AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE

A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF TAPESTRY ART TODAY

WWW.AMERICANTAPESTRYALLIANCE.ORG

Summer 2015 Vol. 41 No. 2

Southwestern Weaving

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Co-Director's Letter, Summer 2015

This newsletter comes with the light of summer. We are in the beautiful season of longer days just made for weaving, gardening, vacations, and family. This could be the year for a road trip to Louisiana to see your work or that of your tapestry friends in Small Tapestry International 4: Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Innovation, which can be seen at Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana, June 8 – August 15, 2015. There is no Convergence this year but a long summer ahead to design and weave entries for ATB 11, which are due this October 31st.

Are you a winter weaver or a summer weaver? Do you accomplish more in the dark winter months or during the longer days? Ashli Tyre, our Tapestry Topics Theme Coordinator, has been working through the long and short of several seasons to provide us with this issue of inspirational reading and knockout images on Native Traditions and Modern Interpretations. This, as every issue, is packed full of information and visual bliss, connecting us to each other, and informing us about what is going on beyond the borders of our own looms.

A grateful thank you to all who supported our annual Valentines Day fundraising appeal that raised $6517.00. And a thank you, as well, to those who donated enticing prizes. As you know, the ATA board and its many volunteers are passionate about tapestry weaving. We are not a crew of professional fundraisers, not a one of us. So each year we try something new, a little different approach to the delicate but necessary challenge of asking kindly of our membership to provide some additional financial support. We are so grateful when you respond, as we all reap the benefits of every gesture of generosity. We are actively looking for someone who is conversant in fundraising. If that is you, please contact us, as you are the answer to our organizational prayers.

Congratulations to Margaret Jones, who received an ATA Scholarship for Tapestry Study this year. Margaret is completing her studies at West Dean Tapestry Studio in Chichester, England.

This is also the summer to catch up on your reading. You are not going to want to miss new additions to our educational articles on the ATA website. Our most recent post is by Margaret Sunday on creativity, "a personal and particular kind of beauty." http://americantapestryalliance.org/education/educational-articles/

Have a wonderful summer,

Mary & Michael

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Ashli Tyre, Theme Co-ordinator

Please note: all page numbers are linked to pages

Cover Image: Thoma Ewen, "Offering at Spider Rock," 60 in x 84 in, 4 epi, 2007, photo: Ken Ewen. Cotton warp, wool weft.

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Theme Editor's Introduction

Native Tapestry Traditions: Telling Stories about Nature through Symbols

by Ashli Tyre

Storytelling is deeply rooted in the human psyche. Since the rise of humanity, we have been telling stories about nature through symbols. Across cultures, artists who share their stories through words, pictures, and symbols are following in this uniquely human tradition. And the symbols we use to express ourselves bear remarkable similarity across cultures. It is in native textile traditions that we find the use of symbolism most compelling.

Storytelling through symbols woven in warp and weft is a theme that draws together the work of the weavers contributing to this issue of Tapestry Topics. Featuring the work of native tapestry weavers and weavers whose work is influenced by native traditions, techniques, or places, we seek to honor the native textile traditions of the Americas.

The work of Marlowe Katoney, a contemporary Navajo artist and weaver, provides a fresh perspective on the traditions of Navajo weaving. Symbols are important in his work as he describes his use of "non-objective shapes as a vehicle to nudge the subconscious into a particular direction." Through his self-described "exercise in mind play," he brings meaning to his work through symbols.

Christine Rivers, Luskwalwun, draws upon multiple weaving traditions, her cultural knowledge, and involvement in the Squamish Nation in her innovative work. Christine shares with us the meaning of the symbols depicted in her tapestries and accounts of a cultural weaving revival in the Squamish Nation.

Ashli Tyre, "Blue Sky Winter Day," 30 in by 45 in, 10 epi, 2014, photo: Kathy Cadigan. Wool warp, wool weft in natural colors and dyed with indigo and brown onionskin

Taught to weave by his father as a young boy growing up in a village in Oaxaca, Erasto Tito Mendoza shares his innovative tapestries that combine modern imagery with symbols depicted in Saltillo serapes and Mexican codices, which are pictorial books written by pre-Columbian and colonial-era Aztecs.

In their article about Rio Grande/Chimayo style weaving, Rose and Eugene Vigil describe their life in the Chimayo valley. Beginning with the processing of Churro wool to dyeing with native plants and weaving, it is fascinating to learn about their weaving traditions that follow the path from fleece to rug.

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In her thought-provoking article, Thoma Ewen reflects on the very act of weaving as a universal symbolic “thread that connects all cultures and all humans.” Just as the symbols that inspire humans are largely universal, her piece helps us see how the techniques of weaving are also universal and the act of weaving “touches a deep place of knowing in us all.”

Rebecca Mezoff shares the influence of the southwest on her work, with its circular conception of time and wide-open landscapes. Her discovery of spiral symbols on petroglyphs during meanderings through the high deserts provided inspiration for her work, just as they inspired those who depicted them in stone so long ago.

Linda Rees shares how her work is influenced by Navajo and Rio Grande weaving styles as if by some form of osmosis. Ever since she was a young child, she was drawn to the strong, distinct and yet minimal use of color and
geometric design employed in southwest textiles. As a reader, it is fascinating to explore photos of her work to identify these influences.

Finally, Audrey Moore takes us on a guided tour of the Navajo reservation in her article. From archeological sites to historic trading posts, she inspires us to jump in our cars and drive all around the Rez and beyond. I know I will have her article in hand as I plan my visit to the Four Corners region this September.

Weaving as a vehicle for telling stories about nature through symbols is a theme that draws together the work of the contributors to this issue featuring native textile traditions of the Americas. While I would not propose to understand the cultural significance of symbols depicted in native textiles, I am quite convinced that aspects of these symbols tap deep into the roots of our universal humanity. My life as a psychologist and university professor has made me keenly aware of the universality of the human experience. Carl Jung, a psychologist in the psychodynamic tradition, wrote of universal symbols that reside in our collective human unconscious. Trained in a more Behaviorist orientation, I did not give much thought to the work of Jung — until I became a weaver studying cultural tapestry traditions. One need only explore the work of weavers from traditions across the globe to see that the universal experience of being a human with the Earth below us, sky above us, and needs for warmth, sustenance, and security have led to express ourselves in remarkably similar ways.

In my work as a tapestry weaver, I share my own stories about nature through symbols constructed in wool. My tapestries tell stories of moments of pure bliss experienced in the Cascade Mountains of the great Pacific Northwest. As I do so, I am aware many before me have told the same stories. By resurrecting my own stories with these new and familiar symbols, I am tapping into the knowledge base of humanity. In my most recent work, “Blue Sky Winter Day,” snow swept mountain slopes stand in stark contrast to indigo blue skies. Ravens take the form of mountains. Curious owls swoop in wonderment at strange beings sleeping under the night sky. I tread lightly upon the forests and mountains of the great Northwest and I approach my explorations of the Navajo textile traditions with great respect and humility.

Ashli Tyre is a University Professor residing in Issaquah, Washington. She weaves only for the pure joy and balance it brings to her personal life. She can be contacted at ashlityre@hotmail.com or ashlityre.wordpress.com.
Photo: Kathy Cadigan

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Marlowe Katoney: Navajo Roots, Contemporary Expression

by Marlowe Katoney

I'm a Navajo Artist. I grew up in Winslow, Arizona. I come from a working class railroad family on both my paternal and maternal side of the family. Both of my parents are non-college educated. I was the first in my immediate family who went to college (University of Arizona). Although I have strong artistic roots on my dad's side of the family, only a couple of my relatives pursue art as a profession. I do not consider myself a "generational weaver" because neither my mother nor my father weaves. However, both of my grandmothers and my great and great-great grandmothers wove and might have been considered master weavers today.

Marlowe Katoney, "Eye of the Storm," 24 in x 20½ in, 2013, photo: Courtesy of The Heard Museum. Wool Textile

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Marlowe Katoney, “Survivor—Long Walk,” 31½ in x 32¾ in, (no date), photo: Tom Alexander Photography. Wool Textile.

Weaving was something I was hesitant to try because of the years I suspected I would need to cultivate the skill. I’m not the best technically; I sometimes make mistakes in my work, but for me it adds a kind of beauty. As any artist, I must always consider the medium, where it came from, what it was, and what it could be. I address the subject matter for my textiles in the very same way. I utilize something figurative by beginning with a sketch or non-objective shapes as a vehicle to nudge the subconscious into a particular direction. It’s a good exercise for mind play when it comes to addressing subject matter from world news to music.
I was a painter before I became a weaver and I found as a painter that you sometimes put a lot of effort into something and come out with nothing. Other times you can put very little

Marlowe Katoney, “Concerto,” 15 in x 21¾ in, 2014, photo: Tom Alexander Photography. Wool textile, Private Collection.

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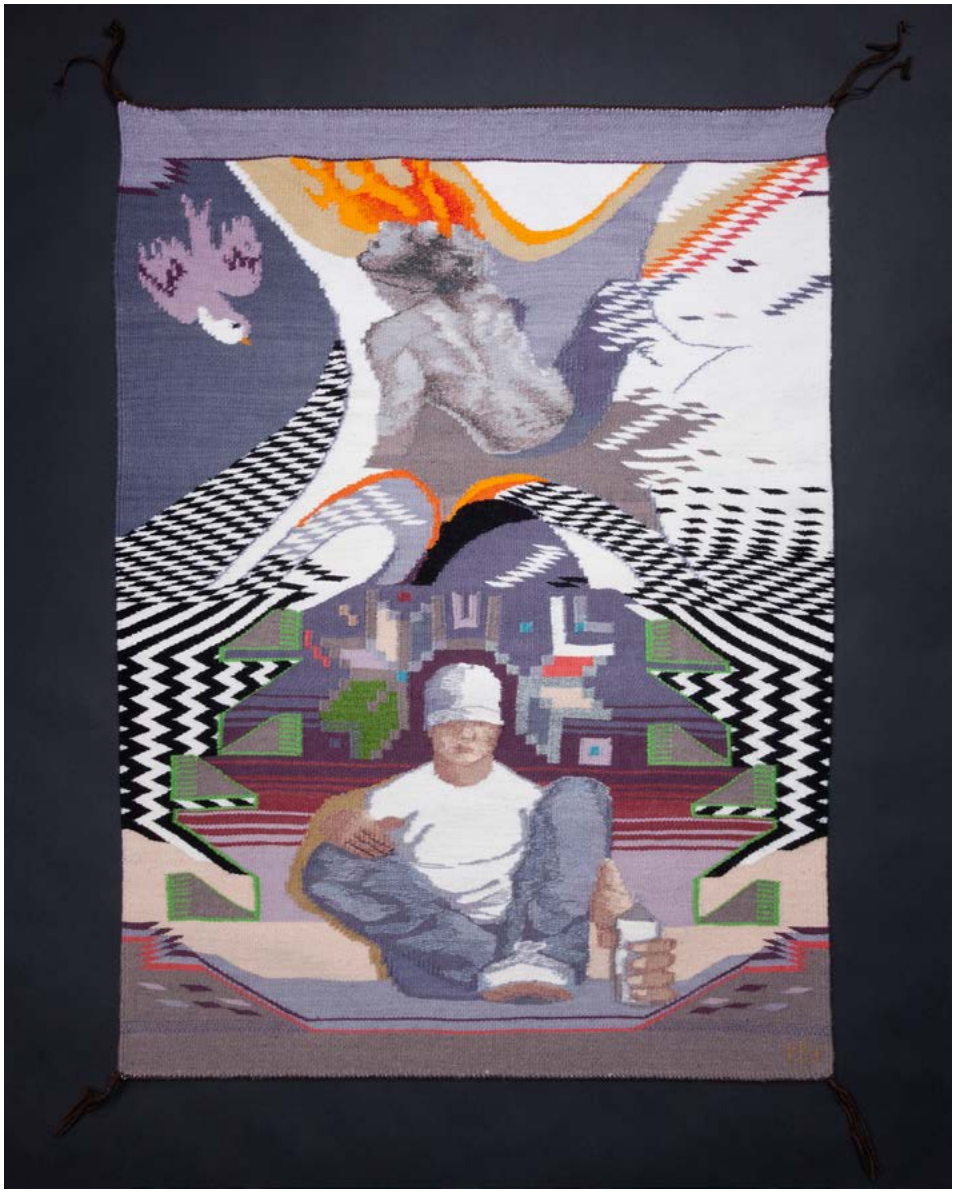
effort towards something and surprise! — you find the aesthetic you were looking for. That's why I find it very important to utilize everything: pictures, patterns, old rugs, new rugs, pop culture. Somewhere along the way a light will go on.

For me, being an artist is an ongoing pursuit of freedom. It is not having to abide by the popular terms of beauty or to create something readily identifiable as being "Navajo." Instead, I deconstruct old ideas to create new ones. I found that often other people's notions of beauty are not necessarily my own. Under those circumstances, I find it necessary to examine "the other," which some people may find unsavory or bland, and reinvent it, giving it new life. Addressing subject matter and composition in this way contextualizes traditional Navajo weaving into contemporary art.

As an artist I believe the capacity of the imagination is endless and the motions of daily life can be fuel for the imagination. It's through these ideals that I'm able to approach Navajo weaving with a fresh perspective.



Marlowe Katoney, "The Acquisition," 30 in x 43½ in, 2014, photo: Tom Alexander Photography. Wool Textile, Collection of the Susan Jordan Law Firm.

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Marlowe Katoney, “Winter Apparition,” 24½ in” x 35¼ in, 2014,
photo: Tom Alexander Photography. Wool Textile, Bahti Indian Arts Tucson.

Marlowe Katoney is a Navajo artist and weaver who resides in Winslow, Arizona. He studied 2D design and painting at the University of Arizona before becoming a weaver. Marlowe’s contemporary art and his work in Navajo weaving have been recognized with numerous awards, fellowships, and scholarships. His weavings have been featured in publications and in the collections of the Heard Museum. He can be contacted at chaikatoney@hotmail.com and Marlowe Katoney Navajo Textiles on Facebook.

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Salish weaving and Tapestry weaving

by Christine Rivers

I am Christine Rivers. My name is Luskwalwun. I am a Salish weaver and I am a tapestry weaver. I studied Salish weaving in 1969 with a Stalo weaver and in 2005 with Squamish weavers, Janice George and Willard Joseph Jr. I studied cedar weaving with Squamish weaver Tracy Williams, Sesemiya. I studied tapestry weaving with Archie Brennan, Susan Martin Maffei, Sarah Swett, Jane Kidd, Barbara Heller, Jean Pierre Larochette, and Yael Lurie. My Salish weaving is now a source of inspiration for some of my tapestries.

Salish weaving has seen a revival in recent years. There were no weavers in the Squamish nation and now there are many. Salish weaving is used in ceremonial life. The regalia worn in ceremonies for namings, funerals and other celebrations are often made with Salish weaving with wool or cedar, or combined wool and cedar. The strength of the people now and in the future comes from the strength of the culture and people of the past. The traditional dress of the past is very important in the ceremonial life of the present for the Squamish Nation people. Weaving is strong again in the Squamish Nation culture.

Christine Rivers, Melanie and Aaron's wedding shawl on the two bar Salish loom, woven from the top down and beaten up, Salish weaving, 2005.

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Salish weaving is done on a simple two bar loom. The warp is wound around the two bars. The weaving is done on the front and the back. When weaving a tunic there is a small dowel hung down to weave the neck opening. Weft fringe is left on both sides as the weaving is done. The tunics I have woven are done with twining. Twining is twisting the warp front and back of each warp. Shawls are woven straight on the loom, with both twill and plain weave, usually fringed with the warp. When using a cedar warp, the cedar is hung from a cord of wool or cedar. The weft can be wool or cedar. I wove leggings with wool on cedar and beaver fur wrapped along the top. I wove the cedar shawl with cedar weft. The cedar bark is stripped from the tree and processed until it is quite soft for weaving. It is sprayed with water to keep it work-able. When the cedar weaving is finished, you rub bear or deer grease, rendered from the fat of the animals, into the cedar to make it softer. Tracy Williams, Sesemiya, prepared the cedar that I have used. Tracy also rendered the bear and deer grease. Delmar Williams, Xwepilkinem, is the hunter. The entire animal is used for food: fur, leather, and grease. Nothing is wasted. I have also used my floor loom to weave shawls. In the old days, dog wool and mountain goat wool were used. The wool dog is extinct and mountain goat wool is hard to come by. We now use our own spun wool or commercially prepared yarns.

Christine Rivers, Luskwalwun, in green tunic for Xwepilkinem, Delmar's naming ceremony, Salish weaving, done on a two bar loom, woven from the top down, 2013.

I wove a shawl for my daughter for her wedding. Her husband, Aaron Nelson Moody, Tewx'sinyexwulla, designed the shawl for my daughter, Melanie. During the wedding ceremony the shawl was used to wrap Melanie in her husband's love, in the same way a wedding ring is used.

Christine Rivers, "Esemkwu - The Family," 7¼ in x 7¾ in, 2011. Tapestry.

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Esemkwu is the Squamish word for 'wrapped in a blanket'. Wrapping in a blanket is a way of protecting a person in a ceremony and wrapping them in the love of the family. The shawl was woven on a Salish loom, from the top down and beating up, all in twining. The black triangles represent the mountains, the green triangles represent trees, and the blue and white triangles represent water. There is a red line around the shawl and on the 'eye' at the bottom of the shawl.

From the wedding shawl, I doodled and came up with a tapestry idea. I wove a person wrapped in a shawl/blanket. It has the same black triangles for mountains, green triangles for trees and blue waves for water. It is called "Esemkwu – Wrapped in a Blanket." Next, I designed and wove "Esemkwu – The Couple." Their arms wrap around each other to make the blanket to be wrapped in. The symbols of mountains, trees, and water are around and through the couple. The third tapestry in the series is "Esemkwu – The Family." The arms of the mother and father wrap around each other and hold their baby. The baby's blanket has the black mountains, green trees and blue water. The symbols are around and through the parents as well.

I continued on the theme with "Osiem – Thank you for the Earth." Osiem is a big thank you from all your relations and ancestors — not just a little thank you. The border has the black triangles for mountains, the green triangles for trees and the blue waves for water. The body of the tapestry has symbolic mountains, trees and water. The hands are how you hold your hands up to say the big thank you, Osiem. In traditional ceremonies, you hold your hands up in thanks.

Christine Rivers, Melanie in her cedar shawl, woven in red and yellow cedar, twined, softened with bear and deer grease, Salish weaving on one bar loom, woven by Christine Rivers, Luskwalwun, cedar prepared by Tracy Williams, Sesemiya. 2013

I wove a tapestry for my daughter for her graduation with a Masters in Public Health. It is called "Esemkwu – All my Relations." It represents my daughter and all her relations. That means her relatives now and her ancestors from both her native side, the Squamish nation, and her Scottish side, the Forbes clan. The blanket is the Salish shawl from her wedding and on the other side, a representation of the Forbes Tartan. The people along the bottom represent the relations and ancestors from the Squamish Nation and from Scotland: the Forbes, Fulton, and Hosie clans. You see again the black triangle mountains, the green triangle trees and the blue wave of water in the border, both in the shawl and in a blanket on one of the small people. In a Squamish ceremony, you hold your hands up to say thank you to "all my relations." My daughter and I say thank you to all her relations for her inspiration to complete her Masters and work for the people.

The cedar shawl that I wove for my daughter's Masters graduation ceremony was woven with warp and weft of cedar. Tracy Williams, Sesemiya, prepared the cedar and rendered the grease for

Christine Rivers, “Standing Together - Then and Now,” 19¼ in x 4⅞ in, 2014. Tapestry.

softening it. It was a proud time to show the importance of the culture from the past being used now, being revived and very much alive and strong now.

“Standing Together – Then and Now” is a tapestry about honoring tradition and inspiring innovation. It has been accepted into ATA Small Format International 4. The tapestry represents the strength of the people now and in the future coming from the strength of the culture and people of the past. Reading the tapestry from left to right, it represents the Squamish people of the past wearing Salish blankets, cedar hats and feather hats; the people of the generation born in the early 1900s, with the man wearing a suit and the woman wearing a long skirt and a scarf; the people of the mid to late 1900s wearing jeans and t-shirts with native logos; and the people now, finding the strength of their culture and wearing Salish blankets, cedar hats, and feather hats. Traditional dress is very important in the ceremonial life of the present-day Squamish Nation people. The innovations of today are based on the beautiful culture of the past as it is relearned and enriched for the future.

My Salish weaving has informed my tapestry weaving and they inspire each other. The strength of the past in both traditions has inspired my weaving now.

Christine Rivers, Parksville, British Columbia, Canada. Christine Rivers lives and weaves on Vancouver Island on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada. Life experiences are the inspiration for her tapestries.

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An Introduction to my Tapestries

by Erasto "Tito" Mendoza

I was born in Teotitlán del Valle in 1963, one of seven brothers and sisters. My father taught us the art of the weaving at an early age. I have worked in different workshops of well-known weavers where I learned to weave intricate traditional rugs, designs from Mexican codices, and reproductions of paintings by famous Mexican artists. I also learned to weave with cotton and silk, to incorporate metallic threads, dye with natural pigments as well as aniline dyes, and weave geometric designs inspired by antique Saltillo serapes.

Now I work independently, weaving and selling my own traditional-themed rugs and wall pieces which incorporate pre-Hispanic geometric design elements and figurative designs. I also represent my village and

Erasto "Tito" Mendoza, "Día y Noche," 27 in x 28 in, 2013, photo: Alejandrina Rios, wool, silk and cotton warp.

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Erasto “Tito” Mendoza, Luna en Greca Flor,” 51 in x 41 in, 2012, photo: Alejandrina Rios, wool, silk gold and silver details with cotton warp

Erasto “Tito” Mendoza, “Diamante en el Valle,” 28 in x 24 in, 2014, photo: Alejandrina Rios, wool, silk, tencel, gold and silver details with cotton warp.

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country internationally by participating in events such as the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the World Art Market at the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, Canada.

My work has been featured in the film, Woven Lives: Contemporary Textiles from Ancient Oaxaca Traditions, at the VI International Biennial of Contemporary Textile Art in the AIR large format category and at the Diego Rivera Anahuacalli Museum in Mexico City.

Erasto “Tito” Mendoza, “Encuentro,” 27 in x 28 in, 2013, photo: Alejandrina Rios, wool, silk, gold and silver details with cotton warp.

Most recently, I participated in the following exhibits:

- Esplendor del Textil at the Museum Peter Gray in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco
- Entretejiendo Culturas: Encuentro at the Museo Textil de Oaxaca in Oaxaca, Oaxaca
- Arropame Desde los pies: Tapetes Tradicionales y Actuales at the Museo Textil de Oaxaca in Oaxaca, Oaxaca
- The Art is the Cloth at the New Hampshire Institute of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire

Erasto “Tito” Mendoza, “Recuerdo de los 90´s,“ 28 in x 20 in, 2015, photo: Alejandrina Rios, wool, silk gold and silver details with cotton warp.

Erasto “Tito” Mendoza lives and weaves in Teotitlán del Valle.

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Chimayo Weaving

by Rose and Eugene Vigil

Rose Vigil

The early generations of weavers from Chimayo were mainly men. The women of the village cleaned, spun, and dyed the fiber. The men could not weave until the women had spun enough wool for them. This made the art of weaving a very close family affair. Eugene and I capture the sense of family working together in our work. This collaboration also supports our artistic strengths. Like our ancestors before us, the craft of weaving is ours from beginning to end.

"Francisco Trujillo, shepherd of the Churro sheep at Rabbit Tree farm, with Marcos the great ram and his offspring lamb Marcos II," 2007, photo: Rose Vigil. He raises about 30% of the fibers that go into our current textiles.

Eugene is holding “El Coyote,” 58 in x 34 in, October 2014, photo: Rose Vigil, Moki Rio Grande/ Chimayo textile woven with woolen warp and weft yarns. Many textiles woven in Rio Grande pattern of alternating brown, indigo blue, and white stripes are called “Moki.” The Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the Chimayo valley is the landscape behind Eugene.

Eugene Vigil

Since I was born and raised in the Chimayo Valley, I have always had an interest in the traditions of the area. My goal is to preserve and promote all aspects of Hispanic weavings, from the most traditional to the contemporary. When my ancestors came to Chimayo Valley in the 1700s they faced many different hardships, and the only reason they survived is because they worked as a family unit. Without the family members working in unity, the job of each one would not be completed. The same holds true today. Without my wife, Rose, my textiles could not be completed. She is the foundation of the traditional textiles that I (we) weave, by raising the wool, washing, carding, spinning, and dyeing the wool. It is after her job is completed that I can begin to weave the textiles on a loom that we built together.

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The feel of the handspun yarn is of that of a rustic land. The New Mexican landscape is made up of rose-colored deserts to broken mesas to high snow-capped peaks. Heavily forested mountain wilderness covers a significant portion of New Mexico, especially towards the north. The Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the southernmost part of the Rocky Mountains, runs roughly north-south along the east side of the Rio Grande in the rugged, pastoral north. One of the most important of New Mexico's rivers is the Rio Grande, which is tied for the fourth longest river in the United States. Chimayo is a community nestled at the foot-hills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountain in the northern Rio Grande valley of New Mexico. It is the people in Rio Grande/Chimayo valley who have carried on the rich traditional trade of weaving. The cultural make-up of the people from Chimayo is Euro/Pueblo.

The yarn colors from the plants that surround us in northern New Mexico come from local vegetation picked by our hands. We create the dye by extracting

"Eugene weaving on a Chimayo style loom" photo: Rose Vigil. He is weaving a 60" wide Chimayo blanket using woolen warp and weft fibers. It was selected for the Intermountain Weavers juried exhibit, Fiber Celebrated 2009

Eugene Vigil, "El Milpas/Corn Patch," 83 in x 58 in, photo: Rose Vigil. Rio Grande blanket woven with New Mexico grown Churro single-plied yarn, dyed by Rose Vigil with wash fast dyes. It won Best of Show at the Tesoro Cultural Center 9th annual Spanish Colonial Market (Sept. 2010). Purchased by Bill King from Stanley, New Mexico, at the Spanish Colonial Arts Society market in July 2011.

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Eugene Vigil. “Chimayo Blanket,” 80 in x 60 in, 2009, photo: Rose Vigil, wool warp and weft with hand-dyed yarns. Photo taken on Friday, July 31, 2009 at the opening reception of the Inter-mountain Weaver juried exhibit Fiber Celebrated 2009 in Durango, Colorado.

the natural pigmentation from the plants we gather during our field trips. Cota (Navajo tea) is a dry land plant that needs little water and produces a golden yellow color. Cota grows wild all over New Mexico. We also use imported dyes such as cochineal and indigo. The designs are from our culture, with simple stripes, twills, serrated diamonds, block design, hourglass, chispas, and seamed textiles. The fibers we use in some of our textiles are from Churro sheep, which have long staples in their protective top coats and soft under-coats that create wonderful strong yarn. It is this fiber that characterizes the Rio Grande textiles of northern New Mexico. The Churro sheep has adapted well to the extremes of the climate in New Mexico. Handspun yarns are produced on Rio Grande wheels, which allow the spinner to create a yarn of their desired thickness and ply to weave their unique type of southwestern textile. It is all of these elements that create a Rio Grande/Chimayo textile. As a weaver, I try to incorporate these elements with a contemporary flair. As a seventh generation weaver, I am proud to keep and pass on to future generations the Spanish tradition of weaving.

Rose Vigil
Little did I know that my marriage to Eugene would lead to a love of Spanish traditional textiles. I began my study in 1989 with a course taught by Kristina Wilson and Rachel Brown at the Taos Institute of Art, and about a year later started my Associates of Applied Science in Fiber Arts at Northern New Mexico Community College as a part- time student. I graduated in May 1995. In our work together, my husband and I are each fulfilling our dreams of keeping our traditions alive and passing our culture to our community. We do this through our joint efforts in completing our Rio Grande/Chimayo textiles. I feel that our traditional work leads to our culture, and that helps us find our identity in society. By learning how our ancestors worked many years ago, we implement our work, keep their traditions alive, and become culture bearers. This, in turn, helps us understand our origins and ourselves.

Eugene and I capture the sense of family working together in our work. This collaboration also supports our artistic strengths. Like our ancestors before us, the craft of weaving is ours from beginning to end.

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Creative Coastal Retreats All Levels of Learning

Pam Patrie hosts participants with a series of intensive creative work sessions through the year in her coastal cabin in Oregon.

February 20 - 22, $350
March 20 - 22, $350
April 23 - 26, Archie Brennan, Susan Maffei, $560
April 30 - May 3, Archie Brennan, Susan Maffei, $560
June 19 - 21, $350
July 22 - 26, $450
August14 - 18, $450
Sept 18 - 20, $350
October 2 - 4, Mt Angel Monastery retreat:
"Jacob's Ladder," Hidden Symbols Deep in the Weave, $375

October 15 - November 5, 2016, Tapestry Adventure Tour (New York, London, Edinburgh, Stirling, Paris, Angers)

For more information, contact Pam:
503-250-1642, or, pampatriestudios@yahoo.com

Watch Pam's website for updates: pampatriestudios.com

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Place of Peace – The Beauty of Weave

by Thoma Ewen

Weaving has been done by almost every culture on our planet, so it touches a place of deep knowing in us all. The Mayans say that when a woman ties herself into her backstrap loom, she ties herself to the cosmos. The universe, they say, was woven into being. Indigenous cultures have a long sacred connection to weaving and their textiles are “texts.” Throughout millennia by using colour, symbol, and line, textiles have narrated the myths, legends, and creation stories of many cultures.

Tantra, Sanskrit for weave, defines a mystic or sacred union. In weaving the union is between warp and weft. Weaving is a sacred path in many indigenous cultures. It transmits the Navajo’s belief of the energy of Peace.

There is a Navajo creation myth that Spider Woman, the creator spirit, stretched out a warp on the four directions and wove the Earth into being. She then made First Woman and First Man and because she was so pleased with all her creations, she gave the gift of weaving to First Woman. Weaving has remained unchanged over millennia. The basic structure of weaving that we call tabby or plain weave is the same as basic tapestry weaving technique. Basic weaving technique is the same everywhere, in all cultures on our planet. It is universal – a common thread that connects all cultures and all humans, through cloth and clothing and through woven art.

The ancient symbol for both water and for life is an undulating line, like a series of connected sine waves. In tapestry weaving this undulating line is the path the weft follows through the warp threads. It flows. There is a subtle fluidity in woven structure that relates it to all of life in its very form.

The weft passes over and under the warp, moving from right to left, and returns, moving under and over from left

Thoma Ewen, “Flowing, Streaming,” 96 in x 48 in, 4 epi, 1995, photo: Larry Hagar. Cotton warp, wool weft. ”Water” Tapestry from The Four Éléments commissioned by The Boyne River Ecology Centre.

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Thoma Ewen, “Light Refraction Tapestries #2: Metamorphosis”, 60 in x 84 in, 4 epi, 1989, photo: Moon Rain Centre. Cotton warp, wool weft.

to right. Every movement is followed by its opposite. While weaving, this constant repetition of one movement followed by its opposite, generates a balancing of left and right brain activities. It has a harmonizing effect on the weaver that is then transmitted to the viewer. This harmonizing, balancing effect is what the Navajos call being in “the beauty place” of weaving, the place of peace.

So too, the contemporary tapestries that we weave express and reveal the ideas, stories, and life experiences of our culture’s artist weavers. And we tapestry artists all know and love this feeling of that place of peace – the beauty place of weave.

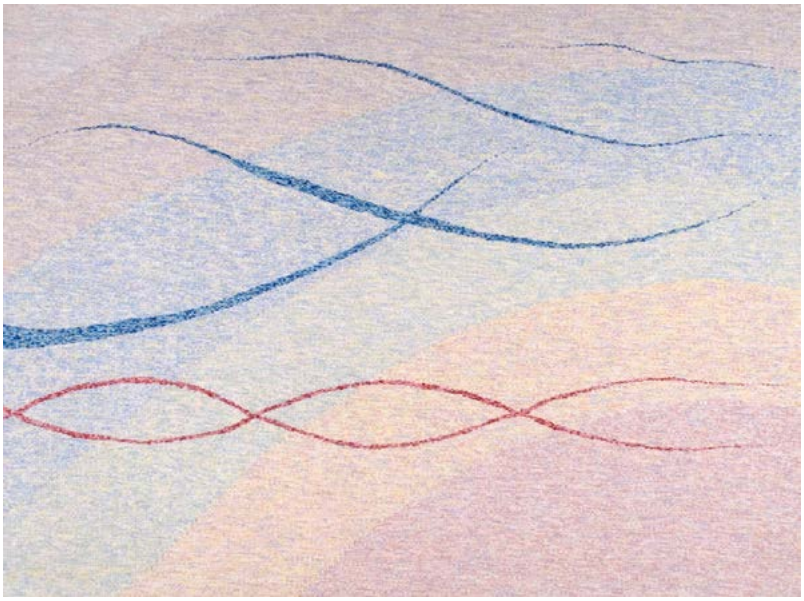
This gift of weaving is special. Certainly it gives beauty to viewers, but even more, it gives us a way to centre, to bring ourselves into balance or harmony. Weaving even connects us to all cultures, and to all

Thoma Ewen, “Offering at Spider Rock,” 60 in x 84 in, 4 epi, 2007, photo: Ken Ewen. Cotton warp, wool weft.

humans throughout time who have woven, worn, and used textiles. It gives us warmth: the visual warmth in the richness of a tapestry filling a living room wall, or the warmth and protection of shawls, blankets, and clothing.

The role that tapestry weaving has to play has never been so important and so necessary. Peace and harmony are necessities for everyone on the planet. The tapestry weaver, almost replaced by digital and almost "globalized" out of the market, has an important contemporary task. Once required to dress humanity, the weaver is now addressing the very heart, soul, and spirit of the individual, community, and culture. In these times of ecological precariousness, and when confronted by media reports of violence that is erupting on a daily basis, tapestry's beauty and harmony provide an antidote to that negativity.

All ancient cultures understood the unique and important role of the grandmother as a teacher, the transmitter of knowledge. As a group of tapestry artists of a certain age, we have the privilege of carrying the knowledge of our art and craft, and we need to take the responsibility of sharing it, to make sure that tapestry has a future. We must actively become the "grandmothers" of our craft – embracing the idea that we are transmitting our art medium to the children of our culture, who are the future of tapestry.



Thoma Ewen, "Light Refraction Tapestries #5: Crossover ", 64 in x 88 in, 4 epi, 1990, photo: Larry Hagar. Cotton warp, wool weft.

Thoma Ewen is a Canadian tapestry artist and Artistic Director of Moon Rain Centre, located in the Gatineau Hills, north of Ottawa. Thoma has been designing and weaving tapestries and exhibiting her works nationally and internationally for 40 years. She directs community tapestry projects and artists-in-the-schools projects, and has coordinated exhibitions for Moon Rain Centre's highly successful Triennale Internationale des Arts Textiles en Outaouais 2013. Thoma is the author of The Living Tapestry Workbook, which you can find at http://www.moonrain.ca/TapestryWorkBook.html
photo: Stephanie Lachaine.

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James Kohler tapestry for sale

48″ x 48″

Provenance: Estate of Jane Kent, artist, collector and owner of The Contemporary Craftsman and Kent Galleries, a major Santa Fe, NM gallery for twenty plus years

$5,900

Contact Donald E. LeFever
717-433-8678
delefever@comcast.net

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Sand in my Shoes: The Influences of a New Mexico Childhood

by Rebecca Mezoff

I have lived most of my life somewhere in the southwestern United States. I should say right up front that I check the “white caucasian” box on federal forms. I’m half Dutch and the other half is a mix of other European descent. My family has been in the U.S. for a scant four generations, mostly in Michigan. I grew up in New Mexico because my parents chose it as the place they most wanted to live. For this I am grateful. New Mexico is a place of stark contrasts: brilliant blue skies and red rock cliffs, tall snowy mountains and white sand dunes, deep poverty and lots of tourism, cultures based in spirituality and art and casinos at every freeway exit.

Time often runs slower there in the land of mañana. Many cultures converge in this part of the country, including the three prominent ones I grew up with: Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo (pretty literally everyone else). This mingling of cultures can cause conflict but it also creates a rich mix of understandings about the way the world works that influences the art created in the region.

I spent much of my childhood trying to figure out how I fit into this mix. I was a little blond girl attending a largely Navajo boarding school as a day student. I took away some understanding of the Navajo culture from that experience, but it wasn’t until I returned to New Mexico years after college that I really started to listen to the voices of the native people in the area. I have much more listening to do.

In the land of tomorrow, time has a different feeling. Europeans tend to have a very linear experience of time. In contrast, among the native peoples in the American Southwest, it moves in circles and at a slower pace. What happened hundreds of years ago is important and as time spirals on, what was once important will become so again. This view of time affects how things run in this land of maña-na. As an anglo living in the rural towns of that

Rebecca Mezoff, “Emergence VI,” 16 in x 49 in, photo: Rebecca Mezoff. Cotton warp, wool weft. Private collection.

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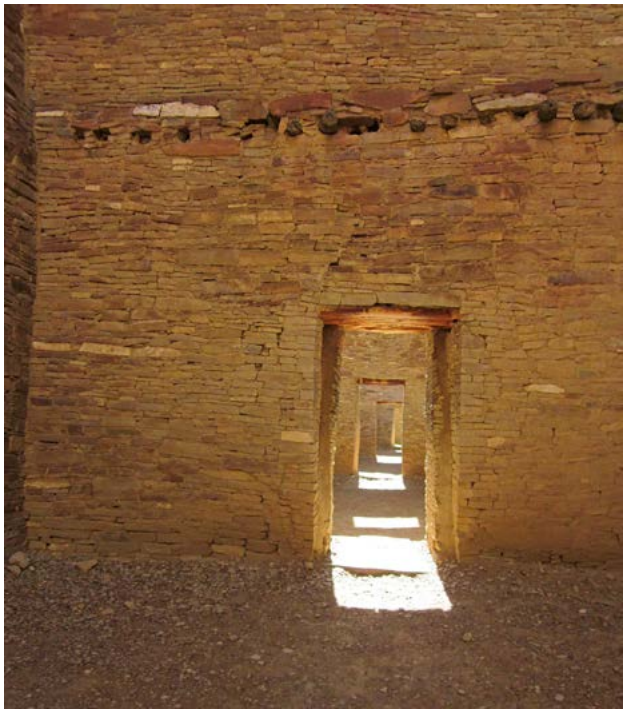
Spiral petroglyph above the Rio Grande bosque, New Mexico. Photo: Rebecca Mezoff

Chaco Doorways, Chaco Canyon National Historical Park. Photo: Rebecca Mezoff



curvy-lined world, it did me good to attempt to live within this different construct. When I finally learned to sit still for a while, I could listen beneath the slower pace of conversation and watch for what is really important to others.

Tapestry is a time-intensive medium. Growing up in a place with cultures that understand time as a circular path fits well with the experience of weaving tapestry. This medium is one where a large piece can take months or years to complete and it takes a great deal of faith in yourself to continue when the linear world is zooming by outside your window and Facebook and Instagram are demanding the next iteration of your work.

I lived in larger cities during college and afterward. But when the threads of my life started to pull apart a bit, I left Reno, Nevada, and moved to the tiny villages of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. I lived there for the next ten years, treating rural populations as an occupational therapist and learning to weave tapestry.

I found myself, rather unexpectedly, moving to a petroglyph preserve north of Espanola, New

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Mexico, about the time I became James Koehler's apprentice. I didn't know when I rented the straw bale house perched above the Rio Grande that it was surrounded by one of the densest collections of petroglyphs in this part of the world. I soon began wandering up the mesa and it became a game to search the black basalt boulders for new glyphs every day. The form that I found repeated over and over was the spiral.

The spiral motif was especially important to me in this time of change in my life. I was trying to forge a new identity as an artist and the spiral is said to be a symbol of the journey the native peoples made from prior worlds into this one.

My memories of trips to trading posts as a child and the rugs I saw being woven there by Navajo artists merged with my exploration of ideas brought by these spiral petroglyphs most likely left by the ancestors of

Rebecca Mezoff, "Emergence V: The Center Place",
45 in x 45 in, photo: James Hart. Cotton warp, wool weft.

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Chinle Windmill, Chinle, AZ. Photo: Rebecca Mezoff

the current Pueblo people. They became inspiration for my own tapestry designs. I began using the spiral form in my designing and soon was weaving the first of what would become the Emergence series of tapestries.

Some of the most important places to me are the canyons and ruins of the Puebloan world. The mysteries presented by Chaco Canyon surrounded me the weekend my tapestry teacher James Koehler died and “Emergence V: The Center Place” was the tapestry that came from that time and place. Starkly remote, windy canyons full of massive great houses surrounded by mysteries still argued over by archaeologists, Chaco is a starting place for my thoughts about native weaving traditions, art, and the use of these forms by non-native people.

I have a continuing fascination with Navajo weaving and love to imagine the grandmothers weaving outside their hogans and hearing the thunk of their hand beaters. But I know this is not my tradition and I can’t ever fully understand it. I cannot weave in this way myself because I don’t have the necessary traditional and spiritual background. In much the same way as when I was a little girl sitting outside the circle of a group of Navajo classmates, I remain on the outside looking in while I create my own weaving traditions. I can sit and talk to my Navajo friends and respectfully watch their creative process, but it isn’t my way.

My weaving traditions are less defined than the Navajo way. Perhaps so many anglo people are drawn to Navajo traditions because we lack or don’t understand our own. There is a blank spot in the past that should be filled with a long tradition of family, and many of us have lost that in the jumble of living in an entrepreneurial, capitalist society. We often don’t have roots anymore and we long for the stability of a tradition that does.

Perhaps what is most important, though, is the spirit of the weaving. Beauty and harmony are important concepts to native peoples and I believe they are important to humanity. Weaving is one of the earliest human technologies and the prevalence of metaphors in our languages that reference weaving is a good indication of the importance of fiber, cloth, and creating with it. Perhaps the distinctions between weaving cultures is unimportant after all. We are humans. We create. We can use the joy of this creation to connect with each other across cultural barriers. And I can take the stories my Navajo colleagues tell in yarn and feel heartened by the historical and spiritual place from which their tapestries spring.

My family visits Canyon de Chelly in eastern Arizona frequently. As I stand and watch the shadows change while the sun moves around Spider Rock, I wonder about the grandmother who is herding sheep at the base, and think about life long ago in the canyon and the changes experienced today on the rez. I leave a rug auction at Convergence in Providence, Rhode Island, because I feel sad at the amazing work being sold for so little money in a place so far from where it was created, and I wonder if the sale is a good thing or a bad thing for the artist who is not there. And I watch the struggles with poverty and culture swirling on and around the reservation and hope against hope that somehow the old ideas can be preserved. Perhaps in a weaving and in a new generation of weavers.

I gain a great deal of psychic space from the open skies and landscapes of New Mexico. I think inspiration comes not just from the act of seeing a beautiful landscape, but from understanding a place… from getting a sense of place in the current moment and in layers built up over time. You get to know a place after you have explored it repeatedly, heard its sounds, lived its challenges.

Growing up in New Mexico was about landscape and cultures and questions that will never be answered. What is the effect of place and culture on creative endeavor? Could I make the same art if I lived in Fairbanks or Seattle or Copenhagen? Would I be an artist at all if my parents hadn't moved to the sandy desert when I was a little girl?

In 2014 I moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, so my partner could attend graduate school. And though I love being so close to the biggest mountains, I am continually watching for opportunities to return to my friends and the land that shaped me… just a ways south on I-25. The day I have to dump the sand out of my shoes again, I know I am home.

Rebecca Mezoff is a tapestry artist and teacher who currently lives somewhere in the southwestern United States. She teaches workshops in person and online. Her favorite thing besides pepperoni and mushroom pizza is the moment she hears a new tapestry weaver shout, "Eureka!" You can find out where she is at www.rebeccamezoff.com.

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Native American Influences

by Linda Rees

I have been influenced by both Navajo and Rio Grand weaving, not so much in technique or imagery, but by some osmosis that defined my style, proportions, and palette.

As a child, I would get excited about a new box of crayons, even fascinated by the colors' exotic names. Every so often my parents received a small "serape" from a friend who lived in Mexico. They were the colorfully striped Rio Grande type, not the intricately patterned Saltillo style. Although they were made as tourist items, they were very finely woven. The vividly colored fabrics had a major impact on me.

This experience was in the 1950s, a time when girls worried about whether their clothes, or those of anybody they came in contact with, might "clash." I could not fathom why someone would put pink next to red, or even yellow next to red. Nevertheless, the results were joyful. A few weeks after receiving a serape, it would be put in the drawer with the linens. But I would sometimes unroll one for my own enjoyment before getting out whatever was needed. I am sure this connection to the medium of tapestry had a direct effect on how I have worked with color since then. What I took from those observations was a preference for using color in bold units, each color visually holding its own and showing its path, as opposed to focusing on subtle transitions.

It is harder to define a specific time or incident that connected me to Navajo weaving. Navajo blankets, or rugs as I refer to them, were visible through magazines like Arizona Highways and at times were trendy for interior designers. When I learned to weave, I quickly realized that geometric forms were ideal for show-casing color interactions, which meant I incorporated shapes often associated with Navajo weaving. It seemed wise to not seek out information related to Native American weaving traditions, in order to keep my imagery unique. But I

Linda Rees, "Califigurey: Clearing the Way," 27 in x 43 in, 1988. The horizontal presentation of this early figurative image is quite rare for me.

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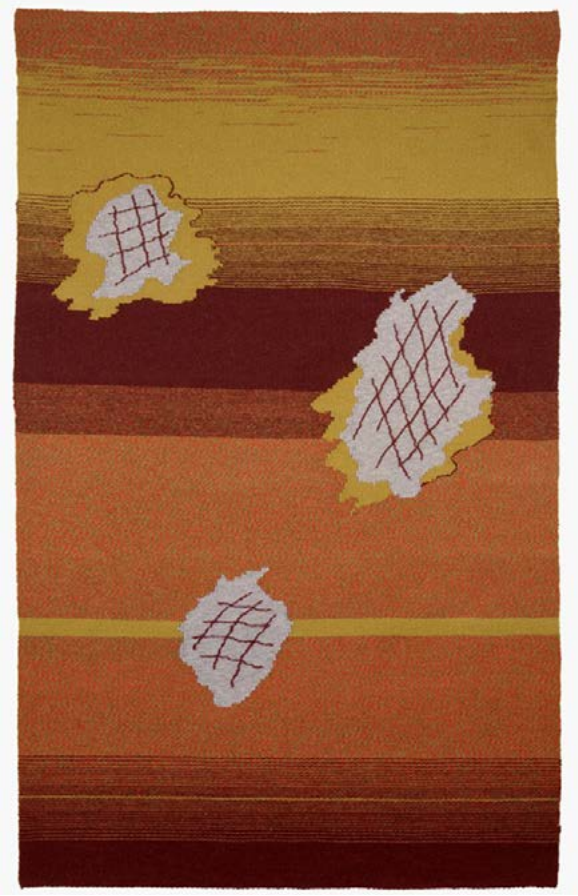
couldn't deny that I settled on a size and proportion most likely inspired by how effective it was for classic Navajo weaving. A format where the base or width of the tapestry was around 3' and the height 5' has been my preferred dimension since the late 1970s.

From 1977 until 1985 I wove rug forms, one right after the other. For the first few years I created symmetrical designs, rewarded by the cohesive image produced as shapes snapped into place. After a few years I began expanding to other styles, although still relying on diagonal and stepped forms. By 1985, I was at a stage in my life when I needed to visually express more personal feelings, so I decided to shift my perspective to working figuratively. Three hard years followed, mainly weaving squiggling forms, trying to loosen up. Eventually I found a direction through devising a way to weave line drawings. Even though I have worked figuratively since 1988, I rarely get through a year without weaving at least one piece that fits my perception of the Navaho proportion. Also, I still prefer to use each color in a



Linda Rees, "Untold Stories," 54 in x 34 in, 2010, photo: Dennis Galloway. The orange color is a combination of two green yarns commercially plied with a red one.

Linda Rees, "Tropical Serape," 55 in x 39 in, 2001. Linen warp, wool weft. Red and yellow are only used independently while sections of green and peach passes of yarns are woven repeats of varying amounts.

manner that shows its path. This aspect allows me to continue a form of abstraction that working geometrically had displayed. My figurative images focus on gesture.

On family outings as a teenager I spent a fair amount of time at the St. Louis Art Museum. I always made sure to go to the lower floor where I would visit the Egyptian mummy and sarcophagus, and then move on to the period rooms to look at two large tapestries. While I acknowledged them as

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Linda Rees, “Valley Journey,” 58 in x 31 in 2007, photo: Dennis Galloway. The tan sections are woven in single passes of the three colors - pale brown gray green and yellow that are used with the dark brown in the diamond.

woven and unique as an art form, their intricacy did not stimulate me in the way that the serapes did. It took another visit to that same museum many years later to perceive where my process of weaving fits in the medium of tapestry.

In 1997 the St. Louis Art Museum sponsored the exhibit Navajo Weaving from the Andy Williams Collection, curated by Ann Hedlund, director of the Gloria F. Ross Tapestry Program at the Arizona State Museum in Tucson. The singer had amassed a huge collection of Navajo blankets. Two rooms were dedicated to Chief’s Blankets woven between 1860 and 1880. They were predominantly bold patterns in red, white, black, and sometimes indigo. Another room featured Moqui Stripe Wearing Blankets. I had not been aware of the Moqui practice of alternating thin stripes of indigo and black yarn, or occasionally brown, to create the dark components of a blanket. In the last room a long wall had been draped with racks of Eye Dazzlers. I enjoyed seeing the mass of vivid patterns, but they were not as compelling for me as the three or four color minimalism of images in the other rooms.

I was quite unprepared for the reaction I had when viewing the rooms of bold Chief’s Blankets and Wearing blankets. They “took me to my core.” I came home that afternoon, dropped down in a chair and did not move for about three hours. The best way to describe this response is that I had an awareness of a place residing within me where color united simplicity and boldness to define me. This brings me to the observation that while I might have shifted subject matter throughout the years, I have continued to use a very limited number of yarns in any one project. I prefer to use between three and six colors. Viewing the exhibit renewed my validity for this practice.

I wove a tapestry called “Standing in Knowledge” to capture the feeling that insight had come to me as if by osmosis. I am not alone in adapting the bold geometrics associated with native western hemisphere weavers, although at times it felt like we might be clashing with the majority of contemporary tapestry artists as much as if wearing a striped shirt with plaid Bermuda shorts. That trend has survived too.

Linda Rees, “Standing in Knowledge,” 35 in x 21 in, 1998. Linen warp, wool weft. The image implies I almost passed a chance to gain understanding about my connections.

Linda Rees. I have been weaving for 50 years. The process of creating a tapestry and the community of artists I have interacted with rewards me immensely.

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‘Round the Rez and Beyond

by Audrey Moore

For weavers, one of the most interesting and unique cultures in the United States is that of the Navajo. Historically, their weaving evolved from the Pueblo, their yarn from the Spanish, and their designs from the land. Slowly, through the sixteen and seventeen hundreds they developed their own recognizable textiles. Traveling through the Navajo Nation today affords a glimpse of both traditional and contemporary Navajo life styles and weaving styles.

This article is not about my weaving but where it comes from. For a road trip, pick up a AAA Indian Country Guide and Tourbook. The “Fiber Arts Trail” booklet is available from the State of New Mexico’s website at www.nmfiberarts.org.

Driving from Albuquerque, head west toward Gallup and the Navajo Reservation. You can avoid the freeway for most of the way by taking parallel Route 66, which was the original Chicago to Los Angeles highway. A short detour can lead you to Acoma Pueblo, often referred to as the Mile High City. A bus shuttles visitors to “The Oldest City in America” and guides tour you through the village where natives sell their beautiful pottery (and delicious pies).

The landscape of tans and browns changes into stunning red rocks as you near Gallup. This town of 20,000 is a main off-reservation trading and shopping center. Staying at El Rancho Hotel, which is listed on the National Historic Registry, takes you back to the nineteen twenties and thirties. Don’t miss a breakfast at Earl’s, where native vendors set up tables outside to sell their wares. Richardson’s Trading Post is eye boggling. Ask to see their rug room where hundreds of Navajo weavings hang from the ceiling, cover the walls, and pile on

Shiprock, Navajo Reservation, New Mexico, 2010, photo: Jeff Moore

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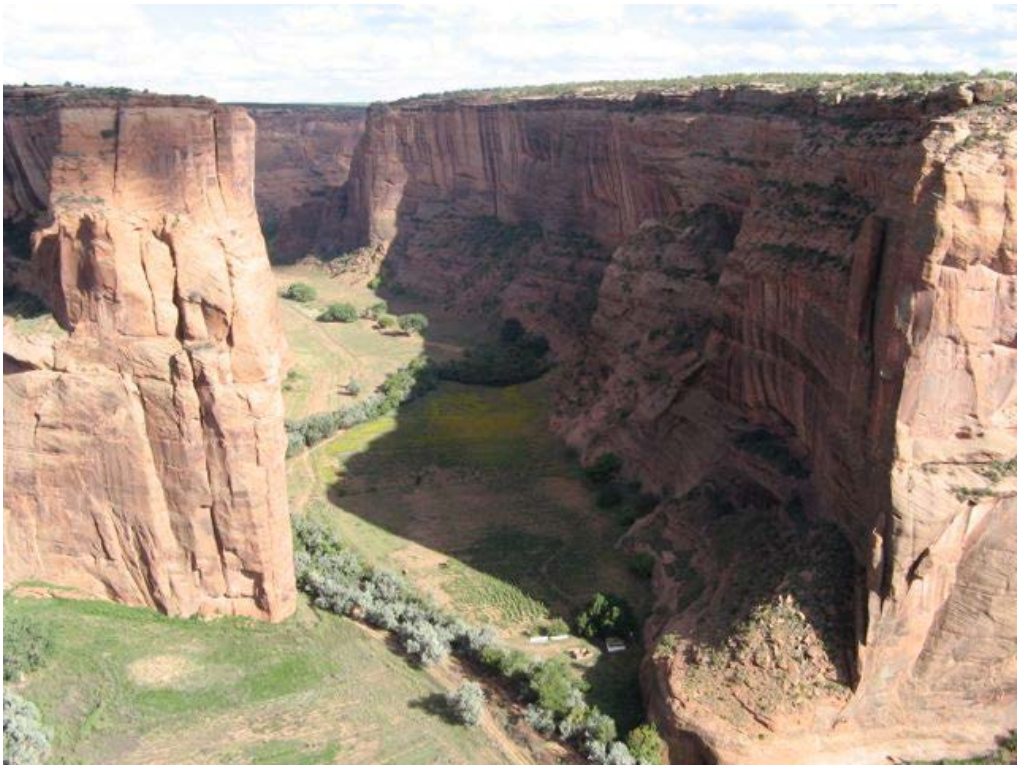

Canyon de Chelly National Monument,
Arizona, 2010, photo: Jeff Moore

the tables. Nearby is the small post of Bill Malone, one of the most knowledgeable and respected traders, a gracious and hospitable gentleman.

Driving north is Window Rock, the seat of the Navajo government. Stop at the Cultural Museum and then at the hogan shaped Council Chambers to see murals depicting the tribal history.

Turning west, you drive through pine forests to Ganada and Hubbell's Trading Post, a National Historic Site. Hubbell's has been continuously operated since the 1870s and it still has the feel of that time, selling groceries, jewelry, and rugs. In the Park Service building across the way, large looms are set up and often Navajos are weaving. To complete this loop one can drive south to the freeway, making a stop at Burnham's Trading Post in Sanders before returning to Gallup.

If you are interested in fetishes and jewelry, Zuni Pueblo is the place to go. You might want to see the newly repainted murals in the local church. On the way you can pick up some local fresh baked bread straight out of a wood fired horno. And if you are in Gallup on the third Friday of the month, plan to attend the Crownpoint Rug Auction. The best route is Highway 291 north, then Route 9 through an area of Navajo settlements, some government housing, and some traditional hogans. The auction is held in the school gym and if you get there early you can buy Navajo tacos or lamb stew and inspect all the tables with locally made items for sale. The auction begins around 7:00 p.m. with one hundred to one hundred and fifty rugs to sell. Many weaver ladies in their lovely dresses are seated watching. The two auctioneers are entertaining and encourage lively bidding with sales ranging from twenty-five to over one thousand dollars. As you drive back to Gallup and view a million stars in the black sky, you'll feel you've been in another world.

Canyon de Chelly National Monument is unforgettable. Periods of culture have been dated back to 2,500 BC. Jeep tours are available with Park Rangers who describe the history and geology. From the valley floor, several caves can be seen and pictographs decorate the red walls. Of particular interest to weavers is Spider Rock, a towering monolith where Spider Woman is said to have emerged to teach Navajo men how to build looms and Navajo women how to weave. Sacred Canyon Lodge and Thunder Bird Cafe are near the canyon entrance. The attraction is a large display of weavings on the restaurant walls, some labeled from specific areas on the reservation. In the past, each local area became known for rug designs: Two Grey Hills, Chrystal, Toadlena, Wide Ruins, Ganada, etc. Today's weavers weave the patterns that interest them no matter where they live.

Toadlena is a little difficult to find. Turning west just north of Newcomb, follow that road to the very end. By the way, if it has rained recently, there are arroyos filled with water all through the reservation, so sometimes a phone call ahead is a good idea. Toadlena Post is by far the most authentic in its looks and activities. It was rejuvenated by Mark Winter several years ago. He and his wife Linda are genuine friends to the community. The locals buy groceries, sell fleece, get mail, and gather to visit. Mark has encouraged both the older weavers and teenagers in all aspects of their craft. He has also published "The Master Weavers," a book in

Rugs inside Toh-Atin Gallery, Durango, Colorado, 2008, photo: Jeff Moore

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Inside the Toadlena Trading Post, Newcomb, New Mexico,
2008, photo: Jeff Moore

which colored plates illustrate the true art created here. Ask to see their very special collection of weavings, many dating back to the eighteen fifties. This is a treasure not to be missed.

At the western edge of the reservation is the road to the south rim of the Grand Canyon. At the entrance is Cameron Trading Post and Motel. This is an old establishment with a collection of unique weavings in its museum. A weaver is often working on her large loom and is knowledgeable and willing to answer questions (tips are welcome).

Driving north, as you come to Monument Valley, the landscape changes. Red rock towers jut high into the sky. These rock formations look familiar and you can almost see John Wayne riding off into the sunset. Harry Goulding was the first to appreciate this beauty and convince movie directors that Westerns should be filmed here. Tours can be arranged either from the Park Visitor Center or Goulding Lodge.

Another good place to stay near Monument Valley is in Bluff, Utah. Recapture Lodge offers comfortable rooms as well as lots of information and maps for taking hiking trips in the area. This is a popular place for

European travelers who want to experience a landscape so different from their own. Mr. Simpson's Twin Rocks Trading Post and Cafe is a popular stop. Fry bread and Navajo tacos top the menu.

Heading east, Teec Nos Pos is an active post where ladies dressed in traditional native outfits buy groceries, bring in sheep, or buy yarns for their special style rugs. The famous nearby geological formation Ship Rock rises to seventeen hundred feet and can be seen from anywhere around this area.

Several side trips can be taken from this part of New Mexico. South takes you into the ancient Pueblo center, Chaco Canyon. North leads you to Abiquiu where Georgia O'Keeffe lived and painted. Local Churro yarns, hand dyed, can be found at Tierra Wools in Tierra Amarilla. Lovely yarns are also spun and sold at Tapates de Lana in Moro.

In Taos, Rachael Brown ran Weaving Southwest for many years. Her gallery displayed high quality tapestries. Rachael's granddaughter, Teresa Loveless, now teaches and operates the shop in the nearby village of Arroyo Seco. A community of artists has long made Taos famous. Stop at the Taos Pueblo and buy native crafts, or visit the famous Millicent Rodgers Museum, the Fechin Art Center, the Harwood Museum, or head down the road to see the local church, painted numerous times by Georgia O'Keeffe.

The scenic "High Road" (Route 518) will lead you out of Taos and down an ancient Pueblo trail. You'll see the old mission as you pass through Los Trompas. In Truchus you may have to ask to find a favorite gallery with top art, Bill and Margaret Franke's HandsArtes Gallery.

As you jog onto Highways 75 and 76, the Spanish influence can be seen. In Chimayo the well-known weaving families of Ortega and Trujillo have studios and galleries selling rugs and apparel. Usually you'll see someone using his or her Rio Grande "walking loom." The local mission attracts pilgrims because of its legendary healing powers. Other visitors come to purchase roasted chili peppers grown on the area's local farms. Down the road is Espanola, home of the Espanola Fiber Arts Center, where beautiful yarn and excellent weaving classes are available.

Santa Fe! The capitol of New Mexico was founded by the Spanish in 1610. At an altitude of 7,000 feet there's clear air, blue sky, and as many galleries and museums as you might find in New York City. On the Plaza, in front of the "Palace of the Governors," natives spread blankets to sell handmade jewelry, pottery and other crafts. Nearby, Shiprock Gallery is a wonderful place to see weavings old and new, and the sales people are exceptionally knowledgeable. The museums on "Museum Hill" each emphasize a different culture: Pueblo, Navajo, and Spanish. Other famous museums and cathedrals surround the Plaza and the State Capitol displays an incredible collection of art.

You travel the final miles of the tour on the Turquoise Trail, Route 14. The "must" stop is Madrid. It was a mining town in the eighteen fifties, a hippie town in the sixties, and now it's an offbeat artists town.

Albuquerque awaits you. Drive down Central Avenue (old Route 66 again) past the University of New Mexico to Old Town. Sit in the tree shaded Plaza and remember your adventures.

Audrey Moore has enjoyed many trips to the Southwest over many years. She has taught at Damascus Fiber Arts School in Oregon since the seventies. Audrey was a contributing editor on Noel Bennett's book "Navajo Weaving Way." Her weavings have been widely exhibited.

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Reviews

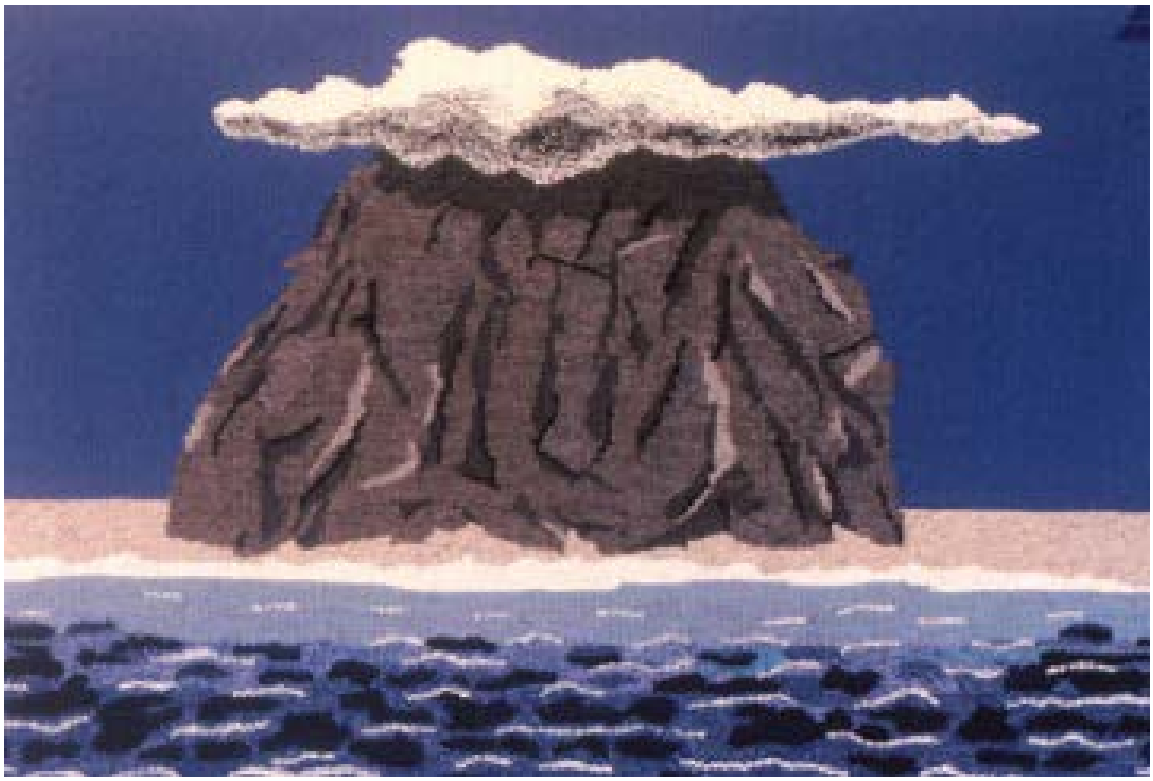
Stories of the Sea

by Lynn Mayne

Stories of the Sea, a tapestry exhibition at the Florida Maritime Museum, was an unusual exhibition in the fishing village of Cortez, Florida. It included some exquisite tapestries amid historical artifacts and large scale woven wall hangings. The tapestries were displayed from February 26 to April 25, 2015.

“Reading the Tidings,” 14” x 20,” by Sidsel Moreb is a dramatic depiction of ravens as “harbingers of news” silhouetted against a seascape. The colors have a mystical quality and evoke an earlier, ancient time.

Pam Patrie’s shimmering “Red Dory Rescue,” 12” x 12,” includes a mackerel sky behind a choppy sea. The gold woven surround encompassing the scene grabbed my attention and was especially striking in the



Archie Brennan, ”A Hawaiian Island…the Beginning,”
23 in x 34.25 in, cotton warp and many different wefts.

Sidsel Moreb, “Reading the Tidings,” 14” x 20”, woolen warp. wool, rayon and silk weft threads.

lighting for the evening opening. A button activated a light behind LaDonna Mayer’s “Polaris,” 18” x 14.” The light shone through her representation of the North Star, which guided sailors across the seas in centuries past.

In “Day’s End Calm,” 14” x 14,” Sharon Crary wove a quiet sea at sunset. Deborah Corsini used wedge weave technique to colorfully portray an undercurrent in a deep-sea vision in “Rip Tide 2008,” 43” x 25”.

“Ocean Memory,” 20”x 25,” is a pastel abstraction by Elizabeth Buckley accompanied by her original poem which includes,

.... Ocean Depths
Carry the memory
Of seaweed, spine and rib...

Archie Brennan contributed “A Hawaiian Island...the Beginning,” 34.25” x 23,” a masterful weaving of a cloud topped volcano in a sea with waves breaking onshore. In typical Brennan fashion, every bead of the tapestry is clearly delineated, with no fuzziness or extra detail.

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Juror of the show, Becky Stevens, wove four tapestries of the sea, which were included at the museum. Three are brightly woven waves and currents: the diptych, “Tides of Fate,” 24” x 24” each; and “The Sea,” 24” x 24.” The fourth, the whimsical “Read All About It,” features a surging sea and stormy sky surrounding a man attempting to read the newspaper.

The museum, the village of Cortez, and the tapestry show are all on a small scale. The museum is housed in a former schoolhouse built in 1912, which became the home and studio of master weaver, Robert Sailors, in 1974, and then a museum in 2007. Stories of the Sea was created to honor Sailors and the history of the area. During the tapestry exhibition some of Sailor’s huge wall pieces were also hung amid the historical artifacts. It made for a unique and interesting combination of dissimilar pieces on related themes. A colorful catalog, 31 pages, 8.5” x 7,” is available for $12 from Florida Maritime Museum, Amara.Nash@manateeclerk.com. It includes a color photo of each tapestry in the show, along with an artist statement.

Lynn Mayne. My formal education was in English literature and writing, but after learning to weave in the 1970s I have chosen to express myself through woven tapestries. I actively weave in my home studio in Florida and in northern Michigan in the summer.

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Susan Martin Maffei: 35 Works of the Sport and Travel Series

by Jan Austin

Located in a beautiful 1897 house in Providence, Rhode Island, on the edge of the Brown University campus, International House of is an independent nonprofit, multi-cultural organization that provides a "home away from home" for international students, scholars, professors, researchers and their families. Their mission is to promote friendship, connection, learning, and global understanding by bringing people together from around the world for cross-cultural exchange.

It was clear that the staff at International House was very proud to present this exhibit, and that Susan Martin Maffei's tapestries were a perfect fit for the venue, as her influences are global, representing diverse cultures. Furthermore, many of the tapestries in this exhibit are inspired by actual journeys. During the exhibit Susan presented a slide lecture, "Historical Global Influences and Contemporary Tapestry," in which she discussed the history of tapestry around the world, and its influence on her work. The lecture was well attended, including a contingent of weavers from the area.

Susan Martin Maffei, "Another View
- the Pompidou - near Mme Touitou,"
detail, 55" x 50"

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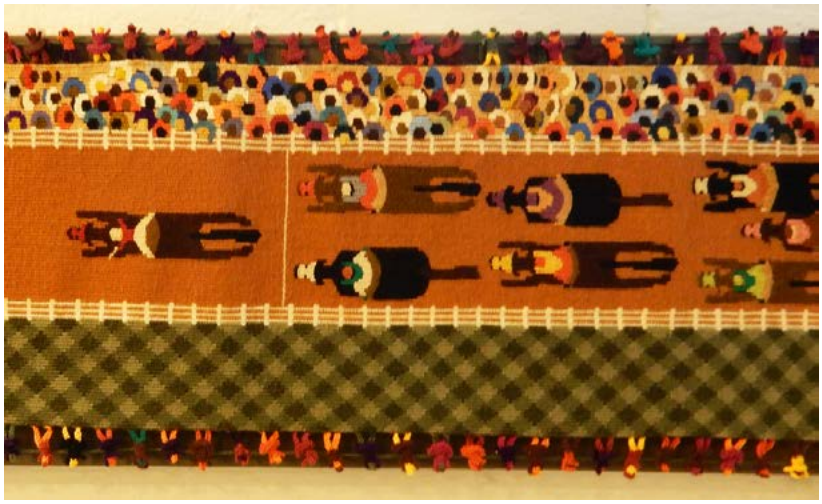


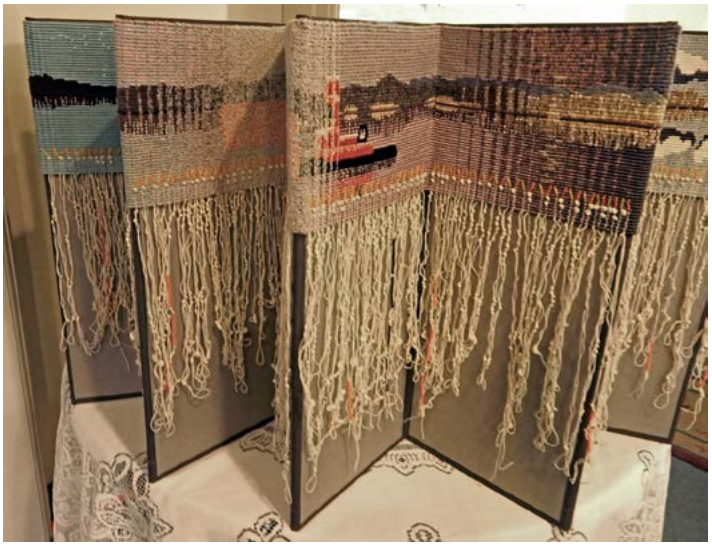
Susan Martin Maffei, “A Day at the Races,” detail, 9” x 79”

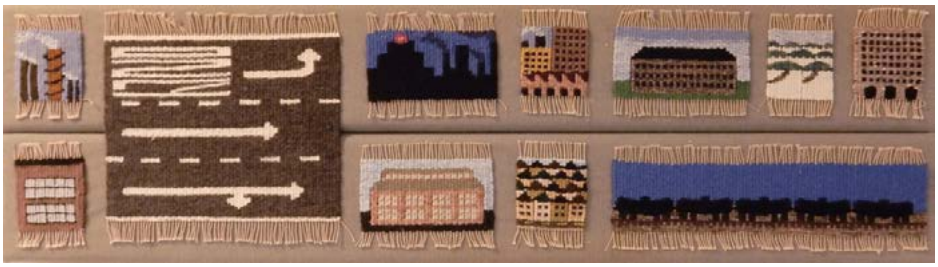
One of my favorite pieces in this show was “Travel Series IV,” a narrative made up of 56 tiny tapestries describing the artist’s train trip from Manhattan to her mother’s house in New Jersey. The linear form is related to medieval European narrative tapestries. It reminded me of the joys of train travel, where you have time to look out the window and see the world going by: house, junkyard, power plant, boats, tunnel, moon.

I have always been fascinated by how Maffei is able to translate the world into woven patterns, and to ceate expressive people in all different postures, their body language simplified to be woven on as few as 4 warps. A perfect example of this is “Another View of the Pompidou,” with groups of people standing around in various attitudes. The figures are abstracted, yet still recognizable.

In the “Sports Series,” the field of play is seen from above, with its layout, markings and textures becoming a complex geometric pattern. The members of the audience become a pattern as well, but an organic pattern, and when we look closer, each person is slightly different.

Susan Martin Maffei, “Nessa Nessa Winter Moon,” 20” x 9” x 8”





Susan Martin Maffei, “Travel Series IV, Panel 3,” 7” x 24”

Maffei’s favorite historical influence is that of the Andean cultures. One place that is manifested in her tapestries is in the use of tiny crocheted figures decorating the edges of tapestries, extending the narrative by serving as “audience, players, refs, patrons and cheerleaders….”

Another influence from the Andes is the use of quipu: knotted cords that were used by the Inca to store information. Maffei uses them to include supportive data, such as the rising, setting and phases of the moon, in “Nessa Nessa – Winter Moon,” a 252-inch long tapestry that has been folded into a circular accordion book.

Information is also encoded in “The Sicilian Defense,” where the faint patterning in the background is actually the American form of chess notation, showing all the moves in this famous chess game, played by Bobby Fisher and Tigran Petrosian in 1971. As writers are often advised, specificity adds interest to the work; it’s not just a generic chess game, but a very specific game with details.

Informational panels were included throughout the exhibit, which was very helpful in illustrating the historic and cultural influences. There is so much to see and to think about in these tapestries that I wish I could have spent more time with them.

Janet Austin got hooked on weaving as an art student in 1972, struggled to make a living as a weaver for 8 years, then, hoping to escape the horizontal/vertical grid, went to graduate school to study painting. Almost by accident, weaving and painting merged and became: tapestry. Austin served on the ATA Board from 2001-2009.

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Workshop Report

Note: Elizabeth Buckley received the 2015 ATA Scholarship for Tapestry Study to attend Joan Baxter's workshop, Desert Horizons.

Desert Horizons: A Workshop with Joan Baxter

by Elizabeth J. Buckley

For many years, I have been drawn to how Joan Baxter works with myth, archeology and landscape, as well as her evocative use of transparency and images that merging together, and the weaverly quality of her tapestries. I also have yearned for time out to focus solely on tapestry, to develop ideas for my own future work, and to sample and explore new techniques. The five days at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico at the Desert Horizons workshop with Joan Baxter gave me such an opportunity.

I especially enjoyed Joan's perspective from "across the pond." Northern Scotland being such a different environment than the desert Southwest, I delighted in seeing photos of the landscape that inspires her, and in hearing about her process of developing the designs for her tapestries. How each person moves from idea to woven form fascinates me. What sparks the initial thought, what colors and images come to mind, which techniques will serve best to articulate the concept and the mood. Joan Baxter talked about all of these things.

Joan weaves a color study for each tapestry, and usually the first colors she tries are not what she ultimately ends up using. She often weaves elongated triangular or diamond shapes, decreasing in increments of 2, 4,

Joan Baxter demonstrating technique. Photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley

Joan Baxter color studies. Photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley

or 6 warps. She also weaves a series of small one-inch squares in this sampling process. Once she is clear on the base colors, she then goes to the dye pot to produce the full palette of value gradations.

Joan described the classic approach to transparency through the systematic use of mixes in weft bundles. She showed her strips of color studies that she wove to find the two or three foundation colors and then the gradations in value of each of these colors. She uses one foundation color family for each layer, and in the areas of overlapping images, systematically changes the ratio of the two color families in the weft bundles. Her weft bundles consist of combinations of both thick and thin yarns, generally a total of four strands: two thick about the size of 8/2 worsted wool, and two thin about the size of 18/2 worsted wool. For more subtle or complex mixes it might need to be one thick and four thin. By having both thick and thin yarns in the weft bundle, the shifting of mixtures can be more subtle and gradual.

With this in mind, Joan suggested that we begin weaving color studies to help us decide on two or three foundation colors. Since Joan weaves from the front, I decided to work from the front as well, a departure from my usual method of weaving from the back. Beside my own warp of 12/9 at 10 epi, I added a 2-inch strip of Joan's 12/15 cotton seine twine warp at the 3 per centimeter (or about 8 epi) sett she likes to work with. Using her yarns, I began my color study so that I would have a sample of the fabric grain she achieves with this warp and weft ratio. She also works with the classic European ratio where the diameter of the warp, and that of the weft bundle, as well as the spacing between warps are all equal. I found that her heavier worsted wool wefts to be very firm and have a slight sheen to them, which is different from my wool. Unfortunately this heavier worsted wool is no longer produced, and Joan is negotiating with a couple of different places to manufacture a comparable yarn.

Joan Baxter yarns. Photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley

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Joan also works on a warp tension that is less taut than many of us are used to. Joan talked about how important it is for the warp to "speak back to you as you are weaving." This is why she uses less tension. The design and the content of the tapestry determine her choice of warp and sett, and she uses both wool and cotton warps. She often space-dyes the wool warps, especially for tapestries where she leaves exposed warp as part of the design. For her larger format work (anything over about two feet square), she uses 12/12 or 12/15 cotton seine twine sett at 3 or 3.5 ends per centimeter (about 7 or 8 ends per inch). For small format tapestries, she usually uses 12/9 at 4 ends per centimeter (about 10 ends per inch). Her tapestries come off the loom very balanced and flat, with no shrinkage. They need no blocking or steaming, and minimal finishing to be ready to hang.

In the evening, the class walked together in the glowing sunset light on the surrounding mesas. Joan talked about how she views landscapes with "weaverly eyes." She assesses the two or three colors in the landscape and the placement of the value areas. She thinks about the images she will layer into the design. She uses sketches and photos, and then transfers these images onto paper with a laid finish. Using pastels, watercolor and collage, she continues working on the design.

Joan encouraged us each to take time to be in the landscape with sketchbook and camera throughout the workshop. In the evenings we went for walks watching the rapidly shifting light and color on the clouds, the mesas glowing as if they were on fire. It was mesmerizing and spectacular. Later we went inside for the evening programs prepared by Joan, and also viewed images of each participant's work. The starlit night sky and the arc of the Milky Way accompanied us as we walked to our lodging to sleep and to dream of tapestries and landscapes.

Joan also addressed the importance of maintaining the "weaverly quality" of a tapestry, rather than replicate a painting. She emphasized simplifying the design, keeping ease of weaving in mind. In some tapestries, she weaves repetitive motifs that decrease and increase at angles. In others, she creates fields of square dots or dashes. In yet other works, she space-dyes some of her warps, so that they remain exposed in non-woven areas. She thinks about the texture of the surface, and sometimes incorporates areas of a different sett or even a weft-faced twill weave structure. Her materials are not always wool. Sometimes she uses linen, cotton, or even twigs that lie flat in the warp. How delightfully versatile!

Joan Baxter, "Summerstones," about 40" x 20," with her yarns, in workshop classroom. Photo: Nancy Wohlenberg.

I consulted with Joan about simplifying my designs, as I find they can get quite complicated and then become painfully tedious to weave. She talked about the choices of techniques, how similar effects can be achieved with those that are easier and more efficient to weave, and deciding when it is necessary to use more time-consuming ones from the French and Flemish traditions, but only doing so in smaller doses.

I long for more simplicity in my work. After 45 years of weaving, I am ready for a bit more ease at the loom. Back in my own studio, I am exploring different setts than my usual 12 epi. I am playing with different weights of wools, as well as cottons, silks and linens.

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View of Pedernal from Ghost Ranch.
Photo credit: Nancy Wohlenberg

The weft bundle possibilities are increasing. How very freeing to have so many choices and options for varying the textures and the sheen.

From the time spent at the Desert Horizons workshop, I came away with new weaving techniques and an especially deeper understanding of Joan Baxter's working process. More importantly, I ask new questions as I design and open myself up to the brew of possibilities surrounding my own future work.

Elizabeth J. Buckley is a second-generation tapestry artist of over 45 years, who works primarily in the Aubusson tradition. Her award-winning work has been exhibited in juried and invitational shows through out the United States and Canada, most recently in "The Art is the Cloth." Her tapestries have been published in Carol K. Russell's books: The Tapestry Handbook: the Next Generation, as well as most recently in Contemporary International Tapestry in conjunction with the invitational exhibition at Hunterdon Art Museum, January 11, - May 10, 2015. She received an ATA scholarship to participate in the Desert Horizons Retreat Workshop with Joan Baxter.

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ATA News

Valentines Day Appeal

Thanks so much to all of you who were able to give during our 2015 Valentines Day Appeal. This year's appeal raised $6517.00, our largest fundraiser to date. We continue to receive donations and, of course, we are grateful to receive donations at any time of year.

Our prizewinners were: Tommye Scanlin, Karen Leckart, Pat Williams, Dolly Perkins, Susan Edmunds, Rebecca Fabos and Sue Schwarz. Many thanks to our prize donors: Susan Martin Maffei; Mirrix Looms; Mary Zicafoose; Michael Rohde; Rebecca Mezoff; and Fiber Art Now.

Thank you, Pat Williams

Pat Williams served as Tapestry Topics Editor for over two years. Her quick wit, her easy going manner and, of course, her dedication to the job, made the detailed and many faceted task of putting the newsletter together efficiently and on schedule, seem easy. We are very thankful for her service on behalf of all of ATA's members and wish her well.

ATA Scholarship for Tapestry Study

Margaret Jones has been awarded the ATA Scholarship for Tapestry Study. Margaret will be completing her MFA at West Dean College in England. She says,

"I have just completed a dissertation investigating the place of tapestry weaving in the contemporary art world and the research allowed me to consolidate my interest and enable me to extend my exploration of the links between contextual and historical aspects of my work in both practical and theoretical terms. With further study and guidance from my tutors, I intend to strengthen the development I have gained from my previous two years of study. If tapestry weaving as a craft is to maintain its relevance in contemporary art practice it is vital that this is done by critically embracing current thinking in art and aesthetics."

Margaret's scholarship will be applied to her fees at West Dean.

Margaret Jones, " Red," 18 cm x 10 cm, 2014, photo: P. Jones, weft faced discontinuous weft with supplementary warps; cotton warp and wool and lurex weft.

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ATA Board Elections

Elections for the American Tapestry Alliance Board of Directors will start May 9, 2015. Watch your email for a link to online voting. Three current Board members will stand for reelection: Pat Dunston, Membership Chair, Rosalee Skrenes, Treasurer, and Mary Zicafoose, Co-Director.

Nancy Corkery, “Faces”

Member’s Passing

Nancy Corkery
Remembrance by Jan Austin

ATA member Nancy Corkery, 82, died peacefully, with her family around her, on January 4, 2015 in Newport, Rhode Island. She is survived by four children and 10 grandchildren. Born in 1932, Nancy attended Parsons School of Art and Design. Her children say she reached the end of her life without ever “becoming old.” Her irreverence and sense of humor were reflected in her award winning tapestries.

Nancy was a longtime member of Tapestry Weavers in New England, and the Weavers Guild of Rhode Island. I had the pleasure of rooming with Nancy at two TWiNE retreats in the 1990s. I am comforted by the fact that Nancy was able to participate in the TWiNE exhibit during Convergence 2014, and that many of you saw her tapestries there.

Nancy’s obituary: http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/newportdailynews/obituary.aspx?pid=173763708

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Tapestry Topics Themes & Deadlines

Tips & Tactics

Deadline: July 15, 2015

This issue will be devoted to tapestry techniques. Do you have a question you would like answered? Email Theme Coordinator, Lynn Mayne, lynnmayne@comcast.net.

Small Format/Small Scale Tapestry: Subversive, Destructive, or...?
Deadline: October 1, 2015
Our second issue devoted to a theme that received a phenomenal response. Submissions are closed.

Social Media

Deadline: January 15, 2016

Social media was constructed to allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. It provides a highly interactive platform through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify. Not only has it precipitated substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals, but also it has profoundly impacted our practice as tapestry weavers. Social media has connected us together virtually, has diminished the sense of isolation endemic in our practice and has been instrumental in being able to connect to other tapestry artists all over the world.

Real connection with others, however, comes in the physicality of doing, in materiality, in actions, interactions, processes and events shared by an assortment of individuals and groups. Weaving is an appropriate metaphor for engagement and activity with others. Both can be described as a means of producing a coherent united whole or collaboration through the combining and interlacement of various elements. Tapestry weaving is a slow, labourious and manual practice, a contrast to the speed at which social media weaves word threads of connection to others.

- Have you used social media to connect to other tapestry weavers? Has this enriched you and your practice? If so how?
- Have you resisted the social media currents? If so why? Is this deliberate or circumstantial?
- Has it helped you feel less isolated as a tapestry weaver? Aided in your development and education?
- Has it transformed or impacted on your tapestry images and techniques?
- Has it broadened your tapestry world?

Submit your article to Theme Coordinator, Line Dufour, tapestryline@sympatico.ca

Do you have an idea for a theme? Would you like to be a Theme Coordinator?
Email: newsletter@americantapestryalliance.org

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Important Dates

June 8, 2015	**STI 4: Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Innovation opens at Northwestern State University.**
July 15, 2015	Tapestry Topics deadline. Theme: **Tips & Tactics. Theme Coordinator, Lynn Mayne**, lynnmayne@comcast.net.
August 15, 2015	**STI 4: Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Innovation** closes at Northwestern State University.
October 2, 2015	**STI 4: Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Innovation** opens at Biggs Museum of Art.
October 31, 2015	Entries due for ATB 11
November 22, 2015	**STI 4: Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Innovation** closes at Biggs Museum of Art.
January 15, 2015	Tapestry Topics deadline. Theme: **Social Media. Theme Coordinator: Line Dufour**, tapestryline@sympatico.ca
January 16, 2016	STI 4: Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Innovation opens at Artspace.
February 1, 2016	ATA Scholarship for Tapestry Study applications due.
March 5, 2016	**STI 4: Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Innovation** closes at Artspace.
April 15, 2016	ATA International Student Award applications due.
July 2, 2016	**American Tapestry Biennial 11** opens at South Bend Museum of Art
September 25, 2016	**American Tapestry Biennial 11** closes at South Bend Museum of Art
October 31, 2016	Entries due for STI 5
November 1, 2016	**American Tapestry Biennial 11** opens at Mulvane Art Museum
December 24, 2016	**American Tapestry Biennial 11** closes at Mulvane Art Museum
March 1, 2017	**American Tapestry Biennial 11** opens at San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles
June 18, 2017	**American Tapestry Biennial 11** closes at San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles