



AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE

Inspiration & Creativity

Mary Lane

Curator's Statement



Joanne Soroka
"Cromarty"



Murray Gibson
"Penelope"



Kay Lawrence
"Translation (detail)"



*Peter Horn "Easter
Island"*

Art offers us the opportunity to look at our world in new ways. Through the manipulation of materials and processes, the artist condenses her observations of the world into forms that embody emotions, ask questions and offer reflections. Unraveling the complex web of form and content that comprises any particular work reveals cognitive leaps, intuitive insights and a particular sensitivity to the artist's chosen medium. But beyond any analysis lies a power, or presence, that defies explanation. This is the stuff of inspiration and creativity. The seemingly magical transformation of ordinary materials into extraordinary objects.

The opportunity to examine an artist's body of work provides insights into his thinking processes and working methods. It reveals the development of themes and the maturation of an individual voice over time. The opportunity to consider the work of four talented artists, Peter Horn (Germany), Murray Gibson (Canada), Kay Lawrence (Australia) and Joanne Soroka (Great Britain) reveals not only their individual strengths and interests, but also the diverse and multifaceted approach that marks current art making.

For all four of these artists, the physical object – the textile – with its associated set of materials and processes, is of paramount importance. Weaving is an apt metaphor for the joining of disparate parts. The technique itself defines two-dimensional space by joining the vertical with the horizontal into a grid of squares – a stable geometric form. This fundamental aspect of tapestry weaving serves this group of artists as they work with the diversity of elements inherent in collage, time travel, layering and generational and cultural research. But, despite their affinity for tapestry, curious minds follow the paths that unfold before them, and so, it comes as no surprise that many of these artists express themselves in other artistic media as well. The fit of the medium with the content of the work guides their journey.

Tapestry has a long and illustrious history and an engagement with the past marks the work of all of these artists. Whether it is the reference to former textile practitioners, direct quotes from historical textiles, the fascination with finding textile linkages in a family genealogy or the recording of traditional dyestuffs, textile history and processes constitute an active subtext of the work.

Creativity is often considered to involve doing something for the first time. Although notions of originality are no longer unspoiled, artists do find themselves embarking into unknown territory. This journey involves the willingness to take risks, to follow crooked paths, to break rules and to court the vagaries of chance. It is our privilege, in an exhibition such as this one, to see what they have uncovered.

*“There may be nothing further...to explain, and yet everything important remains to be grasped, even if it cannot be said.” *1*

Inspiration & Creativity, a project hosted jointly by the American Tapestry Alliance’s Web Exhibition and Educational Articles programs presents the work of four internationally recognized artists: Peter Horn (Germany), Murray Gibson (Canada), Kay Lawrence (Australia) and Joanne Soroka (United Kingdom). In addition to this visual presentation, each artist has generously offered his or her perspective on the creative process through an essay published as an Educational Article. My thanks go to the artists, who have created such inspirational work and have also taken the time to share their process through the written word.

*1 Danto, Arthur. Encounters and Reflections: Art in the Historical Present. New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux. 310.

Joanne Soroka



Joanne Soroka was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec and graduated from McGill University. She now lives in Edinburgh, Scotland. Edinburgh is a centre for tapestry weaving, and Joanne studied at the Edinburgh College of Art during the 1970s, graduating with a post-graduate diploma (with distinction). She went on to become the Artistic Director of the Edinburgh Tapestry Company (Dovecot Studios), before setting up her own studio, Ivory Tapestries, in 1987. Joanne works in tapestry weave, other textile processes and paper, with occasional forays into other media such as print and video. Her work hangs in the lobbies and boardrooms of well-known international companies such as the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Glenfiddich Distillery and in hotels in Japan. She has won numerous awards.

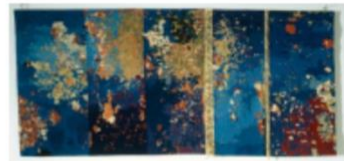
Joanne has exhibited her work around the world and has been teaching at Edinburgh College of Art for 15 years. Her work will be included in the forthcoming publication *Art Textiles of the World: Canada*.



Joanne Soroka
"Kawa"



Joanne Soroka
"Scratching the Surface"



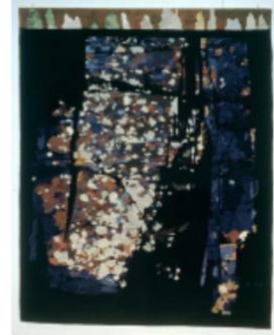
Joanne Soroka
"Steps"



Joanne Soroka
"Chaya's Dream (Nightmare)"



Joanne Soroka
"Cromarty"



Joanne Soroka
"Face of the Earth"



Joanne Soroka
"The Journeyman Stonemason His Mark"



Joanne Soroka
"Golden Section"



Joanne Soroka
"Mesh"



Joanne Soroka
"Tears Like Rain"



Joanne Soroka
"Fragment No. 1"



Joanne Soroka
"Fragment No. 2"



Joanne Soroka
"Golden No. 1"



Joanne Soroka
"Relative Strangers"



Joanne Soroka
"Water Kimono IV"

Cromarty, 1999
linen, wool, cotton
52" x 60"

Mesh, 2000
linen, cotton
8" x 8"

Steps, 1998
wool, linen, cotton
42" x 88"

The Journeyman Stonemason His Mark, 1999
wool, linen, silk, cotton
43" x 57"

Chaya's Dream (Nightmare), 1998
wool, linen, cotton
48" x 70"

Scratching the Surface, 1997
wool, linen, cotton
48" x 72"

Relative Strangers, 2001
digital printing on silk, Tyvek, pencil
4 pieces each 70" x 39"

Water Kimono IV, 1990
tie-dyed cotton, pieced cloth
151" x 110"

Golden Section, 2007
wool, cotton, silk, metallic, linen
56" x 60"

Fragment no 1, 2008
wool, cotton, metallic
5 ½" x 8"

Fragment no 2, 2008
wool, cotton, metallic
7" x 7"

Golden no 1, 1993
watercolor, Japanese paper, collage
15" x 17"

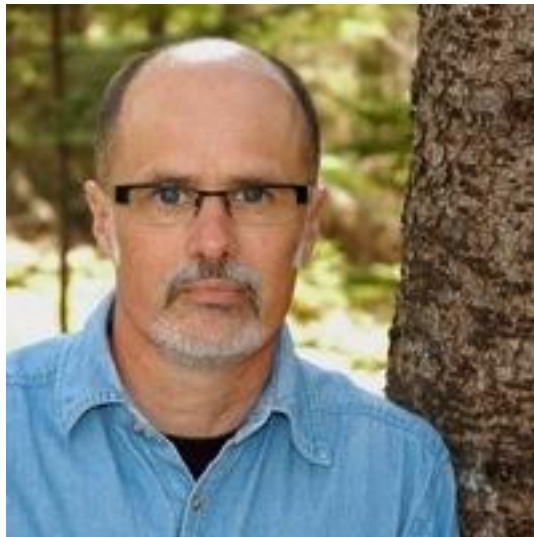
Kawa, 2000
linen, wool, cotton, raffia
52" x 72"

Tears Like Rain, 2000
linen, cotton
8" x 8"

Face of the Earth, 1991
wool, linen, cotton
81" x 64"

Murray Gibson

From Text to Tapestry



Murray Gibson first studied tapestry weaving at the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary, Alberta. After graduating in 1985 he spent a number of years developing his studio practice. One highlight of this period was an exciting year living and working in New York City as Artist-in-Residence at The Center for Tapestry Arts. Murray returned to school in 1995, and obtained his MA Textiles from Goldsmith's College, The University of London, England.

Murray has taught numerous workshops and presented many lectures. He spent an eventful year in Pangnirtung, Nunavut working with a group of Inuit students teaching tapestry weaving and other textile practices. Murray currently lives in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. He teaches part-time at St. Francis Xavier University as well as maintaining his own studio practice

Murray's tapestries hang in private, public, and corporate collections across Canada, the United States, Australia, and Austria.



Murray Gibson
"African Skies"



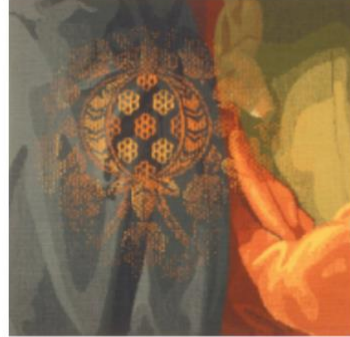
Murray Gibson
"Silent Windows"



Murray Gibson
"Attack"



Murray Gibson
"Jennifer"



Murray Gibson
"Visitation"



Murray Gibson
"Entre Nous"



Murray Gibson
"Bitter Harvest"



Murray Gibson
"The Sky"



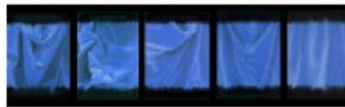
Murray Gibson
"The Three Fates" (Clotho)



Murray Gibson
"The Three Fates" (Lachesis)



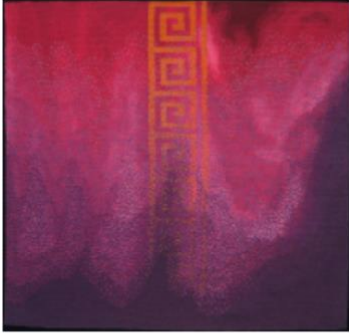
Murray Gibson
"East Coker"



Murray Gibson
"Annunciation"



Murray Gibson
"Annunciation" (Installation 1)



Murray Gibson
"Penelope"

African Skies, 1987

Wool, silk

143 x 147 cm

Collection: Alberta Foundation for The Arts, Edmonton, AB

Silent Windows, 1988

Wool, silk

149 x 144 cm

Collection: Private, Long Island, NY

Babel, 1991

Wool

157 x 155 cm

Collection: The Artist

Bitter Harvest, 1991

Wool, silk, gold

152 x 86 cm

Collection: Private, Sewanee, TN

The Sky is Falling, 1992

Wool, silk

152 x 86 cm

Collection: Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, AB

NOTE: *This tapestry was stolen from the college in 2001.*

A Numbering of Days, 1994

Wool, silk

153 x 92 cm

Collection: The Artist

Attack, 1994

Wool, silk, cotton, brass paperclips

173 x 170 cm

Collection: Private, Scottsdale, AZ

Annunciation, 1995

(L-R) Conturbatio, Cogitatio, Interrogatio, Humiliatio, Meritatio

Wool, cotton

50 x 35 cm each panel

Collection: The Artist

Annunciation, 1995

Installation showing tapestries in corridor light by candles

Annunciation, 1995

Installation showing engraved brass panels and reflected tapestries

Jennifer's Story, 1996

Wool, silk, synthetic

60 x 60 cm

Collection: Private, Canberra, AU

Noah's Arke, 1999

Wool, silk

30 x 30 cm each panel

Collection: Private, Kingston, ON

Visitation, 1999

Wool, cotton

60 x 60 cm

Collection: Cambridge Library and Gallery,
Cambridge, ON

Entre Nous, 2000

Wool, cotton

47 x 47 cm

Collection: Galérie Expression, Ste-
Hyacinthe, QC

The Three Fates, 2002

Wool, cotton

45 x 185 cm overall

Collection: The Canada Council Art Bank,
Ottawa, ON

The Three Fates, 2002

Clotho

Wool, cotton

45 x 45 cm

The Three Fates, 2002

Lachesis

Wool, cotton

45 x 68 cm

The Three Fates, 2002

Atropos

Wool, cotton

45 x 45 cm

Penelope, 2004

Wool, cotton

60 x 60 cm

Collection: The Nova Scotia Art Bank,
Halifax, NS

East Coker, 2006

Text: East Coker, T.S. Eliot

Wool, silk

135 x 135 cm

Collection: Private, Kingston, ON

Kay Lawrence



Kay Lawrence is a visual artist and academic. She studied painting and printmaking at the South Australian School of Art and tapestry weaving at the Edinburgh School of Art. She is currently Professor and Head of the South Australian School of Art. Lawrence's practice as an artist is grounded in textiles, although her most recent work has also encompassed installation. She makes work for both public and private contexts and writes about contemporary Australian textiles. Her work has been exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas and she has completed a number of major commissions, including two works for the national Parliament in

Canberra in 1988. For her work on the Parliament House Embroidery, she was made a member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1989.

Lawrence is particularly interested in exploring the relationship of textile practice to gender, place and community. She recently completed three major projects in collaboration with other artists and designers that involved consultation with Indigenous communities. Weaving the Murray was created for the Centenary of Federation of Australia and drew upon community consultation. The work explored the importance of the Murray River as Australia's major watercourse, currently in crisis, and its symbolic role connecting the settler and Indigenous communities living along its banks.

In 2002 Lawrence was commissioned, along with designer John Nowland, to create a major public work for the glazed entry of the State Library of South Australia. The project, Text, Textile and a Coil of string, draws from research into European and Kuarna knowledge systems. It makes connections between textile processes and the transmission of knowledge. In 2008 Lawrence curated the exhibition, This Everything Water, exploring the symbolic resonances and material qualities of pearl shell as an item of trade and a sign for water in both the white and Indigenous communities in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.



Kay Lawrence
*Working at Lake Mungo, far west NSW,
Australia*



Kay Lawrence
Plant dye grid



Kay Lawrence
"Translation"



Kay Lawrence
"Translation" (detail)



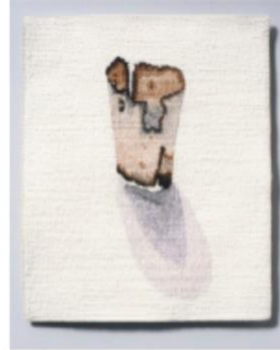
Kay Lawrence
"Translation" (detail)



Kay Lawrence
Drawings, cup and jug



Kay Lawrence
"Rust: jug, plate, cup "



Kay Lawrence
"Jug"



Kay Lawrence
"Bitter as brine"



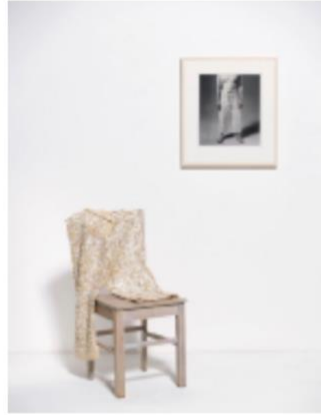
Kay Lawrence
"Bitter as brine" (detail)



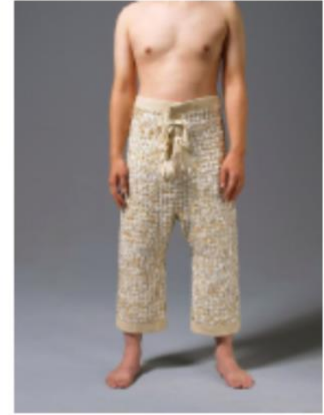
Kay Lawrence
"Rising salt"



Kay Lawrence
"Jug" (detail)



Kay Lawrence
"no work for a white man"



Kay Lawrence
Pearl button under-trousers



Kay Lawrence The mother-of-pearl altar,
 Church of the Sacred Heart, Beagle Bay
Kay Lawrence

*The mother-of-pearl altar, Church of the
 Sacred Heart, Beagle Bay*



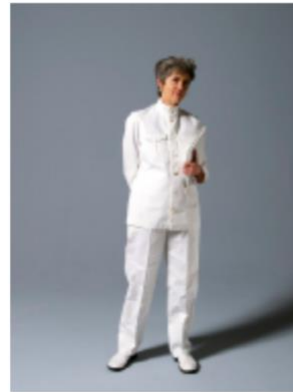
Kay Lawrence
"This is rain"



Kay Lawrence
"This is rain" (detail)



Kay Lawrence
"White work"



Kay Lawrence
*Kay Lawrence in pearls suit with book
'white'*



Kay Lawrence
"no work for a white man"



Kay Lawrence
Pearl button under-trousers

Kay Lawrence working at Lake Mungo, far west NSW, Australia, 1997

Plant dye grid, 1997

plant dye on paper

6 sheets each 18 cm x 25 cm

Translation, 1999-2000

woven tapestry

45 cm x 315 cm

Translation (detail), 1999-2000

woven tapestry

45 cm x 315 cm

Translation (detail), 1999-2000

woven tapestry

45 cm x 315 cm

Drawings, cup and jug, 1999-2001

sepia ink on paper

6 sheets each 33 x 21cm

Rust: jug, plate, cup, 2001

woven tapestry

3 tapestries each 45.4 x 37.5 cm

Jug, 2001

woven tapestry

45.4 x 37.5 cm

Jug (detail), 2001

woven tapestry

45.4 x 37.5 cm

White work, 2004-2008

wooden desk, book designed by John Nowland, blankets, mother-of-pearl buttons, pearl suit made by Adriana Loro

72 x 120 x 43 cm

Kay Lawrence in pearl suit with book 'White', 2008

artists book; text compiled by Kay Lawrence, designed by John Nowland

25 x 25 x 1 cm

No Work for a White Man, 2006-2008

blanket under-trousers, mother-of-pearl buttons, photograph by Michal Klivanek

200 x 200 x 200 cm

Pearl button under-trousers, 2006-2008

blanket under-trousers, mother-of-pearl buttons, worn by Tadashi Nakamura

90 x 54 x 3 cm

The mother-of-pearl altar, Church of the Sacred Heart, Beagle Bay, 2004

This is rain, 2007

grey woollen blanket, mother-of-pearl buttons.

200 x 134 cm

This is rain (detail), 2007

grey woollen blanket, mother-of-pearl buttons.

200 x 134 cm

Bitter as brine, 2008

cream woollen blanket, mother-of-pearl buttons

161 x 188 cm

Bitter as brine (detail), 2008

cream woollen blanket, mother-of-pearl buttons

161 x 188 cm

Rising salt, 2008

grey woollen blanket, mother-of-pearl buttons

190 x 161 cm

Rising salt (detail), 2008

grey woollen blanket, mother-of-pearl buttons

190 x 161 cm

Water is everything, 2008

broken pearl shell (*Pinctada maxima*)

4 x 530 x 250 cm

Water is everything (detail), 2008

broken pearl shell (*Pinctada maxima*)

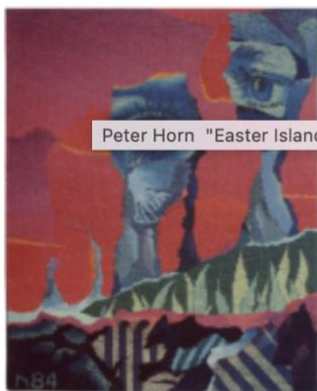
4 x 530 x 250 cm

Peter Horn



Born in 1936 in Kiel, Germany, Peter Horn studied at Muthesius College for Design and at Christian-Albrechts-University, both in Kiel, Germany. He taught Fine Arts at the High School level, and since 1970 has been Assistant Professor in the Institute of Art History, Department of Fine Arts Education, Christian-Albrechts-University at Kiel.

Horn started working in drawing, painting, and tapestry weaving in the 1950s and by 1971 was participating in numerous exhibitions. He has taken part in textile art symposia in Osterholz-Scharmbeck, Germany (1984/1996), Gdynia, Poland (1988/1991), Łódź, Poland (1992), Riga, Latvia (1993) and Graz, Austria (1994). In 1998 he was a member of the jury for the 9th International Triennale of Tapestry, Łódź, Poland. In 2001 he was the European member of the jury for the American Tapestry Alliance exhibit ATB IV. In 2004 he participated in the jury for KARPIT 2 (2005), Budapest, Hungary.



Peter Horn
"Easter Island"



Peter Horn
"Greek Coast"



Peter Horn
"Don't be afraid, General!"



Peter Horn
"Lisi Jar 1"



Peter Horn
"Lisi Jar 3"



Peter Horn
Design for "Date line"



Peter Horn
"Danger is at the gates of town"



Peter Horn
"REHPAI"



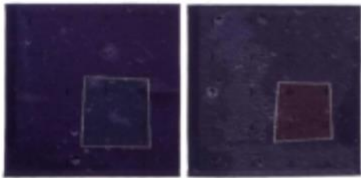
Peter Horn
"Water levels for Kerkyra"



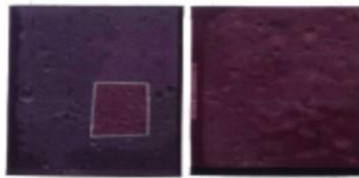
Peter Horn
"Date line"



Peter Horn
"Mafia (business as usual)"



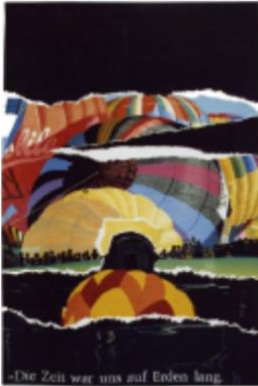
Peter Horn
"Ranger 7 - the last 15 seconds, parts 1 and 2"



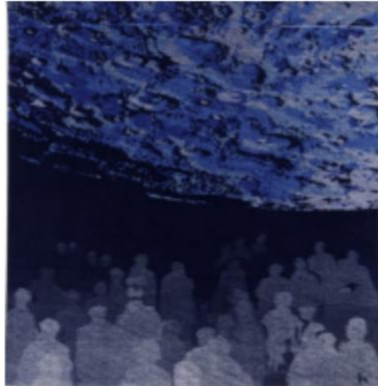
Peter Horn
"Ranger 7 - the last 15 seconds, parts 3 and 4"



Peter Horn
"Lunar afternoon"



Peter Horn
"Lighter than air"



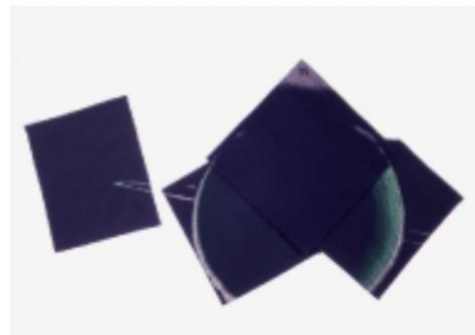
Peter Horn
"Mercurius 2"



Peter Horn
"Ring of Jupiter 2"



Peter Horn
"MARS - Kasei Vallis"



Peter Horn
"Going for a space walk in Jupiter's umbra"

African Skies, 1987

Wool, silk

143 x 147 cm

Collection: Alberta Foundation for The Arts, Edmonton, AB

Silent Windows, 1988

Wool, silk

149 x 144 cm

Collection: Private, Long Island, NY

Babel, 1991

Wool

157 x 155 cm

Collection: The Artist

Bitter Harvest, 1991

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Wool, cotton

47 x 47 cm

Collection: Galerie Expression, Ste-Hyacinthe, QC

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Wool, cotton

45 x 185 cm overall

Collection: The Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, ON

The Three Fates, 2002

Clotho

Wool, cotton

45 x 45 cm

The Three Fates, 2002

Lachesis

Wool, cotton

45 x 68 cm

The Three Fates, 2002

Atropos

Wool, cotton

45 x 45 cm

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Wool, cotton

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Collection: The Nova Scotia Art Bank, Halifax, NS

East Coker, 2006

Text: East Coker, T.S. Eliot

Wool, silk

135 x 135 cm

Collection: Private, Kingston, ON