



# Tapestry Topics

*A Quarterly Review of Tapestry Art Today*

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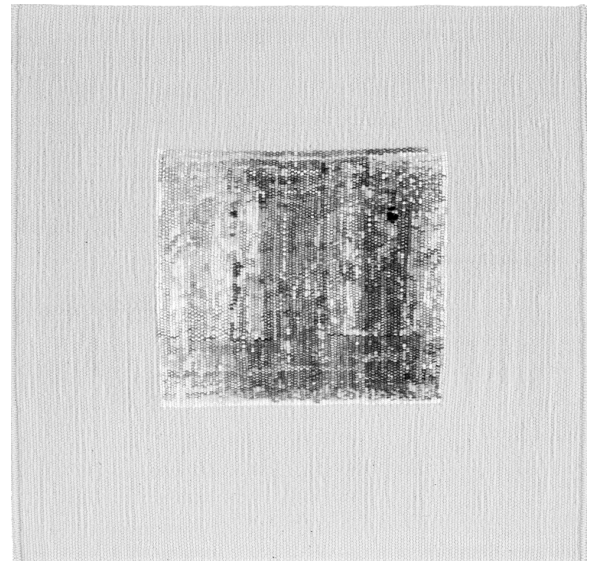
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Marcel Marois, "Rain-Yellow"  
14" x 15" x 1", 1998, Wool, cotton, and  
plywood frame, courtesy Textile Museum

## ATA AWARDED NEA GRANT...FINALLY!

The American Tapestry Alliance has received an award from the National Endowment for the Arts in the amount of \$5,000 to support the development and touring of the biennial exhibition and catalog. Our thanks go out to Deb Erickson, Christine Laffer, and Michael Rohde for putting together the winning application. Thanks as well to all the volunteers who established our credibility and longevity with the NEA by patiently submitting applications in past years. These things take time. Now, thankfully, our time has come!

### Theme for Next Issue: Shaped Tapestries:

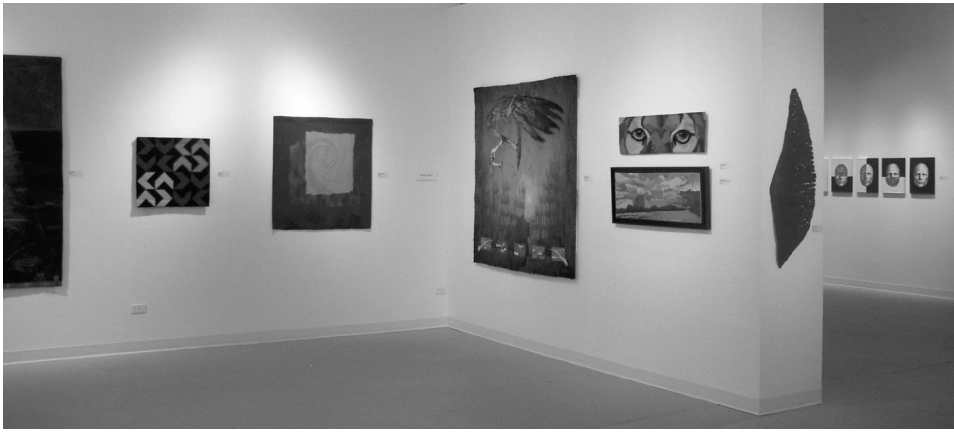
Deadline for submission of articles and photographs, October 15, 2004

## Letter from the Directors

By Alex Friedman and Christine Laffer

The reception for the "American Tapestry Biennial Five" filled the Center for Visual Art, in Denver with an extremely appreciative audience. The exhibit looked terrific in the big open space it shared with the "Small Expressions" show and the "I Can See for Miles" yardage show. Over twelve participating artists were present, including Brita Been, Norway, Birgitta Hallberg, Denmark, and Anne Stabel, Norway. The feedback from many attendees told us it was one of the best shows they had seen. The Center for Visual Arts was pleased as they counted over 600 visitors on the day of the Denver gallery crawl! Congratulations to Monique Lehman, Exhibition Coordinator, for handling such a complex exhibition with so

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ATB5 Installation, Center for Visual Arts, Denver Photo by Alex Friedman

her work in a textile-specific gallery to a high-profile fine art gallery. Sharon Marcus gave a deeply insightful overview of tapestry within the larger world during the past 75 years and its current position in contrast to other "fields" of fiber art. Katie Anderson talked openly about the values and needs of gallery operators and how they continue to respond to an evolving market.

much fine artwork. The catalog looks like a very provocative read and contains color reproductions of every piece in the show. Funding for the exhibition and catalog was provided by our members, by Friends of Fiber Art International, and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

There is big news for the fall on three fronts. First, ATA is a recipient of a \$5000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This is a wonderful asset because it gives tapestry national recognition.

Secondly, the American Tapestry Biennial Five will open at its second venue, at the Dorr Mill in Guild, NH, September 20 until January 9, 2005. This is the first time ATB will be in New England. Plans for docent tours, a three-day design workshop and a lecture have moved ahead rapidly.

And finally, ATA will have a booth at the SOFA Exposition for the first time, in Chicago during November 5 through 7. A big thank you goes out to Dave Johnson, Mary Lane and Anne McGinn for a willingness to work with us as we develop our presentation methods and materials.

Convergence seems to top the list of recent events. First, we'd like to thank Mary Lane and Michael Rohde for pulling together an excellent panel of presenters for "Outside the Studio: Presenting Tapestry within a Broader Field." Three speakers from different perspectives tackled the problems that tapestry artists must address as they face the world outside the studio. Rebecca Bluestone spoke about the path she has taken from showing

We now have several directions to pursue as a result of all our meetings in Denver:

- a) We will probably switch to an off-site, all-day, symposium format for the next Convergence in Grand Rapids, MI similar to the Retreat held in conjunction with Convergence 2000;
- b) We want to poll members about starting up distance-learning study groups;
- c) We want to work out different ways to structure more exhibitions; and
- d) We will seek collaborative projects with other arts organizations in order to continue to expand the field in which tapestry has visibility.

We would welcome your thoughts and suggestions on making these ideas a reality. We look forward to hearing from you and, of course, we welcome your volunteer efforts. Future issues of Tapestry Topics will have more information as we develop these ideas. We hope you are already thinking about entering a tapestry for ATB6 in 2006!

Happy weaving,  
Alex and Christine

## **Request for Slides, Deadline September 24, 2004**

ATA has reserved an educational non-profit booth for SOFA (Sculpture, Objects and Functional Art Expo) in Chicago, November 5-7th. Our goal for the event is to make the participants at SOFA aware of tapestry as a contemporary art form by increasing its visibility to collectors, dealers, other

arts organizations, and exhibition curators. We will print and distribute an informative brochure, show high quality visuals of tapestry in various architectural settings, talk about recent exhibitions, and ask people to sign our guest list for future mailings.

If you are an ATA member and have high-quality visual images (slides preferred) that show tapestry **in an architectural setting with excellent color and lighting**, we would like to see them.

We think SOFA offers an audience ripe for the increased appreciation of tapestry. If you are in the Chicago area around that time, come help sit our booth or just stop by for a visit! For more information on SOFA go to their website at [www.sofaexpo.com](http://www.sofaexpo.com). The following indicates what is planned for this exposition.

SOFA publicity explains "Functionalism, post-modernism and the avant-garde come together at the Eleventh Annual International Exposition of Sculpture, Objects & Functional Art: SOFA CHICAGO 2004, November 5-7 at historic Navy Pier. More than 80 international galleries and dealers present a wide range of cultural expressions, materials and perceptions of art—from the tribal to the contemporary, from such diverse countries as Japan, Scandinavia, the Czech Republic, Israel, Argentina and Australia—similar aesthetics from completely different worlds, side by side, in an affirming contradiction."

"To date 27 international galleries from 10 countries are exhibiting, including 5 from Denmark with its strong Scandinavian design aesthetic; 6 from the United Kingdom, where the Arts and Craft Movement originated and studio ceramics was born in the West; 4 from France with its rich history of ornament; and 5 from Australia, with its vibrantly diverse culture and landscape."

"30 Lecture Series presentations and 4 Special Exhibits at SOFA CHICAGO are being organized in collaboration with key world arts organizations including the Association of Israel's Decorative Arts (AIDA); British Crafts Council; Ceramics Research Center of the Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, AZ; Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC; and Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, Newcastle, ME. Noted artists lined up to-date to speak in the Lecture Series include glass artists

Klaus Moje (Heller Gallery, New York) and William Carlson (Marx-Saunders Gallery, Chicago); forged metal artist, Albert Paley (Hawk Galleries, Columbus, OH); and ceramicist Don Reitz (Maurine Littleton Gallery, Washington, DC)."

This is a place where we can make a difference and reach new people. Notice that they have special exhibits and a lecture series with international involvement, highlighting ceramics, glass and metal. We need more fiber there! Join us as we start this new outreach program.

**Please send your slides to the American Tapestry Alliance c/o Christine Laffer, 88 Brooklyn Avenue, San Jose, CA 95128, (or to American Tapestry Alliance, PO Box 28600, San Jose, CA 95159-8600) by September 24, 2004.** All materials will be returned in December 2004.



Connie Lippert, "I Am Holding the Sun in My Hands," 24" x 24", 2002, photo by Robert Lippert

## High Profile Summer for Tapestry

By Linda Rees

Galleries in two major tourist centers, Washington, D.C. and Denver, Colorado, were filled with tapestries this summer. We are attempting to cover the events at both centers in this issue. The newsletter has featured several of the exhibiting artists during the last year; to enable more images of other artists' work we have not included their work, interesting as it was to see.

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This was my 8th Convergence over a span of 26 years. I go because it provides the opportunity to see the largest amount of high quality fiberarts exhibits I can find. Never before has such a high profile been given to tapestry. For the first time, I could have filled every seminar slot with a tapestry or career related topic, often several were conflicting with each other. Two of the three keynote speakers specialize in aspects of tapestry making. Rebecca Bluestone had the greatest visibility of any presenter at the conference.

Our coverage of Convergence provides information from several ATA members. There was little time for writing about the experience to make this issue's deadline. I am grateful to all sharing their comments. Most were able to see these major exhibits, the ATB5, Small Formats, Woven Journeys and Six of One.

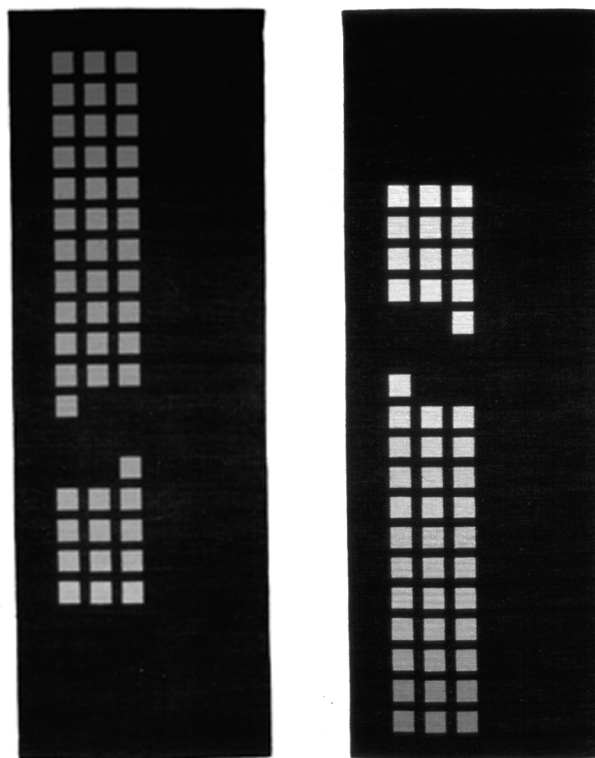
ATA has found the formula for presenting meaningful panel discussions, as evidenced in the Critical Forum. The material covered in Sharon Marcus's presentation is on the ATA web site under "feature articles". It contained far too much relevant information and too many crucial questions for listeners' already overloaded minds to digest the day of the forum. Both Rebecca Bluestone and Kate Anderson generously shared their perspectives.

## Spotlight on Rebecca Bluestone

### Compilation from Joyce Hayes and Janet Austin

Rebecca Bluestone was a busy woman at Convergence. She conducted a one day studio class titled "Career Management: A Workshop for the Professional Artist," presented an abbreviated version of the class as a seminar, participated in two panel discussions, and then presented the closing keynote address: "Intuition and the Process of Making Art." In order to make the deadline, and because of pressing personal obligations, Joyce Hayes conveyed her thoughts about Bluestone by phone including observations Janet Austin e-mailed to her.

Joyce described Rebecca as pragmatic and focused, quiet but generous, emanating a great joy in working with threads. She dresses casually in



Rebecca Bluestone, left: "Untitled 41," 70" x 24" right: "Untitled 43," 70" x 24" ©2000-2003 Rebecca Bluestone, courtesy Gerald Peters Gallery. Photos by Herb Lotz

jeans and a knit top for small and large audiences, often talks without the aid of a microphone, projecting her concise insights confidently. For the keynote address, she "talked for a full hour, flat out," without notes. Hayes had asked Janet Austin about her response to the talk, who concurred that Rebecca's courage, love of her work, and positive attitude were evident in how she presented herself on stage, standing in front of the podium, so clearly willing to "put herself out there in the world".

Rebecca's goal from the beginning of her career was to become a fine artist exhibiting in "high end" galleries. She considers that she weaves her canvas and that dyes and weft are her paints. She is striving for a kind of gradation and color flow that is like paint. Her primary sources of inspiration are music, light and the New Mexico landscape. She is not the kind of artist who shifts directions quickly, and has essentially taken a singular track since the day she started weaving tapestry on her own. Small changes occur with each piece and in general a series evolves for about two years before it is fully explored. She used to produce 30 pieces a year but has cut her production in half after being diagnosed



with cancer. Although she considers the cancer behind her, she now chooses to not work as hard. Rebecca acknowledges that things happen to all of us; how we deal with them is what is important.

There are several observations that Rebecca consistently reiterates when discussing her philosophy and artwork. "What comes easiest and naturally to you is what you should be doing." Do not make the mistake of assuming that, because it is easy and you are not struggling, it is not important. "The work becomes the teacher." Rebecca has never had creative blocks because she expects the present piece to generate the next. Discipline for an artist means knowing yourself well enough to recognize when you are thinking about what others will think.

Related to marketing, Rebecca takes the approach that "commerce is just an exchange of energy." With her goal to eventually sell her work in the best fine arts galleries, she had the novel idea early in her career to send postcard announcements of her work to the galleries she hoped to be part of in the future. During the Critical Forum, Kate Anderson, who manages R. Duane Reed Gallery in St. Louis, agreed that the direct visibility of a postcard is effective. Rebecca feels a responsibility to her work, stating "I love my work so much, I want to give it a life out in the world." Her comfortable attitude about expecting to be a successful artist is an excellent example to emulate.

Bluestone had four tapestries at the University of Colorado's Gallery of Contemporary Art in Colorado Springs. The tapestries were hung in the reception area around the desk, not actually in the gallery. Hayes stated that it was hard to get a long view of the work but fortunately, you could get close up to see the "gorgeous surface" of the hangings. They are all woven with three distinct types of silk yarn, dyed in the same bath and used in tandem. As transitions occur, one color will be shifted at a time but the combination of the thread type will remain the same. In three of the pieces, Bluestone uses the Fibonacci sequence in her characteristic linear pattern of squares as the format for color transitions. The fourth piece, "Silk Journey #23," does not contain squares. It forms an ascending transition spanning across the entire surface, moving from dark navy blue up to a neutral peachy beige.

## Convergence Comments

### Superlatives From Deb Erikson

Bravo to everyone that put the Convergence tapestry exhibits together and participated! I loved the Small Format show. It was well displayed. Each 'panel' of tapestries was captivating, working well as a unit. If you participated, you should be proud.

The ATB5 was breathtaking. Barbara Heller's piece was the most powerful comment I've seen on the state of our world. The bones she attached across the lower portion brought her feelings into the real world. It is a brave statement that touched me to the core- expressing the fears, anger and pain I also feel. She told me she will continue making political pieces, the next one about land mines, stating, "I have to do this."

"Woven Journeys," at the Foothills Art Center in Golden, organized by Kathy Spoering, included tapestries by Karen Benjamin, Mary Dieterich, James Koehler, Sarah Swett, Nancy Taylor, Irvin and Lisa Trujillo and Kathy. I loved the mix of different styles of tapestry all shown together. In each piece the weaver's style was easily identified and complemented the ones hanging nearby. James Koehler's quiet, introspective work was lovely next to Sarah Swett's energetic pieces that capture a moment in



Barbara Heller, "Still Life with Bird," 62" x 60"

time. Mary Dieterich's small, colorful works drew you in from across the room. The gallery is an old church and the tapestries mingled with very tall stained glass windows within the sanctuary. Good company, I would say.

Kathy's recent "seasons" series is a wonderful evolution of her work, using four borders in an interesting and integrated manner. The most recent piece "A Time To Wait," is a profile of her pregnant daughter-in-law in an outdoor setting, and symbolizes Spring. I loved the border along the bottom on the Heritage series, but this new direction is the perfect vision for this one. The top border contains an arched scene, like a cathedral. Kathy's work celebrates family, love and spirit and the arched top highlights the sacredness of her work.

I enjoyed meeting Irvin and Lisa Trujillo and seeing Kathy Spoering with her grandbaby at the opening.

I was able--- to see Sarah Swett's pieces at the show in Longmont, "Fiber with an Attitude," exhibiting with Kathryn Alexander, Deb Menz, and Sarah Lamb. Finally, I got to see "Indigo Bath" and one of my favorites, "Back to Front" in person. All

of the non-color areas are actually open warp. It is like the colors are dancing on the warp. I hear that Sarah has always been in love with warp, it is clear in these pieces! Sarah's color work is unexpected and extraordinary.

A new "face" cropped up at six different shows I attended. I was struck by this powerful abstract work that had a strong voice and showed real evolution with each piece. Her name is Connie Lippert and she is working within the Navajo wedge weave, using only natural dyes. I spoke with her, about her work and she showed me her portfolio. As she came to the piece that is the beginning of this group using Navajo wedge weave, she casually commented, "This is when I had the epiphany." I so agree. Within the nature of the weave, one ends with a beautiful even rhythm of a scalloping edge. Combined with the wonderful rhythm of her color work, peaks and valleys and arrows that seem to point and direct my heart, they are beautiful to behold. One title and piece sticks in my mind. "I am holding the sun in my hands" (photo page 3) is a piece dyed mostly with marigolds from her garden.

Finally, I would like to send a huge thanks to everyone that made all of Convergence and the shows possible. This was my first and not my last!

### **Observations from Tommye Scanlin**

The tapestry exhibits in the Denver area during Convergence were stellar. There were several tapestries in the exhibits at the Convention Center, including ones by Jean-Pierre Larochette and Yael Luri, and Monique Lehman, among others. Here are impressions:

It was wonderful to see several pieces by the same artist in the "Six of One" exhibit and also in the "Woven Journeys" exhibit in Golden. By having examples of more than one piece from each artist there is a chance to observe diversity and similarity in each artist's creative process. It was also instructive to see the difference in the actual pieces and print and/or online versions of the work. Several of the tapestries in both shows have been published in either or both formats.

As far as ATB5, the works were thought-provoking. I was pleased to have a piece in the exhibit, quite a small one compared to several that were



Kathy Spoering, "A Time To Wait"  
Seasons series: Spring, 36" x 56", 2004

there. I was most taken by a piece by the Norwegian artist, Anne Stabell. It was titled "Before the Beginning of Everything" and was one of the most moving pieces I have ever experienced. She was at the ATA forum and had slides included in the showing of works after the panel discussion. Her other pieces were equally impressive.



Anne Stabell, "Before the Beginning of Everything"  
130 x 195 cm, 1999 photo by Frank Chr. Kvisgaard

The ATA day on July 3, with the business meeting, panel discussion, and opportunity for members to show 5 slides each, was what I went to Convergence for...and it was more than worth the effort.

### **Reflections by Linda Weghorst**

At Convergence I expected to be inspired, gain energy and to come away with excitement and enthusiasm. I attended outstanding exhibitions, and heard excellent keynote speeches and seminars. In spite of this I still felt a sense of detachment from the overall conference scene.

Saturday, however, proved to be the day that opened up all the possibilities I had hoped for. The morning began with an outstanding seminar presented by Kathy Spoering about working in series. Her tapestries, concepts, processes and method of presentation were not only inspiring but I found many commonalities to my own life and work. I left the morning session energized, my journal and sketchbook filling up.

The ATA Seminar was the height of the conference. Diverse, insightful presenters, (Rebecca Bluestone, Sharon Marcus, and Kate Anderson) an excellent moderator (Christine Laffer), and thought

provoking responses from audience members contributed to the outstanding Critical Forum. Seeing members' slides and hearing statements about their work was the ideal conclusion to the session.

By the close of Convergence I clearly recognized that the tapestry community, artists and supporting organizations are the essential source for my artistic growth. This connection extends far beyond methods and materials to deeper aspects of perspectives, ideas and creative expression. I am grateful for all of the above and indeed returned home with the optimum experience I had anticipated for Convergence.

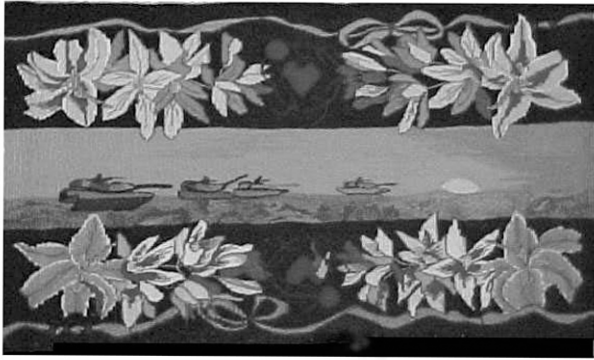
### **Impressions from Jan Austin**

It was my first Convergence. I loved it. The major lectures by Anne Hedlund and Rebecca Bluestone made me cry and that of Arline Fisch, combining slides of her own work with the ancient art that inspired it, was also stimulating.

I saw Small Format Frontiers, ATB5, Woven Journeys, and Six of One, all in 24 hours. I got to hear some amazing people in my seminars (Irvin and Lisa Trujillo, Rebecca Bluestone, James Koehler, Alice Zrebiec, Bhakti Zhiiek)

Then there was the ATA forum, with Rebecca Bluestone again, this time talking about her road to success in the fine arts world, and Sharon Marcus speaking from an educators point of view, with Kate Anderson, who runs a "high end" gallery as well as being a basketry artist. Sharon's talk was an impressive summation of recent fiber art history, including very perceptive and thought provoking insights into problems and criticisms of the field. It was really useful to hear the perspective of someone with gallery expertise. It seems like we are always imagining what they think. One of the things that Rebecca Bluestone said was that at a certain point, having visualized where she wanted to be, in the art world, and having worked very hard to get there, she decided to just "act as if I was there, and demand that people treat me that way."

On Sunday, with all the galleries closed, I went to the Denver Art Museum, which has a stunning collection of Native American Art. I was "blown away" not only by the Navajo rugs, but also pottery



Kathe Todd Hooker, "Momento Morii," 7" x 12"

and exquisite baskets, like the magical feathered Pomo baskets. The Pre-Columbian art floor included a few spectacular tapestries.

The very best part of the large tapestry presence at Convergence was getting to "hang out" with my online tapestry friends, some old and some new, and get to know each other much better.

### Tidbits from Linda Rees

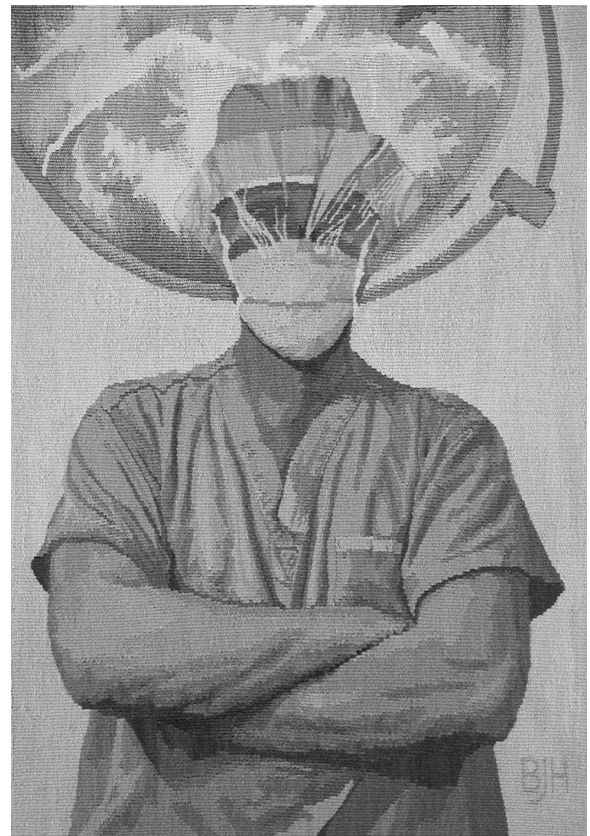
The Six of One exhibit received an amazing amount of general public exposure as groups of predominantly young gallery goers strolled along Santa Fe Drive during the "Gallery Crawl". The size of the gallery dictated that the artwork be relatively small. Karen Crislip had many interestingly mounted pieces. "Deceived," mounted on a tomahawk, combines leather and small artifacts with a very attractively woven face and is a strong image. "Picassofish" is equally inventive. Finely woven tapestries by Kathe Todd Hooker lined one wall of the gallery. "Momento Morii" is a sleeper, a gem of a statement that has received little attention. I like the way Kathe has juxtaposed the new reality of our national participation in war with floral beauty, the classic symbol of the pleasantries of life. Are the row of tanks heading into the sunset like cowboys or is the "sunset" really a fire? The image is so commanding, that in my memory it appears larger than 12" wide. The task of incorporating unpleasant realities into artwork in a way that still appeals to viewers is challenging. Barbara Heller's "Cover Ups Series: Surgeon" continues her evocative series. In person, the image is quite understated in its muted tonality but also more textural than I anticipated from pictures. In studying it I start to ques-

tion what is happening. Is the observer the all too conscious patient? I applaud both artists, suspecting that it is difficult to spend many work hours focusing on negative realities. It is not surprising that both artists chose to balance demanding subject matter with flower designs where they can relish the play of color and form.

I was impressed with the innovative way Deb Menz presented her small weavings in the "Fiber with Attitude" exhibit. She combines colored and embossed hand-made paper with very small sections of tapestry or needlework in related colors. It is unclear which inspired the other, but certainly the framing and weaving work as a unit. Her shaped constructions were refreshingly original too. The crispness of presentation is evident in Sarah Swetts pieces too, especially impressive in the items with major sections of warp exposed.

### Workshop Summary by Priscilla Lynch

"Ikat for Tapestry and Rugs" was a 3-day workshop by Mary Zicafosse. In weft ikat, imagery is created by wrapping selected pattern areas with a



Barbara Heller, "Cover Ups Series: Surgeon" 35" x 25", 2002/3

resist (plastic ikat tape) and dyeing or overdyeing the weft yarn. We stretched our weft yarn on adjustable width pegged boards and then tightly wrapped the segments according to a pre-determined pattern drawn as a cartoon. The weft sequence was maintained by twining or lacing along the end loops. After dyeing, drying, and unwrapping the weft, we were ready to weave.

It is difficult to precisely predict shrinkage and weft uptake so the final width of the ikat was determined in the first few rows of weaving by adding and deleting warp ends as needed for the dyed pattern to line up properly. Mary discussed and demonstrated starting and ending new weft bobbins and tricks to keep the ikat pattern.

Most of the class wove a rug sample at 4epi with a double strand of rug wool. Since I only do tapestry, I set my loom at 8epi and used a single strand of wool. The technique worked well for tapestry as well as for rugs and I think it will be something I would like to explore more.

The indistinct edges of the ikat were a wonderful counterpoint to the hard edges of tapestry and would be difficult to achieve with any traditional tapestry techniques. It was also a quicker way to get complex patterning. I wove an 8.5" x 13" tapestry during a 3-day workshop plus a couple evenings. Mary was a warm and enthusiastic teacher who inspired us all.

The James Koehler "Color and Design for Contemporary Tapestry" was a fast paced one-day studio class that introduced concepts from his longer workshops in designing tapestry using mathematical and geometric principles. Design exercises utilized 1) theories of golden proportion, 2) Fibonacci sequences, 3) patterning within different grid structures and 4) a pliable plane to create 3D effects and movement. Each of these exercises included a color component to explore as well. By the end of the day we each had at least the beginnings of 4 geometric tapestry designs to continue working on. We were also given extensive handouts for further study. The visual power of geometric work as evidenced so well by the exquisite work of James Koehler, has long intrigued me and this class gave me some tools to facilitate my own designing.



Mary Zicafoose, "Yellow Sky/New Stars" 60" x 41", 2003  
Ikat, Hand Dyed Wool on Linen Warp

## Mary Zicafoose: Poised on the Edge

By Ellen Ramsey

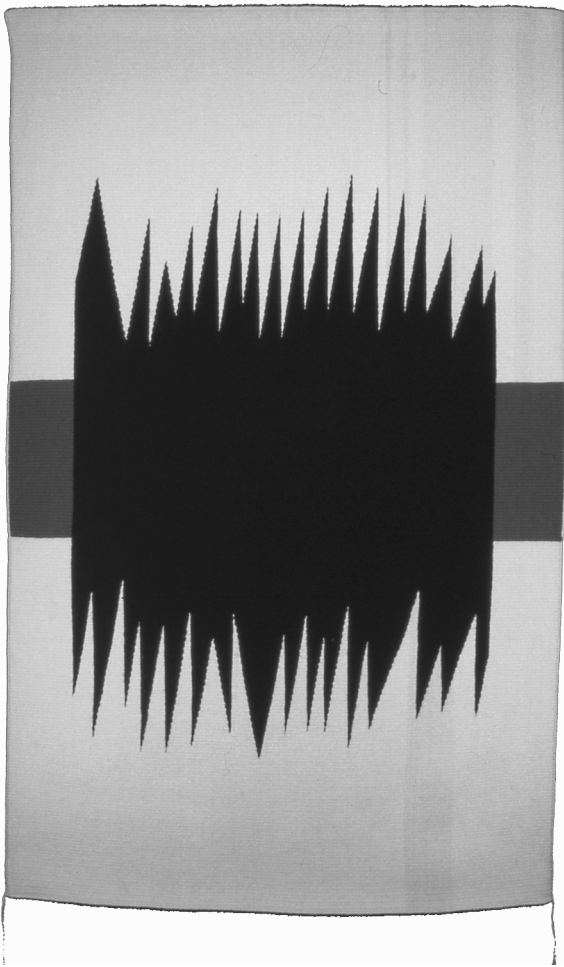
The magic in Mary Zicafoose's tapestries happens at the edges. Whether it be a slit, a single pass of contrast inserted between crisp bands of saturated color, or the soft tonal edges of shapes formed by ikat dyed fibers, it is the edges of her woven forms that turn up the voltage and grab our attention. In terms of career development, Mary Zicafoose is also an artist on the edge, having reached a level of accomplishment in her work and now feeling the need to leap to a new plane in her work. Her recent shows at the Native American Trading Company and the Emil Nelson Gallery in Denver offer us a rewarding glimpse into her process of "repositioning" where, according to the artist, "something must change or shift either perceptually, technically, or energetically."

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To facilitate a shift in perspective, she is very open to working in other media. She explains:

The easiest way for me to think out of the box is to literally get out of it. Working in a different medium forces me to step back, forward, and to the side...It removes the safety net, leaving me holding just what is truly MY visual vocabulary. It is scary, humbling, and exhilarating. The trade-off for jumping off the cliff is to return to the studio/loom/dye pot with my senses more acute, and my design muscles more agile.

Thus, she jumped at the chance when the director of the Emil Nelson Gallery asked her to do an exhibit of works on paper in conjunction with her weavings at the adjoining Native American Trading Company. The resulting exhibition featured lithographs and over fifty monotypes.



Mary Zicafoose, "Wildfire," 67" x 41"

The prints clearly echo the tapestries in color and design elements. Several depict a jagged shape with two square sides that is similar to the elements found in the tapestry "Three Hills Burning." The variety of ways this one simple visual idea proliferates in the print work was inspiring to see. The shape is at once a flame, a crown, or a star depending on the design interpretation. There were also design elements, like circles arranged as polka dots, not yet seen in the weavings. The process of making the monotypes was an extension of Mary's established design methods. For the tapestries, Mary sometimes mocks up her designs on graph paper using silkscreen papers. It was obviously not much of a leap to ink cutouts of these elements and run them through a press. The spontaneity in this work is wonderful.

The tapestries in the show come from two separate series of work. The majority were slit tapestries which interpret the archetypal symbol of fire of which "Wildfire" is a particularly strong example. Controlled jig jags are a common element in her work, but not here. These flames are sharp, asymmetrical serrations that rip unpredictably through an electric yellow field. The play of positive and negative is thrilling in the lower half of the composition where yellow takes the role of aggressor. This is the one I wanted to steal for myself.

The ikat pieces in this show are the beginning of a new series, "The Counting Cloth" that references the process of recording time and planetary movements. Spontaneity gets incorporated into the structure of the weaving. Mary put it best when she told me:

By definition, ikat tapestry blows my whole notion of the power of precise color intersection to bits. Ikat is totally about creating illusion, softness, blurred edges and uncertain boundaries. It is hatching without hatching. The use of ikat opens the door to allow something unplanned, uncharted, ungraphed, and uncontrolled to happen in the tight constraints of procedure and execution at the dye pot/loom. Sometimes the result is inspired, sometimes disappointing. Always there is an element of surprise. Ikat provides a refreshing balance in thought, design and process, the other side of the coin.

"Yellow Sky/New Stars" features soft gray X's that emerge within bands of black in a sequence that brings to mind the phases of the moon with their subtle advancing glow. This is very evocative work. When I plan my stealing caper, I'm taking this one too. Thankfully, we can all look forward to more developments in this series. Mary will be doing an exhibition of her new ikat work in a show called "Tapestry Wrapped/Unwrapped" at the 2005 Surface Design Conference next June in Kansas City. She says:

The plan is to push the envelope on this weft face technique into deeper and more complex multiple wrapped/dyed applications, to take it someplace technically/visually that I have not yet traveled.

So Mary Zicafoose is at a crossroads, poised on the edge of her mature and solid visual language and technical niche, and the 'sky's the limit' possibilities that mastery of these aspects bring to an artist. There is a definite sense of creative momentum apparent in the work in Denver that is hard to put into words. Hopefully the example of her visual energy will serve as a reminder to all of us of what is possible within the language of tapestry.

I am very grateful to Mary Zicafoose for her generosity in sharing information with me about her process and current work.

## "A Tribute to Othar Turner: A Complete Human Being"

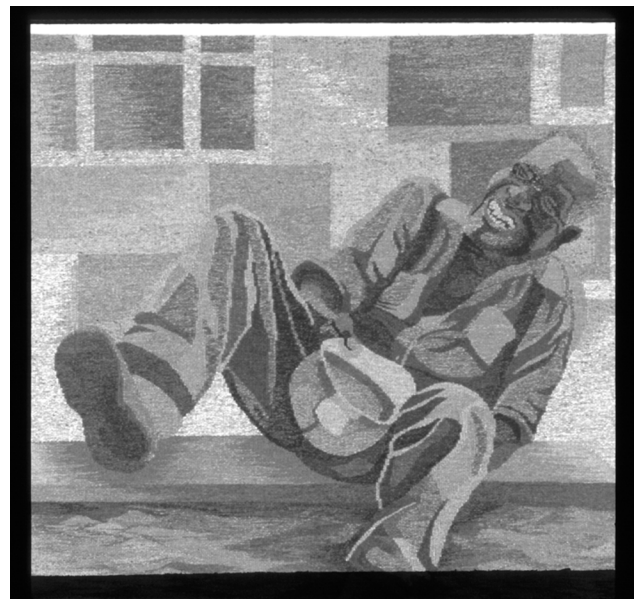
by Linda Weghorst

Throughout the 30 years I have worked as an artist/ handweaver I have often explored figurative and facial imagery as a vehicle to express emotion and the human experience. As I compose these pieces I attempt to "feel" the mood or essence of the subject with the goal being to convey this to the viewer.

The Othar tapestry began on a February morning as I was reading the Memphis newspaper. An article announced that Othar (Otha) Turner, master of the homemade fife and king of the barbecued goat and music picnic, died in Gravel Springs, MS at the age of 94. He was described as a living link to the rural

blues, preserving the 19th century fife and drum tradition, which influenced the development of the blues. The photos with the article brimmed with a sense of liveliness. After reading the following quote I was determined my next tapestry had to be about Othar.

"He was the most complete human being I ever met. His life, his art, his work, his family, his whole belief system was one thing, no separation. I never met anybody I thought was as absolutely resolved as Otha Turner." quoted his friend, Luther Dickerson.



Linda Weghorst, "Tribute to Othar Turner: A Complete Human Being," 46" x 50", photo by Allan McCoy

My first response was that I want to be Othar Turner! A more reachable goal was to set upon the task of weaving a tapestry, which would convey his vibrant life to the viewers.

Colors chosen were dusty, Native American churro yarns, plant dyed, each tone blended with shades of gray. Figure and face were carefully drawn, cartooned and woven. The background areas were spontaneously developed to emphasize the subject.

At the first showing of the tapestry, ATB5, viewers remarked about the sense of happiness and energy in Othar. I am now satisfied that the path I began that quiet morning last February has been fulfilled and my life has been inspired in the process. Perhaps I'm even a bit more like Othar Turner these days!



# Ruth Jones

By Linda Rees

The distinctiveness of two tapestries by Ruth Jones, "An Officer and a Bishop" and "Zeus Lies in Ceres' Bosom.," seen in exhibits in the late 1980s, intrigued me enough to visit her studio during the "Making a Place for Tapestry" symposium in Vancouver in 1993. Although the encounter was brief, it was memorable. Jones was working on an elaborate medieval pattern for a commission on her large Aubusson loom. Her voice was wistful as she stated that, as a single mom with a daughter to support, she no longer had the luxury of doing art pieces.

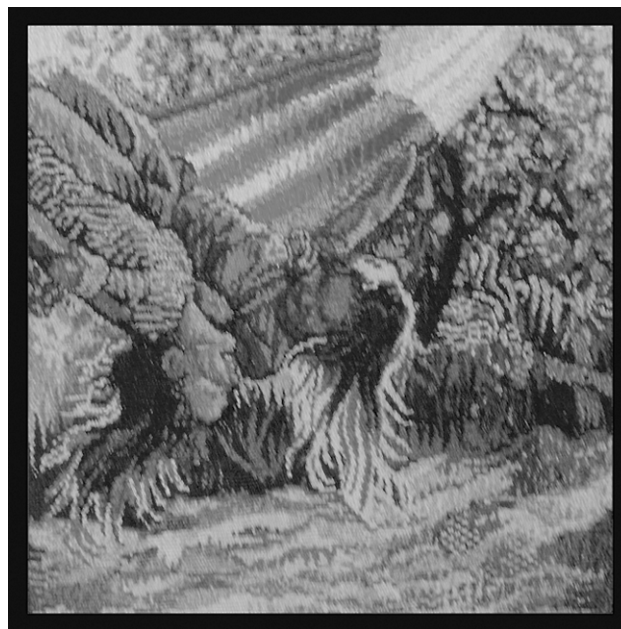
Over the years since that meeting, I wondered if she had been successful in supporting her family through weaving. More importantly, I was curious to know if she would find enough creative outlets in the process. The 2002 Convergence in Vancouver, afforded me that chance to revisit her studio.

That spring I also discovered that she had a tapestry in the "Half Past Twelve: Moments in Tapestry" exhibit at the Fine Line Creative Art Center. The beautiful little tapestry, "A Moment in Freedom," later renamed "Amicahammocus," proved that her weaving skill, distinctive style, and ability to depict an intriguing story were still very much alive.

Ruth had, indeed, been able to continue to weave and maintain the Granville Island studio with only one major stint working as head painter on a movie set. One of her most enjoyable tasks on the job was to supervise the mixing of color for the painters. We talked about her background and how she chose the tapestry medium.

When Ruth was nine, her father joined the United Nations and the family moved to Turkey for his first post. She was educated in embassy schools close to where ever her parents were stationed and developed a fascination for the objects produced by the indigenous cultures she encountered. It led her to study anthropology and classics in Vancouver and later to receive a B.F.A. at the San Francisco Art Institute.

During a visit with her parents on the island of Timor before graduation from the art institute, Ruth



Ruth Jones, "Amicahammocus," 12" x 12" , 2002

used her time to study their extensive collection of ceremonial clothes of the head hunting society that had existed there until the 1930s. Ruth recounts her "moment of discovery."

Head full of this electric encounter with the textile support to headhunting (rituals decorated or described in cloth), I flew to Vancouver . . . The Airporter bus dropped me off a couple of doors from Lount's Tapestry Gallery. Friends I was staying with had not yet gotten home from work so I ambled into the Gallery. ..Wham! Love at first sight -- the answer to all the early '80s disposable, nihilistic, or commercial art practices that I had been struggling to assimilate at art school without much success. Barbara Lount welcomed my query as to where one could study the techniques. Though Pinton et Freres, . . . was no longer taking apprentices, they gave me the address for L'ENAD (Ecole Nationale d'Art Decoratif) in Aubusson.

I flew to France that fall without having heard back from the school, convinced I would sweep floors, if necessary, until they accepted me to the graduate programme. Luckily, I had crossed paths with a letter of acceptance . . . And thus began my "apprend- tissage".



The Head of Instruction in Tapestry Production, M. Saint-Rapt, told Jones that he could not instruct her in weaving the traditional figurative styles she wanted. They were producing contemporary, more abstract imagery suitable for the 1980s. Undaunted, she went to the libraries to research past designs. As she started incorporating the techniques she discovered, Saint-Rapt began slowly advising her about the process. By the end of her tutorage, he imparted his knowledge willingly.

In the research process, Jones discovered a connection to her heritage. She found tapestry designs created by her great- great-uncle, Edward Burne-Jones, the distinguished Pre-Raphaelite artist, designer, and cohort of William Morris. While Ruth had gravitated to the Pre-Raphaelite art movement earlier in art school, and even started to collect books about her ancestor, the fact that he designed tapestries had not registered in her mind until she became personally interested in weaving. The Pre-Raphaelite "refusal to join contemporary art movements, forming their own, based on direct study of nature - which they believed showed respect for the Creator," fit with her own subject matter and "fascination with beauty." Jones states that it:

Gave me an interesting anchor to artistic process in another time. I do feel that something of EBJ's drive to paint the World Beautiful flows in my veins. But I don't try to consciously add something of him to my work. His "femme fatale" and 'woman-as-sacrifice' platform is hard for me to feel operating in my spirit..... what I feel he does give me in my blood is courage to believe in myself. He legitimizes my strong instinct to narrate with images, and the responsibility and savvy to attempt to do it well, and to share it.

Ruth Jones felt a mandate to pass on the skills she acquired through research and the apprenticeship to insure that they are not lost. Setting up her studio on Granville Island was an opportunity to accomplish this goal because it gave public access to her studio. She was active in community tapestry projects, teaching graduate students from Capilano College, and working with children's groups.

When I interviewed her in July of 2002, she was nearing the end of her ten-year commitment to the studio on Granville Island and eager to move on to a

less public setting. With the current opportunity to see a tapestry of hers this summer in the 2004 ATB5, I contacted her again. Her present project is making a site-specific tapestry for a building in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. As Ruth writes of her passion, I recall that all her past artists statements have been affirmations of tapestry.

## The Beneficial Handicap

By Ruth Jones

Cruising through the Rockies to a family reunion in Alberta, I found myself relating to my surroundings with a weaver's eye. A logging truck passing by in late afternoon sun elicits a shape-building solution. A mountain tree-line emerging through fog becomes an exercise in irregular hachures, and the sodium lights in a highway tunnel will need some fierce and fiery orange silk to do them justice.



Ruth Jones, "Manning Park Millefleurs," 54" x 66"

The world is a beautiful place and rendering bits of its gorgeousness in tapestry seems like a good way to honor it. The reduction of nature's endless permutation into a system of woven pattern is my prayer of gratitude for being here to witness and participate. I cannot help but strive to capture this in a woven form; the time and care required are not negotiable. Tapestry, as Archie Brennan pointed out to me, is my handicap.

continued...

I choose to weave my images because the art of weaving is the process that most clearly trains my mind and allows my spirit to be fully expressed. I weave tapestries because I want to develop more of the qualities embodied in the space that tapestry holds for human consciousness.

What do I mean by tapestry holding a space? I refer to an etheric Reality formed of wisdom teachings, insights gathered and experiences refined over the span of human existence. Another example would be that of Medicine which holds the space for healing paradigms to relieve physical and other ailments. This experience based-knowledge can be referenced through lectures, books and internship, yet it exists in the ethers as a Reality beyond these human access points. Doctors and all healers open to this space when they practice, and ultimately help hold the space for Medicine to persist and develop in the world.

As a body of knowledge, tapestry is holding the space for several beneficial paradigms beyond what can be seen from a finished work. Interacting with weaving may open this space in the consciousness of the participants-- the weaver or the observer, but the space itself is a Reality beyond their personal experience, and into which they tap upon contact with this art medium.

The space that Tapestry holds was formed the first time a weaver stopped her/his shuttle part way on the trajectory across the weft and had the thought to turn around. It was invented sequentially in several parts of the world by diverse civilizations, and practiced by all tiers of society -- often under both humble circumstances and by the nobility. I hold that this web of continuity has contributed to a psycho-spiritual Reality available to anyone who now participates as a guardian of this lineage.

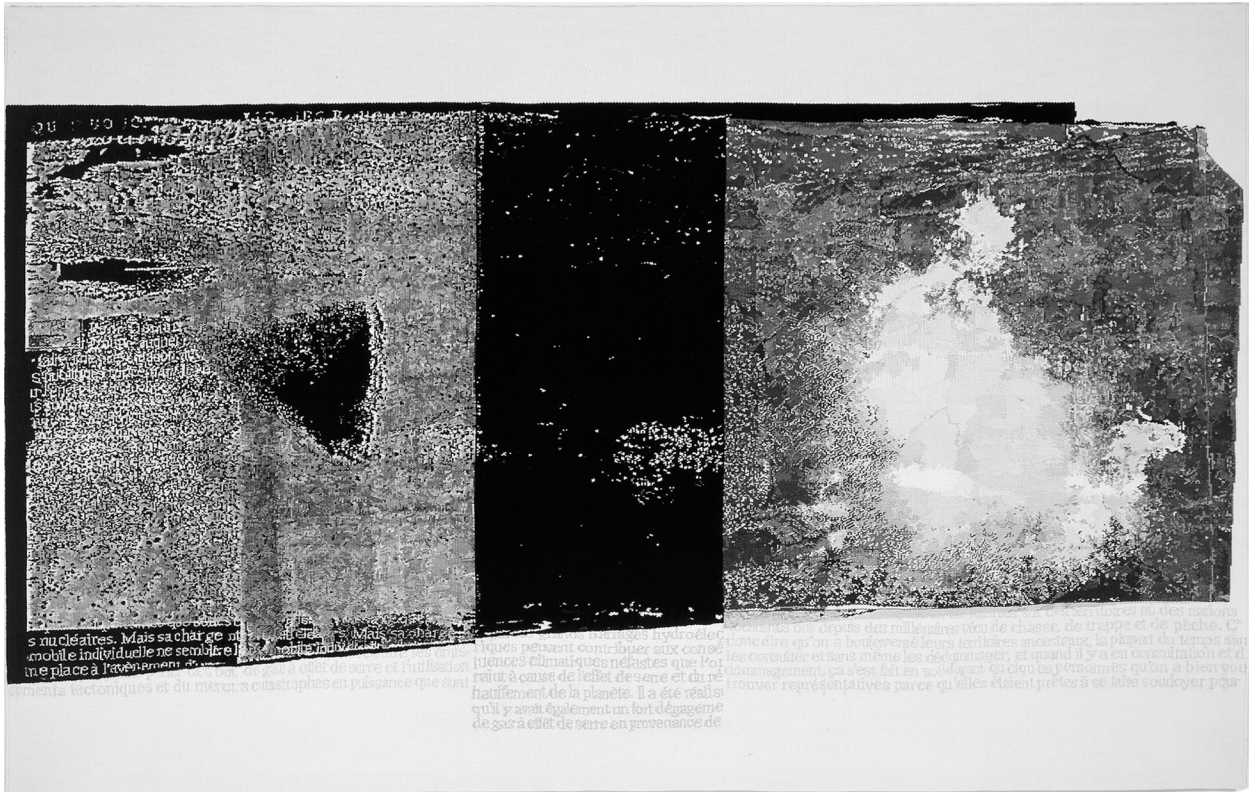
For a designer or weaver to align with this space is to open up to trouble-free sessions of inspiration and to protection from the entanglements of the technical process. Fewer bobbins fall to the floor, wefts pass with ease, warps hold their tension yet yield to the weaver's hand as it reaches into the shed. To believe in this space is to enable the download of information from weavers and cartoon makers in the near and far past. The challenge in open-

ing to it is to stay rooted in one's individuality and personal artistic development.

The path of personal artistic development has not presented me with an Autobahn of freedom. Client-driven projects don't always rank in modern art culture and dealer philosophy. I have had periods of insecurity and self-consciousness regarding weaving custom work for a living. Despite occasionally taking client tastes into account in design work, I grow bolder as I understand more about the larger Reality I contribute to. I know without a doubt that the second half of my career involves expanding my own vision and awareness, and embodying Truth over Fantasy in subject matter. I continue refining my passion around light and color and simplifying my preoccupation with detail, striving always for more purity and clarity. When in doubt, I weave it indigo.

Through authentic practice I endeavor to absorb the following qualities I believe are embodied by this medium. Without daily study at the loom, I would be too distracted, too lazy, or too wrapped up in the importance of my own emotions to see the value in opening to them. They are, among others: Integrity, Truth, Genius, Vulnerability, Refinement and Unification. The discipline of the medium embodies Integrity. The fact that one cannot fake the medium is a study in Truth. The endless variation of individual expression personifies Genius. The Vulnerability of Tapestry in the face of Modernity exemplifies my hope for a peaceful future that celebrates the eternal over the flavor of the month, and the quiet sage over the loud politician. Through its refinement of process it speaks to the Refinement of the Human Spirit. Through its cultural and historical pervasiveness it speaks to understanding and tolerance between cultures and faiths: Unification.

Lastly, I sense that in the humble and private act of tapestry weaving, I am fortunate to open to a timelessness held by the nature of the medium. To be fully present at the loom is to sit in meditation, the mind busy with a moving mudra of tasks while the soul opens to communication with its Source. For me, this is the essence of freedom, and a clue to understanding the resonance in all tapestry works.



Marcel Marois, "Mirrors - Turbulences", 80" x 126", 2000 , Wool and cotton courtesy Textile Museum

## BY HAND IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE: CONTEMPORARY TAPESTRY

By Micala Sidore

The exhibition "By Hand in the Electronic Age," took place at the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C. March 27 through September 5, 2004. It marks only the second time that the museum has shown contemporary tapestry<sup>1</sup>. Rebecca Stevens, the museum's Consulting Curator for Contemporary Textiles, chose work from 12 Hungarian artists who had participated in Karpit 1, an international exhibit held in Budapest in 2001, where she had served on the jury panel. She also selected two North American artists, Marcel Marois, from Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, and Jon Erik Riis from Atlanta, Georgia, USA as examples of North American tapestry weavers who had exhibited in the Hungary show and whose works possess a mature vision.

<sup>1</sup> ITNET opened its second touring exhibit there in 1992.

Stevens states that she was looking for:

two fabulous tapestry artists who have a body of work . . . that is really different, one from the other. [It] made sense, to take two artists that were in [Karpit I]. Both [are] incredibly accomplished.<sup>2</sup>

To work in tandem with the contemporary show, Stevens' associate Lydia Fraser, Assistant Curator for the Eastern Hemispheres Collection, has installed a second exhibition: "Timeless Connections: Exploring Tapestry Weave." Examples from cultures around the world reveal the unexpected, as tapestry appears in non-European cultures: Coptic Egypt, pre-Columbian Peru, Ottoman Dynasty Turkey, Mali, India, Afghanistan, Mexico, Iran, China and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Fraser further links the two exhibits by collecting and posting a series of reactions to them

continued...

<sup>2</sup> All Rebecca Stevens quotes are from an interview with the author April 23, 2004.

quoted from Marois and Riis. In addition, she has written the essay, "What is tapestry?" for the catalog in which she states: "There are three primary types of tapestry weave, defined by the structural interface where two colors of weft yarns meet,"<sup>3</sup> a limited but clear distinction.

Together the exhibitions enrich each other; they are intelligent and often brave. Viewers who know tapestry, can appreciate the lush thoughtful work of the contemporary weavers, perhaps rejoicing at its sophisticated aesthetic and its no-nonsense technical expertise. Those who don't know it as well will find much to seduce them. Fraser's collection will likely surprise and thrill everyone: visitors will suddenly realize the wealth of diverse sources that trigger the work of the contemporary maker.

Most American tapestry weavers first saw Marcel Marois' work in the ATA exhibits of the mid-80's; his workshop at Convergence in Toronto, 1986, was so mobbed by weavers who wanted to learn more about his approach that the organizers had to add a second workshop<sup>4</sup>. Ecology, often with newspaper articles as sources, has served to inspire him from the beginning of his career thirty years ago. Here Marois groups together a series of small pieces, little more than a foot square, with the general title of "Rain," followed by a color-"Yellow and Green," "Blue," "Beige Black," "Violet," and "Black." Each shows a smaller image, like the photographic transparency part of a slide, embedded within a larger frame of plain color. The images are blurred and subtle, a thread-by-thread depiction of forests, half obscured by rainfall. They invite the viewer to examine as they look, to imagine the changes that take place over time, to consider the quality of rain and the content of the rain: drenching rain, acid rain, destructive rain. Marois has always cared about each thread-and here he uses each seed of the tapestry weave to accumulate a rich final impression.

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<sup>3</sup> Lydia Fraser, *What is tapestry?*, page 5, *By Hand in the Electronic Age: Contemporary Tapestry*, exhibition catalogue

<sup>4</sup> This point of exhibits that introduce various tapestry artists is omitted in the catalog.

Two of Marois' larger pieces, "Mirrors -- Turbulences," and "Space-Combustion," again place the figurative and narrative part of the tapestry in a larger frame of a single color. These pieces also include words both legible and illegible; some leave an impression of an aging newspaper's fading print. All the work is demanding and satisfying as imagery with no specific figures becomes recognizable, or almost. The mystery in his work acts like a magnet.

Marois employs a limited palette, mostly neutral tones and black. His work is solemn and meditative. Riis, on the other hand, uses color and sumptuous threads and embellishments-metallic thread (like gold), freshwater pearls, crystal beads-with an exuberance that echoes all the precious materials in tapestries from the French-Flemish traditions. These pieces shimmer with wealth, wildly and engagingly luxurious. Two of his images recall Greek mythology. "Icarus # 3" is falling in a whirlwind of feathers, the sea that will drown him detailed with turquoise beads that act as drops of water. The museum chose this piece to advertise the exhibition in the local mass transit station where the horizontal figure of the naked Icarus, photographic in its realism, attracted second takes. Riis' second reference to the Greeks, "Masked Muses" shows the muses, with translucent, blindfold-like masks, embracing in a stylized pose.

Riis' work also includes jacket-shaped pieces that work like the skin of the upper torso, showing breasts and muscles, and which open to reveal an under-image of human organs. He is thinking about tapestry as inset in clothing, presenting the body as clothing, available to try on. His imagery has a confident fearlessness.

The opportunity to see more than one piece by these two artists fulfills Stevens' hope that viewers will understand something of the art in their personal visions; the authority of the medium gets communicated unhesitatingly.

The tradition of tapestry weaving in Hungary is not much more than a hundred years old. The group represented in this exhibit includes members of the Hungarian Association of Tapestry Artists, founded

in 1996, as we learn in a short two-page essay by their president, Ildiko Dobrani, at the end of the catalog. Most have studied at the Hungarian Academy of Applied Arts<sup>5</sup>, and represent an aesthetic that has developed over the last half of the twentieth century, amidst war, Soviet domination, and recent challenges of the market. The group has the



Gabriella Hajnal, "Raports", 79"x 88" x 2", 2000, Wool, wood and egg tempera courtesy Textile Museum

extremely good fortune to have articulate Edit András as a member of their team.<sup>6</sup> In a thoughtful and informative essay in the catalogue, András talks about each piece as well as Hungarian tapestry in its international context, with references to the relationships between the Hungarian work and that of weavers more familiar to Americans.

Overall, the very large size of all the work is impressive; the Hungarian sense of tapestry seems to derive its definition in part from generous dimensions. This is useful for American weavers to see, in that miniatures have become such a popular format. Large tapestries take courage of a different sort.

Both Ibolya Hegyi and Ildiko Dobrani weave a sense of landscape that is spare - and which cannot

possibly communicate its subtlety and power in a photograph. (The problems of reproducing in print or for the screen have regularly plagued tapestry makers.) Hegyi's triptych "Aquamarine" in particular loses, in print, its subtlety and warmth, especially since she has used conventional materials without the sexy, technologically exciting fiber optic cable used in her ATB 4 entry. This landscape shows Hegyi's typical meticulous attention to detail, and repays close examination.

In Éva Sipos' "Meeting in the Snow," the tapestry maker's mark gets emphasized. She has centered an object (a feather? a stick?) in the midst of a rectangle in pale brown in the midst of an off white field. No area of the tapestry is without the signs of age, no clean pristine space. She is defying all of those who require crisp edges. Age and the effects of time come across most forcefully. Sipos is offering a chance to imagine up close, how a beautiful tapestry woven fabric suggests its future, its fraying and disintegration.

By contrast, the color scheme of Gabriella Hajnal is altogether different. She uses a palette of brilliant red/orange and blue, that, like Riis' work, calls attention to itself. Her alternating panels of heads recall the sequential panels of cartoons in the Sunday funnies. In Hajnal's case, she is offering wide-ranging emotional responses, in facial expressions, and she also echoes the nature of tapestry because her heads reproduce the grid. This piece is part of a larger series in this range of colors; in others, she has organized lines and lines of words. Repetition also suggests the system of weaving; this is an educative choice of imagery. Hajnal represents both the most senior of all the artists and the only one working with collaborators: Katalin Timár and Kiry Nocsovics wove Hajnal's design. Interestingly, András writes:

Th[e] renewal of [Hungarian] tapestry art was made possible when the rigid separation between the intellectual creative artist on the one hand and the material bound subsidiary executor on the other was dissolved.<sup>7</sup>

continued...

<sup>5</sup> The one exception is Gabrielle Hajnal, who studied at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts.

<sup>6</sup> A fellow at the Research Institute of Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest.

<sup>7</sup> Edit András, page 27, *By Hand in the Electronic Age: Contemporary Tapestry*, exhibition catalogue

A theory running through the tapestry community would classify all tapestries woven and designed by the same person, the artist-weaver, as superior to those where the designer and the weaver are not the same person. This latter system, the basis for many of the European studios, has existed for hundreds of years -- but the weavers in this system often find themselves confronted with the challenge of having their contribution under-valued. Members of symphony orchestras, where the composer get all the credit for the brilliant performance of the music and the orchestra all the blame if the music doesn't inspire--know this issue all too well. Collaboration, the opportunity to include more than a single person in the making of a work of art, can add a liveliness to the results. Large scale works become possible in a shorter amount of time. A knowledgeable weaver, aware of both technical possibilities and the advantages of woven material, can make certain cartoons sing and perform in ways that the cartoon maker would not know how to do. Jon Riis receives help in attaching some of the beads and pearls to his work. Does this depreciate the results?

That thorny subject remains open for discussion in the tapestry community; the presence of this show at the Textile Museum opens a different category of question. Rebecca Stevens, when asked about the paucity of tapestry exhibits at her museum, responds:

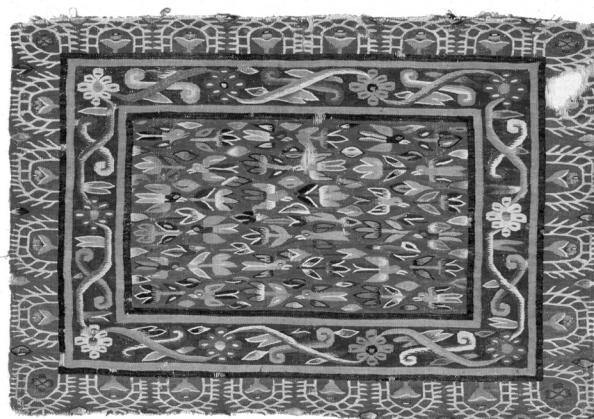
I think what I would like to do is include contemporary tapestry in a more mixed kind of show instead of always segregating it. Otherwise, it's too self-referential; it doesn't widen the circle. So perhaps one could choose a theme, an issue that people were working on, and have works that do different kinds of things. I really truthfully can't envision doing another specifically contemporary tapestry show. [There will be] another one, "Karpets 2," next year in Budapest. The American Tapestry Alliance has biennial shows. [Those exhibits] sort of fulfill that function.

Is she right? Would tapestry achieve adequate representation in such shows as she describes? Those questions too need discussion, and this exhibit, with its superior collection of work, may well be the right place to start the talk.

## Auxiliary Events for "Timeless Connections" and "By Hand in the Electronic Age"

By Courtney Ann Shaw

The concurrent tapestry exhibits at The Textile Museum, are both exquisite. As previously mentioned, "By Hand in the Electronic Age: Contemporary Tapestry" was curated by Rebecca Stevens and "Timeless Connections" was curated by Lydia Fraser, Assistant Curator, Eastern Hemisphere Collections. It shows some twenty works that are part of the Textile Museum's collections from throughout time and place, East and West, employing many tapestry techniques.



Small cover, Peru, south highlands, Late 16th or 17th century, The Textile Museum 91.503. Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1952

I attended the opening reception and several lectures at the small and classy museum. Rebecca Stevens gave a tour highlighting several of the show's pieces during "From Buda's Castle Hill: Contemporary Hungarian Tapestry and Hungarian Cuisine," Wednesday evening, April 28. The Hungarian Ambassador and actor Tony Curtis were among those attending the dinner.

"Tapestry Through the Eyes of the Artist" was an opportunity for the artists to share "insights and unique perspectives about their work." Rebecca introduced Jon Eric Riis and Marcel Marois, to talk about how artists look at tapestry history in reference to items in "Timeless Connections." Their dis-

cussion certainly opened my eyes about the subtleties of design and technique.

Riis commented on his renewed interest in Peruvian work of the Colonial period, by first discussing a small cover, from the South Highlands of Peru, late 16th or 17th century. He pointed out the frame within a frame within a frame and the allusion to Spanish arches, and replication of lace. He responded to the directional and active quality of the birds contrasting to the static borders.

He then selected a finely woven Chinese band of the early 17th century, with metallic thread of the slit tapestry technique. He compared it to his use of metallic threads -- gold leaf on silk cord. He talked



Square, Egypt, 6th-7th century  
The Textile Museum 711.41. Acquired by George Hewitt

about peacock feather filaments in his work in the Mandarin Hotel in N. Y., and the use of freshwater pearls and coral. Jon loves the color combination used in the old band, with its loud colors remaining.

Next we viewed two small Chinese roundels, from the late 17th, early 18th century, probably from the border decoration of a robe. Looking at the reverse side one sees the criss-crossing yarns, thus no waste. So fine are the metallic threads per inch, that with humor, Riis asked if we wanted to use his

glasses to see them. He considers it to be even more special because it includes the 8 Buddhist treasures around the edges.

Finally, Jon talked about an Indian Dhurrie, a flat-woven rug, made by prisoners (possibly from the Abmedabad Jail) in 1915. The design is spontaneous and directional, not unlike the work of the Harrania children's tapestries in Egypt. The weaver used the modulation of dark and light as one textural treatment.

Marcel Marois then spoke, going straight to his inspirational source, a square from a border of a 6th or 7th century Egyptian Coptic weaving. It is a small fragment of very fine tapestry. He compared the composition to contemporary expression in tapestry today, especially his own use of central images, and his use of multiple images to create one idea. Like the Peruvian tapestry mentioned above and this Egyptian one, Marcel, also uses a frame within a frame, which reminds him of Renaissance tapestries too. His borders are more singular in color however.

Next, he approached an Iranian oriental carpet from late 19th century Sennah. It is impressionistic on first glance, built with geometric edges, creating a kinetic and optic effect; then one discovers the flowers and the detail in closer viewing. He fractures his images as well.

To illustrate his methodology and philosophy, Marcel Marois discussed his work, "Miroirs-Turbulences," 2000. He deals with negative changes to the world and its environment. He compared its construction to the Coptic composition, a single topic with different images. The pale text blends into an image of buildings and landscape -a Hydroelectric dam in Quebec, with animals and other allusions. There is a separation between the two sides, a landscape and its explosive disappearance. Marcel has separated from his Gobelins style training to weave what he feels and needs to express.

Marois, also explored environmental issues in the "Rain" series depicting the forest fires outside



of Quebec City, a study of rain and renewal. Marcel works from photographs, then blurs the images. The text of his Rain series, rising from lower levels, can't be read, thus provides no answers. These questions are left for the next generation.

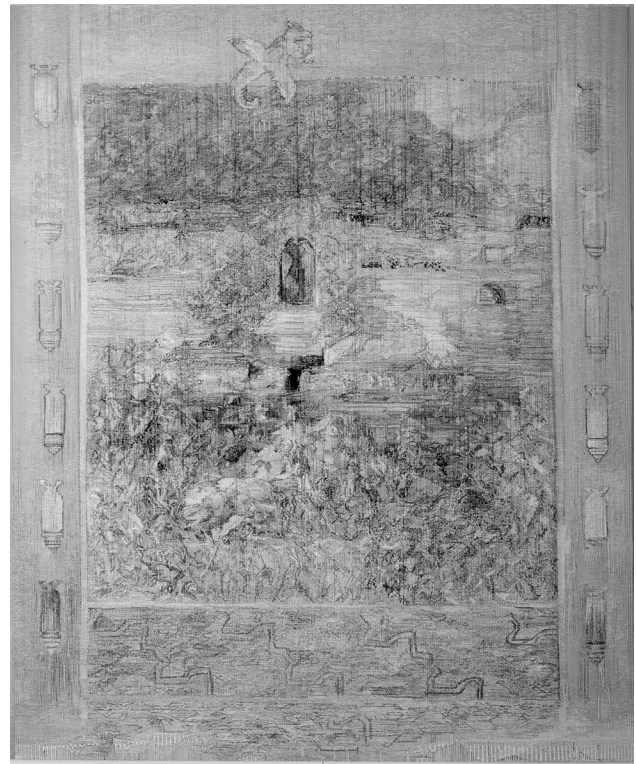
In reference to "Masked Muses," Riis talked about idols of beauty. In the 18th and 19th century the most familiar sculptor in the West was Antonio Canova, who created "The Three Graces." What happened to those white marble sculptures? Beauty today is different, he says. At issue here is what you see and what don't you see? The three fates are engaged in conversation. He invites you to bring your own interpretation to the work. Jon compared it to the Chinese textile he discussed earlier, noting the use of metallic silk for luster, and his use of pearls. These ladies are mysterious, so wear masks. He suggested transparency with a bluish thread. His fascination for anatomy grew out of holidays in Italy visiting sculptural masterpieces.

Rebecca talked about "Icarus III," 2002, suggesting that Riis's version is not a classical figure of the past, rather it shows today's man. Perhaps "a .com guy, who didn't listen, went too high, and crashed". Stevens commented that both artists' work deal with issues of identity.

Luckily, many of the Hungarian artists (with a translator) came to both the opening reception, and to the second gallery talk where they interpreted their work. The Hungarian Ministry of Culture gave a grant to bring the tapestries to the U.S.

"Forever" by Ildiko Dobranyi depicts a garden, using deliberate color separations as in printing, a heritage from her father. Her intimate feelings combine with symbols, especially related to color. Green stands for hope, gold, is the color of eternity, while black implies mortality.

The title of Livia Papai's "Here is Your Crib and Future Grave," 1997, refers to a 19th century Hungarian poem. Its three dimensional, shaped sections, constructed of copper, tin, linen, silk, plumb bob and pencil, depict the continuity of life. She believes that fate determines personality.



Gizella Solti, "Exodus", 71" x 59", 2000, Cotton, wool, and silk. courtesy Textile Museum

Anna Maria Koszegi generally works small, but "The Play of Colors" is large, and reminiscent of the verdure tapestries of the 18th century. She is interested in what is behind the surface, behind to past memories depicted by bark, and dead leaves. Verona Szabo's feels close to nature and likes to magnify its beauty. She chose the spiraling nautilus of "Now and Forever" to symbolize the beginning and end of eternity. Its color is inspired by orchids in her collection.

"Exodus," was woven by the group's oldest weaver, Gizella Solti. She was at the forefront of the movement toward personal expressions. The same fine blending techniques revealed here are evidenced in her students' work as well. The tapestry reveals a doorway into a beautiful flower garden flanked by rows of bombs descending. It is a reference to Jewish neighbors who were sheltered and hid in a nearby forest. The soft color of the garden is pleasant even in the face of war. She thinks about personal responsibility.



Eleonora Pasqualiett's "Cloister" installation of five pieces (wool, metallic thread, silk, paper), varies with each site. The cylinders show an Italian influence of old churches. Rebecca comments on the contemplative quiet of the pieces. These columns are ambiguous. They might be an illusion to the wrapped columns in Tibet and China, but also make reference to a metal factory outside of Budapest, pipes that bring water and are columns falling into disrepair. The images upon them, numbers and other graffiti, make reference to Jewish Hungarians sent away.

What makes these tapestries art? On first look it is the two dimensional view of composition, color, values, and image. Not until one investigates the meaning of the making of it, does one get the three dimensional or whole view of what the artist and weaving are trying to say. The combination of fine art training with classical weaving has produced control, technical wizardry: precision and sophistication. The blending techniques of Hungarians are so subtle and refined that they offer inspiration to today's American tapestry artists.

Stevens concludes that all of the artists presented are well trained in the fields of art, design, and technique. They have looked back to historic tapestry weavings to find methods of production for today. They have the firm foundation and depth of heart. They have dug deep into what they feel about things, and have figured out how to express it.

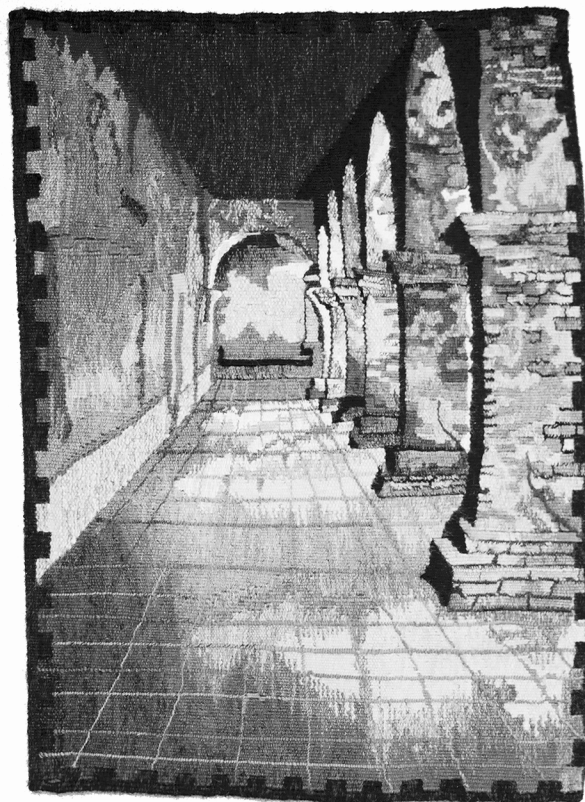
## **ATA Workshop October 29-31, 2004: WHERE LINES MEET - CONSTRUCTING TAPESTRY CARTOONS**

ATA is sponsoring a 3 day workshop in conjunction with the ATB5 exhibit at Dorr Mill in beautiful Guild, NH, with Christine Laffer. "Where Lines Meet - Constructing Tapestry Cartoons," is a condensed course covering both customary and innovative procedures for making and constructing cartoons. We will work on composition, design and color issues with dry drawing materials (pencil and

pastel). This workshop will introduce a new approach by using vellum drafting paper that allows quick development of variations through overlays. The workshop will include critique sessions so that each student can discuss a design's idea, focus and interpretation. The goal of the class is for each student to develop a cartoon around 18" x 18" in size. Students need to bring some source materials such as drawings or prints, cartoons they have previously made, and slides, photos or samples of current work. A list of art supplies will be sent with registration materials.

Christine was one of the jurors for ATB4 and is currently Director of Resources for ATA. In addition to an MFA degree in Spatial Arts, she has studied at the San Francisco Tapestry Workshop and completed an internship at Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins in Paris. Christine is a practicing tapestry artist and has exhibited in the US and Canada.

The workshop and housing will be at the historic Inn at Sunapee located in the picturesque Lake Sunapee area of New Hampshire. Sunapee is



Kathe Todd Hooker, "Waking Dreams," 20" x 15"

approximately 35 - 50 minutes from Hanover, 1 hour from the Manchester airport and 2 hours north of Boston.

Fees: \$110 for ATA members  
\$145 for non-ATA members (includes 1 year membership)

Materials fee: \$4.00

Housing: \$300 (3 nights lodging in private room and all meals Thursday dinner through Sunday lunch.)

To register: Contact Priscilla Lynch, P.O. Box 340, Saugatuck, MI 49453, (269) 857-5614, priscillalynch28@yahoo.com

**Registration deadline: September 25, 2004**

## ATB 5 Catalogs

\$20.00 members, \$25.00 non-members

Please add \$3.50 for postage and handling for one catalog, \$3.95 for two catalogs, and an appropriate amount for overseas postage. Send payment (check or money order made out to American Tapestry Alliance) with your order to:

Amy Kropitz, ATA  
17080 Copper Hill Dr.  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

ATA is looking for volunteer help at both the New Hampshire and Minnesota venues. We are also looking for volunteers for ATB6 and a Coordinator for the next unjuried small format exhibition, both of which open in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 2006. Please contact Ellen Ramsey if you are interested in any of these opportunities. (206) 440-8903 ew.ramsey@comcast.net



Karen Crislip, "Deceived" (detail) 24" x 16" x 2", 2004, Wool, Cotton, Leather, Wood, Feathers, Raccoon Tail, Beads, Shells, Tin

## American Tapestry Biennial 5 Exhibition Schedule

June 3 - August 7, 2004

Center for Visual Arts, Metropolitan State College of Denver, Denver, Colorado.

September 22, 2004 - January 9, 2005

Dorr Mill, Guild, New Hampshire.

Hours: Wed. through Sun., 10-4; 10-8 on Fri.  
for information: (603) 863-8857

*Reception September 20, 6-9 p.m.*

March 12 - April 17, 2005

Rochester Art Center, Rochester, Minnesota.

*Reception March 12, 8-10 p.m.*

## Congratulations to ATA Members

ATA was well represented in HGA sponsored exhibits.

Mountain Majesty: Connie Lippert, Tori Kleinert, Judy Ness, Rebecca Smith, Kathe Todd-Hooker, and Beverly Weaver.

Don't Fence Me In: Amy Kropitz

Queen of the Plains: Monique Lehman, Connie Lippert, Lynne Mayne, Judy Ness, Katherine Perkins, and Beverly Weaver.

Fibers with Altitude - Garments with Attitude: Teri Inman

Small Expressions: Helga Berry

Congratulations to member Judy Ness for taking First Place in the Mountain Majesty show. Kudos to Joyce Hayes for winning the "Best Use of Color and Design" award in the Small Format Frontiers exhibition.

## New Program for ATA Lending/Research Library

ATA is creating a new program that will provide an interesting way to help document the history of tapestry and make that documentation available to members.

ATA is beginning the process of creating a lending library of Catalogues and Videos for tapestry research. ATA is requesting donations of Tapestry Catalogues and tapestry video's for inclusion into the lending/research Library. The catalogues can be used or new. We are especially looking for older catalogues-used or new. Our intent is to begin with donated catalogues and video and then begin purchasing catalogues.

The catalogues can document tapestry exhibits from anywhere on the globe in any time period. We would also appreciate recommendations for catalogues to include in the lending/research Library. The catalogues will be made available for use by ATA members much like for the slide library. If interested please **contact librarian, Kathe Todd-Hooker.**  
**spider472@comcast.net**

## The Circle Continues to Grow

ATA welcomed nineteen members to the circle this past quarter, bringing the total number of Circle Members to sixty-four. We would like to thank the following for their generous support of our organization:

**Studio Circle:** Lynda Brothers, Elizabeth Buckley, Mary Rawcliffe Colton, Jane Daniels, Pamela Done, Marianne Haller, Catherine Kapikian, Beverly Kent, Kathi Kyro, Katherine Larson, Eve Pearce, Christina Rasmussen, Jon Eric Riis, William Saunders, Tommye Scanlin, Mildred Thompson, Sharon Van de Velde, Vita Wells.

**Curator's Circle:** Stanley Bulbach, Jean Smelker-Hugi.

\*A reminder to all Circle Members: Don't forget to post images of your work on the ATA website. We all want to see it! You don't have to have digital photography of your work in order to participate. Questions? Contact Michael Rohde or Christine Laffer.

## Contact ATA

PO Box 28600  
 San Jose, CA 95159

### Director of Member Services

Alex Friedman  
 AQSF@aol.com

### Director of Resources

Christine Laffer  
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### Treasurer

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Ellen Ramsey  
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### Membership Database

Janet Austin  
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Priscilla Lynch  
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### Library Chair

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### ATB5 Chair

Monique Lehman  
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### ATB6 Chair

Peggy Strang  
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### Webmistress

Jeanne Bates  
 aBates@3-cities.com

## ATA MEMBERSHIP FORM

	1 year	2 years	Name _____
Individual	\$35	\$65	Address _____
Studio Circle	\$55	\$100	_____
Curator's Circle	\$125	\$225	City _____ State _____
Collector's Circle	\$250	\$450	Postal Code _____ Country _____
			Phone _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Please contact me about volunteer opportunities			Fax/Alternate phone _____
			Email _____
Send payment to:	ATA Membership		_____
	c/o Janet Austin		_____
	154 Pine Hill Road		_____
	Wakefield, RI 02879		_____
	(401) 789-2957		_____
		_____	_____
		card holder's signature	_____

American Tapestry Alliance  
PO Box 28600  
San Jose, CA 95159

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## Tapestry Topics

### Guidelines for submitting articles to Tapestry Topics:

Next deadline: October 15: Shaped Tapestries  
2005: January 15, April 15, July 15, October 15

Send all items to: Linda Rees lerees@charter.net  
--Or--  
1908A Senate St.  
St. Louis, MO 63118

All photographs and electronic images should include size,  
date completed and photo credits.

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

Exhibition reviews: We seek articles that describe the  
show with insight and critical observations. Describe the  
overall sense of the show and explain the parts that  
contribute to this sense.

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



Mary Dieterich, "Desert Greeting," 4.25" x 7.5"

visit our website  
[www.americantapestryalliance.org](http://www.americantapestryalliance.org)