
August 2023 Artist Newsletter • Becka Rahn

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An Artist Newsletter
by Becka Rahn



Happy State Fair week to those who celebrate! I'm not a state fair fan to be honest. I don't love crowds and I don't love fried foods, so a trip to the fairgrounds isn't on my must-do list. What I do love about this week is that new shiny school supplies are out in all the stores! Someone said that they feel like September is really their "Happy New Year" where it feels like everything is new beginnings. And I think from years of being a student and a teacher and the child of a teacher that my brain its kind of wired that way too. You can see below that I am starting and trying so many new things right now!

For artists especially, trying new things is hard. There is so much energy and excitement about getting whatever it is going, filmed, edited, made, put together, or launched. And then there's the absolute disappointment when you put it out there and all you hear are crickets. I know not to worry and that it takes time for things to gain momentum but that doesn't make the waiting any easier. So this time I am asking for a little push from you (see below) to help get the momentum rolling. What new thing do you have going on that needs a little push? Hit reply and tell me about it!

-- Becca

what's new?



I've got a piece in [this show at the Argyle Zebra Gallery in St Paul](#). A friend sent me the call for this one and it made me laugh! The theme of the show is that it is only open to pieces that were rejected from the Fine Arts competition at the fair and you had to submit a screenshot of your rejection email with your art. The opening reception is coming up on September 9 and I will be there.

Another pretty cool thing that happened is that I completed my [Book Arts Certificate from the MN Center for Book Arts](#).

So I'm now a "certified" book artist. I've been working on this for the past almost 5 years and I have fallen in love with coptic stitch bookbinding (no surprise) and box making covered in hand embroidery or some of my Spoonflower fabrics.



classes



I've launched my first class with Skillshare
[Sewing Sweet Treats: Embroidered Ice Cream Cones](#)

If you aren't familiar, Skillshare is an online school with tons of creative classes. You get an annual membership and you can watch as many classes in as many different topics as you like. That link to the class up above gives you a 1 month free trial if you want to check it out. I've watched sewing classes, video editing, surface design. It's great!

I'm not going to stop teaching classes other places, no worries! I don't want you to have to have a membership to take a class from me, I'm just adding a new option. [I wrote a bunch more about this on my blog and why I think Skillshare is a great addition.](#)

Can you help me get my class get noticed by the Skillshare algorithm?

Part of being brand new means that the search engine hasn't really found me yet. The way that happens is by it seeing people interacting with my class: watching videos, commenting, posting, following me as a teacher. I need a little help.

So I've put together this link: <https://skl.sh/45MsP8r>

It's free access to the class for the first 6 people who click through and use it. You will have to create a free Skillshare account to use it, but you don't have to sign up for a membership or give a credit card. (And I don't get paid for minutes you watch or any other rewards/compensation.) If you have a few minutes and would like to watch some of the lessons and leave a review or a comment or anything, it would be AMAZING! And I'd love to hear your feedback. Do you like the format? The project? I'm only sharing this link with newsletter subscribers because you are the best!



I'm trying LOTS of new things these days. I also signed up for Michaels new MakerSpace which is a hub for handmade items, classes, and how-tos.

It's still in beta testing, so they are working out some quirks, but if you want a sneak peek, [I've added three fun how-to's to the site](#). How-to's are free and there are links in the instructions for materials you can get via Michaels and I get a commission on those.

on the blog



I sewed something entirely for fun and wrote a pattern review of the [Santorini Tank by Itch to Stitch](#) on my blog. Spoiler alert: I loved it so much I made two!

on the studio table



What can you do with paper, armature wire and a postcard? I don't know but it's on my studio table this month.

Materials: One of the Skillshare classes I watched was to make a [Halloween-inspired crow](#) and it used [armature wire \(an easy to shape aluminum\)](#). I've never used it before and now I am wondering where has it been all of my crafty life?!

Proofs: I just got these postcards from the printer about half an hour ago, so you'll see them in my [Etsy shop soon](#). I did a cut paper illustration of Minnesota State Symbols (flower, fish, fruit, mushroom etc).

Materials: I really like Lokta paper for covering boxes and book covers. I buy a heavier weight from the local art supply store but I [found this sold in 8.5 x 11 sheets](#) in a lighter weight and it's great! I am going to try dying some next week to use for some more paper collage.



If you make it out to the [MN Renaissance Festival](#) this year, go find the YARN booth at 715/716 and visit with my friends Doreen & Dawn. Doreen has dozens of skeins of handdyed and handspun yarn and silk/wool embroidery thread and they are doing demonstrations of weaving, spinning, and everything else they can dream up. Their booth has goldfish on the shutters and is right across from Tuey the Juggler (who does a really fun show).



[Beautiful hand embroidery by artists who use simple straight stitches to create their work.](#)

I think this is good news: [US Judge Rules AI-Generated Art Not Protected by Copyright Law](#)

I love love this [series by Mel Beach](#) of block printed and embroidered mandalas. She's been posting progress on Instagram and it's so fun to watch.

The School of Historical Dress [is offering virtual tours of their Blue Exhibition](#). Blue is the second in a series of color themed shows and this one focuses on "stories of wasteless and wasteful clothing told through blue textiles and dress in our collection." The [pictures on Instagram](#) have been very intriguing.

[This pop up book is so amazing](#). What a beautiful illustration done in a unique way.

I so want to try making [giant sized paste paper patterns like this](#). I've never seen anything like it.

The pattern for this floral knit vest isn't out yet, [but I have this post bookmarked](#) because I know I want to know about it when it comes out.

This book was recommended by a friend and although I haven't checked it out yet, it looked interesting enough to pass along. [Your Brain on Art: How the Art Transforms Us](#)

[I am loving the Incryptid Series by Seanan McGuire](#). No spoilers, but if any of you were a fan of the Miss Bianca books as kids, you **need** to read these.

A friend shared Bethanne Nemesh's newsletter with me where she did a really in-depth post about troubleshooting quilting with digitally printed fabrics and the "white flares" you see when sewing them. [She's expanded this into a 3 part YouTube series](#). Great info!

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