



AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE

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Text in Tapestry

Theme Editor's Introduction

by Lindsey Marshall

After accepting the job as Theme Coordinator for the *Tapestry Topics* Winter issue: "Text in Tapestry," I began to think about all the different examples of lettering in this medium, going back to medieval tapestries. It appears as logos, signatures, titles; it can be abstract, descriptive, illustrative, integral, additional, a particular typeface, or cursive, or calligraphy. And that's just the beginning. There are as many approaches to the inclusion, or exclusion, of text and lettering in tapestry as there are artists.

The articles contributed to this issue reflect the diverse possibilities in designing with text. Common threads emerge, such as conveying meaning, playfulness, legibility/illegibility, and text as image. Some articles explore why lettering has been omitted or discarded. In other articles design choices are discussed: Will the lettering be woven into the tapestry or sewn on separately? Will the text be a major element, or an incidental addition? Will the text present a native, or foreign language, or a combination? Whatever the choices, text communicates with the viewer on some level.

Thank you for this editing opportunity; it has been revelatory – both in the range of work and the generosity of tapestry artists and academics who discuss and share their work, techniques, and the design process behind it. I was pleased to receive such varied and numerous contributions that this theme continues in the 2014 Summer Issue of *Tapestry Topics*.



Lindsey Marshall studied textiles in the 1970s, and then pursued a career as a graphic designer, lecturer, and researcher. A change in circumstances provided the opportunity to revisit her textile origins and she began tapestry weaving again in 2009. Much of her work reflects her graphics and visual communications career. Text continues to appear in her weavings.

Text in Tapestry

Lindsey Marshall, Theme Coordinator

Co-Directors' Letter	3
Theme Articles	
Theme Editor's Introduction Lindsey Marshall	2
Adventures in Weaving Words Janet Austin	4
Weaving, Writing, and Story Telling Trisha Goldberg	6
Thoughts on Text Linda Wallace	9
To Text or Not to Text? Barbara Burns	11
On the Use of Text in My Tapestries Peter Horn	14
Reproductive Issues and Text in Tapestry Erin M. Riley	17
Ecclesiastical Text: The Tapestries of Conwry Evans and Dovecot Studio Francesca Baseby	19
From Silk Screen to Text in Tapestry Jan Langdon	22
Inspiration: Muriel Nezhnie's "Imprints" Kathy Spoering	23
Wildflowers of the Sierra and Logo Text Sharon Warren	26
Exhibition Review	27
Translations: Jane Kidd's Recent Work in Tapestry and Negotiating Tradition: Five Approaches Virginia Stephen	
ATA News	31
Awards for Excellence	31
Emerge Membership Grant Winner	32
Thanks to Long Term Members	33
Call for ATA Board of Directors Members	33
Members' Passing	33
Convergence 2014	34
Creative Capital - ATA's 2014 Members' Retreat	34
Tapestry Topics Themes & Deadlines	34
Important Dates	35
Contact Us	35

Cover: **Tricia Goldberg**, "California Poppies," 36 in x 34 in, 2008, photo: Dan Dosick. Wool and silk weft, cotton warp.

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Co-Directors' Letter, Winter 2013

Happy New Year!

This is the prime tapestry weaving season, with several long months of winter still ahead. During the busy holiday season, we hope you will find some unbroken time behind the loom, or at least treat yourself to a winter evening or two reading this compelling issue of *Tapestry Topics* that explores the topic of "Text in Tapestry."

In the world of ATA we are between the tapestry show season with the **ATB 10** entry deadline closed and the exhibition run of **Small Tapestry International 3** completed. Congratulations to every weaver who dreamed, designed, wove, and entered work for consideration in these exhibitions. The collective hope, of course, is for our work to be accepted in an exhibition. But the bigger dream lies in the moment the idea or creative concept is first conceived, followed by the meticulous and almost prayerful execution of the drafting and creation of the piece. The greatest of dreams is for our work to be met and challenged, understood and acknowledged, and to evolve powerfully over time.

This is the stuff New Year's resolutions are made of: intention, affirmation, growth. This is the perfect time to set the bar for something besides weight loss and a reprieve from credit card spending. Why not this New Year set new goals and resolutions for your work in tapestry?

Here are a few that come to mind:

- I resolve this year to enter my work in not only fiber related shows but also exhibitions that include all fine art media.
- I resolve to contact one new gallery every month, be it local, regional, national or international, introducing myself, my work, and the medium of tapestry.
- I resolve to enlist and attempt to master one new technique in the next piece I design and weave.
- I resolve to have a cutting off party with the next piece I cut off the loom.
- I resolve to take the time to have much more fun behind the loom, allowing more people access to both me and my process.

Lastly, we always are grateful to all our members: new to ATA, or longtime members. A special list of those who have been ATA members for 15 or more years can be found in this issue; we salute this special group and are grateful for your dedication to the organization. Thank You!

Weave strong,

M & M



Adventures in Weaving Words

by Janet Austin

I have woven text in many tapestries. It can make a very direct statement, suggest an idea, and even add an element of mystery or humor. The first time I tried weaving text was when my children were very small, and I wove their names into a tapestry. Later I attended a meeting of Tapestry Weavers in New England, where Micala Sidore issued a challenge: to weave a small tapestry using text. On the long drive home from the meeting, I was thinking about what I would weave, and began to notice the highway signs go by, with words on them. The result was a small tapestry with an image of a highway sign: "Exit 7 Tapestry."

As an art student many years ago, one of my favorite courses was calligraphy. I loved making beautiful letters, and I learned that some words have a particular beauty even apart from their meaning. Later I was intrigued by Archie Brennan's use of creative lettering in tapestry, and I liked the idea of practicing it myself.

Just as calligraphy was, for me, the most useful course I took in art school, I have also found practical uses for tapestry text. I wove a tapestry that simply reads "TAPESTRY by JANET AUSTIN," to replace the cardboard sign I was using at craft fairs.

I have two others that read: "PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH," which I hang in galleries during exhibits. After a discussion on the "Tapestry List," another tapestry weaver joked that she didn't just want to touch the tapestries: she wanted to fondle them! I seriously considered weaving, "KINDLY REFRAIN FROM FONDLING THE EXHIBIT." It would be fun, and a little sadistic, to weave it in very soft, seductive yarns.

Recently, I included woven text in two tapestries in my *Chaos* series. In the first of the series, I had developed an image that I wanted to weave, but I didn't want the tapestry to be as horizontal as the image, so I decided to add a border with text. Can you tell my designing process is a bit, um.... chaotic? Some weavers might decide the size and shape first. The image comes from a painting of my messy studio table, with a cone of yarn in the background, which looked to me like a black hole. This made me think about the universe, so what came to me was: "OUT OF CHAOS - CREATION." It could pertain to a black hole in the universe, and the Big Bang; or it could pertain to my messy studio table and the artworks that spring from it.

I designed the blocky letters carefully, knowing that (because of the image) I would be weaving them upright, instead of sideways. Because text has a lot of vertical lines, it's usually easier to weave it sideways, but text can be designed to have thin vertical lines and thick horizontals, or the reverse,



Above: Janet Austin, "Chaos," 18 in x 24 in, 2007.

depending on which way it will be woven. In hindsight, I should have checked my text design against my warps. After weaving halfway up the first line of text, I realized I did not have enough warps to create all of the letters. I had not taken into consideration the minimum number of warps necessary to weave each letter, so I had to rip out all of my text, redesign it, and start over.



Above: **Janet Austin**, "On the Edge of Chaos," 20 in x 24 in, 2011.

In my more recent tapestry, "On the Edge of Chaos," I used cursive text as a decorative element in the border. It's the title in an endless loop: "on the edge of chaos on the edge of chaos on the edge of chaos on the edge." I like that it can read either "on the edge of chaos" or "chaos on the edge." This time I made sure I had (barely) enough warps, but weaving delicate cursive really needs to be done sideways, and again, I was not weaving sideways because it didn't suit the image. It was very fiddly work, with a lot of weaving around one warp, which I hate, and after a lot of cursing and whining (some of it in cursive), I came up with a solution: I allowed the text to half disappear into the background, by weaving a full pass of the background color straight across the text from time to time. This helped to keep the slits together, and created a subtle, mysterious effect that I really like.

My problem sparked a solution that ended up being more interesting than the original design. Sometimes trying something difficult (or neglecting to plan) can teach important lessons; in this case, one lesson I learned was not to weave cursive lettering again unless it's larger, and woven sideways.

I know you're thinking I should have learned a different lesson: to plan my designs more carefully! Perhaps. But I have a habit of creating designs while deliberately not thinking about how they will be woven. This allows me to be more spontaneous in my design process, and less limited in what I choose to weave. It forces me to be more creative in the weaving process, since I don't know how I will translate my design into a tapestry until I am sitting at the loom. Best of all, it leaves plenty of room for serendipity.



Janet Austin got hooked on weaving as an art student in 1972, struggling to make a living weaving functional items for sale. Eight years later, to escape the horizontal and vertical grid, she went to grad school to study painting. Almost by accident, weaving and painting merged into tapestry.

Weaving, Writing, and Story Telling

by Tricia Goldberg

I love weaving, writing, and stories, elements that are fluidly intermingled in three of my tapestries. For “Stamps,” woven in 2004 and exhibited in **ATB 6**, the inspiration came from a pair of actual Japanese stamps on a letter I received. The calligraphy in the stamp design was evocative and intriguing. When I decided to weave the stamps in a fairly literal way, I was concerned about getting the Japanese characters right. Since I couldn’t read Japanese, I tried to weave the shapes as elegantly as I could. Maybe it was easier because I didn’t know the meaning of the words and what the characters should look like. Weaving the hastily stamped cancellation was pure fun, with the word Japan quite legible and right in the middle. The piece includes numbers, English, and two forms of Japanese.



Above: **Tricia Goldberg**, “Stamps,” 38 in x 46 in, 2004, photo: Dan Dosick.
Wool and silk weft, cotton warp.

The story behind “Stamps” developed further when two Japanese friends saw the tapestry. They immediately recognized that it included a haiku by Matsuo Bashō, a revered 17th century poet. They located the original poem in a Japanese library in San Francisco and sent me what they considered the best translation:

Gathering spring rain
Mogami River
Rushes

My friends explained that the Mogami is a small, normally sedate river in the north of Honshu, Japan’s largest island. The poet had visited during an especially rainy spring when the river was unusually active.



Above: **Tricia Goldberg**, "Wasabi Can," 16 in x 11 in, 1988, photo: Rory Alcantar.
Wool weft and cotton warp.

"California Poppies," (2006) began with a seed packet and memories of seeing these poppies in the Marin Headlands during my first spring in California, almost 35 years ago. I continue to marvel at these small flowers with their delicate shape and glowing colors against the often-stark landscape. The design at the bottom is an enlargement of a small reproduction of an ancient Turkish carpet. In addition to text, I also love incorporating other types of textiles into my tapestries. The cut flowers in the cup don't look very different from the poppies shown on the seed packet. I wove the words "California Poppy Orange" with a jumpy irregularity that I hoped would diminish the static appearance of the package's typography.

In “Postcard for Angela” (2010), included in the **ATB 9** exhibition, I expressed my love of travel and how stamps and postcards evoke romance and intrigue. I wanted the fragmentary text not to confuse or frustrate the viewer, but to invite interest and interpretation. I also wanted to play with various kinds of writing and patterns. The original postcard showed an 18th century Greek embroidery. My friend Angela mailed it from Spain shortly after she moved away from San Francisco. She and I had had been roommates in San Francisco, after our initial friendship in college in Florida. I always loved this card’s odd depiction of a girl with no nose or mouth, and hoped one day it would find its way into a tapestry design. I was finally ready to weave a tribute to Angela, five years after her death from cancer at age 50.

The weaving is about loss, but the process was joyous, with many surprises. During the countless hours of making the tapestry I had the luxury to be “with” Angela, and to appreciate her love and friendship. Her boyfriend and traveling companion in Spain originally wrote the card to someone else, but Angela had chosen it for me and made him paint out the writing so it could be for me after all. During the design process there was almost another layer of loss; while researching the embroidery I misplaced the card, but it resurfaced after two anxious weeks.

While planning the weaving I expected the writing to be technically difficult and the patterns of the clothing to be easy. It was just the opposite, although the text in the Spanish stamp was challenging. The tapestry—like the original postcard—shows an address in San Francisco where I lived for only about a year and a half in my early 20s, and as I wove my own name and address I revisited my life and experiences during that time. That writing was bold, and required a different style of weaving from the written message, which I wanted to be smooth and flowing, like Angela’s handwriting.

I wove the upper-right corner last, and it was the most difficult part. I wanted the printed text of the Spanish stamp to be crisp and elegant, but the letters’ curves lacked the smoothness I wanted until I tried weaving them with two strands of fine wool instead of the four I usually use. Also, in other areas, such as the girl’s face and the gray zigzag pattern in her skirt, weaving with two strands let me mimic the thinner, unembroidered areas of the original piece shown in the postcard.

These three tapestries encompass my passion for weaving, writing, and the stories that develop through the process of my work. All three tapestries stand on their own, without explanation, but it is always fun to let the viewer in on the “rest of the story.”



Above: **Tricia Goldberg**, “Postcard for Angela,” 60 in x 40 in, 2011, photo: Rory Alcantar. Wool and silk weft, cotton warp.



Tricia Goldberg has been weaving, exhibiting, and teaching tapestry for over 25 years. She studied tapestry weaving and design with Jean Pierre Larochette and Yael Lurie at the San Francisco Tapestry Workshop. Tricia began exhibiting with ATA’s premier exhibition, **Panorama of Tapestry**, in 1986. Her work is in collections and in publications including *Fiberarts Design Book 3, 4, and 7*, and *The Tapestry Handbook* by Carol Russell. Tricia is a founding member of Tapestry Weavers West, which was formed in 1985.

Thoughts on Text

by Linda Wallace

Every tapestry I weave tells a story. The creativity itself is deeply rooted in research and a passionate engagement with the underlying concepts and ideologies. To design a tapestry that tells the story, I use symbolic, narrative imagery. The placement of the design elements, their size and juxtaposition to other images, choice of both color and value all create nuances influencing a viewer's interpretation. My goal is to create a tapestry that will intrigue the viewer and make them pause in the gallery, lingering long enough to explore it, and wonder what it means.

When I'm present in the gallery, viewers always begin with questions based in curiosity about what the tapestry "means." From that point, discussion evolves about the concept, the symbolism, and the story. To let the viewer know there might be more to the piece than a decorative object, I employ several components to convey the existence of a narrative: imagery, design, symbolism, and color. And often, I create a further layer to the complexity by the careful placement of enigmatic text.

These components work in the way a jigsaw puzzle might, except I'm the one with the lid to the puzzle box. The viewer is given a set of clues, and invited to either find me, find my artist statement, or to use the clues to make their own personal narrative. I am passionate about the concept and consider each element with care – analyzing how an idea could be symbolized. What would "red" or "black" convey to the viewer? Would it change the story if one image was larger or was laid beneath another? After the work is completed, I am also delighted to hear interpretations viewers create from looking at my work.

One narrative element I have used in several tapestries is text, either in a particular font or my own handwriting. The written word itself carries tremendous weight, but the format used to present the words to the viewer adds nuanced tonality. The text I employ is rarely something that would instantly explain the concept and halt explorative viewing. I don't want the text to provide the answer. Instead it should add a layer of complexity, providing clues. Just as I prefer a novel or a movie to leave me wondering and thinking, I want my artwork to engage a viewer's curiosity, while stopping short of revealing the whole story.

Each artist has underlying reasons that inform particular designs, and the product of that creation projects a sense of artistic individuality. To reach a level where a work is recognized as being the product of a particular artist, that artist must develop a distinctive voice. The inclusion of text in my work is one component of my own voice.

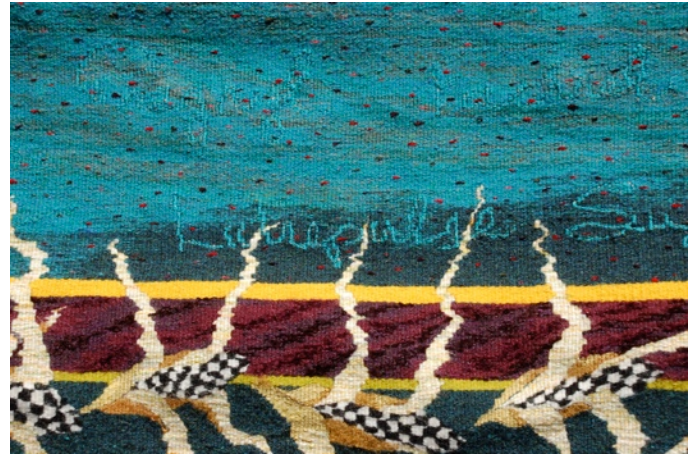
The written word carries such weight, draws the eye so strongly, that the artist using it must consciously decide whether to allow it to be a focal point for the viewer, and then, base choices on that decision. The placement of the text, whether I use a font or my own handwriting, the size, the color, and value of the lettering are all aspects that need careful consideration.

When viewed from a distance, irregular patterning enlivens the background of my large tapestry, "ONE." When viewed more closely, the pattern is found to be handwritten, enigmatic words. Usually, only a viewer with a medical background, or a woman who has undergone fertility treatments, would recognize the words as the names of fertility drugs. Therefore, the viewer must connect to the strong central image and wonder what the words might mean – perhaps searching out my gallery statement, or creating their own story.

The value and color of the yarn selected to weave my handwritten script was a very close match to most of the background area surrounding it. Without a strong contrast between the background and text yarn, it almost disappears from view.



Above Left: **Linda Wallace**, "ONE," detail, 40 in x 48 in, 2004.



Above Right: **Linda Wallace**, "ONE," detail, 40 in x 48 in, 2004. Showing change when background darkens and text yarn remains the same.

The small format tapestry, "Miss Congeniality," currently in progress, also uses text. In this case, the letters are the focal point, even though only the central portion of the larger font word is shown and the words "three" and "seven" have no apparent explanation for their presence. In addition, the font itself is somewhat fragmented.

The words were lifted from a 1921 book on etiquette, on social deportment. The book was printed on a press in which the metal typeface was inked and the paper was fed onto it, leaving the imprint. Enlarged on a photocopier, the apparently solid printing revealed both small holes in the lettering itself and spattered ink on the surrounding white of the page.

In all my work, everything I do is connected to the underlying concept and forms a component of the narrative. Each tapestry tells the viewer part of a story, leaving room for discussion or, perhaps the creation of an entirely new narrative, initiated by the viewer. My primary goal is the interaction with the viewer, and I know that goal is met when I see someone standing in front of one of my tapestries, with their head on one side, pausing to think about it.



Above: **Linda Wallace**, "Miss Congeniality" (in progress), 2013.



Growing up in a Vancouver Island beach house, living in the High Arctic, and aboard a series of boats, *Linda Wallace* developed an interest in the edges of her world. A background as a registered nurse and a mid-life BFA from the Alberta College of Art and Design developed her passionate interest in feminism, women's lives, and women's health. After five years on the Board of the American Tapestry Alliance (Co-Director for three years), she is now back in her studio, researching, drawing, and weaving full time. A recent recipient of one of ATA's Teitelbaum Trust awards, her tapestries and drawings are in national public collections, and international private collections. Her work as artist and curator is recognized within the tapestry medium and outside it, as evidenced by articles in *Fiberarts*, *Textile*, *American Style*, and *Fiber Art Now*.

To Text or Not to Text?

by Barbara Burns

When designing a tapestry with text, I have to ask myself: Do I really need the text? Will the composition stand up better without it? I have designed tapestries with text and found myself removing it. However, sometimes text does enhance my work and that, to me, is primary. The text must serve the art: to provoke and suggest, urge and instruct, and compel the viewer, or rather, the reader to explore realms beyond the physical presence of the tapestry.

“GOLDA”

I wove two portraits of Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel, because I thought I could improve on the composition. For the first attempt, I wove the letters G, O, L, D, A vertically, on the left side, using black letters on gold. I wove Meir’s portrait in gold on black. For the second version, “Golda II,” I removed the lettering and wove a different version of her face, using gold on black again. The second version is one of my more successful pieces. That said, “Golda I,” with the text works well too, but the thickness of the letters which are woven on their side could have been more consistent.

“KING AMENHOTEP II”

I also wove two versions of a sketch I did while visiting the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, where I spent quite a bit of time in the mummy rooms. Imagine standing in a room full of horizontal, glass cases packed closely together, each one with a mummy lying as it might have been in its sarcophagus. Now, add to that dozens of people walking up and down the narrow rows and, me with my small sketchbook and pencil in hand, drawing mummy heads while people walk between me and my subject. My sketches were more like scribbles as I was jostled and bumped while I drew.

I did come out with a few drawings I liked. I decided to weave King Amenhotep II in repose. In the first version, I wove from the side and included the text King Amenhotep II across the top. In version two, I wove from the bottom and left out the title. I used a flying shuttle and weft blending in both versions to get the sketchy quality of my original drawing and the title I had scrawled. Incorporating the text required a rectangular format. The eye moves differently though the rectangular format of the first version, than it does the almost square format of the second version. The text is a copy of my poor handwriting and matches the line quality of the image. I like how the text at the top helps guide the eye back down to the image. I think both versions work well and I am hard pressed to decide which is more successful.



Above: **Barbara Burns**, “GOLDA I,”
9.25 in x 9.25 in, 9 epi.



Above: **Barbara Burns**, “King Amenhotep II.”

“HENRY HUDSON, HENRY HUDSON”

The process I went through to come to weave “Henry Hudson, Henry Hudson” showed me that I am a good editor. I’m a member of the Wednesday Group. One of our group projects was to design and weave a tapestry to commemorate the quatra centennial of Henry Hudson’s discovery of the river we know as the Hudson River. I decided to try something new and weave a landscape of the river with two fishermen hauling shad, also known as silverbacks. Along the bottom I included the words, “The silverbacks are running.” I wove the words in cursive which I really enjoyed doing. The problem was I couldn’t bring myself to weave the landscape. Instead, I wove a portrait of Henry Hudson. In lieu of a frame, which is traditional on a portrait, I framed the portrait with the name Henry Hudson in Lucida Blackletter Regular, repeated two times, one word on each side. This font is a bit difficult to read at first, especially on its side and then upside down, which I like. In the corners I put N, S, E, W for the points of the compass, a nod to Hudson’s numerous attempts to find that elusive Northwest Passage. The text works quite well as it serves a dual purpose creating a decorative frame and naming the portrait. The only criticism I have is the spacing could have been a bit better with the compass points. I also learned I’m not a landscape artist.



Above: **Barbara Burns**, “Henry Hudson, Henry Hudson,” 21 in x 18.75 in, 8 epi.

“LITTLE SPINNER GIRL”

Another experience with framing an image with text is a design I did several years ago which has yet to be woven. It began with a photograph taken by Lewis Wickes Hine (September 26, 1874 – November 3, 1940), an American sociologist and photographer. Hine used his camera as a tool for social reform. His photographs were instrumental in changing the child labor laws in the United States and they are in the public domain. The image I used is of a young girl in a factory standing between two long rows of spinning machines she was tending. I reworked the image using Photoshop and again framed it with text. Across the bottom I wrote “Little Spinner Girl” in Lucida Calligraphy Italic. Up the left side, across the top and down the right side I wrote “A is for accident, B is for bobbin, C is for cotton, D is for doffer” in American Typewriter Regular. When I first designed this piece I really liked the words. Now I’m wondering if they are needed, something I wonder about with other pieces as well. Which leads me to my next tapestry.



Above: **Barbara Burns**, “Little Spinner Girl,” final cartoon.

“FASHION SERIES: REVOLUTION I”

My latest experience with text was unsuccessful. The tapestry, “Fashion Series: Revolution I,” is a large piece for me. The design is based on a red and white striped walking dress from 1780 France. My original design had text around part of the border. It read: “fashion [fash-uhn] stylish. 2 current: popular: fashionable [fash-uh-nuh-buhl] adjective 1. observant of or conforming to the....” There was a great deal of text to weave and I wove about 90% of it. Then I took a good long look at what I had woven and I didn’t like what I saw. I decided to remove the text and was grateful that my border was sewn on. I was able to cut the stitching and remove the offending member, then reweave the border without text. The weaving of the text was not well done and did not really add to the composition. It grabbed the eye away from the main event which was not my intent. I don’t know why I didn’t see that in the cartoon. Perhaps I was too attached to the idea; however, it didn’t work. The final piece stands alone without need for elaboration.

I have used text in service of art, but text can be transformed into art in its own right, as demonstrated in “The Weston Tapestry,” a collaborative piece by Pat Taylor, Taiseer Shelhi, and Vivien Allen. In this tapestry, hand written text is in the form of a flat spiral. The words are legible, plus the letters form geometric shapes, contributing to the artistic design.

Historically, text was used in early European tapestry to augment the image even though the average person of the time couldn’t read. It was often in a banner or ribbon and to the illiterate was probably just another part of the composition. Even so, the letters were meticulously woven which takes practice and control. One exercise that has helped me improve my weaving in general, and with text specifically, is taking a line for a walk. Weave a small sample maybe 6 inches wide at whatever sett is comfortable, for me, 8-9 epi. With a plain background and a vertical line two or three warps wide begin weaving a line. As it goes up, begin turning and curving, all the time working to keep a consistent width. I found that what makes letters look best is to have consistent widths, if you are using a traditional font. It also requires good planning when designing a tapestry with text so there is room for the text without unwanted crowding.

So, after all this, I have to consider what I have learned from my experiences with text. It can be a design tool used to elaborate on the image, enhance the design, and help move the eye through the composition as in “King Amenhotep II.” Text can be used to balance and ground a composition as in “GOLDA I.” Used as a frame, text can be something more than letters alone as in “Henry Hudson, Henry Hudson,” or just be a frame, as in my cartoon for “Little Spinner Girl.” Sometimes it is not necessary and an editing eye is very important. It was painful to realize I had to remove all the text from “Fashion Series: Revolution I,” but knowing when to leave something out (text or otherwise,) is as important as what you put in a composition.



Barbara Burns began weaving in 1994. In 2003, she took her first tapestry workshops, including study with Jean Pierre Larochette and Yael Lurie. In 2005, she studied tapestry with Pat Taylor at West Dean College in England for an intensive six-week program. She has also been under the tutelage of Archie Brennan and Susan Martin Maffei since 2003. Burns is a member of TWiNE, and The Wednesday Group, a group of actively exhibiting tapestry artists which includes Brennan and Martin Maffei. Burns has won awards and exhibited extensively in the U.S., as well as in England, Europe, Canada, and Australia. She teaches and lectures about tapestry.

On the Use of Text in My Tapestries

by Peter Horn

Writing has always been very important in my tapestry weaving. In all my tapestries, so far, I've included my personal initial "h," using lower case. In earlier times I wove even more complicated text. Until 1986, I also added the year of completion. But, my initial "h" has always been a constant. Each addition of text, numbers, and characters has a different and rather special significance.

In 1968, I wove my very first tapestry, and added the text: "Gefahr ist vor der Stadt." The English translation is "Danger is at the Gates of Town." The weaving processes almost led me to despair. I made every conceivable beginner's mistake – and they do show, at least to the trained eye. I chose the wrong warp, which I had to cut off and re-thread halfway through the project. The thickness of the warp was the problem; it was not a good match for the weft I chose, thus compromising the finish of both the weave and the border. I used a flat loom, which, for me, was unsuitable for image-based designs. It took a heavy toll on my back, so I bought an upright Haute Lisse loom in 1982.

The line "Gefahr ist vor der Stadt" refers to the image of the Greek siege of Troy as described in Homer's epic poem. The Greeks built a wooden horse, and gave it as a present to the Trojans, who fell for it and admitted the horse into the town. The horse was filled with Greek soldiers, who then conquered the Trojans.

For my design, I used a combination of sources: medieval book illumination, medieval tapestry, and 20th century art. The background includes a design of buildings shown in perspective, with additional decorative forms. The horse is the central motif, and the text is in a contemporary style. In this case, my use of text supports and intensifies the pictorial message.

Medieval artists used small banners, similar to today's comic strips, to enable priests or monks, who were knowledgeable and literate, to explain the meaning of a painting, illumination, or tapestry to the illiterate population. A good example is the tapestry fragment, "Love Tapestry," woven in Basel, Switzerland in the mid 15th century by an anonymous artist. The tapestry can be viewed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Minneteppich_KGM.jpg and is currently located in the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, Germany.

The lettering in my *Children's Tapestries* series, woven between 1975 and 1982, was inspired by my own children's drawings and paintings. The basis for one of the series, "REHPAi," came from a drawing



Above: **Peter Horn**, "Danger Is at the Gates of Town," 235 cm x 100 cm, 1968.

created by my daughter when she was four years old. She included letters, in a random order, using both upper and lower case. Her inspiration came from her older brother, who had just started to learn the alphabet. The “word” she created has an almost magical effect. REHPAi looks cryptic and sounds mysterious.

I’ve always wanted to weave large size tapestries, but I was only able to realize this idea when I bought my 200 cm (78.7402 in) Haute Lisse vertical loom, which I still use for all my work. From 1982 on, I produced a considerable number of large format tapestries where letters, numbers, Greek fragments of words, and self-invented characters became integrated components of the woven image. These text elements arose more by accident in my designs because I used collage as my artistic principle. I began by tearing or cutting fragments from newspapers and magazines, and then arranged them in a satisfactory composition. The resulting collage would become the cartoon for a tapestry. The main task when creating the composition was to find, and combine different textual and pictorial messages, rearranging them into a new context of meaning.

In a 2004 article, *Peter Horn’s Tapestries*, I wrote: “When I am working on a design for a tapestry, two components come into the process: my ideas about form and content, my experiences, emotions and moods on the one hand; on the other, the stimuli and impulses emitted by the character – both in terms of form and content – of the collage material that I happen to get my hands on. The design emerges through the reciprocal effect of these components on each other. This ‘systematic exploitation of the coincidental or artificially provoked encounter of two or more unrelated realities’ (Max Ernst) leads to the creation of new realities within the picture.” (*Weltbilder - Bildwelten. Peter Horn’s Tapestries*, Łódź 2004, p. 66).

In my tapestry designs, text drops into the image by accident; but, in many cases, has great influence on the picture’s theme, title, and significance.

In 1987, I created my largest tapestry to date, “Lighter than Air.” This tapestry, too, is based on a collage and accidentally contains writing. But, I deliberately added an inscription on the bottom. The line is a quotation from a book on the development of balloon flight (Rudolf Braunburg, *Leichter als Luft. Aus der Geschichte der Ballonluftfahrt*, Hamburg, 1963, p. 62). Charles Montgolfier undertook one of his first balloon flights in 1783 and described what he experienced in an



Above: **Peter Horn**, “REHPAi,” 100 cm x 129 cm, 1980.

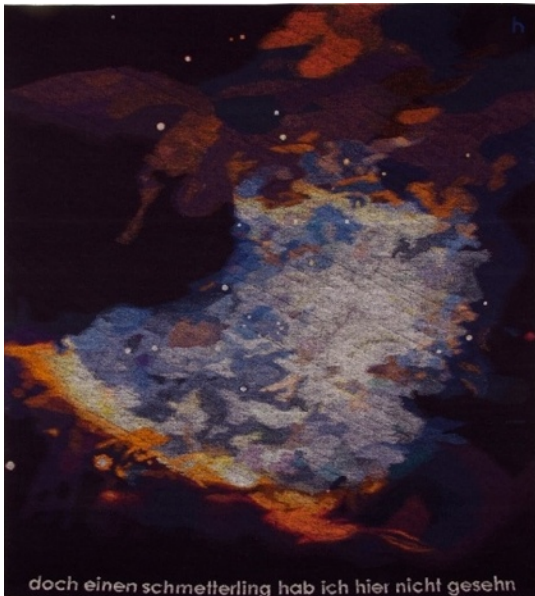


Above: **Peter Horn**, “Lighter than Air,” 300 cm x 198 cm, 1987.

environment he had never seen before. His first words were: "The time was long for us on earth.," meaning he was very impatient to begin the flight. The ambiguity, at least in the German version: "Die Zeit war uns auf Erden lang.," of this sentence, touched me. It can mean what Montgolfier intended to say, but it also signifies a wish to die.

In this case, I wanted to give the inscription more than ordinary informational content. I wanted to emphasize the ambiguity of the phrase, making it cryptic and maybe even significantly poetic. This procedure, I hope, will enrich the whole tapestry and add a kind of romantic gleam to it. Additionally, the ambiguity of the text may cause a viewer to take a second look at the tapestry, which pleases me. Ambiguity and obscurity are recurring artistic principles in many of my tapestries.

I have also gotten into the habit of virtual travel to places I depict. During the lengthy and intense process of weaving a tapestry, I travel closer and closer. When I wove "Orion Nebula" in 2008, I went on my most extended journey: the Orion Nebula lies 1350 light years away - and I was there in my imagination!



Above: **Peter Horn**, "Orion Nebula,"
213 cm x 195 cm, 2009.



Born in Kiel in 1936, *Peter Horn* started tapestry weaving at the age of 15. From 1970, he taught textile crafts and later, art, as part of the teacher training course at the Pädagogische Hochschule Kiel, and later at Kiel University. Peter's studio work as a tapestry weaver has taken the place of a second career, parallel to his day job, resulting in a combination, which, due to many overlaps within the artistic disciplines, made for intensive and satisfying work.

Another tapestry design was inspired by a 2000 visit to Prague where I was especially impressed by an exhibition in the Jewish Museum of drawings, paintings, and poems by Czech children and young people imprisoned between 1942 and 1944 in Theresienstadt (Terezín), a concentration camp. Nearly all of them were eventually brought to Auschwitz where they were killed. I bought a book (Das Jüdische Museum Prag (Hg.), *Einen Schmetterling habe ich hier nicht gesehen. Kinderzeichnungen und Gedichte aus Terezín*, Prag, 1993) containing some of the most beautiful and moving examples of these young persons' works.

The book contains the poem, "The Butterfly," by twenty-year-old Pavel Friedmann who described the desperate conditions in Terezín, and his own sense of resignation. Since I am able to go to any place in the world and even outside the earth during the weaving process, I realized that my world is so immense and free in comparison to Pavel and those like him, who were not even able to catch a glimpse of the nightly heaven and stars from their prison cells. "The Butterfly" inspired my tapestry inscription, "But I Haven't Seen a Butterfly Here."

Text has had, and continues to create quite different purposes and effects in my tapestries, hopefully giving them a mysterious and Romantic touch by using poetic and cryptic inscriptions. This, as I discovered only some time ago, moves me rather close to Romanticism, especially to the German version (For example, see: Rüdiger Safranski, *Romantik. Eine deutsche Affäre*, Frankfurt/M, 2009.) I think I am a budding Romantic.

Reproductive Issues and Text in Tapestry

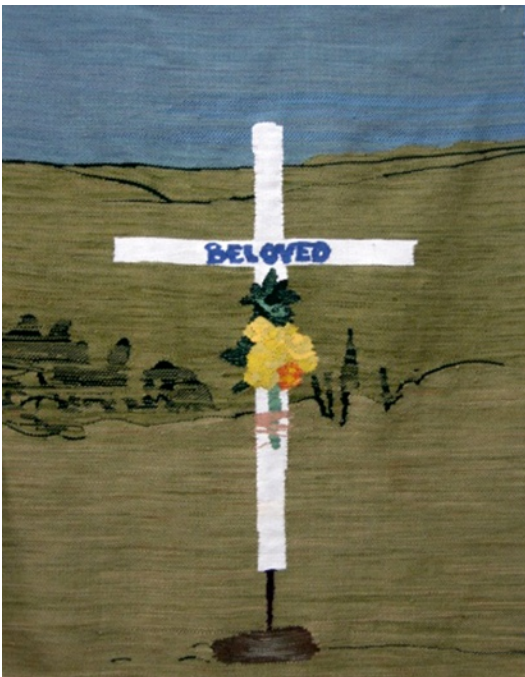
by Erin M. Riley

The first few tapestry projects I ever worked on included lettering as the main component, expressing feelings or emotions using words composed of simple Sans-serif text. I was learning how to use different threads at the same time, plan cartoons, and execute complex tapestries, and text always seemed to serve all of those purposes. I continued to work towards weaving images and text began to take a backseat. However, as I look back at my work, text was always creeping into the compositions.

Words and type are interesting to me graphically; they are also a means to express deep emotions. In works like "Lonely," I was struggling to express emotions visually. Therefore, I couched the cursive lettering "a lifetime of lonely" on the tapestry after it was woven. Pieces such as "BELOVED," the first in the *Highway Memorial* series, included text on the cross markers. "Breaking Your Heart" was planned in Photoshop in order to impose the text "you don't deserve my forgiveness" in response to a letter my biological father sent me in graduate school. I was inspired by the documentary "I Am Trying to Break Your Heart" about the music of Wilco, as well as wanting to creatively capture the most desperate of emotions. These pieces were inspired by the images, but the text, in my opinion, allowed the work to hit the viewer at a much deeper level.



Above: Erin M. Riley, "Lonely," 36 in x 48 in, 2007.



Left: Erin M. Riley, "BELOVED," 60 in x 48 in, 2008.

In 2010, after a family member fell down the road of deep addiction, my interests turned to the stamps on heroin bags. I started studying the different stamps and found there is irony and wit in the advertising of such an evil substance. As an artist in residence at the MacDowell Colony, I started the *Heroin Bag Stamp* series. On my 24" wide Dorset floor loom, I wove simple compositions in which the text design and font took center stage. I created "Fire," "Ice," and many other pieces. The bags, very simple objects, were secondary to the messages that were printed on them.

In my current work, text is presented in the print on items such as condom wrappers and pregnancy tests, bringing to mind contraception and reproductive issues. I find it more and more important to give women options. I am working to present the objects and text that are commonly found in the bathroom cabinets of many contemporary women, rather than confining my subject matter to the particular objects in my own family's life. Weaving the words printed on the packaging of these items, so commonly left unread, or read so many times the words lose their meaning, reclaims their meaning and the emotions attached to them. It also gives the related issues a universal quality.



Above: **Erin M. Riley**, "Plan B," 24 in x 42 in, 2013.



Left: **Erin M. Riley**, "Ultra Thin," 32 in x 42 in, 2013.



Erin M. Riley is a tapestry weaver living and working in Brooklyn, NY. In 2009, she received her MFA from Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, PA. In 2007, she received her BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, MA. Erin has been weaving imagery culled from the Internet and, more recently, photographs she has taken of herself. She uses hand-dyed wool on a floor loom. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and published in *New American Painting*, *Surface Design Journal*, and *FiberArts Magazine*.

Ecclesiastical Text: The Tapestries of Conwry Evans and Dovecot Studio

by Francesca Baseby

The use of lettering in a tapestry often serves the most basic of purposes: to inform the viewer of the title, designer, weaver, date, and/or subject matter. However, even these instances of text in tapestry serve an artistic purpose. In 2012, for example, Dovecot weavers Naomi Robertson and Jonathan Cleaver wove a tapestry designed by Peter Saville. The tapestry is called "After After After Monarch of the Glen" but a more lengthy title is woven into the tapestry:

AFTER AFTER AFTER
MONARCH OF THE GLEN
BY SIR EDWIN LANDSEER
BY SIR PETER BLAKE
BY PETER SAVILLE
DOVECOT 2012

The text is clearly visible in a simple typeface, highlighted against a pale background. By including this text in the tapestry, Saville is encouraging the viewer to recognise the visual connection between the tapestry's subject matter and its source, an 1851 painting, "Monarch of the Glen," by Victorian artist Sir Edwin Landseer.

However, other designers of tapestries woven by Dovecot have taken a less direct approach to type in tapestry. An example is "Canterbury Cathedral Tapestry," designed by Joyce Conwy Evans, woven by anonymous Dovecot weavers, and completed in 1981. The collaboration between Conwy Evans and Dovecot's weavers began in 1961 and continued into the 1980s. The resulting tapestries are unique in Dovecot's oeuvre because the woven tapestry includes the addition of surface decoration: appliqué, beading, and embroidery.

Conwy Evans trained as an interior designer and her tapestry designs are driven by the interiors for which they are commissioned:

You have to acknowledge the quality of the architecture and the period from which it comes, but not try to do a pastiche of that period. You have to do something that will live happily with it. And [in a church] it involves the calendar of progression through the year of the church's colours and requirements. And, of course, you get a lot of people involved, because there's usually an arts committee [...] So you have to take that on board but keep within reason, because otherwise you can get way off your original thought.

Despite her distinctive decorative style, Conwy Evans' designs are not purely decorative. Each one is the result of careful consideration about the meaning and message the tapestry is intended to invoke. Such thoughtfulness is particularly suited to ecclesiastical decoration, the application of which is often didactic. The tapestry for Canterbury Cathedral was commissioned for the Corona Chapel, dedicated to recent saints and martyrs. Canterbury is famous as the site of the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1170 and the Corona Chapel used to hold a fragment of the Archbishop's skull. The text on the tapestry, "The Blood of Thy Martyrs and Saints shall Enrich the Earth, shall Create the Holy Places," is taken from a line in T.S. Eliot's 1935 play, "Murder in the Cathedral," a parody of Thomas Becket's martyrdom.

It is immediately evident on seeing the tapestry or the designer's maquette that the text has not been simply written over the decorative design, but embedded into it. The font has been stylized in a geometric manner so that it takes the viewers a few moments to recognise the words. The two words, "Saints" and "Martyrs" dominate the centre of the image, but the rest of the text is relatively small and difficult to distinguish from the background. The result is that the tapestry requires a degree of concentration and meditation from the viewer.



Above Left: Joyce Conwy Evans in her studio, London, c. 2010-12, photo: Francesca Baseby.



Above Right: Preparatory drawing and material samples for "Canterbury Cathedral Tapestry," collection of the artist, photo: Elizabeth Cumming.

Between 2010 and 2012 I was able to interview Conwy Evans on numerous occasions. She had this to say about her design technique:

I tend to like people to have to work at something. You don't read the message instantly; you have to work at it a bit and then you get the message from the lettering. I like to overlay a lot of patterning over the initial structure of something, because that way I sort of get my character worked into it.... It also provides a lot of decoration, and it breaks it down so that you don't see it all in one go. You don't just glance at something, you stay with it for a bit and work it out.

When designing for a chapel or cathedral interior, Conwy Evans considers the spiritual needs of the congregation, as well as accessibility. One of the motivations behind the use of embroidery and appliqué to a woven tapestry is to make it more visible. Evans' approach to ecclesiastic decor was strongly influenced by her experience in theatre design: "The techniques I learnt in the props department really led me in the direction that I went with the design for King's [College Chapel Altar Frontal, Cambridge, woven by Dovecot in 1968], and even on the Canterbury one." Props and costumes need to be able to make a visual impact to those members of the audience sitting farthest away. This is why the altar frontals feature such large elements of appliqué and embroidery, especially in the case of beadwork.

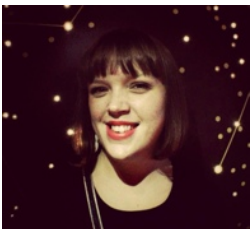
In an article about Conwy Evans in *Architectural Review* (1976) critic Richard Burnett wrote that it is not surprising that Conwy Evans designs for the theatre and the church because they are both scenes for “ritual.” Both arenas are concerned with the movement of people, atmospheric lighting, a focus on oration and singing, large audiences, and the use of props. The use of reflected light via metallic embroidery and beads and bold tapestry designs make Conwy Evans’ designs visually accessible from a distance.

The “Canterbury Cathedral Tapestry” is just one of many examples I could have chosen from Dovecot’s previous works. To me, this one is special for its sensitive approach to the ecclesiastic environment for which it was commissioned, and the sophisticated and effective use of text and pattern to create a visually striking image. The use of sumptuous materials by Dovecot’s weavers and Conwy Evans’ embroiderers adds another layer of grandeur to the piece.

The tapestry can be seen in-situ at <http://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/visit/tour/> as a virtual tour on the Canterbury Cathedral website.



Above: Full-scale maquette for “Canterbury Cathedral Tapestry,” collection of the artist, photo: Elizabeth Cumming.



Francesca Baseby has recently completed a PhD at Edinburgh University. Her dissertation is titled “Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh: Collaborative Tapestries 1945-1970.” For further information about her research and publications visit <http://www.writingwarpandweft.blogspot.com> to read her blog.

From Silk Screen to Text in Tapestry

by Jan Langdon

My interest in lettering developed in the 1960s as I was preparing silk screens to advertise a new shop friends and I had opened to sell our weaving. Applying glue resist on the screen, I made words by free painting the negative space around letters. It was both challenging and playful. Years later designing for small tapestries, I was searching for new subject material and remembered lettering was easy for me, enjoyable. Hooray, a respite from “significant” abstract images. The illustrations are examples of my word designs.

I work from black and white or oil pastel drawings resized to cartoon dimensions using a Xerox copier. I mix materials freely; wool, silk, cotton, rayon. My warps are usually a mixed group of several colored threads to show after finishing as knot heads along the warp edges.



Above Right: **Jan Langdon**, “ALLOW,” 12 in x 8 in, 2002, photo: Sibilia Savage. Wool, cotton.

Below Left: **Jan Langdon**, “VIVID,” 8 ½ in x 8 in, 2012, photo: Sibilia Savage. Wool, linen, cotton.

Below Right: **Jan Langdon**, “FOCUS,” 6 in x 10 in, 2002, photo: Sibilia Savage. Cotton, wool, silk.



Jan Langdon has been weaving since her high school days in the early 1950s. She attended Cranbrook Academy of Art followed by a summer of study at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts with Anni Albers, Jack Lenor Larsen, and Lili Blumeneau. She lives and works in West Marin, CA. She has taught in San Francisco at the deYoung Museum Art School, the Rudolf Schaeffer School of Design, San Francisco City College, and currently at the Richmond Art Center in Richmond. Langdon has also worked in the collections of the Oakland Art Museum, the St. Paul Art Center, the Addison Gallery, and the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, NYC.

Inspiration: Muriel Nezhnie's "Imprints"

by Kathy Spoering

The first tapestry I ever saw was Muriel Nezhnie's diptych tapestry "Imprints," in the University City Public Library in St. Louis, Missouri. Visiting the library every week for seven years, I often looked up at Nezhnie's design, which included large woven letters. The letters captured my eye, and imagination, and I wondered how it was woven.

My own tapestries have often been inspired by words in poetry, stories, music lyrics, and even overheard conversations. Most often I translate words into images, and the viewer will not necessarily be aware of the textual source. I have on occasion felt it necessary to let the viewer in on the words that inspired me, by making them a part of the tapestry.

When I first began working in the medium, as a self-taught weaver, I was intimidated by text and decided to include any words by mounting the tapestry onto another fabric on which I embroidered the text. I actually created several large tapestries this way, for example, "Simple Gifts." I worked on various techniques of tapestry; in this case, I was experimenting with color gradation. I concentrated on one challenge at a time, and I didn't want to try weaving text right away, though I knew I would explore it eventually.



Above: **Kathy Spoering**, "Simple Gifts," 40 in x 40 in, 1988. Woven tapestry with embroidered text.



Above: **Muriel Nezhnie**, "Imprints," detail, 1971, collection of the University City Public Library. St. Louis, Missouri. Photo courtesy of Sheldon Helfman.

As I became a more technically proficient weaver, I started weaving words directly into the tapestry. I always weave from a cartoon. I learned that letters and words are no more complex than weaving any other lines or shapes. They can be a bit fiddly to weave, but so can many other images that I've included in my tapestries. If the text is to be large, I generally weave the letters as shapes. If they are fine or small, I weave them as lines.

To weave tapestry as line work, I generally use a technique, which, because I was self-taught, I thought for years that I had invented. I had just called it weft-wrapping. A few years after I had been using it, I heard Nancy Harvey describe it in a talk, and she said she also thought she had invented the

technique, only to find it had been used for centuries. It was an old but, at that time, poorly documented technique that Peter Collingwood mentioned briefly in his book, *The Techniques of Rug Weaving*, calling it warp twining, because it was used mostly to make vertical (up the warp) line work. Kathe Todd-Hooker has more recently given an excellent definition of it in her *Line in Tapestry* book, calling it more clearly vertical twining. It is a simple and marvelously adaptive technique for weaving thin text, as it can be used in any direction up the weft, not just vertically. If it is used consistently, (i.e., always crossing itself with the supplemental thread coming up from the back being on the left of the one going from front to back) it can follow your cartoon and “write” any word onto your tapestry as you weave. I generally use a single weft thread to weave text in this way. It will sit on top of your tapestry a bit, but will flatten and felt to the tapestry when it is blocked. Also, I do not weave more than three full passes of the weft before I twine the supplemental weft again, so the tiny threads on top of the woven weft are very small, and lock quite tightly into the weaving.

Text that is wider than one warp width, I weave as shapes. The small tapestry “Yellowstone” is one of a series of 8 inch x 10 inch tapestries I wove of some of the western national parks. The park name was woven at the bottom as if the lines were shapes. Even though it is fairly fine, it was possible because the tapestries were woven sideways.

“FALL/ don’t fall” is a tapestry that includes text woven with both techniques. The large letters in the word, “FALL” at the top of the tapestry are obviously large enough to be woven as shapes. The small handwritten fine scrawl of the words, “don’t fall” was woven as lines, with the vertical twining or weft wrapping technique.



Above: **Kathy Spoering**, “Yellowstone,” 8 in x 10 in.



Left: **Kathy Spoering**, “FALL / don't fall,” detail, 21 in x 34 in, 1998.

The words "Peace" and "Grace" woven into the *Nativity Church* tapestries were also woven as shapes. The shapes were mostly about two warp threads wide, making them fairly fine weaving. If you look at words woven this way closely, you will see that the weaving is a grid structure, with warp and weft at right angles to each other, making curved shapes not perfect curves. That is the nature of weaving. However our eyes are so used to reading and seeing letters that viewers will not see the grid-like look of the lettering. They will just see the words, "Peace" and "Grace."

New weavers are often quite wary of weaving text. But text is really no different to weave from any other line or shape. Once you have understood and mastered the techniques for making shapes and lines in tapestry, weaving text is just a matter of choosing how you want it to look. To that end, there are an endless variety of computer fonts that can be helpful, or you can make your text more personal by using your own handwriting.

A problem students often have when first attempting to weave fairly specific shapes, such as text, is that they do not pack the weft down tightly enough as they weave. If it is left loosely packed, weft will "squish" down as the weaving progresses and your beautifully shaped lettering will take a shape you did not intend after several inches have been woven on top of it. This can, of course, happen to other shapes as well, leaving you with flattened faces, or hills rather than mountains. The simple solution to this problem is sometimes just a matter of time and experience, learning to beat your weft down well as you weave, so that it will not pack down later, compressing your text's height.



Above: **Kathy Spoering**, "Nativity Tapestries," 20 in x 40 in, 2012.



Kathy Spoering has been weaving tapestries for over 30 years. Her work is narrative and personal, though it often has a universal appeal. Kathy has been an ATA member from its start, and is proud to have been involved as either artist or organizer in a number of **ATB** exhibits.

Wildflowers of the Sierra and Logo Text

by Sharon Warren

Having been asked to write an article on the use of type in tapestry, based on a tapestry I wove in 2007, I must admit to not knowing any secret techniques. Had I not missed the chance for a workshop with one of the best-known weavers of type in tapestry, Archie Brennan, I might have had an easier time executing the letters required in the pictorial tapestry. Having text in this tapestry was a requirement, not a choice. The following is the story of how it came about.

Graphic artist Theresa Doffing designed a logo for the Handweavers of the Valley, the guild that hosted the Southern California Handweavers Conference held in Visalia, California, in March 2007. The logo was to be the focal point of our advertising and promotional materials such as tote bags, bookmarks, coffee cups, etc. The “Wildflowers of the Sierra” design was so striking and appropriate that the guild, prior to the conference, decided to adopt the design as the guild logo and I, being new to the area and needing an interesting new project for my Fireside tapestry loom, agreed to weave the logo with textual changes to reflect the new conference logo intent.

The revised wording on the logo was, for me, a challenge to incorporate and weave into the tapestry. The weaving was completed in time to be on display at the 2007 conference and to be entered into the “showcase” section where it won the American Tapestry Alliance Award for Excellence. This was an honor which I will always cherish and which represents high praise for Theresa Doffing’s wonderful design depicting the wild flowers of the Sierra foothills which surround all of us who have the pleasure of living in or visiting the Sierra Nevada foothills in the springtime.

The tapestry is now on display at all the events in which our guild participates and has become a widely recognized symbol of our guild’s activities.



Above Left: **Sharon Warren**, “Handweavers of the Valley Logo,” 2007. Above Right: **Sharon Warren**, “Handweavers of the Valley Logo,” in process, 2007



Sharon Warren has been playing with fiber, handspinning, knitting, weaving, etc. since the late 1960s. As a stay at home mom, these were her “sanity projects” while raising two small children. After studying Gobelin tapestry technique with Christine Laffer, she knew what she wanted to do. After learning the technique, she found herself taking every art class she could, so that she could design her own tapestries.

Exhibition Reviews

Translations: Jane Kidd's Recent Work in Tapestry and Negotiating Tradition: Five Approaches by Virginia Stephen

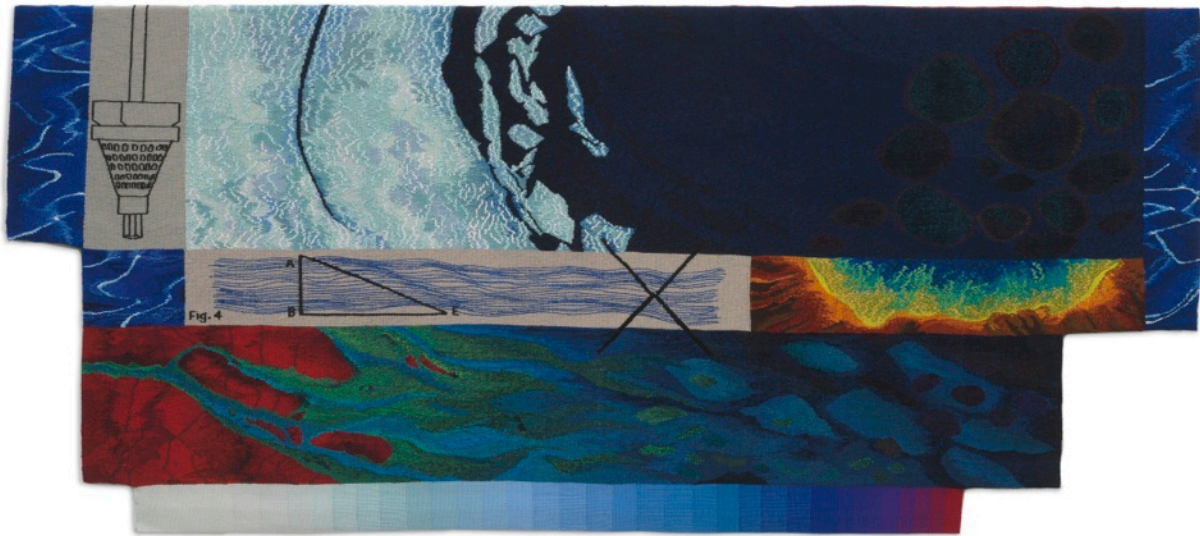
July 14 – September 29, 2012
Feature Gallery, Alberta Craft Council
Edmonton, Alberta

(This review was originally published in the Spring/Summer 2013 issue of Studio: Craft and Design in Canada.)

The word “tapestry” evokes images of 16th century fiber artisans spending months creating finely detailed, pictorial hangings from drawings and cartoons usually created by other artists. Their purpose was decorative and narrative as well as to provide much needed insulation for drafty rooms. The allegories, myths, and biblical stories echoed contemporary painting and print conventions and communicated cultural information which together with size and fine work reflected the owners’ elite social status. Smaller pieces made by individuals adorned furniture and clothing of a wider range of owners.

The two exhibitions, **Translations: Jane Kidd's Recent Work in Tapestry** and **Negotiating Tradition: Five Approaches** hanging adjacent in one gallery, bring these traditions of tapestry into a present day conversation. A challenge for all artists who embrace a deeply rooted and demanding traditional medium is how to avoid being derivative yet honour the teachings of the past - a challenge well met in these exhibitions.

Jane Kidd (now living on Saltspring Island after 30 years in Calgary at Alberta College of Art + Design - ACAD) is both the artist whose work comprises **Translations** and the curator of **Negotiating Tradition**, an exhibition of the work of five of her former students. Passion for working in fibre, the approach to the development of image and design and attention to mastery of the complex medium are clearly shared by all six artists and are a testament to the time honoured learning model of master/student/apprentice working alongside each other that is embedded in the fibre arts. Today the separation of image developer and maker does not exist. Remaining is the challenge of how to create strong and fluid imagery with a medium that is essentially a grid of warp and weft, and how to bring a historical practice into the arena of contemporary discourse.



Above: **Jane Kidd**, “Land Sentence: Pool,” 91 cm x 207 cm, 2010, photo: John Dean. Woven tapestry.

In **Translations** Kidd presents a series of three works in her *Landscape Series* which explores human/nature relationships. Each piece, a rectilinear collage of sections of imagery and pattern, presents in a form reminiscent of a wall hung kimono and is startling in its impression of being three dimensional layers of many pieces suspended over a bar. To draw attention to issues related to our often destructive relation with nature, Kidd draws upon images collected from satellite and aerial photography, technical data, and historic scientific documents. These present stunningly beautiful and exactly wrought visual objects and question what we are doing to our physical world. Some segments are clear and simple representations of the source documents while others, such as the largest section of "Land Sentence: Pool," are exquisite in their subtlety of pattern abstracted from close-in examination of the referenced images. In her artist statement, Kidd explains the series as "my attempt to take a scientific worldview and through the physicality and sensual nature of handwork draw it back in to the realm of the personal."

Each of the five artists chosen by Kidd for **Negotiating Tradition** draws upon the teachings of the master and mastery of the medium, yet moves the work into distinct and highly personal practices.

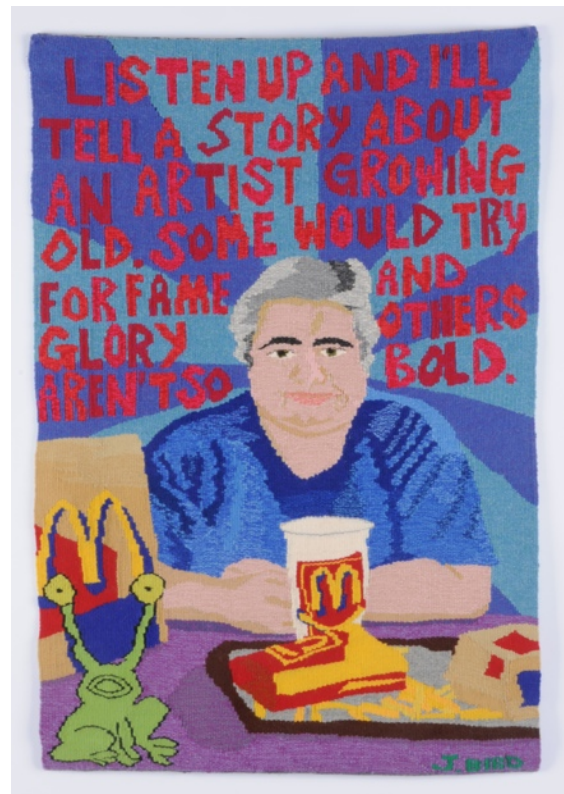


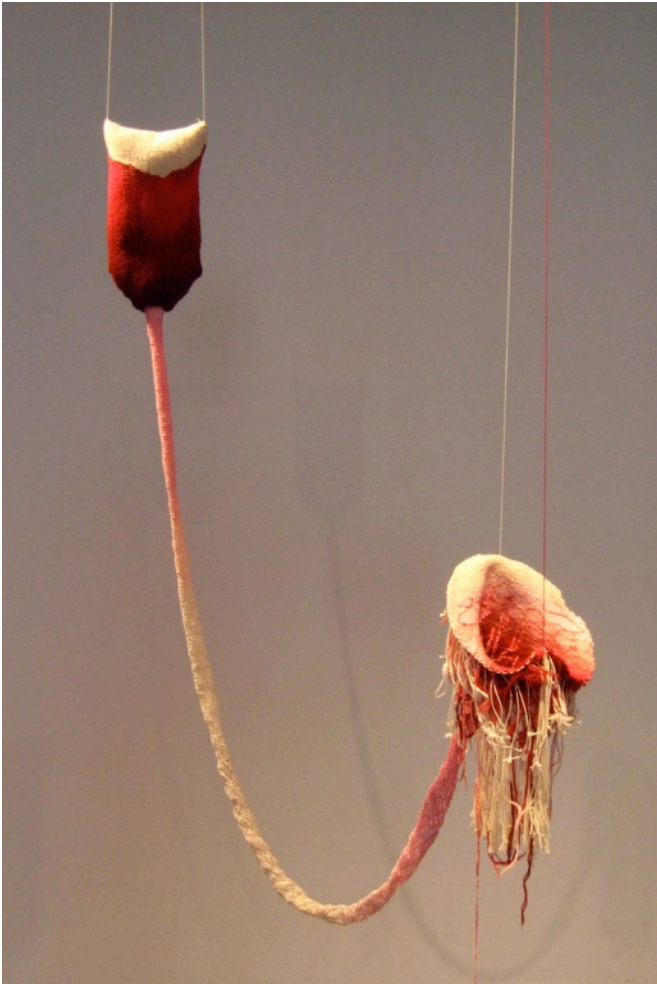
Judy Brown (Calgary, AB) is represented by six small (28 cm x 30.5 cm), deeply detailed works, each containing the word which is its title – "Found," "Chance," "Surface," "Memory," "Meander," and "Passage." The small scale format and complex imagery of each piece provides the viewer with an intimate experience quite contrary to that of the grand scale tapestries of bygone eras. The pieces have an edgy, contemporary spirit taking full advantage of the traditional medium and more contemporary adaptations of materials and technique.

Above: **Judy Brown**, "Meander," 28 cm x 30.5 cm, 2011, photo: provided by artist. Wool & silk.

Left: **Jolie Bird**, "Hi, 'How Are You?," 62 cm x 81 cm, 2008, photo: provided by artist. Wool, cotton & acrylics.

In contrast to the tight, intricate patterning of Brown's work, Jolie Bird (Halifax, NS) works in a larger, portrait format for strongly narrative, loosely constructed, vividly coloured work. Her imagery also includes words but with individual head shots and is drawn from popular culture and personal experience. The highly stylized design has a quality reminiscent of comics and pictorial hooked mats. From a foundation of the highly repetitive and precise tapestry traditions, she is contemporizing the practice by introducing materials and conventions from other visual arts.





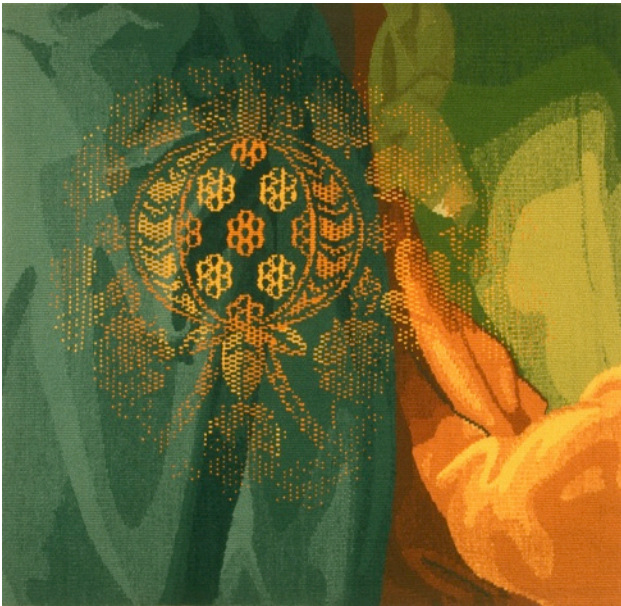
Melissa Wong (Calgary, AB) moves off the wall with "Repository," a powerful and elegant three dimensional piece using tapestry and needlepoint lace techniques and suspended from the ceiling. Wong's work is intimate in its exploration of the body as textile. Her two works in this exhibition are startling and beautiful interpretations of birth. In contrast to the fluidity of the sculptural piece, the wall piece, "Spill and Mend," is a disciplined, finely woven piece but with spare, nearly photographic imagery.

Left: **Melissa Wong**, "Repository," 22.5 cm x 15 cm x 10 cm with 110 cm long lace, 2011. Woven tapestry with needlepoint lace.

Below: **Linda Wallace**, *Diminishment of Hope*: "NonGravid 04 April," 41cm x 51 cm x 4 cm, 2005, photo: Terry Zlot. Handwoven tapestry, burial, and handstitching.



Also exploring issues related to birth, in this case infertility, are six poignantly haunting works in the series *Diminishing Hope* by Linda Wallace (NanOOSE Bay, BC). Created over five years, each of the small, monochromatic tapestries was buried in the soil of a wild area of her property on the same day, retrieved on different dates and titled "NonGravid" (not pregnant) with the date. The partially decayed pieces were reworked, repaired, overstitched, and mounted. The ritual of traditional tapestry making combined with the ritual of the long process of burial (implanting), retrieval, and reworking, a very contemporary approach to artmaking, echoes the ritual cycle of infertility procedures. Together they tell a compelling, personal story.



Above: **Murray Gibson**, "Visitation," 60 cm x 60 cm, 1999, photo: provided by artist. Gobelins tapestry, wool, and cotton.

Murray Gibson (Antigonish, NS) has made a commitment to mastering the Gobelins tapestry technique developed and employed in the 16th century. It is an intricate technique made more complex as weavers work on the back of the piece from a drawn "cartoon" mounted behind the warp, necessitating the use of mirrors to enable the weaver to see the progress of the work. Gibson's imagery is grounded in research, exploring the stories of women of history and myth who were practitioners of textile arts. The foundation of the imagery is representation of drapery referenced in historical images of these women. Overlaying this are symbolic images advancing the story. "Visitation" draws the drapery image from the 1528 painting of Mary and Elizabeth by Jacopo Pontormo. Overlaying the drapery is a stylized pomegranate, symbolic of Christ's suffering and of fertility. The effect is that of looking at an image with a magnifying glass. The technique is fine, rich, and polished, and the image a contemporary interpretation of culturally significant stories from the past.

This is a stunning and thoughtful pair of exhibitions that, with relatively few works, tells the story of the profound connection between traditional technique and contemporary expression.

(Note: Both of these exhibitions are available on-line at <http://www.albertacraft.ab.ca/feature-gallery/> on the Alberta Craft Council's website).



Virginia Stephen is an arts educator, arts administrator, consultant, curator, and artist living in Edmonton, Alberta. Formerly in senior positions at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and Edmonton Art Gallery where she championed the inclusion of fine craft in the exhibition and collection programs she is now Executive Director of Liberal Studies, Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta. Stephen maintains an art practice in painting and fibre arts. Her work has been included in exhibitions across Canada and she has had two recent residencies in the Banff Centre Leighton Studios.

ATA News

Award for Excellence Winner - Evelyn Campbell

Evelyn Campbell from Los Alamos, New Mexico, has been awarded the ATA Award for Excellence in Tapestry for her piece, "Sandhill Cranes over Pajarito Acres." Her tapestry was exhibited at the **Celebration of Fiber** during the Intermountain Weavers Conference at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, from July 26-28, 2013.

Evelyn shares that:

"Sandhill Cranes over Pajarito Acres" was inspired by a photograph taken by T.K. Thompson of cranes flying over my home in the fall toward their wintering ground at the Bosque near Socorro, New Mexico. Our Las Tejedoras tapestry group challenged each of us to weave a tapestry illustrating "passages." Watching the sandhill cranes flying over Pajarito Acres and listening to them every spring and fall has been a passage that has been part of my life for 47 years.

The decision to learn to be a weaver in my retirement years was facilitated by Espanola Valley Fiber Arts Center in Espanola, New Mexico. Its location made it easy to take all sorts of classes over the last 18 years. Gradually, my interests have narrowed down to tapestry. My technical training included study with several accomplished tapestry artists, including James Koehler. He used to teach twice a year at the Center. The idea for "Sandhill Cranes over Pajarito Acres" was the last discussion that I had with him.



Above: **Evelyn Campbell**, "Sandhill Cranes Over Pajarito Acres," 28 in x 22 in, 2012. Hand-dyed wool weft on cotton warp.

Award for Excellence Winner - Kathe Todd-Hooker

Kathe Todd-Hooker was awarded ATA's Award for Excellence for her tapestry "Pax Chene" at **Coastal Fiberarts 2013** at Clatsop Community College's Astoria Visual Arts, from July 18 – August 18, 2013.

Todd-Hooker is a tapestry weaver, instructor, dreamer, writer, tapestry list mistress, instructor, a sometimes historian, and journaler who writes about tapestry, design, color, journaling, symbolism, Russian Old Believers, and tapestry technique. Her work consists of small format work (less than 15 inches square at 20-22 ends per inch).

She says, "Decorating one's surroundings is a primal need for human beings. Because of this, people have often woven designs into cloth. All these skills fulfill the need of the doer to place marks on his or her surroundings and control them. Often the decorations consist of symbols. By using symbols, the viewer becomes a participant in the work itself - trying to puzzle out the meaning of the work. With ambiguous symbols, people are encouraged to spend more time participating in solving the ambiguity."

By using historical symbols, creating my own symbols, and by renaming old symbols in my work, I feel an inner “connectiveness” to the past, present, and future. I allow the viewer to participate by choosing his or her own meanings.

All that said, ‘Pax Chene’ is an oddity - a portrait of my studio buddy. It is one of three that I have finished or am working on. It’s a study in soumak and rya, a memento of my ‘best studio buddy and companion;’ a portrait of calm and waiting.”

To find out more about having the ATA Award for Excellence presented at your exhibit, see <http://americantapestryalliance.org/awards/ata-award-for-excellence/> or click on ataaward@americantapestryalliance.org to send a message to Awards Chair, Tal Landeau.



Above: **Kathe Todd-Hooker**, “Pax Chene,” 12 in x 8 in, 2011.
Sewing thread, perle cotton.

Emerge Membership Grant Winner - Jennifer Galliot

Jennifer Galliot has received the Emerge Membership Grant for a second year. Jennifer had much to say about the value of her first year as the Emerge recipient:

To me the biggest thing about the Emerge Grant, is that it made me a part of a community. This is something that was lost when I graduated from university and became a self-guided artist. When you don’t have peers to encourage and challenge you, or even people that speak your artistic language, it is always quite difficult to keep up the enthusiasm of one’s practice. By receiving the Emerge grant last year I was not only made a member of ATA, but also gained a peer group. By being given an artist page, it made my tapestries visible to my peers which drove me to critique my previously woven tapestries and strive to improve.

The next big thing about the Emerge grant was the mandatory volunteer time. This led me to help with the ATA’s Twitter feed and ATA’s TEx gallery. This gave me a role in the ATA community, as well as an opportunity to keep improving myself.

After receiving the Emerge grant and wanting to improve my practice, I asked around the Newfoundland arts community for a loom that might be available to rent. It just so happened that an art school close to me had tons of unused looms and let me have them free of charge as long as I used them at the school so the students could see what I was doing. This led me to having another link to the artistic community as a mentor. Because of this, I also pushed my artistic boundaries to prove that I was worthy of the mentor role.

In the coming year, Galliot hopes to complete a body of work for a gallery show. She also hopes to take advantage of ATA’s Distance Learning mentoring program.

ATA’s Emerge Membership Grant is awarded to young, emerging artists 40 years of age and under. Applications are reviewed on an ongoing basis. To find out more about the Emerge Grants see <http://americantapestryalliance.org/awards/emerge-membership-grants-for-new-emerging-artists/> or click on ataaward@americantapestryalliance.org to send a message to Awards Chair, Tal Landeau.

Thanks to Long Term Members

The following people have been ATA members for 15 years, or longer. Thanks so much to all of you for your sustained support.

Janet Austin	Nancy Garretson	Mary Lane	Letitia Roller
Erika Baker	Helen Gold	Jan Landrum	William Saunders. MD
Carol Bitner	Tricia Goldberg	Jean Larochette	Tommye Scanlin
Ann Blankenship	Joan Griffin	Yael Larochette	Judy Schuster
Cecilia Blomberg	Peter Harris	Annita Magee	Jean Smelker-Hugi
Odette Brabec	Janet Hart	Ruth Manning	Rosemary Smith
Galadriel Breezy	Ibolya Hegyi	Sharon Marcus	Micala Sidore
Archie Brennan	Barbara Heller	Susan Martin-Maffei	Patricia Sindewald
Jim Brown	Susan Henegar	Lynn Mayne	Kathy Spoering
Elizabeth Buckley	Silvia Heyden	Sonja Miremont	Sarah Swett
Bobbi Chamberlain	Betty Hilton-Nash	Julia Mitchell	Maria Szaraz
Martha Christian	Jane Hoffman	Audrey Moore	Dorothy Szymanski
Karen Chu	Susan Iverson	Olga Neuts	Sally Thrall
Myla Collier	Nancy Jackson	Inge Norgaard	Kathe Todd-Hooker
Jane Daniels	Beverly Kent	Pam Patrie	Beverly Walker
Mary Anne Dyer	Jane Kidd	Katherine Perkins	Linda Weghorst
Bette Ferguson	Barbara Kiger	Suzanne Pretty-Hamel	Patricia Williams
Marti Fleischer	Lialia Kuchma	Ellen Ramsey	Jackie Wollenberg
Joanna Foslien	Christine Laffer	Linda Rees	Karen Yackell
Alex Friedman			

Call for ATA Board of Directors Members

ATA is looking for new board members to lead the Education Committee, the Awards Committee, and the Promotions Committee. Meld minds with creative artists from around the world! Be a mover and shaker in THE premiere, international, contemporary, tapestry organization! Gain experience in arts administration. Join the ATA Board of Directors. [Online application](#). Need more information? Email [Becky Stevens](#).

Members' Passing

We have received word that Annie Scheer of Camphill, PA; Jeanne Claire Walker of Pomona, CA; and Lynn Heglar of Seattle, WA recently passed away. Our condolences go out to their family and friends.

Lynn Heglar loved her husband Ken, her family, and her many friends. For the last eight years I was lucky to be one of those friends. A foodie who didn't cook and a weaver who wasn't doing that much weaving when I knew her. But, Lynn gave me the best piece of weaving advice I ever got: "When you're having trouble with your edges (pulling in), it's what's happening in the middle that's the problem." – submitted by Joanne Sanburg

Jeanne Claire Walker pursued three careers: teaching, writing, and weaving. She exhibited her work in galleries, and sold to enthusiastic collectors who appreciated the unique quality of the ancient art of tapestry. She employed a specialized technique called transparent tapestry. When displayed in windows or backlit, transparent areas contrast with opaque segments giving them a unique mystical quality. – submitted by Patricia Dunston

Convergence 2014

HGA's *Convergence* will take place July 14-19, 2014 in Providence, Rhode Island. ATA is planning on holding a Speakers Session with the ever popular Digi-Slam. We are also looking forward to seeing all of your entries for **UNTITLED/ UNJURIED: small format tapestry 2014** at the University of Rhode Island Feinstein Providence Campus Gallery. The opening of the show will take place July 17th. [Exhibition information](#). Questions: Email Exhibition Chair, [Jan Austin](#).

Creative Capital: ATA's 2014 Members' Retreat

Does your muse feel trapped under an immovable object? Invest in your creativity by signing up for ATA's 2014 Members' Retreat in Providence, Rhode Island and allow your inspiration to flow as freely as an unobstructed river. Pack your bags and fly, drive, or sail to the Ocean State to study with talented tapestry artists, Helena Hernmarck, Susan Martin Maffei, and Marcel Marois. Don't miss this opportunity to gather with old friends, meet new friends, and immerse yourself in an ocean of tapestry, creativity, and fun. General registration opens November 24th at 12:00pm, Pacific Standard Time. Questions? [Retreat information](#). Email [Mary Lane](#).

Tapestry Topics Themes & Deadlines**All Things Green****Deadline: January 15, 2014**

This can encompass various meanings of the word, from seeing green, being green, to thinking green. For example:

- Using the color green in your work.
- Green with envy - work that inspires or places where tapestry work is honored and appreciated.
- Green practices in terms of dyeing and the studio facility.
- Green as a reference to being new to tapestry or new to some aspect of tapestry.
- Being green – exploring environmental issues in the content of one's work.
- The greenback - a discussion of pricing and selling work as a way to earn that green paper we need in order to do our work.

If you plan on submitting an article, please contact Theme Coordinator, [Louise Halsey](#).

Type in Tapestry**Deadline: April 1, 2014**

Submissions are closed. Theme Editor, [Lindsey Marshall](#).

Collaboration**Deadline: July 15, 2014 4**

Does your work involve collaboration? With another artist? As a weaver for a designer? With nature or chance? Tell us about your experiences and insights into working collaboratively. If you plan on submitting an article, please contact us at newsletter@americantapestryalliance.org.

Do you have an idea for a theme? Would you like to be a Theme Coordinator?

Contact the Editor: newsletter@americantapestryalliance.org.

Important Dates

December 1, 2013. STI 3: *Outside the Line* closes at the [Troy-Hayner Cultural Center](#).

November 24, 2013. Registration for *Creative Capital* opens. [Read more](#).

January 15, 2014. Articles due for *Tapestry Topics*, "All Things Green." Theme Coordinator; [Louise Halsey](#).

January 31, 2014. Entry deadline for **UNTITLED/UNJURIED: small format tapestry 2014**. [More information](#). [Enter online](#).

February 1, 2014. Deadline for [ATA's Scholarship for Tapestry Study](#).

March 31, 2014. Tapestries due for **UNTITLED/UNJURIED: small format tapestry 2014**. [More information](#).

May 2, 2014. **ATB 10** opens at [Visions Art Museum](#), San Diego, CA.

May 10, 2014. Opening reception for **ATB 10** at [Visions Art Museum](#), San Diego, CA.

July 8, 2014. **UNTITLED/UNJURIED: small format tapestry 2014** opens at URI Feinstein Providence Campus Gallery. [More information](#).

July 17, 2014. 5:00–9:00 pm Opening reception for **UNTITLED/UNJURIED: small format tapestry 2014**. [More information](#).

July 19, 2014. ATA's Speakers Forum, Providence Convention Center, Providence, Rhode Island.

July 19–22, 2014. *Creative Capital*, 2014 ATA's 2014 Members Retreat. University of Rhode Island, Kingston campus.

July 20, 2014. **ATB 10** closes at [Visions Art Museum](#), San Diego, CA.

August 8, 2014. **UNTITLED/UNJURIED: small format tapestry 2014** closes.

September 25, 2014. **ATB 10** opens at [Kent State University Museum](#). Opening reception.

January 4, 2015. **ATB 10** closes at [Kent State University Museum](#).

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Open

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Creative Capital

ATA's 2014 Members Retreat

Does your muse feel trapped under an immovable object? Invest in your creativity by signing up for ATA's 2014 Members Retreat in Providence, RI and allow your inspiration to flow as freely as an unobstructed river. Pack your bags and fly, drive, or sail to the Ocean State to study with talented tapestry artists, Helena Hernmarck, Susan Martin Maffei and Marcel Marois. Don't miss this opportunity to gather with old friends, meet new friends, and immerse yourself in an ocean of tapestry, creativity and fun.

ATA's Members Retreat will be held July 20-22, 2014 at the University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI, following HGA's Convergence. Check in at URI is in the afternoon on July 19. Private room suites are available and include all meals.



"On the Dock"

Commissioned Tapestries: Interacting with Clients

Helena Hernmarck

In this class I will discuss five very different commissions and explain in detail:

- How they came about.
- How I designed them to fit a given space and to relate to the client in subtle ways by giving my work a deeper connection to the owner than is obvious.
- How they were executed on time and within budget, even if it took more than one year to finish the work.
- Hanging, fire protection concerns, maintenance and other practical matters.

I will share charts to show how I plan a job, keep everyone motivated and monitor progress. Digital presentations, along with a few designs and studies to handle, will complement the class. Questions from the participants will also be discussed.



"What Lies Beneath"

Extending Boundaries

Susan Martin Maffei

This workshop will explore several technical and creative aspects relating to extending the narrative visions of woven tapestry such as multi-selvedge and shaped warping, 3 dimensional crochet trim, using found objects, unusual fibers and textured yarn wefts. Small works that are the popular trend in tapestry weaving today take on a more sculptural and precious form when edges are not necessarily square and images walk beyond the boundaries. Trims and found objects can bring an additional concept to the content of the work. Students will draw on these possibilities over the 3-day workshop and create one or more small format tapestries or samples.



"Chromatic Downpour"

Exploring High Warp Tapestry: Expression & Interpretation

Marcel Marois

This is a workshop for developing a personal artistic language in connection with the process of High Warp tapestry weaving. It will be a time to find one's own direction within a tradition that has been explored for thousands of years.

From different studies with drawing, photography and collage, participants will learn how to interpret a personal design into weaving and further develop the relationship between content and technique. Focus will be on the quality of design, color blending, color gradation and making. There will be instruction on different stages of the process and discussions on previous works in connection with works in progress.

Helena Hernmarck was born in Sweden and has a degree from Konstfackskolan University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. She has operated her own weaving studio for 45 years, designing and executing tapestries of monumental size for corporate lobbies and other large spaces. She has been the recipient of many awards and her work is in the collection of major museums across the country. She was on the faculty of the Rhode Island School of Design and has taught at many other art and craft institutions.

Susan Martin Maffei is an internationally known tapestry artist whose background includes art studies at The Art Students League in NYC, tapestry training at Les Gobelins in Paris, apprenticeship and studio work at the Scheuer Tapestry Studio, NYC and conservation of antique textiles at Artweave Gallery, NYC. She has been weaving her work professionally since 1985. She has taught, lectured and exhibited in the U.S. and abroad and has work in both public and private collections.

Marcel Marois is a Canadian artist and professor at the University of Quebec at Chicoutimi where he teaches in Postgraduate and Undergraduate Art programs. He occasionally teaches tapestry workshops in Europe and North America. His tapestries have been exhibited in major international exhibitions, Switzerland, Poland, Belgium, Australia, Hungary and Japan. He is regularly invited as juror, curator or consultant for different tapestry and textile art exhibitions. His work is part of several public art collections.

Registration Enrollment is limited. [Register Online!](#) Or complete the registration form below and mail to Marcia Ellis, 5565 Idlewood Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404, USA. Early bird registration must be received by March 1, 2014. Registration closes May 31, 2014. Retreat fees for non-ATA members include a one-year membership to ATA. **Full refunds, less a \$50.00 administrative fee are granted until May 31, 2014. No refunds will be granted after that date.** Checks returned for insufficient funds will be assessed a \$25.00 fee. For extra copies of this form, visit www.americantapestryalliance.org Questions? Contact Mary Lane: marylane53@mac.com

[Click here to Register Online!](#)
or mail in this Registration Form

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email: _____ Emergency Contact (Name and phone): _____

Teacher preference (number in order, 1-4): Hernmarck _____ Maffei _____ Marois _____ any instructor _____
Teacher preferences will be assigned according to date of registration.

	Registration Fee	Room & board 3 nights (Sa dinner - Tu lunch)	Room & board 4 nights (Sa dinner - Wed breakfast)	Materials Fee (for Maffei students)	Materials Fee (for Hernmarck students)	Transportation from Providence, RI to the Retreat	Total
ATA member, Early Bird, single	\$350.00	\$270.00	\$345.00	\$25.00	\$15.00	\$35.00	
Non ATA member, Early Bird, single	\$385.00	\$270.00	\$345.00	\$25.00	\$15.00	\$35.00	
ATA member, late registration, single	\$385.00	\$270.00	\$345.00	\$25.00	\$15.00	\$35.00	
Non ATA member, late registration, single	\$420.00	\$270.00	\$345.00	\$25.00	\$15.00	\$35.00	

Payment: Check enclosed _____ (in US dollars and made out to American Tapestry Alliance. Please spell out the entire name. Do not use ATA. Canadians, please write "U.S. Funds" on your check.)

Credit Card # (MC or VISA) _____ Security Code: _____

Exp Date: _____ Cardholder's Signature _____

PayPal: (Log on to paypal.com. Send payment to americantapestryalliance@gmail.com & mention "retreat")

Mail registration form to: Marcia Ellis / 5565 Idlewood Road / Santa Rosa, CA 95404 / USA