

## Pam Patrie ~ Improvisational Journey

by Linda Rees

Pam Patrie has recently finished a private commission, "The Horace Poem", which took her two years to complete. It is a skillfully rendered winter landscape with an elaborate complex of houses and outbuildings set under a roiling sky and backdrop of trees, while a rapidly, wildly flowing stream commands the foreground. However, what makes the piece so impressive is how successfully Pam was able to superimpose several lines of text into the central part of the tapestry in a way that seamlessly unites the words with the other elements in the design.

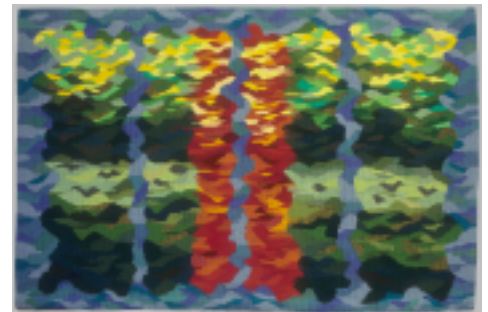
The text by the Roman poet Horace appears on the snow covered ground between the buildings and rushing stream. The snow is woven in a wide variety of gray and white yarns ranging from warm to cool options delicately balanced throughout, creating a surface reminiscent of parchment, so apropos as a backdrop for text. The drama of the overall landscape is sharpened by the use of extra bright white acrylic yarn highlights (as referenced in the Kudos commentary in *Tapestry Topics*, summer issue 2010) and dark black accents. By contrast, the letters are subtle, standing in calm and orderly fashion in the otherwise active scene. It is a challenge to get the kind of equality of strong imagery and verbal message that is displayed in this particular tapestry. The idea to include the poem was Pam's, and she had to convince the client that it would work. And it does. Without the text, the scene might appear clichéd or remote from the viewer's perspective; but we understand the pride of ownership that connects the sentiment of this ancient poem with the present.

I had decided I wanted to write about Pam Patrie soon after I opened my "*Connections: Small Tapestry International 2009*" exhibition catalog, which was before I saw photos of the commission. The catalog had fallen open to Pam's "Aurora Sky at Sea", instantly appealing to me for its novel ambiguity, minimal and active at the same time. I was fascinated by how the bold, diagonal texture of the twill border balanced the rhythmic pick-and-pick verticals coursing across the colorful sky. I was surprised that it was by Pam and dismayed to realize how little I really knew of her personal work other than the earlier piece "Power".

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Pam Patrie, "Aurora Sky at Sea"



Pam Patrie, "Scenic Wonder, Blue"  
48 x 72" 1977

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## IMPORTANT DATES

**September 20 - November 15, 2010** American Tapestry Biennial 8, Elder Gallery, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, NE

**October 6-9, 2010** Textile Society of America Symposium, Textile and Settlement: From Plains Space to Cyber Space, Lincoln NE

**October 7, 2010, 6:00-9:00pm** Opening reception for ATB8, Elder Gallery, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, NE

**November 30, 2010** Entry deadline for Small Tapestry International 2: Passages

**December 12, 2010** Ads for the Membership Directory are due

**January 20 - May 1, 2011** American Tapestry Biennial 8, American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA

**January 20, 2011 5:30-7:30pm** Opening of American Tapestry Biennial 8, American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA

**March 13, 2011, 2:00pm Lecture**, American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA, Susan Martin Maffei "Under the Influence, or Is It Just Inspiration?"

**April 2, 2011 - mid May** Small Tapestry International 2: Passages, Weaving Southwest, Taos, NM

**April 2, 2011** Opening of Small Tapestry International 2: Passages

**April 3 - 5, 2011** Introduction to Chimayo Weaving, taught by Lisa Trujillo, Weaving Southwest, Taos NM

**April 10, 2011, 2:00 pm** Lecture, American Textile History Museum in Lowell, MA, Anne Jackson "Anne Jackson: Knotted Tapestries"

**April 15, 2011** Deadline, ATA International Student Award

**June 2011** Small Tapestry International 2: Passages, Handforth Gallery, Tacoma, WA

## It takes far more than a village...

by Julie Barnes

Through twists and turns (literally), this issue has finally come together with the impressive support of numerous ATA volunteers. In August, Linda Rees stepped in to help edit the articles as I recovered from gallbladder surgery. Mary Colton followed up with her skillful edits, fact checks, and helpful advice. Then the design and distribution team (Elinor Steele, Nancy Crampton, Diane Wolf, and Christine Laffer) pulled the rest together. And here you are ~ your fall 2010 issue of *Tapestry Topics*.

Erica Diazoni has provided a fabulous collection of pieces for this issue, and Stanley Bulbach has coordinated the winter issue's handspun theme. If you have a late addition for the winter issue, contact Stanley through his website ([www.bulbach.com](http://www.bulbach.com)). Feel free to send non-theme items directly to the *Tapestry Topics* editor ([ATA\\_julie@msn.com](mailto:ATA_julie@msn.com)).

New ATA member and long-time tapestry weaver, Tori Kleinert ([www.woolpastures.com](http://www.woolpastures.com)) has taken the plunge and volunteered to coordinate the spring theme **Exploring Color**. Contact Tori ([tktapestry@msn.com](mailto:tktapestry@msn.com)) to submit an article. January 15, 2011 is the submission deadline.



Tori Kleinert,  
Exploring Color theme coordinator

Being a theme coordinator is a valuable help to the newsletter and doesn't take up too much of your valuable weaving time. It also gives the coordinator a good chance to network and meet more ATA members.

Please consider sharing your time and talents while exploring your tapestry network as theme coordinator for one of these possible topics:

- ◆ **Cartoons:** Let me tell you a story...
- ◆ **Honoring Tradition**
- ◆ **Inspiring Innovation**
- ◆ **Wedge Weave**
- ◆ **Going International**

If those themes aren't your cup of tea, why not suggest one of your own? Send your ideas to Julie Barnes ([ATA\\_julie@msn.com](mailto:ATA_julie@msn.com)). The *Tapestry Topics* team is waiting to hear from you!

## Pam Patrie ~ Improvisational Journey continued

I certainly had a familiarity with her name in print from notices about major commissions she had produced; I was also aware she had been an active part of the enclave of Oregon tapestry artists emerging in the late 1980s who formed "Tapestry Forum". They organized the 1990 symposium in Portland that brought an impressive congregation of tapestry artists together, getting the idea for the International Network of Tapestry Artists going, and later, organizing the non-juried small format biennial exhibit currently sponsored by ATA, with its 8th version in 2010.

After "Aurora Sky at Sea" set me on this quest, Pam lent me files and has taken time to discuss her career path. I observed Pam teaching a workshop, and was able to see samples, including several small format tapestries similar to "Aurora" that utilized borders woven in gold thread. Over the years she collected relatively small bits of various gold-coated silk threads, used judiciously in the "Jacob's Ladder" commission for the Mt. Angel Abby completed in 1999. It occurred to her that the remnants would work well as frames for miniatures and also for small, three-dimensional items. Two examples can be seen in the catalogs for "Encore" from the Atlanta Convergence in 1998, and "Small Format Tapestry: The Butterfly Effect" in 2000. I had forgotten that she has consistently produced interesting work for the small format non-juried exhibits.

Pam has carved her own niche in tapestry over four decades. She learned multi-harness weaving in 1968 at Oregon College of Arts and Craft. She was a full time student at what is now Pacific Northwest College of Art, formerly the Portland Museum Art School. While well versed in painting, drawing and calligraphy (a craft she started in high school), during her first exposure to tapestry, she had an immediate attraction to the vitality colored yarn imparts. She worked out her own methods for weaving tapestry, but in 1972 she traveled to Southern France for a few weeks where she independently studied Gobelins techniques in order to gain more structural control. Pam started a series of 32 12" square pieces

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Pam Patrie, "Scenic Wonder, Red" 48 x 72" 1977



worked spontaneously without cartoon or drawings in 1974, exploring color effects. In a 1979 *Fiberarts* article she stated that she liked the "simplicity of the Navajo design, the speed of the French method of the weaving. . . Keeping the loom simple allows me to change any shape, line or color area at a moment's notice."

The article also pictures several of her small colorful tapestries. "Purple Swim", 1975, is a charming, abstracted beach scene. Others dating around 1978 are even more abstract and as large as 4 x 6'. They frequently have bilateral symmetry reflecting one of her "obsessions" -- stereographic images. She also mentioned a fascination with visual illusions and color relationships, stating: "I studied the large silk screened edition of Josef Albers' book on color relationships for years. Now I don't intellectualize, I just do it."\*

By 1979 she had already begun doing commission work experimenting with more representational imagery, which nevertheless had an abstract quality. Despite her enthusiasm for the medium, her early tapestries were still not meeting her expectations. She could see that she needed to systematically gain more ability to render her ideas on the loom. While there were lots of weaving courses offered in the community, tapestry was not in vogue during the 1970s. However, as was typical for that era, she was already sharing whatever new knowledge she acquired with others through workshops.

While looking through documents, especially newspaper articles she provided for me, I discovered how very resourceful and dedicated Pam is. In 1980 she decided to participate in the San Francisco Tapestry Workshop (SFTW) where her skills were encouraged by Jean Pierre Larochette, Yael Lurie, Rudi Richardson, Phoebe McAfee, and many others. This gave her exposure to working on a large scale along with the business aspects of commissions.

Pam came back to Portland to face a lot of challenges before she could reach her goal as a professional artist. Of most critical importance, she needed to provide for herself and daughter. State Art in Public Places programs were thriving in the early 80s, and new skills enabled her to take advantage of these opportunities. She returned from SFTW



Pam Patrie, "Nepal" 48" x 72" 1977



Pam Patrie, "Britain"

convinced she needed a large French style loom in order to get the pulled tension she needed, and one very antique Belgian loom actually became available in California in 1980. She approached a couple with the proposal of advancing her the money on the condition that if they did not like the first piece off the huge loom they could request something else. She funded the trip to transport it home by hauling a load of household goods for a Portland family who responded to her ad.

Pam has created many commissions on this loom with its capacity to weave as much as 11 feet wide and a very long length using the huge roller beams. Many of the pieces she wove were renderings of other artists' work, a process that honed her previous art training and color study to a higher level. She has averaged at least one major tapestry every five years since.

Soon after coming back from SFTW she started a salaried job on the Burnside Bridge in Portland, high above the Willamette River, operating its lift to open the channel below and keeping watch over the boat traffic. She found time for sketching and occasionally to use a small frame loom for weaving in low traffic times. Much of her personal work has been inspired by the activities viewed from her perch: producing sky, river, and city scenes as the result. There have been a series of rowing images and a large tapestry of the Steel Bridge as seen from the Broadway Bridge.

By the 1990s she had begun facilitating frequent workshops that brought highly skilled weavers to the Portland area, most often Archie Brennan and Susan Maffei, and Pam continued teaching too. Now she understands that the knowledge she has gained from various masters and her own projects can really be communicated best through interacting one on one. She is proud of the success of her previous apprentice, Mieko Konaka who is now at Stirling Castle weaving the Hunt of the Unicorn reproductions along with Rudi Richardson. Once Pam retired from her bridge job a few years ago, she conceived of several projects she would like to weave that could utilize apprentices to expedite finishing the work.

\*Carlton, Bronwyn *Fiberarts Magazine* Fall, 1979 pp. 62-63.

## Greetings from the Co-Directors

This Fall 2010 issue of *Tapestry Topics* is dedicated to and inspired by the new generation of youth in the field of tapestry. It is with keen interest that the American Tapestry Alliance warmly welcomes all new weavers to the world of tapestry. Whether you are a student within an art school or degree program, a member in a guild study program, or a self directed learner, you are creating the next generation of textiles. It is your mission and your mandate to evolve our field, taking what is strong and resonant from the past, blending it with new thought, new materials, and a truly new voice. We salute you, and we exist to support your efforts to grow as artists and weavers.

One tangible aspect of this support is demonstrated in our annual Student Award. We have recognized an outstanding student's work in tapestry with a monetary award and complimentary membership in ATA. This award helps support the student's development and brings awareness to tapestry. The recipient is noted elsewhere in this newsletter and on the ATA website. Most importantly, at our spring board meeting, the ATA board unanimously committed to the development of a scholarship fund for students pursuing accreditation within the textile/arts field. This gives us great incentive to seek additional resources to secure the future of tapestry and provide economic opportunities within the textile field for youth.

In ending our fiscal year, if we were to articulate a theme for American Tapestry Alliance's past year, it would have to be **growth** – **growth** in membership, **growth** in programming, and **growth** in professionalism. The 2009-2010 Annual Report, which specifically details this immense organizational growth, was delivered at the ATA membership meeting following Convergence in Albuquerque, New Mexico on July 25. Since many of our members were unable to be at this gathering, the report is included in this newsletter and on the ATA website.

As mentioned in our annual report, ATA's future looks bright. All bright futures are dependent upon financial health, and this certainly holds true for our organization. This year many members upgraded to Circle levels and our monetary donations doubled. Your financial and volunteer support is both validating and empowering. This level of dedication ensures that contemporary tapestry has a voice for generations to come. Thank you for your generosity.

And finally, with great affection and pride we recognize the board members whose terms expired in June. Two-term Co-Director of Member Services, Becky Stevens will be leaving the co-directorship position after four outstanding years of leadership, guidance, and daily attention to the endless organizational details of running ATA. Great thanks to one-term board members Sarah Swett and Marcy Fraker for their enthusiastic and valuable service. The dedication and steady guidance of Alex Friedman, former co-director of member services will be missed now that she has completed the maximum four terms. The combined level of service to ATA of these outstanding workers has been staggering. This is a volunteer driven organization with the highest caliber of wise and dedicated overseers. They all will be missed and leave shoes not easily filled. We wish them plentiful and happy hours of weaving!

We have enjoyed time with many of our membership in Santa Fe at SOFA-West and at Convergence ATA events in Albuquerque, and we look forward to seeing many of you at the opening of ATB 8 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Cheers!

Mary Zicafoose & Becky Stevens

On a personal note, I would like to thank my co-director Mary Zicafoose for her clear vision of the future for ATA and her enthusiasm to accomplish it, the hard-working board of ATA, our very capable administrative assistant Mary Lane, the dedicated volunteers and members who have been super supportive over my four year tenure as Co-Director of Member Services. This is an amazing organization, one that provides opportunities to freely share our tapestry passion without regard to demographics, politics or international borders. I am delighted to continue on the ATA board in another capacity.

I know you will join me in warmly welcoming our new Co-Director of Member Services, Michael Rohde. Michael comes with many skills and an exemplary volunteer history with ATA. He is familiar with our programming and knows many members of ATA as well as the greater textile community. He will be a great asset to ATA!

~ Becky Stevens

Some time ago, when I first learned of ATA, I knew that the approach of the organization to our field was especially out of the ordinary, and one I wanted to be part of. It is with great appreciation and humility that I join the ATA Board, and wonder how I will be able to do even half as good a job as Becky Stevens has done for ATA over the years.

In doing the few things I have done to help out, it has become clear just what exceptional contributions are made by everyone, but I am often surprised to hear low estimates of the actual time spent by each individual. What seems a monumental task becomes much more doable when the effort is spread among our many volunteers.

Knowing how much ATA means to me was what convinced me that I should accept the suggestion to take on what seems an unwieldy task. Having benefited in so many ways, I felt it was time to give back some of my time. I hope each of you will consider saying 'yes' if you get a request to help in some small way.

~ Michael Rohde

## Board Election and Tagline Voting Results

Thanks to all of you who voted in the 2010 Board Election and Tagline Vote. All of the candidates running for Board positions were approved. Your hardworking board is:

Mary Zicafoose - Co-Director, Resources  
Michael Rohde - Co-Director, Member Services  
Diane Wolf - Membership Committee Chair  
Linda Wallace - Promotions Committee Chair  
Rosalee Skrenes - Treasurer  
Elaine Duncan - Public Relations Committee Chair  
Tricia Goldberg - Exhibition Committee Chair  
Becky Stevens

The Board is involved on a day-to-day basis in producing ATA's diverse, and impressive programming. They are supported by scores of additional volunteers working on our slate of exhibitions, educational opportunities, awards programs, and our fabulous website. Volunteering for ATA offers you the opportunity to learn new skills, meet wonderful people, and give back to your community. Please contact Joan Griffin ([joangriffintapestry@gmail.com](mailto:joangriffintapestry@gmail.com)), if you have time to share your talents with ATA.

ATA's membership chose **Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Innovation** as our new tagline. These four words embrace ATA's commitment to the wide variety of approaches present in the medium of contemporary tapestry. We are very excited to send this tagline out into the world as a statement about our vibrant, grounded and growing field. Watch for it as it is incorporated into our graphic materials. The tagline was the joint work of Linda Wallace, Becky Stevens, and Mary Zicafoose.

## Teaching the Next Generation Erica Diazoni

Being a "next generation" tapestry weaver is quite rare. In fact, I've yet to meet another tapestry weaver under 30. I was beginning to think that something must be wrong with me. So it excited me to see that Tapestry Topics would focus an issue around teaching the next generation. This must mean that I am not alone!

I jumped at the chance to guest coordinate this theme because it gave me a chance to ask my questions of the tapestry world – and I think I've gotten some great answers, not just about tapestry, but also about art and living a creative life. Being a beginner is an exciting place to be. It is also a bit scary. So thank you all for sharing your stories and lighting the way. I hope that other next generation weavers will be inspired, too.

We can all learn from the wisdom here, but let's all remember to keep our beginner's mind. Let us learn from the past, do our best in the present, and look forward to finding our answers between the warps.

*"In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in the expert's mind there are few."* - Shunryu Suzuki

## Did you know?

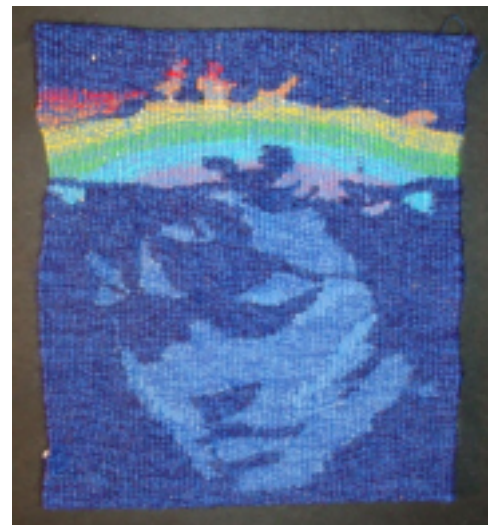
*Did you know* that ATA has an organizational manual called the **Red Book**? This manual lists all the committees and the descriptions of the various projects they oversee. The organizational chart shows how ATA functions with the Directors of Member Services (Michael Rohde) and Resources (Mary Zicafoose) and each committee under each Director. The reason our manual is called the **Red Book** is because the first one in 2002 had a red cover.

*Did you know* the reason ATA has two leaders instead of one is to divide the work. With over 500 members there is a lot of work to do.

*Did you know* that that we have a part-time administrative assistant (Mary Lane) who works for the Directors of Member Services and Resources and helps keep ATA organized. Mary keeps track of all the things going on with ATA. Mary also does research on current and future projects like fundraising, membership development, branding, think tank organization, and she works on the budgets for each committee. She publishes all of our calendars, job descriptions, board decisions, and much more in our virtual office. Since ATA does not have a physical location, it is important for others to be able to access information, so we must have a central place to store references.

*Did you know* that ATA has between 50-75 volunteers working very hard to accomplish all the work for the various 10 committee projects for our 500 members. ATA could not exist without our very capable volunteers.

From time to time we will be introducing our committees, their members and what they do. Stay tuned and maybe you'll want to join a committee.



Erica Diazoni,  
"Rainbow Connection/Self Portrait"



## Fiber Art Education: The Missing Half

by Stanley Bulbach

Most fiberists want our publications, teaching programs, and organizations to thrive productively. That requires serious economic resources. In addition, while many active fiberists in our field do not consider themselves to be professionals, the majority would be utterly delighted to sell some of their work at fair, even profitable, prices, if only to help support our field more generously. Obviously these priorities are issues that need our attention and support, but unfortunately they are rarely discussed openly in our advocacy organizations.

For example, we are not encouraged to discuss openly our field's relatively low status in the arts, or the inaccurate research recorded about our field, or our poor economic vitality, and so on. This contrasts sharply with our educational focus on technical information, which is strongly encouraged throughout the entire field of fiber.

This blackout of dialogue on issues is not accidental. When anyone asks our advocacy organizations about professional issues, the usual response — if any — is “go ask somewhere else.” Even fiber related Internet bulletin boards automatically “unsubscribe” people for raising “non-technical” issues. A review of publication indexes and conference agendas in our field immediately reveals the pervasiveness of the censorship and self-censorship of these issues.

This does not make sense since almost everyone in our field agrees unofficially that our field has been unfairly accorded lesser significance in influential scholarly research. But much of this lower hierarchical status results from unchallenged distortions, such as gender prejudice and undisclosed financial factors. Therefore, it also results from our own advocacy organizations imposing hobbyist status upon most of our field despite its wide spectrum of identities. Other divisions in the arts benefit greatly from encouraging intellectual vitality and probing dialogue on the important issues in their field. If we complain that we don't wish to be underrated in the arts, why shouldn't we be encouraged to discuss our issues openly too?

There is no question that scholarly research practice in the art world arbitrarily accords our field lesser significance. For example, art historian Edward Lucie-Smith, noted:

“[T]he recent history of craft as it is reflected in print is subject to some unexpected distortions. For example, although ceramics is not the largest field of activity — that honor almost certainly belongs to fiber — in the recent history of American craft ceramics is more fully recorded than work in any other medium.”

“Historical Roots and Contemporary Perspectives”, [*Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical*, edited by Paul Smith (New York: Weiden & Nicholson, 1986) p. 16.]



Stanley Bulbach with his friends ~ the books.

If most non-profit scholarly research on the contemporary craft arts occurs in art museums, then how could scholarly museum research generate “unexpected distortions”? This would have to indicate methodological defects in the museum research.

The essence of scholarly research is the requirement that it be designed with “transparency” and “accountability” to permit its judgments and conclusions to be challenged, reviewed, and, if mistaken, then corrected. But where in our educational focus has our field alerted members about this wonderful requirement? Where have we taught that open probing debate is needed, in fact, expected, for us to challenge and correct research distortions?

In 2000, the Association of American Museums issued its “New Ethical Guidelines”, calling for “more accountability, more transparency of action, and more leadership in the community.” This was in response to eroding public trust in art museums as financial scandals increased in recent decades. The AAM itself openly discussed the need for more professional transparency and accountability in *New York Times* for accurate scholarship. So why hasn't our field encouraged the same dialogue?

Some fiberists are surprised to hear that other areas of the arts discuss these issues openly. So here are some recommended books focusing on the issues discussed outside the fiber field that are missing from our field's advocacy and education:

1. *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust*, ed. by James Cuno, with contributions by James Cuno, Philippe de Montebello, Glenn D. Lowry, Neil MacGregor, John Walsh, James N. Wood, and Anne d'Harnoncourt; Princeton

continued...

University Press, Princeton and Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge: 2004. This book is a compendium of essays by some of the most eminent art museum directors in the U.S. who are concerned about the loss of the public trust in museum research on contemporary art. It makes for rather dry reading and is somewhat self-serving, but these essays do describe some of the controversies and scandals that have rocked art museums which claim to execute reliable, accurate scholarly assessments of art today, for example, the Guggenheim and the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

2. *The Art of the Steal*, Christopher Mason; G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, NY: 2004. In this book, Mr. Mason details the Federal investigation of Christie's and Sotheby's for price-fixing while they dominated the North American and European art market. The book explains how Sotheby's CEO and president, Diane ("DeDe") Brooks, a former banker, was sentenced to house arrest and fined, and how Sotheby's chairman, A. Alfred Taubman, a shopping mall developer, was sentenced to prison and fined. Sotheby's and Christie's had to pay back customers half a billion dollars. This potboiler is an enjoyable read. And while reading it, ask yourself what role breathtaking profitability plays in how art today is accorded scholarly significance.

3. *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art*, Don Thompson; Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY: 2008. Economist Don Thompson, a collector of contemporary art, has taught marketing and economics at the London School of Economics, Harvard Business School, and York University in Toronto. He details one of the most powerful marketing elements in the contemporary art market, "branding". Our fiber field is strongly branded not as art, but as a hobby, which is why so few galleries even agree to look at our field's work and why so little fiber is included by museum curators in mixed media exhibitions. What fiber advocacies have challenged that inaccurate branding? I strongly recommend this book for those who are unaware of these economic relationships in the modern Market Dominated Economy.

4. *Eyewitness: Reports from an art world in crisis*, Jed Perl; Basic Books, New York, NY: 2000. Here Jed Perl, well known art critic and writer, details how this is "the Age of the Deal Makers" where finances seem to have greater sway than good research practice. He states that the very "art experts" who research, record, and judge contemporary art actually seem to know little and care less about its details. This book is good reading for fiberists perplexed as to how our field is pre-judged by experts who don't even examine the actual work.

5. *Culture Incorporated: museums, artists, and corporate sponsorships*, Mark W. Rectanus; University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 2002. For a true democratization of cultural institutions, the author calls for more than just full disclosure of all of the financial arrangements

involved in the museum projects. In contrast to fiber's advocacies, he hopes that "individuals and communities, including artists, assume a greater responsibility for and demand a voice in the institutions of culture."

6. *The Painted Word*, Tom Wolfe; Bantam Books, New York: 1975. The Painted Word is great fun to read. Wolfe illustrates how the modern art world depends upon controversy, sensationalism, and publicity to dominate both the public and academic stage. "In short: frankly, these days, without a theory to go with it, I can't see a painting. . . . Modern Art has become completely literary: The paintings and other works exist only to illustrate the text." This classic Wolfe masterpiece will bring chuckles of recognition to many colleagues.

7. *Thread String Felt: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Craft*, Elissa Auther; University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 2010. Prof. Auther explores the assignment of "hierarchies" upon artists and their art. Focusing on the 1970s and 80s she illustrates about how art experts have used the very same factors in their art writing to elevate "fine artists" using fiber and denigrate "fiber artists". She openly describes — I believe for the very first time — how successful artists using fiber have done so after distancing themselves from fiberists. She also casts light on the damage of the unwise antagonism between traditional and non-traditional factions in our field. I strongly recommend this book and hope a sequel is planned for the future.

In conclusion, our fiber field is wide, venerable, diverse, and filled with highly energized, talented, skilled, generous, dedicated members. And yet we seem to have a deathly fear of the intellectual vitality of non-technical dialogue and divergent opinions. Consider how it is not the agreeing view, but the disagreeing views our two eyes send our brains which provide the higher problem-solving ability of three-dimensional perspective. Explored wisely and constructively, disagreement and diversity help surmount challenges, and are precisely what our field needs to rise above our decades-old poor status in the arts. How poor is our status? Just consider the ATA Links webpage that lists a total of only four North American galleries purportedly interested in tapestry art. Then ask yourself how many dozens of galleries feature ceramic art? Or glass art?

In particular, I recommend the above titles for my younger colleagues many of whom I know hope for better public appreciation and economic opportunities. These books will introduce you to perspectives, events, histories, and ideas widely discussed outside the fiber field, but not encouraged in our field's educational focus. They will help you understand some of the principal reasons why our field has not yet succeeded in equaling the stature and viability of the other craft-related arts. As education is supposed to do, these books will help point you to ways to improve your future as fiberists significantly.



# The Relevance of Handwork in Post-Disciplinary Education

by Shelley Socolofsky

Craft: (noun), a decorative or practical object made by hand  
To craft: (verb), the skilled practice of making something by hand

Skill development is the natural outcome that, intended or not, occurs from doing something repeatedly over time. I am lustfully drawn again and again to textiles. They embody material solidity and graceful sensuality along with a connection to domestic spheres, and to their pluralistic and political histories. On a fundamental level, I am in love with the process and pace of weaving. Out of these attributes the work takes form. Ultimately, in my own practice, I make objects.

Yet, as an artist and an educator, I must probe these ideas continuously. Skill of technique and a lust for process may have been enough in the Modernist's art curriculum when 'art-for-arts' sake prevailed. Today, however, a sound textile curriculum – and one beyond formalist Industry concerns, must orient students towards sustainable studio practices that strive for serious aesthetic and critical consideration. This sort of rigorous practice demands more than the cultivation of skill and technique.

Glenn Adamson's article "Sloppy Craft, How Practice Makes Imperfect", (CRAFTS, No. 211 / March/April, 2008), illustrates a pivotal shift in expressive hand making and progressive institutional art academic sensibilities:

In the post-disciplinary art environment in which students are trained today, a long-term investment in dedicated skills is less and less common... what we have now, mostly, are found objects, outsourced fabrication, bad painting, big photos printed on expensive equipment, 'relational' situations requiring only rudimentary props, and of course, outsized sloppy sculpture... A line was crossed when instructors began teaching skills on an 'as and when' basis.... Right now the quintessential art forms may no longer be physical objects at all but rather music video mashups and hypertext-rich blogs... The DIY movement, still in the height of fashion, is an obvious expression of this open source culture, and the crafters' emphasis on community and gratification often results in a casual attitude to technique... This permissiveness has deeply penetrated art-school culture, fascinatingly blurring the line between hobbyism and professional endeavor.

Given such insight, what does this mean for an educator committed to teaching students contemporary issues in textile-based processes while expanding the rhetoric of craft? Glimpses of progressive solutions can be gathered from Rosalind Krauss' groundbreaking essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" (*October*, Vol. 8. Spring, 1979) and by inter-

rogating the expansion to include the nature and implications inherent in textile histories and processes. Through broadened interpretations of the conceptual potentials of "crafting", can the possibility to bring handwork into serious contemporary art discourse occur?

Particularly related to hand crafted work, problems arise when process or technique overrides concept. When this happens, craft tends to kill the necessary subtlety of the work and removes it from the realm of contemporary analysis, keeping it in the dominion of "Craft". "Sloppy Craft" works precisely because the workmanship serves the concept. It is used as a strategy to support the meaning within the work being delivered. In *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, (Pye, David, 1968) Pye addresses the nature of the presence or absence of the mark of the hand within hand made objects. "The work of the hand within an object made by hand is only visible when...it...reveals the sense of life and moment-by-moment human decisions that are recorded in the act of making." By intentionally choosing to make a hand crafted work appear sloppy, some artists are producing the desired visual and emotional affects of expressive urgency. Similarly, hobby-ism and amateurism (which might also alter choices in strategies of craftsmanship during process) have been used as fabrication strategies for work investigating issues of social class and consumerism.

During the Western European Middle Ages when attention to technique through apprenticeship was paramount, and work that was commissioned articulated the propaganda and wishes of the patron, the guild system became so politically strong that it challenged monarchical decision making in many areas. It was no accident, then, that the advent for artists in the 17th century drew artisans/craftsmen away from guild membership in an effort to break the power of the guilds. Manual artists (painters and sculptors) were struggling to separate themselves from hand-oriented craft mediums such as tapestry or metal work in efforts to ally themselves with the more intellectual and refined groups of poets and musicians. This effort was the definitive break separating the more prestigious groups deemed "fine arts" from the "crafts".

The perspective lens through which 17th century western civilization viewed the world became increasingly scientifically based, relying heavily on the perception that the world operated on binaries, or opposing dualities. By employing dualistic terms such as mental/manual, scientific/spiritual, body/soul, normal/deviant, the world could be understood, analyzed, controlled and managed. During this time the privileging of ideas over handwork was established. The Art Academy was birthed out of this perspective.

continued...

Within the histories of non-indigenous, western made textiles, many transformative events occurred over the course of the next 200 years, one of which was the invention of the Jacquard loom system, designed itself on a system of binaries. The Jacquard loom's invention displaced hundreds of hand weavers throughout Europe and the New World. Colonists, like their merchant predecessors, followed the system of divisions, separating time and labor into similarly divisible units. Small weaving workshops grew increasingly obsolete and were replaced by growing Jacquard cloth factory labor productions.

Further erosion of pride in hand work occurred en force with the induction of the Industrial Revolution. Class structures were exacerbated through increased divisions of labor: collar worker from sleeve cuff worker, threading machine operator from managerial employee. Time was increasingly valued monetarily, carving a deeper divide in privileging between that of mental (managerial) labor over manual work. Divisible production could now be easily outsourced which further removed the work of the hand from the final object produced.

The backlash of the Arts and Crafts Movement in 19th century England grew out of these divisive systems of labor and entitlement, followed by Walter Gropius' School of the Bauhaus in Germany 100 years later. Both camps argued in favor of handwork and the leveling of the now long established aggrandizement of fine art over craftwork. Although neither of these movements lasted long enough to break the hierarchical divides, evidence of change had begun to challenge the entrenched art educational and critical systems of duality and privilege.

Utilizing craft applications designed as conceptual strategies, artists such as Eva Hesse and numerous first wave feminists' made distinct choices to merge art hierarchies via material choices used in their work. Crossover conflation continues to be practiced. Consider the inclusion of the following "crafts" work in the current Whitney BIENNIAL, 2010: Pae White's "Smoke Knows" and Jessica Jackson Hutchins' "Couch For a Long Time". White's piece, an enormous cotton, polyester digital weaving, operates in an effort to merge ephemeral and banal moments with the physicality of fabric and mass production. Hutchins' news-papered, papier-maché slip covered couch with ceramic pots demonstrates domestic post-modern cynicism, fusing the private with public pervasiveness. These inclusions demonstrate the shift in trends, bringing the materiality of craft back into critical discourse.

In light of these observations, I continually rewrite my own art curricula as I encourage my students to take a broader, more experimental approach to woven structures. Deconstructed down to its minimal form, weaving is simply the interlacing of 2 opposing elements. Those elements might be non-material. They might be of a pliable yet non-traditional nature. They might be interlaced on a loom or

tensioned on site out in the world: in a landscape, between some architectural elements. If students' concepts are predominantly concerned with the ritual of process, I would encourage them to seek ways to demonstrate "process". Equally, if the students' intent leans towards something site specific, their final projects would not necessarily best be said to involve a completed "object" removed from the intervened site and placed in the gallery for review. In either case, documentation would be more succinct than product outcome.

I argue in favor of an art curriculum that teaches across disciplines. A pluralistic perspective is brought to this new mix of cross disciplinary students that culminates in some of the freshest work in Woven Structures class being made by product design or metals students. This cross-pollination opens up new territory for dialogue and fosters multiple approaches to conceptual and design problems.

And finally, critical texts, such as those mentioned above, that provide challenging analytical and theoretical ideas plus ones that outline relevant historical events are equally essential pieces within my pedagogy.

These concepts and discussions alter perspectives that assist students in developing strong voices, sustainable future studio practices, and understanding in positing their work in contemporary discourse by thinking about, thinking through, and thinking beyond Craft.

## **Random Thoughts on Teaching Tapestry Workshops**

**by Joan Baxter**

I have been running regular workshops in tapestry weaving since the mid 1980s, both from my own studio and at other venues. I love sparking people to take up tapestry, and I especially like helping them to develop their skills beyond the first introductory class. I also need the income generated by my teaching activities to help support my weaving.

With my experience in studio weaving, independent-project weaving for other designers, and weaving my own designs for more than 20 years, I have a broad range of tapestry and related skills that I am very keen to pass along to others.

There is great danger that the current pool of tapestry skills will disappear within a couple of generations. As far as I can see, very few young people are taking up tapestry with any degree of seriousness. The young students I have taught at tertiary level enjoy the process but simply can't see how they could make a living at it. A typical comment from students and young visitors to the

studio is “... it takes ages to learn, it takes ages to make, and you can’t make any money at it. Why would anyone want to do it?”

Tapestry seems to have singularly failed to engage young weavers, since classes, exhibition openings, and conferences are largely populated by the over 40s. There are no young role models for aspiring tapestry weavers. Young people have to be so much more pragmatic about career choices than my generation – we all expected to starve romantically in garrets whilst doing whatever it took to fund our weaving.

Apart from Edinburgh College of Art (which produced many of the UK’s best known tapestry weavers from the late 1960s until fairly recently), tapestry has not been seriously taught at any UK university for some years. In the 1980s and 90s, there were some constructed textiles programs that had tapestry weavers on their staff, so it was there that the latest generation of art school trained tapestry artists were nurtured. Even in these institutions the actual techniques of tapestry weaving took second place to design and individual creative expression. Students who wanted a good technical grounding either had to study in France or work in a commercial tapestry studio for a time.

Now the bare basics of tapestry techniques are taught within constructed textiles courses. Since these courses are generally biased towards the fashion industry, it is understandable that few of these students pursue tapestry further. In any case, it would be unlikely that the instructors have in-depth tapestry skills. This means that experienced tapestry weavers who teach undertake a very important mission to secure the continued health of tapestry.

Fortunately, there is a new breed of tapestry weavers coming through who have not gone down the route of formal art training or whose art training has been in a different discipline. They are very often people who have already had a career doing something else before they encountered tapestry. They are often unwilling or unable to study full time and require different things from their learning. Most importantly, they are very sure that tapestry is what they want to do. This is where individual tapestry weavers and private colleges can step in with more tailored courses. West Dean College is probably the only place in the UK where students can seriously study tapestry in a formal learning environment and gain a qualification.

I taught tapestry modules at my local university in Nottingham for a couple of years but funding eventually dried up. Over the years, I have run a lot of beginning tapestry classes from my studio. I have also held many one and two-day classes for the British Guild of Weavers Spinners and Dyers as well as summer schools and evening classes. I also open my studio to the public from time to time so that those who have no interest in learning to make tapestry can still gain knowledge and appreciation of tapes-

try as a beautiful and expressive plastic art. This is also an important educational activity.

The biggest problem in teaching any privately organized class is the need to have enough students to run the class while trying to ensure that the participants have roughly the same skill levels and expectations. I never found this a problem with beginning classes, which were nearly always over subscribed. It was often difficult to fill intermediate-level classes and the tapestry design short courses I was particularly keen to develop.

My move to the remote north of Scotland from the relatively accessible English Midlands forced me to reappraise my whole approach to designing and delivering short tapestry courses. On the one hand, I was now living in a beautiful part of the world where many people would be happy to take a class as part of a holiday or while traveling, but the distance from my usual pool of students made the whole package of tuition fees, travel, and accommodations much greater than it had been when I was in England. I also had considerably less space in my new studio, so class sizes had to be much smaller with a maximum number of five students. First of all, I had to increase my tuition fees to take the smaller numbers into account. Secondly, I had to think about how best to attract the kinds of students I felt would benefit most from my uncommon range of skills and experience.

I decided there was a gap in the market for students who wanted to seriously study tapestry but who didn’t want to or couldn’t study full time. These students would be well motivated to work on their own between classes and would have clear personal goals in mind from the start. Originally, I envisioned that these classes would always be on a one-to-one basis with the program negotiated between the student and myself. Over the past five years I have had several students of this kind. One of them persuaded her local government arts body to fund her three-year, part-time study with me, on the basis that it was the most appropriate way for her to study and the most cost effective. She studied with me for a week at a time, three or four times a year, and worked on her own in between. This suited us both very well, and she is now an independent tapestry weaver with her own studio in Orkney. I’m now running a regular series of modular three-day classes for intermediate and advanced level students, which covers all the technical aspects of tapestry. Alongside this, I offer tailored advice on developing professional practice and individual tutorial sessions. I am especially interested in teaching Design, Inspiration and Interpretation classes because I feel that is often the missing element in wholly self-directed learning. Additionally, this is why I was particularly pleased to be asked to lead the ATA retreat *Channelling Your Muse* in Florida during 2008.

You can see my class programme for next year at <http://joanbaxter.vasu.org.uk>

## Community as Next Generation

by Terry L. Olson

If a generation includes a contemporaneous group of people who possess a common skill set, then acquiring new members of the group and passing along those skills becomes a necessary element of continuity. Teaching the “next generation” often refers to children. I think that all the people to whom we teach our tapestry skills, no matter their age, are the next generation. Part of that continuity, that line of tapestry artists, includes the community of weavers at the Damascus Fiber Arts School located south-east of Portland, Oregon.

I have woven for 18 years, moving from student to helper, to assistant, and finally to teacher. My mentor, Audrey Moore, began teaching tapestry in 1973. She learned more techniques and acquired more students through the years, passing skills along while keeping many of these weavers as students. Now Audrey and I teach together at the Damascus School.

Although it can be said that we are a multi-generational community, we are mostly retirement age women, accompanied by a few men and some younger women. Several of us weave alongside our mothers, we occasionally have visiting grandchildren, and in past years students have included home-schooled youth. We have 20 to 30 regular weavers, several of whom have been in our community for a decade or two. A few new students join us each term, some briefly and others more permanently. Several weavers have returned after years away because of work or family commitments, and others are looking for new ways to express their artistic creativity.

Everyone is encouraged to develop good technical skills and designs and to share their work. New students can start weaving either small tapestries on the copper pipe loom, or a relatively small geometric design on a Navajo warp. Eventually most want to learn it all, and more. Currently, several students are doing wedge weave, a couple are creating mille fleur designs that include native Oregon plants, and a few others are interpreting work of master painters. Some weavers focus on color interaction. Shaped tapestry interests two weavers, and another two currently weave family portraits.

Inspiration is often a community endeavor. Unlike many studios, weavers and visitors are encouraged to interact. We change our student gallery theme each term and show off newly completed work. We participate in the group challenges at the ATA non juried small format exhibits during Convergence. This year we sent 19 pieces, woven with a common theme and palette of mostly hand-



Damascus Fiber Arts School, Damascus, OR



Instructors and students at the Damascus Fiber Arts School.

dyed yarns. One of our weavers presents slide lectures about notable weavers with their innovative techniques. Another volunteers as librarian for our 200-book library, which includes Navajo, Kilim, and other tapestry designs from around the world. During most summers we have workshops—recently by Archie Brennan and Susan Martin Maffei, sponsored by Pam Patrie Studios, and this past summer one by Sarah Swett.

The changes Audrey and I have seen over the years in this school, the way the tapestries have begun, developed, and grown, and how the students have expanded artistically and personally show us that the “next generation of tapestry artists and weavers” are *all of us* who weave, who teach, and who share our tapestry so others can learn from us. Come visit if you can. ([www.damascusfiberartsschool.com](http://www.damascusfiberartsschool.com)).



# When Teachers Embody Ergonomics

by Karen Piegorsch, PhD

Is your creativity or your endurance for weaving limited by pain? Have you ever needed a week to recover from participating in a weekend workshop? Do you notice your students struggling to learn new techniques or doing less than their best even though you know they are talented and motivated? If so, ergonomics may help.

The basic definition of ergonomics is the design of systems, work methods, tools, and environments to enhance human capabilities. Traditionally, ergonomic design is used to maximize physical and mental performance and prevent physical injuries. It involves the dynamic interaction of humans with their environment.

As an artist, I believe that creativity flows best when we are whole, with body, mind, and spirit fully engaged. Therefore I embrace an expansive definition of the human (emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical) and the environment (physical, social, energetic). This view encompasses the many interfaces that are available for applying ergonomics to art-making.

For example, a tapestry artist's comfort, performance, and enjoyment are affected by relationships among: methods (tools, equipment, posture, force, repetition, pace); medium (fiber type, size, color); market (pricing, volume); environment (lighting, sound, climate); and self (eyesight, strength, coordination, personality).

I celebrate with gratitude tapestry teachers who incorporate ergonomics in their classrooms!! Two wonderful examples are Rebecca Fabos and Kathe Todd-Hooker. Last year, in an article for *Handwoven* magazine ["Set Your Body (and your Loom) Free", p. 10, May/June 2009], I shared Rebecca's ergonomic solution for weaving on portable frame looms. "Portability is important to me, but I got so tired of the loom wiggling in my lap, and I like to have both hands free," she explained. "Then, one day in my art supply store, I saw a box easel and thought, I can put my tapestry loom on this!"

After reading that article, Kathe tried the box easel in her studio and classroom. Then she enthused on her blog, "The easels with the drawers were spectacularly great. No sore or tired backs. They helped with the drawers to calm and/or remove a great deal of clutter. I have decided that I will be taking several to all of my classes from now on. I use my easel all of the time when I am weaving my shaped tapestries. I love the fact it has drawers and a handle for carrying it. The height of the weaving is adjustable which is way cool."

([www.synergarts.org](http://www.synergarts.org))



The ergonomically posed Karen Piegorsch.

Here are a few tips for incorporating ergonomics into the learning environment:

1. Embody ergonomics in everything you do. Taking care of yourself should be natural and automatic. By teaching through personal example, the benefits of ergonomics will flow effortlessly into your classroom.
2. Recognize when your students are struggling to perform. Notice signs of mental frustration, physical tension, fatigue, awkwardness, and difficulty achieving quality results. These are opportunities to benefit from ergonomics.
3. Help your students adapt the classroom context to their individual needs. Keep a stash of "temporary fix" resources on hand such as wedge cushions, task lights, ear plugs, and so forth.

I've noticed two key times when artists are most receptive to input on ergonomics. One is while learning a new skill. The other is after problems become severe enough to limit or disable their practice. Proactive ergonomics is the ideal.

Let's help the next generation of tapestry weavers develop their skills for a lifetime of creative expression.

# Swooning

by Erica Diazoni

Once upon a time, there was a young girl who, quite by chance, met and fell in love with a rare and rather absurd artistic medium called tapestry. Tapestry weaving created an odd sense of peace and serenity in her – it was challenging and creative. A piece of the rainbow was bound into a scrap of cloth when she finished weaving.

She swooned, fell head over heels, and dreamed that someday she would weave big, beautiful tapestries and follow the thread of tapestry weaving until she grew old.

She studied diligently in school. She learned how to spin wool, weave cloth, dye with chemicals, and dye with plants. She loved to draw and paint.

“Why don’t you just paint?” her teachers and classmates would ask. “Painting is much more versatile, and much quicker!” Even her close friends didn’t understand, so she began to doubt that this was a good thread to follow.

The kingdom where the young girl lived was wealthy and prosperous because it produced computers, software, and search engines. People rushed around, living half their lives in the beautiful sunny valley, and the other half was spent living virtual lives on Facebook. Innovation was sought after, and making money was the bottom line.

“There must be a place where people aren’t always in a rush and glued to their computer screens – a place where people take notice of dusky lavender sunsets. There must be people who don’t care what the latest ‘iProduct’ is and care even *less* if they have one. There must be other tapestry weavers out there somewhere,” thought the girl. She resolved to find such a place.

Aided by her fairy godmother, the girl undertook the perilous journey *toute seule* deep into the heart of the far-away kingdom of France, into a town called Aubusson. At last she arrived in the village, nestled between mountains where a cool blue river meandered. With starry eyes, she saw gardens carved out on the hillsides, walked the streets made of cobblestone, and explored the ruins of a castle and old clock tower. Surely this must be the place!

But when she went to the Museum of Tapestry, she found herself alone. When she visited other weavers’ workshops, they told her business was bad. One weaver showed her a DVD of a new machine that could weave tapestry, not Jacquard but closer to the handwoven weft faced tapestry. Over dinner, an instructor from the academy of beaux-arts



Erica Diazoni is "finding the way forward".  
Photo by Danny Chak.

told her the school was shutting down; there was no interest in it anymore. Only the Australians were into tapestry.

Perhaps she had come to the wrong place. Perhaps she should journey to Australia.

“No.” she decided. “If tapestry is a sinking ship, I had better not get on board.” So she left Aubusson quickly and fled to Paris, cheering herself up with Monet’s water lilies and Degas’ ballerinas. She sat down with a cappuccino, a croissant, and considered,

“Why not just paint?”

But her dreams of glowing tapestries would not fade.

Now what should she do? Should she pursue her love of tapestry despite the bleak prospects?

Did you?

What would you tell your younger self? What guidance can you give the young girl with tapestry-filled dreams?

Why should she press on? What dangers should she be wary of? What weapons do you have to put in her arsenal? What talismans do you have for her medicine bag? What song of hope can she guard in her heart? Most importantly, what knowledge can you impart?

## Five Mantras for the Young Tapestry Weaver

by Mary Zicafoose

### Mantra #1: “A Jacquard Shawl”

There is a poem entitled “A Jacquard Shawl” taken from the Pulitzer Prize winning book *Delights & Shadows* by Ted Kooser (the former United States Poet Laureate from Prague, Nebraska) that I have been reading for years to my workshop students and at the end of conference keynotes:

“A pattern of curly acanthus leaves  
and woven into one corner  
in blue block letters half an inch tall:  
MADE FROM WOOL FROM SHEEP  
KILLED BY DOGS. 1778.

As it is with jacquards,  
the design reverses to gray on blue  
when you turn it over,  
and the words run backward  
into the past. The rest of the story  
lies somewhere between one side

and the other, woven into  
the plane where the colors reverse:  
the circling dogs, the terrified sheep,  
the meadow stippled with blood,  
and the weaver by lamplight  
feeding what wool she was able to save  
into the faintly bleating, barking loom.”

This poem is a mantra.

A mantra is a vehicle, usually a sound or vibration, designed to assist an individual experience more refined levels of thought and creation. Mantras are used in meditation to help you transcend the morass of endless brain chatter. They help you get quiet, turn inward, and then e-x-p-a-n-d.

Mantra: in Hinduism and Buddhism, a sacred utterance (syllable, word, or verse) that is considered to possess mystical or spiritual efficacy. Various mantras are either spoken aloud or merely sounded internally in one's thoughts, and they are either repeated continuously for some time or just sounded once. Most mantras are without any apparent verbal meaning, but they are thought to have a profound underlying significance and are in effect distillations of spiritual wisdom. Thus, repetition of or meditation on a particular mantra can induce a trancelike state in the participant and can lead him to a higher level of spiritual ...

#### **Mantra #2: Weaving is a path to self actualization.**

From the get go, from the very first day I sat behind a loom, I was convinced that weaving was a covert spiritual activity, and that inherent in all the ritual, repetition, fiber, and focus, was a well trodden path to self actualization. I was so convinced of this that I spent a year doing research, collecting references from many cultures, referencing the act of weaving as a consciousness expanding activity. Interestingly, the parts of the world that produced the mythical and timeless textiles we venerate today as fine ethnic art, were the same cultures that spoke of weaving as a conduit to the higher Self. This research eventually became a slide/talk entitled “Weaver & Mystic”.



A Zicafoose piece installed and on exhibit.

“Pre-conquest American Indian women valued their role as vitalizers. Through their own bodies they could bring vital beings (and creations) into the world - a miraculous power whose potency does not diminish with industrial sophistication or time. They were mothers, and that word did not imply slaves, drudges, drones who are required to live only for others rather than for themselves as it does so tragically for many modern women. The ancient ones were empowered by their certain knowledge that the power to make life (creativity) is the source of all power and that no other power can gainsay it. Nor is that power simply of biology.” Paula Gunn Allen, **The Weaving Visions**

#### **Mantra #3: I am a weaver and a mystic.**

As I see it, there are two things going on when you sit at the loom. There's the very direct physical act of making the piece, and the somewhat invisible metaphysical act of accessing your vision.

Making the piece can easily become a lifetime's course of study in tapestry weaving.

Accessing your vision is where the weaving leaves the realm of learned craft and intellectual process and starts to involve some serious risk taking.

The weaver becomes the mystic when the two worlds seamlessly merge, producing an inspired product and an inspired artist.

#### **Mantra #4: What is it I want to say?**

What is it that you really want to say? Write it down. Keep writing and asking yourself this question until you have actually answered it. Now give it form—draw it or collage it or photograph it—make it visual. Then demand of it why it should become a tapestry. There must be at least five compelling reasons for this idea to bring you to the loom. Is tapestry the medium to best express this particular idea? If not, don't. Keep dreaming. Keep drawing. Put the idea aside. Move in a different direction, then revisit the idea. It must deserve to be a tapestry and be a worthy teacher, rewarding you for the time you will give it. Not the warp, the sett, the oh so lovely/edgy materials, the bobbins, beaters and baskets, nor the heady, romantic/arty act of weaving itself, will give a weak composition strength or render a half baked idea brilliant.

#### **Mantra #5: What is it that I plan to do with my one wild and precious life?**

Please read the last three lines of the poem “The Summer Day” by Mary Oliver:

“Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?”

This is a particularly powerful mantra. It is never too early or too late to answer this question....or change directions.



# Fatal Distraction

By Sarah Sweet

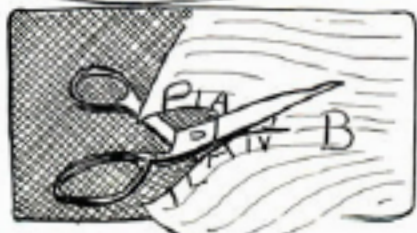
Take me!  
I'm yours

One of the great things about weaving tapestries is that I get to spend a lot of time with each idea.

One of the drawbacks is learning to cope with the rejects - cuz ideas are persistent, and I am a sucker.

Isn't it cute?

Oh, you again.



Sometimes, if given a small job, or a place in the queue, stray thoughts will settle down.



Sketchbooks can absorb many an ill-considered notion

Other textile techniques are also handy - a spare tapestry idea might really be a great new dress.



Once in a while I can think them into oblivion -

...on the other hand...

-but not often

Paint is OK, though not for long - it gets bossy & over-confident

And about words, the less said the better. Voracious, selective and insatiable, they will co-opt every idea within reach\* - which is why, just now, I am tucking them into nice squares where I hope they will behave



because, having completely capitulated to this absurd form

it's high time I returned to work



# Annotated Bibliography: “How to” Tapestry Books

by Elaine Duncan

Undoubtedly the most well known “how to weave” tapestry books include:

***Tapestry Handbook: The Next Generation*** by Carol K. Russell, 2007, ISBN 978-0-7643-2756-8, Schiffer Publishing Ltd. This completely revised and expanded book has been a classic with students and teachers for years. The updated photographs of more recent tapestries as well as older favourites are very inspiring. Her tips and advice preceding each technique provide notes on refining a technique or expanding its application. Diagrams are clear. She covers all areas of making tapestry from looms and equipment, materials, weaving, designing and finishing. It is an attractive addition to the tapestry weaver’s library.

***Tapestry Weaving: A Comprehensive Study Guide*** by Nancy Harvey, 1991, ISBN 0-934026-64-5, Interweave Press. Also another classic in the tapestry world, this book starts with the basics, instructs techniques through the weaving of a sampler and ends with mounting the tapestry and cartoon planning. For beginners who feel overwhelmed with the design aspect, this book provides cartoons which can be easily adapted to one’s own use. I personally like her clear diagrams where she anticipates the challenges involved and provides a good solution.

New in the “how-to” books over the past few years are Kathe Todd-Hookers’ books: *Tapestry 101*, and *Shaped Tapestry*. These coil-bound books easily lie flat near your loom for detailed information and instruction.

***Tapestry 101***, 2007, ISBN 978-0-9753698-5-2, starts with the basics. Kathe says you can view it as though you are taking a workshop with her. Start with this book and build your technical knowledge through weaving a sampler.

***Line in Tapestry***, 2005, ISBN 0-9753698-3-0, was actually the first book of the three written. But this book is not a beginner’s book. It is meant as a guide to what you can do with techniques you already know. Always having been fascinated with lines, Kathe chose to begin her publishing career with this book.

***Shaped Tapestry***, 2004, ISBN 0-9573698-0-6, is a fun book to help you play with your tapestry ideas. A lot of the “what if” questions are answered here. All three books have good illustrations and inspirational photos of tapestries, and provide very insightful ways of weaving tapestries all based on Kathe’s teaching knowledge and her weaving experiences. These are available through Fine Fiber and Press Studio, Albany, Oregon.

***Tapestry Weaving*** by Kirsten Glasbrook, 2002, ISBN 978-0855329389 is a bright, colourful book that appeals to the visual senses of potential tapestry weavers. It is equivalent to a small child in a candy shop. Using a widely set warp, she samples techniques to make it easy to see how to weave.

The books already mentioned provide great information for weaving from the front of the tapestry. But I would also like to include a couple of French weaving tapestry books where the weaving is traditionally done from the back of the tapestry:

***Great Tapestries The Web of History from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*** produced by Edita Lausanne, 1965, is mainly about the European history of tapestry. But towards the back of the book there is a great amount of information written by Francois Tabard, a master weaver at Aubusson, on the practical side of French tapestry. Descriptions of high-warp and low-warp looms, a glossary, setts, portees, textures, cartoons, how to warp and necessary equipment complement the first portion of the book on history. The photographs make you feel like you are right there.

***La Technique de A à X de la Tapisserie de Haute and Basse Lice et du Tapis de Savonnerie*** by Roland Galice, 1985, published by Paris: les Lettres Libres is a “must have” for French tapestry weavers. Even though it is written in French, the diagrams for the different techniques show from the front versions as well as from the back. There are examples of good and bad ways of doing things. Clearly illustrated, it is not necessary to have a good command of the French language.

Another book I would highly recommend for tapestry weavers is Peter Collingwood’s ***Techniques of Rug Weaving***, 1950, ISBN 0823052001. This book has long been a classic on rug making, but there are several chapters which apply to tapestry weavers. Collingwood’s well thought out directions and diagrams provide an excellent resource for finishing your tapestries, weaving kilims, and taking command of joins.

The above listing of “how-to” books is only a partial list. There are many excellent tapestry books on history, design, inspirations, colour, etc. I recommend that you go to Christine Laffer’s website listing for a more complete listing of books and articles. ([www.christinelaffer.com/tapestryresource/pub2/books\\_auth.html](http://www.christinelaffer.com/tapestryresource/pub2/books_auth.html))

## It's All in Your Angle

by Leslie Mitchell

Recently I was pleased to attend *Tapestry from Every Angle*, a tapestry weaving class given at the Española Valley Fiber Arts Center (EVFAC) in Española, New Mexico. Instructor Robin Reider is an award-winning weaver extraordinaire and a longtime Chimayó, New Mexico, resident. Robin combines Rio Grande weaving styles with her own to create large, striking tapestries that explore fine color grading, use of curves and extreme angles, and traditional and modern designs.

I've studied tapestry weaving for almost 10 years, mainly indigenous styles of the Americas, but I have minimal floor loom experience. My classmate (there were just two of us) has years of experience in fabric floor loom weaving but none in tapestry techniques.

Robin focused on subtle horizontal and vertical color grading as well as creation of unusual angles that can also form curves with no mathematical calculation. My classmate and I took advantage of Robin's large stash of hand-dyed yarns arranged by color family to design our weavings. Over three days we crammed in enough information to make our brains hurt (but it's a GOOD kind of hurt!). A concentrated infusion of new ideas for techniques and design is a great kick start to move beyond our daily weft, as we created small tapestries to take home and revisit as study guides.

Many thanks to Robin Reider for her expertise, energy, and patience, and to the staff of EVFAC for their assistance, dedication, and love of fiber arts!

Visit [www.evfac.org](http://www.evfac.org) and [www.weavingsbyrobin.com](http://www.weavingsbyrobin.com) for more information.



Leslie Mitchell, Landscape & Color-Banded Weavings, 12 x 19"  
2008. Photo by John Tallent.

## Lions, Tigers, and Bears

by Maria R. Kovacs

What physically happens to the brain when confronting art? The question posed in an article, "Is Beauty in the Brain of the Beholder", in *Art News*, January of 2010 by A. Landi inspired me to learn more. Feeling like Dorothy in Oz, I am reading about neuroaesthetics.

Simply defined, it is the science of nervous tissue of the brain, combined with aesthetics or the nature of beauty and judgment in art. I discovered there are many scientists, university departments, and artists devoted to neuroaesthetics. It is no secret that we now know what specific areas of the brain control hearing, sight, memory, and movement. Scientists have mapped specific brain areas responsible for the subtle differentiations in particular color, form, and shape; and how areas respond to visual stimuli to identify how the brain processes art.

Semir Zeki, author of "Art and the Brain", takes us through important art works as a means to compare and explain the concept of neuroaesthetics. According to Zeki, the brain processes color before form and form before motion. Beauty and desire activate similar areas of the brain. Interestingly, an unfinished or ambiguous work of art is more satisfying to the brain than a complete work. Zeki considered imagery by Vermeer, Cezanne, and Michelangelo, believing a system of connoisseurship exists in the brain categorizing so called nebulous art works. For example, what is the young woman thinking in Vermeer's painting? In addition, he states that those with "more knowledge of art show greater brain activity than less sensitive viewers." (Zeki, S. "Art and the Brain", *Daedalus* 127 No. 2, pp 71-103)

Mary Livingstone, a Harvard professor of neurobiology, studies the optical system to find "what kinds of information our cells in the brain are extracting from the world around us." Her *Vision and Art: the Biology of Seeing*, (NY: Abrams Press, 2002), is a readable, illustrated book that adds another dimension to this investigation. Livingstone states that Mona Lisa's smile is best viewed peripherally, giving her face a dynamic quality that takes the viewer once again to that "ambiguous place". In this case, ambiguous references the thing characteristic in great art – the platonic ideal. The English artist Constable also equates abstract with platonic.

Exhibitions devoted to Neuroaesthetics are to be found in the U.S. notably at the Art Museum of Baltimore and at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, England. All this brings me to the point of asking, "How can we make use of this information in our own work?"

Perhaps most important in the realm of aesthetics, for me, is the notion of non-explicit components taking on the role in what makes a major work of art stimulating. Is leaving the exploration to the viewer – having several possible interpretations or gut reactions, the hallmark that separates average from great work?

If the brain is stimulated by color before shape, form, and movement in art, even if by a fraction of a second, does this give us a logical means to an end? All these thoughts of how we see things (lions), how others interpret them (tigers), and what we qualify and quantify scientifically (bears) are what I am wrapping my brain around. The brain interprets straight lines as being stronger and more profound than curved lines, curved lines resolving into straight lines, and symmetry as preferred by the brain over curved or asymmetrical images. I wonder how and if I can apply these ideas to my own work or see in others work?

The studies seem to lead to the exploration of so called new media to exemplify the concepts. Technical virtuosity, as discussed in Zeki's article, is used to generate ambiguity, meaning the ability to represent simultaneously several truths. Synaesthesia is a neuroaesthetic exhibit at Goldsmiths University, London, England. The term means sensations combined, a condition when an individual receives a sight stimulus and hears the stimulus. Actually one of the pieces by Stephen Vittielo was "What does light sound like? Notably, Nina Sobell's "Thinking of You" is brain wave drawings. [<http://www.art-brain.org/synaesthesia-a-neuroaesthetics-exhibition/> (2/2/2010)]

What tapestry artists' work hallmarks some or all of these ideals? Initially for me, James Koehler for his supreme use of color and line ambiguity creating puzzles for our brains to solve; he gives us hints in the titles of the work. Also, Michael Rhode for his abstract use of form, line and color. Perhaps the best example is Susan Iverson for evoking dreamscapes in abstracted shape, line, and color. The additional use of the human silhouette in some of her work adds yet another element to fulfill the aesthetics that separate average from good work. The abstract concept puzzle seems to fulfill the principles of neuroaesthetics. Art is introspective. The brain pre-selects what is important, the essential information in the visual environment or Zeki's "Einführung", to identify the link between the pre-existent form within the person and the outside world which is reflected back to the viewer. (Zeki, p.83)

So in the Einführung, my revised insight into the process of making art entails the following: inspiration and analyses, technical consideration or the mark of the hand in technical virtuosity, and the resolution in platonic ambiguity.

This is quite a mouthful but, when in Oz? A concluding quote to challenge us more as artists is "If art is to serve as a window into the brain, the challenge is for art to reveal something that we do not already know about the brain." Anjan Chatterjee, "Art, a window into the brain", *Journal of Neuro-Aesthetic Theory*.

Some sources for your consideration:

[www.artbrain.org/art-a-window-into-the-brain-2](http://www.artbrain.org/art-a-window-into-the-brain-2)  
[www.neuroesthetics.org](http://www.neuroesthetics.org)  
[www.neuro.med.harvard.edu/faculty/Livingston.html](http://www.neuro.med.harvard.edu/faculty/Livingston.html)  
[www.artbrain.org/art-a-window-into-the-brain](http://www.artbrain.org/art-a-window-into-the-brain)  
[www.online.wsj.com/article](http://www.online.wsj.com/article) (Search: How Art Affects the Brain, 1/22/2010)  
[www.psychologytoday.com/print/30776](http://www.psychologytoday.com/print/30776)  
[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuroesthetics](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuroesthetics)

## Mary Colton ~ Volunteers Make a Difference

by Linda Rees

In 2007 Mary Colton started proofreading for *Tapestry Topics*. At the time she was a bit unsure if she would be available on a regular basis because of other commitments and travel plans. As it turned out, since the time frame for doing the proofing is a fairly predictable unit, she could schedule it into her activities. As all of us who have worked on the newsletter have discovered, Mary agrees: "it has been great fun being one of the first to read the articles each quarter, and I'm happy to make a contribution to ATA."

Mary is well suited for this task since she taught English several years until her children were born. She still would get a little disturbed by the frequency of split infinitives present in the copy to be proofed but always left the final choice of wording to the editor. On the other hand, the rewards of proofing a newsletter might be as marginal as those of weather



Mary Colton wearing Ikat coat with "Meditation Pond" Ikat hanging on the wall.

forecasting because often other mishaps occur after the proofing is done, either in implementing the changes or occasionally in the layout. When I was editor, I cringed when seeing any mistakes in the printed newsletter, knowing they most likely occurred in my fixing the corrections. Fortunately, Mary has been a cheerful, efficient worker and as our time working together evolved, she took a more active role in commenting on problem areas or exceptionally informative text. The interchanges made our task more dynamic.

Mary's introduction to weaving came about 40 years ago when her mother-in-law let her choose a project from the Marguerite Davison's *A Handweavers Pattern Book* and led her through the steps "from warping the loom to finishing a bag." She went on to take a weekly class at Craft Alliance for six weeks where she found that her earlier experience, along with skills in sewing and knitting her

continued...





Mary Colton, "Santa Fe Window" 9.5 x 7" Las Aranas Tapestry Group's Doors, Gates, and Windows project for the ATA Small Format show at Convergence 2008.

mother had taught her, placed her a step ahead of the other beginners and comfortable with finishing skills. From the mid 1970s to 1982 she taught basic weaving for Craft Alliance. Mary also continued avidly taking classes from a local weaver and any workshops she could from the Weavers' Guild of St Louis. She had a brief introduction to tapestry from Muriel Nezhnie but considered it too slow at the time.

A three-week session at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine conducted by Yoshiko Wada in 1981 on indigo and Ikat,

gave Mary the impetus for a couple decades of weaving Ikat garments and wall hangings. She had moved to Albuquerque by then and during the 1980s taught weaving at the University of Albuquerque, at Village Wools and in workshops around the country. For the decade of the 1990's she was an adjunct assistant professor of weaving in the Art Education Department of the University of New Mexico. Mary also received the HGA's Certificate of Excellence in Weaving in 1998. For the Master's certification she studied various tapestry techniques from all over the world, choosing to weave a Turkish-style kilim, a fine-yarn Aubusson tapestry and a third tapestry using techniques and design ideas from the southwestern US, Mexico and Peru.

When her husband retired from teaching at the end of 1999, she did too. While still producing Ikat stoles for galleries, she spends most of her weaving time creating tapestries, accommodating now to its slow process. Active in Las Arañas Spinners and Weavers Guild, Mary has promoted a tapestry study group of the guild for the last decade. She continues to be a staunch member of Handweavers Guild of America, busy with details for Convergence in Albuquerque this summer.

Thanks Mary for your supportive role and continuing contribution to getting the newsletter to the members. It was a pleasure to rely on your reading of the newsletters' content and our interactions.

At the end of this issue you will note that Mary Colton is now credited as assistant editor. She reluctantly gave permission to add this to her title -- it does reflect what she is really doing. Although calling her the "indispensable editor and proofreader" is more accurate. Mary's quarterly contributions would not be so invisible if you saw each issue before her review. Mary's talents as a tapestry weaver and assistant editor/proofreader are greatly appreciated. We all sincerely thank you.

## Kudos

### Compiled by Merna Strauch

please send items to mstrauch@mac.com

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts recently purchased Jane Kidd's "Land Sentence: Arbour."

The Art in Embassies Program of the US State Department has selected the triptych "Once There Was a River" by **Mary Rawcliffe Colton** for the ambassador's residence in Swaziland. Mary's ATA Artist Page led to the discovery of her tapestry!



Sherri Woodard Coffey, "Ancient Symbol" 22 x 46.5"



Pat Williams, "The Last Grasp" 18.5 x 47.375" 2007

**Sherri Woodard Coffey** had two pieces, "Purple Haze (Reflection)" and "Ancient Symbol", accepted for "CraftTexas 2010", Sept. 25 to Dec. 30, 2010 at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft.

**Pat Williams'** "The Last Grasp", portrays a woman trying to learn about aging from a flower. It has been accepted into the exhibition "Green: the Color and the Cause", on view at The Textile Museum in Washington, DC, Apr. 16 to Sept. 11, 2011.

**Alex Friedman** had the sole tapestry in the theme show "surface/tension: h2O" in Sausalito CA, June 1 to July 11, 2010. The show included 44 San Francisco Bay Area artists whose work featured the subject of water in its many forms — physically and metaphorically. Alex's piece, "Flow: Unfathomed", 45 x 71 x 3", wool & cotton on cotton warp, was woven this year.



**Jean Pierre Larochette** and **Yael Lurie's** "Water Song" tapestries and "Corn" motif pieces were shown at the Rochioli Winery in Healdsburg, California from May 14 to June 23, 2010.

**Odette Brabec's** "Old Stone Steps Provence" won the HGA award at "Fiber Celebration 2010" at Tointon Gallery for the Visual Arts in Greeley, CO in June 2010. **Sherri Woodard Coffey's** "Journey" won an award from Mountain Colors Yarn, and **Michael Rohde's** knotted vessel "Arterial" won an award from Webs. Also participating were **Kathy Spoering** and **Barbara Richards**.

**Tommye Scanlin** and fabric collage artist Diane Getty showed work in May and June 2010 at the Focus Gallery of the Southern Highland Craft Guild Folk Art Center in Asheville, NC. They both find inspiration in natural forms, and the works in the exhibit reflected that inspiration. Tommye had seven pieces on exhibit and demonstrated tapestry weaving in the gallery.

**Maximo Laura** received second prize for "Poema a La Flor" at Fantastic Fibers 2010. **Kathe Todd-Hooker** took Juror's Choice Recognition for "So Between 2." Only 56 pieces were chosen from almost 600 fiber art entries for this April 2010 juried show in Paducah, Kentucky.

**Michael Rohde's** tapestry "Indra's Net" has been selected by the US State Department Art in Embassies Program for the Ambassador's Residence in Belize.

"Constructed Inquires", a two person exhibit by **Linda Rees** and **Carolyn Price Dyer**, is showing at the La Conner Quilt & Textile Museum in La Conner, WA. The exhibit runs from Sept. 29 through December 31, 2010.

**Sarah Swett's** "Slow Literature" exhibit at The Bank Left Gallery in Palouse, WA ran from Sept. 11 to Oct. 2, 2010. Sarah's woven novels (the words of her stories woven into her art) and her tapestry cartoons were shown together for the first time.



Alex Friedman, "Flow: Unfathomed" 45 x 71 x 3" 2010

New Mexico was tapestry heaven this summer. In addition to many wonderful exhibits and ATA events, tapestries were present in the Convergence juried shows in the Albuquerque Center:

**Kathe Todd-Hooker's** "So Sought After" won first place in Small Expressions! Others in the Small Expressions exhibit were **Joyce Hayes' "Conciliation - Fall"**, **Maximo Laura's "Cosmic Harmony 1"**, **Merna Strauch's "echoes"**, and **Linda Wallace's "Evolve."**

Eye Dazzlers hosted five tapestries: Judy Ann Ness' "Requiem", Elaine Nixon's "Poppies in the Park", **Tommye Scanlin's "Spring Profusion"**, **Nancy Taylor's "Midday Market"**, and **Linda Weghorst's "Georgia's Sky ..."**

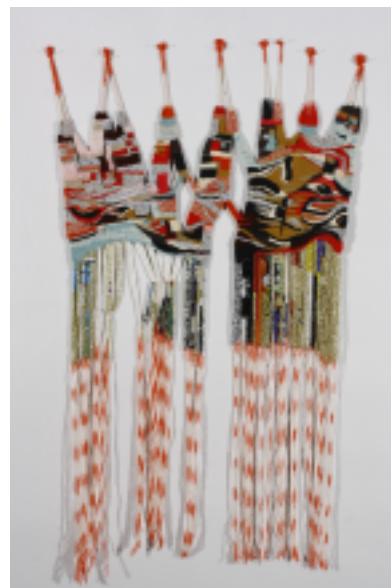
**James Koehler's "Wheelmaker 1"**, **Connie Lippert's "Elu, Opening"** and Liesel Orend's "Women of the North" were on display in the Story Tellers exhibit. Walk in Beauty, the Convergence fashion show featured **Regina Vorgang's "Seasons Blanket."**

## ATA NEWS

written and compiled by Elaine Duncan,  
Joan Griffin, and Mary Lane

### ATA 2010 Student Award

The American Tapestry Alliance is pleased to announce that Jennifer Hunt of Lawrence, Kansas is the student award recipient for 2010. She is currently studying fiber art at the University of Kansas in the Textile Design Program. After taking her first weaving class in the summer of 2008, she immediately realized that tapestry permitted a sort of encompassing process of working, and she was able to create imagery that she found exciting.



Jennifer Hunt, "Blanket" 18 x 36"

From Jennifer's artist statement: "Tapestry weaving allows the maker to use a tactile process in order to create a design surface that is flat, having a graphic appearance. While yarn can be used to achieve color blending, each piece of yarn always retains a single color. My work has utilized

continued...



Jennifer Hunt, "Panel Pieces" 26.5 x 29"

such aspects of tapestry in that my weavings are treated as arrangements--of single yarns, single colors, and single shapes that build from one segment to the next. I do not make preliminary designs before I begin a weaving. I am constantly assessing the composition and pattern as I weave. By working this way, I have developed a sort of "language" of colors and forms because I tend to repeat certain arrangements. I utilize a rich color palette and combine fluid motifs with geometric shapes. Recently, I have experimented within the confines of the loom, by altering the tension to produce various sized slits, and also by leaving sections of warp unwoven to create rectangular or irregular-shaped openings. As with the beading and dyeing of warp ends in "Blanket", I am interested in combining tapestry with other surface techniques. My work explores the design process I have developed and reaches out to the viewer through abstraction and pattern."

## Textiles and Settlement: From Plains Space to Cyber Space 2010 Textile Society of America Symposium

Textile artists, scholars, curators, and collectors gather every two years for the Textile Society of America's Symposium, three stimulating days of talks and site seminars that cover a broad range of topics. Pre and post conference tours and workshops, and an enticing array of exhibitions, round out the offerings.

ATA was pleased to participate in TSA's 2010 Symposium in Lincoln, Nebraska, October 6-9, 2010. Two speakers' sessions organized by ATA members, *Negotiating the Handmade in a Cyber World* and *Tapestry: Voices From the Past Lead into the Future* were accepted into the conference and included eight tapestry related talks. In addition to the speakers' sessions, the Elder Gallery hosted *American Tapestry Biennial 8. ATB8* was visited by conference participants during a Site Seminar and was featured on the Gallery Crawl.



Elinor Steele, "Reconstruction V" 33 x 59" 2007

ATA's participation in the TSA 2010 Symposium is an example of our efforts to foster collaborations with other organizations. These collaborations introduce contemporary tapestry to a wider audience and offer our members more stimulating and enriching opportunities. Watch for a full report on the TSA symposium in an upcoming *Tapestry Topics*.

### ATA 2011 Membership Directory

Initial planning and information gathering has begun for our 2011 Membership Directory. Contact Myla S. Collier at [mcollier@charter.net](mailto:mcollier@charter.net) if you would like to put an ad in the directory or if you have suggestions for contacts. If you need to update your address, phone number, email/blog/website address, etc., contact Diane Wolf. Also, if you have received a notice of membership renewal and ignored it, your membership may lapse and you will not be in the directory. Please contact Diane Wolf at [dianewolf@mac.com](mailto:dianewolf@mac.com) for information or suggestions. No computer? Write to: Diane Wolf, ATA Membership, 18611 N 132nd Ave, Sun City West, AZ 85375



Lisa Trujillo, "Crazy at Heart" 84 x 54"

## Chimayo Tapestry Weaving

Mark your calendars!  
April 3-5, 2011  
Weaving Southwest, Taos, New Mexico

Chimayo tapestry weaving is a New Mexican tradition related to Rio Grande weaving. It is unique in emphasizing at-the-loom creativity. The techniques and skills learned in this class are applicable to all of the Rio Grande weaving styles, but the focus will be on the special logic of Chimayo weaving and designing that stresses spontaneity. Students will learn how to combine angles and forms to create this unique form of woven expression from Northern New Mexico.

This workshop is an opportunity to study with master weaver, Lisa Trujillo. Trujillo's work has received numerous awards, including at Spanish Market, and is part of collections around the world. She and her husband, Irvin, run their successful business, Centinela Traditional Arts in Chimayo.

The workshop will take place in conjunction with *Small Tapestry International 2: Passages at Weaving Southwest*. The opening reception for *STI2: Passages* is April 2, 2011. Watch for more details regarding this workshop in upcoming ATA enews and *Tapestry Topics*. Contact Mary Lane (marylane53@mac.com) for more information.

## In Memoriam



### Liev Beuten-Schellekens

It is with sadness that we note Liev Beuten-Schellekens recently and unexpectedly passed away. Liev was a long time tapestry weaver, ATA member and has had work exhibited in several American Tapestry Biennials. Through the generosity of her family, the tapestry chosen for ATB8 will still be included in the exhibition.



Liev Beuten-Schellekens, "Imagination"

### David L. Johnson

At press time we learned of Dave Johnson's passing. A remembrance will be included in the next issue of *Tapestry Topics*. Visit [www.urbanwild.net](http://www.urbanwild.net) to see Dave's body of work featuring tapestry and mixed media.





## ATA's Annual Report 2009-2010

American Tapestry Alliance's past year can be summed up neatly in one word: Growth. ATA has experienced growth in membership, growth in programming, and growth in professionalism.

### Membership

ATA's membership now surpasses 500 members (510). Members form the foundation of our organization and inspire many of us to dedicate hours away from our studios managing the programs and business of ATA. This year many members upgraded to Circle levels and our monetary donations doubled. In a year of economic challenges and natural disasters that we all felt compelled to support, the financial generosity of our members validates the excellent work of our volunteers and the high quality of our programming.



L to R: Erica Diazoni and Christine Laffer at "Toolkit of Tapestry Techniques" 2009, San Jose, CA. Photo by Mary Lane.

### Programming

- Income from membership dues and member donations supports ATA's diverse and stimulating programming.
- In addition to this Forum and the upcoming Member Retreat held in conjunction with Convergence 2010, ATA is also sponsoring a Session of speakers at the Textile Society of America's conference in October.
- We are increasing our presence at SOFAWEST, where we will be presenting contemporary tapestry to an international audience of collectors.
- Educational Articles on the ATA website covered topics such as commissioning tapestries and the technical aspects of tapestry weaving.
- The Distance Learning and Helping Hands programs continue to attract both students and mentors.
- ATA's exhibitions elicit a large number of entries from around the world and the Web Exhibition program has highlighted master weavers and teachers in our field.

### Professionalism

ATA's professionalism has grown through partnerships with other organizations. In addition to our ongoing relationship with HGA, we also look forward to connecting with a broad range of artists, scholars, and curators through our programming at the Textile Society of America's symposium. Outreach to collectors grows through our presence at SOFAWEST in Santa Fe, New Mexico. ATA's efforts, in collaboration with the Gloria F. Ross Center for Tapestry Studies, offer this gathering of international galleries and collectors an opportunity to see the exciting work in the field of contemporary tapestry.

Our overseas connections are also growing stronger. The summer issue of the German publication, *Textilforum*, features an article on American Tapestry Biennial 8. ATA events are publicized in the United Kingdom and in Australia. United Kingdom, Australian, and European members, as well as other overseas members, travel to the United States to participate in our educational programming.



To maintain professional and consistent communication with other organizations, ATA hired a part time Administrative Assistant this year. The Administrative Assistant helps retain information and maintain programming schedules as Co-Directors and Board Members transition in and out of their volunteer positions. Program records, contacts, schedules, and the organizational calendar are stored in a virtual office by the Administrative Assistant.

## **Future direction**

ATA's future looks bright. The Board, the Administrative Assistant, and two Board Advisors met for three days in April to review our programming based on your comments in the member surveys and the recommendations from five topic-specific think tanks composed of invited members. Based on those comments, and after careful consideration, we drew up ATA's next five-year plan. Some of the goals of the five-year plan include:

- **Increasing international membership:**  
Members from countries around the world add to the richness and breadth of ATA's membership and programming. Creating relationships with tapestry groups in other countries and increasing listings and articles in publications outside the United States will increase our profile in the international tapestry community and offer more people the opportunity to take advantage of the many benefits of ATA membership.
- **Encouraging youth membership through awards and a scholarship program:**  
Incorporating ideas from the upcoming generation of tapestry weavers will insure that ATA stays vibrant and receptive to new ideas.
- **Developing a PDF Tapestry Topics:**  
An online newsletter offers ATA the opportunity to develop a full-color publication. The newsletter will be redesigned to include more, and bigger, images. The banner, graphics, and layout will be also be updated. Members will receive their newsletters earlier, and the money saved from the increasingly expensive postage and printing costs will be directed towards other programming. ATA will also be doing its part in reducing the use of paper.
- **Re-branding ATA:**  
Re-branding involves examining the way we communicate our mission and goals. The process started with the search for a tagline, and will also involve redesigning our graphic materials to create a fresh, contemporary, and consistent look. The Board is also considering changing ATA's name to one that better reflects our increasingly diverse and international membership. Possibilities include Alliance of Tapestry Artists or Tapestry Alliance.
- **Working towards hiring an Executive Director:**  
Planning now for a solid and reliable flow of income will insure that ATA can support this new, and exciting, phase in our development.

## **Financial**

ATA's plans for the future require a careful balance of income and expenditures. The budget for fiscal year 2010-2011 has been drafted and approved by the Board. It is based on retention of current members, a modest growth in new members, a growing Annual Appeal, and a prudent allocation of funds. Through diligent fiscal management, ATA has not lost any funds during the current economic challenge.

## **Conclusion**

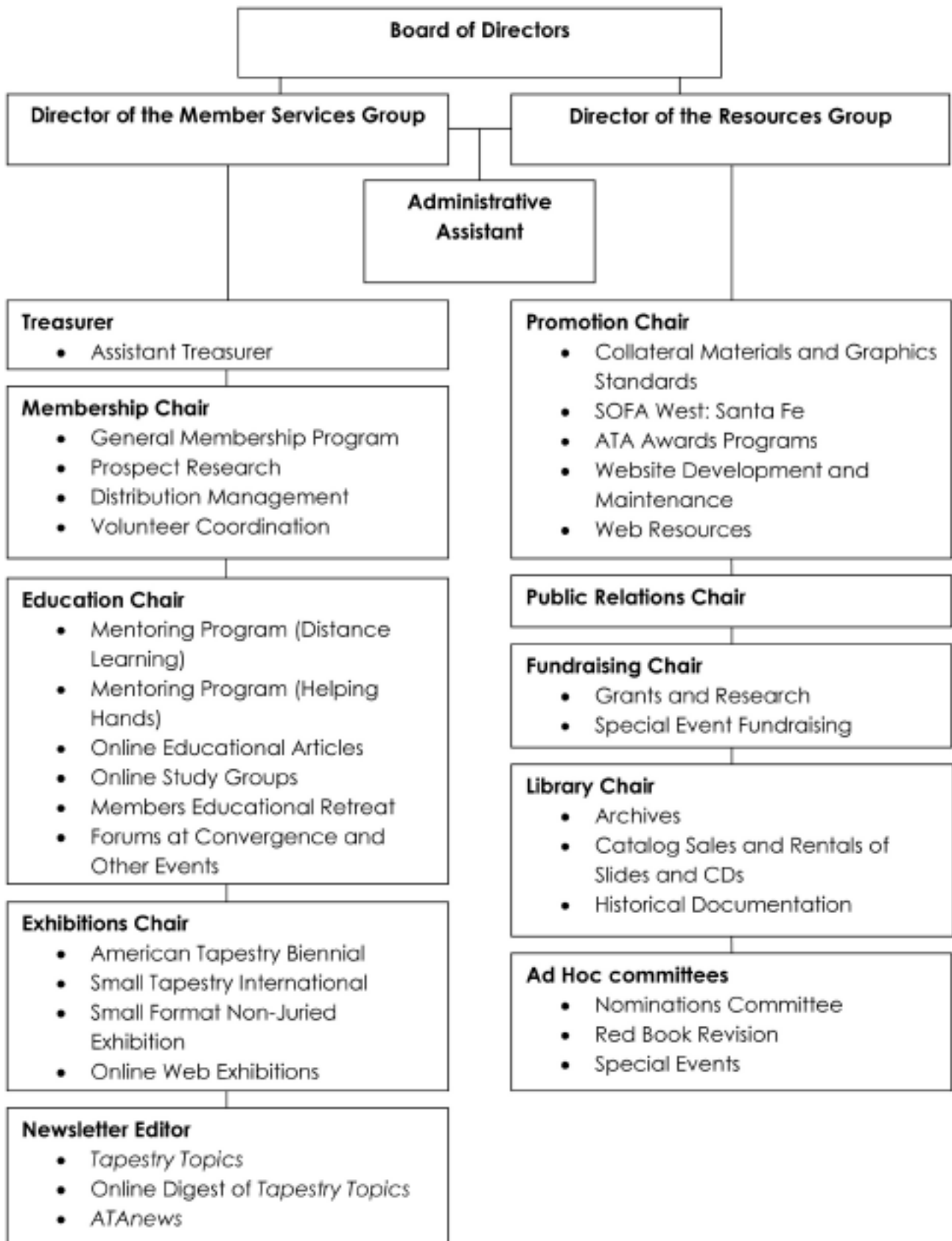
Members who donate their time, participate in programming, support ATA financially, and promote our organization through networking around the globe keep the American Tapestry Alliance vital and growing. Your dedication to the American Tapestry Alliance ensures that contemporary tapestry has a voice and support for generations to come.

## **Thank you for your support!**

The full Annual Report will be available on the ATA website.

continued...

# ATA Organizational Chart



## Tapestry Topics - Exciting Changes

ATA's Board of Directors is excited to announce the redesign of Tapestry Topics. Our highly anticipated newsletter will now be available as a web-based journal bursting with colorful images of contemporary tapestry. Julie Barnes, the creative editor behind Tapestry Topics, has been working with Elinor Steele, our talented graphic designer, to update the layout of the newsletter and to incorporate many more images. Many of you have already told us that you support this change, and have been receiving the transition newsletter on the web as the newsletter team perfects the delivery system.

A web-based newsletter will not only contain more visuals - all in color - it will also cut down on ATA's contribution to the paper stream, and make the increasing costs in printing and postage available for other ATA programming. We hope you are as excited as we are about a new look to our newsletter. The complete change to the web-based format will take place with the Winter Issue. Watch for the link to the new Tapestry Topics in ATA's November enews.

The publication date of Tapestry Topics will be shifting as we transition into a new newsletter team and a new format. As the schedule is redefined, the revised publication schedule will be announced.

ATA Board of Directors

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### ATA MEMBERSHIP FORM

	1 year	2 years
Individual	\$35	\$65
Studio Circle	\$60	\$110
Curator's Circle	\$125	\$225
Collector's Circle	\$250	\$450
Student*	\$25	\$45

\*enclose copy of current student identification card with payment

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities

Send payment to: ATA Membership  
c/o Diane Wolf  
18611 N. 132nd Ave.  
Sun City West, AZ 85375  
(480) 200-1034

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax/Alternate phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Visa/Mastercard number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
card holder's signature

PayPal option:

Use the "Send Money" tab on the PayPal website and send your payment to [americantapestryalliance@gmail.com](mailto:americantapestryalliance@gmail.com) with a description of what it applies to. Make your check, money order or credit card form payable to ATA.

American Tapestry Alliance  
PO Box 28600  
San Jose, CA 95159-8600

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## Tapestry Topics



Sherri Woodard Coffey, "Journey" 29 x 55"

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

### Guidelines for submitting articles to *Tapestry Topics*:

**Deadlines** ~ Note that issue themes have changed publication sequence!

January 15, 2011: **Exploring Color**: coordinator Tori Kleinert  
([tktapestry@msn.com](mailto:tktapestry@msn.com))

April 1, 2011: **Cartoons**: Let me tell you a story...

July 15, 2010: TBA

October 1, 2010: TBA

Send all items to: Juliet Barnes at [ATA\\_julie@msn.com](mailto:ATA_julie@msn.com) or  
2485 Heights Drive  
Ferndale, WA 98248 Phone: 360-380-9203

All photographs and electronic images should be accompanied by the following information:

Size, date completed, and photo credits.

Articles should be under 1000 words. Submission will be edited for clarity and space requirements.

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

Newsletter committee: Asst. Editor/Proofreader: Mary Colton, Layout: Elinor Steele, Kudos: Merna Strauch, Distribution: Nancy Crampton, Web Posting: Christine Laffer