



July 1, 2009
ISSUE 4



"Plays Well With Others"

We have heard that expression all of our lives, yet what does it really mean? Is it just being tolerant or can we take it a step further and really want our fellow finishers to truly be happy and successful.

Sisters Hands is focused on the success of others and have found that what you give, you most certainly get back. This issue is about collaboration in life and on the wall. We hope it inspires you to take others by the hand too!

APPLAUSE!

Giving a big HAND to Ziska Childs!



San Francisco Opera's production of "Elixir of Love" in rehearsal with the Show curtain Scrim in place. Set Design by Allen Moyer, Lighting Design by Paul Palazzo.

Ziska Childs has been an entertainment industry professional since 1978. With over 300 productions her credits range from Global 500 companies (AT&T, SAP,AOL/Time Warner) to Tony

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Applause

Look what THEY can do!

Getting to Know Us

a HANDful of questions answered by one of our members

Get a Grip

Business Advice

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FREE Recipe!

Get your Hands on THIS

Product Review

**Sisters Hands,
Decorative Artists
Consortium,**

www.sistershands.com

Susan Bickford
Marti Carroll
Elaine Castronovo
Cindy Everett
Renee Holder
Judy Norman
Krista Vind
Cait Whitson
Julie Young

award winners (Phantom of the Opera, "M" Butterfly for Eiko Ishioka). She has provided 3D presentations, Sketches, Drafting, Surveys, Creative Consultation, and Project Management to a wide range of projects from Broadcast media (ABC, NBC, CBS, Turner Broadcasting) to Industrial Expos (IBM, PC Xpo, Nike). She shares with us her thoughts on the art of collaboration.

"I find that a process without collaboration almost always end up unsuccessfully; both personally and artistically. It really is the kind of cornerstone of my artistic process."

Those aren't my words, those of the words of Allen Moyer. Allen is an old classmate, a good friend and the Tony nominated designer for "Grey Gardens" on Broadway. I asked him to write a few words on the subject of collaboration and that's what I got.

I can't say it better than that.

So let me start with the "apology" This is about the collaborative process in the Entertainment Industry. That's my world much more than the Decorative Arts world. Some things are the same, some are not.

This is not about "Cooperation". Cooperation should be the least one expects on a project. Cooperation, etiquette and plain old fashioned manners are all helpful for a successful project. Without these collaboration isn't likely; but being polite is not being part of the collaborative process, it helps, but it's not the determining factor.

Do you believe that there is more to the world than your single viewpoint? Do you believe that the opinions of others may inform or even improve your own? The determining factor is optimism. [read more....](#)

www.ziskachilds.com

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Getting to Know Us...

At your Fingertips...

Handy resources to help along your way!

[Altered Provisions](#)
[Artistry in Faux Blog](#)
[FabulousFinishes](#)
[Blog](#)
[My Notting Hill Blog](#)
[Design Inspiration](#)
[Snapdragon Garden](#)
[Patricia Gray Blog](#)
[Fresh Palette Blog](#)
[Meanwhile Here in](#)
[France Blog](#)
[Indexed](#)
[Design Amour](#)
[Faces in Places Blog](#)
[Fauxology](#)

Sisters Hands will be moving to a quarterly newsletter schedule, instead of bi-monthly

Look for our next issue this fall!



This month we feature Faux Play!

When we as a group initially got together, it was based on our professional respect for each other- creating a social community where we could all share ideas, help each other with projects, and basically apply 10 brains rather than one. Many of us work together on a regular basis and gather in groups as often as possible. We also enjoy a yearly gathering we like to call "Faux Play".

Faux Play is usually a week- long event filled with inspiration, a gathering of like minds but diverse talents. Among the group we have accomplished instructors, event planners, photographers, cooks, business experts, marketing gurus and philosophers.....every one a talented decorative artist. We are all mothers as well, so our collaboration also tends to revolve around our personal lives, not just our art. During Fauxplay we have been so blessed to have many companies donate products for us to "play" with. We have created some killer finishes by opening buckets, smelling all the different products (yes, we all do that first don't we?) and then brainstorming,.. "what if we do this, then we do this.

Our creative souls are energized as we play with a wide array of products and finishes and leave refreshed in spirit and inspired with new creations to add to our portfolios, and to share with you, our newsletter readers.

This year we gathered together at the home of our sister, Elaine Castronovo in Monaca, PA near Pittsburgh. Our "Creative Laine" organized a great Sister's Hands project for the Laird family. The Laird's graciously moved out of their home for a week, leaving it for an extreme home makeover.....Sister Style!

We finished 1000 sq ft of a two story foyer in several colors of

plaster using Manda Mudd products, playing up the southwest theme and colors of the home. With eight individuals working side by side, laughing all the way, we completed a lovely finish in the two story foyer in less than 11 hours. What a great way to get a job done!

We also staged furniture, reorganized artwork on the walls and created several works of special art for the homeowners. We created a focal point in the living room by adding a lusterstone finish to the fireplace niche, and a custom work of art on an adjacent wall. Next, the soffit in the kitchen received one of Elaine's specialty finishes. You can view photos of the finished foyer as well as process pictures on our website: www.sistershands.com.

The week also allowed for studio time as well as play time for the sisters. We had fun, ate lots of great food and shared a fantastic week together! We as a group are hoping to have a bonus Faux Play this year in the Fall. Yeah, it may be wishful thinking as it is hard to coordinate so many schedules; but hey, dreams do come true, don't they?

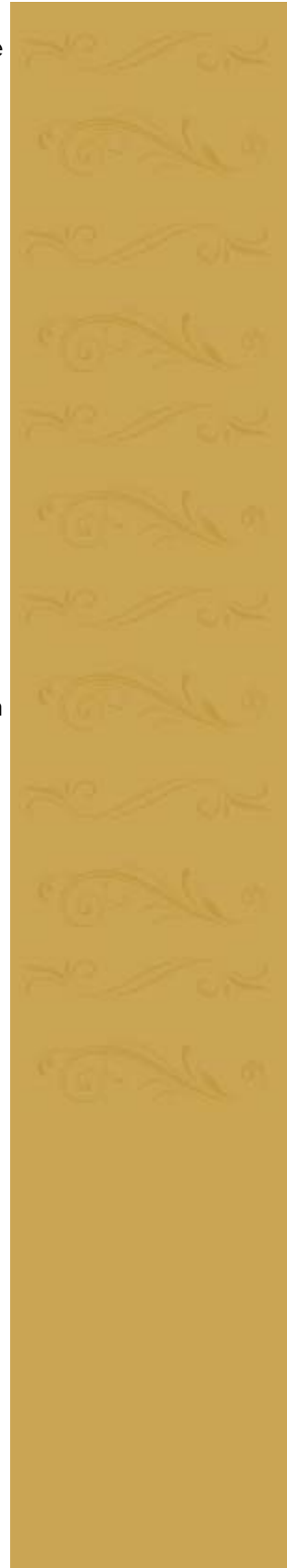
We share our story with you in hopes that you too can form a coalition of like-minded folks to share your talents, your journey in art, with. We value each other as individuals and friends, and always strive to build upon our strengths and nurture each other. We have created a family that we can come home to whether we are in the suburbs, the country, by the sea, or across the ocean.

Get A Grip!

Our Business Tips and Advice
from the pen of Susan Bickford

The Value of Collaboration

In my class, "The Art of Making a Profit," students are always challenged by how to estimate and figure pricing when including help. For those with small businesses without employees, bringing in help on jobs should NEVER increase the total man hours on the job over what it would be with the principal artist working alone – meaning the price should be the same to the client. In fact, if help is chosen wisely, it should result in fewer man hours to accomplish the job because the artists will both be skilled needing no "training" time. Another benefit contributing to efficiency is being able to stay fresh and less tired. Increased efficiency means a higher hourly wage and profit to the principal artist, as well as a faster turnaround time so the next job can be started sooner, meaning a higher production rate. This faster



turnaround also enables you to get in and out quickly and not “wear out your welcome” in the client’s home. Increased efficiency and production result in a healthier bottom line.

This is where collaborating with other artists who have comparable or superior skills can help increase efficiency. For some tasks, less expensive, unskilled labor is the smart way to go. However, if that less expensive worker requires time to demonstrate the technique, constantly supervise and oversee the work, or potentially redo the work, then it effectively increases their labor cost. Not only does the “cheap” labor become more expensive, it reduces the principal artist’s hourly return because they are using valuable time to supervise or redo, and takes them away from where they are most productive – using their skill on the wall. Cheaper labor can wind up costing as much, or more than hiring a skilled artist when all these factors are taken into consideration. Collaborating with skilled artists who have their own businesses also helps keep the subcontractor versus employee issue clear on tax records. Next time help is needed and the choice is between highly skilled or less skilled labor – don’t forget to take into consideration the true cost and value of each.



IDAL in the Spotlight

With the collaborative theme of this newsletter, it seems a perfect fit to talk about the International Decorative Artisans League.

If you have never attended an IDAL (formerly SALI) convention, you don’t know what you are missing! It is such a wonderful event. There is so much to do and see. There is the Expo where you can peruse the isles for inspiration, find out about new products, watch and listen to demonstrations, and even get freebies! The networking is second to none....you can meet and chat with people from your favorite message boards, teachers you are considering classes from, icons in the industry, and friends you may see only that once a year, creating and building relationships that, in my experience, are enduring.

There are also events to attend, and my favorite part.....classes. IDAL classes are a great value. Nowhere else can you take classes from industry leaders, jam packed with cool new finishes and products, at such incredible prices.

This year Sisters Hands members Susan Bickford and Krista Vind are offering a unique decorative finish class that arose from their



past teamwork creating finishes. "Explore a World of Finish Treasures" will feature several product lines as well as some great products that are sometimes not utilized to their full potential.

T616-Explore a World of Finish Treasures

Tuesday · 1:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Wednesday · 1:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Fee: \$325.00

Instructors: [Krista Vind](#); [Susan Bickford](#)

Cross product lines and style boundaries, explore and experiment with different product combinations and interesting techniques. These two seasoned decorative artists thrive on developing original finishes using cutting edge products/design. As a direct result this class will focus on many under-appreciated, yet exciting materials, utilizing them in new and innovative ways. No matter what your market dictates, this class has something for everyone, from using "Old World" in transitional ways, to exciting bold concepts bringing you into the "new world" of contemporary finishes. Eight 17 x 24 samples on polystyrene, product "treasures" from FauxEffects, Golden, Modello, 3 Stencils, LeonNeon.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Class Type: Decorative Finish

Supplies to Bring (in addition to [Basic Supplies](#)): Trowel, chip and foam brushes, whiz roller and cover, wallpaper brush, Rubbermaid scrub brush, sea sponge, terry towel

Supplies/tools/stencils student keeps: 3 custom designed stencils, 1 Leon Neon

Donor: Faux Effects, Golden, Modello Designs



In addition, Krista and Susan are offering several other classes. Krista is teaching "Modern for the Masses" and Susan is teaching her "Pricing without Guesswork" courses



1 and 2.

The members of SistersHands are looking anxiously forward to Memphis in July and would love to meet you! Please introduce yourself at convention. For more information on IDAL and this years convention in Memphis, TN, please visit:

<http://www.decorativeartisans.org/>

From Our Hands

In each issue we will share a **[FREE RECIPE](#)** available for download from our website

Follow the link below to download our current free recipe!



["Green Apple Crackle"](#)

Get Your HANDS On This!

Our most current THUMBS UP product review:

Rock-Kote™

With all the focus these days on finishing for countertops and floors, Faux Effects is introducing a couple of new products for those applications called Rock-Kote Water Based Epoxy and Rock-Kote High Solid Epoxy. Expanding your portfolio to include these surfaces is a great way to fight the slower economy, especially as more people are remodeling as opposed to decorating. Both the

water based and high solid versions will offer superior topcoat protection for those surfaces that need it most....floors and countertops. One of the most exciting things about these products is that they work not only in conjunction with the RS Crete line; they are compatible with the gold and silver line products as well. This means that you can virtually put any finish currently in your portfolio, anywhere you want it!!!!

Both versions of Rock-Kote are 0 VOC, and are 3 part systems containing a part A, part B, and a conditioner which aids the product in settling and reduction of pin holes. There is also a retarding thinner for the HS Rock-Kote, just add about 10% and the HS Rock-Kote becomes a very brush-able clear coat product... even on vertical surfaces (Wow!!) Both are chemically resistant and exterior rated. [read more...](#)

All of us in Sisters Hands would like to thank everyone for your continued support and encouragement for our group and its efforts!

A special thank you to those who signed up for our mailing list and the email responses we have received! We appreciate all of your input!

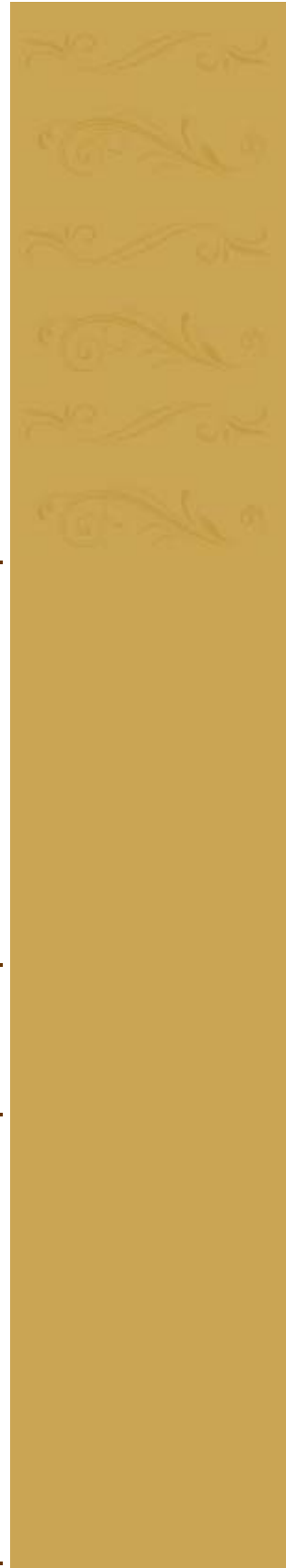
[Click here](#) to view a schedule of our upcoming classes in 2009!

Want to share something with the Sisters?
Questions, ideas for a future Newsletter?
Want to recommend someone for an Applause?

Please do not reply to this message-

[Contact us here!!](#)

Forward-to-a-Friend



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