about SAQA.

As a military family, the Boscherts have lived in many locations. Deborah says, lots of people move around in today's world. When you're a member of an international organization, you can sort of plug into a group of like-minded people wherever you move to. While living in Maryland, Deborah volunteered to be the SAQA regional rep for Maryland, DC, and West Virginia. She joined the Education Committee, was elected to the Board of Directors, then Vice President. She just completed her first year of a two-year term as President.



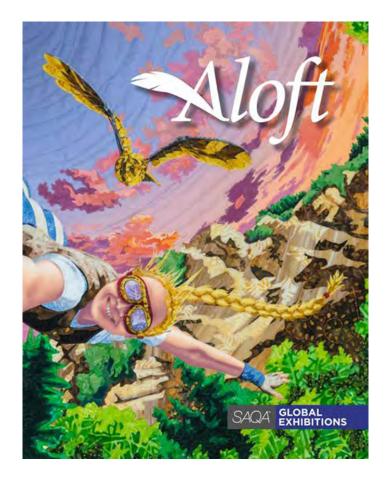


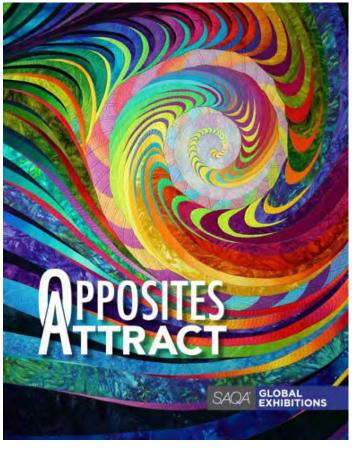


SAQA did a massive all-member survey in 2020, and one of the things they discovered was that their members considered the *SAQA Journal* one of their biggest benefits. The SAQA Journal is a print magazine that is sent out quarterly. It's 38 full-color pages, with articles about artistic development, professional development, new trends, technology, reviews of various resources, and profiles of artists. There is always a member gallery based on a theme. Members all have the opportunity to submit their quilts for publication in the SAQA Journal, which strives to be representative of their membership.

Another member benefit is the annual SAQA Seminar, which is a collection of online resources based on a theme. For 2021, the theme was color. For six weeks, SAQA Seminar presented content with different topics under the basic theme of color. There were live chats and registered members logged onto Zoom to participate. But the Seminar was self-paced, so members can continue to take the courses at their convenience. This year, they had 1,245 people register, getting the weekly emails and course descriptions, etc. The content will remain available to all members forever.







Perhaps the flagship program for SAQA is their exhibition program. The Exhibition Committee plans six global exhibitions per year that travel to quilt shows, galleries, and museums all over the world. In any given year, there are 15 global exhibitions traveling. Many of the regions also plan their own exhibitions and there are 23 regional exhibitions active in 2021. Members have many opportunities to submit their work for exhibitions, either at the regional or global level.

SAQA also recently launched a virtual exhibitions program, available for view on the SAQA website. They wanted to make a space for submissions that might not fit into the global traveling exhibition program, such as 3D work, work with lights or motion, works that would be difficult to ship, or for

members where shipping cost is prohibitive. The first SAQA virtual gallery was called <u>No Limits</u>, followed by <u>Land Art:</u> <u>From the Forest to Your Balcony</u>, <u>Waiting</u>, <u>Plurality of Voices</u>, and <u>Structures</u>.

Deborah Boschert says, One of the most wonderful things about SAQA is that we welcome everybody. There is no requirement at all, other than loving art quilts. Whether you've made one or a hundred, or none at all, anybody who loves art quilts will get something out of our organization.

https://www.saga.com/





## Benefit Auction

The annual Benefit Auction is SAQA's premier fundraising event!

All proceeds help support SAQA's exhibition programs, publications, and education outreach.

Your purchase helps increase the recognition for art quilts and the artists who make them.

The quilt images shown in this issue are all examples of work that will be for sale this year.

All 469 pieces up for bid have been donated by SAQA artists and are 12"-square.

Last year, SAQA raised \$112,800 from the Benefit Auction, so we're expecting the bidding to be fast and furious!

The 2021 auction will take place online from **September 10 through October 3**.

With hundreds of beautiful artwork available for bidding, there is something for everyone to enjoy!

www.SAQA.com/auction





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