



DEVELPING & TEACHING WORKSHOPS - AN INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH BOSCHERT

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Clara Nartey Interviews Deborah Boschert

In this episode of [Textile Art Business Interviews](#), we'll be discussing how to teach workshops. I've got Deborah Boschert here with me to help us with that. Deborah is an artist, a teacher, and an author.

I'm glad to welcome Deborah to the blog, today.

CN: Hi Deborah. I'm glad to have you here to chat about your business. Welcome to the Clara Nartey blog.

DB: Thank you so much for having me. I'm always honored to have the opportunity to talk about art and creating with fabric, paint, and stitch.

CN: Deborah, what's the story of your creative journey? How did you get here?

DB: I began making traditional quilts from patterns. (My first quilt was [a Quilt-In-A-Day pattern](#). Shout out to [Eleanor Burns](#)! You should interview her!)

Eventually, I started seeing art quilts in Quilters Newsletter Magazine (sadly no longer in publication). And soon after that [Quilting Arts magazine](#) began publication.

Seeing art quilts in print opened my eyes to new possibilities. I took a class from [Melody Johnson](#) where I learned the wonders of raw edge fused appliqué and never looked back. I spent several years developing my own creative voice which led to showing my work, winning prizes and publishing a book.

CN: What a journey!!! And yes, I'd love an opportunity to interview [Eleanor Burns](#). A great quilter!! Let's talk about your main artistic medium – fabric. Why do you love working with fabrics?

DB: Endless possibilities! I love exploring color, texture, print, and pattern — and that's just the fabrics.

Layering with surface design, hand embroidery, and machine quilting add even more possibility.



CN: You once said to Ricky Tims, “I love to teach. I love to kind of nudge people into developing their own original quilts.” I assume you didn’t start teaching immediately you started making art quilts. How did you discover your love for teaching?

DB: Teaching is its own creative endeavor, just like making art quilts.

As my creative voice became more clear and recognizable, I became more confident in sharing my process and techniques.

I’ve thought a lot about the process of developing your creative voice and I try to share those ideas along with the projects and techniques I teach.

Types of Teaching and Where You Can Teach



Deborah Boschert and her Quilts

CN: What types of teaching engagements are you involved in? Do you teach online? Do you travel or do you only do local teaching? Lectures? 1-day or multi-day workshops? How exactly do you teach?



DB: Yes, to all of that. I have an online workshop available called [Buds, Branches and Blossoms: Botanical Fabric Collage](#).

I teach at several guilds in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and around Texas. I've been traveling more and more to guilds around the US and that's super fun.

I've also had the opportunity to teach at premier venues like International [Quilt Festival](#) in Houston and [Quilters' Affair](#) in Sisters, OR.

This year I'll be teaching at both [Craft Napa](#) and [Hudson River Valley](#). Giving an evening program is totally different than teaching a multi-day event, but I really love it all.

How Deborah Boschert's Teaching Career Progressed



Deborah Boschert in a Selfie with her Students



CN: Great!!! Let's get to the details. How do you land teaching engagements? Do you have a contact list of venues to teach at? And if so how did you build that?

DB: In the beginning, I asked my teacher friends to recommend me to local guilds.

As I was invited to those guilds, I'd ask them to recommend me to other guilds.

After being published in [Quilting Arts magazine](#), teaching at [Quilt Festival](#) and publishing my book, I am lucky to have guilds invite me to teach rather than seeking out opportunities.

Unlike guilds, most retreat-style events have a process for applying to teach. So, for those opportunities, I request an invitation to submit a proposal.

And then I spend a lot of time compiling a compelling application that fits their particular market.

I always include a list of my awards and publications which shows that I have experience and a strong body of work.

Handling Teaching Contracts (Yours vs. Theirs)



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CN: Do you have a teaching contract for venues to sign? What are the necessary elements to include in such a contract? What do you do when the venue presents you with their own contract?

DB: I do have a contract.



If the organization also has a contract, I often ask that we fill out both making sure they don't contradict each other in any way.

The contract includes all the details of date, time and contact person, plus the exact programs and workshops they want presented.

The contract also describes exactly what I'll provide and what they'll provide.

When Are You Ready to Teach



Deborah Boschert at her Book Signing Event

CN: One thing that deters people from teaching is they don't know everything there is to know about a particular topic.

My question to you is: do you need to know everything before you teach?



At what point should a quilt artist feel comfortable teaching?
DB: No one knows everything! We can't let that be a deterrent.

But, here's the thing, I know everything about how I create art quilts. In fact, I'm the only one who knows everything about my work.

I know my process, materials, and techniques and I'm eager to share them.

I always remind students that I'm just telling them what works for me. It's likely I'll completely contradict what they may learn from a different teacher and that's totally fine.

To get to this point, it's important to have confidence in your work.

For instance, I used to feel like I had to apologize for using acrylic paint on my art quilts since most artists use textile paint or dye.

Then I realized that the way I use paint is unique and I have good reasons for the choices I make.

I'm happy to share those choices and encourage students to experiment and work through their own choices.



How to Stay Relevant As a Teacher



Deborah Boschert in Her Studio

CN: How do you as a teacher, keep yourself relevant in the quilt world when there are so many new teachers coming up every day?

DB: I love to connect with people and social media is a great way to do that.

I share my creative process, interesting things I discover, places I visit and my thoughts about art and life.



This helps people get to know me and my artwork and might make them want to take a class with me.

My social media is not particularly curated or polished, but it's me.

In fact, I recently posted a picture of a bunch of needles, pins and embroidery floss on the arm of my couch — rather than in a pin cushion.

It got more comments than almost any other post on my Facebook artist page. I'm not sure that converts directly to any teaching gigs, but it was fun and memorable.

Some of the Processes Involved in Developing and Teaching a Workshop

CN: Is teaching financially worth the effort?

DB: That's hard to answer.

The reality is that it takes a lot of time to

- △ develop workshops,
- △ prepare handouts,
- △ compile kits,
- △ process paperwork and
- △ travel — and of course,
- △ make art that converts into workshop content.



It's "worth it" to me because I enjoy it.

I'm energized by students and I love the opportunity to travel.

It's good to have items to sell that can supplement teaching fees.



Deborah Boschert at a Sampler Event



Deborah Boschert's Tips on Teaching Textile Art



- △ Be generous with your knowledge and experiences.
- △ Meet students where they are. Acknowledge that some people take classes just to spend time with friends and others are working hard to develop new skills. Be enthusiastic, kind and appreciative of everyone.
- △ Be organized. Keep everything for each workshop you teach in a bin — demo supplies, workshop samples, supply lists, handouts and your own personal notes. It's a huge hassle to recreate all this stuff every time. Try to avoid that.
- △ Get to know other teachers. Ask for advice and suggestions.
- △ Things will go wrong. It's ok. Just be flexible and do your best.
- △ Always pack a bottle of water and some trail mix. Take care of yourself.



Deborah Boschert's 5 Faves



- △ Podcasts — Entertaining, informative and inspiring.
- △ Facebook Groups — A great way to stay connected with people. (that's why you should JOIN our Facebook group [Textile Art Creative Friends](#) to connect with me and many more creatives)
- △ [Misty Fuse fusible webbing](#) — Reliable, easy to use and beautifully lightweight.
- △ [Jeana Kimball Size 8 Red Work Needles](#) — Long, sharp, not too thin and not too thick and have an eye that easily accommodates three strands of floss (but you can jam six strands through the eye if you really want to).
- △ Deadlines — A good motivator. Keep the momentum moving forward

CN: Thanks Deborah. It's wonderful that you accepted my offer to do this interview. I'm sure my readers will enjoy reading your perspective on these issues.

DB: Thank you, Clara! Your blog is such a wonderful resource. I'm thrilled to be included.

CN: It's nice of you to say that Deborah. Thank you.

To learn more about Deborah Boschert, visit her website [DeborahsStudio.com](#). You can purchase her book - Art Quilt Collage: A Creative Journey in Fabric, Paint



& Stitch on [Amazon](#) or get a signed copy on [Etsy](#).

Interview Highlights & Quotes

- △ Teaching is its own creative endeavor, just like making art quilts.
- △ It's important to have confidence in your work.
- △ Acknowledge that some people take classes just to spend time with friends and others are working hard to develop new skills.
- △ I know everything about how I create art quilts. In fact, I'm the only one who knows everything about my work.
- △ I spend a lot of time compiling a compelling application that fits their particular market.



Clara Nartey is an artist and a writer. She finds and interviews thriving entrepreneurs from all over the world about their mindsets and the systems they use to grow their businesses, in order to help artists learn how to start or grow their own creative businesses. To get more of her writings and access to her free resources for textile & quilt artists, makers, and creators, [sign up here](#).

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