



Tapestry Topics

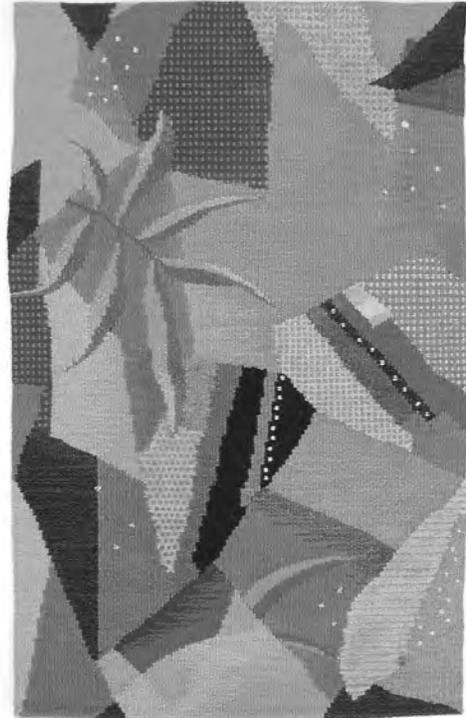
A Quarterly Review of Tapestry Art Today

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Lany Eila, "Look on the Bright Side"
28.5" x 17.75"

Letter from the Directors

We are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to visit the American Tapestry Biennial 6 at the Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Thirty-six artists have lent their pieces for this Biennial show, which includes 13 international artists. The newly minted ATB 6 catalogs will be on sale for \$18. Three cheers to Lynn Mayne and her team who managed the catalog production from start to finish.

The Small Format show, *Grand Ideas*, which American Tapestry Alliance sponsors, is at the Kendall School of Art. This year it has over 150 entries and according to Priscilla Lynch, the organizer, it is a very exciting miniature show. She has recruited the college students to design and produce the CD catalog for the show, which has given them a wonderful exposure to tapestry.

There will be new faces on the Board this year as some board terms end in July. **Becky Stevens** of Florida has graciously agreed to become the new Member Services Director. Becky has been very involved in Tapestry Weavers South. She brings a lot of experience and wisdom to the posi-

continued...

tion and will continue to keep American Tapestry Alliance moving in a positive direction. Alex will stay on the Board but is looking forward to more time to weave. Barbara Heller retires after four terms. She has contributed in so many ways over the past eight years. We will miss her astute observations and ready support. **Linda Wallace**, will represent our northern neighbour and hopes to recruit more Canadian members to ATA. Our other new board members are **Barb Richards**, of Colorado, who steps in as treasurer since Amy Kropitz has returned to the work force, and **Linda Weghorst**, of Tennessee, who will be a member at large on the Board. We welcome all of them at a time when ATA is growing in stature and can benefit from their experience and guidance.

We have decided to mount a regular series of web exhibitions. David Johnson has agreed to organise these, beginning with an invitation to Sharon Marcus to be the first curator. She has put together a small show, *Between Two Worlds*, featuring two artists, Sara Lindsay and Valerie Kirk. You can click on the American Tapestry Alliance website, <http://www.americantapestryalliance.org/Exhibitions/Exhibitions.html> to view it. If you would be interested in curating a show, please contact David aturbanwild@earthlink.net for guidance.

In March we had a very productive Board Retreat in San Francisco. Eleven attended, including most Board members and a few key volunteers. ATA is growing stronger. We met for two and a half days discussing the many facets of ATA. We want to add to our member services without losing the quality and sustainability of the organization. ATA now has over 420 members supporting our mission to promote tapestry. We are always interested in volunteers, and if you want to be involved or have computer or promotional skills, please contact Joan Griffin, our Volunteer Coordinator.

Alex Friedman and Christine Laffer

In this Issue: The Element of Chance

By Lany Eila

This special-theme edition of *Tapestry Topics* arose from curiosity about how the element of chance, serendipity or risk plays out in the creation of tapestry. By definition, tapestry weavers are people drawn to a time intensive, slow motion, meticulous, archivally complicated practice that can carry a ponderous weight of history. Yet surprises occur, despite our best plans - or perhaps because of them. This issue's wide range of contributors describe how working creatively on the edge of the unknown or unexpected has enriched their work and opened up paths they might not have otherwise considered.

About the authors

Special thanks goes to **Lany Eila** for a superb job of organizing this theme issue. She took initiative, was resourceful, and a pleasure to work with. Lany Eila began weaving in 1981, and became a tapestry weaver after seeing the World Tapestry Today exhibit (organized by the American Tapestry Alliance) at the 1988 Convergence in Chicago. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. **Janet Austin** got hooked on weaving in 1972, at the Massachusetts College of Art. Eight years of fabric weaving and an MFA in Painting morphed into Tapestry in 1983. **Elizabeth J. Buckley** is a second-generation artist and weaver of over 35 years. She teaches in a variety of settings, including her studio located in Albuquerque, NM. **Dorothy Clews** spent seven years at Warnambool TAFE learning how to weave and obey the rules of tapestry weaving. Nine years on, she has learned to throw away the rulebook and finds weaving in the margins is interesting. For almost 30 years **Mary Colton** taught weaving and wove Ikat garments and rugs. Nearing retirement, she earned the COE with astudy of tapestry techniques and now gives herself time to weave tapestries. **Joyce Hayes** is a practicing tapestry artist in Seattle Washington. She is the slide registry, library, and archive chair for ATA. **Mary Lane** is an artist and art historian living in Olympia, Washington. Her tapestries have been collected and exhibited widely and her writing has been published internationally. **Susan Martin Maffei** is an internationally known tapestry artist whose background includes art studies at the Art Students League in NYC, tapestry training at Les Gobelins in Paris and apprenticeship and studio work at the Scheuer Tapestry Studio, NYC. She has been weaving professionally since 1985,

has taught and exhibited in the US and abroad and has artwork in public and private collections. Oregonian, **Terry Olson** has been weaving tapestry for nearly 15 years, mostly on a Navajo loom. She learned to weave from Audrey Moore and now helps her teach tapestry at the Damascus Fiber Arts School. Passionately intrigued by issues of feminism, female infertility, bioethics and the concepts imbedded in rituals marking life's passages Linda Wallace creates work in traditional, image based tapestry, drawings and more ephemeral pieces exploring ideas of preciousness and control. Her work is in public and private collections in Canada, the United States, United Kingdom and Australia.

Next Issue: Deadline JULY 15

The next deadline should be July 1st, but, because we would like to cover tapestry related events and exhibits from Convergence, we will set the deadline for the 15th. I invite all members who make it to Grand Rapids to consider writing about your observations. We can pool the commentary as we did for the Denver conference. Besides Convergence material, we would be interested in reviews of other shows or special events, happening in other places as well.

The fall issue, with a deadline of **October 1st**, will feature articles about "Joins and Other Transitions". If you have information to share or would like to read about a particular artist's method, let us know and perhaps we can get them to discuss it.

Risk and the Creative Process

By Mary Lane

Creativity is not only one of the most sought after human attributes, it is also one of the most elusive. Personal accounts of creative moments often focus on a sudden insight, an "Ah, Ha!" experience. Researchers, however, describe the creative process as a series of steps, of which the aforementioned "Eureka" is but one. A common model involves the following stages: First Insight, Saturation, Incubation, Illumination and Verification (Edwards 4). How these stages manifest themselves can be highly variable and is one reason the creative process is considered so mysterious. For many artists it involves a certain amount of risk, such as the risk of exploring

the unknown in order to discover new directions. In this article I will draw on the experiences of two artists, Linda Wallace and Sharon Marcus, to illustrate the variability and complexity of the creative process and the role of risk within that process.

An artist's First Insight involves the discovery of questions, or challenges, that become the focus for the work. Albert Einstein said, "The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of ... experiential skill. To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old questions from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advances...(Einstein)"

Although risk taking may be present in any stage of the creative process, First Insight often involves the most personal risk because it requires letting go of what is comfortable and known in order to discover new paths. This process is often highly intuitive and has no guaranteed outcome. How do artists stimulate this First Insight? For Sharon Marcus, interrogative writing serves as a fruitful



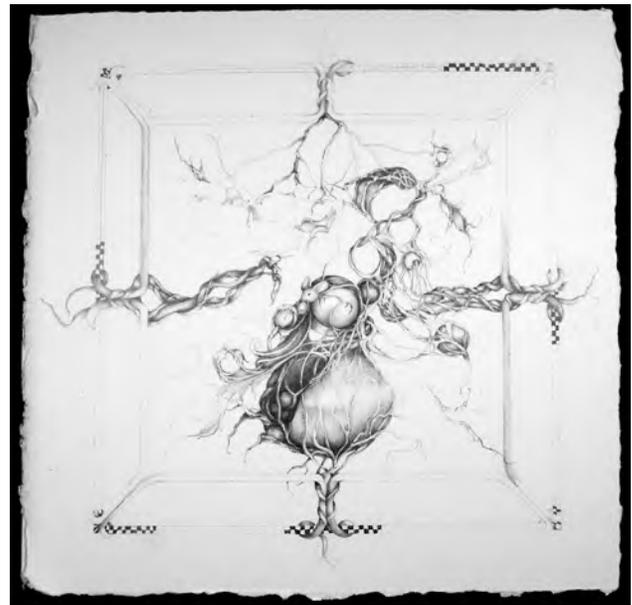
Linda Wallace, "For the Tears of Queen Anne,"
46" x 33", 1996

method for generating new ideas. Through written reflections on completed work and ideas that the work has generated, she discovers new lines of investigation. As written language, these new ideas exist as abstractions, concepts that have not yet found physical form. Probing the universe of the unfamiliar is, for Marcus, essential to her growth as an artist. "I really try to follow my instincts about what 'feels' right (Marcus)." Projects that do not pose new challenges do not retain her interest. During this early phase Marcus may explore the ideas through computer imagery or through experiments on the loom.

For Linda Wallace, finding new directions involves both observation and daydreaming. By exposing herself to stimuli such as books, magazines or experiences in nature, and by keeping an open mind, ideas rise to consciousness. Wallace speaks of this part of the creative process as a "disengagement of my linear mind. Space is a good word for the drifting phenomenon, thoughts floating, touching down, finding connections both profound and banal. No design pressure. No judgment (Wallace)."

Although Wallace does not characterize herself as a risk taker, she does acknowledge the importance of open-ended exploration. "If you knew where the road was leading, why go down it? It's the mystery of what might be around the next bend - in art and in life - that ... draws me in (Wallace)."

The second stage of the creative process is called Saturation. It involves researching the area of interest that was discovered during First Insight. Sharon Marcus' work often involves research. In the multi media series "Notes From Lake Mungo," Marcus brought to visual form her experiences at a remote site in Australia. Her first visit to the area preceded any research about its history or geography. Her objective was to engage directly with the site, allowing it to guide her thoughts and artistic interventions. Later she read about the early history of Australia, imagining how that history might have affected the residents of the now deserted Lake Mungo. The series of artworks that arose from Marcus' experience at Lake Mungo reflect the intersection of physical site and history. In Site she incorporated materials that were, or would have been present, at Lake Mungo and employed weaving and finishing techniques that evoked the landscape. (See *Tapestry Topics*, Winter, 2004)



Linda Wallace, "Homage to Aubrey" 10" x 10" drawing

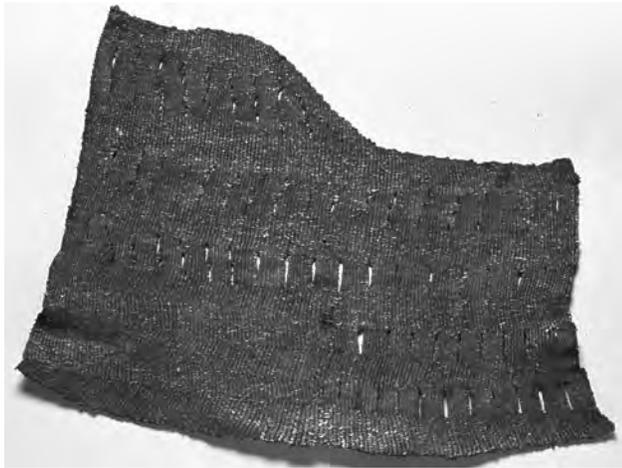
For Wallace, careful thought and thorough research are critical to her process. Part of Wallace's research involves determining how to represent complex social issues in visual form. Preliminary drawings explore the ways in which images might symbolize the issue. She also addresses other questions at this point, such as, "What medium? What imagery? What size? More importantly, what do I want to say and who is my audience (Wallace)?" The understanding gained from research creates depth and complexity in her artistic projects.

Wallace's series on infertility started with an interest in women in European history who were unable to produce an heir. "For the Tears of Queen Anne" relates the story of the English queen, who, pregnant 18 times, gave birth to only five living children. None of the boys survived to inherit the throne. This series developed into an exploration of bioethical issues. "Conundrum" and "One" reflect Wallace's research into women's responses to current fertility technologies. (See *Tapestry Topics*, Summer, 2004)

The third stage of the creative process is referred to as Incubation. This might involve stepping away from the problem, or talking and corresponding with others. However, she rarely discusses actual pieces. For those decisions she trusts that the time and effort put into her work will lead to a solution.

Drawing is also important at this stage. Drawings such as the sketch for "Homage to Aubrey" render in visual form the initial question and subsequent research. Many of Wallace's drawings do not become tapestries. They are simply another way of contemplating the question.

For Marcus the Incubation stage often involves self-reflection, scrutinizing her process in order to



Sharon Marcus, "Façade," 23" x 15"
2003 wool, linen, wire, pigment

resolve doubts. Marcus' propensity for writing manifests itself in this stage as she records her thoughts about her work, keeping a record that will become a valuable reference.

The fourth stage, Illumination, or the "Eureka!" phase, is defined as the discovery of a solution, or an approach, to the question. This might involve a realization of what methods could be used to represent the issue in the artwork. In some cases the illumination reveals a truth. In other cases one realizes that the question is more important than the answer, or that the question is unanswerable, or the answer ambiguous. Although some of Wallace's images have come to her quickly, others are worked and reworked over a longer period of time that involves additional research and rumination. For her, the process of searching for truth is more important than finding a final solution. Her goal is to illuminate the complexity of the issues and to stimulate the viewer to engage with the questions.

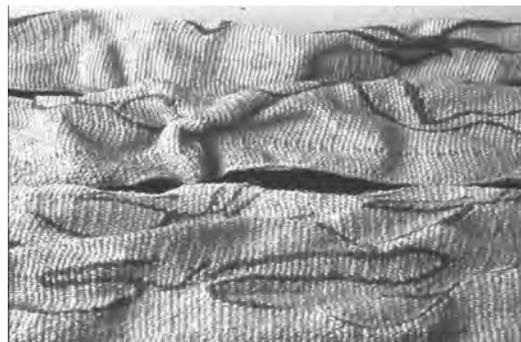
In speaking of this complexity, Linda Wallace says, "No matter what stage my work has reached, I'm always operating at all the levels."

For Marcus, characterizing this stage as a flash of insight does not acknowledge the work that takes place during the Saturation and Incubation stages. She prefers to contextualize these insights within the framework of the reading, writing and thinking that occurs throughout her creative process. Marcus considers most of her work to be the quest for a truth that underlies a particular line of investigation. This truth encompasses a multidimensional set of qualities, which may themselves involve ambiguity or multiplicity in meaning.

In the theoretical model of the creative process the last stage is referred to as Verification, the testing of the solution that arose in the Illumination phase. For an artist, this usually involves making an art object. For most artists the actual making of an object also involves a degree of risk because working with specific materials and techniques is malleable and open to experimentation. For tapestry weavers, taking risks in the making can be especially difficult because the process itself is so laborious.

Wallace weaves her tapestries from fairly complete drawings. For her, more risk occurs during the conceptualization and drawing stages than at the loom. Her drawings, however, are black and white. She chooses colors during the weaving, a method which entails a certain amount of risk. The first color choice is critical, as it governs many of the decisions that follow. Wallace selects colors for their symbolic significance, their relationship to the image, and their relationships to each other.

Sharon Marcus characterizes her most recent series, "Personal Knowledge," which includes the tapestry "Facade," as "absolutely the most risky studio undertaking in my work so far (Marcus)." The post weaving washing, pounding and burnishing of the fabric surface add further aesthetic and conceptual complexity to the work. This technical



Sharon Marcus, "Site," detail, 16" x 32" x 1"
1998 wedge weave, tapestry

continued...

experimentation has, in turn, stimulated new questions and directions.

For Linda Wallace evaluating the success of her work involves determining whether it embodies the concepts and issues about which she has been thinking. She considers the project from multiple perspectives and usually finds that this stage leads to new opportunities to trust her instincts and open herself to the creative process.

Marcus' evaluation of her work, like the rest of her creative process, is purposeful. Her goal is to stay "truthful to my instincts (Marcus)." If a piece feels wrong, she has no qualms about abandoning it. Her goal is to create meaning in her work through the interaction of content and process.

One must be careful to avoid dogmatic thinking when describing creativity as a process of steps. As the two artists quoted in this article demonstrate, the creative process is highly variable and individual. However, it is not necessarily mystical or controlled by chance. The techniques that Marcus and Wallace employ as stimuli in formulating new directions are examples of how artists encourage original thinking and the development of new paths in their work. The investigation during the research and contemplation phases adds richness and the final verification stage allows for self-assessment. The creative process involves both the less predictable elements of exploration and insight, and the more analytical elements of research and evaluation. It is an interchange between serendipity and intention, a balance between imagination and analysis. Work that springs from an open-minded curiosity and, through the artist's intellectual, emotional and technical investigation, unveils surprising associations, and reveals a creative mind at work.

Edwards, Betty. *Drawing on the Artist Within*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986.

Einstein, Albert and Leopold Infeld. *The Evolution of Physics: From Early Concepts to Relativity and Quanta*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966.

Higby, Wayne. "Expectation: Art, Materials and the Photograph." *Haystack Monograph Craft in the 90s: A Return to Materials*. Deer Isle, Maine: Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, 1991.

Marcus, Sharon. Personal Interview. March 2, 2006.

Wallace, Linda. Personal Interview. March 2, 2006.

Light from Darkness

By Mary Rawcliffe Colton

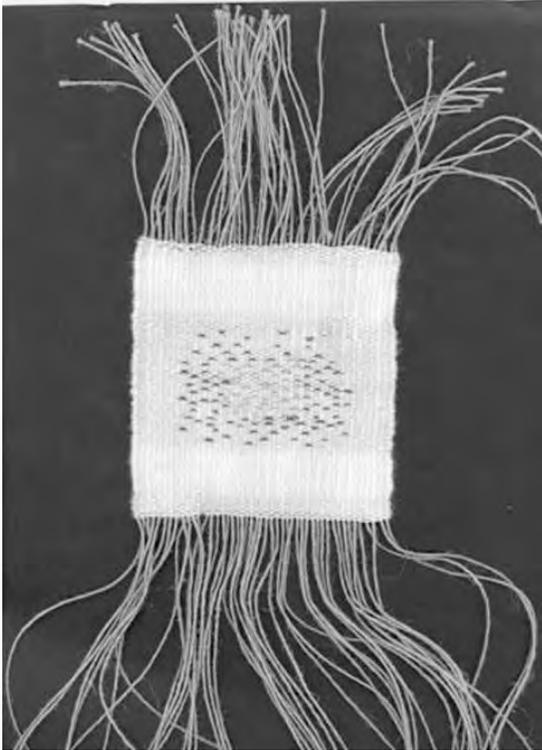
When I wove *Ikat* fabrics, serendipity was a key part of my approach; I would dye warps in a succession of colors, letting the colors overlap, and enjoying any unexpected results. Tapestry has been an entirely different matter, calling for careful planning to avoid problems that might cost hours — or weeks, of lost time.

However, having reached an age when one goal is the annual reduction in my total stash of yarns, I began cleaning out those odd colors, leftover single balls, and strangely textured skeins. Rather than giving them away, I decided to dye all of them black, just to see what would happen. Knowing that a portion of the fiber's ability to absorb dye had already been used up by the original colors, I used a medium, rather than strong, shade of black dye.

Dried in the shade, the over-dyed skeins all looked a rich black. But when I tumbled them onto a sunny patch of carpet, I saw hints of red, blue, green and gold glowing from many of them. That was the inspiration for designing what resulted in a "light from the darkness" series of tapestries, each woven with the multiple blacks used as an almost-hidden design feature. The images are in bright silks against the various dark yarns. My favorite, "Lamplight: Mosque" will hang in ATB6.

Doors, Pathways, Journeys, Seeds

By Dorothy Clews and Linda Wallace



Linda Wallace, Number one of six small tapestries 3" x 4" woven on linen warp. The weft consisted of bands of white wool (fine, bleached merino and coarser, natural Harrisville). In the centre of each panel, small seeds (darker wool and gold linen) were woven.. There are fewer seeds in each successive tapestry. Other than the diminishing number of seed images, the panels were all similar in appearance, technique and fibre content.



Linda Wallace, "Detail of 1st Tapestry After Mounting" showing the distressed background

The Internet opened a door between Dorothy Clews, living in a small town in the Australian outback, and Linda Wallace, living in a rural area of Vancouver Island, on the West coast of Canada. They talk almost daily, sometimes serious discussions of concepts or technique, sometimes sharing gossipy news about their lives, families and surrounding environment. Ideas bounce back and forth, "what if", "we could", "I wonder". This magical conduit has allowed them to talk, dream, explore and create in ways they might never have found on their own.

Organizing the postcard project, "FindingHome," became the starting point of their current collaborative exploration. Linda found her first woven postcard to be embarrassingly awful, so wove a replacement, - and mailed it to Dorothy via her postcard partner with instructions to discard the first one as soon as the replacement arrived. And so it began.

What is the appropriate disposal method for a rejected tapestry? Linda thought it should be thrown away. A dedicated gardener, Dorothy felt composting it would be more fitting. Then, curiosity took hold. What would happen to the weaving? How long would it take to disappear? Naturally, they needed to examine the differences between the rich, loamy soil of the Vancouver Island rainforest and the salty, sandy earth of the Queensland interior.... Dorothy sent a small rejected tapestry of hers to be buried in Linda's backyard. And doors opened.

The idea of intentionally decomposing work, letting go of the preciousness of the object, and their fascination with the entire process, drew them in and kept them wondering. Each wove more tapestries to bury and began a separate series of explorations. The goal was of playful exploration rather than serious art; they never thought that the samples would be made available in the public arena, exhibited or even discussed. They were not even sure if they would end up with anything to show for their efforts. If the timing for digging up the tapestries was misjudged, they might find only a few unravelled threads and some organic material for the garden. While still talking, sharing ideas, data, and scanned images, their concepts developed along quite different lines.

Linda Wallace: "Im/Plantation Tapestries: Diminishment of Hope"

I decided my series would continue the conceptual thread of female infertility that I have been investigating for several

years. No matter the care and attention paid to the garden, no plant will grow if a seed is infertile. The journey for my work, titled "Im/Plantation Tapestries: Diminishment of Hope" began on December 21, 2004. The six small tapestries, woven with wool weft on linen warp, were im/planted in a wild area of ferns and salal and the burial sites marked. The tapestries were left undisturbed for three months (a trimester), during which time I recorded soil and meteorological data. Then, each month I dug up one tapestry from its earthy womb/tomb. At the end of nine months, all had been disinterred. No fertility, no germination, no birth — just progressively deteriorating, fragmented tapestries transformed by the earth. Fragile.

During this period, my father died and new conceptual layers began to evolve and integrate with the work. I have been intrigued by the ideas of the World Transhumanist movement, by the work Aubrey de Grey has been doing on extended longevity - perhaps immortality, the increasingly blended human/machine possibilities, external gestation of embryos, termination of gender. Add to those: my interest in women's traditional role as healer and as the person who assisted others at the passages in our life cycle; the role cloth has in rituals connected to those passages. A conscious awareness of the interwoven balance between control and freedom and between serious conceptual rigours and gleeful play became a powerful factor in motivating creative decisions.

New plans developed for the tapestry fragments. Originally I thought the project would end with the disinterment and documentation of decay, but not anymore. Life is too precious!

Every time the object started to exert pressure to be preserved, I subverted it; then allowed it to rebuild. Five of the six tapestries have been washed and are in the process of being obsessively stitched onto linen backing fabrics. They are made from strips of inherited, worn, domestic textiles simulating strips of old, hoarded cloth: bandages for the wounded/winding cloth for the dead/swaddling cloth for the newborn. The stitching flattened the freely twisting threads and the preserved fragments took on the feel of pinned butterfly specimens. Lines, created by couched linen yarn, overlay the stitched fragments, intersecting the horizontal seams of the backing strips to reintroduce the original grid structure, distorted and decayed by the earth.

The work on this series is still in progress. The next stage is to counteract the preciousness of the carefully preserved fragment stitched to antique linen by abrading away large portions of the backing. The abrasion process is being done over the entire backing surface with stones and sandpaper until the edges disintegrate. The final presentation is not firm yet, but I plan to stitch each frayed, abraded cloth to a further backing, probably stretched linen of the kind used as a painter's ground. A final reclamation of value for these fragments is to be hung as stretched linen panels on the walls of a gallery.

The exploration will continue and I can see two definite but related themes: the fertility/infertility, birth/death, passages and rituals issue, and the preciousness and control elements. There will be more tapestries for burial, more pathways to explore. I have become fascinated with the decayed fragments of ancient textiles and the disintegrating structure of the grid. I feel that expanding the possibilities of the medium has liberated my creativity. I envision creating work to purposely destroy it, manipulating the woven structure, perhaps replicating fragments by casting them in bronze, integrating the woven object with other media. I have been investigating the idea of video and sound to incorporate the body of work into a form of installation. I see no limits, only ever expanding possibilities and challenges.

It is still tapestry. The weft faced weave structure, created with discontinuous weft, is the base on which all further investigation is built. The history of cloth, of tapestry, of valued objects and rituals along with the role of the weaver, of the woman within and outside her society reveal so many conceptual layers to understand and integrate. I am serious about what I am doing — and, it is still tapestry.

This project is in its third year and has become a pivotal force in my life. I will not abandon image-based work but — well, I don't know where the path is leading me. I know I have to keep pushing, exploring, questioning, and playing. Sometimes my most profound creative leaps come from play. This body of work is obviously not commercial. Those of you whose work is created with the intention of forming an object of beauty to be treasured by its owners may think I am a bit mad, but it is a path I need to follow. It is something I need to do. Expression of creative thought is the reason I make art. The journey is the reason I travel.

Dorothy Clews: "Seeds of Change"

The tapestries I have woven in the last year have been a meditation on textiles, gardening, agriculture, water, salt, sand, clay, heat, time, growth, decay, conservation, rehabilitation, repair and the making of a different environment. Since 2003, I have also been exploring the third dimension and considering shadow and light in tapestry through the use of supplementary warps and slits woven in a variety of fibers. The compost tapestries form part of this ongoing body of work.

As the idea gained in substance, I realised that we had created the opportunity to look at tapestry in a new way, a chance to find new meaning in our work. I found that my vocabulary changed when referring to the composted tapestries. They were "planted" not buried. The tapestries became seeds of knowledge with the potential for growth and metamorphosis, for decay and perhaps eventual disappearance.

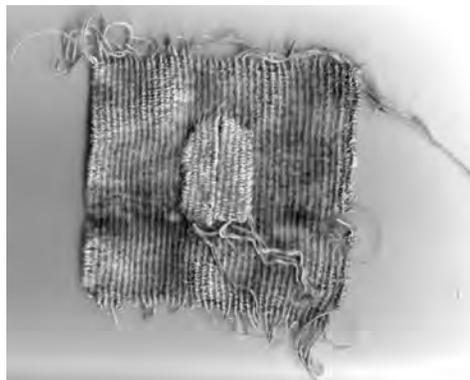
When seeds flower they become self-replicating devices. Seeds in the desert are the initiators of new life after the floods and rains that only occur rarely in such an arid environment. Desert plants flower, seed, die and decay in a few short weeks. But the remains provide the opportunity for the next cycle of growth. Take these precious remains away and a regime of sterility and death follows, changing the landscape forever.

The tapestries make reference to both landscape and textile. My three small, rather tatty, bits of fabric were reminiscent of ancient textiles that have been found in bogs, rather than the exquisite fragments found in the arid areas of Peru.

Change became of major importance to this project, not just the physical change in the tapestries, but also the gradual evolution of the concepts. Lack of control and the abandonment of preconceived



Dorothy Clews, "Seed 1,"
before planting,
6cm x 9cm.
Warp: seine twine, weft:
cotton, linen, viscose, silk.



Dorothy Clews, "Seed 1" after planting.

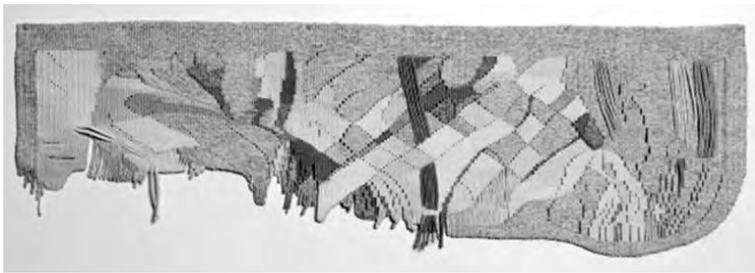
ideas were critical factors. Soon after the tapestries were planted, the earth went under six inches of water for several weeks, with the real potential for a flood to pass through the area. Rocks were put on the site to reinforce the stick markers, and to stop the water from washing the soil and the tapestries away.

The process became a journey of treading a fine line between the order of the textile grid structures and the uncontrollable chaos of nature; between the imposed structure of the garden and the chaotic natural woodland; and between agriculture, grazing and the wildness of the desert areas. Edges are rich areas. Where is the line between natural and man-made, or even between tapestry and not tapestry? Is there something else between these states?

Initially the idea of mark making interested me, but once the tapestries were dug up I came to realise that the destruction process was more interesting; the deconstruction of the cloth, the new structures that evolved, and relationships between the fragments. At one stage I thought that repair of the tapestries would be important after they were finally dug up and transplanted to the studio, echoing the 'conservation' ethos of the natural environment. Should we conserve tapestries? Why? How? What should be permitted to disappear? These are some of the questions I have asked myself.

We both had plenty of thinking space in which to develop the concepts behind the tapestries. While I waited for rain to 'plant' my tapestries, Linda's pieces were slowly decomposing in the cooler damp climate. Linda wrote to me "I think we've hit on the essence of an on-going art practise. Lots of thoughts and ideas swirling around — sometimes one comes to the surface, joins with what's next to it and submerges again. Some never become anything other than interesting, mental path-

continued...



Dorothy Clews, "Stitch," 120 cm. x 35 - 45cm.

ways but some, eventually, come out as art. When they do, all that thinking and mulling over makes the work better and more complex than it would have been if it had been created immediately". During this time, I researched mudcloth, compost dyeing, and natural dyeing. I wondered if the artifacts such as old horse bits I had dug up in the garden could be used in some way for rust dyeing? Could future tapestries be based on small sections of magnified decayed tapestry or could new structures or preservation techniques be discovered from the remains?

Discussion on the mounting of the tapestries, between the two of us and on the tapestry list, lead again to contemplating the idea of conservation, both of tapestries and of the natural landscape. I decided that what most appealed to me was their fragmentary nature, and that the tapestries would go back into the ground to continue the disintegration process, with me digging them up and photographing them, according to the weather that we experience over the next few months. If it is very dry there will be little change. A flood would lead to faster destruction. I plan to print the enlarged gradually disintegrating tapestry images onto sheer fabric, which will be hung so that they catch every movement of air — the images appearing and disappearing with each movement.

The process continues to inspire explorations into the structure of tapestry and the elements of landscape. The tapestry "Stitch" was started just before the compost tapestries were buried. It was originally a rectangular panel, but midway, after I dug the compost tapestries up, it changed dramatically into a shaped, lacelike, fragmented landscape. The structure of the tapestry 'disintegrates' through the techniques of wrapping single warps and using slits and shaping. "Stitch" is also a record of the desert edge: the salt pans, dunes and grasses that

make up a complex relationship of patterns and systems disrupted by a grazing industry that fragmented the complexity of the desert systems, then withdrew the order of agriculture, leaving a no man's land left to its own devices without resources for renewal.

When we impose our will on something we hope we know what we are doing. When we lose control we create something else. I like the idea of the natural environment not only being the subject of the tapestry, but also influencing the form that the tapestry will take through colours, marks and structure. I want to make new work using these techniques to create new forms, making the tapestry a landscape/textile object. I am happy to answer questions at the ATA website forum <artistic issues>

The Cycle

By Lany Eila

Some chance occurrences are gifts of the creative process, and then there are the chances one is compelled to take to get out of a creative impasse. My work "The Cycle" is a case of the latter. It evolved from a strong need to respond to the tsunami, war, my own aging, a friend's death, cancer in friends and family, and other catastrophes (which now include hurricanes).

In developing this work, I wanted to contemplate both the fact of impermanence as well as the survivors' reactions to it. Yet, no image felt strong enough. Suddenly I realized that perhaps the medium of tapestry itself is an apt metaphor for our perilous lives. We spend extravagant quantities of time and energy carefully planning and weaving our lives and work, tucking in the stray threads, guarding against possible dangers, making it all to last - archival. And yet we are constructing these lives and tapestries from inherently fragile materials; in the former, with bodies and relationships, in the latter, with hair, plant fiber, and color.

To move forward, I first had to face impermanence in my own tapestries. I un-hemmed a number of small tapestries I had woven over the course of

many years, ironed fusing material onto their backs and cut them up. While I expected to feel grief from their destruction, it actually felt cathartic to let go of these works as they were. I liked several of the fragments more than I had liked the original tapestries.

The colors and designs of those tapestries were not what I use now. Rather, they were the works I happened to have on hand. Many seemed a bit too cheerful, some too dark. I pondered what colors and designs would better carry the concept, but eventually realized that the point was that they were the chance artifacts of a life. Many years ago, a friend drove a relief truck in Mexico City after the large earthquake. She told me of driving past rubble and seeing someone's lost shoe on the street. It was just a shoe, but to her the scope of the tragedy became real through the mundane, intimate fact of that lost



Lany Eila, "The Cycle: Best Laid Plans Unravel, Memory Reweaves, the Moths Arrive, and the Cycle Continues," installed diptych - 59" x 60" x 8.5"; "Fragments" - 59" x 37" x 8.5"; "Memory," 25" x 19.5". 2006

shoe. What these tapestries looked like became less important to me than their history; they express where I was at that time, and I did not weave them to be cut up.

I spread the fragments out on the black cotton cloth that would serve as backing. My goal was to arrange them in a way that was artful while appear-

ing random, then fuse them to the backing, cut away all of the visible backing material, and hang the assemblage to give an effect of everything coming apart. As I worked with the fragments, it became immediately clear how hard it is to appear both artful and random. Would the fragments be exploding or falling down? After many false starts and re-workings, I took a chance and pulled out the iron again.

A thick wire is sewed along the back near the top edge of the fragments piece, which I bent to enhance the look of falling. The work extends about 8" from the wall. I would have liked the tapestry fragments to fray more at the edges, but the fusing material has prevented this.

What happens after things fall apart? We rebuild again, using the same fragile materials, with the same hope that this time it will last. I created a cartoon for a new tapestry from a photo of the fragments piece, modifying it to simplify the elements and create more cohesion than had existed. However, the new tapestry seemed more of a memorial to the fragments than a rebuilding. It was also far too cheery, reaching too hard for that silver lining. After having the whole work critiqued on an ATA on-line critique group, I began again. The first attempt is now a separate tapestry called "Look on the Bright Side" (see photo page 1). For the second tapestry, I chose design elements and colors from the fragments, then worked them over and over again in Photoshop to more closely examine memory, reconstruction, what is lost, what is retained, and the ghosts that remain.

The second tapestry is hung to the right of the fragmentary piece, to indicate a sequence of time. I also considered hanging the tapestry on the wall behind the assemblage, or, at the suggestion of members of the critique group, placing the second tapestry beneath the fragments, as if to catch the fragments.

As a final step, several moths are embroidered into the new tapestry, indicating a continuation of the cycle. I do not know how well the work actually expresses the concept, but the making of it has offered some peace. While the topic is heavy, I actually experience this work as optimistic; we are such a heartbreakingly hopeful, albeit doomed, species.

Dominoes and Risk

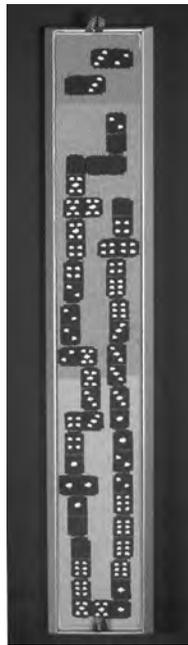
By Susan Martin Maffei

Traditional methods of developing and preparing an image to be woven in tapestry have persisted for hundreds of years or more. The use of a cartoon whether by paint or ink can be traced back with certainty at least to the 14th or 15th century in Europe. The idea that an existing image from another media is translated into tapestry was common and is perhaps part of the stigma that still identifies the medium as reproductive and minor in many circles.

Over the past 12 years or more I have been experimenting with the process of building tapestries without any pre-existing drawings or images. Influenced by the wonders of pre-Columbian tapestries, these experiments started out to explore the mark making particular to the process of the interlacing of warp and weft. The goal was to make a marriage of my interest in the narrative of memory with the intrinsic mark making and weaving characteristics of the medium.

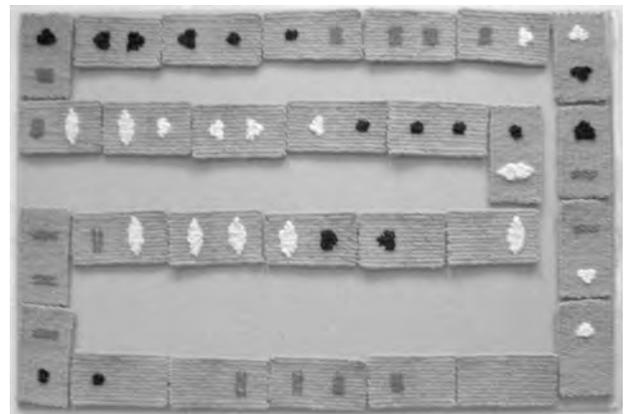
Initially the weavings were quite small and used simple images that had been formally observed, then captured and conceptualized in the visuals of the mind, before being woven. They slowly became larger and larger, more complicated, and more and more a narrative journey conceived and developed directly on the loom. The building of the images on these tapestries related more and more to the marks and the patterns formed within the process. The lessons were invaluable. The risks resulted in an engaged freedom and the development of a personal language that allowed a more direct connection of mind to hand, image to mark. The repetition of the interlacing is directly connected to the pattern of the mark making. The flow of the narrative is related directly to the inherent characteristic of the building of the work from one side to the other. It was an effort to come to a language that defined and identified tapestry as weaving and not simply as a reproduction of other media and a return to that old question so often batted around of “why weave it?”

I often start lectures with a small 24” x 3.5” tapestry of a domino game. It encompasses most of the things that attract me to the medium of tapestry and perhaps, most simply, illustrates what I am try-



Left:
Susan Martin Maffei,
The dominoes box is 25" l.
x 4.5"w. x 2.5"d. The tap-
estry on the lid is 24" x
3.5" and the dominoes
inside are 3" x 1.5" each.

Below:
Susan Martin Maffei,
"Dominoes,"
3" x 1.5" each.



ing to achieve in my experiments and how I approach a piece. The building of the work begins at the bottom with the first shape to support the first domino (color and yarn decisions, number of dots on the first domino decision, and negative shape for placement decision). The subsequent decisions that follow relate to the choice of that first domino and its placement and then the decision of the next domino placed against the previous one and then another and another. So it proceeds on, perhaps more related to the building of a stone wall and its decision process than with other media. The shape of the dominoes relate to the picks of the weave and the repetitive nature of the shapes and dots to the repetitive nature of the crossing of warp and weft.

The textural differences of thick cotton dominoes with a fine silk for the dots, result in an effect that appears embossed. This is played against the contrasting spins and thickness of the 3 various background colors and yarns. Sense of touch is disseminated by the sensuality perceived by the eye. The rectangular format reinforces the hanging quality of the textile. The repeating pattern of the dominoes become animated by their varying positions as well as by the varying number of dots. The background space is divided with larger weights on the bottom and the image hangs from the small orange background on the top. In working this way the combinations of color, texture, marks, memory and image teeter on the verge with each decision on the journey and with each there is an agony that engages and persists until the work is complete. Risk? Chance? Luck? Like the game of dominos itself - a game of decision making within each step. Win or lose. No going back. A game of visual play. Luck and chance and risks!

Just recently I have experimented by returning to use a full size collage as a cartoon, which I had used as a preparation process in my earlier work. Even though I could use the information I gleaned from working so freely in the last years and I can see a jump forward, I still found that the result and experience was rather dead by comparison. I return to working within the constant problem solving and development of a narrative directly on the loom, and so confirm I am on the right track as I continue to search for a language particular to tapestry.

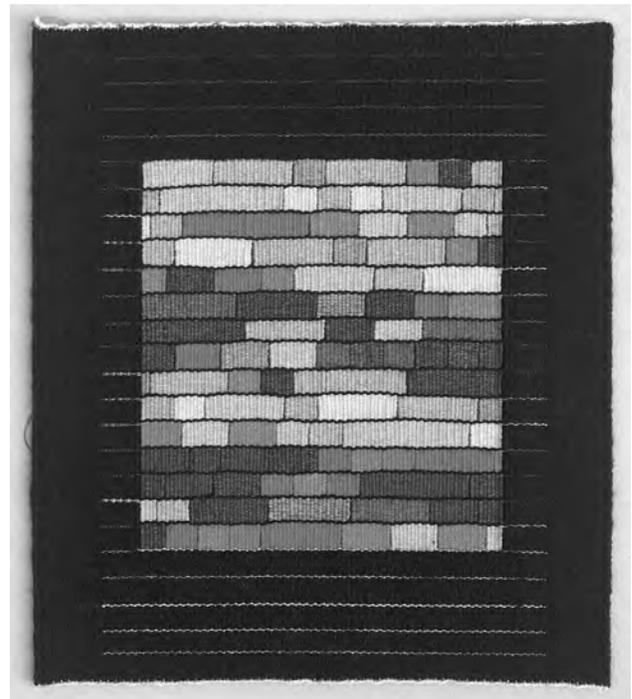
Landscapes to Chance

By Joyce Hayes

My first tapestries were geometric abstract landscapes; in fact I had always considered myself a landscape artist. There is nothing wrong with the landscapes except I was getting bored and did not see much future in them. I enjoyed making the watercolors and drawings but after a time the thrill of weaving the paintings lost its edge. So I began experimenting with ikat dyed cotton thread left over from an ill-fated forage into yardage. Still weaving the abstracted landscapes, the ikat threads led to a series of geometric, patterned ikat tapestries. During this process I was becoming more and more enamored with chance; whatever happened stayed. The unknown became a lure.

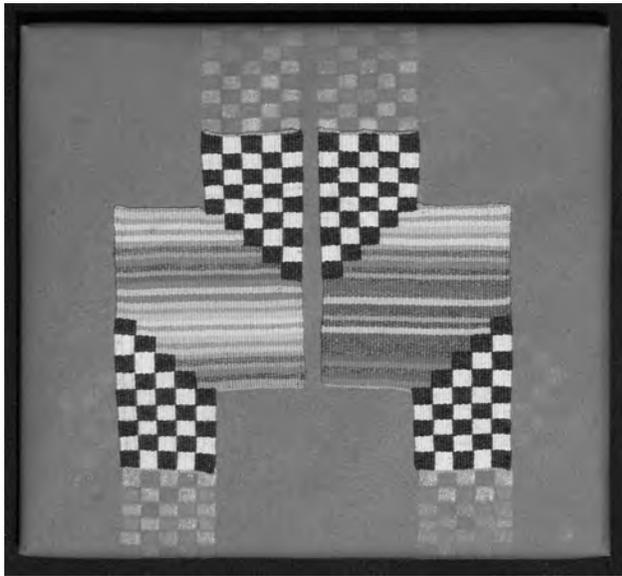
By this time my hands started to go numb and I could not weave. Fortunately surgery was an option. It was reasonably successful but I could no longer weave shapes and had to switch over to weaving straight across and using a beater. This was an important change in direction. I weave small but I am not a fussy weaver, straight forward is always best for me. It was time to reevaluate what I was doing and where I wanted to go.

Being pragmatic I began to list what I liked about tapestry, what interested me artistically, what visually excited me, and finally how all of this fit my internal clock and rhythms. My interest in music, color, and stripes



Joyce Hayes, "Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets I"

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Joyce Hayes, "Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets II"

became a starting point. So, what does this have to do with chance. My daughter was writing her PhD dissertation on Sarah Vaughn and every day I would hear "Whatever Lola Wants Lola Gets." After assigning a color to each of the twelve tones of the western classical scale, I transposed this song into color notations and wove it, making no changes or concessions. This piece was the first in an ongoing series inspired by music I enjoyed playing as a teenager.

I like the surprise of not knowing what is going to happen – what colors will fall next to each other. I like setting up systems and designs. Once all of the design work has been completed in black and white I go through the cartoon and initial in the transcribed score's color for each shape/stripe. This final insertion of chance allows me to step aside and let the rest just happen. Control and perfection were large issues that I had been confronting daily in my work so by intentionally eliminating these the creative flow is more constant. Every day is different because I don't know which color will come up next and I get to enjoy each color interaction as I weave. Sometimes I cringe and other times the colors bounce all over the place. Besides musical scores, I have used prime numbers, and other numerical systems. Recently I purchased an assortment of dice to extend these ideas of chance. Instead of dead ends I now have years of ideas.

Improvisation in Tapestry

By Elizabeth J. Buckley

When I contemplate how the element of chance or serendipity enters my work, I first think back about twenty years ago to my early tapestries, when I wove directly from the gut, without cartoon, or preplanned design. I made it a daily practice to sit at the loom first thing in the morning,

With the arrival of the dawn, my mind would be fresh and receptive. Still dressed in sweats and heavy socks, I would sit quietly at the loom, surveying what I already had woven, and envisioning what needed to come next. When I could picture this in my mind's eye, I would pick up the different strands of colors and begin weaving, row-by-row in Mexican and Rio Grande techniques. Each day at the loom, I would enter a space in time of deep listening and focused attention. The emerging tapestry and I engaged in this dialog of shapes appearing one edge leading to another, one line suggesting a second one or the beginning of another form. As my designs grew more complex, I found I could not keep all the details in my head. I realized I needed a way of making a road map on paper to track the overall idea, yet with lots of room for interpretation and suggestions from the growing tapestry. I began by charting what I had woven, so that when the tapestry was rolled around the front beam, I would know what had come before. Then, I tried putting thoughts and images on paper as I began contemplating the next tapestry. My art school training had certainly not prepared me for this! I struggled because my drawings and watercolors on paper could not reflect what I ultimately wanted to end up with in tapestry.

Thus, I began my quest. How can I make media on paper help flush out the idea in my mind's eye so that I would be ready to weave with some sense of where I was going? How can I create a cartoon that would not be a dictator, but a guide to help me?

I began studying French tapestry, and to my surprise, found myself easily shifting from weaving row-by-row to building up shapes and working with positive and negative space. I resonated with this approach, because it allowed me to focus on

specific areas as I wove. Even working from the back somehow felt better to my brain.

Next, came going to Aubusson to immerse myself in the milieu of this centuries-old tradition, to weave in an atelier, to learn by going through the process of cartoon development, and to discover how techniques synchronize with the design. I replicated a small section of an historical tapestry, from drawing the cartoon to matching the color palette and woven techniques. I spent hours studying tapestries hanging in museums and galleries, gazing upon and listening to what each had to tell me. As a result I could adapt the graphic design and



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Portal," 48" x 28", 2005
This tapestry was in the New Mexico Committee
for the National Museum of Women in the Arts
juried show "Originals 2005"

color theory principles from my previous art training to help me think in the language of tapestry. I returned to the States, with a sense of the wind blowing through my previous frustrations. It felt like an opening to limitless possibilities. I began to sense how to find my own way of working, which still would incorporate the element of spontaneity and simultaneously provide me with a road map.

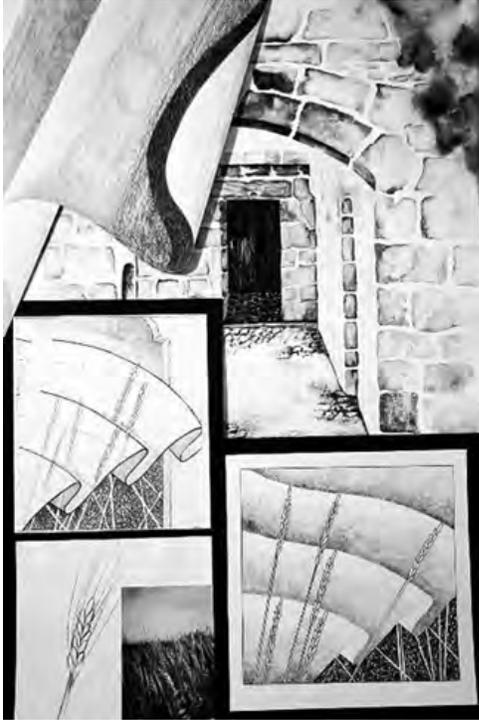
Now, I actively invite the element of chance and serendipity into the initial design phase. Often, the general feel of an idea brews in my mind for weeks or even months, while I am finishing the current work on the loom. When I am preparing for the tapestry yet to come, I often enter into a period of waiting for connections and images to begin forming in my mind's eye. Always I ask myself the question: what needs to be explored and expressed next in tapestry?

These periods of waiting are not idle. They are full of preparations toward being ready for the creative moment to take shape. Frequently I see more clearly when drawing. Looking intensely at shapes and shadows, their edges and textures, helps to focus my eye. My hands seem to know something my mind cannot yet grasp. I make sketches, paint in watercolor, play with pastels or charcoal and see what comes out the end of my fingers. As I create shapes on paper, one idea leads to another. Relationships between images, shapes and colors begin taking on energy and life. I pull out tracing paper and begin outlining some of what I have generated, and start shifting and layering, enlarging or shrinking sizes. I drift toward the bins of yarn, pulling out shades and tints of different colors that I am drawn to, and I heap the skeins and balls in groups all over the tables and floor. From all of this, the design for the next tapestry gradually emerges.

I still prefer weaving when I first awaken in the morning. I still enter into an oasis in time, as I engage in a dialog with the tapestry in process. In addition, I now have a full-scale value study of the design mounted where I easily can see it from the loom. Now, there is a cartoon beneath the warp, delineating curves and shapes, with lots of blank spaces. I wind many bobbins, with theme and variation of color blends in mind, and then choose my colors at the loom, as I weave.

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There are times at the loom when I discover I am bogging down in an area. This is my cue to stop weaving and walk away for a short while. The tapestry is informing me that the area needs adjusting.



Elizabeth J. Buckley, Collage of sketches, watercolor, idea development for "Portal" and "Prairie Study"

In the winter, I go outside and split a few logs for my wood burning stove in the studio. During the growing season, I tend the garden. Usually during these breaks, I find ideas suddenly occurring to me about what needs to happen next in the tapestry. Sometimes I end up patching the cartoon with a design adjustment. Other times I simply need to change the color blend on a bobbin or a value, which might require taking out a little bit of weaving.

I love this unfolding process of listening to what the tapestry is telling me. It is like improvisation in jazz, where themes reoccur, then variations expand a particular phrase, or take off on a tangent that then becomes related to the overall whole. So, too, in tapestry. Only when it comes off the loom, do I fully know and behold it for the first time.

Serendipity for the Tapestry Weaver

By Jan Austin

What does serendipity mean to me? Before considering dictionary definitions, I wanted to explore what it means to me personally. Walking on the beach in January helps me think. I was looking for a treasure to bring home from my walk, not sure what it would be, just keeping my eyes open and, OH, it's a tiny piece of turquoise glass. How serendipitous, I think.

Serendipity is like an open door. In C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, a child is hiding in a wardrobe, and falls out the back into a snowy landscape; another world has opened up. It was Lucy, and being the youngest child, she was more open to such things than her siblings, who were older and knew better.

I am quite intrigued by doorways, gates, stairways, openings in stone walls. Recently, I came up with a name for an illusion in the forest that has demanded my attention for years: "Portals." These dark, deep areas under shrubs or between branches, appear to be leading somewhere mysterious. There is a wall of vegetation, and it is broken by openings into another dimension.

I also discovered that I have already written about serendipity; I had forgotten that it was in my artist statement! "I prefer to allow nature to process itself through my eyes without the conscious interference of my brain, facilitating the effects of serendipity. I avoid control, and seek spontaneity in my reaction to visual stimuli." What did I really mean by that?

On a practical level here is how I work. I draw and paint from nature, and my work collects in old sketchpads, portfolios, or just heaps on the table. My tapestry designs often come from artwork that is as much as 20 years old. I might come across it while looking for something else, and suddenly recognize "this is what I want to weave next!"

In 1986, while hunting for a piece of paper for my daughter, I came across old life drawings, which became the "Thin Model" series. A few years later, I felt the need for new tapestry designs, so I spent a

whole summer painting with acrylic on paper. In the fall, I looked through the paintings and was disappointed to find nothing that spoke to me as a tapestry design. However, I became aware that each painting had a small part that I wanted to weave. So I took out my scissors, and embarked on the “Excerpts” series. I do not make tapestry designs as much as I find them.

When it comes to weaving, I am meticulous about following my cartoon, but still, I usually have no idea how I will make it work. There is a lot of trial and error, and there is always something unplanned, unexpected, and hopefully magical about the way paint, charcoal, or pastel gets translated into tapestry.

At a recent Tapestry Weavers in New England meeting, Sue Pretty showed some of her paper weavings that are small pieces woven from computer manipulated gouache images cut into strips. Because her approach is so playful, and she seems to revel in the unexpected, I asked her if we could carry on an email correspondence about serendipity.

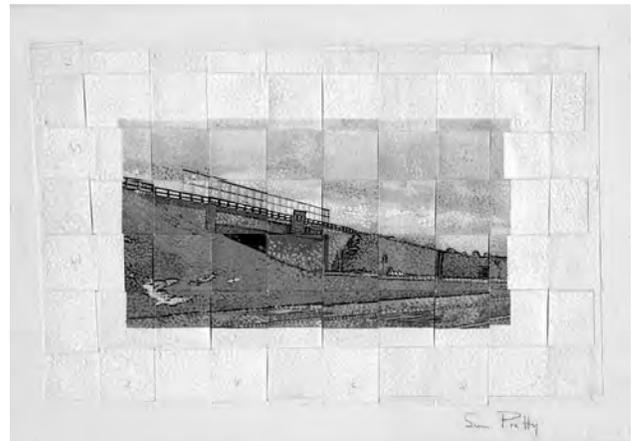


Janet Austin, "Hyssop"
6" x 9.5", 1990. Cotton warp, wool weft

Sue feels that since tapestry weaving is so labor intensive, it is important for each piece to be an exploration and push the boundaries. She started the paper weavings because she is a firm believer in experimentation and in the benefits of venturing into different media. “These paper weavings have been an exploration. I’m not sure where they are going. Maybe I will weave some of the pieces and I am thinking about how these pieces could be woven. I’ve scanned the woven images and played more with them in the computer — change this color, combine with these elements into a collage.”

Sue gets very excited about surprises; she loves taking a piece that did not quite work and saving it. “One of the early paper weavings didn't quite fit together and was sitting on my drawing board half done for quite awhile. Something about the piece slightly unraveling kept drawing my attention, so after looking at it for months I mounted it with archival glue and worked on it more with gouache. It's one of my favorites. Another piece I had my husband dry mount — completely different look, very flat. I was working on it with gouache and decided to put acrylic matte medium on it because I was unhappy with the background. An interesting thing happened: the weave of the paper weaving [rose] with moisture and really brought out the twill structure. Even after it dried it remained raised, almost like the washing process for wool, fulling out the image.”

When at last, I consulted the dictionaries, the Oxford English Dictionary tells us that the word serendipity was coined in 1754 by Horace Walpole, who based it on the title of the fairy tale “The Three Princes of Serendip,” the heroes of which ‘were



Suzanne Pretty, "Pease Bypass," 15 1/4" x 20" framed woven paper with gouache mounted on canvas. I am considering this for a tapestry.

always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of.’ The OED also quotes E. Solly (1880) who defines the word as “looking for one thing and finding another.” The Random House Unabridged Dictionary defines serendipity as “an aptitude for making desirable discoveries by accident” and as “good fortune; luck.”

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Definitions can be useful when they give us another angle to explore. I am interested in the suggestion that serendipity involves sagacity or aptitude, not just luck. We tend to associate serendipity with qualities like spontaneity and intuition, but leaving the door open for serendipity is only the first step, we have to be present and alert enough to recognize and welcome it when it arrives.

Sue says “one of the most important things is showing up in the studio. Some days may be more productive than others but it is necessary to keep working through the ideas.” The discoveries, desirable or not are made, not just by accident, but because we are actively looking for one thing, and then find another.

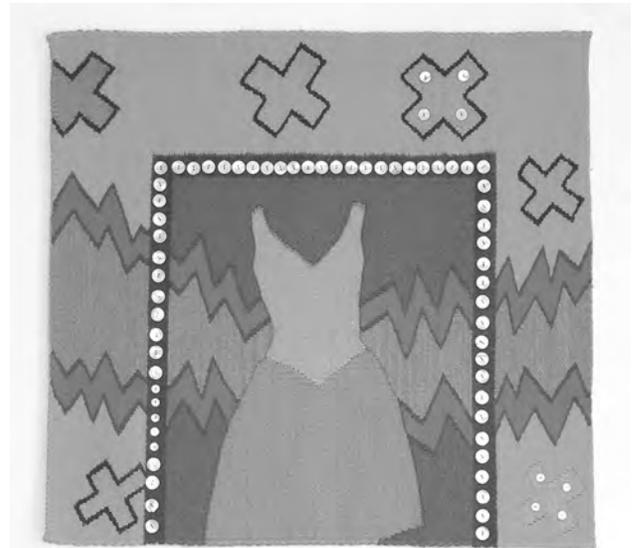
One of the dictionaries implies that it is only the desirable discoveries that can be ascribed to serendipity. I asked Sue if she thought it was only serendipity when the results were positive. Surely, in leaving the door open for serendipity you are taking a chance on letting in something else entirely, like failure or disaster. Her answer was that “out of one piece that didn't quite work, something clicks and sends me off in a direction that might be more successful.” Our grandmothers were right: we do learn from our mistakes.

Review: "The Hidden Element"

By Terry Olson

“The Hidden Element,” currently on exhibit at the Contemporary Crafts Museum & Gallery in Portland, Oregon, combines and contrasts the woven hangings of Rosalie Neilson and Audrey Moore. Neilson creates complex geometric designs using the Swedish technique of “rep weaving” and a computerized loom, while Moore’s simple and colorful narratives are expressed using a Navajo-style loom and traditional tapestry techniques and tools. In Neilson’s warp-faced weaving, the weft is the hidden element, whereas Moore’s technique is weft-faced and hides the warp.

Neilson and Moore’s weavings complement each other by the use of bright, bold colors and by the



Audrey Moore, "Lady V" from "The Ladies" series, each about 30" square.

intermixing of geometric and organics shapes. However, inspiration for each woman is a study in contrast. Neilson was “compelled to travel by air” immediately after 9/11. Her designs are based on sketches from those flights, manipulated with a weaving software program, with color added at the loom. Each panel in a series is slightly different than the others. They combine to make a bold statement. (see the installation photo on the ATA website.)

A Northwest Coast Indian button blanket that hangs on Audrey Moore’s wall inspired her. She had been looking at that blanket for a long time and one day decided that buttons would be a good addition to her tapestries. This series, “The Ladies,” emerged from that decision. Moore often weaves tapestries that depict textiles, usually in abstract forms. She combines the flowing, organic shapes of textiles with more angular background shapes, and adds a ribbon to hold it all together. She says, “I almost feel that I am a little kid again playing with paper dolls, making their dresses. I choose their colors, their shapes and their outward character and personality. Do clothes make the woman? Are our first impressions important? I have put my own interpretation on each lady. I hope the viewers will enjoy doing that too.”

Moore studied weaving in the mid 1970’s with

author and weaver, Noel Bennett. Her tapestries are woven on a large, handmade Navajo loom permanently installed in the walkout basement studio of her home near Mt. Hood, Oregon. Moore weaves at a sett of about 8 epi, using Navajo techniques and tools, the traditional wooden fork and batten. Her tapestries employ a tightly spun wool warp and a thick, single-ply wool weft. Moore makes a sketch, then a full size cartoon. She chooses colors from her large selection of hand-dyed yarns. If she needs a different color, she just dyes it for that project, using aniline dyes. Her son Rick, an artist, consults on the final color selection.

“The Ladies” is a series of ten tapestries, each about 30 inches square, and each depicting one dress surrounded by a three-sided frame cropped just below the garment. Each dress shows a different style, a different pose, a different color. They have a different background and each presents a different mood. Yet they are tied together to form a whole by the subject matter, the use of strong colors, the shape of the frame and, of course, by the buttons.

Although Moore weaves on a Navajo loom, she does not weave Navajo designs and although a Native American button blanket inspired Moore, she does not use buttons in the same way. Moore uses buttons as part of the background, the doorway or mirror in which each Lady is framed. Nine of the



Audrey Moore, "Lady VI"

tapestries use fairly large, white, iridescent shell buttons woven onto the doorway-shaped frame behind each dress. Lady VIII, however, has variously sized and colored buttons woven into its bright pink frame.

A simple beginning, “The Ladies I” depicts a dark blue shift with a red yoke. The dress is framed in warm red and gold; the evergreen and deep teal background appears to be a mountainside at night, under a starry sky. This tapestry and Lady II are calm and quiet, not bold, though they have both zigzags and circles. Lady VII is poised and proper, a red jacket and zigzag notwithstanding. Lady X stands demurely in a cool pink, fringed dress covered by a gold and red-fringed shawl and a simple frame of four green plus signs against a dark green ground.

A fun and lively person herself, it is not surprising Moore livened up a few of the “Ladies”. “The Ladies III” is a hot pink dress framed in green and it is dancing, definitely dancing, along with the bold orange circles and ribbons of the background. Lady IV is a two-tone gold dress framed in a dark red-dish-brown. The background is bright red with dark-outlined scarlet plus signs and two big, wavy green lines that swoop from edge to edge. The white shell buttons on this tapestry and the next really draw the viewer’s eye onto the dress. Lady V is a bright green sleeveless party dress. The orange, red and green background is especially full of motion with zigzags and X’s bouncing across the scene. Lady VIII would party with the others, in her stylish bright red and blue dress with the flouncy hem. This background says “fiesta” as several colors of orange vie with a couple shades of turquoise to keep your eye jumping around.

“The Ladies VI” makes the most obvious use of buttons as a design motif by creating white triangles outside the frame. These oppose the red triangles along the tapestry’s edges, creating black diamonds in between, and forming a striking background for a black and red kimono style robe. The robe that is Lady IX is very different - red with full sleeves and open at the hem so it can move. The background, two rich shades of deep blue, uses a crenellated motif outlined in white to frame the robe.

The room in which the exhibit is hung is well lit and spacious. Neilson’s weavings were grouped in

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series; each a different set of bold colors. Moore's tapestries were hung six on one wall and four on the wall directly opposite. They are displayed in an order chosen with an eye for both color and design, resulting in a harmonious show that is bright and cheerful on a rainy Portland day.

Neilson teaches rep weaving and kumihimo workshops through the United States and Canada and currently teaches weaving at the Oregon College of Art & Craft. Moore teaches tapestry on the Navajo loom at her school, the Damascus Fiber Arts School, in Damascus, Oregon.

Member News

By Ellen Ramsey

ATA would like to acknowledge the following members who renewed or upgraded their membership to Circle level during the first quarter of 2006. Thank you for your additional support!

Studio Circle: Barbara Carlbom, Karen Flesvig Chu, Patricia Dunn, Daria Gardynik, Kareemah Hasan-Rasheed, Joyce Hayes, Ibolya Hegyi, Sara Hotchkiss, Emily Hyatt, Victoria Hyatt, David Johnson, Ann Keuper, Jane Kidd, Inge Norgaard, Tea Okropiridze, Eve Pearce, Elinor Steele, Kathe Todd-Hooker, Beverly Weaver, Linda Wallace, Linda Weghorst, Alicia Woods

Curator's Circle: Marcia Ellis, Christine Laffer, Nancy Wohlenberg

Kudos

ATA members **Archie Brennan, Marianne Haller, Priscilla Lynch, Susan Martin Maffei, Ruth Manning, Anne McGinn, Eve Pearce, Susanne Pretty, Linda Rees, Sarah Swett, and Linda Wedghorst** are included in the exhibition *Folks In Fiber* at the Cahoon Museum of American Art in Cotuit, Massachusetts, March 21-May 14.

In Zacatecas, Mexico, for the second year, **Patricia Dunn** was invited to participate in the *Galeria El Principio* exhibition honoring the

International Day of the Woman. In this show, "Resplendor de Maravillas", *Creatividad Femenina*, her three tapestries joined works of sculpture, painting and fiber by women of Zacatecas.

Barbara Heller's solo show "Cover Ups and Revelations" appeared at the Fiber Art Center in Amherst, Massachusetts April 6-May 27, 2006. The exhibition will be shown at the Discovery Gallery, Alberta Crafts Council, Edmonton, Alberta July 15-August 22, 2006.

Jane Hoffman showed three felt and mixed media vessels from her "Bon Terra" series in the show "Surface Intrigue" at Tohono Chul Park, Tucson, Arizona January 12-March 26, 2006.

Two weavings by **Michael F. Rohde** (Spring/Ginza and Earth, Fire) have been accepted into the 27th Annual Contemporary Crafts Exhibition in Mesa, Arizona (Mesa Arts Center January 27-March 12, 2006). Only 35 artists, out of 342 entries were selected by juror Jane Milosch, Curator at the Smithsonian Renwick Gallery.

A tapestry by **Martha Christian** was shown in the American Craft Council juried regional exhibition at the Kentucky Museum of Arts in Louisville January – March, 2006. Another work will be included in the juried 70th Anniversary exhibition at the Memphis College of Art from May 15 – July 21.

"Useless Dreams," a solo exhibit by **Susan Iverson** was held at the Southwest School of Art and Craft, San Antonio, TX from January 19-March 12. A catalog of the exhibit was published.

Tommye Scanlin's "Legacy of Operation Ranch Hand" was accepted in the American Craft Council Southeast regional annual juried exhibit "Spotlight 2005" at the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design at the UNC Asheville Kellogg Center, Hendersonville, NC. The exhibit runs through July 30.

Q: How many tapestry weavers does it take to screw in a light bulb???

A: Just one, but it takes a year!

Volunteers Make It Happen

By Mary Lane

The strength and diversity of the American Tapestry Alliance's programming depends, in so many ways, on the support of its membership. One critical way members help is by volunteering for ATA. They share their existing talents and learn new skills as they work for all of us. Volunteers are the backbone of the American Tapestry Alliance. If you are interested in joining the ATA volunteer team, please contact Joan Griffin, our Volunteer Coordinator: joan@joangriffintapestry.com. (434) 979-4402.

Newsletter Committee



Linda Rees

Linda Rees is the current editor of *Tapestry Topics*. Because she believes that a newsletter creates a vital link between the members of an organization, Linda has accepted this important job. As a task oriented person who enjoys writing, the multi-faceted job of an editor suits Linda well. She especially enjoys the opportunity to gain a more intimate understanding of a writer's thoughts that reading analytically brings.

Linda became interested in weaving at a young age. She has pursued not only weaving tapestry, but also the study of other weaver's work. Her recently published book on Muriel Nezhnie is entitled, *Nezhnie: Weaver & Innovative Artist*. Since she has retired, Linda balances a daily session at the loom with the care of a large collection of succulent plants and a new grandson. She is also interested in native plants and mushrooms and enjoys cooking.

Since moving to Eugene, Oregon, she is part of a

growing community of tapestry weavers in that area. Amidst the commotion and upheaval of a second move in a year, Linda focused herself by weaving a rug design that involved experimentation with color. Her challenge was to maintain the integrity of two more closely related colors balanced with a contrasting motif. She titled the tapestry "The Trickster's Day" because, despite her best efforts, the piece seemed to exercise its own volition.

Linda values the sense of community that ATA provides tapestry weavers and believes that it is essential to the health of the medium. She feels that ATA should offer services for every level of tapestry weaver. As a writer Linda bemoans the fact that tapestry is not being served by the academic community. She feels that each of us is responsible for doing what we can to increase the visibility of our medium. This might involve developing a presence as an artist in one's community or acting as a spokesperson for the medium. For Linda, part of this responsibility is editing the ATA newsletter.



Anne Clark

Anne, like many ATA volunteers, finds the connections she makes with other weavers to be one of the biggest rewards of volunteering. She currently proofreads *Tapestry Topics*. Previously she volunteered on the American Tapestry Biennial 4 with Barbara Heller. During ATB4 she was able to share her interest in tapestry with weavers throughout the

world. She still derives inspiration from the Hungarian tapestries that were shown during Convergence in Vancouver.

Anne lives in Victoria, British Columbia and belongs to the Canadian Tapestry Network (CTN) and TAPIS (Tapestry Weavers from Vancouver

Island). Through TAPIS she has been involved in three community tapestry projects, several collaborative ventures and a number of exhibitions.

Replenishing our field with new weavers is a concern of Anne. She feels that the public's impression of tapestry is limited to a more traditional style and does not include work that is conceptual, or that engages social issues. Perhaps because of that, it is often difficult to secure venues for exhibiting tapestry. Anne feels that exhibitions, workshops and symposia offer wonderful opportunities for artists to gather, share and find inspiration.



Anne Clark, "Wall Street,"
40" x 15", 2003

Anne has been weaving tapestry for thirty years. Her commitment to the medium has offered continuity amidst moves and life changes. Originally self-taught, Anne later studied with Deborah Forbes, Ann Newdigate, Susan Martin Maffei and Archie Brennan. Her work is both small and large scale. She suggests that "a large piece... lets you enter a special 'space' every time you sit down at the loom." Much of Anne's work is inspired by landscape. She balances the sedentary nature of weaving with more active pursuits, such as dancing and hiking. She also enjoys painting, photography and playing the button accordion.

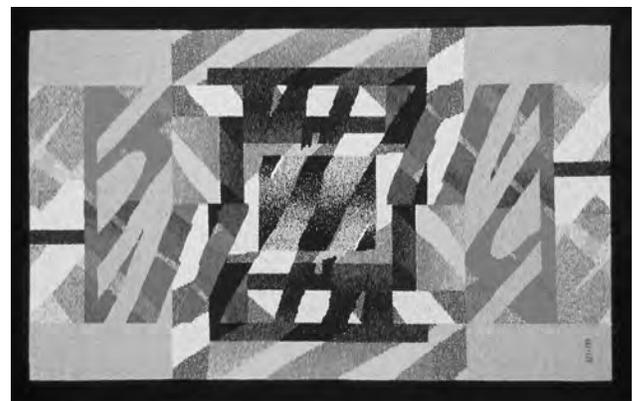
Elinor Steele

As the person in charge of graphic standards, Elinor Steele is responsible for the professional appearance of ATA's documents. She designed the logo, the letterhead and the layout of *Tapestry Topics*.

Elinor enjoys solving the puzzle of fitting all of the information and articles into each newsletter. She also enjoys being one of the first to read *Tapestry Topics*.

Elinor values ATA's promotion of tapestry as a fine art form and her volunteer work confirms her belief in the goals of the organization. It also offers her a way to keep in touch with other weavers. She communicates regularly with the members of the newsletter team and enjoys the camaraderie and common goals of the group.

Exposure of tapestry through written articles and the internet is critical not only for educating people outside our field, but also for inspiring each of us as artists. Publications, exhibitions, workshops and websites that showcase tapestry as a vital and contemporary art form can inspire young artists to pursue a medium that offers a counterpoint to the speed of life in the twenty-first century.



Elinor Steele, "Reconstruction I," 32" x 53"
Wool on cotton warp, 2004

Elinor grew up in a family of artists and began weaving in high school. She studied fine arts at the University of New Hampshire. A family friend had studied tapestry with Archie Brennan at the Edinburgh College of Art in Scotland. This inspired Elinor to enroll there for one year in 1972.

She is currently working on a series entitled the "Reconstruction" tapestries. "These began as a way to express my frustration with the destruction and violence in the world." The designs involve the creation of a balanced, graphic image through the manipulation and reconstruction of fragmented shapes.

Elinor lives in New Haven, Vermont. She has two children, and, in addition to weaving and volunteering for ATA, she works in community theater, designing and building sets.

In addition to the standing Newsletter Committee, other ATA members have offered valuable expertise on specific issues. Thanks to Laurie Robbins for proofreading and to Micala Sidore and Lany Eila for editing. Thanks, also, to Ellen Ramsey who handles the mailing of the newsletter. In addition, Tapestry Topics would not exist without the stimulating articles contributed by so many of you. Thank you!

Contact ATA

PO Box 28600 San Jose, CA 95159

Director of Member Services

Alex Friedman Alexfriedmanata@gmail.com

Director of Resources

Christine Laffer claffer@christinelaffer.com

Treasurer

Barbara Richards barbrichards@airbits.com

Member Chair

Ellen Ramsey ew.ramsey@comcast.net

Membership Database and Ask ATA Host

Janet Austin nitsuanaj@yahoo.com

Education Chair

"Grand Ideas" Small format exhibit Chair

Priscilla Lynch jplynch99@comcast.net

ATB6 Chair

Peggy Strang peggy@frenchcreekfiber.com

Library Chair & Slide Registry

Joyce Hayes joyce.hayes@comcast.net

Promotion Chair

Becky Cook atabeckyvt@yahoo.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Joan Griffin joan@joangriffintapestry.com

Events Coordinator

Mary Lane marylane53@mac.com

Webmistress

Jeanne Bates aBates@3-cities.com

ATA MEMBERSHIP FORM

	1 year	2 years
Individual	\$35	\$65
Studio Circle	\$55	\$100
Curator's Circle	\$125	\$225
Collector's Circle	\$250	\$450
Student*	\$25	\$45

*enclose copy of current student identification card with payment

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities

Send payment to: ATA Membership
 c/o Janet Austin
 191 Cedar St
 East Greenwich, RI 02818
 (401) 885-5595

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American Tapestry Alliance
PO Box 28600
San Jose, CA 95159

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Tapestry Topics

Guidelines for submitting articles to Tapestry Topics:

Next Deadline: **July 15** focusing on Convergence reports,
October 1 theme: "Joins and Other Transitions",
January 15, April 1

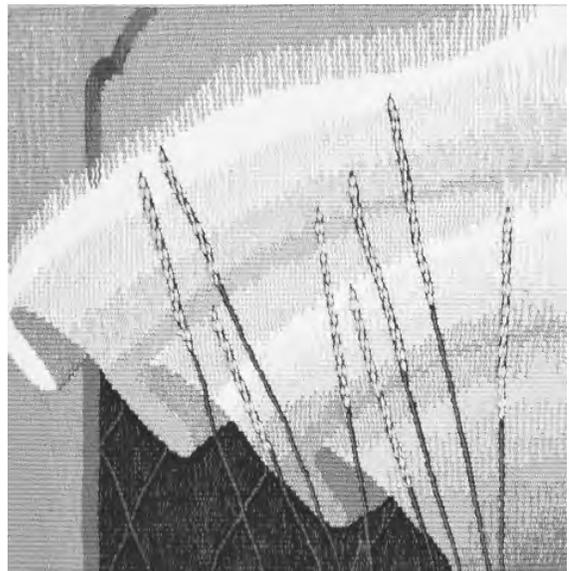
Send all items to: Linda Rees: lerees@comcast.net
--Or--
1507 Elkay Drive
Eugene, OR 97404

All photographs and electronic images should be accompanied by the following information : Size, date completed, and photo credits. Do not insert images into the text body. Attach each one separately.

Articles should be under 2000 words. Submissions will be edited for clarity and space requirements

Exhibition reviews: Articles should describe the overall sense of the show with insight and critical observations, and explain the parts that contribute to its impact.

Newsletter committee: Proofreader: Anne Clark, Layout: Elinor Steele, Distribution: Ellen Ramsey



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Prairie Study," 9" x 9", 2006

visit our website
www.americantapestryalliance.org