



AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE



A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF TAPESTRY ART TODAY

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Spring 2018 Vol. 44 No. 1



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Cover Image: Marie-Thumette Brichard, "Fractures 1,"  
81 in x 64 in, 2014, photo: Hervé Cohonner. Wool.

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## DIRECTORS' LETTER, SPRING 2018

Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of *Tapestry Topics*. Our theme, "Continuing Thread," explores the many ways that weavers have discovered to deepen their learning about tapestry weaving and related topics. The pursuit of education is always a topic of great interest and the stories that theme Coordinator Lyn Hart has put together will keep you enthralled for hours. We want to thank Lyn and all of the many volunteers who helped to make this issue so wonderful. We have said it before, but we will say it again - the heart and soul of ATA is the many volunteers who do large and small jobs all through the year to keep ATA alive and well!

This has been a busy quarter for ATA and a lot of the work has been done behind the scenes: volunteers have been searching for venues for future exhibitions; the Nominating Committee has been talking to members interested in serving on the Board of Directors; and planning is underway for our meeting in Reno. More visibly you can see the results of hard work when you view ATA's eNews and eKudos. Especially exciting was the launch of our 2018 Blog Tour - a wonderful way to learn so much!

Thanks to all of you who gave to the Valentine's Day Appeal. Our goal of funding a professional video that will help promote contemporary tapestry is on its way!

Congratulations to all of you who had work selected for **World Tapestry Now!** We all look forward to seeing this wonderful show online and in print.

We hope to see many of you in Reno this summer. Our annual meeting with talks by Maximo Laura and Rowen Schussheim-Anderson, the Digislam, and the presentation of **World Tapestry Now** will be quite exciting. This is always a good time to see old friends and make new ones, as so many tapestry weavers gather. Thanks to all of you who are participating in **The Biggest Little Tapestries in the World!** Our small format show is always a big hit at Convergence!

We hope you all find something inspirational in this issue as you read about how your fellow members have enriched their lives through different kinds of educational opportunities. Learning is living - and learning about weaving is really living! Enjoy.

On behalf of the ATA Board of Directors,

Susan & Michael.



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Do you teach classes? Offer yarn dyeing services? Sell weaving supplies or equipment? ATA offers advertising space in both *Tapestry Topics* and in the Membership Directory. Ad rates cover four issues and can be updated quarterly. Discounts are offered for members and for advertisers who take out ads in both publications.

Read more about our ads [here](#). Submit your ad online [here](#).

For more information email us! [info@americantapestryalliance.org](mailto:info@americantapestryalliance.org)

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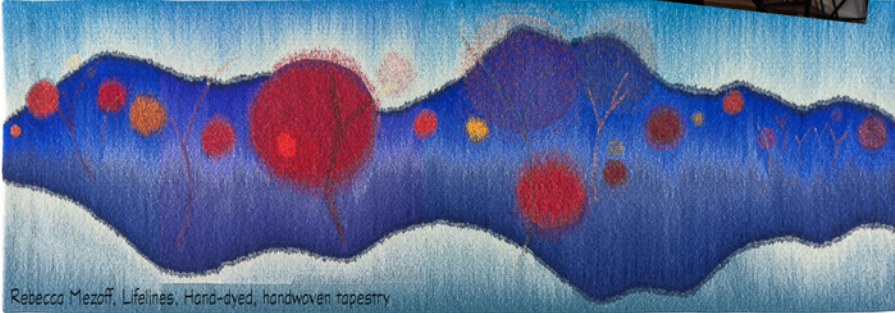



  
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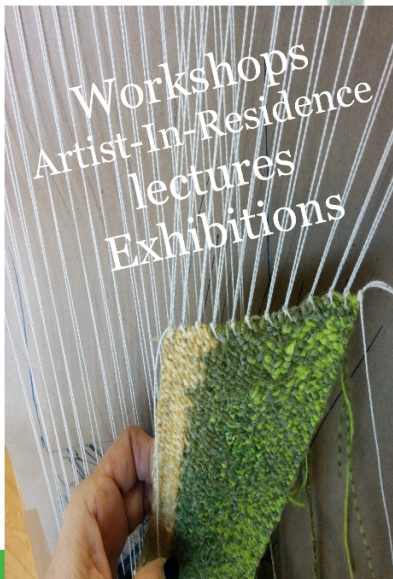
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The *Canadian Tapestry and Texture Centre* is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promote, teach and produce tapestries, photography and poetry at the finest levels. Today we are also the new home to the oldest community Guild, the Oakville Handweavers and Spinners Guild founded in 1952.

The CTTC offers tapestry instruction, Community projects, Artist in Residency placements, lectures, intensive tapestry workshops year-round, as well as music nights once a month to explore tapestry visually.

For information please contact us at

Canadian Tapestry & Texture Centre  
280 North Service Road W. A-8  
Oakville, ON  
Canada

## CONTINUING THREAD—THE ART OF SELF EDUCATION

by Lyn Hart

As January rapidly fades in the rearview mirror, we find ourselves well into 2018. Resolutions may have been made and then discarded or forgotten in the scuffle of life, but the possibilities of a new year still shine ahead of us.

For this first *Tapestry Topics* issue of 2018 I had the pleasure and honor of being the theme editor. Ever since I struggled to return to school in my late 20s, despite meager finances and a troubled marriage, I have realized that knowledge is power and have been interested in how and why people learn. Fast forward to my 30s when I finally was able to enter nursing school; learning to understand the different ways in which people learn was a key concept since nurses are also teachers. Another decade later, upon making the decision to leave the medical profession to develop myself into a working artist, I had to decide whether to return to formal education or seek my own individualized learning experiences.

Truth be told, I was not really enamored with the idea of returning to school for an art degree. When I had first started taking evening classes at the local community college where I lived in Florida, a graphic arts degree was what I intended to earn—until I experienced that first “real” art class, ART101, where the instructor provided constant, harsh criticism of all work I produced. And told me I would never be an artist. Since both of my parents were nurses, switching to a nursing degree seemed to be the solution at the time.

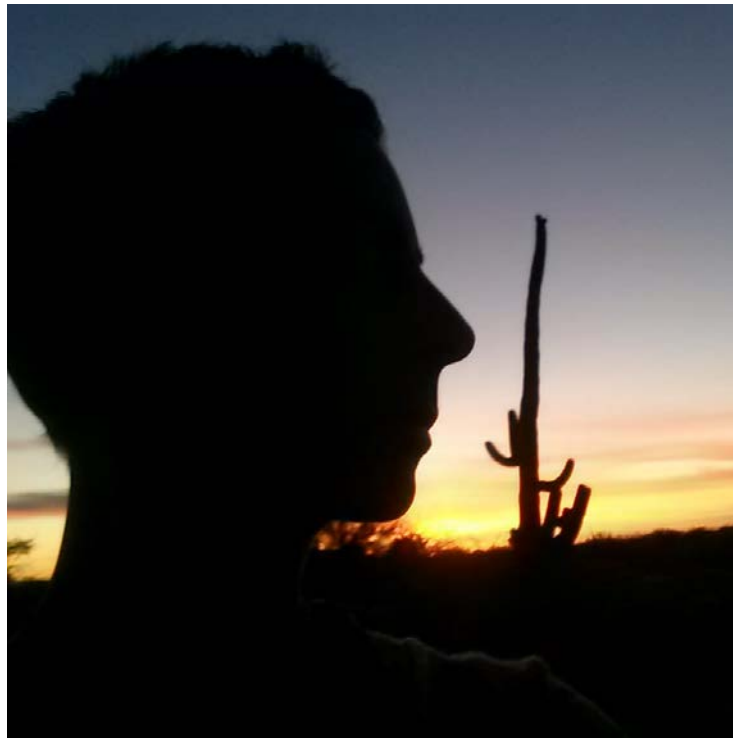
When tapestry and I finally found each other, I eagerly sought out all workshops, classes and books that I could afford. I learned how to weave tapestry and as time passed my materials, tools, and looms improved. There came a point when I didn’t have to think so hard about technique, except for choosing which ones to use to achieve a desired effect. I knew how to weave; I knew how to think about weaving. That’s right about the time I realized I did not really know how to be an artist. Or how to think like one beyond a very basic level. With this realization came frustration and blocks with my weaving. I had amassed all kinds of art media that I dabbled with, but I had no deep understanding of basic design or the rudiments of using the non-tapestry media. I began to see I needed more than loom time to better my art practice. My first taste of learning essential design concepts occurred during my studies with Silvia Heyden in her Bauhaus-based *Loomish Eyes* “distance learning” workshop. Other memorable learning experiences were Shelley Socolofsky’s 2013 *Traces, Layers, Narratives, & Surfaces*, which concentrated on using Photoshop as a design tool and Marcel Marois’ 2014 workshop in which looms were listed as “optional” and the main focus was composition and design principles.

I honestly have to say that my greatest growth as an artist has come recently during the last couple of years while I have pursued classes in basic drawing, painting, and collage. It has been through these experiences, and not by solely focusing on tapestry, that my thinking and design processes have started to gain more refinement, sophistication, and deeper personal expression. I am learning who I am as an artist.

The authors of the articles in this issue have gained knowledge about who they are as artists in various ways. Some have not strayed too far from the warp, others have been open to whatever learning opportunities have come their way, and yet others have purposefully left the beaten path to pursue unique opportunities. I hope their stories inspire you to seek your own!

*The secret of the man who is universally interesting is that he is universally interested.*

William Dean Howells



**Lyn Hart, Theme Coordinator**, lives, creates art and weaves in the beautiful Sonoran Desert in Tucson. Her work has been exhibited in local and national venues and she has had the honor of serving as Artist-in-Residence in three National Parks. Lyn has recently been appointed Arts Fellow at the University of Arizona's historic Desert Lab atop Tumamoc Hill where she will serve as a member of the Tumamoc Artists Working Group whose mission is to meld art and science. View her work on her website ([www.desertsongstudio.com](http://www.desertsongstudio.com)) and follow her on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/desertsongstudio/>).



## THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

### Including Lyn Hart, Theme Coordinator



**Louise Abbott** has re-engineered her life many times over the years. Today she has the pleasure of focusing on the weaving process that she loves. She appreciates weaving's tactile component and textiles as a conduit for communication.



**Alex Friedman** is a former Co-Director of ATA. She exhibits nationally and internationally. She is an active member of TWW and is currently organizing two tapestry exhibits. Alex is on the Board of the Textile Arts Council at the de Young Museum in San Francisco, which has significantly broadened her textile knowledge.



**Marie-Thumette Brichard** is a French tapestry weaver who lives in Brittany. She is a member of American Tapestry Alliance and takes part in many exhibitions, both in France and abroad.



In her work, **Cornelia Theimer Gardella** explores her relationship to the land. She is drawn to sparse and open places and seeks to distill the essence of these landscapes. She works in Germany and New Mexico and has completed three residencies at the Icelandic Textile Center in Blönduós. Cornelia's work is shown internationally and resides in private collections in the U.S., Germany and the public collection of the Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź, Poland. <http://www.corneliatheimer.com/>



**Molly Elkind** had a solo show of her *Mary* series and *Illuminated Manuscript* series of tapestries in February-March 2018 in Atlanta. She will be teaching a 3-hour workshop "Plan Your Tapestry Diary" at HGA's Convergence conference in Reno, Nevada this July.



**Elke Hülse** has been an independent tapestry weaver and teacher since 2003, regularly exhibiting her work in solo and group exhibitions. Among her commissioned works are portraits for private clients.

She has been weaving threads and friendships for about 15 years through a tapestry group, "As Catarinas."



Student intern **Jenny Ross-Nevin** is studying Textiles at Norwich University of the Arts.



**Lesley Millar** is Professor of Textile Culture and Director of the International Textile Research Centre at the University for the Creative Arts, UK. In February 2018, the book

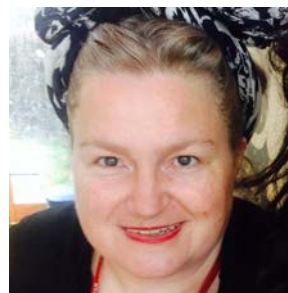
*The Erotic Cloth*, co-edited by Lesley Millar and Alice Kettle, will be published by Bloomsbury Academic.



**Merna Strauch** lives and weaves in Southern California, not far from the edge of the continent. Her fascination with edges often shows up in her tapestries.



**Liz Pulos** lives and learns in Tacoma Washington. She is a member of Tapestry Artists of Puget Sound (TAPS).



**Emma Jo Webster** is a professional tapestry weaver based in Glasgow, Scotland. She weaves for The Dovecot as well as her own work, specialising in hand woven portraiture.

[www.emmajowebster.com](http://www.emmajowebster.com)

## My Methods for Artistic Development and Motivation

by Louise Abbott



Louise Abbott, "Conduction,"  
34 in X 24 in, 10 epi, 1/2016: photo: Louise Abbott. Transparent weave.

I was delighted to be asked to comment in the spring issue of *Tapestry Topics* on how artists continue to evolve their creative expression through self-directed study. Weaving is my passion. I have been involved with textiles for over 45 years as an independent weaver, a contract weaver, and working in the textile industry as a yarn designer. Never having had a formal education in art, I availed myself of every opportunity to learn the technical process. Driven by the desire to expand my awareness and ability, I have taken numerous workshops and attended textile conferences throughout the country. But how do you translate that knowledge into ongoing artistic originality and challenges? I have come to the conclusion and I am convinced that collaboration and sharing of ideas with other artists is key. In the early 1980s I had a studio in an artists' cooperative and gallery with artists representing all media. Themed and collaborative exhibits pushed me to leave my comfort zone and experiment. The other artists had a significant influence on me and the validation of my work.

Currently I am a member of the Arts League of Lowell Gallery (Lowell, MA) where I rent a wall to display my



weaving and participate in themed group exhibits. It stimulates me to create and participate in the exhibit opportunities. As an example, last January the Gallery sponsored an exhibit titled Heat to inspire warmth in our cold winter. I wove a transparency (24" x 34") with tapestry sections using warm colors. It was titled "Conduction" which is an electrical term conveying energy and heat. It was a great experience and fun to do. If you have no opportunities to join a local gallery or arts league, I recommend joining textile groups such as TWINE (Tapestry Weavers of New England). Guilds and other local groups are also great sources for classes. With the internet today, it is easy to become part of an online group. Having artistic support helps to make you more successful.

My textile reference and art library is invaluable and has grown over the years. Several of my technical favorites are: *Tapestry Weaving Design and Technique* by Joanne Soroka; Carol K. Russell's books *The Tapestry Handbook* and *The Tapestry Handbook: The Next Generation*; *Weaving A Tapestry* by Laya Brostoff; and Kathy Todd-Hooker's books, *Tapestry 101*, *Shaped Tapestry*, and *Line In Tapestry*. For design I recommend *A Lively Guide to Design Basics for Artists and Craftspeople* by Steven Aimone. Many books provide wonderful inspiration, such as *Contemporary International Tapestry* by Carol K. Russell, and *Tapestry: A Woven Narrative* by Black Dog Publishing, London UK.

Museum visits have always been a priority. Last year I traveled with Road Scholar for a five-day study program at the Art Institute of Chicago. ATA offers excellent opportunities to study with tapestry notables from around the globe. Elizabeth Buckley offers workshops in her home studio and Joan Baxter has traveled to the US to give workshops throughout the country. For several years I was fortunate to attend tapestry retreats with Jean Pierre Larochette and his wife Yael Lurie in El Tuito, Mexico. I met wonderful like-minded people and learned so much. But you don't have to travel to take advantage of offerings at local museums. Whatever your opportunity, approach your learning experience with an open mind and a willingness to try new approaches and techniques.

Set goals, no matter how small. I received great advice from a friend who recommended that I weave just five minutes a day. How can that possibly make a difference? We all lament that we never have enough time. But five minutes is possible and helps us slow down in this fast paced world. One of the benefits of daily weaving is continuity and the sense of involvement in something you love. Keep track on your calendar every day you weave or start a notebook identifying details of your projects. At the end of a month, review how much time you actually wove. Let go of the outcome and your output and just let it happen. Integral to the success of doing your art is having a place to do it. Set up an area in your home where you can escape and weave or just plan.

Lastly, I am a firm believer in introspection and self-reflection. Pause in your busy life to consider where you have been and where you are going. What gives you satisfaction, what doesn't, and how can you make changes. I have taken overnight sabbaticals to clear my head and set goals. The outcome is not always important, but the effort is. It can change your life. Happy weaving and ENJOY!

## Noticing Neutrals

by Liz Pulos

I enjoy learning how others do what they do, in other media as well as in tapestry. There's always something I can bring to my own work, either directly or via a subliminal cascade of associations. For this article I will focus on one aspect of color I learned from my explorations with paint.

Beginning painters are often encouraged to use just three primaries and to mix other colors, including grays, from these. Mixing colors deepens understanding of color and color relationships. Moreover, hues mixed from the same primaries have a visual unity owing to their shared lineage. This makes it harder for the beginner to make disastrous color choices.



Liz Pulos, "Shell Study,"  
6.5 in x 6.5 in, 10 epi, 2016, photo: Liz Pulos.

I frequently use a still more limited palette—complementary colors. I'm especially smitten with the neutrals and semi-neutrals that come from blending colors opposite one another on the color wheel. These are subtle and sophisticated colors that perform nicely in supporting roles where vivid colors are the stars. Also, when there are many bright colors in a painting, the neutrals (aka "the mud") that come from blending the brights can stitch competing areas together.

I have just started to attend more to the neutrals in my weaving. After I have picked the dominant colors I want to include in a tapestry I go to the paint box, reproduce them, and mix them in various proportions to produce those lovely neutrals. But then what? Of course, weavers who know their way around a dye pot can replicate any color mixture in that way. But for the rest of us there are really just two options. One is to purchase yarn of the desired color. Fortunately, it's often possible to find exactly the right hue in the palette of yarn

manufacturers. With a little experience in color mixing it's possible to recognize colors coming from the same family. This is the approach I took in the small tapestry "Shell Study." It uses a palette that results when two purples and a warm yellow are mixed in different proportions. The neutrals contain traces of their parentage—a hint of purple in the gray, a golden cast to the brown. The collection of colors is in harmony.



The other option is to create color mixtures through optical blending. Optical blending works best when certain conditions are met: when the colors to be blended are similar in value, when it's possible to use many fine threads in the weft bundle, and when the tapestry will be viewed at a distance. This means that some blends that are easily achieved with paint can be challenging with yarn. Bright purple and bright yellow, for example, tend to appear stippled, not blended, when used together in a weft bundle.

The figure below shows six color swatches resulting from blending two colors opposite one another on the color wheel: this time orange and blue. In the watercolor samples, the intermediate hues are a smoky blue, charcoal gray, chocolate brown and terra cotta. In the optical blending sample, I used five strands in the weft bundle, changing one thread from square to square. There is a smooth gradient from blue to orange, but the intermediates have to be viewed at some distance to read as distinct hues. In the solid color sample, I tried to produce the intermediates with yarns from my stash, blending when necessary. This provides a better match to the watercolor sample.



Color samples, photo: Liz Pulos

Of course, I'm still drawn to vivid color. But my experiments with paint have made me more appreciative of the dark, dull, and neutral hues that may not thrill the eye but can be vitally important to a composition. ■

## New Eyes

by Merna Strauch

*The real journey of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.*  
Marcel Proust



Merna Strauch, "Islands in the Sun," 5 in x 17 in, 8 epi, 2014, photo: M. Strauch. Linen warp and weft, shallow wedge weave.

The same things don't work for everyone. I think I should start each day drawing or journaling—having a daily creative practice of some sort. Instead I do killer sudoku, email, read, and think. I also regularly visit museums and galleries. Any chance to see Agnes Martin, Fred Williams, Mark Rothko, or David Hockney among others—I'm there!

My tapestry life has always been one of watching to see what happens. I'm drawn to learning about how artists conceptualize and how writers write, how both use metaphor to explore a subject.

### Tapestry classes

Books have been my main source of education, but I've also had the opportunity to take classes with accomplished and inspiring tapestry artists. Every one of them imparted at least a nugget or two of wisdom, but two people were a major influence.



Merna Strauch, "Digression," 10 in x 4.5 in, 8 epi, 2016, photo: M. Strauch. Cotton warp, wool weft.

In 1989, a friend was visiting New Mexico and happened upon a gallery show of Donna Martin's work. It was gloriously and busily abstract—and fascinating. Donna's method was to write some morning pages, surround herself with books and photos, turn on the radio and start weaving without a cartoon. She was aware of sights, sounds, and ideas, a non-goal oriented awareness, literally taking time to smell the flowers. She dyed her weft yarn with native plants outdoors over a wood fire. Her workshop space was minimal; her yarn stash was undyed until she needed something. Donna came to California to teach "Weaving with an Open Mind."

Donna's spontaneity really spoke to me and it's still my favorite way to weave. One must be entirely engaged with the weaving, observing and thinking all the time. The work builds naturally on itself and the design evolves, relying on *informed intuition*. I didn't adopt her minimalism, morning pages or daily practice though.

Fast forward to 1996 when I first saw Mary Zicafoose's rugs in a Portland, Oregon, gallery. My jaw literally dropped! Taking an ikat class with Mary in 2008 led to an aha moment. To make my class sampler a bit larger, I did a few inches of plain old tapestry along the side of my ikat piece and liked the look. I was combining wedge weave with classic tapestry techniques at the time. I enjoy dyeing, so adding ikat to the mix was fun and made for exciting and successful tapestries. Ikat needs planning so my way of working was altered. Figuring how to combine all of these elements was enjoyable enough to make a few measurements and sketches worthwhile. After some wool were tapestries done this way, I moved to working with linen for smaller square pieces.

## Non-tapestry classes

My goal is to create a visual metaphor for landscape, learning to synthesize and abstract the essence of the environment. I've been drawn to classes with artists who have a fiber sensibility but don't necessarily work in tapestry or even a fiber medium. Resonance with an artist and his or her work is more valuable than the particular discipline or medium used.





Merna Strauch, "Lines in the Sand," 14 in x 14 in, 8 epi, 2013, photo: Merna Strauch. Linen warp and weft, dyed and natural.

Clinton MacKenzie, a painter now, and the late Walter Nottingham co-taught a class in hand papermaking in 1988, including both process and product. It was probably my first experience in seeing how some artists think about their work and even consider what medium to use depending on what they want to say. Both Walter and Clint were professors in university fiber programs with wide-ranging fiber skills. We considered mystical elements and making the unseen visible, food for thought to this day. One of the side benefits that came from that class was a wonderful reading list that introduced me to new (to me) artists and writers.

[Gail Rieke](#), a book and assemblage artist in Santa Fe, New Mexico, teaches about awareness, observation, seeing art in everything, and recording it. She creates multimedia journals as books or containers. Gail teaches "The Artist as

Traveler," using travel itself as one's muse. She has traveled widely herself, making elaborate travel journals to record every trip. Working with her opens your eyes and leads to becoming much more aware of your environment.

[Sharon Kagan](#) is an installation artist and painter in Los Angeles and teaches visual journal work. She's a firm believer in the work begets work concept, encourages her students to focus on their personal creative vision, start, and see what comes next. Sharon is sensitive to each person she teaches and seems to know just what kind of support or suggestions are needed. She works with artists using one or more media, in two- or three-dimensions.

All of these teachers, and others, have given me new eyes. Surely one's cumulated knowledge and life experiences are part of any artistic expression and *informed intuition* is still my guiding principle. ■

## Exploring the Process: Slits, Eccentric Weft and So Much More by Alex Friedman



Alex Friedman, "Dynamic Flow," 19 in x 33 in, 8 epi, 2011.

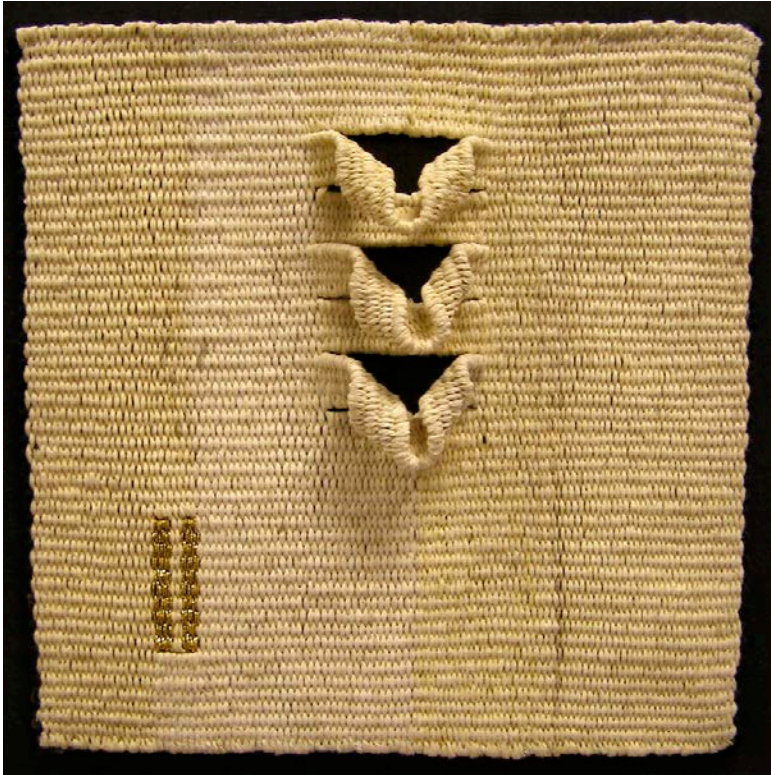
I have always loved all kinds of art but tapestry has held a special place, perhaps because of the circuitous way I discovered it. I signed up for a six-week evening beginners weaving course at the "Y" and loved the process. Two more courses followed! I bought books to teach myself double weaving, waffle weaving, and so on for a year or two. In addition to the colors, the design, and the patterns, I loved the unexpected logic and mathematical aspects of it.

When we moved to NYC in 1973 I tried to find a job that would involve weaving. I was extremely fortunate that Michelle Lester had received a huge commission from Pan American Airlines to make sets of tapestries for the interiors of a fleet of jumbo jets and she was looking for four weavers to assist her.

I brought her my weavings and Michelle hired me despite the fact I had never made a tapestry! The Pan Am tapestries were not complex but there were six for each jet and all kinds of technical issues arose as we began to work on them. I have lots of curiosity and enjoy solving problems, and these traits stood me in good stead. Michelle made me the studio manager to manage these vexations. Once the Pan Am project was completed there were more commissions to work on, but after three years I left as my family was transferred to London.



I went back to weaving my own pieces but this time it was only tapestries on a homemade six-foot by six-foot frame loom. The freedom to play with color and make ongoing designs within the process was exhilarating compared to the relative rigidity of multi-harness weaving.



Alex Friedman, "Triple Flips,"  
9 in x 9 in, 8 epi, 2002. Collection of Pat Porter.

Living in London was a fabulous opportunity for studying old tapestries there and on the Continent. I spent hours at the V&A Museum and explored many other heritage venues, looking at details and sketching tapestries. I also became aware that different European cultures had very different approaches to tapestry, and that was something I wanted to know more about.

When we moved back to the US in 1980, I took workshops from as many teachers as I reasonably could. Each offered me new techniques or refinements, but what I most enjoyed was having the opportunity to learn about their approach and artistic philosophy as I was still trying to fine tune my own ideas.

A remark made by Archie Brennan at Convergence in College Park, Maryland (around 1992), was about tapestry's "textileness," and that its unique characteristics should not be overlooked. It

was a lightbulb comment I have long thought about. My tapestry at the time aligned with painting and photography—rectangular shapes, flat surfaces, and designs that were more attempts in reproducing reality rather than exploiting the possibilities that weaving can offer.

My insight was that tapestry is an organic art form that is rich in design possibilities because of the nature of the process. Textures can be enhanced with a variety of materials, slits, or working in three dimensions. It can incorporate eccentric wefts, soumak, or twining to create texture and contrast. Even the weaving process offers design elements that are unique to tapestry, when there are lazy lines, interlocks, hachure and pick-and-pick. With all these thoughts flooding into my head I began to explore many of them as part of my own design process.

Initially, I was intrigued with creating more dimension and wove a small study series called the **Flip Series** that I intended to enlarge until I decided that gravity would not be a positive asset over time. Other tapestries used an eccentric weft to create more dimension. ("Bound") The **Flow Series** followed as a way to give

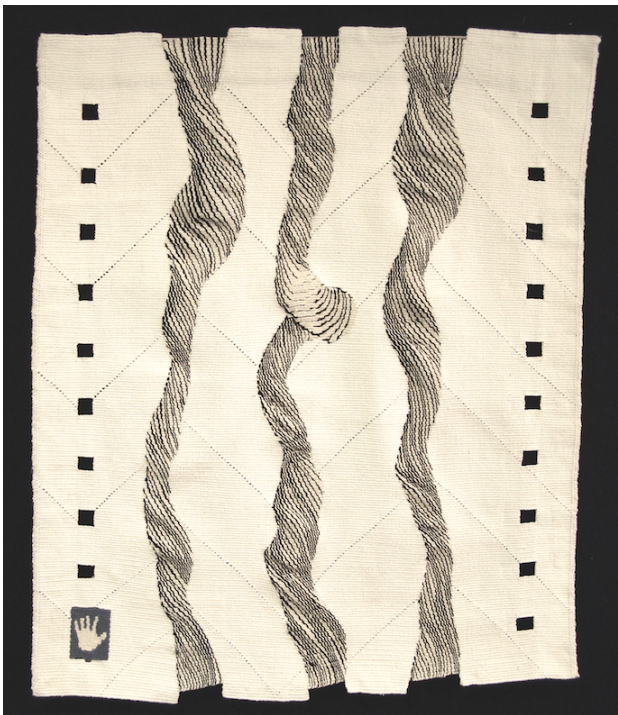
more texture. ("Flow 3") My website includes more examples of incorporating texture and dimension:

<http://www.alexfriedmantapestry.com>

I have always tried to see as many tapestry/fiber shows as I can. I may not use their techniques, but I do absorb the spirit and the energy in them. Images in books, magazines, and, especially now, Facebook and Instagram are wonderful resources when exhibits are too far away.

Finally, another aspect to developing my art and being inspired is that I have a shared studio in a large building filled with over 100 artists, mostly painters and photographers. They are supportive and insightful as well as wonderful resources of ideas not only in art but in the marketing and professional skills of being an artist. Their feedback is very encouraging (and important so that tapestry moves into the mainstream).

It is not hard to keep my muse working. I have several sketch books going and other visual materials that I come across. My curiosity challenges me to solve new problems and there always seem to be more aspects to explore. I find instead, that it is time, not ideas, that is in too short supply.



Alex Friedman, "Flow 1," 32 in x 27 in, 6 epi, 2005.  
Collection of Nelsie Davis Estate



Alex Friedman, "Flow 3," 50 in x 44 in (flared,) 6 epi, 2007,  
photo: Kate Cameron, Collection of Bruce Mitchell



## On Stillness and Movement: Growing my Art through Travel and Collaboration by Cornelia Theimer Gardella



Cornelia Theimer Gardella, "Untitled #2 (Red/Blue)," 26.5 in x 40 in, 8 epi, 2013, photo: Cornelia Theimer Gardella. Cotton warp, hand-dyed wool weft.

To me, being an artist is closely connected to being open to new experiences, ideas and views. It is the opportunity to continue learning that excites me and moves my work forward.

What started with formal training in Rio Grande textiles at Northern New Mexico College and contemporary tapestry weaving with James Koehler in Santa Fe has developed into an art practice which now spans textiles, photography, and socially engaged projects.

I started weaving tapestries in 2005. My training at the time included traditional Southwestern weaving techniques, natural and synthetic dyeing, color and design theory, as well as contemporary tapestry. I took many workshops and my reading list mainly consisted of books on design principles and color theory. One

of the most valuable teachers was, and still is, my own weaving practice where the ideas and techniques for future tapestries are informed by what's currently on my loom.

It wasn't until 2015, however, that I started seeing myself as a full-time artist. It was the year I did a two-month art residency at the Icelandic Textile Center in Blönduós, Iceland. At the time, I felt that what was lacking in my art practice was professional contact to artists of diverse backgrounds and a strong concept in my work.



"Summer Solstice 2015. Greenland Sea, Iceland," June 21, 2015, 11:41pm, photo: Kurt Gardella.

Some of the most interesting—and challenging—events at the residency were the monthly artist talks, which were designed to give the artists the opportunity to introduce their work to fellow residents. These talks forced me to analyze my practice and to explain to others, and to myself, what my work was about. I realized that there is an encompassing theme in my work but with multiple aspects which require different forms of expression.

It has become clear to me that my art practice is strongly linked to ideas of place. I am drawn to sparse landscapes and remote locations where I spend extended periods of time exploring my relationship to the land as well as other people's ties to these places. Working with textiles and photography, I try to capture the thoughts and feelings that specific places evoke.

My tapestries are my personal responses to the places I find myself in. Working with minimal line and color movement I aim to capture the essence of a place, while at the same time trying to create textile "spaces"

which become universal in their abstract qualities. Horizontal lines are a recurring element in my work, a reflection of the open landscapes I often find myself in. The use of natural materials and traditional weaving techniques in this process further ties me to the land.



Cornelia Theimer Gardella, "Untitled (Lines on Black/Brown)," 18 in x 18 in, 6 epi, 2015, photo: Cornelia Theimer Gardella. Linen warp, weft: natural Icelandic wool, hand-dyed silk, and Icelandic wool dyed with local plants found in Northwestern Iceland and with synthetic dyes.



Cornelia Theimer Gardella, "Untitled (Lines on Black)," 18 in x 18 in, 6 epi, 2015, photo: Cornelia Theimer Gardella. Linen warp, weft: natural Icelandic wool, hand-dyed silk, and Icelandic wool dyed with local plants found in Northwestern Iceland and with synthetic dyes.

In contrast, my photographs are more outward. They are observations and documentation of other people's relationships to the landscape. For me, working with people balances the solitary time at the loom. Recording their stories allows me to share in their sense of place and meets my need for social interaction.

When working with different mediums and forms of expression, I can choose the technique and format that works best for a given purpose, allowing me in turn to stay true to the specific medium while learning about its possibilities and limitations along the way.

The time I spend among artists at the Icelandic Textile Center is always marked by exchange and learning. It is one of the reasons I keep returning to Iceland—this year will be my fourth time. It also led to a two-year collaboration with Swedish textile artist Emelie Rygfelt Wilander who I met in Blönduós in 2015. After working alongside each other in the main studio at the residency for two months, we realized that although our artistic means of expression differ—Emelie mainly works with textile installations and performance—the subject matter at the core of our work is very similar. We are both interested in questions of land, home and



place. Out of this initial interest in each other's work we developed the idea for a long-term project called "Textile Journeys," which has taken us from Iceland to Sweden and New Mexico.

Emelie is a member of the Swedish art collective "Not Quite," which is housed in an abandoned paper mill in Fengersfors, Sweden. We had two different exhibitions together, one at Not Quite in 2016, and another at the Gallery of the Open Space Visitor Center of the City of Albuquerque in 2017. We spent a total of three months in each other's homes and our journeys were full of learning about local textile traditions, meeting fellow artists and exploring our natural surroundings. In both places, we organized events that allowed us to connect to local residents.

Based on this collaboration, Emelie and I developed the idea for a themed residency on the topic of travel and home, movement, and pause, which we are hosting at Not Quite in June 2018. Space becomes Place will be an opportunity for us to expand on the subjects we've been working on, this time with a group of fellow artists and writers from diverse locations and artistic backgrounds. The residency will be followed by a month-long exhibition at Not Quite.



Installation View: "Textile Journeys," Gallery of the Open Space Visitor Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.  
 Background: "Untitled I-V (Regular Horizontals from the New Mexico Churro Wool Series)" by Cornelia Theimer Gardella.  
 Foreground: "Balance" (detail) by Emelie Rygfelt Wilander, photo: Cornelia Theimer Gardella.

My art practice is fed by the balance between solitary studio time and collaborations with fellow artists. The challenges that arise both at the loom and when working with people help my art grow and offer endless opportunities for learning. ■

## **Warp and Weft Enchantment** **by Elke Hülse**



Elke Hülse, "Series Portraits," 30 cm x 50 cm, 2008, photo: Elke Hülse. Cotton warp, cotton weft. Private collection.

Why did I choose to work with tapestry as a manual and artistic activity in Brazil, a country that does not cultivate it as a tradition? That is the question I have been trying to answer through my work on my loom over the years. I learned how to weave on a hand loom during my studies at the university where I became enchanted by the diversity of tapestry techniques and all the creative possibilities that they presented. After I graduated I decided to do everything I could to develop my skills as a tapestry weaver, so I took courses with accomplished artists including Uruguayan tapestry weaver Ernesto Aroztegui, Jean Pierre Larochette, and Sarah Swett. In 1996 I participated in my first international exhibition promoted by ATA. After years of weaving mostly utility objects, I decided to dedicate myself exclusively to the production of tapestries on vertical looms. I also realized that to think in the tapestry language I needed to devote myself to it, entirely.

At the same time, I began to teach tapestry classes which allowed me to learn and improve my own knowledge by helping my students.

A turning point in my career was the ATA Mentoring Program with guidance from Mary Lane, a very rich experience in every sense. That period had a tremendous impact on my weaving and led me to try unconventional materials like plastic thread. It was at that time I became fascinated by facial expressions and different face shapes and wove my first portrait, which was to become a recurring theme in my work.

The dissertation for my master's degree in Theory and History of Art with the focus on tapestry was related, among others, to the article by Walter Benjamin, in which he describes the importance of passing on knowledge by telling stories. From that time on I have been using this concept of telling stories to teach or pass on to my students the enchantment for tapestry. As a result, I, along with my students, created a group called "As Catarinas" that takes part in exhibitions in Brazil and abroad.



Elke Hülse, "Photo Revelation II," 48 cm x 127 cm, 2015, photo: Elke Hülse. Cotton warp, cotton weft. Private collection.

It was during my master's studies that I made my first commissioned portrait. I began observing people's interest in portraying themselves. ("Series Portraits") Here is at least part of the answer to the initial question of the text: in a country where tapestry is not a tradition I would translate the portraits that come to me into tapestry. I have woven portraits in different sizes and using a variety of materials, in such a way that each portrait is a fresh new exercise in deepening my understanding of tapestry techniques. Beyond this, I began using new technologies like Photoshop, which allow me to modify colors and abstract details to explore different possibilities for my work on the loom. ("Photo Revelation II") I learned that repetition and difference are the best exercise in which the work of memory gains strength and opens space for new ideas.





Elke Hülse, "Touch Me," 20 cm x 20 x 5 cm, 2017, photo: Elke Hülse. Cotton warp, cotton weft, fabric, barbed wire. Collection of the artist.

Sometimes, when I have no orders, I produce tapestries to participate in exhibitions. Often the theme suggested is a stimulus for researching forms, materials, colors and techniques that better suit the cartoon. An example is the small format "Touch Me" which suggests that the viewer should touch the cushion and feel various sensations in the same work. It is being shown at **Miniartextil 2017** in Como, Italy.

Another example is "Kinder Glauben" which has as its starting point an internet image and will be displayed on the floor. Similar faces appear in two pentagons; another two pentagons are linked by images of a hand touching a face. These four pentagons form a dome that frames the two central pentagons in which children are together. In the tapestry there are several white tones and a light that reveals and frames the various repeated scenes, a haptic look, inviting a clear sense of touch through the viewer's eyes. Children exchange caresses and looks within the simple form. The children invite touch; the materials of the tapestry invite touch. As a whole, the tapestry reaches the essence of our senses.

For the past 10 years I have participated in several exhibitions in different countries, showing my tapestries in many different sizes and shapes. At the same time, I have made many friends through electronic media with whom I keep in touch and exchange information, ideas, and inspiration. In this way we tapestry weavers are neighbors even in different continents. All of the moments described above are responsible for my ever-growing involvement and deepening enchantment of the art of tapestry. These moments and the challenge of daily work on the loom inspire me and encourage me to continue, to create. Contradicting contemporary dynamics, I use time as my greatest ally, from the development of the cartoon, choice of threads, and preparation of the warp to the execution of the tapestry.



Elke Hülse, "Kinder Glauben," 215 cm x 215 cm, 2016, photo: Elke Hülse.  
Cotton warp, wefts: cotton, fabric strips, plastic threads, and synthetic threads. Collection of the artist.

## Continuing Thread: A conversation with Fiona Hutchison

by Jenny Ross-Nevin

Tapestry artist Fiona Hutchison has been designing and weaving tapestry in her Edinburgh studio for over 30 years, dividing her time between developing her own work, working to commission, and teaching.

### Where do you see yourself in terms of your career?

I consider myself a mid-career artist, simply because my learning process is still very much ongoing. Although I have been weaving for thirty years, I still feel excited to learn about new materials, face challenges, and find new techniques to use in my work.

### What has been the greatest influence on your work?

My most enduring inspiration is my love of the sea and sailing. I go sailing on the water three times a week, for nine months of each year. I sail on both the east and west Scottish coasts, which have very different characters. The Forth is an industrial estuary, whereas the west coast is more rural. I rarely get the opportunity to take photographs because we are racing, but I am always looking, thinking, and remembering.

### What has influenced the evolution of your work and kept it fresh?

It is networking with other artists from all disciplines, travel, residencies, and studio visits. I have travelled widely within Europe as part of the steering committee of the European Tapestry Forum. My residency in Norway in 2008, for instance, challenged me to explore and play with new materials and techniques within textiles, paper, and stitch. One of the most exciting experiences, both culturally and creatively, was my visit to Lithuania in 1992. This was not long after Lithuania became independent from Russia. I met many other artists, visited studios and went to the Art Academy in Vilnius. A formative visit to Japan in 2000 made me



Fiona Hutchison's studio, 2017, photo: Michael Wolchover.  
Research drawings and wool basket, artist studio.



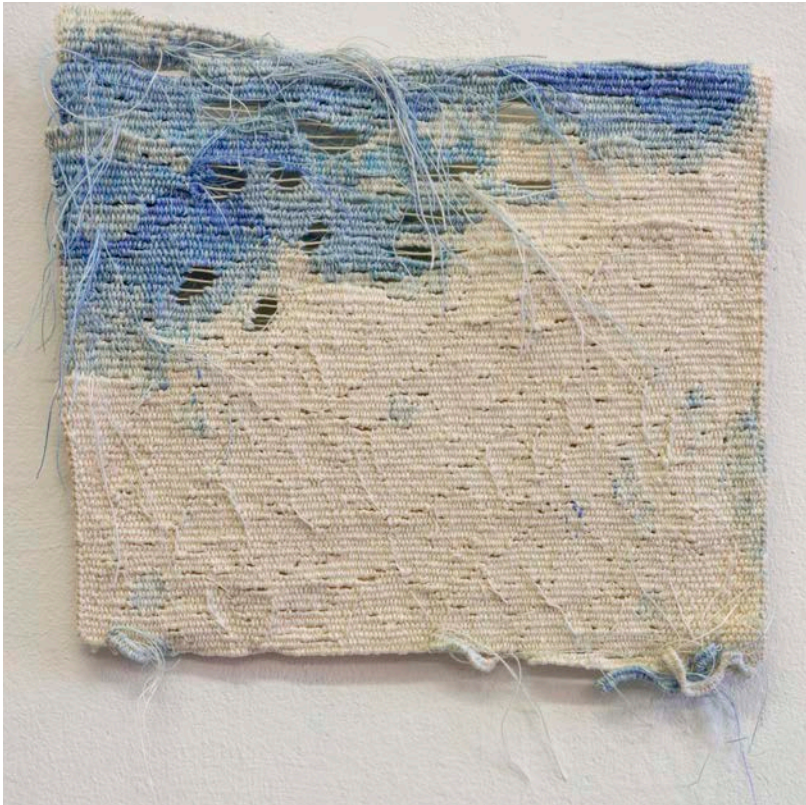
consider making work for specific spaces rather than to hang in a gallery. What inspired me about the Japanese artists was their working with, and being true to, their materials. Their colour choices, particularly blues, and their sense of space and composition have been an enduring influence on my own work. As a result of my Japanese travels, my work became lighter in character and more delicate. My earlier work, by contrast, was much more traditional in weaving style and richer in colour.



Fiona Hutchison, "Tide II," 4 ft 11 in x 4 ft 1 in, 8 epi, 2017, photo: Michael Wolchover. Cotton warp, linen weft.

**Can you describe how you stimulate your creative process to develop new ideas?**

A major stimulus for my work is drawing and sketching, in combination with experimentation with nontraditional implements. Recognizing the value of play and the role of chance in the evolution of ideas is of paramount importance. I have investigated using thread as a drawing tool, along with twigs and sticks to make the unexpected or uncontrolled mark. Key to my work is developing a sense of surface with tissue paper and collage, using papers of various textures and absorbent qualities. In the past I mainly used tissue papers but designs for my recent work are made using Lokta paper from Nepal. This particular paper has a very fibrous surface that can be manipulated and stained.



Fiona Hutchison, "Shifting Tide," 10 in x 11 in, 8 epi. 2017, photo: Michael Wolchover. Cotton warp, linen and cotton weft.

**What place does research have in your practice?**

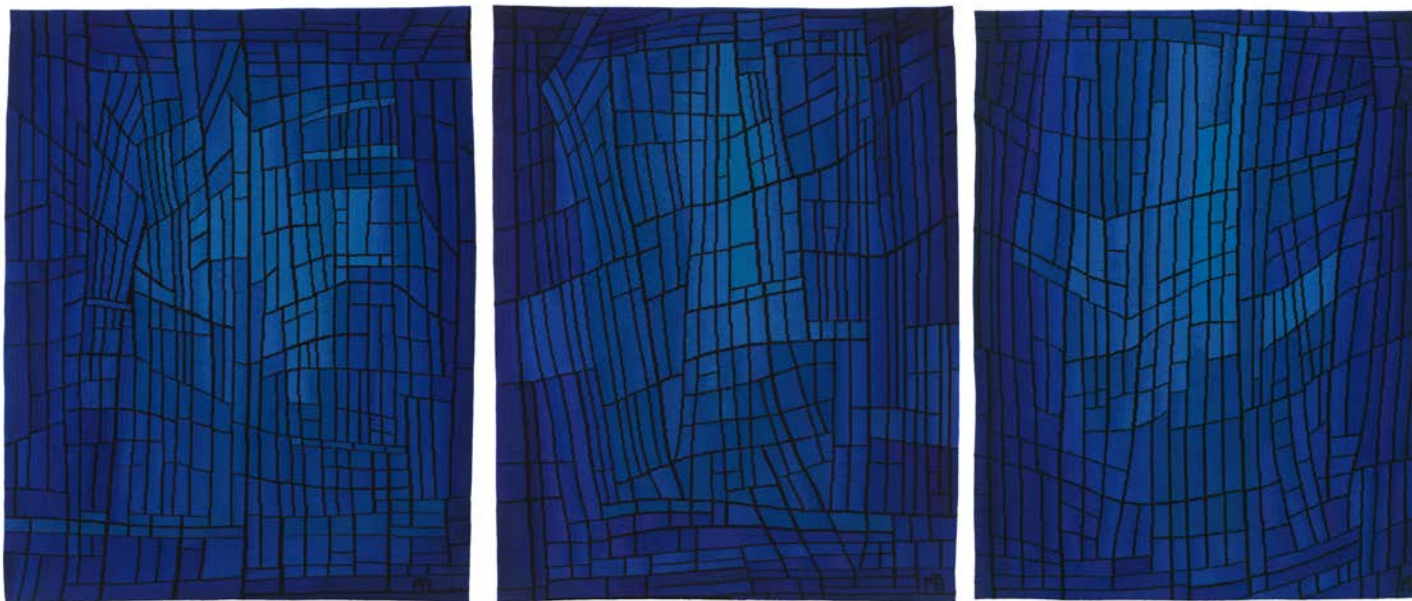
Research can take many forms, including primary research from sketchbook drawing, photographs, and in my case, being out on the water. Making connections between areas of interest, reading widely and researching anything and everything helps to conjure up images that then join together to produce new ways of thinking. Knowing your subject in depth is invaluable and brings a greater context to the work. Looking at my work in relation to that of other artists, who do not necessarily work within the field of textiles, is also important. From college days I found Abstract Expressionism and Color Field painters inspiring, especially the work of Mark Rothko, Richard Diebenkorn, Barnett Newman and Helen Frankenthaler. More recently, I find the work of Agnes Martin fits with the contemplative, quiet quality of my

more minimal pieces. Looking at the different ways in which other artists work—their processes and how they approach things—has a direct influence on my practice. One of the most important things is that you never stop looking, experimenting, and being inquisitive. I continue to ask questions such as "What will happen if?" and "How does this work?" ■



## Captivated: A Life in Tapestry

by Marie-Thumette Brichard



Marie-Thumette Brichard, "Fractures 3" triptych, 51 in x 122 in, 2016, photo: Hervé Cohonner. Wool.

*Year after year the tides and storms erode the rocks and the coast is moving back. These tapestries are about the drawings and the lines made by the waves when they hit the rocks. Stunning, fragile, and often short-lived as they announce the falling of the rocks. The signs of a coming chaos. In my tapestries I believe that I translate emotions rather messages, but sometimes both are joined*

Sometimes in your life you meet somebody, and they change your mind in important ways. Thirty years ago, I took a workshop with Dominique Delplace, a weaver in the research studio of the Manufacture des Gobelins in Paris. The topic was how to build a tapestry cartoon using drawings, collages, and painting.

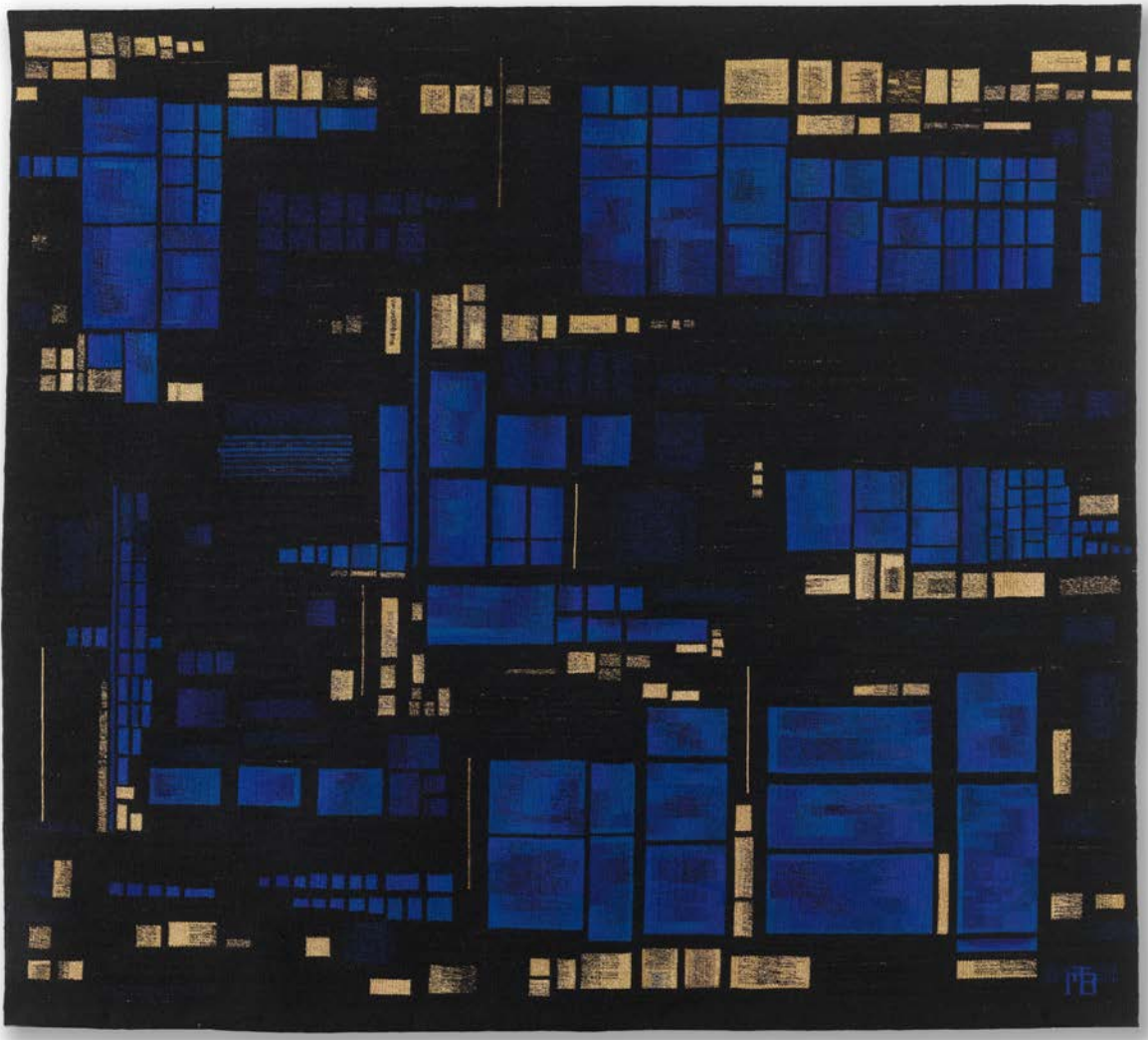
At this time, I wove relief tapestries; I was, above all, interested in form, textile sculpture, and different fibers with mixed techniques. I had visited several Biennials in Lausanne, and, of course, I admired Magdalena Abakanowicz and Olga de Amaral, among others. I particularly admired Pierre Daquin and Thomas Gleb who influenced my work for a long time.

Meeting and studying with Dominique Delplace were pivotal for me regarding my weaving choices. I realized that it was imperative for me to extend the classical technique.



Dominique said two things I will never forget: first, "If you want to weave your own tapestries you have to know drawing," and secondly, "You will spend some months to weave a tapestry, [so] you can spend the time it needs to make the project of this tapestry."

At this time, I decided to study at the Art College. I would draw regularly with my friends (I am very lucky, two of my best friends are painters). We often drew live models, but we also went every week to a dancing school (classical with children and modern with adults) to quickly draw the dancers on the move.



Marie-Thumette Brichard, "Back to the Harbor by Night 2," 55 in x 62 in, 2016, photo: Hervé Cohonner. Wool, metallic threads, gold.

*One of my oldest childhood memories is the lights of a port from a ship, probably Hambourg; my father was the captain and my mother and I were with him. I was about three years old, and now each time I am sailing or visiting a port by night, I remember this moment.*

Later on, I went back to the Art School for evening classes. My friends and I exhibited together, showing paintings and tapestries, and it was very interesting to compare our works and to talk about and to examine them. Even though we no longer have time for our drawing sessions, we continue to visit our studios and give our opinions about each other's work; it is very important to have an outside and critical look. I believe that drawing and painting are essential in the creation of a tapestry, and weaving tapestry is like painting, we always have to work at it.

It is important and rewarding, for me, to keep in touch with what is happening in the tapestry world, in painting, and art in general. I am motivated and challenged by reading, following exhibitions in museums or the internet, as well as staying connected with other tapestry weavers, taking part in exhibitions in other countries, and meeting artists with different sensitivities.

I've discovered that I am always thinking about tapestry, even if it is not obvious. Inspiration comes from life, landscapes, seaside, childhood memories, reading, drawing, and painting. As I am weaving a tapestry I am already thinking about the next one. Sometimes it is difficult, I may have no ideas or at least might think they aren't good, so I draw, I make collages, I weave small tapestries, then finally, I can work on a design.



Marie-Thumette Brichard, Collages, photo: MT Brichard.

## Lucky in my Work: Weaving for Others and from my Own Inspiration

by Emma Jo Webster

I often feel while I'm weaving that I'm learning new techniques all the time. I have been weaving for over 30 years, so I'm unlikely to attend courses on weaving myself but I do teach classes to beginners to give people the feel of it.



Emma Jo Webster, "Finlay," photo: Emma Jo Webster.  
Hand woven in cotton, bamboo and linen on a small frame.

I go through intense periods of designing images for possible weaving; designs can be around the studio for quite a while before I may or may not weave them. This sporadic design work doesn't happen as often as I'd like due to time constraints of work and childcare. I am very lucky in that my work is weaving for the Dovecot in Edinburgh three days a week, which is wonderful—it's not my own work, but I get to weave!

When I'm not weaving for the Dovecot I'm in my studio in Glasgow where I'm often weaving to a commission, usually a hand woven portrait, which I'm known for. I have a small waiting list for these which is fantastic, but it also means that I have less time for my speculative work, which is often colour plays about happenings, time, and emotion. I love colour! My grandfather was a stained glass artist and I spent a lot of time with him in his studio, looking at the handmade glass he used and marveling at the colours. I often get inspiration for these colour plays from listening to stories, music, books, and poetry. These colour plays usually start off as wee paintings which I will weave bigger to try and retain a jewel-like effect. The portraits however are different, and they often start as a selection of photographs that I play about with digitally on the computer until I get a feel and just know which ones will weave well.



It really depends on the design and the "look" you want to achieve within the final piece. That is especially true with the weaving work I do as a professional weaver for tapestry studios. In that case you are often weaving designs by other artists who have a completely different colour palette and style than your own work. This can be quite challenging as you have to go beyond your natural way of weaving.

Therefore, before each piece we weave a lot of colour and style samples. The team of weavers working on that piece will all weave up samples and then we will discuss what works and what does not. This works well as each weaver will have their own ideas and methods to tackle design specifics and we often discuss different techniques together. Then we will present the artist and commissioner the samples which have worked and maybe some more before we start weaving the piece. This part of the development is very like a workshop—at least a mini one!



Emma Jo Webster, "Ex Memoriae," photo: Keith Hunter. Hand woven in wool and cotton on an upright scaffolding loom.



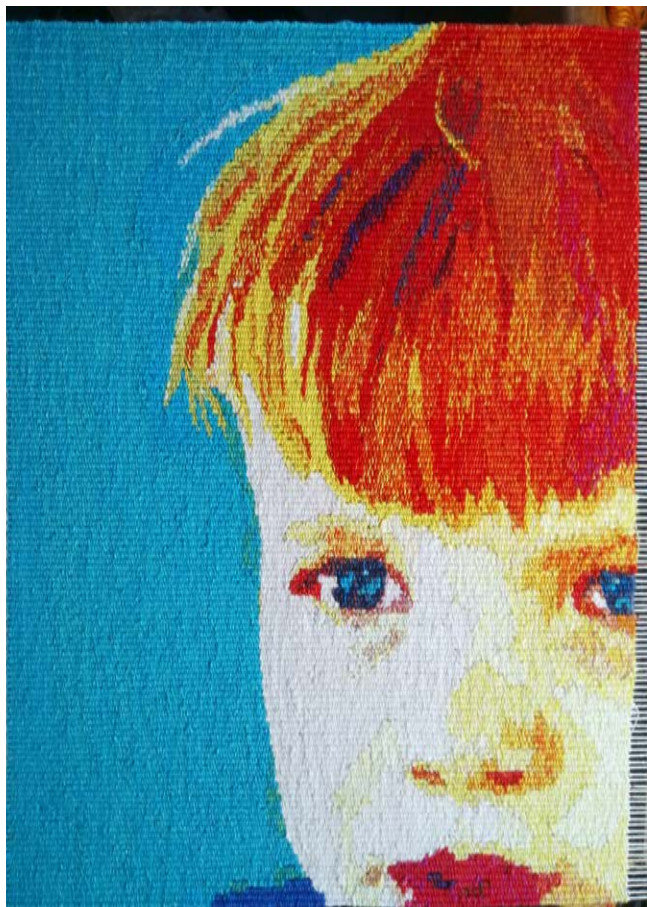


Left: "Grouse and Strawberry" detail, woven at Stirling castle on an upright wooden loom by Emma Jo Webster for West Dean Tapestry Studio, photo: Emma Jo Webster.



Right: "Tree Tops" detail, woven by Emma Jo Webster and Louise Trotter (apples) for West Dean Tapestry Studio, photo: Emma Jo Webster.





Emma Jo Webster, "Ali," photo: Emma Jo Webster.  
Hand woven in cotton, bamboo and linen  
on a small frame.

Probably like many weavers I self-teach by observation—this was definitely true when I was about to start working with a team of weavers on the Stirling Castle tapestries in 2001 for the West Dean Tapestry Studio. I went to see the original tapestries at the Cloisters in New York, as even though I knew some of the basics of medieval weaving I still needed to see how some of the shapes were constructed. The first tapestry I wove on was "The Unicorn in Captivity," and I worked on the plants near the top. I live in Glasgow and commuted to work at Stirling. Glasgow has the Burrell Collection, which has a great selection of tapestries, and I discovered that some of the tapestries there had larger, more coarsely woven versions of the same plant. It was slightly easier to see how they had been woven, which helped a great deal! I didn't weave on the whole project. I left the project for 10 years to have a family and develop my own work, and then went back to help finish the last tapestry and had to get my head back into weaving the medieval way again. By then the lead weaver at Stirling Castle was Ruth Jones, an expert in medieval style weaving, and she gave me a few reminders to help get me back into the swing of medieval weaving techniques.

One of the more recent projects I worked on with the Dovecot was "The Caged Birds Song" by Chris Ofili,

which was commissioned by the The Clothworkers' Company. Before it went to its home at the Clothworkers' Hall, it was shown at the National Gallery in London over the summer. It was a challenging piece to work on and I definitely learnt from my fellow weavers. It was a watercolour design with charcoal which created its own challenges. We literally had to weave water! Water marks and the crumbly texture of the charcoal mixed together in places provided many challenges. We started weaving the samplers and got into the way of weaving it, discovering that each of us in the team were good at certain things. When we came across a challenging bit and the other weaver wasn't in to discuss it, we'd think, "Now how would they have approached it?" So we worked it out together as a team!

I've been very lucky as a weaver and am often in a position where I can ask other weavers questions about how to tackle certain designs and which method to use. I nowadays also find the Internet incredibly useful—looking up other tapestry artists work. Though I'm sure you'd all agree, there is nothing like seeing tapestries in real life! ■



## REVIEWS & REPORTS

### *Time Warp . . . and Weft Exhibit*

Lyndon House Arts Center  
Athens, Georgia

**by Molly Elkind**

In July 2017 I had the pleasure of viewing an exhibit of time-related tapestries in Athens, Georgia, at the Lyndon House Arts Center. The exhibit featured the work of six weavers—Janet Austin, Geri Forkner, Janette Meetze, Rebecca Mezoff, Tommye Scanlin, and Kathy Spoering—who have been making tapestry diaries and other pieces exploring the passage of time. Tommye Scanlin organized the exhibit.

It is always a great pleasure to see work in person that one has previously seen only on screens or in print. For me, perhaps the best surprise was the sheer variety of approaches to what seems like a fairly straightforward idea: mark the passage of time by weaving. I am in my third year of a tapestry diary practice and I continue to be excited by the myriad possibilities it offers for exploration and development as a weaver.

The pieces were beautifully installed in a spacious gallery. Each artist's work was hung together so her evolving approach could be compared from year to year.

Several artists have taken the diary aspect literally, weaving a small defined bit on a large warp each day. Every artist sets up her own rules of the game, deciding in advance how colors will be chosen, what techniques will be used, and the overall size and format of the finished piece or pieces. Janet Austin, Janette Meetze, and Tommye Scanlin all created traditional wool (or mostly wool), weft-faced woven tapestries by weaving a small bit each day on a larger warp. Sometimes the month or the date is indicated; sometimes it is not. But often events from the artist's life or the larger world make an appearance in the weaving. The daily inventiveness of these artists' weaving really impressed me. And their craftsmanship inspires me as I continue to refine my own technique.

While every artist's work is impeccably crafted, I particularly enjoyed the fine details in the daily portions of Janet Austin's pieces. Janet's thoughtful progression of colors and compositional strategies from month to month in her 2015 diary also impressed me. About her practice, Janet says that "I have learned so much from my tapestry diary practice, for example how important it is to weave something small and simple every day. The most important thing I have learned: the repetition and, yes, even boredom of weaving the same thing every day drives me to explore and experiment, to challenge my creativity for solutions. The simplest beginning allows very small changes to be effective. It is a new kind of creative process that takes place little by little, on the loom." She adds, "I have a framework but each day I sit down, not knowing exactly what I will weave, and make that simple decision based on what feels right at that moment."



Janette Meetze, "Into the Hills," 2015, photo: Molly Elkind.



Geri Forkner, "Daily Weavings," strip lengths 76 in to 98 in, 2010-2013 and 2015, photo: Molly Elkind.

Janette Meetze's 2013 diary followed the strategy of making each day a distinct and detailed rectangle. But for 2015 Janette adopted a more fluid approach, in which the days flow into each other, and the journey through the year becomes like a hike through the hills. Red squares on the sides indicate the months. Again, it is delightful to zoom in on detailed passages of pick-and-pick, or hatching, or color gradation. Janette said this about her practice in a 2014 article she wrote for *Tapestry Topics* a few years back, entitled *Tapestry Diary: It's About Time*: "Working on the tapestry diary did get me into the studio every day and weaving every day and making that effort did improve my confidence and technique. There were other benefits as well, getting into the studio every day gave me momentum to finish and work on other things by creating a pattern of activity both mental and physical. Changing or establishing one habit can create quite a rift in the space time continuum."

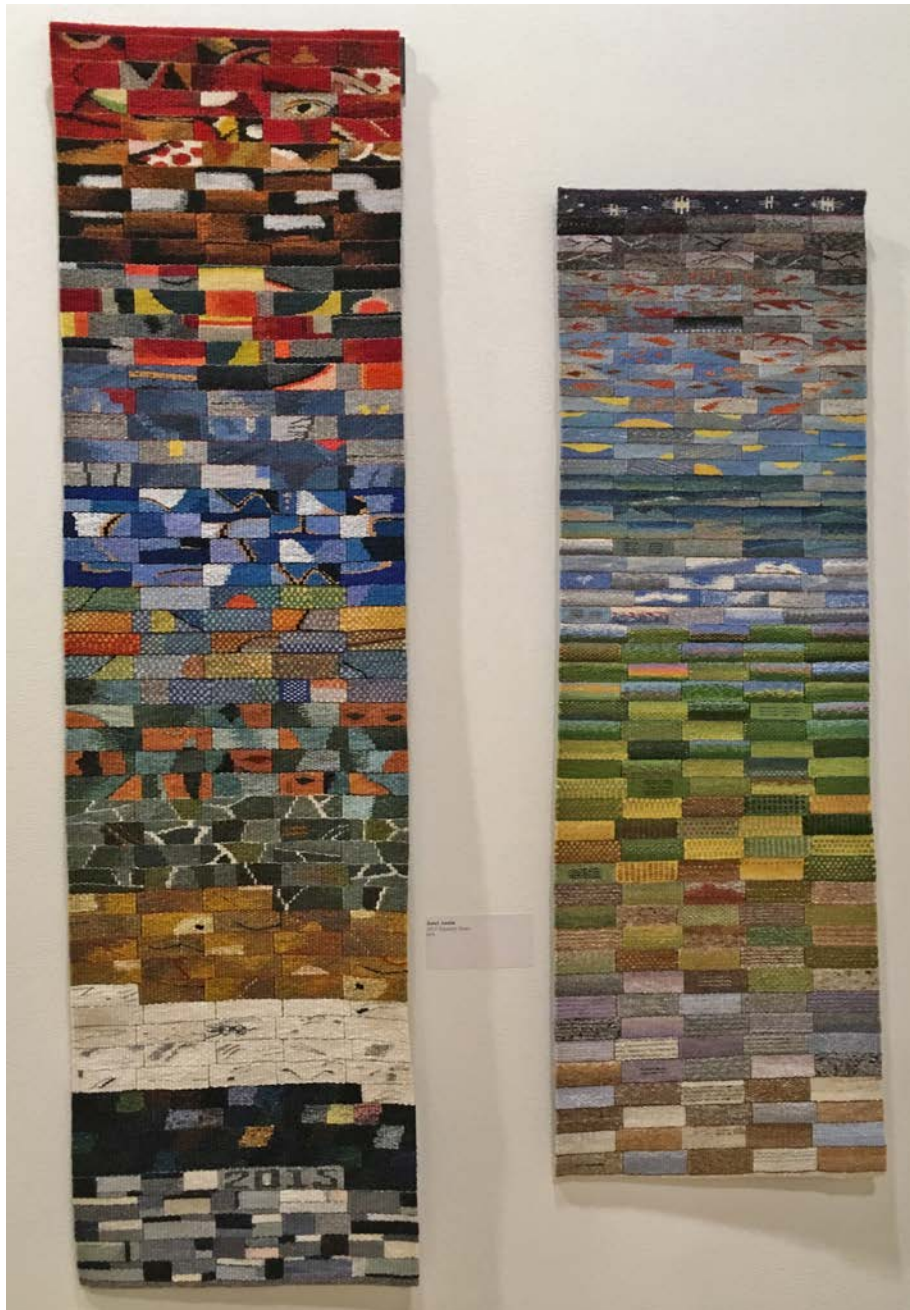
It was especially interesting to see how several artists' approaches to the project changed over the years of their practice. A weaver can choose to weave one long piece, or several smaller pieces that are later joined (or not). Tommye Scanlin has set up different guidelines and formats for herself each year. In Year Two (2010), she chose to leave the warps unwoven when she was away from the loom. In another year, she chose to weave a solid neutral "filler" color for those days.

For the past few years, Tommye has woven a small pictorial image related to the season for each month and has indicated the passage of the days with squares and rectangles that surround the month's image. So the passage of time is represented in daily bits of weaving as well as in larger images. When I asked Tommye what she has learned from her practice, she said this: "Although this seems strange for a tapestry weaver to say, I guess, is that what I've learned about myself through this practice is that I can persevere. When I started with the first daily effort back in May of 2008 I wasn't even sure that I would have the discipline to complete the month-long tapestry, even though I was only going to be doing about an inch each day. When, at the end of 2009 I'd stuck with it through the 365 days of the year, I knew I'd have the discipline to continue the practice for as long as I wanted to. Now, almost nine years and over 3,000 days into it, I can say I am persistent--at least with my tapestry diary work!" Tommye's diaries continue to inspire new tapestry diarists.

Kathy Spoering considered the theme of time by making a calendar series, weaving a pictorial tapestry representing each month of the year. As I understand it from her blog, this was a project requiring several years' work, and the detailed imagery and thoughtful designs attest to that. Kathy has avoided obvious choices of imagery for each month, instead choosing scenes with personal significance. She had this to say about what the practice has meant to her: "Much of my work has been, in one way or another, about the passage of time. The **12 Calendar Series** tapestries, which were a part of this exhibit, were the fourth series of tapestries about time that I have woven. I believe that marking time with the slow-paced medium of tapestry helps me feel as if I can capture the fast movement of the world. I can record a bit of it permanently, so that time doesn't feel so fleeting, quickly disappearing, never to be held again. Weaving the seasonal and monthly changes I see in the world slows it all down to a weaver's pace, at least while I am at the loom. I find that I need that, especially in contrast to immediate news, the ever-present onslaught of social media,



and rapidly maturing grandchildren!" I suspect many of us would agree with Kathy's feeling that weaving tapestry does slow down, even freeze, the passage of time somewhat.



Janet Austin, "2015, 2016 tapestry diaries," 45 in x 12 in, 9 epi, 2015; 37 in x 12 in, 9 epi, 2106, photo: Molly Elkind

Rebecca Mezoff took yet another approach to the theme of time. During time she spent at an artists' residency at Petrified Forest National Park in November 2016, Rebecca took her small Hokett loom outside each day and wove a two-inch square piece in response to the landscape around her. She mounted groups of these pieces together on fabric-covered stretchers. These intimate pieces invite the viewer to come in close to appreciate the details. Rebecca says, "This project was one month long. Every day I hiked and because I knew that I would be weaving something I saw that day, I started looking for forms that would work well woven at a small scale. Fairly quickly this changed the way I interacted with my environment. I paid attention to detail and I looked for forms that were easy to render in tapestry at a small scale. The hours of weaving each evening were a chance for me to relive what I had seen that day and think about how they connected to my experience of the world. And it reinforced the power of daily practice of something. Over time, paying attention to something in a very particular way changes you." Rebecca has published a book, available through her website, with photographs of the tapestries in the landscapes that inspired them.

Geri Forkner has been doing daily weavings incorporating found objects and non-traditional materials since 2005. Like the other artists, Geri changes up the rules of the game each year, sometimes moving into relief, other times exploring irregular edges, while sticking to a long vertical format. She describes the impact of her project this way: "Each year I seem to gain a new insight into this project as a new metaphor takes shape over the days and months. One year I decided to see if I could use up a single cone of yarn as the day's warp. To warp an individual 3" square takes maybe two yards and the cone of yarn was mostly full. I had no idea how much yarn was left nor did I care as the point of the project is to work with found and scrap items collected or on hand. Over the course of several months, I eventually used up all of the yarn. The steady use of the cone of yarn reinforced how a daunting undertaking can be done using a slow and steady pace over time. I feel more confident now when I take on a labor intensive project."

While Geri's pieces are not traditional weft-faced tapestry weaving, they were a lot of fun to look at. The long narrow strips were hung from the gallery's ceiling and on the wall behind, making a visually rich environment that invited viewers to walk through and among them, studying individual details. My personal favorite may have been the pink plastic comb whose teeth formed a warp for a tiny bit of weaving. It is amazing how Geri integrates such varied bits of flotsam and jetsam into weaving.

In my own tapestry diary practice, I remain fascinated by how this daily activity of sitting to weave a bit every morning has been such a spur to creativity and a way to practice and refine my technique. My 2016 diary was a long panel following the colors of the liturgical year. In 2017, I wove separate 5" x 7" panels for each month, assembling them into an accordion book that when opened out stands up in three dimensions. In my diaries, I try to balance the overarching format and thematic guidelines I start out with against the need to evolve my approach over the course of the year to take into account new interests in weaving and the events of life as it unfolds. My 2017 diary evolved into a sort of tapestry sketchbook, in which I tried out new ideas, rather than a unified and polished work of art in itself. And that's OK. For 2018 I am combining stripes of daily weaving with small studies of details from historical and contemporary tapestries. I am certain I will learn a lot.



(left) Tommye Scanlin, "Years 7 and 8, 2015 and 2016," 64 in x 13.5 in (2015), 52 in x 14 in (2016), 8 epi, 2015-2106, photo: Molly Elkind.



(right) Rebecca Mezoff, "Petrified Forest Tapestries," each tapestry 2 in x 2 in, 12 epi, 2016, photo: Molly Elkind.



Like any journal, every tapestry diary is of course unique to its maker. I am grateful to the artists in *Time Warp. . . and Weft* for sharing their inspiring and individual approaches.



Kathy Spoering, "12 Calendar Series: January–June," each 18 in x 18 in, 8 epi, photo: Kathy Spoering.

Other publications about the tapestry diary practice include:

Janette Meetze, *The Tapestry Diary: It's About Time*. ATA Tapestry Topics, 2014.

<https://americantapestryalliance.org/tapestry-education/educational-articles-on-tapestry-weaving/the-tapestry-diary-its-about-time/>

Rebecca Mezoff, *Petrified Forest National Park Artist-in-Residence Tapestries*, 2017. Available at <http://www.rebeccamezoff.com/shop/>

Tommye Scanlin, *Threads of Time: One Day at a Time*. British Tapestry Group Tapestry Weaver, Issue 8, November 2012. <https://tapestry13.blogspot.com/2012/12/threads-of-time-one-day-at-time.html>

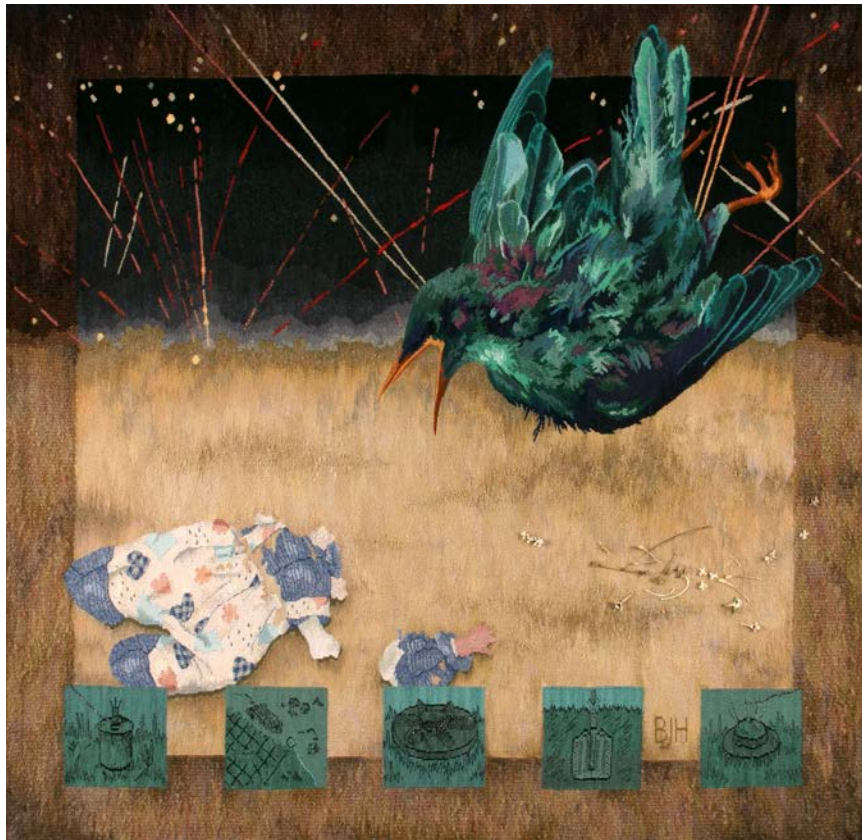
This article was originally published in a different form on Molly Elkind's blog: <http://www.mollyelkindtalkingtextiles.blogspot.com>.

## Tapestries - the narrative of our time?

The Holburne Museum, Bath, UK  
29th September 2017

by Lesley Millar

The symposium "Tapestries—the narrative of our times?" was convened to support and develop the themes of the exhibition *Here & Now: Contemporary Tapestry*. It was held at the beautiful Holburne Museum Bath on the final weekend of the final showing of the exhibition tour. The theme invited discussion and exploration of how this art form can inspire reflection about our experiences of and about the world around us.



Barbara Heller, "Ozymandias," 158 cm x 168 cm. Linen warp, hand-dyed commercial and hand-spun wool, cotton, and miscellaneous fibres, bones.

When thinking about the schedule for the day, we decided to go for depth rather than breadth. Given that tapestry events have been so infrequent in the UK over the last 20 years, it was tempting to try to cover as

much different ground as possible, however we felt that the theme demanded time and thought for the speakers and for the audience. Therefore we invited just four, allowing an hour for each with questions. As organisers, we were very excited that all four of our exhibiting artists who we had invited as speakers were able to attend, truly representing the international range of artists in the exhibition—traveling as they did from Australia, Canada, Japan, and the UK. Equally, we were delighted with the number of delegates—89—who came from all over the UK, indicating the interest in tapestry in this country.

The day began with me, as curator of the exhibition, giving a short introduction in which I described the context of the exhibition and the importance of tapestry as carrier of the narrative of its time, historically and as contemporary expression of our lives now. Friday September 29th was also the day of the funeral of the great Japanese textile artist and designer, Junichi Arai, with whom I had the honour to work over a period between 2003-05. I took the opportunity to give thanks for his life and his achievement.



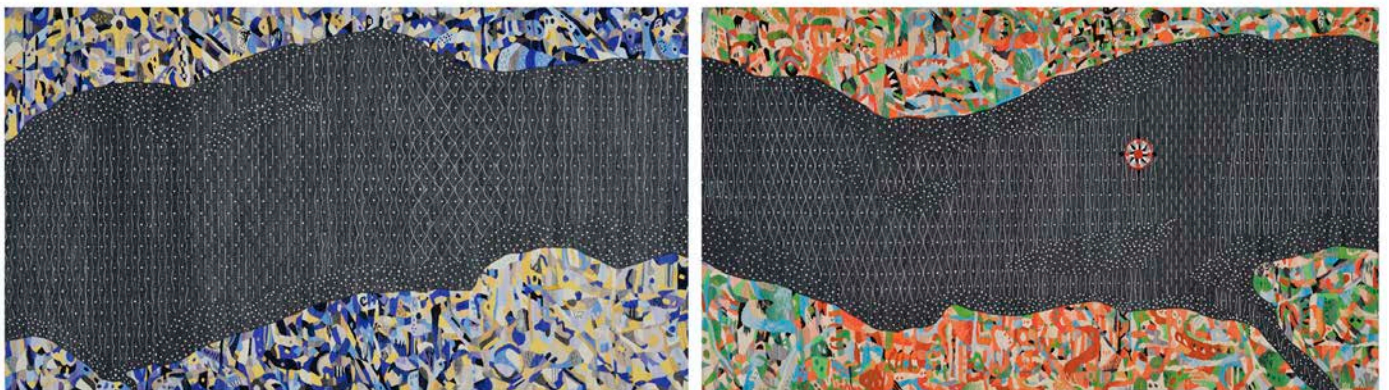
Pat Taylor, "6704 – 13," 133 cm x 112 cm x 2 cm, photo: E Egg. Cotton, linen, wool.



The first speaker was Canadian tapestry artist Barbara Heller whose presentation was titled "Tapestry and Politics - the Story from Then and Now." Barbara's work is powerful and moving in its subject matter which addresses "the concerns of our planet today—environmental degradation, population displacement, power and politics, and the plight of the individual trying to make sense of all this." Her presentation placed her own work, and that of other Canadian tapestry artists whose work focuses on political and social engagement, in the context of the traditional use of tapestry as a means through which stories have been told and understood.

Barbara was followed by Pat Taylor, who spoke extremely eloquently about her work and her creative processes. Her presentation fell into two sections. In the first she described a commission she had been awarded for one of the new parliamentary buildings in London and the ways in which she was able to accommodate the needs of the client and her own artistic vision. Central to this was her desire to involve the people who work in the building in the story contained within the tapestry. The second section dealt with her fascination with faces and how this informed her driving political (with a small 'p') involvement. Again, the traditional relationship between tapestry and narrative was central to her practice, as her presentation title clearly indicated: "Crafting Stories: However we tell stories, they are as real a part of us as the experiencing, fleeting self."

As Professor of Textiles at Kyoto University of the Arts, Yasuko Fujino has been the catalyst for young Japanese students' interest in tapestry weaving. Her own work is concerned with coded symbols of her own invention. These she links to the importance of pattern in traditional Japanese textiles, which have narrative in their patterns and composition and are shared by the community. Her process is one of slow reveal, allowing her tapestries to "represent their own memories that are weathered, regenerated and trapped." At the Symposium she also presented the work of young Japanese tapestry artists and it was evident how much they wished to reflect their lives in contemporary Japan.



Yasuko Fujino, "Yamato River," 250 cm x 70 cm, photo: Makoto Yano. Silk.



Valerie Kirk, "Floating Fossil," 1 m x 1 m. Wool, cotton.

The final speaker was Valerie Kirk, who drew the day together with her overview of past, present, and future, describing the importance of fragments of ancient tapestries which have been preserved through burial rituals. Through these textiles we can read about the lives of people many thousands of years ago. Now in the digital age she reflected on what will remain to tell our stories and the continuing relevance of tapestry to "mirror our world and concerns, providing reflections for our present and future generations."

The speakers who were not from the UK took the opportunity to introduce artists who were less familiar, or new, to the UK audience. Each spoke clearly and knowledgeably about the role played historically by tapestry in telling those stories about the life and beliefs of those who commissioned, and those who looked at the works, and latterly of the artists who conceived and wove them. Most importantly, the context of tapestry as a narrative of our time afforded the opportunity for all the presenters to speak from their heart, demonstrating their passion and commitment to their narrative themes and the centrality of tapestry in the materialisation of those themes.

Finally, I was delighted to announce that I will be curating a new tapestry exhibition at the William Morris Gallery in London, opening June 2018. And so the story continues...



## ATA VOLUNTEERS

### Margo Macdonald

#### What brought you to tapestry weaving?

I was a painter early on and dabbled in all kinds of weaving. When I had my first child, all the messy stuff needed to be put away. I needed something image based that could be left at a moment's notice. Tapestry weaving fit the bill; first a necessity, then an obsession.

#### How did you find ATA?

My regional tapestry group, Tapestry Artists of Puget Sound (TAPS,) all came to ATA about the same time.

#### Describe what you do for ATA.

I am the Exhibition Committee Chair. I find venues for all the exhibitions and work with the co-chairs of each show. I submit quarterly reports to the Board and work with the Executive Director and the Volunteer Coordinator

#### What do you value about volunteering for ATA?

Meeting other tapestry artists and learning new aspects of tapestry art in the contemporary art world.

#### About Margo

I live in the Pacific Northwest and my art making reflects that environment. My most recent work focuses on rivers in Washington State.



Margo Macdonald, "Elwah," 30 in x 35 in, 2017, photo: Margo Macdonald



## ATA NEWS

### Valentine's Day Appeal

Thanks so much to all of you who have donated to the 2018 Valentine's Day Appeal. This year's appeal will support a professionally produced, educational video celebrating the processes, materials and beauty of contemporary tapestry. The video will add a dynamic component to our exhibitions and an online resource presenting creativity & excellence in contemporary tapestry. It's not too late to donate! [Click here](#) to access the Valentine's Day Appeal donation page.

### Painter Brown Scholarship for Tapestry Study

Did you know that ATA's scholarship award accepts submissions on an ongoing basis? The scholarship is designed to assist any American Tapestry Alliance member who wishes to pursue study in the field of tapestry weaving. The application may be for study in workshops, courses, study with individual tutors or institutions of higher learning. [More information](#).

### ATA International Student Award

Deadline: April 15, 2018. The ATA International Student Award is presented annually to a student enrolled in a college fiber program. The fiber program may be located in any country. The award consists of:

- \$750.00.
- An article in ATA's quarterly newsletter, *Tapestry Topics* featuring the work of the award recipient.

All applicants will receive a one-year student membership in the American Tapestry Alliance.

More information and an online application can be found [here](#).

### Call for Board of Directors

**WE WANT YOU!!** ATA is currently looking for two Board Members, who would join the Board in July of 2018. The positions are: Director of Communications and Director of Fundraising. For information about serving on ATA's Board, click [here](#). Please [contact us](#) with your questions.

### 2018 Board of Directors Election

The 2018 Board election will take place during the month of May. Watch your email for a link to the ballot.

### Weaving the Future Grants

Sally Reckart has been awarded a Weaving the Future grant of \$250. She, along with Janet Clark and Jane Riley will be teaching tapestry to children at various locations, museums, community centres in Teeside, United Kingdom.

## Convergence

### 2018 Speakers Session

ATA's Speakers Session will take place Monday, July 9th from 10:30 am to 3:00 pm at the Peppermill Resort. Maximo Laura and Rowen Schussheim-Anderson are the featured speakers. Their talks will be followed by the 2018 Digislam, a preview of **World Tapestry Now** and time for networking. Bring a loom, bring postcards of your work, bring information about classes that you teach or regional tapestry groups to which you belong. **JOIN US!**

### 2018 Digislam

Get ready! ATA's **Speakers Session** during Convergence will include our much anticipated **Digislam**. Everyone is eligible and encouraged to submit up to three images of their tapestries for inclusion in the Digislam. If more people enter than can be included, priority will be given to ATA members. **Entry Deadline: April 15, 2018.** Online entry can be found [here](#).

### The Biggest Little Tapestries in the World!

**July 1-31, 2018** Northwest Reno Public Library, 2325 Robb Drive, Reno, Nevada, USA.

#### Important Dates

March 31, 2018	<b>The Biggest Little Tapestries in the World</b> tapestries & catalog materials due
April 15, 2018	<b>2018 Digislam.</b> Entry Deadline
April 15, 2018	<b>International Student Award</b> deadline
July 9, 2018	<b>ATA's Speakers Session.</b> 10:30 – 3:00. White Orchid Room. Peppermill Resort, Reno, Nevada with speakers Rowen Schussheim-Anderson and Maximo Laura, the 2018 <b>Digislam</b> , a preview of <b>World Tapestry Now</b> and time for socializing!
July 2018	<b>The Biggest Little Tapestries in the World!</b> Northwest Reno Public Library, 2325 Robb Drive, Reno, Nevada, USA
July 10 – 13, 2018	<b>Mining the Muse! ATA's 2018 Members Retreat.</b> Peppermill Resort, Reno, Nevada, with Maximo Laura and Rowen Schussheim-Anderson

## Tapestry Topics Themes & Deadlines

### ***New Faces in Tapestry***

**Deadline: April 1, 2018**

In recent years, a type of weft-faced weaving that can often be broadly defined as tapestry has gained popularity. A new crop of artists are learning to weave and many are not following the path of tapestry weavers before them. Unconventional techniques, broken rules and modified terminology mark a new generation of weavers.

Are you a tapestry traditionalist? Do you cringe when you see a weft-faced weaver breaking the rules? Is it jarring to you to see tapestries that don't fit the definition of tapestry you've always known?

Do you welcome this new kind of modern tapestry weaver and the innovation that they bring to the art form? Are you excited to see interest in tapestry weaving and excited to work together within a diverse community of weavers?

Are you a member of this new group of weavers? Do you feel like a part of the tapestry community? Is your ultimate weaving goal to learn traditional tapestry or do you want to be a part of a community creating their own version of this art form?

We want to hear from everyone. What do you see in tapestry weaving's future? Please email Theme Coordinator, Elena Zuyok [elena@mirrixlooms.com](mailto:elena@mirrixlooms.com) to let her know what you would like to contribute to this issue.

### **Call for Theme Coordinators**

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

Email: [newsletter@americantapestryalliance.org](mailto:newsletter@americantapestryalliance.org)

### **Tapestry Topics Committee**

<b>Editor</b>	<b>Leslie Munro</b>
<b>Copy Editor</b>	<b>Robbie Lafleur</b>
<b>Layout</b>	<b>Open</b>
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## *Between & Etc.*

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Online & brick and mortar. Retail by appointment.*

*Between & Etc. - Sales of tapestry bobbins (9 variations), bones, beaters  
a newly designed M.E. style metal tapestry beater, grattoirs, warp,  
specially designed tapestry tools, produced locally and Alv Norwegian Tapestry  
yarns. A market place for used tapestry equipment and books, as acquired  
or placed on consignment.*

*And of course - Books written by Kathe Todd- Hooker and Pat Spark:  
Tapestry 101, Line in Tapestry, Shaped Tapestry, So Warped (with Pat Spark)  
And some books by others (Linda Rees, Nezhnie - Weaver & Innovative Artist)*

*Watch for - Tapestry and Friends will be available in June.*

*We offer all levels of instruction: design and making it happen!  
Or by private instruction, where you create your own agenda of learning.  
Instruction can be one on one, group or workshop. I also offer private critiques  
and consulting, and am available as an itinerant tapestry instructor,  
traveling around giving workshops and private instruction.*

*And, yes, gr! It is both small format and large format.*

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**2018 Surface Design Association International Member Exhibition**

**San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles**  
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[www.sjqmusem.org](http://www.sjqmusem.org)  
July 22 - October 14, 2018

**Important Dates**  
Call Opens January 8, 2018  
Call Closes April 6, 2018

**Exhibition Dates**  
July 22-October 14, 2018

**July 22, 2018**  
Opening Reception

**Entry Procedure**  
Entries are to be submitted online through CaFETM Call for Entry  
<https://tinyurl.com/ybfou7qm>  
\$40 entry fee for members  
\$45 entry fee for non-members  
\$20 for student members

**Jurors**  
Carole Frances Lung, artist/activist/academic  
Amy Di Placido, SJMQT Exhibitions Curator

**Questions?** Email us at: [info@surfacedesign.org](mailto:info@surfacedesign.org)  
[www.surfacedesign.org/events-exhibits/exhibits/](http://www.surfacedesign.org/events-exhibits/exhibits/)



San Jose Museum of  
**Quilts &  
Textiles**



### ATA appreciates having YOU as a member!

We know that you have many ways to spend your money and we are very thankful that you value a membership in ATA. We also hope that you take advantage of the many benefits of membership.

#### Individual Membership Benefits

##### Promote your work & workshops!

- Listings in ATA's monthly *eKudos*
- Listings on ATA's Tapestry Instructors webpage
- Social Media Spotlights on member instructors

##### Get inspired!

- *Tapestry Topics*, ATA's quarterly newsletter
- Digital files of ATA's Digislams and out of print catalogs

##### Connect!

- Subscription to ATA's monthly *eNews*
- *Talk* – members only email list
- Membership Directory

##### Save money!

- Reduced entry fees for ATA's exhibitions
- Reduced registration fees for ATA's workshops
- Discounts on exhibition catalogs
- Discounts on advertising
- Discounts on tapestry equipment and supplies from selected businesses

#### Studio Circle Benefits

- All Individual benefits listed above, plus:
- Your own Artist Page on ATA's website
- Social Media spotlights of your Artist Page
- Free Mentoring Program
- Donor recognition in ATA catalogs

#### Curator's Circle Benefits

- All Individual and Studio Circle benefits listed above, plus:
- Early registration for workshops

#### Collector's Circle Benefits

- All Individual, Studio Circle and Curator's Circle benefits listed above, plus:
- Complimentary catalogs

## The Back Page

neoteric [ni:ə(ʊ)'tɛrɪk]

1. *adj.* new or modern; recent.

First known use in English: 1577.

"Chasuble with the Gathering of the Manna," After a print by Hieronymus (Jerome) Wierix (Netherlandish, ca. 1553–1619 Antwerp).  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Retrieved 12 February 2018, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/227765>



*In this very rare example of a tapestry-woven ecclesiastical vestment, the more expected materials and techniques are imitated in trompe l'oeil: the main fabric simulating a pomegranate velvet and the pictorial scene, embroidery.*

Alice Zrebiec, 1996