

My quilt is accepted! Now what?

Many tasks combine to create travel-ready artworks

by Sarah Entsminger

Congratulations! You're in! The time and effort spent to create an artwork for a SAQA exhibition makes you an important player in our exhibition schedule and our mission to promote the art quilt. It is tempting to sit back and celebrate, but acceptance means there is still much work to do before you enjoy seeing your work on display.

Each exhibition is assigned an exhibition coordinator by the Exhibition Committee to assist with myriad administrative and collaborative tasks. These steps are required to build a collection of accepted pieces into an exhibition ready to travel. The exhibition coordinator will send you a packet of information, titled Artist Instructions, along with a contract.

The first thing you need to do is input all the important dates listed in the instructions into your calendar. It is vital that you adhere to these deadlines, as many others are working in tandem with you to complete

the necessary steps toward a successful traveling exhibition.

Include the exhibition coordinator assigned to your exhibition in your safe senders list for email, as you will continue to receive communications while your quilt is part of the traveling program. Keep the exhibition coordinator updated with any new contact information for yourself so you don't miss out on the exciting news when a new venue agrees to host the exhibit.

When you submitted your original registration, you were asked to either state the sales price or choose "not for sale" for each piece. The contract you receive will reflect what was in the registration. You need to double-check to make certain it's correct, as it cannot be changed once the contract is returned. Sign and return the contract as directed—one copy electronically and the original via the United States Postal Service.

Save yourself stress by recording the dates your quilt will be part of the traveling exhibition in your

records. That way, you won't submit it to another exhibition in the same time frame or sell it to someone who expects to take possession before the exhibition ends. Once the contract has been signed and the quilt shipped, the work cannot be withdrawn from the exhibition.

Once that is done, there is still more paperwork to process. You will need to write an artist biography for the Education Committee to use in preparing materials for docent training, as well as educational activities for each exhibition. This biography should be written in the third person to serve as an introduction when you are not present with the exhibition. Remember to include information about your website and where you can be found on social media.

The schedule of dates in the instructions includes the date your quilt must be received by SAQA Shipping Central. Your wonderful, accepted quilt is very important to you, so how you package and ship the quilt should reflect this. Before you begin looking for the right box, examine your quilt with a critical eye. Are there threads hanging? Is there pet hair on the surface? Are there creases that need pressing?



SAQA's *Earth Stories* exhibition
Huntington (West Virginia) Museum of Art

Does it need to be aired out before packing? Is the sleeve the correct size and placed properly? Does the label contain all the required information? Review your artist's instructions and online resources. If you are shipping a 3D piece, review online resource articles available to SAQA members (see sidebar) and pay close attention to the packaging suggestions.

Find a sturdy box that will allow you to either fold, with appropriate cushioning, or roll your quilt. If you are reusing a box, be sure to remove all previous shipping labels and bar codes. Use bubble wrap or tissue paper to protect the quilt as it is rolled or folded, then wrap it in clear plastic. Your box may be exposed to the elements several times before it reaches its destination. Once you have the plastic-wrapped package in the box, along with any materials requested in the artist instructions, seal the box. Reinforce the corners and edges of the box. It's a good idea to use bright colored or printed duct tape somewhere on your box so that if it is misplaced, there will be an easy way to identify your box among all the other brown boxes in transit.

SAQA covers the insurance while your quilt is part of the traveling program, but it's your responsibility to provide insurance for the trip to Shipping Central. It is very important to send your box with both tracking and signature required. You can use the tracking number online to follow your box's journey. Requiring a signature will insure that your box is not left when no one is available to

accept it and put it into secure storage. You will be able to track the time and the name on the signature line so you will know that your box arrived at its destination safely. There are too many packages going in and out of Shipping Central for SAQA to be able to send you confirmation of each

box's arrival. Set your mind at ease by tracking your package online.

Your work is not finished yet! There are no restrictions on publishing images of your accepted artwork prior to the opening of the exhibit. Consider this your opportunity to create positive press about your work

SAQA member resources

The SAQA website has a wealth of exhibition information for members. We encourage you to visit often. Interested in a topic not listed here? Please email editor@saqa.com with your idea.

General resource articles

www.saqa.com/resources.php?ID=2240

Specific articles of interest

How to make a hanging sleeve by Sarah Ann Smith

Shipping 3D artwork by Susan Else

How to write a press release by Cheryl Dineen Ferrin

General exhibition guidelines

www.saqa.com/resources.php?ID=3496

Specific Items of Interest:

SAQA policies and FAQs

SAQA shipping policies

SAQA Journal Page

www.saqa.com/members.php?ID=3263

Index of Journal articles

How to improve color accuracy in quilt photography by Deidre Adams

How to pack and ship fiber sculptures by Susan Else

Write artist statements that welcome, captivate your audience by Sarah Entsminger

Traveling Exhibition Program puts members' work on the road by Bill Reker

Picture this! Instagram for art quilters by Abby Glassenberg

Behind the scenes display hardware for quilts by Daren Redman

Blogging: A guide for getting started by Mirka Knaster

Photographing your art like a professional by Cindy Grisdela

Writing a press release by Amanda Carestio

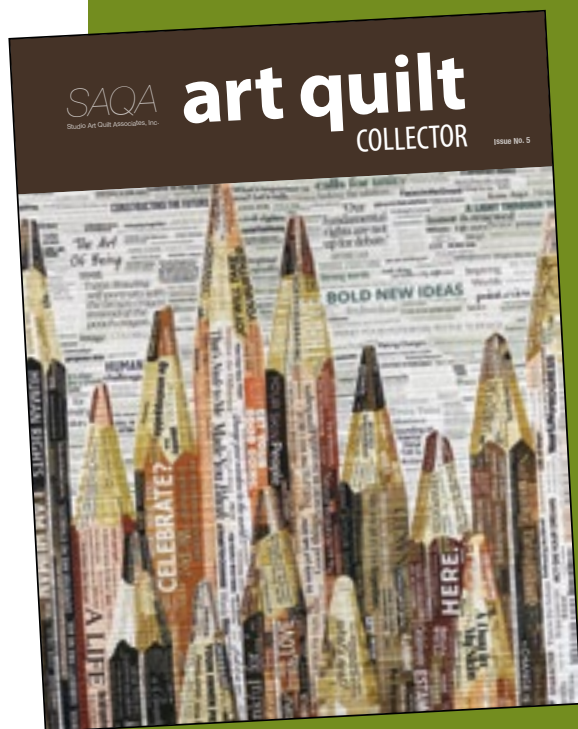
Email Contacts

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as well as the exhibition. Use your website, blog, or other social media outlets to promote your work. Be sure to include the dates, times, and location(s) of the exhibition. Consider creating a short video about your work, and your piece in particular, as another way of introducing yourself to potential viewers and purchasers. As the time approaches for the debut of your artwork, consider preparing and sending a personal press release to your local news outlets. Include a high quality photograph of your work to increase your chances of publication.

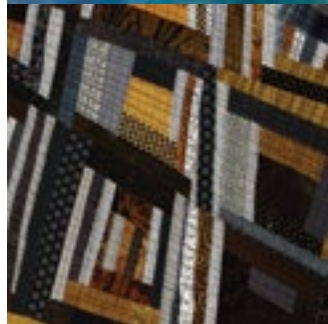
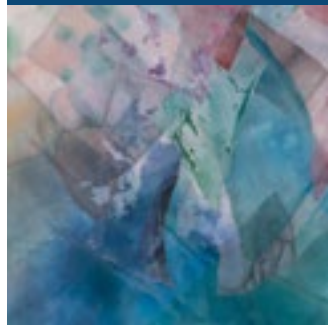
SAQA's website contains a wide variety of resources to assist you in creating your artwork and writing an artist statement, as well as to help with all the steps needed to get your

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artwork seen by the public. The SAQA *Journal* article index on the website will allow you to quickly see relevant articles that have been published by title as well as category.

The website also has a *Resource Articles* page which includes articles in other media, divided into sections. The *Exhibition* page also has many guides, including videos on how to enter your quilt, how the exhibition process works, and a detailed set of frequently asked questions. All of these resources are available for members to use at any time and are an important part of your professional development as a working artist. ▼

Sarah Entsminger is a SAQA JAM residing in Ashburn, Virginia. She is a member of the Exhibition Committee.

Join for the Journal...
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Surface Design Association
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www surfacedesign.org

“ Fabrics, threads, and sewing machines have always been a big part of my life. I started with garment construction, then moved to traditional quilting. Finally, I combined artistic skills and quilting fabrics and have found my home in art quilting! SAQA has been a big part of this journey. I have enjoyed the conferences, the amazing online information, and encouragement of like-minded folks. Most of all, I cherish the connections and lifelong friendships that have come through SAQA. I want to see SAQA continue long into the future, inspiring the next generation of art quilters. That’s why I’ve chosen to donate to SAQA and have left instructions in my will. I hope many others choose to do the same.

—Beth Schillig



Is SAQA in YOUR will?