



AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE

A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF TAPESTRY ART TODAY

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HONORING TRADITION, INSPIRING INNOVATION

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Please note: all page numbers are linked to pages

Cover Image: Jon Eric Riis, "Neoclassic Male and Female," 69 in x 51 in, 2014, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven silk and metallic thread with crystal beads.

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## Co-Directors' Letter, Winter 2017

Welcome to the Winter 2017 edition of *Tapestry Topics*, where we continue with the second half of *The Interview Issue*. There are so many interesting lives and so much to say about tapestry, art, and life! To all of the many volunteers who worked so tirelessly to produce this newsletter, we send you a sincere "thank you." It is easy to forget the many aspects of creating a newsletter each quarter. From the beginning, with the Theme Coordinator and the writers, to the moment this arrives in your inbox - a talented group of people edit, design, proofread and proofread again, putting the final touches on our most prized member benefit. Like so many things in ATA, this is a labor of love by volunteers! Thank you.

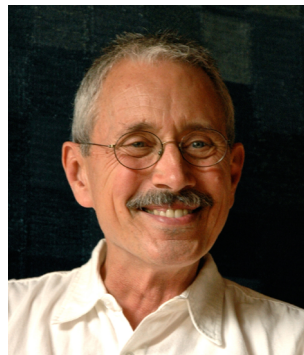
It seems that ATA never rests. The newest issue of CODA came out this fall to rave reviews. It is an issue to impress and inspire us all. Thanks to Editor, Christine Laffer, and guest essayist, Lesley Miller, for their insights. And a big thank you to Anna Kocherovsky for designing an elegant and contemporary layout. **Small Tapestry International 5: Crossroads** ended its stay in Denton, Texas and opened with great success at the Handforth Gallery in Tacoma, Washington. We are pleased that so many members in the Tacoma area were able to attend the opening. Congratulations to all of you in the exhibition. And thanks go out to Deborah Corsini, Exhibition Chair, and Helen Keogh, catalog designer. Applications have been received for **World Tapestry Now**, and we look forward with great anticipation to this online exhibition and print catalog. Many of you signed up for the 2018 Members Retreat in Reno next summer, and we look forward to seeing you there for our annual meeting. Please remember to send in images for the Digislam!

It is time now to relax and read this wonderful issue. We hope you enjoy each interview and find something to inspire you in your own life or studio. For diverse reasons, each season is a wonderful time to weave! For those of you in the northern hemisphere with the joys and hardships of winter, we wish you hours and hours in the studio - a perfect season for weaving with wool! Those of you in the southern hemisphere can now enjoy the long hours of natural light and the relaxed nature of summer - also perfect for weaving!

Susan Iverson and Michael Rohde



Susan Iverson



Michael Rohde

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## Identity and Meaning: More Interviews

by Ellen Ramsey

Continuing our artists interview theme, this issue brings together a diverse group of artists, including a good number who are not members of ATA and are new to the pages of *Tapestry Topics*. Many of these artists identify with their work on a cultural level, others are inspired by the concept of identity, their own or others'.

Among the weavers whose very identity is interwoven with every pass at the loom are two esteemed Navajo weavers, Roy Kady and Mae Clark. Both of these weavers are deeply inspired by their heritage, but they are also innovating within their traditions and advancing their art form to new heights. Kady's inspirations are the old ceremonial narratives, interpreted through intricately woven pictorials that are clearly his own and speak to 21st Century audiences. Mae Clark is something of a rebel underneath her shy public persona, and it was her work that most surprised me. Her beautiful weavings manage to be both uniquely personal and deeply rooted in the traditions of her heritage. Her poetry imbues each piece with a special presence that is truly born of her spirit.

Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir (Ragnheidur Bjork Thorsdottir) is also a welcome newcomer to *Tapestry Topics*. Like Kady and Clark, she is also deeply connected and inspired by her heritage and traditions, in her case, Icelandic textiles and Norse mythology. She often turns her cultural inspiration on its head, mixing traditional subjects and/or techniques with untraditional materials. Like Clark, she manages to produce work that is personal within the confines of tradition.

Lyn Hart, from Arizona, provides an interesting contrast to Ragnheidur's work in both style and geography, with her descriptive images of desert flora and fauna. To say that the theme of identity drives her work would be misplaced, but there is no mistaking that "where she is" is informing "who she is" as an artist. Many ATA members will identify with how Lyn entered our field, and how she pursues the craft. If you know Lyn, you know that she is an inquisitive participant in the life around her, and not much goes unnoticed. She takes a naturalist's view of her surroundings, and her curiosity is evident in every tapestry.

Jon Eric Riis and Pat Taylor are internationally known artists who are well known to readers, and both enjoy a high demand for their conceptually driven and impeccably woven tapestries. Both artists explore the issue of identity by asking us to discern the hidden subtext behind a portrait or an elaborately embellished coat.

Dance Doyle is a young artist who is a keen observer of the urban social landscape. She clearly identifies with her work and is inseparable from it. Spontaneity is not a word that is ever associated with tapestry, but Dance has managed to create work that is absolutely spontaneous from concept to execution—and pulls it off! She is clearly a rebel, both in technique and subject matter. Her work is wild, embellished, and utterly free of the weight of tapestry tradition. She is a rare find, and I'm so glad she is finally here in *Tapestry Topics*.



**Ellen Ramsey** lives in Seattle, Washington, and is a member of Tapestry Artists of Puget Sound. She is currently serving as Co-Chair for **World Tapestry Now**. She would very much like to thank everyone who entered!

Enjoy!

## Thank you to our Contributors including Ellen Ramsey, Theme Co-ordinator.

**Jeanne Bates** began weaving at an early age after stopping at Four Corners, where she watched Navajo weavers at their looms. Since retiring, she has taken workshops with tapestry experts, including Roy Kady, a talented weaver and excellent teacher.



Photo: Jeanne Bates.



**Deborah Corsini** has pursued a lifelong interest in weaving and textiles. Known for her dynamic wedge weave tapestries, her work is exhibited in national and international venues and her tapestries are in US Embassies and in corporate and private collections. Although tapestry is her primary art, her multi-faceted career has included teaching weaving, designing fabrics for the quilt market, and curating. As the former curator of the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles, she is well regarded for her provocative exhibitions and remains an advocate for contemporary textiles.

Photo: Serena Harrigan.

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 in her work. She works in Germany and New Mexico, and has completed three residencies at the Icelandic Textile Center in Blönduós. Cornelia's work has been shown internationally and can be found in private collections in the US and Germany, as well as the public collection of the Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź, Poland. Ragnheiður and Cornelia first met in 2016 during one of Cornelia's residencies at the Icelandic Textile Center. Cornelia will return to Iceland in the spring of 2018 to assist Ragnheiður in her current research project.

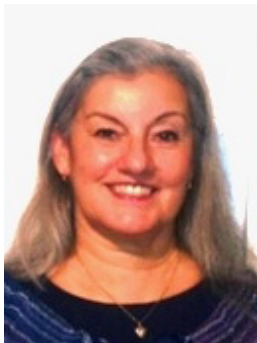


**Celina Grigore** is a visual artist specializing in handwoven tapestry. She lives in the San Diego area, California. For more information, visit her website at: [www.CelinaGrigore.com](http://www.CelinaGrigore.com)

**Nancy Nordquist** trained in art and art history, with a strong interest in textiles, both history and practice. After decades of quilting and embroidery, with occasional forays into weaving, she began knitting, spinning and dyeing wool in 2010, and to study tapestry seriously in 2015. She taught art history for fifteen years and is now happily weaving tapestries in The Woodlands, Texas.



Photo: Ron Nordquist.



Born in Buffalo, New York, **Pamela Palma** lived in New Mexico in her 20s, where she feels her soul was born. Her work continues to be informed by the Southwest landscape and Native American cultures. Today she weaves tapestries, art works, yardage for domestic products, apparel, accessories, anything and everything, mixing media and reinventing fiber art. She exhibits her work and teaches weaving in her studio in Miami, Florida.

**Katherine Perkins** started weaving tapestry in 1993 after more than 20 years of teaching high school government and history. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



**Cande Walsworth** lived in London for three years, where she participated in a tapestry study group (“surgery”) led by Pat Taylor. She recently returned to her permanent home in Kingston, Washington.

## A Weaving Life: Roy Kady

by Jeanne Bates



"I passionately weave and create with natural fibers to center myself in the cosmos of the universe. My ancestors, grandparents, and my Shimá (Mother) shared with me stories about how weaving was gifted to us in the creation world by Spider Man, by taking the natural elements of the universe to construct the first loom and then teaching his counterpart Spider Woman about weaving a web of life.

I raise a special breed of sheep that was also gifted to us in the underworld; they have long dual fibers that are very suitable for the fiber arts that I pursue. Whether it is a utilitarian wearable or an Art décor for the collector, it sings a song of beauty.

My designs are inspired by my natural surroundings; whether it is colors for my palette, or stories that I have heard from the past or present. I hand process most of the natural fibers that I create with, and I grow several fibers to include in my art. I also gather plants for natural dyeing my fibers to create one of a kind pieces. Thus my creations represent my heritage, traditions, and the ever-evolving Art of Navajo weaving that is considered one of the last primitive arts that are still created on an upright loom."



Roy Kady, "Home Of The Buffalos," 5.5 in x 5 in, 2009, photo: © Jack Loeffler. Handspun, vegetal dyed, Navajo Churro wool yarns.

**I consider Dine' (Navajo) weavers to be some of our National Treasures. Could you tell us about your heritage of weaving?**

Our heritage of weaving extends from the oral stories of inheritance from the underworld. Spiderman and his counterpart, Spiderwoman, taught their community of animals how to weave the universe on an upright loom by taking the horizons, the Earth and Sky beams, to make the frame for the loom. They used wild cotton that was drawn from the backs of the spiders to thread between the earth and sky beams from east to west, mimicking the

sun's travels. The strings thus became the male/female rain streams, and were fastened with the sun rays to make the first upright weaving loom. Each animal was given the opportunity to learn the process of weaving, and each animal created a pattern of colors and designs similar to their own body markings.

My favorite part of the story is when one of the animals realized that a group of animals was left out, and a messenger bird was sent to their camp to invite them to the learning and sharing that was taking place. When those animals came to learn,



the weaving came out very intricate and needed extra heddle sticks. Thus it became known as the twill weaves, and those animals were the serpent/snake people.

In my own family clan unit of the Manygoats and Salt clans, the same process of teaching has been taught to all so that it gets passed on for future weavers. This is how I learned the weaving lifeways of our people at the early age of nine years old.

**I really love that you are passing on your weaving traditions and your vast knowledge through your apprentice program. How is that structured?**

It is structured the same way that my Shimá (mother) would've shared it with the community members who had shown a keen interest in learning the weaving way, mainly by stopping by for a visit, and over a cup of coffee or tea, expressing interest in learning to weave, spin, and process wool.

But I structured mine a little more formally, which was asking the youths in my community or nearby communities to submit a one page letter of interest via Facebook about why they should be a part of my apprenticeship program, then selecting each one that submitted a letter to the program.

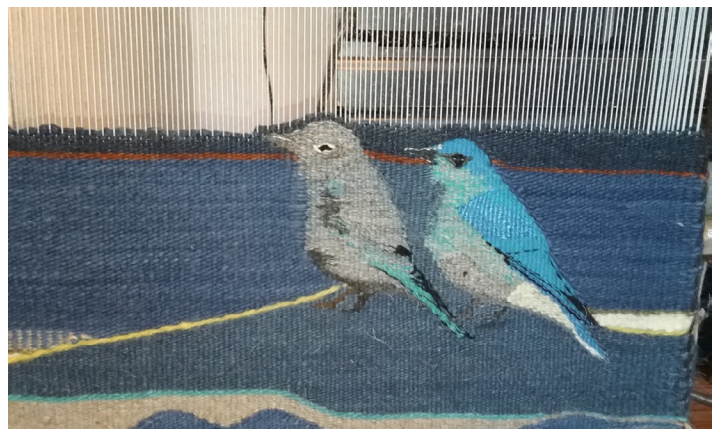
At the first gathering we talk about who had relatives currently, or maybe remember kinfolks, that wove, and raised sheep. We share those memories to invoke them in us, because it is important to remake those connections first, to gain permission from them to use their tools that may have been passed down, or may have been idling in a tool bag kept at home by their parents.

After that, we learn the beginning processes of working the fibers: washing, carding, spinning, dyeing, stringing up a loom, dressing it, and weaving. Also, we never forget the care of the sheep and the land because they are intertwined with our weaving lifeways.

I also immerse them by visiting museums that house collections of our earlier weavings, to draw on their designs and spirituality, and to learn about the histories of the weavings and sometimes their makers. We also attend ceremonies of other weaver friends to hear and learn the weaving/spinning/sheep songs.



Roy Kady, "Reflections," 52 in x 26 in, 2012, photo: Roy Kady. Handspun, vegetal dyed, Navajo Churro wool yarns.



Roy Kady, "The Blue World," 44.5 in x 66 in, 2017, photo: Roy Kady. Handspun, natural/vegetal dyed, Navajo Churro wool yarns, and metallic, cotton, hemp, silk accents on the birds.

Together, we continue to learn all that we can about other types of fiber related processes and techniques of weaving. We attend Native American markets and shows locally to gain knowledge about showing in these prestigious market places. Some apprentices apply to them and sell their pieces, while others decide to just weave for kin and friends, and continue to share what they've learned with other community members.

**Can you share the horse traditions and describe the horse trappings you weave?**

Our horse traditions also go back to our underworlds when they were created, and they are sacred to us, just like sheep are. My favorite story about them is of the Sun Bearer and his daily track across the sky.

The Sun starts each day from his hogan in the east, and rides across the skies to his hogan in the west, carrying the shining golden disk, the sun. He has five horses: a horse of turquoise, a horse of white shell, a horse of pearl shell, a horse of red shell, and a horse of coal. When the skies are blue and the weather is fair, the Sun is riding his turquoise horse or his horse of white shell or of pearl, but when the heavens are dark with storm,

he has mounted the red horse, or the horse of coal. During the creation of the horse, it is said that beneath the hoofs of the horses are spread precious hides of all kinds, and beautiful woven blankets, richly decorated. Hence, earlier on, we Navajos used to wear such blankets, and men say they were first found in the home of the sun-god. The Sun pastures his herds on flower-blossoms and gives them drink from mingled precious waters. These are holy waters, waters of all kinds: spring-water, snow-water, hail-water, and water from the four quarters of the world. The Navajos use such waters in their rites. When the horse of the sun-god goes, he raises not dust but glittering grains of mineral such as are used in religious ceremonies; when he rolls and shakes himself, it is the shining grains that fly from him. When he runs, the sacred pollen offered to the sun-god is all about him, like dust, so that he looks like a mist. The Navajos sometimes say that the mist on the horizon is the pollen that has been offered to the gods. The Navajo sings of the horses of the Sun in order that he, too, may have beautiful horses like those of the sun-god.



Roy Kady, "Hummingbird I," 25 in x 18 in, 2014, photo: © Micheal Benanav. Handspun, vegetal dyed, Navajo Churro wool yarns.

The weaving songs are about the horse who drew his hoof into the rain steams to weave on it, thumping his other hoof to make the weaving noise when you thump your weaving comb into the weft after you have strung it.

### **What is your favorite technique or type of weaving?**

My favorite weaving designs are the ones that tell a story, like of the Sun's horses, or of sunflowers in the distance. The pictorial ones are my current favorites at the moment, and this could all change later, who knows.

### **How do you choose the images you incorporate in your weaving?**

I choose the images in my weavings because they inspire me. They come from the stories that I have been told, or that I have heard at events/ceremonies that I've attended, and I wish to share those stories in order to tell about them.



Roy Kady, "Sunflower I," 23 in x 27 in, 2015, photo: Roy Kady. Handspun, vegetal dyed, Navajo Churro wool yarns.

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*And of course - Books written by Kathe Todd- Hooker and Pat Spark:  
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## A Unique Voice in Contemporary Navajo Weaving: Mae Clark's Compelling Story

by Pamela Palma



Mae Clark, photo: LeNora Fulton, taken at the Apache County Recorder, at Christmas Party, 2015.

As a Diné woman I introduce myself with my name and clan first, as I was told. My name is **Mae Clark** and my maternal clan is Towering House Clan, paternal clan is Chiricahua Apache Clan, maternal grandfather is Mexican Clan, and paternal grandfather is Near to Water Clan. I have been married to Jackson Clark for 28 years, and I have two children, Nocona and Shyn Sue.

I started weaving in 1985, and I wove only traditional rugs, mostly copying other weavers. In 1996 we relocated to what is now Newlands in Sanders, Arizona. We chose to be part of the Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation. Thank goodness Mr. Burnham\* remembers my mom and me. The rest is history, as they say.



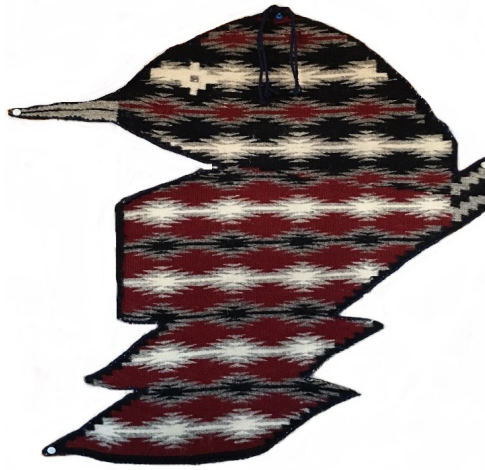
Mae Clark, "Thank You," 42 in x 48 in, June 30, 2009, photo: Mae Clark. Germantown Yarn.

### Thank You

*Our ancestors believe so much that we should live free,  
So they fought for our freedom,  
And the right for our voice to be heard.  
I've had grandfathers, grandmothers, uncle, aunts,  
Nephews, nieces, and cousins in the armed services  
Defending our country and our freedom.  
Some have paid with their lives  
Some have paid with their dignity and soul  
Whether they believe in the cause or not.  
They went because their country call.  
There is never an easy way to say thank you enough times.  
The only precious way for me to say thank you is with my tears.  
They are tears of joy to live in a country and be free  
And also they are tears of sorrow because  
We lose the ones we love  
WE THANK YOU AND MISS YOU!!!*



Mae Clark, Untitled.



Mae Clark, "Hummingbird," 24 in x 28 in, photo: Mae Clark. Materials: wild and wooly.



Mae Clark, Untitled.

When asked to conduct an interview with a tapestry artist for *Tapestry Topics*, I knew I wanted to connect with a weaver whose work I consider stellar and perhaps not well known, someone who is not part of ATA. I found Mae Clark through Facebook and have been "friends" with her for some time. I feel that Navajo weavers are under-represented in the art world. Even as textiles, hand weaving, and tapestries are having their "moment" of recognition, and we begin to attract notice, contemporary Navajo weaving is yet another subset of our genre.

Mae's story is genuine, and I thank her for sharing it with all of us. I hope you enjoy it, and her work, as much as I have.

**How did you get started as a weaver; what makes you keep weaving?**

I got started as a weaver apprentice in June 1986. I was out of college with no income and I didn't want to live off my parents. So one day I asked my mom (Rose D. Begay) to put up a rug for me, thinking she would do all the warping and set up all the time. Boy, was I wrong. She did it once and after

that it was all me. Her quote was, "You have watched me do this all your life, somewhere in that head of yours it is stored." And it was true. My first rug was a 16 in by 24 in Storm Pattern and I sold it for \$50 to Blair's Dinnebito Trading Post. I bought lamb milk for my lambs. Proud moment!

I tell people I keep weaving to keep my sanity. In all seriousness it would be, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY WITH MY ART - because I am a shy person.

**Tell me a bit about your design process. What influences your art, and what parts of the process do you love or not love?**

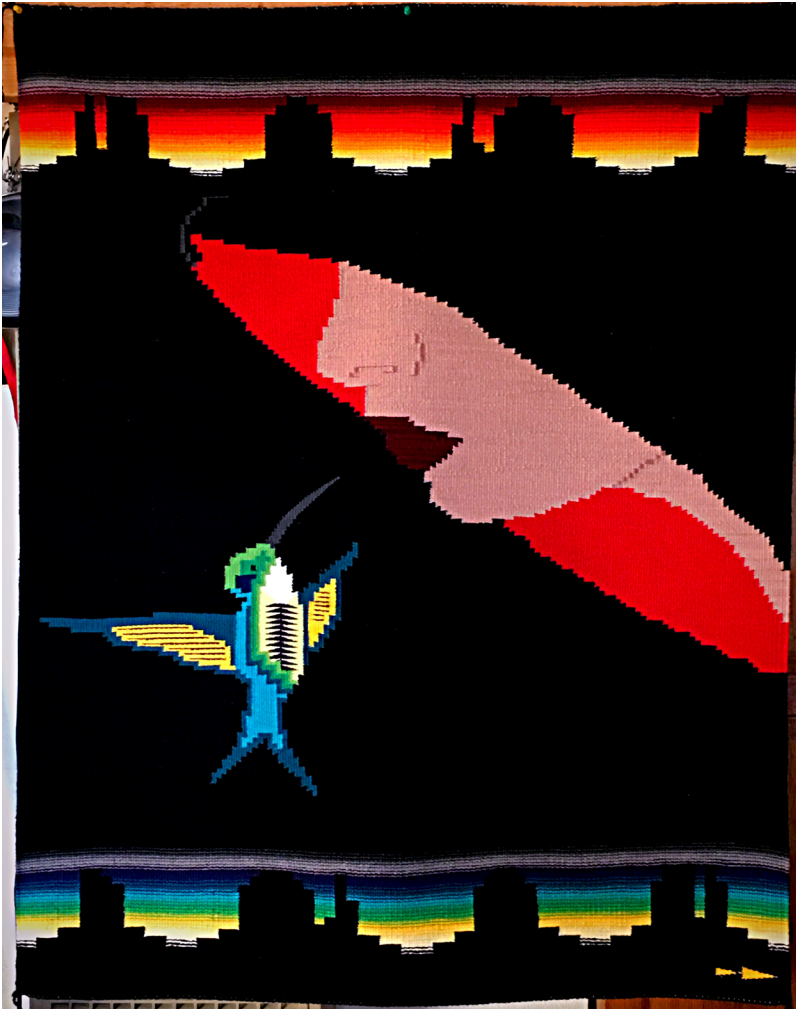
My design process starts with an idea or something out of my surroundings, and then I sketch it out and bounce it off my husband (Jackson Clark) and my daughter (Shyn Sue Clark). My influences are everything that my eyes touch because everybody and everything has something to say. We've just got to listen. The process I love is drawing out the design and putting together a poem that goes with the rug. My least favorite process is starting my design on my loom.

**I see your tapestries as very meaningful and, therefore, important woven art. What is the public's response to your work?**

The public didn't have a problem with my weaving when I was weaving traditional designs. After that, I started weaving contemporary pictorial Germantown rugs, and I give thanks to Bruce Burnham, owner of R.B. Burnham Trading Post, for taking a chance on me. Oh boy! I had a lady tell me that it was beyond traditional weaving, and that we, as Diné people, were not meant to weave like that. I told her that as a young, very traditional, Diné lady, "I have a lot of imagination, and as an artist I have a lot to say, and I just happen to say it with weaving." Another lady told me that, "because of you, our rugs mean nothing these days." That was back in 1999, but now, in 2017, a trader told my daughter, "Back in the day, every weaver ridiculed your mom for going beyond traditional weaving." Now I see weavers taking a step in that direction.

**Do you have a dream project? Professional goals?**

Yes, I do, it is to make rug dresses--



Mae Clark, "I Thought I Stop By and Explain...." 42 in x 48 in, March 13, 2007, photo: Mae Clark. Germantown yarn.

**I Thought I Stop By and Explain....**

*To stand outside and see beyond the hills  
and I say to you.*

*I'll always be near your heart, not far from  
your thoughts.*

*Please don't let me be your burden,  
I shed a tear....*

*To see my family, missing me.  
I am here with no blame.*

*I stand beside you forever.*

*Take my hand and let me be your strength.  
Talk to me and each other.*

*Your still a family, take nothing for granted.  
Love and cherish each other through hard times.*

*Through the song we sang and the prayer  
we prayed, your will remember, my teachings.*

*I leave you with this thought....*

*You made me the kind of person I was, nevertheless,  
you will never know the impact you made on my life,  
you made it a beautiful place, my family.*

**I WILL BE ALRIGHT.**

one for my daughter, for when she gets her Associate's degree in business management (I was not able to do it for her when she got her first Associate's degree), and another rug dress for my granddaughter, when she graduates from high school. She is only six years old. I wouldn't call it a professional goal but I want to do replicas of small rugs and call it "Mae Clark Weaving Through Time Collections."

**Do you feel you have a purpose as a weaver?**

I would say, yes, and my purpose would be, "I don't weave for fame and glory, but I do weave for my sanity and perspective in my life." For me, when everything gets outlined in my life, I talk to my rugs, and that has taught me to examine the situation like a sphere from all angles, with no hasty decisions.

**What is the best advice you have been given?**

That would be from my father, Tohannie Begay. One afternoon while we were eating lunch, I glanced back at my rug and thought, "Damn, I made good timing." My dad smiled to himself and said, "I am going to say something to you." I said, "Ok daddy." He goes, "I know you quit your school so you could take care of us. I wanted for you to sit in an office. As a parent you want your children to have an easy life. I blame myself for getting old and taking that dream from you. But I do not regret spending time with you for however long I am here. The weaving your mother is showing you, and you learning it, can provide you a comfortable life. But know this—never look back at your rug and think, DAMN I'M GOOD. Also, leave your mistakes because it makes the rug unique and one of kind even though you made a replica of a pattern. Weave with your heart." I never got the meaning—*weave your heart*—until I started weaving Germantown rugs.

**What words of wisdom would you pass to other weavers?**

If you dream it, draw it, see it, feel it, taste it, by all means put it on the loom. It doesn't matter if it's right or wrong. Never mind what people say. If your heart says it is right, go for it, because every single talented person has something to say. We just have to find a place to put it so the world can see.



**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

I can't talk about myself without mentioning the people who inspired me to go beyond traditional weaving. First, my husband, Jackson Clark, for having an eye for colors and designs and for all the pep talks encouraging me I can do those angles and weird shapes in rugs. My children, Nocona and Shyn, for having so much faith in me. Who could forget my number one fan, Bruce Burnham, owner of R.B. Burnham Trading Post, and whole Burnham Family? He defended me for weaving nontraditional rugs and encourages me to use Germantown yarn and, most of all, he gets my name out into the weaving world with my rugs and the poems that go with them.

\*You can find Mae Clark's work at <https://rbburnhamtrading.com>



Mae Clark, "I Stand Outside to See," 36 in x 48 in, October 17, 2003, photo: Mae Clark. Vegetal dye, Germantown yarn.

**I Stand Outside to See**

*I stand outside and see beyond these hills.*

*I see things people don't see.*

*I know nature has a face and that expressions changes form:  
Day to day, hour to hour, minute to minute and second to second.*

*I stand outside and stand still to see nature evolves around me.*

*There's a world outside that is invisible to the eye that you only can see with your heart.*

*I see things blind to the eye while I stand outside to see*

*See with your heart through the eyes and things will be a lot clearer.*

*I stand outside to see, but learn when to shun the world from your heart.*

## Honoring and Innovating within Icelandic tradition: An Interview with Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir (Ragnheidur Bjork Thorsdottir)

by Cornelia Theimer Gardella

### Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir

was born in Sauðárkrókur, Iceland, and lives and works in Akureyri. She graduated from The Icelandic College of Art and Craft in 1984 in textiles, studied in the MFA-program for textile artists at John F. Kennedy University, USA, from 1984-85, and attended the Gobelin workshop in France in 1989 and 1990. In addition to working as a textile artist, Ragnheiður has been teaching at the Comprehensive College in Akureyri for the past 27 years, in the Department of Art and Design. She was the Director of Textiles and administrator for the Art Department from 2001-2015. Her work has been shown in Iceland and abroad for the last 30 years, both in solo and group exhibitions. Ragnheiður was Akureyri's honorary artist from 2014-2015.

Currently, Ragnheiður is leading a new research project at the *Icelandic Textile Center* and the *Blönduós Center for Research and Collaboration* called "Bridging Textiles to the Digital Future". This project aims to research, analyze, and transform traditional weaving knowledge to rediscover original Icelandic techniques and weaving methods. Part of the project is to create new weaving patterns from historic samples, to archive valuable information, and to enable these historic samples to be woven once again in the Icelandic weaving industry – thereby potentially creating a new national identity for Icelandic textiles. The patterns will be made accessible through an online database for dissemination into the industry for textile artists and designers. Using the research, database, and the facilities in Blönduós, new prototypes, first test runs, and small batches of products can be woven on a TC2 digital loom.



Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "Land of Sheep," 120 cm x 130 cm (48 in x 52 in.) 2012. Icelandic wool and tog wool (the long, coarse guard coat of the Iceland sheep).



### Which tapestry is currently on your loom?

I started my current ongoing tapestry project last March, and I will, hopefully, finish it this year. It is not a traditional tapestry; I am using the pile weaving technique because I want the outcome to be a bit blurry. As my cartoon, I am using mono printing sketches, and the outlines of the design are out of focus, which is characteristic for this technique. I use only a variation of two colors (blue and white), various kinds of yarn, and different thickness of the yarn in each knot. The subjects are Scandinavian mythology, fertility and healing goddesses, and the symbolism of colors. My plan is to weave at least three pieces with this pile weaving technique. I have always been fascinated by old mythology and patterns mainly because they have lost their original symbolic values. We tend to look at patterns as having purely decorative meaning because we have lost the old understanding of their symbolic meaning, which I think is very sad.

### What is your most recent finished tapestry project and how did it come about?



Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "Winter," 90 cm x 170 cm (36 in x 68 in,) 2015. Cotton warp, Icelandic wool, linen, silk and cotton.

My most recent and finished tapestry project was done in 2015 for my solo exhibition at the *Art Museum*, in my hometown of Akureyri. I was the honorary town artist from 2014-2015 and finished with an exhibition. Among the weavings at that exhibition were 21 miniature tapestries that I wanted to function as one piece. These 21 small tapestries were like a journey of healing or recovery from a severe illness that I suffered from in December 2014 to September 2015. My legs and my right arm were partly paralyzed so I had to use quite primitive ways to weave my tapestries. The first piece took me three weeks to finish, and I am sure that these tapestries were part of my physiotherapy as well as psychiatric treatment that helped me a great deal through the recovery period. These miniature tapestries are very personal, and all of them have a great meaning to me. I had never before done small tapestries so it was a challenge to work on such a small scale. I did not always plan these small tapestries, sometimes they just came to me and I used my intuition – trying not to think too much. They were like my diary for



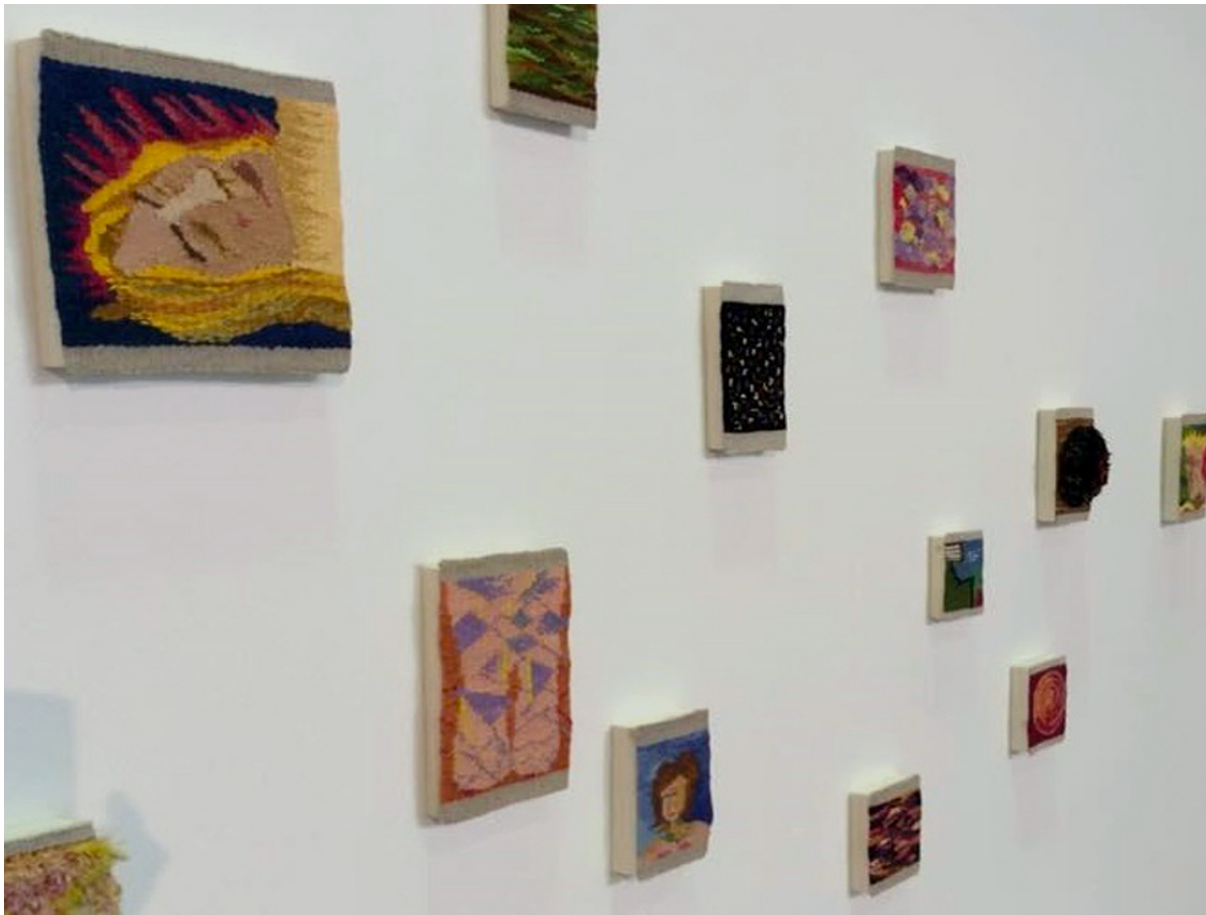
Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "The Old Flowerpot," 120 cm x 1180 cm (48 in x 72 in,) 2014. Icelandic wool.

this period of recovery.

**To what extent do you feel your work is influenced by your Icelandic heritage?**

A big part of me and my work is influenced by my Icelandic heritage and more so as I get older. So a big part of my motivation is the fact that I am Icelandic. We did not have any tapestries in Iceland until the 20th century, we simply did not have the time, manpower, nor buildings to display big tapestries. But Icelandic women wove so-called artistic weavings, something only few women did in Iceland for 1000 years. They were very skilled weavers, and until around 1800, they all used the old warp-weighted loom to weave their artistic weavings. These artifacts were made in techniques like tabby weaving, Icelandic glit, pile weaving, cross weaving, and monksbelt. Twill, plain weaving, and goose eye twill fabrics were woven for trading and for domestic use.

In my work, I have been influenced by the old pile weaving technique,



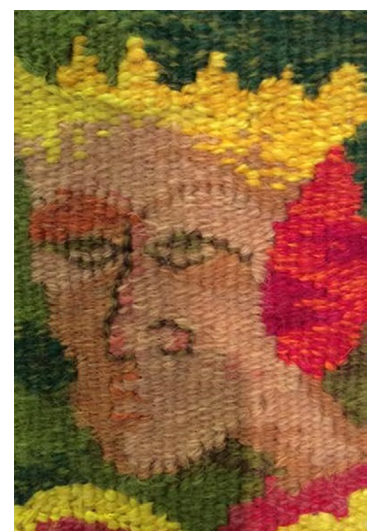
Ragheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "Microweavings," 2015. Cotton warp and Icelandic wool.



Ragheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "Microweaving: The Spiral," 15 cm x 15 cm (6 in x 6 in.) 2015. Cotton warp and Icelandic wool.



Ragheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "Petite Princess," 20 cm x 22 cm (8 in x 9 in.) 2011. Cotton warp, Icelandic wool and silk.



Ragheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "Microweaving: The Control Freak," 12 cm x 20 cm (5 in x 8 in.) 2015. Cotton warp and Icelandic wool.



Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "New Beginning," 100 cm x 140 cm (40 in x 56 in,) 2012. Cotton warp, Icelandic wool and copper wire.



Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "Transformation," 100 cm x 140 cm (40 in x 56 in,) 2012. Cotton warp, Icelandic wool and copper wire.

Icelandic glit, and overshoot technique. I use these techniques in non-traditional ways and with a variety of materials like plastic, copper wire, and Icelandic wool. In general, I can say that, in my tapestries, I tend to use strong colors and figurative forms, while in my mixed media weaving I work more abstract. For a long time, I have been fascinated by old weaving samples and old Icelandic patterns and materials. I have been researching a lot of old weavings, texts about weaving in the old Sagas, and the old books of law and culture in the old days. Weaving used to be the most important product of Iceland, and we exported twill for centuries and used it as our main currency.

**Are you also influenced by the Icelandic landscape and natural life so close to the Arctic circle?**

Yes, definitely. The Icelandic landscape is a big part of me and my life. It is more than an influence, it is a part of me and my existence. I am surrounded by

Icelandic nature; sometimes it is rough, and sometimes it is mild and caresses you. Sometimes it bothers me, the cold, and sometimes I love it. When I try not to let it influence me I tend to be more personal in my work, and sometimes that is what I want to focus on. I fluctuate between focusing on nature and on trying not to do that at all.

I take photos of the landscape; I sketch; I collect found objects, plants, and stones. I listen to the sound of nature, the snowstorm, the rain, and the strong wind, and sometimes I think of my warp as the weather because my loom is like an instrument.

The sound of the loom is like the weather or my favorite music, sometimes it makes me sad, and sometimes it makes me very happy. I try not to imitate nature because I can't, but instead, I create my own expression of nature.



Ragnheiður Björk Þórsdóttir, "Funny Lady," 60 cm x 80 cm (24 in x 32 in,) 2010. Cotton and Icelandic wool.

## Lyn Hart, desertsong studio

by Nancy Nordquist

For an intimate glimpse of the Sonoran Desert, seek out the handwoven tapestries of Tucson-based artist, **Lyn Hart**. Her work glories in the beauty of the desert landscape and its inhabitants. She makes us see its strength and resiliency, its beauty and complexity. In this interview, Lyn shares her inspiration, processes, and background with us.



**How would you describe your work?**

My tapestries are largely representational renderings of the flora, fauna, landscapes, and occasionally the cultural symbolism of the Southwest. When I first started exhibiting my work, I described it simply as “tapestry,” but I quickly realized that many things are described as tapestry which I personally feel are not. I now categorize my work as “handwoven tapestry.”

**How did you come to be a tapestry weaver?**

It was actually a convoluted path that led me to tapestry. As a girl, I was an incorrigible tomboy and strongly resisted doing or learning anything that was “girly,” despite my mother’s best efforts. I refused to learn how to cook, sew, etc., and struggled in Home Economics in school. Fast forward to



Lyn Hart, “el corazón,” 14 in x 11 in, September 2016, photo: Lyn Hart. Linens, rayon, sea silk, brass embellishments.

my twenties; I was living in a small rural Gulf Coast town where there weren’t many employment choices if you were a young woman with a high school education. After a string of many different kinds of employment, I somehow managed to get a job at the local Vanity Fair lingerie factory and was trained to be, of all things, a seamstress on a production line. It turned out I was quite good at it, and I realized I might be able to make my own clothes, which I did not have

much money for at the time. That evolved into teaching myself to make patchwork quilts. I feel that these were my first experiences working with and enjoying the tactile nature of fiber. By my late twenties I had become a part-time community college student, and in my early thirties I entered nursing school full time. At the time, I had to drive 1-½ hours one way to school for classes and clinicals at hospitals, which was very hard; when the school told me they were going to start having

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Lyn Hart, "recuerda," 23.5 in x 24.75 in x 0.75 in, July 2017, photo: Lyn Hart. Alpaca, cotton, hemp, linen, nylon/acrylic blend, paper; distressed basswood embellished with walnut dye ink & oil based metallic ink.

clinical within a twenty minute drive from where I lived, but that I would have to sit out of classes for one full semester over the summer until that happened, I immediately agreed to do it. For the first time since taking my first job during high school, I had a whole summer free. I discovered a local reed basketry artist who was teaching; I signed up for her classes and fell in love with weaving. Upon returning to nursing school for the next two years, and subsequently working as a labor and delivery nurse, artistic pursuits pretty much disappeared from my life. After moving to Arizona in my late thirties, I was exposed to Native American culture and became very interested in Navajo weaving. I discovered the book, *Working With the Wool* by Noel Bennett, and my husband helped me build a Navajo-style loom using the plans in the book. I taught myself to warp it and weave a

Navajo-style rug. Although I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, my deep respect for different cultures made me feel uneasy about copying their art forms, so I did not weave anything else on the loom. Several years later my husband encouraged me to leave nursing altogether to pursue becoming an artist, which I happily did. Knowing I wanted to work with fiber, but not knowing what that would be, I dabbled with several different fiber-related activities I learned on my own—weaving on inkle, tablet, jack and triangle looms, and spinning—none of which really struck a chord for me. I finally signed up for the first fiber-related workshop I could find, which turned out to be Jane Hoffman's Natural Dyeing class being held at the Intermountain Weavers Conference in Durango, Colorado. She was the first contemporary tapestry artist I had ever met, and it was also my first

realization that modern tapestry even existed. After returning home, I looked at Jane's work on her website—her tapestries focus on the natural habitat where she lives in the White Mountains of Arizona—and I knew I had found what I wanted to do. I found a local tapestry artist offering classes, began to weave, and continued signing up for classes with different tapestry instructors whenever I could find them.

### What inspires you?

I am completely enamored with the desert environment where I live in Arizona and around the entire Southwest. The plants, animals, color gradations, patterns, and textures keep me in a constant state of inspired observation. Deserts are harsh habitats, but their stark beauty is undeniable and unexpected. Native American and Mexican American cultures are very prevalent here as well, which makes for interesting juxtapositions with what I sometimes feel is a cultureless mainstream.

### Where do your ideas come from? And how are they transformed into tapestries?

The desert and Southwest are always my inspiration. Sometimes I get the urge to represent something in tapestry just because it grabs me visually, and sometimes I am motivated to create something for a specific exhibit related to my subject matter if the deadline gives me time to do so.

When I first began weaving, I used photos I took myself, enlarging them if necessary and tracing the contours for my cartoons, but that began to feel restrictive and stagnating after time. Once I became proficient in technique, I wanted to focus more on the quality of my design. Copying from a photo wasn't allowing me to feel I was truly expressing myself in my work. Now I prefer to use my own sketches, collages, or painting to inform my design process and cartoon creation. If the subject isn't something I can draw myself directly from nature, then



Lyn Hart, "cereusly?" 24 in x 14 in, January 2016, photo: Lyn Hart. Bamboo, perle cotton, linen, sea silk, wool.



Lyn Hart, "casa espinosa," 36 in x 28.5 in, October 2016, photo: Lyn Hart. Cotton, hemp, linen, rayon, silk, synthetics, wool.

I might refer to a photo to render a sketch. I'm not a prolific designer in that I don't typically make multiple drawings of the subject; it's usually a "one and done" effort because I've spent lots of time visualizing mentally what I want to do. As far as weft choices are concerned, I just tend to start pulling yarns out and constructing weft bundles of mixed fibers and colors that fit my idea for the tapestry's palette. Once that first weft bundle combination is decided, it allows me to build the rest of my weft bundles from there. Sampling just isn't my thing; I've tried it a few times, but always ended up feeling that it was easier for me to make weft selections when I weave "in situ" following my intuition, even if it sometimes results in the dreaded unweaving.

**What is your studio space like?  
How does it affect your  
artistic process?**

I started off using one of the small spare bedrooms in the house for a couple of years, but in 2007, the attached 23' x 23' former garage became my permanent studio. I designed the remodel of it so it would become an extension of the main house; it is minimalistic with an open doorway into the house, grey metal lab cabinets with Plexiglas windows for yarn and equipment storage, two mid-century modern chairs, a tall pine bookshelf, a computer desk, a pine dining room-sized worktable, a beat-up desk from an automotive shop, and a couple of dog beds. My six-foot-wide Shannock loom is along one wall, the smaller Mirrix looms are stored folded up when not in use. There were originally three small square north-facing fixed windows which are still in place, and the garage door was replaced with a twelve-foot-wide window with two casements and two fixed panes, which looks out on our

desert property (we own 4-½ acres). The walls are masonry, painted white and the flooring is bamboo in a striated driftwood color. No television, only music. I tend to listen to alternative-classical minimalistic types of music which help me concentrate. Sometimes classic rock gets cranked up if I am cleaning, organizing, or warping!

I pretty much live in the studio every day, whether or not I'm weaving. I feel very connected to the desert in here as there is a constant parade of animals passing by outside— insects, birds, lizards, snakes, rabbits, squirrels, coyotes, javelinas, and even bobcats on occasion. I have always had dogs in my life since I was an infant, and mine are constant companions in the studio. Being just steps away from the main house is a bonus and a bane. I don't have to drive to, or pay rent for, a studio



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guest, and a worktable where I could weave. Avoid becoming a workshop junkie, and don't get hooked on only one teacher, or you run the risk of becoming that person's clone if everything you weave begins to look like their work. It's valuable to learn different ways of working from different artists because then you can make choices as to which of them resonate with you most, and make them your own. You also need time to absorb what you just learned from one workshop experience before you bombard yourself with more. There have been times when I've come away from a workshop thinking I didn't get much from it, only to remember something months later in an "aha!" moment, and then I go running to dig out my notes from class. And do take notes in workshops, even if there are handouts. There is no way every gem a master weaver shares during that time will be on a handout, especially if the person does any demo weaving for the class. And occasionally take a class in other media to recharge... yes, love the weaving, but use other media to spark your inspiration!

For further inspiration and to see more examples of Lyn's tapestries, visit her website at

<http://www.desertsongstudio.com/>

You can also follow her on Instagram

[@desertsongstudio](https://www.instagram.com/desertsongstudio)



Lyn Hart, "canyon tide," 34 in x 37.75 in, September 2015, photo: Lyn Hart. Bamboo, cottons, fishnet coated with persimmon extract, linens, rayon, sea silk, silk, wool.

space, I have 24/7 access, but I also get very distracted by things that "need to be done" in the main house. But being able to see, feel, hear, and smell the desert just outside my windows is so very important. I am part of this space and it is part of me.

**Do you see a pattern in the work you have done so far, and how do you see your work evolving in the future?**

Other than my subject matter, I don't feel I have a very cohesive body of work because I do not have a developed concept that connects it all together; for this reason, I have also not been able to produce a series. This has been a frustration for me and something I have been working on understanding how to accomplish. I do not have an art education so a defined concept isn't something I had even known about or considered necessary

when I first began weaving. But now I feel it is very important in order to achieve more sophistication in my work.

**Do you have any advice for fledging tapestry weavers?**

Weave! A lot! You can't perfect technique if you aren't sitting at the loom consistently, and if you're constantly struggling with technique, you can't focus on design. Make yourself a dedicated space where you can leave your loom out. I started off crammed into a small spare bedroom, but it was very important to be able to go in there and get away from distractions. I was able to use the space because I realized that, since we did not have many visitors there was no need to keep a bed in there unused and taking up space. I replaced it with a futon that could accommodate the occasional

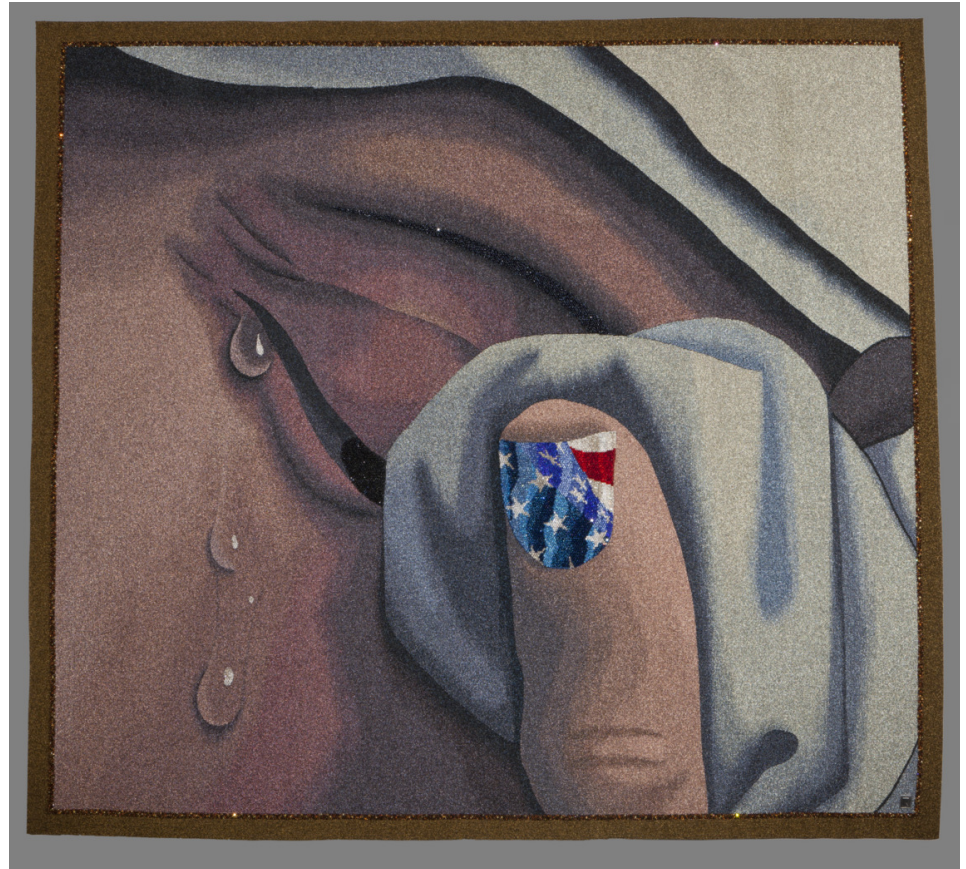
## Rendering the Human Condition: Jon Eric Riis

by Celina Grigore



Considered by many to be the nation's leading contemporary tapestry artist, **Jon Eric Riis** has, perhaps more than any other artist, taken the ancient craft of hand-woven tapestry to the level of important contemporary fine art. Often imbuing his subject matter with highly critical social and cultural ideas, Riis's provocative art is as important for its content as it is for its stunning execution and unmatched technical prowess.

[www.joneriis-studio.com](http://www.joneriis-studio.com)



Jon Eric Riis, "Tears for America," 68 in x 77 in, 2013, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven metallic thread and Swarovski crystal beads.



Jon Eric Riis, "Neoclassic Female," detail, 2014, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven silk and metallic thread with crystal beads.

**Your tapestries abound in references to myths, beliefs, and ideals of past global cultures. How do you interpret these motifs to resonate with today's societal concerns?**

Having grown up in the Chicago area, I spent many weekends browsing the ethnographic collections, especially the Tibetan hall at the Field Museum of Natural History. The textiles of pre-Columbia Peru and Imperial China, as well as Russian ecclesiastical vestments, are also of special interest.

I attempt to push the tapestry genre as I investigate issues of identity, life, and the human condition. I am also interested in the notions of

beauty, using myths and historic textiles as points of departure. In many of my tapestry works, I utilize precious materials such as metallic and silk thread, often with added embellishments of freshwater pearls and crystal and coral beads.

**How important is drawing, as skill and knowledge, in developing a tapestry cartoon and in completing a tapestry?**

Drawing is very important, especially when creating my cartoons. Concerning works dealing with the human figure, I need a realistic rendering. The proportions must be exact as I do not want any anatomical anomaly.

Every tapestry has its end, and many times what I have originally envisioned is not the finished project that I had in mind; one has time to contemplate while weaving, and now I just go with the flow.

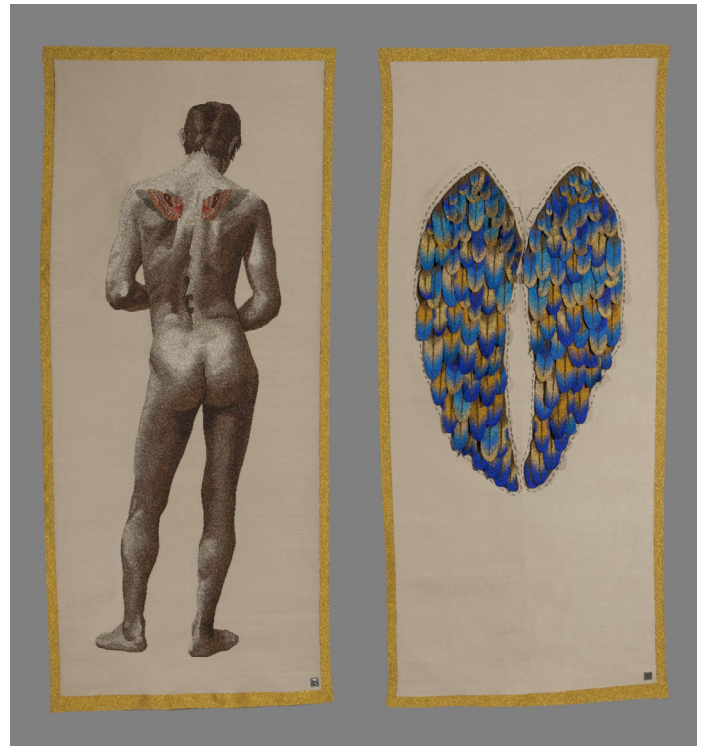
**Many consider tapestry an almost extinct medium. It is time consuming. There is a narrowing audience for it. Why should one work in this medium? What can be accomplished in this medium that cannot be expressed in other mediums?**

My life is consumed with various aspects of tapestry, historical through contemporary. The technique is certainly time consuming, but, working alone in my studio, it is a solitary practice which I relish.

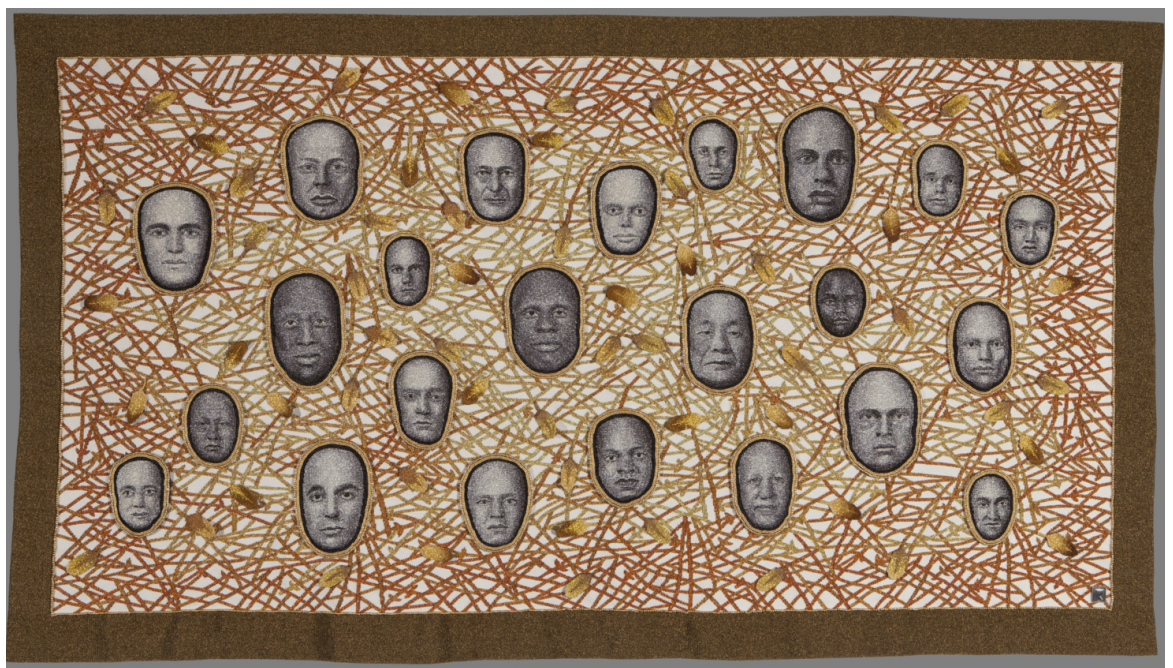
Once a week, I have two apprentices that help me with various tapestry finishing techniques and sewing embellishments on finished tapestries.

I work in tapestry because I am drawn to the tactile qualities of the medium.

**How do you see the future of the tapestry artist as a profession?**



Jon Eric Riis, "Young Icarus Diptych," 34 in x 79 in x 2 in each, 2014, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven silk and metallic thread.



Jon Eric Riis, "Ancestor's Tapestry (white)," black background and white background (pair), 42 in x 75 in, 2014, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven silk and metallic thread, glass gold beads and seed beads. details on left of both versions

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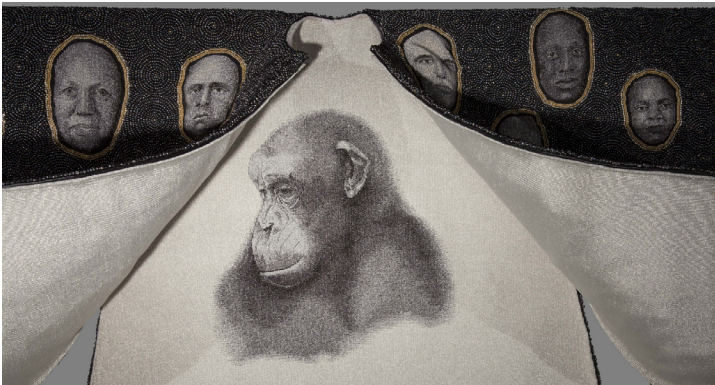
Since closing my commission tapestry studio in the 1990s, I have been occupied with my own politically motivated tapestries. I believe if one is doing socially relevant tapestries there is a future in creating contemporary tapestry.

**Do you have some words of advice for aspiring tapestry artists?**

Travel to visit various art museums, galleries, and immerse yourself by studying textile collections.

**Do you have any upcoming major plans that our readers should know about?**

Upcoming solo exhibition of my tapestry work in Decatur, Georgia, this coming March. Lecturing and exhibition of work in Riga, Latvia, in June 2018



Jon Eric Riis, "Ancestor's Coat," 34 in x 66 in, 2015, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven metallic thread, leather, freshwater pearls and gold glass beads.



Jon Eric Riis, "Skull Coat," 34 in x 66 in x 3 in, 2007, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven silk and metallic thread, with freshwater pearls and glass seed beads.



Jon Eric Riis, "Congressional Constraint," 60 in x 60 in, 2012, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven silk and metallic thread with coral, gold beads and horsehair.



Jon Eric Riis, "Congressional Constraint," detail, 2012, photo: Thomas Abraham. Tapestry woven silk and metallic thread with coral, gold beads and horsehair.

## Engaging with Society through Tapestry: Pat Taylor

by Cande Walsworth



**Pat Taylor** has worked with the potential opened up by drawing and its relationship to woven tapestry since the 1970s. Engaging with emotional memory, using spontaneous mark making and classical techniques, travelling from monotone to bright colour, Pat Taylor creates images where past, present, and future collide in a space devoid of landmarks. Preoccupation with physiognomy has been a constant theme, stimulated by current and sometimes physically distant events. Turning the European tapestry model on its head, these works are personal and intimate, speaking about the 'have nots' of this world and their relationship to the powerful and wealthy in society. These stories vary from the poignant, to the sad, to the humorous. They are intentionally accessible and easy to read and, by using physiognomy as the linchpin for each work, the stories are expressed through the landscape of the face. These intuitive drawings are kernels for:

"An activity that combines planned procedure with an immediate, intuitive activity of the hands, the actual weaving action akin to a form of drawing within established constraints. The process is reflective, meditative, seeing the artist work so closely to the work as to risk falling into it, if it were not for the awareness of how any underlying guide of a cartoon is always in negotiation with spontaneous mark-making." website:

[www.pat-taylor.com](http://www.pat-taylor.com)



Pat Taylor, "6704-13," 133 cm x 112 cm x 2 cm, 2017, photo: Peter Jones. Cotton warp, linen, silk, wool weft.



Pat Taylor, detail of work in progress "6704-13," 133 cm x 112 cm x 2 cm, 2017, photo: Pat Taylor. Cotton warp, linen, silk, wool weft.

**You've been a weaver for more than 30 years; can you describe your current practice and, briefly, how it has changed over the years?**

Since my student days, I have been an admirer of John Berger. He has popped up at different points in my life, often during periods when I felt dismay at world events. This man of such sensitivity, whose words never strayed into sentimentalism, offered antidotes to the world's loudest and most powerful voices. He always felt current, a man who wrote with hope, a good citizen to have by my side.

He knew very well that writing has its limitations, that, by itself, writing cannot rebalance the inequities of the present. But he had a sensitivity to how the long view, the narrative of history, comes alive. He wrote "close-up" stories of human relationships, retelling the narrative but from a different angle. I found that very inspirational.

In *Portraits: John Berger on Artists*, he wrote about Frida Kahlo's compulsion to paint on smooth, skin-like surfaces, suggesting that it was Kahlo's pain and disability (she had spina bifida and had gone through treatments following a bad road accident) that "made her aware of the skin of everything alive – trees, fruit, water, birds, and naturally, other women and men."

I do not put myself in the same category as Frida Kahlo, but I do say I have looked at the long view, the narrative of our time, and then tried to create 'close up' stories from different angles. I choose tapestry weaving as the means to express those 'close-up' stories. I use that slow, painstaking act of weaving to try to demonstrate my intensity, my 'lack of proper distance' from events.



Pat Taylor, "Portrait of a Man," 111 cm x 114 cm, 2008, photo: Steve Spiller. Cotton ward, linen, wool weft.



Pat Taylor, "Mitsuko Utchida," 111 cm x 116 cm, 2007, photo: Steve Spiller. Cotton ward, linen, wool weft.

I think that my work has developed, not changed, since I first started weaving in 1974. In essence, I am still trying to concentrate on that which captured me intensely in the first instance, and importantly, I focus on not losing my way. The means is now second nature, and if I question woven tapestry at all, it is how to use its particular and unique language effectively.

**Where do you find inspiration, and are there influences outside of the visual arts that you use when designing?**

I don't think my work is only a purely aesthetic experience. It engages with society, with people, with the social, political, and cultural issues of our time. Whether it is valid as a series of stories is not for me to say. That judgement lies in the hands of the viewer. I can only reiterate the strength of my intention and give some insight into the hinterland of the work I make, by demonstrating some of the ideas in the work.

Over time I have begun to understand more deeply the environment in which I am based, aware of how that shapes, colours, and limits my perception: a white, middle-class woman, located in the countryside of the south of England. This awareness gives way to the question of how I belong in the world, and makes me want to challenge my conventional understanding of place and people.

This leads on to my subject, the meat of my work, which arises out of specific locations and points in time, but they are not directly articulated in the finished work. I look at homes, both near and remote, but there are no homes in my work. I look at borderlands, territories, boundaries but none of these are in my work. I notice contradictions, that we desire

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Pat Taylor, "Boris," 40 cm x 30 cm x 2 cm, 2016, photo: Colin Rundle. Cotton warp, linen, wool weft.

a border free world, with the Cloud and the Internet, but physically we are building walls; psychologically we are in retreat. Nationalism is on the rise. Suspicion and estrangement sometimes feels as if around every corner. Ebb and flow has been displaced by fragmentation. The haptic world is dominated by the digital. All these things are present in the work but not manifest.

**When looking at your pieces about identity, some of the faces remind us of the goodness of humankind and other faces jerk us back to reality with the darkness that is also present. How much do you take into account the affect your tapestries will have on the viewer?**

I follow 'the faces'; everywhere I look they are there, multitudinous. Some stare back, others do not see. Faces are with us from birth and, hopefully,

with us till death. They express universal emotions, yet each is unique. Faces express the here and now, this very moment, and they also express deep time, and they hold me under their spell, as weft builds upon weft.

**Composition and color are key to a successful tapestry design. What advice can you give on approaching composition and color theory for weaving?**

Both composition and colour should support, reflect, and intrinsically tie themselves to the original concept. The key elements reflect whatever it is you are trying to say. Don't use a colour just because you like it, use it because it works.

**Are there any books you can recommend about color theory for tapestry weavers?**

There are so many good books, it is hard to choose, so instead I suggest a word, 'coalesce'; everything in a work of art coalesces, whether in harmony or through tension.

**Do you have a favorite tapestry tool, what is it, and why? (Apart from your loom, of course.)**

My beater; the photo tells it all. We have been together since my student days.

**Can you offer any parting words of wisdom for new(er) tapestry weavers?**

Love what you do, and let the result be what it is.



Pat Taylor, Artist's Boxwood Beater. Photo: Colin Rundle.

## Weaving on the Wild Side: Dance Doyle

by Deborah Corsini

**Dance Doyle** is an Oakland, California, based artist, born and bred in Oakland during the 80s and 90s. She studied ceramics, sculpture and textiles at San Francisco State University.

Her focus is creating contemporary narrative tapestries with her unique style and techniques. The tactile quality of tapestry, the structure, and color allows her to express her vision as she designs on the loom. Her work is exhibited in galleries throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and, most recently, in an exhibit at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles in January 2017, and a solo exhibit in Berkeley, California, in May 2017.



Dance Doyle, "Grenada" detail, full size 87 in x 35 in, 2016. Hand dyed wool, merino wool, cotton, linen, silk, glass beaded silk, fresh water pearls and mixed media.



Dance working at the loom, photo: Greg Fordham.

### Why tapestry? What is it about the medium that is significant to your imagery?

I already had 15 years of ceramic sculpture in my background before I entered the world of textiles. I had to take another studio arts class in college, and the only class open was textiles. It was over from there, and I switched majors.

Textile was a whole other language, which excited me to the core. I was learning fashion patterns and card weaving, but when we got to the tapestry weave, I just stopped there. With the tapestry art form I have complete control over my textures, colors, and lines. I get lost daily in my studio, blasting old school hip hop and jazz while painting, but just with thread. My favorite sound on earth is the shed changing. It calms me.

### Your imagery is personal and unique. Where does it stem from? (Please give an example of one specific tapestry and how you developed the imagery.)

Okay, "Grenada," a recent, large-scale piece of mine, was a design I never even wrote down. I just saw the image in my warp. Periodically I use sharpies to make dots on some of the warp threads just for spacing.

"Grenada" is a flash shot of a woman losing her shit—not her mind—and tearing about town ready to blow everything up. Figuratively, this work is about a woman or any human being finally expressing their emotions in an immeasurable way. I feel like doing this on a daily basis and the only way I can blow shit up is through my work. Also, I'm an Oakland native so I had to weave the Tribune Tower, couldn't resist.





Dance Doyle, "Jumping Off," 72 in x 19 in, 2011, photo: Victoria Remler. Hand dyed wool, linen, cotton, silk and mixed media.



Dance Doyle, "Ebbflo," 58 in x 19 in, 2006, photo: Victoria Remler. Hand dyed wool, cotton, silk, linen and mixed media.

**In your exhibition, I enjoyed seeing the collection of pencil and pen and ink drawings. How do you design your pieces? Do you work with a full size cartoon or develop the image as you weave? What is your process?**

I've never used a cartoon. With my work, I'll jot down one single part of a story, mainly the focal point. Then the rest of the designs that I add in are based on that image with the spirit of urban mysticism behind them. Many of my designs are spontaneous, I'll be weaving and I'll see this insane design, and I quickly think to myself, "Can I translate that image?" Then I'll just do it. For instance, in my piece, "The Witness," I wrote down a face which is a portrait of the way I see myself. The story was me, in a trance-like state, looking down on a murder I witnessed in downtown Oakland in 2008, and feeling the electricity that evening in the air. I weave from bottom to top. The designs in the background, like the lines in the sky weren't planned until I finished the buildings downtown.

**You add some funky and unusual embellishments and tokens to your tapestries. How do you select these?**

I found them in the old basement of the now gone Pearl Arts on Market Street in San Francisco. I don't use any embellishments now, but 10 years ago I was obsessed with adding solid, non-woven things into my work. I mean obsessed. I still have like one hundred or so little

plastic babies stashed away in one of my bins. I've also used mardi gras beads, fresh water pearls, hella tinsel, pillow stuffing, little plastic skeletons, plastic netting, foam, stockings and sequenced blouses I shredded with a rotary cutter. It just kinda appealed to my wild side.

**Are there other tapestry weavers or artists that inspire you? Or other influences?**

I have a background in street art, and it is everywhere I look in my world, so my brain arranges images in that style most of the time.

There are so many weavers that I worship, like Olga De Amaral—especially with her *Woven Walls #42 & #79*, Sheila Hicks, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Mary Zicafoose's explorations and mastery of ikat, and Ritzi Jacobi. These weavers are like gods to me. Their skills are my goal.

**What are your three favorite books?**

That's hard: *No Disrespect* by Sistah Souljah, *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran, and Naomi Wolf's *Promiscuities*.



Dance Doyle, "Martyr From the Lower Bottom," 96 in x 20 in, 2015, photo: Victoria Remler (Instagram: victoria\_remler.) Hand dyed wool, merino wool, silk, glass beaded silk, cotton, linen and mixed media.

# Canadian Tapestry Centre



The Canadian Tapestry Centre is a Not-for-profit organization dedicated to the studies and development of Tapestry as well as an overall view of tapestry's historical background leading up to contemporary tapestry.

Founded by textile artist Ixchel Suarez, this Centre is one of its kind in Southern Ontario. Celebrating tapestry, and now, once again working in the Jaworska's Heritage loom, this Centre now opens its doors to all creative souls inspired by this wonderful medium: TAPESTRY!

The CTC offers year round  
\*\*intensive tapestry workshops (2 - 4 weeks)  
Coming soon FALL 2016!!  
Oct 9 – Oct 22 & Oct 23 – Nov 5

*Theme: Natura Textura: A source of inspiration for the creative process In tapestry studies*

\*\* Traditional tapestry techniques, all levels

\*\* Artist in Residence programs (1-3 months)

*For information on fees, lodging, programs and more please contact Ixchel: (289) 242-8685  
[canadiantapestrycentre@gmail.com](mailto:canadiantapestrycentre@gmail.com)*

## Volunteer Profiles: Michael Rohde and Anna Kocherovsky

### Michael Rohde

#### What brought you to tapestry weaving?

When I began weaving, I admired tapestry weaving, but didn't think I had the time for it while working full time. Instead, I began weaving twill and later block weave rugs. The latter designs became more complex, with areas of inlay, and they wound up on the wall more often than the floor. So, it was logical that I made the switch to tapestry in 2003. It helped that by then I had taken early retirement to weave full time.

#### How did you find ATA?

Likely it was when I attended an ATA meeting at Convergence. What impressed me was that, in addition to support for beginning tapestry weavers, ATA had members who were professionals, something rare to find in Convergence and general HGA programming.

#### Describe what you do for ATA.

My initial job with ATA was to be the Co-Chair with Susan Iverson for **ATB 8**. A year or so after that was over and done, I was asked to join the ATA Board, seven years ago. As Co-Director of Member Services, I work with the other Board members and Mary Lane, ATA's Executive Director, to make certain we have the programming and organization to meet the needs of as many members as possible with our resources.

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

When I began weaving I learned from others, therefore I feel the responsibility to share what I have learned when I can. Sometimes I teach, but working with the volunteers and Board of ATA, I can see how many others benefit from what the organization does. Most of all, I enjoy working with fellow tapestry weavers who share the desire to raise the visibility of tapestry and those who make tapestry.

Michael F. Rohde, "Tara," 45 in x 36 in, 8 epi, 2011, photo: Andrew Neuhart. Wool, natural dyes.

#### About Michael

I began weaving in 1973, with training in color and design at the Glassell School of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. My work is in the collections of the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles, Racine Art Museum, and The Art Institute of Chicago.

<http://www.michaelrohde.com/>



## Anna Kocherovsky



Anna Kocherovsky, "Guardians," 43 in x 24 in, 2014, photo: Anna Kocherovsky. Cotton warp, wool, metallics weft.

### What brought you to tapestry weaving?

I started making tapestries as an experiment in which I could use ancient art and styles to talk about stories, which I love, in media other than paint. I am not finished with this experiment yet.

### How did you find ATA?

I do not remember exactly, but I believe it was through an article in American Craft Magazine.

### Describe what you do for ATA.

I worked as a graphic designer for three of the ATA's publications, and in 2015 I was helping in the ATA's booth in SOFA Chicago. I offered my skills because I knew it is what I can do best for the organization, and it is how I like to work most.

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

I thought that by volunteering I could get to know people and the organization better. I am glad I did it. I learned about a lot of people along the way; some of them were artists whose tapestries were published in the catalogs, and we tried to do our very best to represent them. And there were people who were working with me as a team. Their trust and support helped me to be confident in my choices and grow as a designer. It was very interesting, and I was glad to get to know each of them.

### About Anna

Anna Kocherovsky lives and works in Michigan, United States. Anna's tapestries have been exhibited in the US, the UK, and Canada, including **American Tapestry Biennial 10, Heallreaf**, West Dean College, UK, and the *World of Threads Festival*, Ontario, CA.



## Exhibit Review

### The Textures of Earth Memory

Aug 19 - Oct 22, 2017

Open Space Visitor Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico

by Katherine Perkins



**The Textures of Earth Memory**, a solo exhibit of tapestries and drawings by Elizabeth Buckley, opened on a hot August day at the Open Space Visitor Center in Albuquerque's lovely bosque. The setting was perfect for a show celebrating the expanse of time. The open spaces around the center, with the expansive view of the impressive Sandia Mountain Range, and the forest of cottonwoods edging the Rio Grande and the adjacent wetlands, evoked the themes evident in the art work on display.

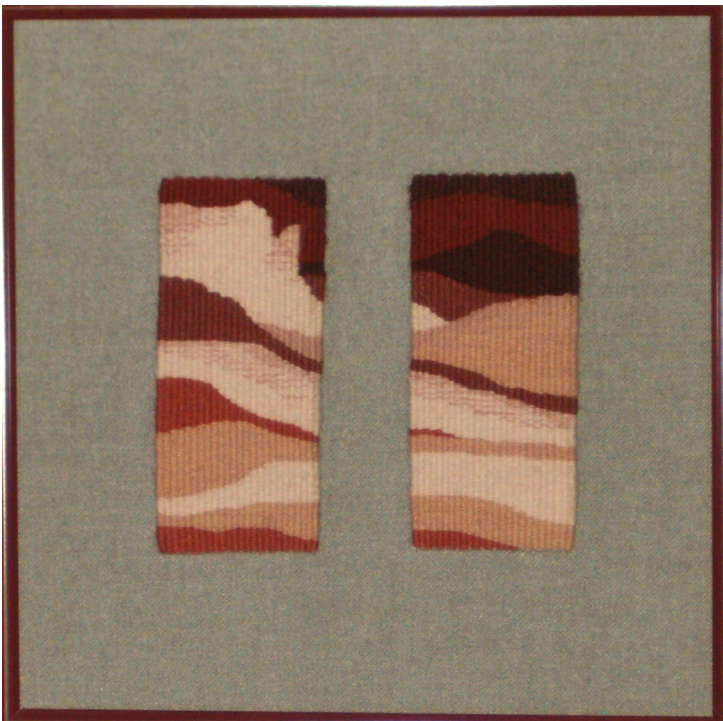
Upon entering the Open Space Gallery one steps directly into Elizabeth's show. The interplay of colorful tapestries with the serenity of the mostly graphite drawings nourishes the senses and draws one in for a closer look. It is readily evident that there are several strong themes that cross the boundary of tapestry and drawing, and one has a deep feeling of the timelessness of the natural world. Elizabeth, a native Kansan, spent many an hour on paleontological hunts with her father, and now, a long time New Mexican, has spent much time in the canyon and mesa country of the Four Corners. Both landscapes have informed her narrative in the drawings



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Ocean Memory," 20 in x 25 in, 12 epi, ©2014, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. 12/9 cotton seine twine warp, weft bundles of crewel weight wools, hand-dyed silks, pearl cotton.



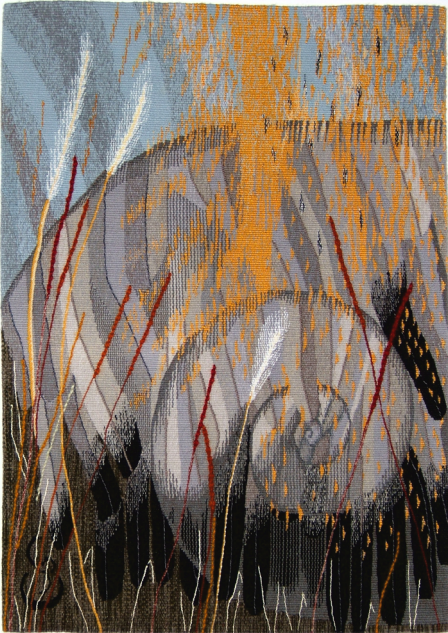
Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Prairie Strata," 10 in x 10 in, 12 epi, ©1999, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. 12/9 cotton seine twine warp, wefts of crewel weight wools.



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Mesa Strata," 10 in x 10 in, 12 epi, ©1999, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. 12/9 cotton seine twine warp wefts of crewel weight wools.



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Molten Beneath Strata," 71.5 in x 28 in, 6 epi, ©2017, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. 12/9 cotton seine twine warp, weft bundles of rug weight wools, hand-dyed silks and crewel weight wools, pearl cotton, cotton fabric strips.



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Fossil, Feather and Light," 25 in x 18 in, 12 epi, ©2013, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. 12/9 cotton seine twine warp with weft bundles of wool, pearl cotton, hand-dyed silk, linen.

and tapestries where she deftly mixes gastropod, strata, grasses, and prairie to express a sense of place. Interestingly, the motifs from one landscape are often common to the other.

On the east wall of the gallery the two small tapestries, "Prairie Strata" and "Mesa Strata," have a similarity, strata of the earth, but are distinguished by the very different colors and actual land formations unique to each environment. Similarly, the gastropod appears in numerous drawings and tapestries throughout, as in "Prairie Flight" (obviously Kansas), "Gastropod and Mesa," "Spiral Universe" (a nod to our night skies), and others.

Often several themes are in a single work, as in the tapestry, "Fossil, Feather and Light", and the drawing, "Prairie Flight." Both have the gastropod, grasses, and the crane; the tapestry includes abstracted feathers, in the drawing a majestic crane in flight. In both, the gastropod is rendered in a transparency under the grasses. Similarly, the gastropod is paired with strata in both tapestry



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "The Veils of Time," 60 in x 50 in, 10 epi, ©2017, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. 12/12 cotton seine twine warp, with weft bundles of crewel weight wools, pearl cotton, hand-dyed silks.

and drawings, as in the drawing, "Gastropod and Mesa," and the tapestry, "The Veils of Time."

Elizabeth's process starts with many hours of ruminating over possible themes, colors, and then, creatively, with drawings. The drawing, "Seismic Waves," bears a marked resemblance to the bold motifs in "Molten Beneath Strata," a tapestry that draws you in because of its sense of movement, in the same way the drawing does. There is a similarity of movement in both pieces, although the tapestry

gives you a sense of the power of geologic time whereas the drawing gives you a sense, almost, of wind, flying, dancing, or even being adrift beneath the sea. This tapestry is unique for Elizabeth, a wider sett and multiple weft types, even fabric strips gleaned from the stash she inherited from her mother. Also surprising in the piece are the exposed warps which add texture to this particular earth memory. All in all, it is a stunning piece and a new approach which encapsulates those textures of earth common throughout the show.





Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Prairie Flight," 32 in x 38 in, ©2013, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. Graphite pencil.



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Seismic Waves," 38 in x 32 in, ©2017, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. Graphite and colored pencil.

The tapestry, "Ocean Memory," is a fine example of Elizabeth's repertoire of French Aubusson tapestry techniques. Weaving on 12/9 cotton seine warp at 12 epi (although a few other tapestries are on 12/12 at 10 EPI), this tapestry shows the wide range of uses made with the various hachure techniques: pick and pick, demi duite, color blending, and a Beauvais technique most effective in depicting water. The tapestry, "Dialogues Through the Veil," almost feels like it slipped in through the window from the nearby bosque cottonwood groves. Again, the veil is a metaphor for time past, with the colors reminiscent of the landscape right at hand--the blues for our skies, and the Rio Grande, although chocolate muddy is more commonly its color, and the various shades of greens for the trees, colors of our Southwest earth.

The pièce de résistance of the show is undoubtedly "The Veils of Time," a large tapestry, 60" x 50", that incorporates the major themes of gastropod, strata, and grasses as viewed through the "veils of time," where Elizabeth literally incorporated a lacy veil as a metaphor for eons past. The ancient landscape in the tapestry is the same landscape so integral to

the heart and soul of northern New Mexico, a land cherished by artists, naturalists, environmentalists, geologists, cowboys, and casual visitor alike. The challenging techniques used in the tapestry help evoke that time of long ago. Looking through the veil at what was, and to the right, with the veil to what is the place we now cherish. Ghost Ranch? Maybe. A combination of places across the land? Perhaps.

Across the room, "Gastropod and Mesa," a drawing in near monochromatic colors, is of the same general landscape. Both tapestry and drawing are exquisitely created, but it is the tapestry, this tapestry, that is the boldest and most mesmerizing in the show. The colors, the use of wool, pearl cotton, and silk to add depth and dynamism, the techniques that form the texture so important to this land, the fossil that conjures ancient times--all are used to encompass the textures of earth memory. Elizabeth has rendered a masterpiece of memory in the ancient art of tapestry, so fitting to portray a time and place remembered.



Elizabeth J. Buckley, "Gastropod and Mesa," 15 in x 15 in, ©2014, photo: Elizabeth J. Buckley. Watercolor pencil and graphite.

## Creative Coastal Retreats All Levels of Learning

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

\$425.00 includes workshop lodging meals and transportation from Portland.



**APRIL 28, 29, 30**  
**Beginning Methods in Tapestry**  
**The Five Basic Techniques and History**

**MAY 19, 20, 21**  
**Weaving the Sea**  
**Illusions with Line**

**June 2, 3, 4, 5**  
**The Beauty of the Hachure**  
Guest artist: Elizabeth Buckley  
This special session is \$625.00.



**OCTOBER 20, 21, 22, 23**  
**MT ANGEL Abbey and Monastery**  
**The Jacob's Ladder Tapestry Journey**  
**Retreat Seminar and Workshop**  
There is a special fee for this session.  
Check my website for updates for this special event.  
Transportation from Portland can be provided.

**Contact Pam**  
503-250-1642  
pampatriestudios@yahoo.com  
www.pampatriestudios.com

## ATA News

### Painter Brown Scholarship for Tapestry Study

Did you know that ATA's scholarship accepts ongoing submissions? 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.

### Call for Board of Directors

**WE WANT YOU!!** ATA is currently looking for three board members who would join the Board in July of 2018. The three positions that will be open are: Exhibitions Chair, filled for the last six years by Margo Macdonald; Promotions Chair, currently open; and Director of Member Services, filled for the last eight years by Michael Rohde. We thank Michael and Margo for sharing their skills with ATA through a position on the Board of Directors. For information about serving on ATA's Board, click [here](#). Please [contact us](#) with your questions.

### 2018 SPEAKERS SESSION AT CONVERGENCE

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.**

### MINING THE MUSE! ATA'S 2018 MEMBERS RETREAT

July 10-13, 2018. Get your weaving tools polished up and ready to mine the rich vein of knowledge tapestry sages Maximo Laura and Rowen Schussheim-Anderson will be offering at ATA's four-day retreat, July 10th -13th, in the Silver State, during HGA's 2018 Convergence in Reno! Your jackpot will overflow with the bonus round of HGA's attractions and the coinciding Complex Weaver's Seminar, all of which, including the Retreat, will take place at the Peppermill Resort. Those tumbling dice won't crap out with snake eyes if you take a chance and make the journey to the Biggest Little City in the World! [Visit the Members Retreat webpage](#) for more information.

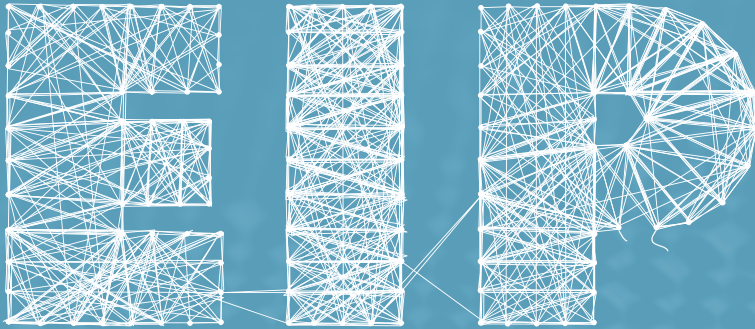
### THE BIGGEST LITTLE TAPESTRIES IN THE WORLD

**Join in the fun!** Join hundreds of other weavers and participate in the 12th international, unjuried, small format tapestry exhibition. **The Biggest Little Tapestries in the World!** is open to all weavers. We invite entries which fit more traditional definitions of tapestry and also entries that expand upon the core principles of the medium as they explore new techniques and processes. Multimedia work is welcome. **The Biggest Little Tapestries in the World!** will hang at the Northwest Reno Public Library, 2325 Robb Drive. **The entry form (intent to participate) is due February 15, 2018. The tapestry and an image of the tapestry is not due until March 31, 2018. [Enter today!](#)**

The *Surface Design Association* proudly returns with its annual International Exhibition In Print. This popular issue dedicates the Winter 2017 Surface Design Journal to celebrating the very best in contemporary fiber, textile, and textiles-inspired art. Winter 2017 Surface Design Journal online submissions accepted July 1-September 15

*Surface Design Association Members*  
**\$20 for up to 3 images**

*Non-Members*  
**\$45 for up to 3 images**



SDA 2017 International Exhibition in Print

*Juror*  
**Kathryn Hall**,  
*Curator,*  
*Houston Center for Contemporary Craft*

This call is open to all artists, with discounted entry fee offered to members of Surface Design Association. Artists working in all media are encouraged to apply.

For more information visit  
<https://tinyurl.com/ybskb3bb>

[www surfacedesign.org](http://www surfacedesign.org)



## ATA Award for Excellence



Marie Clews, "Landscape," 8.25 in x 3.5 in, 12 epi, 2016, photo: Marie Clews. Cotton seine twine warp, wool (commercial and hand dyed) and cotton weft, eccentric weaving and pick & pick techniques.

**Marie Clews** received ATA's Award for Excellence for her work, "Landscape." The tapestry was exhibited in **70th Anniversary Exhibition** at Fitzroy Hall, April 2017. The show was sponsored by Hand Weavers & Spinners Guild of NSW Inc.

Marie says of her tapestry, " 'Landscape' was woven from a digitally manipulated image of the landscape. This tapestry is a departure from my usual style and colours and was a challenge to weave. I would like to make it the first in a series of landscapes."

In 2003, Marie completed the Diploma of Art (Tapestry) course at South West TAFE (Warrnambool, Victoria). She has exhibited tapestries in a number of group exhibitions

in Australia and New Zealand as well as the **unjuried** ATA exhibition held in conjunction with Convergence. She teaches tapestry weaving through the Hand Weavers & Spinners Guild of NSW Inc at their Summer and Winter schools, and has attended a number of tapestry workshops with overseas tutors both in Australia and the US.

Marie is one of the organisers of the yearly AUNZ Tapestry Challenge in which weavers send a small (no larger than 20cm x 20 cm) tapestry based on a theme. These tapestries are exhibited at various venues in Australia and New Zealand.



**From workshop  
to studio**

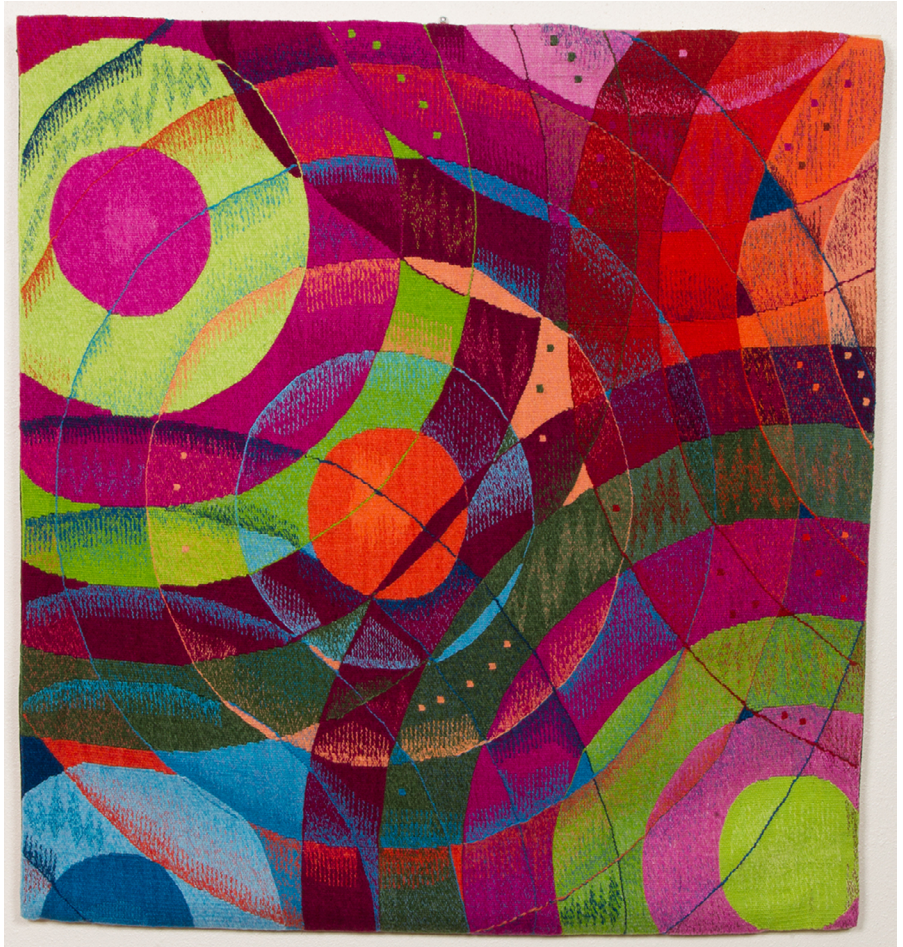
**The perfect  
portable  
tapestry loom**

**mirrixlooms.com**

## ATA Award for Excellence

**Cindy Dworzak** received ATA's Award for Excellence for her work, "Circles," which was exhibited in **Celebration of Fiber**, held at Fort Lewis College of Colorado during the Intermountain Weavers Conference, July 27 - 30, 2017.

Cindy says, "I find producing tapestries fascinating and am always surprised by the results. I am drawn to abstract subjects that allow me to play with color effects and movement within the tapestry. I start with a basic design and decide on a color palette. I dye my weft yarn in a variety of colors, varying the values and intensities of my yarns. At this point I start placing yarns in the design, which develops as I weave. When a tapestry is progressing well, the tapestry tells me which yarns to use next. I have been taking tapestry classes for many years. Since retiring seven years ago, I have been concentrating on learning more about art theory and techniques and weaving larger and more complex tapestries. This has been an amazing journey which I look forward to continuing."



Cindy Dworzak, "Circles," 40 in x 37 in, 2017, photo: Don Taylor. Cotton warp and hand dyed wool weft.



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## ATA Award for Excellence



Denise Stevens, "River Reflections," 11.3" in x 6.3 in, 9 epi, 2017, photo: Denise Stevens. Cotton warp, wool and mercerised cotton weft.

**Denise Stevens** received ATA's Award for Excellence for her tapestry, "River Reflections," which was exhibited in the 70th Anniversary Exhibition of the Hand Weavers & Spinners Guild of New South Wales, Australia.

Denise said, "Woven tapestry has been my major interest for 30 years. I first encountered it during a formal Certificate course in Textile Crafts. Following my retirement from a long scientific research career, I studied further through a Diploma of Art (Tapestry) course and several workshops & conferences in Australia, UK and US. The challenges and

freedoms of the medium are what engage me, and I take every opportunity to promote the art form through exhibiting and teaching others. My work is held in ten private collections. 'River Reflections' continues my fascination with distortions created by reflections and refractions of light on water, especially as a result of wind, tides, or the passage of boats in otherwise calm waterways. In the tapestries I have so far woven on this theme, I have tried to dissociate myself from the real scene and to focus on the shapes and lines that are created."


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## 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

### 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](#)

## Weaving the Future Grants

ATA is thrilled to have already awarded five Weaving the Future Grants:

**Janet Clark** has been awarded a Weaving the Future grant of \$250 for teaching tapestry to Sally Reckart, who will, in turn, teach children in a variety of locations.

**Liz Pulos** has been awarded a Weaving the Future grant of \$250 for teaching tapestry to a facilitator at a Boys and Girls Club, who will go on to teach children to weave.

**Ixchel Suarez** has been awarded a Weaving the Future grant of \$250 for teaching tapestry in an after-school program at the Canadian Tapestry and Texture Centre.

**Tamar Shadur** has been awarded a Weaving the Future grant of \$250 for teaching tapestry to a public school teacher at Smith Academy, who will go on to teach children at her school.

### Studio Circle Benefits

All Individual benefits listed above, plus:

- Your own [Artist Page](#) on ATA's website
- Free [Mentoring Program](#)
- 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**

**Dorothy Thursby** has been awarded a Weaving the Future grant of \$250 for teaching tapestry to both teachers and children at the Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School in Palo Alto, California.

Janet Clark and Sally Reckart have initiated their project. Sally submitted this report:

**My interest is in working with children from rural and deprived backgrounds. Imagination and problem solving are what children from these two groups have in common. As a novice instructor, I need to practice not just this particular tapestry technique, but also the language of how to teach it.**

In July 2017, we participated in a nature conservancy weekend at Catterick Military Garrison, Foxglove covert, with public workshops and children weaving. Janet Clark's choice of teaching me William Jeffries textured weaving



*Festival of Thrift*, Kirkleatham, Redcar, UK, where over 200 children and adults took part in Sally Reckart and Janet Clark's public weaving project.  
Photo: Sally Reckart.

Outcomes:

- Five primary school teachers are going to take the community weaving concept into their schools.
- BloominArts, an arts promotion company, liaised with us at the festival to help them deliver a 'Discover' Arts Award to young festival participants. Arts Award is a nationally recognised qualification in the arts managed by Trinity College London in association with Arts Council England.
- We were asked to participate in another festival, the *Wintertide Festival*, Hartlepool, November 24-26. The organisers plan to set up looms at a museum where people of all ages can drop in and respond to the museum and open sea view.

All in all, ATA's grant enabling Janet to travel from Huddersfield to Darlington to teach me, and the opportunity to purchase thick weft yarns for large scale looms, has been invaluable. Thanks also to Weavers Bazaar and Jane Riley (The Weaving Rooms, Darlington), who supported this project by donating materials, and equipment."



Catterick Military Garrison, Foxglove covert - nature conservancy weekend. Worm weaving.

techniques worked very well. His freeform technique for covering warp threads enabled me to focus on keeping the children's, and adults', imaginations and enthusiasm uppermost.

In September 2017 we were at the *Festival of Thrift*, the North of England's largest festival of making and crafts. Janet focused on engaging children of all ages in the use of tapestry weaving techniques on small frame looms, whilst I set up large-scale, textured weaving. To encourage children of all ages confidence in their choice and use of materials, and to show that tapestry needn't be expensive, I set out a table of texture and colour: thick weft yarn purchased with the ATA grant, thrift store yarns, old t-shirts cut into strips, jumpers unpicked for their yarns, chocolate box ribbon, etc. from which they could choose.

## Important Dates

- November 2–5, 2017 **SOFA Chicago.**
- November 15, 2017 **Small Tapestry International 5** opens at the [Handforth Gallery](#). Tacoma, WA
- December 2, 2017 **Small Tapestry International 5** opening reception at the [Handforth Gallery](#). Tacoma, WA
- December 30, 2017 **Small Tapestry International 5** closes at the [Handforth Gallery](#). Tacoma, WA
- February 15, 2018 **The Biggest Little Tapestries in the World!** intent to enter deadline
- March 31, 2018 **The Biggest Little Tapestries in the World!** tapestries and catalog materials due to Exhibition Chairs
- April 15, 2018 **2018 Digislam** entry deadline.
- April 15, 2018 **International Student Award** deadline
- July 9, 2018 **ATA's Speakers Session.** Peppermill Resort, Reno, Nevada, with speakers Rowen Schussheim-Anderson and Maximo Laura, the 2018 **Digislam**, and a preview of **World Tapestry Now**.
- July 10 – 13, 2018 **Mining the Muse! ATA's 2018 Members Retreat.** Peppermill Resort, Reno, Nevada, with Maximo Laura and Rowen Schussheim-Anderson.

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## Tapestry Topics Themes & Deadlines

### Continuing Thread

**Deadline: January 15, 2018**

Do you, Leonardo da Vinci, Emily Dickinson, Goethe, Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Dickens, and Maya Angelou have anything in common? If you are an accomplished tapestry weaver who unceasingly strives to evolve your artistic expression through self-directed study experiences, that are driven either by the burning need to know or by identification of a potential to learn in novel situations, you are an autodidact, just as these greats were. Since learning to weave tapestry, what continuing self-education opportunities—tapestry or non-tapestry workshops, articles, books, internet-based or perhaps neoteric experiences—have you pursued and benefited from? Were discoveries and knowledge obtained in bits & pieces feeding the slow burn of your inspiration, or was there a bolt from the blue resulting in a major epiphany which has had a profound effect on your work? Please email Theme Coordinator, Lyn Hart, at [desertsonghart@gmail.com](mailto:desertsonghart@gmail.com) to let her know what you would like to contribute to this issue.

### 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 is 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 innovations 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, at [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

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Josep Grau-Garriga, "Home (L'homme)," 3.8 m x 1.2 m, 1993-97. Haute-lisse tapestry.  
Josep Grau-Garriga, "Dona (La femme)," 3.8 m x 1.2 m, 1998. Haute-lisse tapestry.  
Musée Jean-Lurçat et de la Tapisserie Contemporaine, Angers, photo: L. Munro.

## The Back Page



From behind “Dona” and “Home” all the tapestries in the Grau-Garriga gallery seem to be in intimate dialogue.