

American Tapestry Alliance

PO Box 28600 San Jose, CA 95159-8600 www.americantapestryalliance.org



American Tapestry Alliance Annual Report 2008-2009

American Tapestry Alliance continues to thrive. Programs such as international exhibitions, workshops and symposia offer our artist members opportunities for personal growth, and present the vibrant and flourishing field of contemporary tapestry to the public. This year we expanded our efforts to connect with the larger textile community by collaborating with other organizations at events of shared interest.

During this fiscal year ATA was one of the beneficiaries of the Henry Day Ellis Charitable Remainder Trust. This donation gives us an opportunity to secure the future growth of ATA activities. As always, ATA's success stems from a strong and committed Board of Directors and an unprecedented number of volunteers, whose continued involvement and support endorse the direction of the organization.

Member Services Committees:

Newsletter: Completing her sixth year as editor, Linda Rees has coordinated themed articles in each issue of Tapestry Topics. A balance of book reviews and exhibition reports, scholarly missives and member submissions challenge and educate us. Tapestry Topics also serves as a message board. It publicizes the call for entry for ATA's three sponsored exhibitions and the subsequent list of accepted artists and exhibition schedules. The Kudos column notes our members' honors, awards and commissions. Volunteers Make it Happen profiles some of the many volunteers who support ATA. The newsletter is our connection to each other and a link to the world of contemporary tapestry. Linda Rees is retiring as editor and we thank her for her tireless and vigilant work to produce a newsletter we all look forward to receiving.

A new team is being formed to continue the information flow. Ellen Ramsey has handled distribution of the newsletter, utilizing non-profit bulk mailing for favorable postage rates. She will pass this job on to Nancy Crampton. With new editors and a new distribution person we expect to see new ideas implemented.

Treasury: The past year saw the retirement of Barb Richards, our dedicated treasurer of three years. We thank her for her service. Stepping in seamlessly is Rosalee Skrenes, assisted by Marcia Ellis. They have divided the treasury duties and streamlined some of the processes, making it easier to track and report various aspects of the budget. Rosalee reports that ATA has a positive balance sheet and healthy savings. This reflects membership dues and the donations from the Valentine's Day appeal and the Henry Day Ellis Trust. The Trust money has been secured in a CD during this time of economic uncertainty. More profitable investments will be investigated when the economy stabilizes.

Paypal will soon be available on our website for paying dues and purchasing catalogs. It will be an especially useful tool for handling payments from our overseas members. This online payment system is used by many non-profits as well as commercial operations.

Membership: Memberships currently stand at 453. This is down from last year's high of 467. Membership chair Ellen Ramsey reports that while the number of new members remains about the same, renewals are slow to come in, with some long time members choosing not to renew. This is a concern. At the very time ATA is receiving large donations and venturing into collaborations with other textile groups we need to keep a strong membership base.

There is obvious support for ATA programming in the form of higher-level memberships, donations and a record high number of volunteers this year. It is unknown if the economy is playing a part in the lower number of renewals or if those members are just less engaged with tapestry at this time. Ellen Ramsey has done a remarkable job of watching over member benefits and keeping contact with members for 6 years. She is retiring and Diane Wolfe will become the new Membership chairperson, assisted by Ann Arndt.

Exhibitions: *ATB7* opened at HGA's Convergence in Tampa, Florida in June 2008, where it was part of the popular Gallery Crawl. It traveled to Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft in the fall. KMAC supported a lecture by ATA member Susan Iverson, as well as related textile activities during the run of the exhibit. Alex Friedman was the *ATB7* chair.

Also opening at Convergence was ATA sponsored *Woven Gems*, the small format open exhibition. A record 177 tapestries were on view in a public building in the business district near the site of the conference. Janet Haase was the chair.

The inaugural exhibition *Small Tapestry International: Connections* opened at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles in May 2009. Ninety-eight artists from nineteen countries submitted 184 tapestries. The juror, Jane Sauer, selected 40 tapestries. *Connections* will travel to Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana in September 2009. Kathy Spoering chaired this exhibition.

A catalog was produced for each exhibition and all are available for purchase on the ATA website: www.americantapestryalliance.org.

The **Web Exhibitions** program, under the direction of Dave Johnson and Sarah Swett, continues to offer tapestry shows on ATA's website. This year, the Web Exhibition program featured: *Lialia Kuchma: Work Over Time; Inspiration & Creativity*, a show highlighting the work of Peter Horn, Murray Gibson, Kay Lawrence and Joanne Soroka, and accompanied by a series of essays written by the four artists in the ATA Educational Articles section of the website, and *Land*, a show developed in conjunction with the Australian tapestry symposium, Tapestry 2008, and originally hosted at the Australian National University School of Art.

ATA has a **Slide Library** of past exhibitions for loan to members. The program is being revamped to keep up with changing technology. *Connections* was our first digital entry exhibition. We are in the process of setting up a storage and rental system for CDs of our exhibitions. We will continue to rent out the slide sets as long as there is interest.

Catalogs are produced for each ATA exhibition. These catalogs contain images and essays that are important documentation of contemporary, artist produced tapestries. They are offered for sale through the newsletter and the ATA website. They are also available through the museum shops of host venues. At Convergence in Tampa, *Lunatic Fringe* offered ATA's catalogs for sale in the vendor's hall. Catalogs will again be available in the *Lunatic Fringe* booth at Convergence, Albuquerque in 2010.

The **Archives** contain documentation of over twenty-five years of ATA history and programming. They are a valuable resource for anyone writing about artist made tapestries or the history of an organization dedicated to promoting tapestry and its makers. Since Karen Crislip sorted and organized them a year ago, we have received more stored files that need to be organized. Fran Williamson is in charge of archives.

Joyce Hayes is the Library chair.

Education: Participation in **Distance Learning** is offered to Circle members. This year, eleven mentoring “couples” are working together. Both students and mentors are enthusiastic about the interactions and the opportunities provided by this study format. Distance Learning has thrived under the leadership of Tommye Scanlin for the past three years. She is stepping down and Barbara Heller is the new chair.

The newer program **Helping Hands** for beginning tapestry weavers is growing slowly. 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.

The **Convergence Forum**, *Reinventing Landscape*, was held at Convergence 2008 in Tampa, Florida. The featured speakers were Joan Baxter and Mary Zicafoose. Joan and Mary were also the teachers for the ATA sponsored **Post Convergence Retreat**, *Channelling Your Muse*.

The **Workshop**, *Toolkit of Tapestry Techniques*, was held in conjunction with the small format exhibition *Connections* at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, San Jose, California. Christine Laffer taught the workshop. The workshop was held in the gallery area among the tapestries. This enhanced the workshop experience for participants and generated much interest with the public.

Two **Online Study Groups** were active this year. *Decoration as Subversion*, led by Sharon Marcus and *Materials + Structure = Something More*, led by Dorothy Clews commenced in October 2008. *Materials + Structure = Something More* ended in May 2009, and *Decoration as Subversion* is still continuing and is due to end in September 2009. Both study groups opened the session with participants discussing the possible definitions of the themes to be studied, artists whose work exemplified the theme, and a short bibliography.

Two **Educational Articles** were posted on the ATA website this year. *Inspiration & Creativity*, curated by Mary Lane, was a project that included four essays written by Peter Horn, Murray Gibson, Kay Lawrence and Joanne Soroka. A Web Exhibition of the four artists accompanied it. Jan Austin compiled a *Glossary of Tapestry Terms*. The glossary is interactive and members are invited to add terms.

Mary Lane is the Education chair.

Resources Group Committees:

Public Relations: The PR committee has been increasingly successful in securing publicity for ATA exhibitions and programming. Press releases are sent to textile magazines and journals including those in Great Britain and Australia.

Display ads for *ATB7* and *Connections* as well as the workshop, *Toolkit of Tapestry Techniques* were placed in several publications. The Student Award and calls to artists are noted in the calendar listings of many publications.

Presentation books for securing the ATB and small format exhibition venues were created by this committee. Elaine Duncan is the chair assisted by Linda Wallace.

Postcards have proven to be a very effective promotional tool for exhibitions and membership recruitment. The position of Post Card Manager has been added to the PR committee. Lynn Mayne will oversee the timeline and production of postcards for all exhibitions.

Promotions: ATA's awesome **Website** offers a wealth of information about our programs and events. Educational articles and online exhibitions are regular features that change every few months. A glossary of tapestry terms was added recently.

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.

The website is regularly updated to include current national and international exhibit information. Many links to information relevant to the tapestry field are available in the calendar. An online version of Tapestry Topics is available. It includes excerpts from the articles published in the print version, accompanied by many color images.

Christine Laffer is web mistress, assisted by member volunteers, Jeanne Bates, Dave Johnson and Lyn Hart.

This year's **Student Award** was given to Daniel C. Edwards of Australia. Daniel studies tapestry at the Australian National University School of Art. Daniel will receive a \$250.00 award and a one-year membership in ATA. Starting this year the board approved extending a free one-year membership to all students who apply for this award.

Through the generosity of the Teitelbaum Family Trust we are now able to offer two **Teitelbaum Family Awards** for our juried exhibitions. The Teitelbaum Family First Place Award in the amount of \$300.00 and the Teitelbaum Family Second Place Award in the amount of \$200.00 will be given for the first time in conjunction with *ATB8*. Our juror, Rebecca A.T. Stevens, will make the selection. The Teitelbaum awards will also be available for the next *Small Tapestry International* exhibition in 2011.

The **ATA Award for Excellence in Tapestry** was given to four tapestry artists this year. They are:
Kathy Spoering - Pike's Peak Weavers Guild show, *Living with Beauty*
Alex Friedman - TWINE show, *A Contemporary Look at Tapestry*
Tommye McClure Scanlin - Western North Carolina Handweavers Guild show, *Blue Ridge Handweaving Show*
Margaret Swanson - Southern California Handweavers Guild show, *Color Connects*

A presence at **SOFA** is one of the goals of ATA's five-year plan. SOFA hosts annual International expositions of Sculptural Objects & Functional Art in Chicago, New York and, for the first time this June, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. SOFA expositions consist of prominent international galleries and dealers who present the work of master artists of decorative and fine arts. A lecture series and educational exhibits are another component of these expositions.

Mary Zicafoose started her term as Co-Director of Resources by organizing ATA volunteers and promotional materials in order to participate in SOFA WEST. She collaborated with Ann Hedlund of the Gloria F. Ross Center for Tapestry Studies to share a table in the Resource Center at SOFA WEST. Information about both organizations was distributed and contemporary tapestry was promoted to collectors, gallery directors and the interested public. We look forward to increasing ATA's profile at future editions of SOFA WEST.

Fund Raising and Grants: The **Valentine's Day appeal** was a new opportunity for members to show their love for ATA. A lovely postcard, a letter from the Co-Directors and a donation form was assembled and mailed by Membership chair, Ellen Ramsey. Donations came in large and small amounts. The total raised exceeded \$1,500.00. The board voted to use a portion of these donations to purchase a digital projector for our programming use at Convergence and other conferences.

A **Friends of Fiber Art International grant** of \$500.00 was received to support the production of the *Connections* catalog. Kathy Spoering submitted this grant application.

A **National Endowment for the Arts grant** application was submitted to support the *ATB8* exhibition. Results will be posted in the fall. Susan Skalak made this application.

Volunteers: It is through the dedication of member volunteers that American Tapestry Alliance is able to offer such a rich and varied range of programming. Our Volunteer Coordinator, Joan Griffin, has matched over a hundred volunteers with jobs this past year. One reason so many volunteers are needed is that some jobs have increased in complexity. By adding more volunteers the work can be divided to make less work for each person. Another reason is that many people are willing to take on small jobs or jobs that occur one time, but not ongoing or more complex jobs. We need to keep a strong volunteer base to accomplish all our objectives.

Conclusion: Through the efforts of the board, and with support from our member volunteers, American Tapestry Alliance continues to serve our members' tapestry interests. ATA is becoming more visible in the textile community through our collaborations with other textile groups. We are extending our efforts and resources to bring tapestry to a wider audience, including collectors and gallery owners, through projects such as participation in SOFA WEST. ATA's ongoing programming is supported through individual memberships. Generous donations and gifts build ATA's financial reserves and careful management of these assets insures our continued fiscal health.

We thank our members for their support through upgraded memberships, donations, catalog purchases, volunteering and participation in our events.

Respectfully submitted,

Co-Directors,
Becky Stevens and Linda Wallace