

## **AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008**

This past year has seen steady growth for American Tapestry Alliance. Our membership has expanded not only in the number of artists we serve, but also in the countries these artists represent. We have received record monetary contributions. ATA's services to its members have grown and diversified - through a new exhibition, and expanded programming in other areas. As always, we strive to offer programs that offer personal growth to our artist members and an increased visibility for contemporary tapestry.

ATA's success stems from a strong and committed Board of Directors and a talented group of volunteers, whose continued involvement and support endorse the direction of the organization.

#### **Membership**

ATA membership continues to grow. Of our 465 members, more than 25% renew at Studio Circle level or above. This year over 100 people will have joined or rejoined ATA by June 30, even though membership was not required to submit to ATB7. The increased numbers can be attributed to ATA's rising national and international presence and our much applauded website.

Volunteers Mimi Heft and Ellen Ramsey designed snazzy new membership brochures and postcards. They are available to guilds and teachers for distribution at their events and are being handed out at the Convergence 08 information table. Increasing our funding base through membership is key to the continued success of ATA and we hope all members will promote our organization whenever possible. Ellen Ramsey chairs the Membership Committee.

#### **Treasury**

Barbara Richards, our Treasurer, reports that American Tapestry Alliance has a positive balance sheet and healthy savings. This is due to the increasing number of members and a greater number of higher-level memberships. It also reflects the success of the Silver Anniversary Raffle and additional monetary donations from the Teitelbaum Charitable Remainder Trust and a private individual's loom sale. See the Annual Budget for more information.

#### **Newsletter**

Linda Rees, editor of Tapestry Topics, continues to produce an informative quarterly newsletter that is read and valued by tapestry artists around the world. Her use of themed issues allows aspects of contemporary tapestry to be explored in depth by a diverse range of authors. Linda also takes advantage of guest editors, who provide individual approaches and fresh ideas. An excerpt from each article in Tapestry Topics is posted on the ATA website and accompanied by color images. This has allowed us to keep printing costs and membership fees low, while still offering color imagery. Ellen Ramsey handles the distribution of the newsletter and has set up bulk mailing for favorable postage rates.

## Website

ATA's website continues to provide a rich and diverse range of tapestry information. It is updated frequently and is readily accessible not only to our own members, but also to magazine editors, galleries, collectors and anyone else interested in contemporary tapestry. The website is visited over 2300 times per day.

Web Exhibition Coordinator, David Johnson has developed guidelines for web exhibitions and welcomes proposals from prospective member curators. This year's Web Exhibitions included *Christine Laffer: Lines of Inquiry*, and *Lialia Kuchma: Work Over Time*. The next Web Exhibition will be *Inspiration & Creativity*, a project hosted jointly with the Educational Articles section of the website.

The Educational Articles section of the website was added this year. It offers information on a range of topics. Articles posted recently discuss mounting and hanging tapestries, warp weft balance, using slits in tapestry and making the infamous Archie Brennan copper loom. Another new service on our website is the list of tapestry educators.

Artist Pages, a benefit of Studio Circle and higher memberships, offer artists a chance to exhibit their work on the ATA website. Links are also provided to the artists' individual websites. Members with higher-level memberships are encouraged to take advantage of this benefit.

ATA Core, a website portal, was added to our resources several years ago. It offers a virtual filing cabinet with controlled access for key volunteers. By downloading policy documents, guidelines, letter formats and promotional materials to Core, volunteers can easily access the information they need. The board has made a concerted effort to add all board and volunteer job descriptions this year. Christine Laffer is ATA's web mistress.

## Education/Events

Tommye Scanlin oversees the Distance Learning program. This year, ten mentoring "couples" are working together. Both students and mentors are enthusiastic about the interactions and the opportunities provided by this study format.

Building on the success of Distance Learning, ATA recently created the Helping Hands Program for beginning tapestry weavers. Each student is paired with a mentor who can address the specific needs of the new tapestry weaver. Joyce Hayes is the chair of this program.

Mary Lane organized two educational programs and a forum this past year. *Connecting Image to Process*, taught by Susan Martin Maffei, was well received in New York City in October 2007. *Channelling Your Muse*, a three-day educational retreat following Convergence 2008, will offer participants an opportunity to study tapestry design with Mary Zicafoose and Joan Baxter. *Reinventing Landscape*, a forum held in conjunction with ATA's annual meeting at Convergence, will present artist slide talks by Zicafoose and Baxter and a digi-slam of contemporary tapestry.

As part of ATA's activities at Convergence 2008, Myla Collier organized the Waterfront Gathering, a networking dinner for tapestry weavers and enthusiasts. North American and overseas artists were welcomed at this event.

## **Exhibitions**

ATB6 completed its run at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles in San Jose, California in April 2007. Although some of the tapestries were held up in customs when crossing borders, Peggy Strang capably returned all the tapestries with the necessary customs and travel documentation.

ATB7 attracted 177 entries from 102 artists. Susan Warner Keene, an independent curator from Canada, juried the exhibition, selecting 40 tapestries from 39 artists. Four of the accepted entries were from Canada and Mexico and ten tapestries were from overseas. The remaining 26 were from the United States. ATB7 opens at the University of Tampa, Scarfone/Hartley Gallery in Tampa, Florida and moves to the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft in Louisville, Kentucky in September. Alex Friedman is the ATB7 chair.

Lynne Mayne's stewardship of the ATB catalog production continued for a second exhibition cycle. The professional catalog was produced both on time and within budget. We offered the catalogs at a pre publication price for members and for the first time they were available at Convergence in the vendors' area through Lunatic Fringe.

American Tapestry Alliance also sponsored Woven Gems, the popular unjuried Small Format show, at the TECO Plaza Gallery in Tampa, Florida. Janet Haase and her committee capably carried out all aspects of organizing this show, including working with art students at Broward Community College to create a catalog that documents 177 tapestries. This catalog is also available in the vendor's hall at Convergence. All catalogs are available on our website: [americantapestryalliance.org](http://americantapestryalliance.org).

Connections: Small Tapestry International, the inaugural edition of a biennial, juried, small format tapestry exhibition, will be launched in 2009. Jane Sauer of Jane Sauer Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, will be the juror. Connections will open at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles in May 2009. This new, juried exhibition will permit those working in a smaller format to showcase their work in an exhibition that will enjoy the status and popularity of ATB. Kathy Spoering is the chair.

## **Public Relations and Promotions**

The Promotions Committee has made great strides in developing targeted mailing lists to promote ATA exhibitions, awards and programs. Relationships are being built with magazine editors and with other fiber organizations. Fiberarts and Shuttle, Spindle and Dyepot are two of the magazines that have published articles and reviews of ATA exhibitions and events.

With Elaine Duncan as chair, the Promotions Committee created ten books that will be used to solicit exhibition venues. They include ATA's organizational resume and a variety of images of our members' work.

Postcards have proven to be a very effective promotional tool for exhibitions and membership recruitment. Several members who are graphic designers create these cards for us. We could very much benefit from a volunteer who would oversee the timeline of postcard production for all of our events.

For the second year we did not attend SOFA in Chicago. In order to participate we must sponsor a speaker who has an affiliation with a gallery at SOFA. This might be possible by collaborating with Friends of Fiber Art International and by identifying a volunteer

who is interested in fostering this process. A presence at SOFA would help promote tapestry to collectors and gallery owners.

### **Library and Slide Library**

The guidelines developed for slide rental work well, but the program needs to be revamped to keep up with changing technology. Connections in 2009 will be our first digital entry exhibition. It will give us the opportunity to set up a storage and rental system for CDs. We will continue to rent out the slide sets as long as there is interest.

In 2007 we decided to disband the ATA library. Most books are available through interlibrary loan. The actual dissemination of the books and catalogs has not yet occurred. Joyce Hayes maintains the Slide Library.

### **Archives**

Karen Crislip has organized the ATA archives. She sorted through many files, arranging them so that the information remains complete and available to future researchers. She also added the Silver Anniversary documentation to the archives. Marti Fleischer has recently donated audiotapes and other documentation of the early days of ATA.

### **Awards**

This was the third year for ATA's Student Award. Erika Diazoni from San Jose State University, in San Jose CA was selected to receive the award, which consists of a one-year student membership to ATA and a monetary award of \$250.00.

The ATA Award has been renamed American Tapestry Alliance Award for Excellence in Tapestry. This award is given in recognition of superior tapestries exhibited in a juried show containing at least 10% tapestry. The award consists of a ribbon and a one-year membership in ATA. This past year Donna Contractor, Tommye Scanlin, Sharon Warren, and Jennie Henderson received the award in different exhibitions throughout the United States. Last month, Irisa Blumate received the award in the LAND show of the Tapestry Foundation of Victoria in Australia.

We thank Beverly Kent, a long time ATA supporter, who has steadfastly promoted and administered the ATA Award for many years. She has stepped aside and Elisabeth Quick is the new American Tapestry Award for Excellence in Tapestry coordinator.

### **Fundraising**

ATA's most reliable and successful fundraiser has been the annual giving program, administered through Studio Circle memberships. These memberships bring in several thousand dollars each year above standard membership rates. We also write grant proposals to seek support for ATB exhibitions. This year we received a grant of \$750.00 from Friends of Fiber Art International in support of the ATB7 catalog. We continue to draw on funds generated by the Silver Anniversary fundraiser in 2007 to support our programs and catalogs. No grant application was made to the NEA this funding cycle.

Our most notable source of funding came this year through the Teitelbaum Charitable Remainder Trust. As a beneficiary of the trust, ATA has received \$20,200.00. We are looking into ways to best invest this generous gift.

## **Nominating Committee**

Jan Austin chaired the Nominating Committee, which successfully recruited four new Board members, Marcella Fraker, Kathleen Marcel, Sarah Swett and Mary Zicafoose. Her committee included Karen Crislip and Pat Williams. They not only assembled a list of candidates for the current Board openings, but also a group of people interested in future Board positions.

## **Volunteer Coordinator**

The addition of this position within the leadership of ATA continues to prove invaluable. Several years ago Joan Griffin stepped forward to support her belief that “many hands make light work”. Volunteers make American Tapestry Alliance successful. Over 100 volunteers have been working in both short and long term jobs this past year.

## **Board Retreat**

The Board retreat, which is attended by Board members and a few key volunteers, will be held in Fall 2008. The Board retreat is an opportunity to put our virtual communication system aside and meet face to face for two and half days. Through open discussions we problem solve and make plans for each area described in ATA’s operating plan, known as the Red Book.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we believe ATA has made great progress in the areas of Promotion, Educational Programs, Fundraising and Exhibitions. However, one of the topics that begs for discussion and action, and that will help insure the successful growth of ATA, is hiring staff. As ATA grows in numbers, and in the range and sophistication of its programming, the value of professional skills becomes apparent in many areas. We will be discussing this issue at the board retreat and we invite input from the membership on this matter.

As an all-volunteer organization, ATA has grown in stature and recognition over the past twenty-five years. We, the volunteers, who steer and steward the organization, who dream, plan and problem solve, are truly proud of all ATA has accomplished and we look forward to a future where we hand our jobs on to others, knowing ATA and tapestry will continue to maintain a place of importance in the world of art and craft.

This concludes the annual report. A few copies of this report and the annual budget are available. It may also be read on the ATA website.