

Introducing the Canadian Quilters' Association/Association canadienne de la courtepointe

# Teacher of the Year for 2011

by Seymone Armstrong

On behalf of Quilt and Textile/Fibre artists of Kingston and area, I have the immense pleasure of introducing the CQA/ACC's Teacher of the Year for 2011.

In addition to being a past president and member of the Canadian Quilters' Association/Association canadienne de la courtepointe, she is actively involved with the LIMESTONE QUILTER'S GUILD (Kingston), THE KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS, the American Quilters' Society, The American Quilt Study Group, Kingston Fibre Artists, Innovative Threads Kingston and is the Ontario Network of Needleworkers' representative for the Cataraqui Guild of Needle Arts (Kingston).

And, she works fulltime!

And, she teaches! In fact, she developed a certificate program in fibre art at St. Lawrence College and teaches at least one course per term.

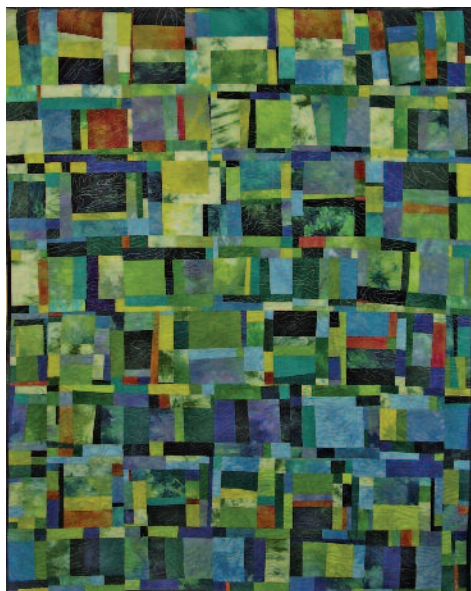
She is and has been instrumental in creating a thriving quilting and textile/fibre artists' community in Kingston and surrounding area. As a passionate, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and very talented teacher, her classes are always well attended and in great demand.

She maintains that "creative licence allows for an artist to shine". There are no rules in her classroom when it comes to self-expression. We are taught to experiment with various methods of quilting, textile and fibre techniques. We are encouraged to colour outside of the lines and to think outside of the box. But as we are pushed to challenge ourselves she only demands of us one thing—we must have fun. And, boy, do we have fun!

So without further ado, I am pleased to present to you, the CCA/ACC's Teacher of the Year for 2011, Bethany Garner.



Katrina Pyne from the *Kingston This Week* newspaper took this photo of Bethany and her award after their LIMESTONE QUILT GUILD meeting and kindly agreed to share. A small article appeared in the local *Whig Standard* and another article in the *Kingston This Week*.



## Bethany Garner's Acceptance

It has been many years since I stood on the podium at the Annual General Meeting of the CQA/ACC, as a Past President, retiring from my role on the Board of Directors. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to see many friends, both old and new, attending the meeting as *Quilt Ontario 2011* gets underway here in London.

Just a week ago today I was staying just across the parking lot at Perth Hall when I received an email message from our VP, Gayle Szmurlo, advising me that I had been nominated by a group of my students and friends in Kingston, ON and subsequently selected by a Committee to receive the 2011 CQA/ACC Teacher of the Year Award.

I am so very humbled and pleased beyond measure to be able to accept this award on behalf of all of my students over the past 30 years—as THEY are the impetus behind my development as a Professional Instructor and Student Advisor, mentor, supporting designer, fabric colourist and dyeing guru. I have travelled this province and indeed our country in my role as a Quilting and Surface Design Program Facilitator and as a Community College Textile Design Instructor at St. Lawrence College in Kingston, ON. It is there where I met and have spent the past six years sharing untold hours of Instructional playtime with the amazing women who have nominated me for this Award.

Having come to quilting with strong ties to the art form from my paternal Grandmother, Edna Sumners Hord, an award winning Kentucky quilter and a strict and well-loved needlewoman in her own right, I have carried my love of the art of quilting throughout my adult life from Michigan to my first Canadian home in Branford, Ontario. It was there where I helped start the BRANT HERITAGE QUILTERS GUILD in 1987. I taught alongside my close friend and another CQA/ACC Teacher of the Year recipient, Jessie Barker (1996), encouraging the Brant County quilters to develop new skills and try new techniques. Today many of those quilters are participating in local, national and likely international shows as well-recognized quilt professionals. We all participated wholeheartedly in the CQA/ACC activities, including the Annual Conferences across Canada. It was there that

I became active on the Board of Directors and served as your VP, President and Past President from 1993-1996.

In 1993, I relocated my family due to accepting a Health Care Administration position in the beautiful Lake Ontario city of Kingston, ON where I quickly made friends in the area who, too, were quilters and fibre arts enthusiasts. Over the next ten years, I was actively teaching workshops all across Eastern Ontario and establishing a relationship with St. Lawrence College through their Summer School for the Arts. Guild Workshops were, and still are, a highlight of my teaching and I love to travel across Canada to share new designs from my personal portfolio, and many, many techniques workshops which have proven to be exciting for students being exposed to surface texture, design, paint techniques and fabric dyeing for the first time.

Most importantly in my role as a Quilting Instructor has been the amazing opportunity to work for four years to develop the Textile Design Diploma Program at St. Lawrence in Kingston, one of only three diploma level programs in Canada. The program was launched in January of 2005 and continues to offer the opportunity for students who are moving from their traditional (quilt) roots into professional textile artist roles, to develop a body of work that is exhibition ready and to instill the confidence in some of the students to step into teaching roles themselves. Two of our SLC Graduates, Seymone Armstrong and Barbara Rushton are here with me today and were instrumental in forming my Nominating Committee. I could not be more proud of them both and each of the many amazing students who have worked through the ten courses in this amazing textile-focused College level program.

I continue to marvel at the beauty, the excellence in design, colour, execution and presentation of the work of my students. Many have submitted their work to our own CQA/ACC *National Juried Shows*, the *Grand National*, the *AQS Shows* and beyond. Several of my students have taken on the exciting role of Course Instructor and at least one is here with you as an Instructor this week, Elaine Quehl. Elaine is a perfect example of what our members, guilds and groups



across Canada seek in a teacher—the very highest level of expertise and a series of strong courses/programs focusing on professional teaching standards which are a welcome investment for students/organizations who employ them.

Please join me today in celebrating the many students across our great Country who look to their teachers for inspiration, guidance, the very best skills and the most fun ever as they enter the classrooms and workshops we share.

Without YOU, our students, teachers would be at home in their studios, dreaming up new techniques and wishing they could share them with someone...just like I do whenever I plan a new course, develop an original quilt design to share, whip up a batch of dyes and paints and get the urge to call together a great group of friends and let loose and PLAY!!! You are the reason we travel and teach, share our creativity and dream of new ways to inspire. Believe me, there is no better feeling than watching new work develop in the classroom or seeing my students work hanging in a gallery, a local Quilt Show, featured in a News article, or as it is recognized for its beauty in our own *Canadian Quilter* magazine. I LOVE being a TEACHER—and you would, too!

To the CQA/ACC Teacher of the Year Selection Committee, who saw my story as worthy of this important Award, I thank you for your support, encouragement and offering me this huge honour. Hope to see many of you soon in a classroom somewhere in Canada.