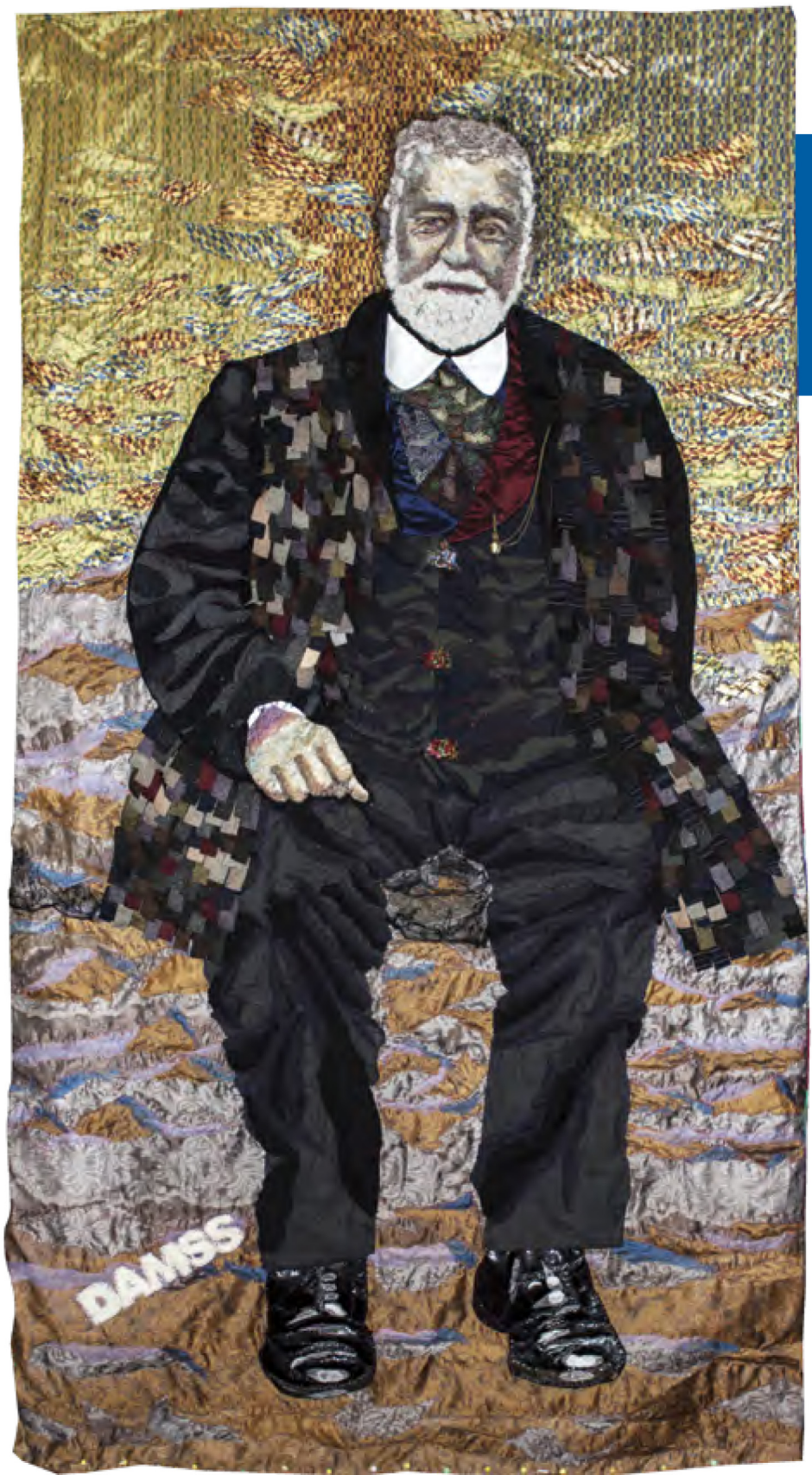
SAQA Journal

Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc.
2018 | Volume 28, No. 3



Inside:
A special preview of
art quilt QUARTERLY
Issue No. 12

In this issue...

Featured Artists: DAMSS: Daniela Arnoldi and Marco Sarzi-Sartori. 6
Branding Part 2:
Build your online brand. 10
Website design tips 11
SAQA Global Exhibitions: *Guns: Loaded Conversations* 12
SAQA Benefit Auction behind the scenes 14
Create dynamic PowerPoint presentations 20
SAQA Member Gallery: *Great Outdoors* 22
Navigate high-end craft shows 24
Inspired: Martha Wolfe. 27
JAM Showcase: Isabelle Wiessler 35

Monsieur Bohin
106 x 59 inches | 2016
by DAMSS

DAMSS:
Daniela Arnoldi and Marco Sarzi-Sartori

Expansive artwork spreads message of sustainability

by Cindy Grisdela

Italian artists Daniela Arnoldi and Marco Sarzi-Sartori—known collaboratively by their initials DAMSS—have turned recycling into an art form. Based in Milan, Italy, they make use of all types of cast-off textiles to build their large-scale works and installations.

Marco Sarzi-Sartori and Daniela Arnoldi pose with an enormous pile of fabrics waiting to find their way into the couple's large-scale artwork.

Roma 3000

13 x 33 feet | 2017

"Our creations aim at recycling and at promoting the sustainability of artistic and industrial products," they say. Their first step is to seek out waste fiber materials. Once they have the materials in their studio, they must be classified and stored. The fabric may be divided into attribute types such as color, weight, pattern, thickness, quality, and storage method needed.

One image of their studio shows Arnoldi and Sarzi-Sartori sitting behind an enormous mound of fiber strips rolled into balls. Their materials are not just cotton, but almost every type of fabric, from voile to heavy winter textiles, silk shantung to organdy. Once the material is on hand, Arnoldi and Sarzi-Sartori manipulate and process it into shapes, using a variety of techniques, such as cutting, restructuring with acid, and coloring with dripping alcohol. These processes turn material into fabric "tiles" for their projects.

"The fabric tiles are reassembled like bricks," they explain. The influence of the French Impressionists is clear in their approach to textile design with images formed by the strategic placement of the fabric tiles. The 2016 portrait of *Monsieur Bohin* pictured on the cover is a good example, particularly in the construction of his jacket. The process is also apparent in *Cinque Terre Corniglia* from 2015. Thread painting adds color and detail. "Random stitching [is used] for a realistic scene and more precise and careful [stitching] for the fine details."

The way the Impressionists used their brushes to create their paintings resonates with Arnoldi and Sarzi-Sartori. "Our methods derive from in-depth analysis of their brushstrokes and their way of holding the brush, the characteristics of their colors and study of subjects."

All the work is done by machine. Sewing machines are set up in the studio for different tasks. Most of the work is done on a frame they built themselves that is nearly 10 feet long. It has "two sliding layers, set with fast

Cinque Terre Corniglia

98 x 98 inches | 2015

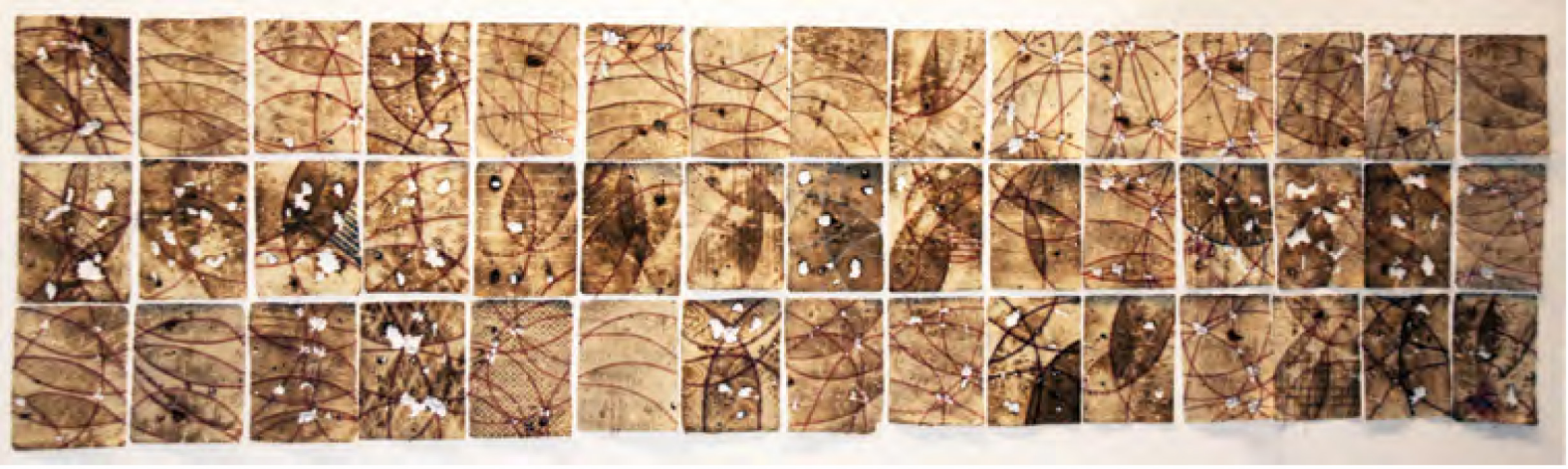
Milan Cathedral

63 x 63 inches | 2010

and powerful sewing machines and presser feet modified to perform more difficult tasks."

The fabric tiles are assembled on a base layer, as seen in the photograph of the large sewing machine setup in their studio. "The sewing of various layers of fabric with rows of stitching at varying widths allows us to vary the [textural look] of the textile to create the appearance of topography, hills, rocks, and other pieces of the picture."

Their studio is located in the same building as their apartment in Milan, making for a short work commute. They work every day of the week,



Iron

39.5 x 142 inches | 2011

spending time in the studio during the day and doing computer work in the evening to create the computer graphics needed for their projects. They also keep up with email, marketing, blogging, and other work related to their business.

By training, Arnoldi is an engineer and Sarzi-Sartori is an architect. They began to explore the possibility of working together to create art in 2000, and were drawn to the textile medium during a visit to an international quilt exhibition in France. "Textile is a fascinating medium as it is soft and flexible. It can be cut, disrupted, restructured and reassembled, spun, twirled, painted, embroidered, burned, and wrinkled—a wide range of manipulating possibilities not provided by any other medium," they say. *Iron*, completed in 2011, shows some of these transformative possibilities. The panels were burned with acid and then ironed at a high temperature.

Their first tapestries were fabricated using vertical looms they built. Later, their work developed into frameless textile art supported by metal, using enameled metal threads.

"We followed any technique that we thought could be useful in our future," Arnoldi and Sarzi-Sartori say.

In recent years, the couple has created large-scale work measured in feet rather than inches. *Roma 3000*, finished in 2017 and pictured on page 7, is one example of this grandeur, measuring about 13 x 33 feet. Photographs of the artists standing in front of the pieces give a sense of the works' enormous scale.

> 'Textile is a fascinating medium as it is soft and flexible.'

A project such as this can take many months to complete. Once the topic has been decided, they plan it using computer graphics which have become an essential part of the creation. The composition is then divided into sections and printed full-size onto canvas to be used as a template.

At this stage, each artist chooses an area of the piece to work on. As the image grows, they exchange their work so each has input on all the panels. "It is practically impossible to define the paternity of the stitches within our work because they are mixed in such a manner as to define our common style."

In addition to large-scale textiles, they also collaborated on fiber art installations such as *Connecting People*, installed in 2017 at a craft exhibition in Vicenza, Italy. The work features 300 pounds of colorful fabric strips attached top and bottom in diagonal lines. The process for one of these pieces is somewhat different from their hanging quilts, as the artists create a scale model for the

see "DAMSS" on page 33

project and then acquire the materials and assemble the piece on site. Fabric compositions have an optical-kinetic relationship with the viewer because they can be experienced in three dimensions.

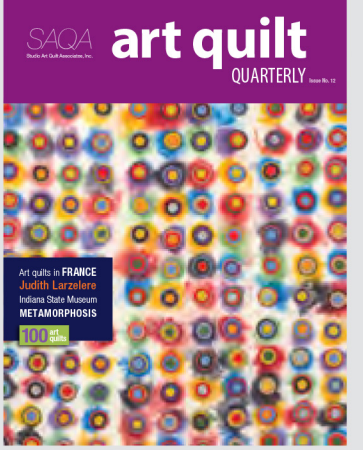
Arnoldi and Sarzi-Sartori teach master classes to students interested in learning about their style of working. They teach in their studio, as well as travel to other venues. "While teaching we learn more than we give. This positive outcome is due to the acts of sharing, discussing, pondering, confronting, and discovery."

The scale of many of their pieces means their approach to exhibiting and selling their work is specific to a certain type of collector or display. "We are bound by the large dimensions of our displays, which means that they are more [suitable] for collectors, hotels, companies, and institutions linked to the topic of the work itself, and [who also] have large areas for display." Focusing on the idea that their work is made in Italy is helpful too, they add.

Arnoldi and Sarzi-Sartori use the acronym DAMSS to brand their work. Their tagline is "from discarded material to vibrating compositions." ▼

Cindy Grisdela is a SAQA JAM who resides in Reston, Virginia. You can see her work at cindygrisdela.com

[Editor's Note: Arnoldi and Sarzi-Sartori responded to written questions for this article through a translator, their English friend David Ashworth, who also lives in Milan.]



SAQA quarterly publication designed for collectors, arts professionals, and admirers of art quilts everywhere!

Subscribe today!

www.saqa.com/aqq

SAN PEDRO SQUARE MARKET

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF QUILTS & TEXTILES

2019 SAQA Annual Conference

Threads of Innovation

April 25-28, 2019

HILTON SAN JOSE
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

Enjoy a full schedule of activities, informative presenters, local outings, exhibitions, and more!

Early-bird registration opens in September

LEARN MORE AT
www.saqa.com/conference