



# **Strategic Plan 2016–2019**

## A note from the HGA President

In the spring of 2015, the Board of Directors of the Handweavers Guild of America, Inc. (HGA), hired a new Executive Director, Elizabeth Williamson. It seemed like the perfect time to develop a long range, multi-year plan for the organization. So, in July 2015, with the help of our new director, we embarked on a strategic planning process.

We began by rewriting our Mission Statement and adding a Vision Statement. **Mission Statement:** *To educate, support and inspire the fiber art community.* **Vision Statement:** *To be the leading resource for awareness and advancement of the fiber arts.*

The next step was to ascertain how our members, past and present, felt about HGA. We posted a survey on our website and social media and sent emails to more than 8,000 fiber arts enthusiasts asking for their opinions. We were delighted that 2,604 people responded, fifty-three percent of whom were current members of HGA. The Board could see that HGA was falling short of meeting the needs and desires of many in our target audience.

In January 2016, the Board and Staff held a planning meeting at HGA headquarters to identify specific objectives, goals and strategies. The following Plan is the result of this meeting. It is our intention to be responsive to our membership. This includes transparency and accountability. This Plan is a living document. It is subject to change and revision. It is also ambitious. To truly make HGA an organization that reflects the needs and desires of its members requires input and help from many more than just the Board and Staff. As you read through this Plan, I hope you will want to contribute to its implementation. If something strikes you as interesting or important or you have a skill that would help us to reach a goal, volunteer to help. Become the change you want to see.

Much appreciation is due to our talented staff: Linda Campbell, Kathi Grupp, Sally Orgren, and Ingrid Sciscoe; and to our dedicated Board: Candy Barbag, Joy Berg, Teena Jennings-Rentenaar, Penny Morgan, Suanne Pasquarella, Kathy Perito and Marcia Weiss, and to our intrepid leader, Elizabeth Williamson. All have spent countless hours making this Plan a reality. It is our hope that it will persuade you to support HGA's mission to educate, support and inspire the fiber art community.



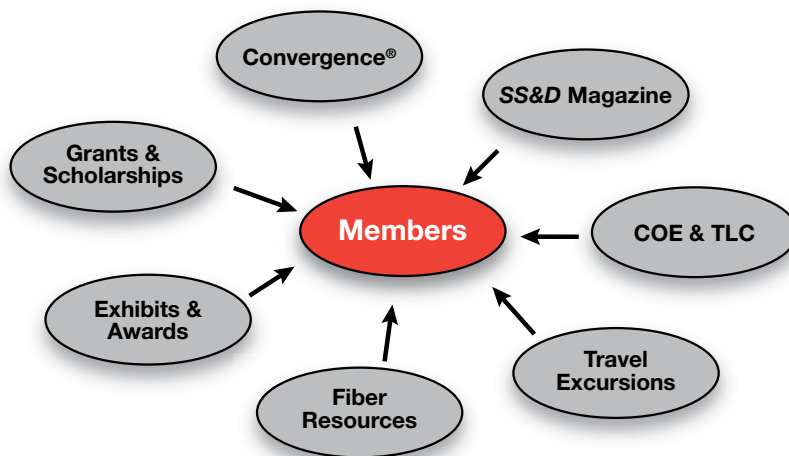
Catherine Marchant  
President, HGA Board of Directors

# INTRODUCTION

## Mission, Programs and Vision

The mission of the Handweavers Guild of America, Inc. (HGA) is to educate, support, and inspire the fiber art community. Our programs include:

- Convergence®, a biennial international conference offering lectures, seminars, workshops, vendor marketplace, juried art exhibits, fiber-oriented tours and our popular fashion show
- *Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot*, an award-winning, quarterly magazine providing inspiring and educational articles about weaving, spinning, dyeing and the fiber arts community
- Certificate of Excellence (COE), a rigorous certification program in the fields of handweaving, spinning, dyeing and basketry
- Teaching and Learning through Correspondence (TLC), a one-on-one study program with a mentor, tailored to meet the student's needs
- Scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in accredited academic programs in the United States and Canada for the purpose of furthering education in the field of fiber arts, including training for research, textile history and conservation
- Grant opportunities for individual members to study or take workshops
- Fiber resources, such as Textile Kit and Multimedia rentals and the Laughlin Library collection of fiber-related books, available to members for personal and guild use
- Travel excursions offering unique opportunities for private viewings, exclusive lectures, and a rare chance to explore and examine exhibits with knowledgeable leaders
- *Small Expressions*, an annual juried exhibit of small-scale works created using fiber techniques by national and international artists
- The HGA Award, recognizing outstanding exhibited works of fiber art, is given to more than 30 deserving artists each year



**HGA's vision is to be the leading resource for awareness and advancement of the fiber arts.**

## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Handweavers Guild of America, Inc. (HGA), was begun by a handful of weavers in the summer of 1969, working with 125 of the nation's leaders in the fiber arts to determine whether there should be a national guild, what form it should take and what it should offer its members. By November 1, 1969, HGA had 1,000 members and in December the first issue of ***Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot*** was published. In 1972, HGA held its first Convergence® at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, hosted by the Michigan League of Handweavers with Peter Collingwood as the featured speaker. At this event, the HGA Scholarship fund was started in memory of Berta Frey. By the autumn of that year, the organization had 24 state representatives to add to its volunteer staff. In 1974, HGA began to explore the possibility of offering a Certificate of Excellence (COE) in handweaving. The first examination was conducted in 1976, and was followed by certificates for handspinning, then dyeing and basketmaking.

HGA received its 501(c)(3) non-profit status in 1977.

1984 was the 15th anniversary of HGA and also the first year the exhibition *Small Expressions* was held in conjunction with Convergence® in Dallas, Texas. This juried exhibit is held annually. During even-numbered years it is exhibited at the Convergence® site and during odd-numbered years the exhibition rotates to various locations around the country.

1993 saw the beginning of the Teaching & Learning through Correspondence (TLC) program for those who wanted an in-depth study of a particular subject within the fiber arts.

In 1994 the Board felt that in order to meet the mission of HGA they needed to provide more educational programs. The Fiber Trust was instituted to pay for these programs. Through the years, money raised by the Fiber Trust has provided scholarships, grants, student assistantships, exhibits, and other programs. HGA members and non-members alike have benefited from the Fiber Trust.

In 1996, *Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot* received a **First Place Award** in the category of **Publications** from **Association Trends™**.

HGA received the **American Craft Council Award of Distinction** in 2003.

As HGA celebrated its 40th anniversary, it also held its inaugural members' excursion to Canton, Ohio to view *KIMONO AS ART—The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota* at the Canton Museum of Art.

With the celebration of its 45th year in 2014, the Board of Directors initiated a search for a new Executive Director to replace Sandra Bowles, who announced her intention to retire following her 25th year of service. Because Sandra had also served as Editor in Chief for the magazine, the Board needed to hire a new editor of *Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot* as well. Within a year, Elizabeth Williamson was hired as the new Executive Director, and Sally Orgren became the new Editor.

In addition to the Executive Director and the Editor, the staff of HGA currently consists of 1 part-time and 2 full-time employees. There is also the Board of Directors and the treasurer, who function as a working board supported by the staff. During the planning and execution of Convergence®, the number of volunteers runs into the hundreds.

As HGA approaches its 50th year, the organization must chart a clear path for success. Over the past year, the Board and staff have completed the initial phase of the strategic planning process, assessing HGA's strengths and weaknesses and identifying opportunities and threats to the success of the organization. This plan provides direction to the organization over the next three years and serves as a document for the Board and staff to help set priorities, allocate resources and measure progress through clearly stated goals.

### **Steps to Achieve Success:**

- Be an organization that engenders enthusiasm among its constituents
- Be a respected leader in the fiber arts community
- Be a resource for fiber arts education
- Be financially sustainable

## **OUR STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Objective I: To be an Organization that Engenders Enthusiasm Among Constituents**

#### **1. Engage Membership in HGA Benefits and Activities**

- a. Determine what benefits HGA members want and provide them, as feasible. (yr. 1)
- b. Recruit new members and retain current members. (yr. 1)
- c. Enlist volunteers to orient and mentor new members. (yr. 1)
- d. Develop an ongoing conversation with HGA members regarding programs and benefits. (yr. 2)

#### **2. Produce a Magazine that Excites and Engages our Constituents**

- a. Produce and adhere to production schedule/calendar. (yr. 1)
- b. Ensure representation of spinning, weaving and dyeing. (yr. 2)
- c. Convene a focus group to determine the best format and delivery method. (yr. 2)
- d. Create an advisory committee to assist the editor. (yr. 2)
- e. Explore capacity to complement articles in *Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot* with online video content. (yr. 3)

#### **3. Support Local Guilds**

- a. Ask the guilds how HGA can best help. (yr. 1)
- b. Encourage HGA Reps to maintain closer relationships with local guilds, and provide HGA Reps with the necessary information and resources to serve those guilds. (yr. 1)
- c. Develop a resource tool kit for guilds, based on their reported needs. (yr. 2)
- d. Facilitate sharing among guilds by providing a forum for communication. (yr. 3)

#### **4. Provide More Opportunities to Exhibit Fiber Arts**

- a. Create opportunities for members, from beginner to advanced, and in all disciplines, to showcase their work. (yr. 2)
- b. Partner with other organizations such as galleries and museums to present fiber arts exhibits. (yr. 2)
- c. Explore the feasibility of sponsoring traveling exhibits, working with other conferences as well as museums and galleries. (yr. 3)
- d. Budget for the increased expense of additional exhibits. (yr. 3)
- e. Explore the feasibility for digital exhibits and/or galleries. (yr. 3)

### **Objective II: To be a Respected Leader in the Fiber Arts Community**

#### **1. Establish and Implement Non-Profit Best Practices in Policies and Procedures**

- a. Determine what policies and procedures are important to HGA. (yr. 1)
- b. Prepare a document that integrates new policies and procedures with current policies and procedures, include job descriptions for staff, board and volunteers. (yr. 1)
- c. Train staff, board and volunteers in policies and procedures. Develop a training process for new staff, board and volunteers going forward. (yr. 2)

#### **2. Be an Organization Which Attracts People Who Want to Work and Volunteer**

- a. Develop a staffing plan to meet future needs. (yr. 1)
- b. Establish clear expectations and lines of accountability for staff, board and volunteers. Clarify staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities. (yr. 2)
- c. Determine if staff positions are competitive and attractive. Provide development opportunities and recognition for staff. (yr. 1)
- d. Determine if board and volunteer positions are competitive and attractive. Provide development opportunities and recognition for board members and volunteers. (yr. 2)

#### **3. Establish a Climate of Transparency with HGA Members and Affiliates.**

- a. Compile data to share with constituents regarding membership and programs. (yr. 1)
- b. Publish an annual report, including membership, programming and financial information. (yr. 3)

#### **4. Increase the Visibility of HGA**

- a. Clarify our target audience. (yr. 1)
- b. Utilize HGA Reps to introduce local guild members to HGA. (yr. 1)
- c. Define the HGA brand. (yr. 2)
- d. Develop and implement an advertising and marketing plan. (yr. 2)

### **Objective III: To be a Resource for Fiber Arts Education**

#### **1. Strengthen Education Programming and Increase Participation**

- a. Create a committee to evaluate all current programs and determine what members want. (yr. 1)
- b. Determine how to divide our resources between levels of ability (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and evaluate delivery methods. (yr. 2)
- c. Improve marketing of all programs. (yr. 2) *(See Objective IV, Goal 2f)*
- d. Give greater recognition to COE recipients. (yr. 3)

## **2. Strengthen Convergence® and Increase Participation**

- a. Evaluate Convergence® using surveys and focus groups to identify what attendees, vendors and instructors/leaders want. (yr. 1)
- b. Determine feasibility of hiring a staff conference planner. (yr. 1)
- c. Select future Convergence® sites more than 2 years in advance. (yr. 1)
- d. Produce Convergence® Planning and Procedure Handbook to provide a clear guideline for future organizers (staff, board and volunteers) to maintain a successful and well-documented event. (yr. 1)
- e. Build relationships with vendors and increase vendor participation in both numbers and variety. (yr. 1)
- f. Explore instructor/leader compensation that is competitive in the marketplace. (yr. 2)
- g. Engage local and regional guilds in the Convergence® planning process. (yr. 2)
- h. Develop an advertising/marketing plan specific to the Convergence® site. (yr. 2)
- i. Include a formal community service project in each Convergence®. (yr. 2)
- j. Collaborate with other fiber-related conferences, by sharing marketing, exhibits, instructor/leader coordination, etc. (yr. 3)

## **3. Develop an Action Plan to Utilize the Laughlin Library as a Member Resource**

- a. Catalog and value the books in the library. (yr. 1)
- b. Do a cost/benefit analysis to determine the feasibility of retaining the library. (yr. 2)
- c. If library retention is feasible, develop an action plan for how the library will function, including fee structure, preservation, non-circulating books, duplicate books. (yr. 2)

## **Objective IV: To be a Financially Sustainable Non-Profit**

### **1. Develop a Fundraising Plan**

- a. Establish a committee including members of the Board, Executive Director, major donors and volunteers to develop a fundraising plan. This plan may include bequests, legacy giving, Convergence® fundraising, auction, grants, etc. (yr. 2)

### **2. Diversify Sources of Funding**

- a. Apply for a National Endowment for the Arts grant. (yr. 1)
- b. Increase advertising in *Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot*. (yr. 1)
- c. Increase individual and affiliate memberships. (yr. 1)
- d. Develop a donor marketing plan to identify, retain and recognize new and continuing donors. (yr. 2)
- e. Develop corporate sponsorship packages. (yr. 2)
- f. Increase participation in current programs. (yr. 2) (*See also Obj. III, Goal 1c*)
- g. Research grant sources; develop relationships with foundations, corporations and government entities. (yr. 3)

### **3. Build a 6-Month Operating Reserve**

- a. Prepare a two-year budget based on expected revenues and expenses with a clear chart of accounts. (yr. 1)
- b. Reduce operating costs without compromising quality of programs. (yr. 1)
- c. Set benchmarks for revenue. (yr. 1)
- d. Determine return on investment of each program. (yr. 2)
- e. Develop a budget that accounts for capital, future and unexpected expenses. (yr. 2)



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