

# Choosing Colors

Linda Rees, Editor

The following commentaries were initially compiled as source material for an ATA Online Focus Forum that explored how tapestry artists approach color selection. I chose nine talented tapestry artists whose work on ATA's Artist Pages or in exhibition catalogs reveals a distinctive color sense. In addition to reading the artists' commentaries, exercises, mostly using yarns, were also suggested as weekly projects for the Forum participants.

Those who participated in the forum were greatly rewarded by the variety of design approaches and all were informed by some detail or practice that had not occurred to them previously. Because the collective methods and observations seemed to stimulate new means of translating concepts into artwork, I felt the commentaries should be available for a larger audience.

Here are the questions I posed to the selected artists, Patricia Armour, Karen Benjamin, Patricia Dunn, Marcia Ellis, Anna Kocherovsky, Margo MacDonald, Lynn Mayne, Inge Nørgaard and Becky Stevens.

- At what time in the process do you start working out the specific yarns to use? What helps you determine a palette, or what kinds of tools, do you use to make the decision? paints? chalk? commercial yarn samples? magazine clippings? photographs? scanning your supply? etc.
- Do you work with bundles of colors? And if so, do you have specific formulas you have worked out about the most effective rules for this, like analogous color or some other combination?
- At what point in the process might you consider the conventional tenets of color theory?
- Do you write your thoughts down or brainstorm on paper, or is the choice a purely empirical placement of yarns together, or an intuitive process as you go.

Follow the links on our website to read the artists' commentaries:

Patricia Armour, ["Combining Yarns, Collage and Chalk"](#)

Karen Benjamin, ["Illumination"](#)

Patricia Dunn, ["Zacatecas 6. Cerro del Grillo. After the Fire."](#)

Marcia Ellis, ["On Choosing Colors"](#)

Anna Kocherovsky, ["Active Colors"](#)

Margo MacDonald, ["Limited Palette"](#)

Lynn Mayne, ["Color for Tapestry"](#)

Inge Nørgaard, ["Light and Variation"](#)

Becky Stevens, ["Value and Color Temperature"](#)