

TEXTILE ARTREPRENEUR

LUKE
HAYNES

TEXTILE ART BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

WITH CLARA NARTEY



BEYOND TEACHING AT LOCAL GUILDS: AN INTERVIEW WITH LUKE HAYNES

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Clara Nartey Interviews Luke Haynes

In this episode of [Textile Art Business Interviews](#), I've got Luke Haynes here with me to talk about teaching. Luke is an award-winning artist and an international teacher.

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

Luke Haynes' Creative Journey



Luke Haynes with one of his quilts

CN: Hi Luke, it's my pleasure to have you here on the Clara Nartey blog for this episode



of Textile Art Business Interview.

LH: Thank you for having me.

CN: Luke what's your quilting story? I know it started late in art school. Can you tell the story for the benefit of all to hear?

LH: The story started before art school, with knitting in middle school. That was my gateway craft.

Then when I was in Arts school I had some fabric and tried to make a portrait out of it. I learned a lot and really had a LONG way to grow so I kept trying and learning. And here I am.

CN: There must be something about fabric that draws you to it quite above the other media you've been exposed to. What is it about fabric that makes you choose to work in this medium?

LH: I like fabric already. Paint or pigments by themselves don't tell a story. Fabric especially used textiles, has an existing story to tell. Plus, I really enjoy the process of sewing quilts.

CN: That's a question I love to ask because everyone seems to have their own reason for working with fabrics.

For someone who didn't come from a quilting background, how come you have created so many quilts with a traditional quilt pattern – the log cabin.

What's the story behind your log cabin portrait quilts?

LH: I started in arts and design, but

quilting comes from a history of tradition and I want to really honor the past history of the medium.

I think that it's important to show, through my work, the history and importance of methods and media.



Luke Haynes Honors the Tradition of Quilts Through Art



Luke Haynes teaching log cabins in California

CN: Some quilt artists see themselves as painters –fabric painters, thread painters and so on. However, you say, “I’m a sculptor, not a painter, quilts are sculptural objects”. What do you mean by that?

LH: I mean that I am not only creating an image, but also creating an object.

The quilts I make can be used on a bed, they honor the history of “utility” implicit in the medium. I think that is important to specify. I don’t want to just make a fabric painting. If I wanted to make a painting I think using paint would be the best method.

The Place of Art Quilts in the Art World

CN: While talking about your Fossil commission you said, “I’m a member of the creative class whose job is to push our industries to greater aesthetics.” My question to you is how do we push the textile art industry to greater aesthetics?

LH: Short answer is: just make more. I think through conscious practice we can all grow in skills and prove the value of what we make to the world of art, whose rubric for acceptance is aesthetic.

CN: Well said, Luke. Well said!!! “The world of art’s rubric for acceptance is aesthetics”. Not tradition, not techniques and definitely not how many months it took to finish a piece of art quilt.



When you were asked about what the greatest challenge of being a textile artist was, you responded by saying this. “Explaining the value to the collector/investor. Quilts have inborn nostalgic and functional value, but the monetary value is often overlooked”.

How to Attribute Value to Art



Luke Haynes teaching Figures in Calgary

CN: So how do we go about educating textile art collectors? What exactly do you say to a collector (or what do you do) to make them see value in your work?

LH: I try to do that through my history of shows and sales. I am not sure of a better active way to do this.

I have shows across the world and pieces in museums and I hope that helps value my work alongside the medium. The more I sell and show and tell and others do the same the more we will all move into accepted media.



CN: So, it's your opinion that it's collective action on all our parts as well as the individual artist's own actions. Awesome!!!

Working as a Traveling Artist

You're on the teaching circuit a lot. It was quite hard to get a hold of you for this interview because of that. Why do you teach?

LH: I teach because that feels to me like a way to give back to the community of quilting. And of course, I learn from my students.

I tend not to teach anything I don't want to practice, that feels the most honest way to me. It also affords me some travel, which is fun.



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CN: By far, teaching is the most common income-earning activity textile artists engage in. Although there are other things like selling your art quilts, doing commissions, art prints, fabric design etc., teaching seems to be the favorite of them all. As an international teacher yourself, why do you think this is so?

LH: Because there is a greater market for teachers than artists in this medium. It's supply and demand and all of that.

Quilters don't buy quilts; they buy ways for themselves to make more quilts, either education or tools.

That goes back to the issues with collectors and valuation of the finished object.

CN: What's the most important lesson you've learned as a textile art teacher?

LH: For me, it's always my goal to give permission for my students to explore and experiment.

And to give them methods and ways of thinking for them to use after we work together.

The lesson in that is that it's not my job to control but to support.

Before I taught I always assumed it would be my task to mold people into what I wanted them to be.



Helping Your Students Accomplish Their Goals



Luke's student when he was teaching log cabins in California

CN: In your experience, what's the one thing students are worried about the most when they first come to class? What is it that will make them feel accomplished at the end of a class?

LH: Most students are worried that they don't have the skills to accomplish the task, or that they are "too traditional" or "too independent to learn" etc. Often they lack confidence.

The thing I strive to include in my classes is a finished something they can take home and reference.

I find that its FAR more likely for someone to do something again than finish what they started.



Also, people feel accomplished when they see a room of people go through the same trials as them and notice they are in a community rather than alone in a learning curve.

CN: That's a great point you make there. I like to say "[starting is hard](#) but finishing is a great motivator for starting again". Luke, there are two segments I include in every interview because readers really enjoy these segments. One is what are your five favorite tools and resources? And the other is what are your business tips.

LH: So many! Haha



- 1) Ok well, of course, the rotary cutter. That changed the world.
- 2) I also use a long ruler and a big cutting table. Give yourself enough room to work, so you can see what you are making.
- 3) I have a BIG ironing table for the same reasons. 36 X 60"
- 4) Camera/cell phone, depending on your space it allows you to be able to visually take a step back and see your work. I find that it helps me be objective on color decisions.
- 5) Glue stick!! "Acid-free"!!! So it doesn't deteriorate your work] it helps me hold things together till I can quilt it, no need to do it by hand or a basting stitch. Saves me hours on each project and it washes right out.



How Luke Haynes' Tips for Becoming a Traveling Teacher



- △ Watch what other teachers are doing.
- △ Ask other guilds what they are looking for.
- △ Work on your mastery that they will want you for. [method or material etc].
- △ Consistency, the more that people see your name, the more they will trust your product and persona.
- △ Apply for big shows like [Quiltcon](#) or AQS - [American Quilter's Society](#) and let the community see you at work.
- △ Promote yourself on social media and let people find you.

CN: Thanks Luke for enriching to our knowledge about teaching in the art quilt industry.

To learn more about Luke Haynes, or to see if he's coming to a destination close to you to teach, visit his website at [LukeHaynes.com](#)

Interview Quotes & Highlights

- △ The quilts I make can be used on a bed, they honor the history of "utility" implicit in the medium. If I wanted to make a painting I think using paint would be the best method.
- △ The world of art's rubric for acceptance is aesthetics.
- △ Quilters don't buy quilts; they buy ways for themselves to make more quilts, either education or tools.
- △ Apply to teach at big shows ([Deborah Boschert](#) talks about spending time on your applications)



Your Turn

Is becoming a traveling teacher something you're interested in? Go to the [blog](#) to answer.



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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