

Opening Up

*It's September!
Back to the 3 R s
Recovery, Relationships, Resources*

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This past year has been hard as we were isolated at home, unable to continue our regular routines. There is much we missed: getting together with family, participating in activities, visiting art museums, going out to dinner, etc., but here today we want to focus on another important aspect in our lives that was absent: interacting with friends. Friends are not a luxury; they are important to us, a necessity, central to our growth. They help us discover aspects of ourselves we otherwise may not have recognized. They help us face life's turmoil; they contribute to our personal growth; they are even good for our health. Without friends we wither and fade away.

At this retreat we will focus on those people around us who have helped us on our odyssey as artists. Monday's activities will focus on opening up about ourselves and the close relationships that have helped us through these last months. Tuesday we will expand our focus to include a wider circle of friends and institutions that have been useful to us in the pandemic. On Wednesday we will concentrate on AQN, what it has meant to us as members and how it can continue to be useful to us in the future.

On the way we will work on our **recovery** from this past year, we will examine how our **relationships** have changed, and we will expand our knowledge of the **resources** available to us for our odyssey into art.

General Comments:

The goal of this retreat to provide participants with a relaxed, friendly environment in which to re-establish connections that have been severed these last few (long) months.

Some activities have been planned, but they are mainly vehicles through which we can re-establish contact as well as plan for the future.

The plan is for each table to have a pile of tools in the middle – pencils, paper, fabric, etc. – that participants can use to express themselves through drawing or creating during the entire retreat. The Swap Table is also designed to help foster this process of adventurous, playful creation. At dinner on Wednesday we will display these creations and be able to admire them.

AQN Fall 2021 Retreat Agenda

Monday, Sep 13

Morning: Our room will be available for you to use all morning. You can use it to meet up with people, you can use it as a workroom to get started on your own projects that you have brought, or you can use it just to hang out. The room will be locked after we finish in the evening so you can plan to leave things there overnight.

Noon: the foam boards will be delivered, and you can start pinning up your work in preparation for show and tell if you wish.

1 pm: Official start of the retreat

Introduce theme of the retreat; Introduce new members

Activity: Make your own name tags and tags for the foam boards. Get creative!

Introduction ice-breaker: Using your name tags as a starting point, tell us a bit about yourself.

Friends: Talk about the quilt/object you brought with you and what this item represents for you personally.

2:30 pm: Break: A good time to register for the hotel if you haven't yet

3:00 pm: Pat Owoc introduces her book project. *Friends — Can it be said in needle and thread?*

5:00 pm: Show and Tell

5:30 pm: Break for dinner

6:00 pm: Dinner is served

7:00 pm: In Depth speaker, Show and Tell

8:30 pm: Adjourn

Tuesday, Sep 14

9 am: Call to order. Announcements. Some people move to a new place.

Charles Johnson, his life's odyssey is an example of how the people we meet change our lives.

Introspection:

15 minutes: Think about your own odyssey as a quilter and write down some main points. For example, when I think of my own life, I started as a dressmaker, hardly an artist, but I learned the skills, I segued into traditional quilting with exact piecing, then I discovered art quilts and turned to more intuitive piecing, then I learned about the possibility of printing my own fabric. At each step it was something or someone who gave me a new direction.

What motivated you to work in art?

What people have influenced you in your art?

What techniques (applique, abstract, figurative, quilting, raw edges, fusing, and so on) do you use?

What words best describe your quilting style?

How has your quilting style changed over the years?

Always ask yourself: Why? - Why do I use that technique? Why do I focus on certain colors/subjects? Why do I quilt stitch this way? Why do I concentrate on quilting instead of painting, or woodworking?

45 minutes: After your personal introspections, share among your table partners a summary of what you wrote, the parts you wish to share.

10 am: Break

10:30 am: Quick sketch activity

11:30 am: Break for lunch

Noon: Lunch is served

1:00 pm: Pat Owoc: Continue work on assembling your book.

3:30 pm: Business Meeting

4:00 pm: Move to a new table for the next round of discussion.

Expanding our point of view:

45 minutes: Covid effects: what new resources are available now after Covid? Video exhibits, on-line classes, etc. What have you found most useful? Specific examples. Have someone take notes at each table on the resources people have discovered.

15 minutes: Have each table report to the whole group on the resources that they have used using the notes they have taken. Have someone assemble those notes to send around to all members in an email after the retreat.

5:00 pm Member share

5:30 pm Break for dinner

6:00:pm Dinner is served

7:00 pm: In Depth speaker, Show and Tell

8:30 pm: Adjourn

Wednesday, Sep 15

9 am: Call to Order. Announcements

Change focus of discussion to AQN, the organization

45 minutes: How can we build on the strengths of AQN?

Think about how your connection with AQN has influenced your art. (Refer to yesterday's introspection.) What has been the most important to you about AQN when you consider your development as an artist?

How can we improve/change without losing what we treasure? Is change necessary to keep the organization viable? The strengths we keep and the changes we seek are dependent not only on the need to be viable at this time, but also on the need to reflect the post-pandemic world and the needs of our members. Think about your own personal goals and how they have changed during the pandemic and what your own needs are now.

The world has changed with Covid - where does that leave AQN? How do we need to change as an organization to adapt to the new world? Do we continue to Zoom? Do we become more virtual? How do we change without losing what we value most?

Come up with concrete suggestions. Have an open mind, put everything on the table and think deeply about what we need to keep and what we could afford to change. Each table should take notes and be prepared to share with the group the consensus of the discussion.

10 am: Break

10:30 am: What will AQN look like in the future? Form a consensus of the group as a whole on what needs to stay the same and what needs to change. Make plans to implement these ideas. Get volunteers to take the next steps.

Noon: Adjourn for lunch/afternoon activities. Be sure everyone has a group with a car if they wish to join. Reminder: the room remains available for those who wish to stay and work.

5:30 pm Dinner at the hotel for everyone. Time to process the retreat and say goodbyes. Decorations provided by work created during the retreat!

Items to bring for the workshop:

1. Personal sewing kit including scissors. Include a thimble if you usually use one. If you have an awl, bring it. It's not necessary to purchase an awl if you don't have one.
2. Threads and floss that you particularly like
3. A small amount of fabric that you enjoy using or that has meaning to you. The project is relatively small so you won't need much fabric.
4. Consider bringing a small project that you started and abandoned and that you wouldn't mind cutting up. You'll be able to work on the project without this item so don't feel that you need to cut up something you've already started.
5. Pen and/or pencil for taking notes, notebook
6. A sense of adventure and friendship and camaraderie and introspection

Workshop leader will provide:

1. Glue stick (or bring one if you have it handy)
2. Tapestry needles
3. Small sharp nails (substitute for an awl)
4. Small fabric pieces and small pieces of batting
5. Book pages and spines for the book

Additional items to bring for the rest of the retreat:

1. A quilt or other object that reminds you of a special person who has been important to you this last year or reminds you of someone special
2. Swap Shop: bring fabric/sewing thread/embroidery/thread/notions/pens/pencils or paper/stencils/devices/ etc. that you no longer have a use for. Set up table to display and everyone help themselves. Also a useful resource to use for creative activities during the retreat
3. Quilt or two for show and tell
4. Project you may want to work on at leisure