

## Sabrina Niebler



Sabrina Niebler, "Rooted in the Hand"; 6" x 3.5" x 2.5"; 2013; rice paper (silk screened with text and hand spun into yarn) and cotton warp, pulled warp and pieced tapestry

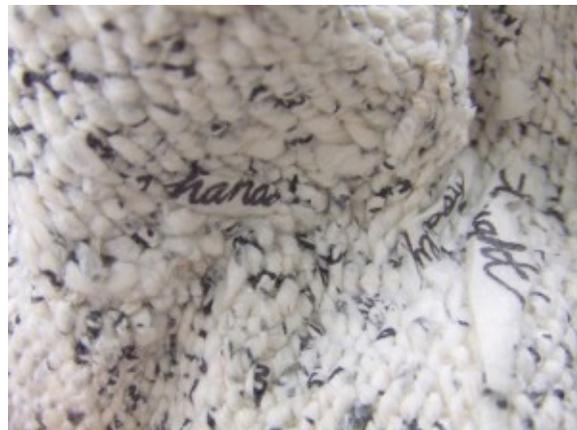
Tapestry as a medium intrigues me because of the way that the finished product is imbedded with meaning. The image or text becomes a part of the very fabric of the tapestry in a complete union of thought and physical object. This is reminiscent of the process where the long and tedious task of making tapestry is only completed through the union of body and mind. For me, making tapestry becomes a meditation.

Within my artistic practice, tapestry has been a form that meshes quite succinctly with concepts I am interested in sharing. Concepts such as oneness and the idea that

knowledge is embedded within the physical self lend themselves very well to the medium of tapestry, where, when I weave with text, the knowledge literally becomes ingrained within the fabric of the tapestry. The ultimate form and tradition of tapestry as a story telling medium add a layer to the work that I also enjoy. The weaving process is in line with how I make. Much of my work is very process based; I spend a very long time, repeating small actions to create the work. I enjoy this tedious and monotonous process as I become very intimate with every stage of the work as it becomes a physical form, where thought becomes fabric. This slowness becomes a place of meditation, almost an escape from our society of instant gratification. Tapestry is a labor of love and will only be completed in the face of determination and patience. These values and the idea of slowly working away at your vision, until one day you come out with a work of art, I think of as reflections on a life lived according to what is right and what you want, not what is easiest. There is nothing more gratifying than personal success resulting from working very hard for a very long time on a desired goal.

Though my tapestry work can be read on many levels by any kind of person, I do feel as though I became a part of a global community of weavers when I took it up. The medium itself has its own language, not just through knowing the techniques, but there is also a common understanding shared with the actual experience of weaving.

The potential for tapestry to be something quite sculptural while still existing as a flat image is quite exciting to me. Even when woven to be a flat, hanging object, it has a



Sabrina Niebler, "Rooted in the Hand" detail

thickness and tactility from layer after layer of yarn and time. It becomes an image (or form) with a strong sense of touch that begs not only to be viewed, but also felt. I am pleased when viewers touch the tapestries I have created, as I think it activates the language of tactility so innate and hugely important to any physical being. I am also interested in pushing this sculptural aspect by experimenting with making more dimensional forms that relate to the human body. I enjoy when my art has a physicality to it that becomes engaging for a viewer, as it does for me.

Quite often I consider how the head, hand and heart intersect within my work. I think about many ideas that I want to make, but I also consciously try to follow my hands and my heart in terms of what I ultimately decide to create and during the making process. Something I try to do with my own life of being is to honour all parts of the self – physical, mental and emotional – as one entity, working together, not elevating one over the other. Making work such as tapestry seems to me to be a working reflection of this intersection. My explorations in tapestry and in art have largely been an extension of my own self-discovery in this regard. I meditate on this way of being and I hope to create spaces of meditation for others' introspection as well.

I think of myself as a creator rather than trying to apply myself within the working definitions of artist or crafts person. My work is embedded with deep thought while having a very high standard of craftsmanship. What I want to do is to create for my own meditations and for others' enjoyment and thought. Whether the viewer accesses that through the concept or is seduced by the material and technique is equally valuable.



Sabrina Niebler, "Nobuko"  
15.5" x 13.5"; 2012; wool and rice paper (printed with text and hand spun into yarn), tapestry

Although I see the possibility of weaving tapestry as a career, I am at the point in my individual journey that I see it as an activity for personal satisfaction. I prefer to keep it something I do with the purpose of creating an object of thought and enjoyment rather than for monetary concerns. In this way, I hope to keep the essence of the tapestry true to my vision, not to be influenced by how salable it is.



Tapestry is a medium that I discovered, explored and have ultimately fallen in love with. The long process and time dedication needed to create tapestry is a challenge that makes the final object feel very intimate to myself and precious in my hands. This sensation and the language of tapestry is something that I wish to share with the people around me; whether through literal weaving or as moments of reflection as we all continue weaving the tapestry of our own lives.

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