



Tapestry Topics

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Sarah Swett, "Hang Up and Draw" 56 x 37"

"Hang Up and Draw" ~ A look at Sarah Swett's new style

By Cheryl Silverblatt

In the summer of 2009, several members of our small guild attended the Association of Northwest Weavers' Guilds conference in Spokane, Washington. A friend and I signed up to go on an exhibit tour to five or six venues around downtown Spokane. At the second venue we saw an exhibit of Sarah Swett's work, and I observed a distinct shift in style with her more recent tapestries. Borders are still used as a framing device but are simplified, not deconstructed design elements as before. Abstract designs ("Sunflowers") are

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Sarah Swett, "Palouse by the Sea (tea)" 18 x 24", egg tempera

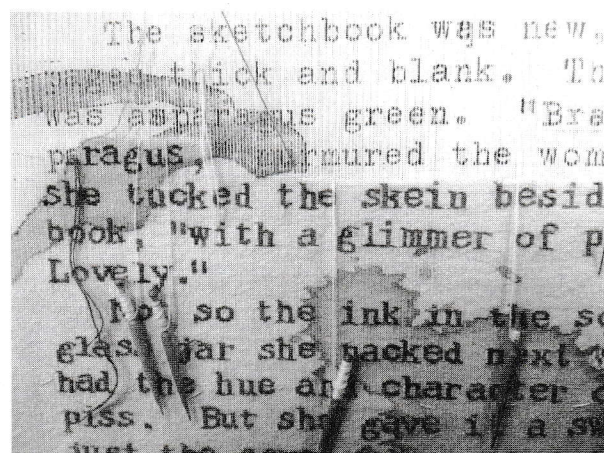
new. The beautiful "Hang Up and Draw" has replaced the undulating curves from past tapestries. The significant changes evident in this new work led me to initiate an e-mail conversation with Sarah to talk about her transition to a different palette and a more simplified design style. This article is about that transition.

As most readers know, Sarah Swett had spent over 15 years contentedly weaving vivid tapestries that told stories until she felt frustrated by tapestry's seeming limitations and became fascinated by egg tempera paint. Tempera turned out to be a transitional medium, a "flirtation," which allowed her to explore an imaginary land, a narrative she had been drawing for several years – "Palouse by the Sea." The Palouse is a dry region in Northeast Washington and Northwest Idaho characterized by high, rolling silt dunes created by the ice ages – and is, today, not by the sea in real life. The undulations of the dunes make them appear to be different colors. The paint medium provided a way for Sarah to cope with all the drawings she had been making of a "watery place" she had never visited. Sketchbooks were filled with pen and ink drawings of streets, maps, houses, and people with names who had conversations and insisted that Sarah write down their words. The water-based paint medium shared time with needlepoint, a familiar practice she observed in her childhood. The portable needlepoint provided a different format to experience the grid, and the rigidity of the canvas gave a new way to simplify images. Simple patterns led to pictorial works such as "Book Bag" which Sarah found to be too similar to woven tapestry. She stated, "Indeed, if I could weave or paint or describe (in words) whatever I wanted, what reasons were there for choosing one medium over another? Edges of the media became fluid, and an internal hierarchy I didn't

know I had was gone." What followed was four years of fiction writing about this watery place. Paragraphs led to pages, which led to three novels. The drive to find out what would happen next was overwhelming, and the only way to know was to keep writing.

Sarah's return to the loom was sparked by these narratives "and jealousy of a person who didn't exist – a tapestry weaver in the second novel whose work was nothing like mine, long, narrow, colorful tapestries she called *Margin Notes*...limited in palette, simple in structure, and I longed to do work like that." Remembering that she probably could (very well indeed), she created margin notes of her own – she wrote about these in *Tapestry Topics* Winter 2006. Sarah describes, "The initial style shifts were the result of copying the work of my character – or what I saw as her work while I was writing about it...It was delicious to succumb to these very weaverly structures, to imagine how they looked in a gallery and then write about them. As a result, when I began to write less and weave more, I found that, narrative or not, what I wanted from the woven surface was different from what I wanted before. A limited palette, large areas of negative space, the freedom from detailed cartoons were all so pleasurable that I found I had lost interest in packing my work with movement and color as I had before."

"Hang Up and Draw," for instance, was a revelation. It began the day I got a mobile phone, and I conceived an ode to my rotary dial telephone. It evolved, however, into a commentary



Sarah Swett, "Sketchbook - Revised" in progress, 72 x 36"

on the effect of constant communication, of calls to stay connected, to participate, to be involved, and the way it sucks time and energy that could be focused on drawing, weaving, making, and thinking. Indeed, if I didn't hang up, get back to work, there would be no drawing, and I would not exist. So the spare lines, the unfinished image, the use of slits and lazy lines (tapestry specific structures) to define form suited both the idea and my mood. Idea, structure, image, and the pleasure of warp and weft were, for once, in harmony."

"One of the things I liked most about the margin notes was the limited palette – just a few skeins of yarn at my elbow instead of a floor covered in baskets. And this continued back into the image-based work. I wanted less color, less variation, and to let the surface of the tapestry do the work. In 'Hang Up and Draw' I didn't need lots of color, just lots of slits and a few lines. The phone is 'real,' unlike the figure."

When looking at both needlepoint and tapestry pieces on Sarah's website, I noted an "escape" theme that seemed new to me as well. The themes of Sarah's past pieces centered on home, family, and friends. For Sarah, most if not all of the "escape pieces" are based on her novels, attempts to turn the narrative into textiles. But it is also possible... "that all of this work is a metaphor for my own pursuit of ideas, a pursuit that often forces me 'out the window' of the things I know and do well and into the uncharted territory of paint, needlepoint and most recently, comics theory. My work is generally narrative, not to mention deeply accessible, and I can't help but think about that, to wonder which parts are of central importance: the medium? the story? the color? So the escape stories themselves are perhaps an attempt to document the search, even as I am in the midst of it."

"The structure of the escape pieces was deeply influenced by two things. The first was a workshop with Susan Martin Maffei wherein we wove small, four-selvedge, narrative tapestries. This provided both a wealth of ideas about narrative and the four selvedge technique so perfect for small work. The second influence was a book by Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*. It provided a context: sequential, narrative art – a.k.a. comics – a way to think about images in series that flow, one to the next, linked by a central storyline. Twenty months and twenty 9" x 9" tapestries later, I have woven 'Anywhere Else,' a series of four tapestries, *Casting Off: A Tapestry in Seven Parts*, and a number of other individual but related tapestries. Eventually I found that open canvas needlepoint allowed greater scope for the comics, so am working another tale, 'Stripes' (three pages, each 60" x 40") of individually embroidered panels linked by hand-dyed fabric."

"But just as writing left me free to weave 'Margin Notes' these stitched, image-based comics left my loom empty. And since I'm still in love with words, the look, the sound, the shape

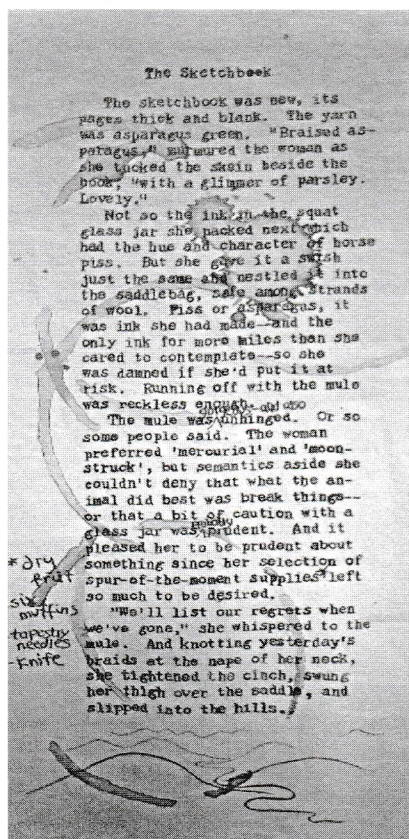
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Sarah Swett, "Casting Off"
three of a seven piece series, 9 x 9" each

of them, I'm now weaving chapter one of my third novel – 234 words, letter-by-letter, from bottom to top. It is narrative personified, the tapestry encompassing the story of the object, the story in the object, and the story about the object. And the protagonist is running away."

The depth of Sarah's imaginative power is a wonder to behold. Her open and generous description of this artistic transition is inspirational, and the tapestries and needlepoint canvases are beautiful. Visit Sarah's website www.sarah-swett.com or her Artist Page from the American Tapestry Alliance website to see for yourself (www.american Tapestry Alliance.org/AP/ArtistBio/SwettS.html).



Sarah Swett,
"Sketchbook - Revised" finished,
72 x 36"

Greetings from the Co-Directors

By Becky Stevens and Mary Zicafoose

After a long winter it is time to turn our thoughts to spring and all the new possibilities it brings. ATA's calendar is bursting with a bevy of tapestry events as you will see in the pages here. Proportion is the theme of this issue, and we hope it will complement the rush of creative energy that comes with the changing seasons. See what our tapestry weaving authors have to say about balance and scale, and how they approach design, as well as life challenges in their work.

We on the ATA Board have declared this the **Year of the Conference**. We have scheduled two events in New Mexico and one in Lincoln, Nebraska for your education and enjoyment. All three ATA activities are being held in conjunction with major art and textile conferences. One of the goals of ATA's board is to bring more attention to the organization and its activities by connecting with other fiber related groups, and this *is* the year.

From July 8 - 11, ATA will host an informational table at SOFA WEST: Santa Fe with the goal of introducing ATA and contemporary tapestry to the collectors, galleries, and artists who attend this upbeat arts event. SOFA (Sculpture Objects and Functional Art) promotes exceptional quality work in diverse media with annual shows in Chicago and New York City. This is the second year SOFA has come to Santa Fe, New Mexico. It looks to be the go-to place for fiber, and we want to be part of it. SOFA is an exposition of international art galleries presented as a bustling marketplace that features the best of contemporary art and craft. In addition to work available for purchase in the many galleries attending, there will be educational seminars with artists speaking about their work.

Join us a few weeks later in New Mexico during HGA's Convergence, July 22 - 25. New Mexico based artist/teacher James Koehler and Lynne Curran, who hails from the UK, will share insights into their tapestries and careers at the Sunday ATA membership meeting, *Unraveling the Creative Strand*. On Saturday there will be a chance to see old friends and meet new ones at *Tapestry Networking: An Enchanted Evening*. This is a great event to invite a friend or interested weaver to attend. Reservations are not necessary for either event.

Lynne Curran and James Koehler will cap off the exciting week of New Mexico fiber activities as featured guest teachers at the popular ATA post convergence retreat, *Tapestry Enchantment*. James is also teaching at HGA's Convergence Conference.

Our third big event will be the opening of ATB8 at the Textile Society of America's (TSA) conference in Lincoln, Nebraska from October 6 - 10. This will be our largest ATB yet with 65 artists selected. The artist list is published elsewhere in this newsletter, along with information about TSA.

This year's TSA conference, "Textiles & Settlements: From Plains Space to Cyberspace," features a diverse and compelling group of art

and textile speakers, workshops, seminars, vendors, and 16 textile related exhibitions. We are very excited to be invited to be a part of this international textile conference. It is a brand new arena for both ATA and ATB8 to shine.

If you have not returned your Valentine's Day Appeal envelope, please consider a donation to help support the ATB8 traveling exhibition.

With thoughts of tapestry and spring, we congratulate all of the ATB8 artists and hope to see you at one of 2010's exciting ATA events!

Gratitude and Glory

By Julie Barnes

It was grand to know that the winter issue of *Tapestry Topics* finally arrived in mailboxes. With a "first timer" on board, the process was a bit slow. But now we are starting to run like a well-oiled machine, as e-mails fly and deadlines are met.

With gratitude I want to acknowledge this issue's theme editor Pat Williams for delivering a wonderful selection of articles on proportion. The theme editor is an important contributor to each issue of *Tapestry Topics*. By communicating with and soliciting articles from fellow tapestry artists, the volunteer editor requires only a limited time commitment ~ one issue and that's it!

A short time commitment, yes ~ but this valuable position is showered with the glory of developing the successful theme. Wouldn't you enjoy such wonderful glory? You deserve it, don't you?

Please consider sharing your time and talents while exploring your tapestry network as theme editor for one of these upcoming issues:

- ❖ **Teaching the Next Generation** of tapestry artists and professionals
- ❖ **Exploring Color**
- ❖ Weaving with **Handspun Yarns**

If those themes aren't your cup of tea, why not suggest one of your own? Of course, volunteers and good ideas are always welcome. Send your ideas to Julie Barnes (ATA_julie@msn.com). The *Tapestry Topics* team is waiting to hear from you!

Proportion, the hidden principle of art

By Pat Williams, theme coordinator

I asked a number of tapestry designers to consider when, how, how much, and what portion does *proportion* plays in their compositions, generally – with examples of their designs to go with their statements.

"But, Pat, I don't consciously think of the word *proportion* when designing my tapestries," is the response I got from most people when asking them to write down their thoughts on the subject. On the contrary, Kathe Todd-Hooker wrote that proportion is "dear to my heart," and she would love to consider the topic in writing. Once these contributors submitted their articles, the diversity of their points of view were many, and there were similarities.

In selecting writers for the topic of proportion, my aim was to include a variety of artists' styles. Barbara Burns weaves portraits; Su Egen works with optical illusions; Mary Zicafoose creates abstract pieces with a minimalist feel; Joyce Hayes often works in modified Fibonacci-like series, and Kathe Todd-Hooker depicts landscapes with a surrealistic flavor.

As a principle of art, proportion can be discussed in relationship to each of the elements: color, line, value, shape/form (its usual venue), texture, and space. Most people's first thought is that scale and proportion are synonymous. Scale is a descriptive natural to proportion, and proportion is often used to make emphasis. Proportion and emphasis are both official principles of art.

As we discovered, all those elements and principles of art are just one big incestuous bunch. Everybody's related and stepping into each other's "business."

Tapestry Topics — See it in Full Color

Remember to visit the Tapestry Topics Online digest to view all the full-color images printed in this issue. Go to the main page (www.americantapestryalliance.org) and click on *Tapestry Topics Online*.

Thoughts on Balance, Scale, and Magic Carpets

By Mary Zicafoose

The first time I threw a pot on the potter's wheel, it dawned on me that I had never really thought about the inside of a tea cup. Or the curve of a handle. Or the fit of a lid. Or the weight of a bowl. My life up to that moment had taught me nothing about these things. I had no personal insights about three dimensional volume.

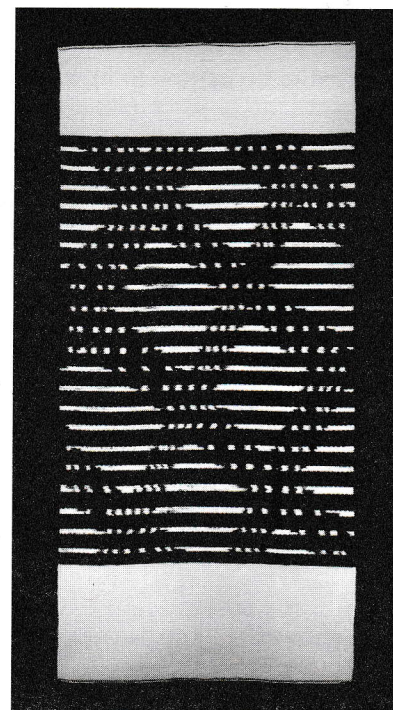
And, so too, the first time I sat behind a loom, it dawned on me that I knew absolutely nothing about what made cloth wonderful. Or flexible. Or luxurious. Or desirable. Or timeless. I knew some things about art and design but did not have a clue how to apply that information to miles and piles of yarn. In the spring of 1979 I bought my first loom, a little 27" used Schacht, and set out to discover what makes carpets magic.

My first discovery was that the activity of weaving is an overused metaphor for just about all of life's activities of great virtue. My second was a hunch that once I learned to navigate the loom(s), ball winder, swift, warping board, and the yarn shops, I might be able to apply something of my study of art to the making of cloth. After weaving my way through a year of *Handwoven* magazines, I made my third and most sobering discovery – I wasn't a loom-controlled weaving kind of gal at all. That realization changed my life.

My work is large and minimal. Generally speaking, it's about scale with very little distraction. I live in the state of Nebraska on an immense stretch of prairie called the Great Plains. I am profoundly influenced and inspired by these plains/planes: the big sky, the horizon line, and the earth. I find this to be a triad that is pretty unbeatable. Actually, triads, themselves, are pretty unbeatable. This, along with my 4th grade Girl Scout leader's tip to always leave more space at the bottom of a mat when framing a picture, makes up the core of my bag of tricks (my *modus operandi*) upon which a lifetime of weaving has been based.

I work with balance and scale daily. So do you. Maybe we don't talk about the elements of proportion every night at dinner, but as a tapestry weaver balance and scale are the evil twins. When they are in harmony the world is good, but when something is off, even by a hair...there is no peace, or dinner.

When I use the word proportion and think in terms of balance and scale, I am referring to areas – planes of color. As I design and weave, I grapple with specific amounts of color, their saturation and their interaction. How many inches of cobalt blue can you put next to perfect orange before they each begin to lose their push-pull magnetism and affinity for each other? Will a fine line of the dullest grey hold the tension between two fields of opposing colors or will the line simply dissolve? If the line is made thicker will one color begin to advance or the other recede? What happens if the



Mary Zicafoose,
"Ancient Text: Yellow"
63 x 29", 2007,
weft-faced Ikat



Mary Zicafoose,
"Ancient Text #11: Morocco"
76 x 24", 2008

line should become red, or purple, or a complement? What happens if there is no line at all, no horizon? What then will become the visual anchor?

I do not use a computer for my design work. Everything is drawn and colored, or ripped out of something, or cut and pasted colored papers. I still use a sketchbook and really love life in hard copy. I am a regular at Kinko's, a frequent user of their giant blueprint photocopier to enlarge my thumbnail designs to exact uber-scale cartoons. I have learned that absolutely anything is adorable when it's 2 inches by 2 inches, but the color yellow takes on a whole new meaning at 8 feet by 8 feet.

I regularly scavenge the library and my studio shelves, on the look out for visual surprise and inspiration – what works, what's new, and what represents timeless design? A great idea is priceless and life sustaining. It can keep reinventing itself within a series of pieces that spans decades. My best ideas come knocking when I am working and aggressively engaged in the daily problem solving of weaving. Rarely does the light bulb of inspiration go on for me when I am watching *American Idol*.

These days, when I sit behind the loom, I find myself thinking about proportion from a more philosophical perspective. It seems that we, as a planet, are collectively being asked to dream a new dream. Not out of whimsy, but for the sake of our balance and survival as a species. If every blade of grass is being asked to evolve, so too are the arts. That being said, how does one think and see differently to seek solutions that address not only our work but the more pressing concerns of society? How do we get out of the box, pushing forward to create new textiles for a new world? And, by the way, does anyone know what makes carpets magic?

Thoughts on Proportion

By Kathe Todd-Hooker

"Proportion: harmonious relation of parts to each other or to the whole." This definition is according to Merriam's Collegiate Dictionary, a rather harmless and insipidly nice way of saying it's a pleasing design.

But, from there the definition and intent moves on to a not so pleasant cudgel used on those of us who might not have European Renaissance sensibilities of what a harmonious relationship might be. The definition over time has been used to force an ethnocentric idealism of the arts and handicrafts on people who might be considered by those in power to be less than their glorious conquering ideal. This view of the world seems to be an ongoing 3,000 year old form of cultural imperialism that has been set down in stone. It is what "Art Speak" calls the canons of proportion and the ideal of which the golden mean, formal classical perspective, the Fibonacci series, and the golden ratio are all a part.

These formulas and theories are based on an ideal science. It is a science that expresses a super perfection of reality rather than what and how some individuals might actually observe in their own reality – a reality that isn't so ordered, but still one they wish to express in a way understood or read by someone else.

It has even been hypothesized by one art historian that the principles of the Canon of Proportions and the Fibonacci series examples in use from the past were faked. Historians and measurers of the past decided that they fit the classical principles in order to strengthen their own arguments about proportion whether they actually did or not.

These expressed canons and scientifically applied principles limit the scope of a storyteller's or artist's vision. The sought after classical perfection renders some images as not important because they do not follow the same rules of science as those found in imperialistic cultures. Storytelling, visionary images, and symbolic subjects in art are not often classically correct and perfect. They have characters and images that rely on the exaggeration of objects, events, proportions, and features.

As an instructor, I often find students and some tapestry weavers using the classical rules as a crutch. By doing so they feel they don't have to rely on their own way of perceiving events. They don't need to take responsibility for their images, their own cultural prerogatives (which all groups have – even those Americans who preface themselves in design classes as not having a culture as they search for the exoticism of other cultures), color palette, or perceptions of events.

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For myself, I much prefer the distortion, controlled chaos, resizing, and heretical weighting of one image by size in relationship to another for importance and the reordering of design principles for emphasis of the story line, vision, or symbolism in a work of art.

In color theory classes, I find beginning and not so beginning students relying on the Fibonacci number sequence to create color fades. These number sequences work best with words and math formulas, not actual color arrangement. As soon as you apply color to this formula, the balance is gone because of the saturation and intensity of different colors. The colors are just not visually the same so the formula fails visually. You can't get perfect proportional fades using formulas. Students seem to think if they rely on theory, it can't be wrong. They forget to actually look at their fades which have linear elements and lines rather than smooth, even transitions. They don't look around and see that nature doesn't always mimic scientific theory either visually or proportionately when color is involved.

The golden ratio can help in design layout, but it is absolutely worthless in creating a good design unless you have something to say or weave. No matter how religiously you have followed the rules and formulas, they are only crutches. If you have something to say, it may need to be said by weight, size, and odd proportional relationships. For instance, one side of the design may need to have a disproportionate layout or some other way that doesn't fit into the theory of the golden mean.

As for myself, I am sure at one time the proper sensibilities, rules and proportionate harmonies were trained into me. I had several outstanding design teachers in both undergraduate and graduate school. One is now my business partner and is still an astounding teacher of design and theory. I realize that I have probably internalized those lessons to the point that they are me. But over time, I think I have gone back to many of the images and models learned from my Grandmother. I prefer a horizon line to the golden mean and often design around compass points. Backgrounds, distance, and perspective have always felt not needed in my work. When cartooning, I prefer images of animals, flowers, and humans that respond to an emphasis on character traits as opposed to the classical Vitruvian proportions of human and animal figures. I definitely have a fear of

a lack of visual movement and prefer controlled chaos – a cenophobic (horror vacui) view of empty spaces. I prefer symbolism to reality and a marking of events embroidered and painted onto surfaces that work as both image and story – that is not written. All these things I saw as a child in the handiwork of my Grandmother.

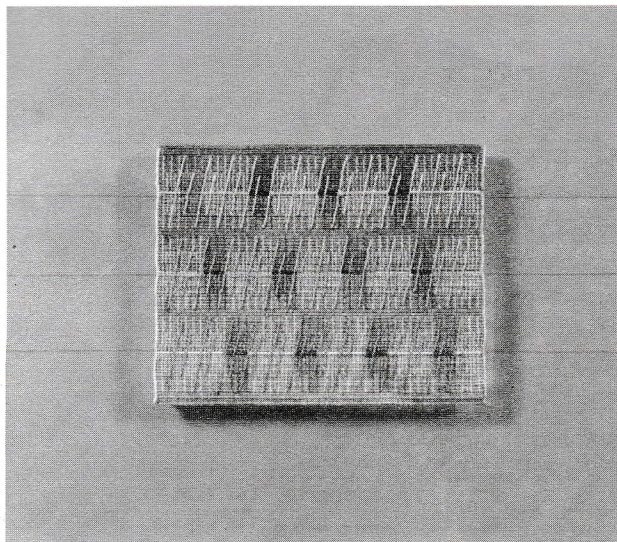
Objects in Proportion

by Joyce Hayes

Twelve years ago I needed to ask new questions in order to continue developing as an artist. After 15 years of working on large, boundwoven rugs, I was at an impasse and no longer inspired by what I was weaving, the materials I was using, or the size and shape of my weavings. And, most importantly, my imagery seemed forced and contrived. I had a hunch that there were universal design principles governing proportion and scale that people were instinctively drawn to, and I wanted to learn what these were.

Whenever I am in a slump, I make watercolor collages, draw, and read with an emphasis on the artists whose ideas and work excite me the most. At first I concentrated on symbols like the spiral, which I had seen in prehistoric artifacts and contemporary works like Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970), a 1,500 foot wide counter clockwise spiral constructed of basalt rocks jutting into the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Although symbolism was not the answer to my questions, my attraction to the spiral was a part of the journey. After reading Robert Lawlor's book *Sacred Geometry*, which analyzes how mathematics and geometry have historically been used in art, I learned that spirals are based upon the golden section ratio of 1:1.618. Next, my research led me to the paintings of Dorteia Rockburne, who, in her early work, also used the golden section in the construction of her folded paper and canvas paintings. These works represent a fascinating use of geometry where she subdivides and extrapolates squares and rectangles that project out from the wall; they are not confined to a standard rectangle or square presentation. They are objects instead of paintings, and as a weaver, I see my work as three-dimensional, constructed objects, rather than two-dimensional work.

Inspired by my newfound understanding of proportions and balance, I revisited Agnes Martin's work.



Joyce Hayes, "Conciliation - Rain"
8 3/8 x 9 1/2", 2009. Photograph by Cecil Hayes

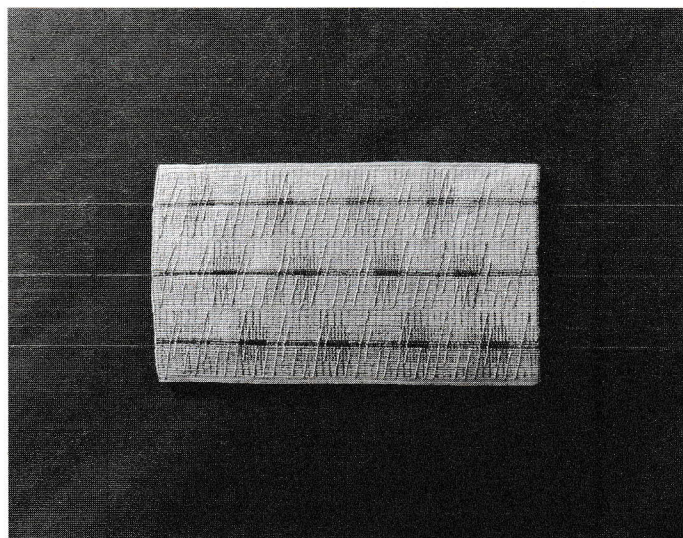
The quiet elegance of her marks on canvases measuring five feet square, to match her five-foot arm span, showed me the importance of bringing together the physical dimensions of the painting and the imagery, and in the case of Martin, her own physical dimensions. Most recently, I have studied painter Jennifer Bartlett's work, specifically her *Rhapsody* series (1975-1976) done on one-foot squares of white enameled steel overlaid with a grey grid. There are 987 squares, and when hung continuously the piece measures 7'6" x 153', but often the work is hung to fit the dimensions and oddities of the space. I like this flexibility and appreciate how her multi-layered sets of grids maintain their fluidity while exploring a multifaceted set of images. Upon closer analysis, this collection of squares can be interpreted as many Root 4 Rectangles, which are the sum of 2 squares.

In my opinion, root rectangle proportions and golden proportions help create works that are elegant and balanced. These calculations are easy to do. You can use a compass and ruler to geometrically determine the ratios, or you can use the following proportions: 1:1.618 for the golden section rectangle and 1:1.41 for the root 2 rectangle (using this rectangle you can design a root 3 rectangle, which is in turn the basis for a root 4 rectangle, etc). In other words, if the short side of my tapestry is 4 inches, to create a root 2 rectangle I multiply 4 x 1.41 to get 5.64 inches. The dimensions of

my final tapestry are 4" x 5.64". I find all of the root rectangles especially interesting because they can be endlessly subdivided into proportionally smaller rectangles, and I use these subdivisions as markers during my design process.

Another favorite design tool is the Fibonacci series developed in 1170 by mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci as he studied the Great Pyramids of Giza in Egypt. This series is a sequence of numbers for which each successive number is the sum of the two previous numbers: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, etc. I use this series to help order space and add movement to my work. For example, to create a vivid pattern with an interesting rhythm I have used it as the basis for a series of stripes that get progressively wider. The first stripe is comprised of 1 weft pass; the next has another 1 weft pass as well, then 2, 3, 5, etc.

When I realized that good design wasn't just about imagery, but also about integrating the outer physical dimensions of the piece along with imagery, my work became more coherent and balanced. For me, the creative process begins by determining the dimensions of a new piece using a golden section rectangle, a square or one of the root rectangles. Every design decision I make is influenced by these outer dimensions – be they color movement, hatch marks or soumak lines. As a result, all elements in the tapestry work together in an inter-related conversation. The final result is a tapestry that is self-contained and refined, while being visually stimulating.



Joyce Hayes, "Conciliation - Change"
10 3/8 x 13 1/4", 2008. Photograph by Cecil Hayes

Proportion: edgy/emotional aspect

By Barbara Burns

"**PROPORTION** refers to relationships of size, amount, and degree." These elements relate back to the whole. In my portraits I attempt to interject an edgy/emotional aspect using these elements to underscore the personality of the individual I am portraying. I use proportion for emphasis, most obviously, with larger-than-life size. (We relate all we perceive back to our own physical size.) Using a large scale creates visual weight, which is perceived closer and more important than using a smaller scale. I have also used these relationships in my use of value, color, line, texture, and density.

For my first few tapestries, I did not give these elements much attention since I was so focused on technique. The first time I seriously considered any of these components was in my tapestry titled "Golda II." I had already woven one version, and I felt it did not have the effect I desired. I concluded that going larger in scale would give it more power. "Golda I" is 9.25 x 9.25" and "Golda II" is 16.25 x 14.75". This size increase made the face larger than life, a statement that portrays Golda Meir well in my estimation. I decided to simplify the design by removing the hand and name while enlarging the face. This created a more challenging and direct image. Adding the element of outline using silk brings in a small amount of shine and richness against the vast flatness of the wool. The lessons I took from this exercise are to simplify composition, a little sparkle (the silk) goes a long way, and a larger-than-life face makes a strong statement.

The Goldas were not the only time I repeated a design. I wove "Blue Frida" (Frida Kahlo) and "Homage to Egon Schiele" (an early 20th century artist) two times, changing some of the aspects including size – going larger in each. When I look at the Egon Schiele tapestries, the smaller



Barbara Burns, "Homage to Anne Frank"
27.5 x 54", 2005, wool, cotton, 8 epi

version was more successful. The intimacy of the smaller size and darker value used for the background color draws the viewer in. The size of the head is larger speaking more to the medium of tapestry. This was an instance where bigger was not better. In the second, larger version of "Blue Frida," the face gives the impression of being monumental even though only a portion of it is shown. Drastically cropping the face was my attempt to characterize Kahlo's personal struggles. In deciding where to crop, I used two L shapes of cardboard to create a rectangle and moved them around until I had an image that inspired me. A bigger proportion of value contrast in the larger version of "Blue Frida" better accentuates the relative smoothness of the shape of her face against the jagged profile of the earring.

In "Homage to Anne Frank," I definitely wanted to evoke a strong emotional response. Working with different visual images relating to her life, I eventually juxtaposed the face of Adolf Hitler with Anne Frank's face. This was the "a-ha" moment. I knew instinctively this combination of images had the spark I wanted. My goal became to visually portray opposites. I chose to

make both heads equal size to make the statement that Anne Frank was, and is, as important as Adolf Hitler. The faces look out from the picture plane in opposite directions. This created a tension that I did not feel when I had them facing toward each other.

Connecting the heads increased the proportions



Barbara Burns "Blue Frida II"
20 x 10", 2007, wool, metallic,
cotton warp, 8 epi

of mass and density. I decided to merge the images further by slicing both heads into vertical bars. It took hours of trying out different proportions for the slices. The size worked best when I slowly graduated from small to large, starting from the left with Hitler and the right with Anne Frank. I tried the Fibonacci sequence 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34..., but the size of the slices became large too quickly. The proportions I used allow the faces to read easily.

I chose an equal proportion of warm colors for Anne that adjoined cool colors for Hitler. The warm colors tend to come forward, and the intensity of the cool colors attempts to overpower the warm. By choosing the warm colors for Anne, I am saying she was warm and alive. In contrast, portraying Hitler in cool blues exemplifies him as cold and calculating. The curved lines of the faces are juxtaposed against the sharp straight bars of the sliced images used to accentuate the struggle between opposites and the breakdown of humanity that occurred. The outcome of the proportion chosen to slice the faces into bars defined the aspect ratio roughly 2:1 (height to width). Interestingly, this ratio is similar to a movie screen (1.85:1 to 2.35:1) – something our eye recognizes. Subconsciously, it augments the impression of colossal heads and emphasizes the importance of the subject.

When it came to the size of the overall tapestry, I knew I wanted something larger than life to further stress the significance of the subject. But, how large should it be? I enlarged the cartoon using an overhead projector. Moving the projector back and forth from the wall, I found a size that looked right. As I was projecting it larger, there was a point where I just felt it was too big. Ultimately, the decision was subjective, and the tapestry is 27.5 x 54”.

When I design and weave a tapestry of someone from history, I also read a biography of that person. The information I gather from reading can come into the design consciously and subconsciously. For instance, the cropping of Frida Kahlo's face was influenced by her life story and her artwork along with the choice to portray the jagged earring against the smoothness of her face. I often work intuitively and see the rationale later. My use of proportion is often instinctual.

Terri Stewart

Ok, this is what I can say about what size to make a tapestry. I start out usually with a pencil drawing on normal sized sketch paper. Once I am done with that drawing, I take a long hard look at the details in the image. How easy are they to see? Would this piece look better a bit larger or a lot larger? What I often end up doing is going to the nearest copy store and enlarging that image to twice the original size. Now how does it look? If it is better but could be bigger still, I will enlarge whatever portion of the image that has the most detail, or most important detail, and see how that looks. If that is satisfactory, then I have the entire image scaled to whatever that detailed part was and begin to weave. I usually do this at a blueprint shop that can handle enlargements that a regular copy machine cannot.

The reverse is also true. I have often drawn an image and decided I liked it at that size, so no enlargements are made. Why? This depends on the impact of the image to the viewer. Sometimes a larger version may be easier on the eyes, but the impact of the image is diminished. It no longer “draws you in” to see it closer and search for the details and color changes. This may be a subjective point of view, but it is how I work.

Michael Rohde

As important as proportion is, I've come to realize that beyond trying for the Golden Mean in the overall shape, I fly by the seat of my pants quite often. I throw away even the Golden Mean restriction, at times, when as the design develops, it looks better with other proportions.

Alex Friedman

Proportion is not something I consciously consider except as part of the design process. When I finalize the drawing for a new tapestry, the proportions suggest themselves depending on the impact I want to make. My more recent ‘twisted’ pieces can work at a small scale. Now with an 8 foot loom, I am exploring something much larger. Balance is important to me, so proportion happens as a by-product!

Holly Wilkes

I am weaving minimalist landscapes where one line divides between land and sky. I have found that it is very important as to where this one line is placed to have the correct proportion of the areas to show the focus of the piece. If I want the land to be the focus of the piece this area is larger and the line is higher than if I want the sky as the focus.

Rosemary Smith

Intuition generally directs my use of proportion. I often enjoy weaving a landscape scene of mountains and clouds. If the proportion of the natural elements is close to being the same size, it can be very boring. If I want to really "say" something in my designs, dominance of proper proportion is absolutely key. Size and value are my favorite tools to achieve proper proportions.

Lynn Mayne

"So I said to myself - I'll paint what I see - what the flower is to me but I'll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it..." Georgia O'Keefe, 1939.

I enjoy studying some small thing in nature, such as an insect, and then blowing it up larger than life to weave in a tapestry. I often work with images on the copy machine to enlarge or shrink them. Graph paper is useful to create border designs where an element is repeated along an edge of a tapestry.

Linda Rees

Artists generally adhere to the specific conventions of spatial or color balance and focal point orientation established in their particular culture. Surprising insights can occur when we consider the aesthetic principles of other places and traditions or just by purposely breaking out of our own dictates about proportion.

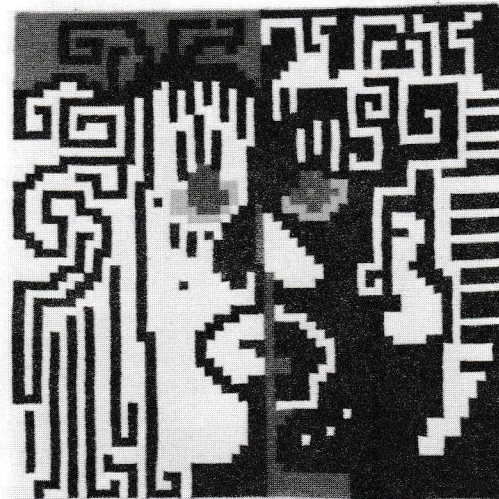
Connie Lippert

Years ago, I used to consider golden mean, Fibonacci numbers, etc., and even used them in my weaving. Now I consider proportion intuitively, I suppose.

ON Proportion

By Su Egen

To begin, I can't say that I have ever thought about proportion when designing a tapestry and do not intellectualize about what I am doing. Although, each piece is completely planned in detail during the design process, I go by no rules at all. I use countermarch looms, and the size of my pieces depends on the warp on the loom. Generally 10, 20, or more yards are put on each of the two looms used for tapestry – a 150 cm and a 160 cm loom. The last two warps were 38 and 50 inches wide. When choosing a size, I determine what I want on a wall – be it a gallery or exhibit while also thinking about suitability for a home or business. I want it to be striking, to stand out, and to be pleasing close up and at a distance.



Su Egen, "In the Knows" 39 x 37", no date

Lately I have been working in a square format often used for paintings and have utilized that shape often, deviating from the expected rectangle, in an attempt to push my way into galleries that do not ordinarily exhibit tapestries. The hope is that they will see this as a viable art form.

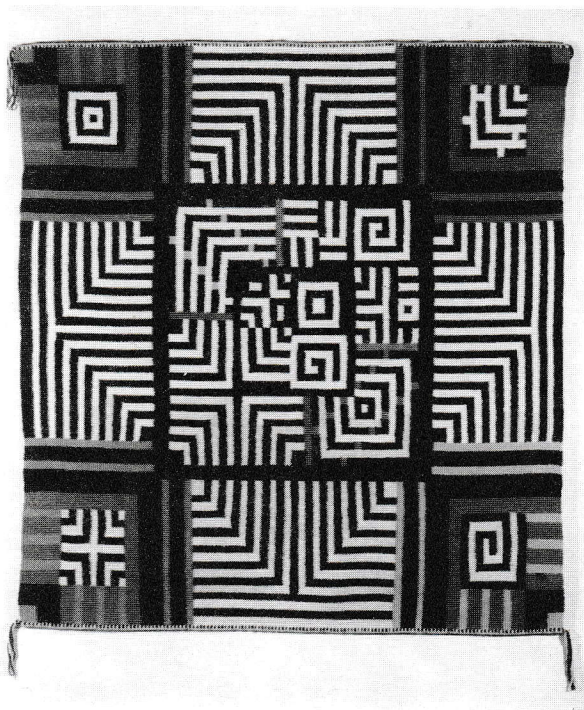
The chosen size, square, then becomes my design base. The next step is to draw that size onto graph paper and then divide it up into basic geometric areas.

Sometimes I think about a specific number of areas. On ten-to-the-inch graph paper squares are filled in to develop my initial design areas. The first division generally gives me an idea of the direction I will be heading. I continue to divide space until I know it is time to stop. I seem to have an internal clock that lets me know when the design is complete and that there is no need to go further. I follow no preconceived rules of design, but work strictly from intuition. I don't suppose this is very helpful, but I rely on my personal taste.

In the last ten or more years, I have been working with optical illusion, manipulating the shapes to follow the viewer and to change as he/she moves past it. In the design process, rarely do I even have a vague idea of what I am shooting for. Once the design is in the elementary stage, I scan and move it into the computer using a really old program my son designed for me many years ago. Once in the computer, the design is placed onto graph paper (made on the computer), and then the design is placed on top of the graph on a separate layer. I can then begin to manipulate the design areas, easily changing them until I am happy with the layout. At this point, I generally take a break to sit and look at the design looking for weak areas, those that simply do not work, or are of no interest.

I do not think about the colors I will be using until the design is in place. I have, for some years now, been working in black and white in the design stage and often in the weaving. Sometimes color is entered in small areas on some pieces, and others are designed in full color, after the palette has been chosen. I keep a large stock of wool on hand and pull my colors for the piece, which consumes one or two days. Once they are pulled, three to four groups of possible combinations are realized. I match them to the computer using Pantone color cards or just eyeing them – which I prefer. I then begin placing color into the graph, working with each group selection until a final decision on which group is to be used. Sometimes, I will work up each group on the computer, print them out, and then make a determination.

Before the weaving process is begun, the finished design is sent from the Mac to the PC and digitized for machine embroidery. Then I'll embroider a study of the piece, often manipulating it further, and then evaluating the success of the piece. By the time I go to the loom, all decisions have been made. The creative process happens before the piece is woven. The ultimate goal is to create a piece that is dramatic, bold and stunning, and is one that the viewer does not tire of. My hope is that each time people look at it, they see something else.



Su Egen, "Optically Speaking" 53 x 41.5", no date

I work with symmetry and asymmetry, often not even thinking actively about that. In designing, it is as if I enter a world totally focused on the design – tunnel vision – my hand following its own independent path. I enter a meditative state, separating from the outside world. If I tire, I stop. Sometimes I can go on and create multiple designs. There is no certainty of how it will go. In the end the pieces are in proportion. If not, I would not be able to let go and move on to the next step – weaving. In weaving tapestries for 40 years, perhaps I have learned that, for me, this is the art of it.

The Canons of Warp and Weft Proportion: *The Ideal and the Slightly Fractured*

excerpted from So Warped

By Kathe Todd-Hooker and Pat Spark

Many people want to have a rule for choosing the perfect warp, warp setting, and weft. Unfortunately there are too many variables to take into account, but we can come rather close. Also, the proper proportions will fall in a fairly narrow range of materials and weaving ease once a person has woven for a while and has experience with their materials. The "ideal" warp/weft combination is theoretically one whose proportion is mathematically regular and will create the tapestry that you want to weave. The concept of a canon is to create a series of rules that define this ideal. Forget about the classical dudes, who had a canon of proportion for just about everything. The biggest variable will always be the weaver and personal choice.

The following ideas will help us place and size the warp, weft and sett, so that they look correct, go together and get the job done with the least amount of trouble. For instance, I prefer that the weft diameters in my tapestries are equal to the space between the warps – the sett. I also prefer to have the warp and the weft bundles be the same size. But how do I proceed? Do I choose a warp first, and then figure out the size of the weft and the sett? I have a series of questions I ask myself about the finished piece before I choose my materials and create my formula of warp, weft, and sett. I have adapted these questions for general use.

continued...

How will it be used? How much wear will it receive? What hand or feel to the touch do I want the tapestry to have? Will it hang on a wall and not be subjected to movement, walked on, worn as a garment, used as a bag or purse? Should it be soft and drapeable or able to stand up by itself? Should it look solid or sway with a breeze; be textile like or stiff as a board; be able to wear like iron or have a certain amount of fragility?

What is the design, and how much detail do I want in a square inch of its busiest area? The design should determine the format size or the scale of the weaving, warp, weft, and sett. They should not be chosen just because you've been told that you need to have a certain size warp or weft. If the design is complicated, with many small details, you may need to change its scale. In order to weave the small, busy shapes, you may have to increase or decrease the sett and therefore the size of your tapestry. However, if you have a preference for a certain warp-weft sett proportion, you might have to change the size of the cartoon to fit this proportion. Or you may need to modify your design, adding more or less detail depending on your proportions.

What loom will you be using? Somewhere in this process when you are designing, the loom may dictate the format. You cannot weave a three foot piece on a one foot square loom or at least not easily. If you are using frame looms with small areas to weave on, you need to take loom waste into consideration. To me the most important thing is a loom that can hold a tight tension. This is extremely important when working with warps that wear with use, such as cotton crochet threads, linen warps, wool, and sewing threads. The act of working with the warps on a loom can create wear. There is less wear on a warp if the tension is tighter than looser because it is held in place so it's more difficult for friction wear to occur.

Once you have thought about these issues, you can consider warp, weft, and sett. What are the warp considerations? Tightly and evenly twisted or spun threads which are then cabled together make the best and strongest warps. They are the easiest to weave, beat down, and cover with weft.

Cotton seine twine is strong, durable, and not overly stretchable. It is a tightly spun cabled twine that comes in many sizes, and it is accessible while having only a small amount of stretch. Over the last 30 years

the quality and evenness of the spin and stretch has improved making it a first choice for tapestry warp. But at smaller warp setts such as 20 epi, it isn't strong enough to take much abuse.

Linen threads should be line linen and not tow linen, and it should smell slightly grassy and not musty. They are preferably not waxed because over time the wax residue can migrate to the wefts and cause spotting. While line is very strong, it does abrade easily. Therefore linen warp for very small pieces wears and frays during the warping and beating processes - breaking easily. Linen is also non-stretchable and can be difficult to work with because of this. BUT, most importantly, it creates a beautiful tapestry at larger warp setts with a beautiful drapeable hand that becomes softer and more drapeable as it is used.

Wool warp should be strong, evenly spun and cabled if at all possible. Really good Navajo wool warps are not cabled but will often have a touch of mohair for strength.

Lightly spun cottons that are frequently used as warp such as Maysville Rug Warp, some crochet threads and silk will wear and stretch unevenly in both the weaving process and with use. They will fray and begin to thin as you weave, and the tapestry, itself, will not wear well if it has a hard-use purpose.

When working with small format tapestry, such as 20 or more epi, the warp should be non-stretchable and tightly spun. I prefer Dual Duty Craft thread or Buttonhole Twist. Generally and unfortunately for linens and cottons, the smaller the thread being used for warp the more fragile and worn it becomes within the weaving process.

When working with larger format tapestry, another thing to consider is the larger the warp, the bigger the rib will be in the tapestry. This will create more light waves as opposed to reflecting light back as in a reflection. If you use coarser, crimpier wool as a weft with this larger rib, the wefts will also hold more light rather than reflecting it back from the rib's structure. This creates shadows and in smaller designs will hide detail and woven points.

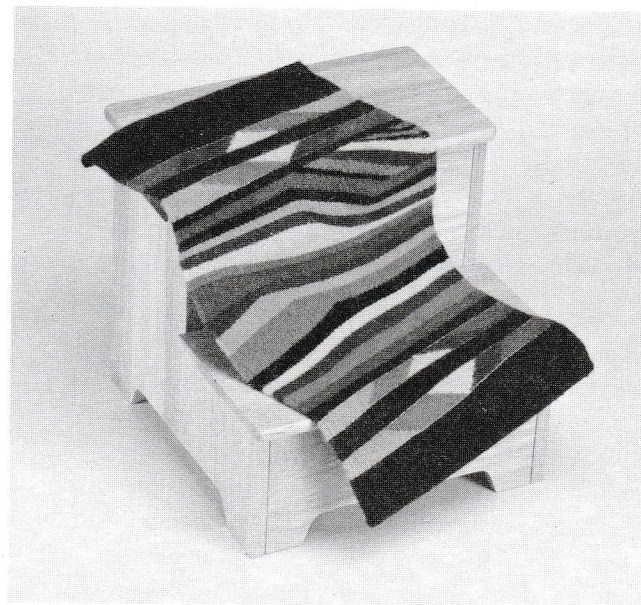
The further apart the warps, or sett, the more weft is used and the less rib structure influences the design. The weft becomes more important when viewed because of the larger floats across the warp. The wider sett also creates a softer hand to the fabric.

In warp and weft relationships, generally the greater the proportion or the larger the warp size to the size of weft, the heavier and/or the less drape in the woven tapestry.

In choosing the weft to go with the warp in our perfect Canon of Ideal Proportion we would traditionally create a balance of weft equaling warp size. But there are times when we may not want to do this. For instance, if you unbalance the weft bundle in proportion to the warp and sett size, you can place more passes in a given area thus creating more detail in that area or throughout the whole design. There are two ways to do this. One is to use a smaller thread than the normal size in the weft bundle, scaling the weft bundle down. The other is to use only one thread from the normal weft bundle. Of course, you then lose the blending ability of the weft bundle. Another way to get more detail is to add more warps in a given area by adding a supplementary warp to that area or by starting out in the warping process with an extra set of warps on a different sett of heddles.

If you want to go the other direction to unbalance the warp sett, you can double up the warps as you weave. Instead of going over and under one warp thread, go over and under two warps at a time. The rib structure is larger and the weft bundle can be doubled letting one have more color blending options.

Choosing the sett (once I have considered wear, use, and hand) comes down to deciding how much detail I want in a given area. The amount of detail is determined by the amount of passes I can put in a given area, again, the proportion of warp to weft. When I look around at many small-scale, small-format pieces, this to me is the most common mistake people make when designing tapestries. They lose detail by choosing the wrong warp sett and warp or rib size. These are problems that are easily avoidable by considering the warp and warp sett once you have designed the piece. Today, good warp in various sizes is easy to find and usually inexpensive to purchase, so availability is not an excuse. Bad choices are always going to be bad choices in warp and weft. It's difficult, time consuming, and discouraging if you constantly have to battle the materials. Set up your own canon of ideal warp proportions. When using warp and weft, it doesn't profit you to make bad choices, reduce detail, or use inappropriate materials just because your proportion of warp to weft to sett are incorrect for a given piece or you're stuck believing there is only one choice or way to use warp, weft or sett. Open yourself to other possibilities.



Leslie Mitchell, "Multicolor Weaving on Step" 23.5 x 17", 2009, wool weft, cotton warp. Photograph by John Tallent

Learning to Weave Navajo-Style; the Journey of an Easterner

By Leslie Mitchell

I've always loved woven articles – the feel and sheen of textiles, the earthy quality that they bring to a room, and the beautiful geometric patterns. As a kid in school, I wove the requisite projects but never tried my hand at a real loom until years later. Why not? The usual excuses: I don't have time, it's too abstract a concept for my non-spatial brain, and it's too expensive for an untried hobby. I was unfamiliar with the wide range of loom types and knew only of that which resembles an upright piano, taking up about as much space. Still, from time to time I toyed with the idea of learning to weave.

Upon moving to a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania semi-rural area, I attended a local American Indian community center's annual pow wow which awoke my interest in Native arts. I began to read about Navajo weavers and their upright, vertical looms. Those Navajo looms looked quite practical for use in a small house and could be built inexpensively from ordinary hardware store supplies. The rusty cog began to click.

A little background though, before the rest of this yarn is spun; I am a 49-year-old Jewish woman of

continued...

Russian and Romanian descent, still living where I grew up, in western Pennsylvania; a nice place to live and work but hardly a bastion of Navajo weaving. Several active weavers and spinners guilds meet here, but after searching through class offerings at nearby art schools and colleges, I realized that finding a local teacher for this weaving specialty was unlikely. Then came my Internet search.

Surfing the Net provided many weaving resources and helped me to find a weaving school in central Pennsylvania. The school offered a weekend crash course in "southwestern-style weaving" in October 2000, and off I went. The school imported a Penn State University fine arts professor who had studied with weavers in Navajoland. After a wonderful long weekend spent learning some weaving basics, I was on my own again but armed with tools, yarn, books, and a small wooden frame loom. I kept in touch for a time with our professor who insisted that I must learn from a Navajo weaver if I intended to get serious.

A Navajo weaving instructional video showed me how to assemble a larger, modern Navajo-style loom. A helpful plumbing salesman at my favorite hardware store looked over my loom plans and set me up with lengths of iron pipe, elbow fittings, wooden dowels and turnbuckles. As I checked out the cashier asked, "Are you a plumber?" I replied, "No, I'm a weaver!" Fifty bucks worth of parts, a wrestling match with a pipe wrench, a good deal of sweat, and a few hours later my real loom was standing.

I limped along with my pipe loom as best I could but decided to take my professor's advice. A year later in October 2001, I flew to Taos, New Mexico to take a week-long class with Pearl Sunrise, a renowned Navajo weaver and teacher. All six students had found Navajo weaving through the same circuitous route, and on the morning of our first day, we found that nine students had originally signed up for our class. Two had canceled due to fear of flying after 9/11. The other, a New York stockbroker, had been killed in the World Trade Center attacks. We kept an empty loom and chair set up in our classroom all week in her memory.

Pearl was a wonderful teacher, and with her inspiration our small group bonded quickly. Pearl taught us about Navajo culture as well and sent us home after an unforgettable week in beautiful Taos. To this day I keep in touch with

several former classmates. We keep up with each other's lives and often e-mail photos of our latest weavings.

Here at home, problem-solving must be done through books, internet research, e-mail, long-distance telephone calls, and persistence. I almost ran away from home after an early attempt to fix a broken warp. My first pictorial weaving featured two small and simple birds, and after their completion I was very nearly bald from tearing out my hair. Recently, I had to undo several inches of work to correct a careless error. When I struggle (literally) to complete that last quarter-inch of a weaving, I ask myself, "Why, again, do I enjoy this?"

Lately, I've branched out and explored different looms and techniques. I've found that European tapestry looms, table and floor looms all have their own personalities, advantages, and difficulties. Local weavers and spinners that I've met are wonderful and supportive people but mystify me with such words as *countermarch* and *niddy noddy*. Learning to weave has taught me patience like nothing else that I've ever attempted: playing the guitar, origami, needlework, painting. Since then, I've returned to Taos for another dose of its magic. Here at home I carry on in occasional frustration but know that I will always be a weaver. What started as a hobby has become a journey, and that realization might just be the best part of all. Weave in beauty.

~ Leslie Mitchell is a marketing writer living in Pennsylvania who writes frequently for safety industry magazines and for humorous publications. Leslie weaves tapestry using a combination of Navajo, Mexican, and European techniques.

American Tapestry Biennial 8 Exhibition

By Michael Rohde

We received 176 entries from 105 artists representing 15 countries. As you can imagine, the Juror, Rebecca A.T. Stevens, had a very difficult choice, but selected 65 tapestries to be included in the final exhibition.

As you may know, we were unable to secure an appropriate venue in Albuquerque, New Mexico during the HGA Convergence. However, we will prepare the ATB8 catalogue so that it will be available for attendees at Convergence 2010 and for the booth ATA will have at SOFA Santa Fe, both in July 2010. Although the exhibition will not be on display in New Mexico for these events, we expect the catalogue to generate interest in the exhibition.

We currently have contracts with two venues for the Biennial and are waiting to hear about a potential third venue. ATB8 will open at the Elder Gallery in Lincoln, Nebraska (Sept. 20 - Nov. 15, 2010) and will coincide with the meetings of the Textile Society of America (TSA) as they present their 12th Biennial Symposium. This will be an exceptional opportunity for the work to be seen by members of this prestigious organization. Several members of ATA have submitted and been accepted to make presentations at the TSA meetings. This will allow for contemporary tapestry to be at the symposium's forefront. Visit www.textilesociety.org/events_conferences.htm for more information.

From there, the exhibition will travel to the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts (Jan 21-May 1, 2011). This newly refurbished museum has a very active outreach/educational program. Most of its collection is historic, but they have been very interested in showing our contemporary work.

If our application is accepted for the third venue, we would expect the work to be on display until the end of July 2011.

Congratulations to these tapestry artist who have been accepted into ATB8.

Janet Austin USA	Agneta Henerud Sweden	Suzanne Pretty USA
Joan Baxter UK	Susan Iverson USA	Elisabeth Quick USA
Liev Beuten-Schellekens Belgium	Anne Jackson UK	Linda Rees USA
Archie Brennan USA	Urban R Jupena USA	Michael F. Rohde USA
Marie-Thumette Brichard France	Mary Kester USA	Deann Rubin USA
Anne Brodersen Denmark	Eila Lany USA	Kristin Saeterdal Norway
Don Burns USA	Maximo Laura Peru	Joann Sanburg USA
Janet Clark UK	Susan Martin Maffei USA	Jennifer Sargent USA
Manuella Cocchis USA	Lynn Mayne USA	Kathy Spoering USA
Lynn Cornelius USA	Anna-Byrd Mays USA	Elinor Steele USA
Line Dufour Canada	Rebecca Mezzoff USA	Becky Stevens USA
Elaine Duncan Canada	Julia Mitchell USA	Sarah Swett USA
Joanna Foslien USA	Ulrikka Mokdad Denmark	Kathe Todd-Hooker USA
Jane Freear-Wyld UK	Ann Naustdal Norway	Christina Utsch Germany
Marianne Haller USA	John Nicholson USA	Dorothea Van De Winkel Belgium
Barbara Heller Canada	Inge Norgaard USA	Linda Wallace Canada
Jennie Henderson USA	Eve Pearce USA	Pat Williams USA
Susan Hart Henegar USA	Christine Pradel-Lien USA	Mary Zicafoose USA

Convergence 2010 Events

Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico

Tapestry Enchantment ATA's 2010 Educational Retreat

Thanks for your enthusiastic response. These workshops are now full.

Enchanted Pathways Unjuried Small Format Show

The submission deadline is now passed but make sure to visit the show at the William and Joseph Gallery in Santa Fe (www.thewilliamandjosephgallery.com).

An Enchanted Evening

Interested in meeting with tapestry weavers? Join this American Tapestry Alliance sponsored gathering to meet new and old friends and colleagues. Learn about regional tapestry groups, enjoy a slide show of tapestries, peruse our publications, and best of all, talk tapestry! Scheduled for Saturday, July 24, 2010, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Albuquerque Convention Center. The room is to be announced. A cash bar will be available. Open to all. No reservation is necessary. For more information, contact: Diane Kennedy, P.O. Box 601, Santa Fe, NM 87504 (di1204@gmail.com).

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Unraveling the Creative Strand **ATA's 2010 Membership Meeting & Forum**

Join us for the American Tapestry Alliance's Biennial Membership Meeting and Educational Forum. Held in conjunction with HGA's Convergence, the meeting is scheduled for Sunday, July 25, 2010 from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the Convention Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico. The room is to be announced later. This meeting is open to the public. Find out what's new in ATA, and be inspired by Lynne Curran and James Koehler as they share insights into their tapestries and their careers.

In "The Hidden Heart" Lynne Curran will discuss the elements she believes necessary for a successful tapestry. Using her own work and working methods, interests and historical context, she will tell the story of her tapestries.

In "Developing a Career as a Tapestry Artist" James Koehler will trace the path that led from his initial interest in tapestry weaving through the pitfalls and successes that led to his dedicated focus and fulfilling career as a tapestry artist.

A Digi Slam of contemporary tapestry will follow Curran and Koehler's talks. To participate in the Digi Slam, please submit the following by May 15, 2010:

1. Up to five digital images of your tapestries. Label each digital image file with your last name followed by the name of the tapestry, e.g. Smith Morning Mist.jpg. Digital image specifications: jpegs saved at 300 dpi and exactly 1000 pixels on the longest side. Save the image with high or maximum image quality.
2. A Word document (or pdf), whose file name is your last name, e.g. Smith.doc, and containing the following information:
 - Your name, address, phone number and email
 - An annotated list for the submitted images listing the title of the work, the dimensions, date and materials.
 - A one-paragraph bio.
 - Up to two paragraphs about your work.

Burn the image files and the Word document onto a universal CD and mail, by May 15, 2010 to Mary Lane, 703 Foote Street NW, Olympia, WA 98502.

The slide show is not juried, but is limited: first come, first served. The only commentary will come from the text you provide with your images.

See this exhibit while at Convergence in New Mexico
"Dialogues: Tapestry and Human/Nature"

July 1- August 22, 2010

Opening reception the evening of

Friday, July 23, 2010 as part of the Convergence gallery crawl

An exploration by artists from New Mexico, Canada and Australia
Artists include Elizabeth J. Buckley, Lany Eila, Katherine Perkins,
Elaine Duncan, Linda Wallace, and Dorothy Clews

Mon. - Fri., 8 am to 6 pm.

South Broadway Cultural Center

1025 Broadway SE, Albuquerque, NM

Call for Entries:

Small Tapestry International 2: Passages

Small Tapestry International 2: Passages, the American Tapestry Alliance's juried, international exhibition of small-scale tapestries will open during 2011. The anticipated run of the show is from the spring through the fall, although the dates of the show may be extended further into the year. Artists are encouraged to consider the technical, metaphorical, and/or conceptual implications of the theme of the show, *Passages*, as they develop work to submit. Innovation and experimentation within the technique of tapestry are welcomed. All works must be mounted. For more information on submission requirements please refer to the call for entry. Exhibition Chair: Margo Macdonald (margomac53@comcast.net).

SMALL FORMAT LIVES AGAIN

By Letty Roller

Every two years Small Format Tapestry (SFT) is curated to show the works of tapestry artists from all levels of expertise. Weft-covered warps are celebrated at this non-juried exhibition.

The submissions come from enthusiastic tapestry weavers eager to share and join in this exhibit. In many ways it is a great advertisement to educate all those who know little about tapestry. We can emphasize an incredible diversity of artistic possibilities when small-scale tapestries are the focus.

Over the years there has been a definite progression from the early days of this wonderful show. The **World Weavers Wall** was the germination for the SFT exhibit. It was held in Melbourne, Australia in May 1988 with participants from all over the world. There were 18 from the United States in the Ur-exhibit that included 250 entrants worldwide. It is believed that some of these people banded together to create the first Small Format Tapestry show in the USA in Portland, Oregon at a seminal tapestry conference. It is exciting that this exhibit has a history and life of its own, as it is an extraordinary

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Call for Entries

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Small Tapestry International 2: Passages

Passage is the act of passing from one place, condition, etc. to another, the route one travels. ATA invites artists to use innovative approaches that push the technical or conceptual meaning of the term in their submissions to the ATA's biennial juried small format exhibition.

The American Tapestry Alliance is a not-for-profit, member-supported organization seeking to exhibit the best of contemporary tapestry. The small format exhibition gives artists an opportunity to explore ideas and processes in new ways while preserving the qualities of handwoven tapestry.

Eligibility

Eligibility

Entry to Passages is open to all tapestry artists who design and weave their own tapestries (defined as "hand-woven, weft-faced fabric with discontinuous wefts"), either individually or collaboratively (all assistants shall be named). Multimedia work will be considered as long as the primary medium is tapestry. Entries must be one-of-a-kind and have been completed after January 2009. Artists may submit up to three entries.

Size Restrictions: The size of the tapestry may not exceed a total of 100 square inches (625 square cm) and cannot exceed 20 inches (50 cm) in any one dimension. For example, a piece can be 10 x 10 inches (25 x 25 cm) or the sides can be of different lengths from each other as long as length times width does not exceed 100 square inches and no dimension is longer than 20 inches (50 cm). Three-dimensional pieces may not exceed 10 inches (25 cms) in height, length, or depth. Tapestries must be mounted and/or framed. If the mount or frame is meant to show when hung, that treatment must be shown in the entry image and must be in keeping with the small-format theme. If accepted, the work must arrive ready to hang.

Submissions

Submissions

Image quality may influence the juror's decision. Only completed tapestries will be juried. Submissions must be digital. For each entry, submit one jpeg of the entire tapestry and one jpeg of a detail.

Digital image requirements: jpegs saved at 300 dpi and exactly 1000 pixels on the longest side. Save the images with maximum image quality. Each digital image file must be labeled with only the title, e.g. Morning Mist.jpg or Morning Mist detail.jpg. Burn all image files onto a universal CD. Entries will be saved for historical purposes.

Conditions

Conditions

- Artists are responsible for all shipping and insurance costs to the first venue and for the return shipping and insurance costs from the final venue.
- Entries not accompanied by all completed forms, digital images and fees cannot be juried.
- Work that differs significantly from the submitted image may be declined for exhibition.
- Complete exhibition instructions will be sent to the accepted artists. Accepted works not completely prepared for installation may be returned.
- Tapestries must be available through the last scheduled exhibition.

Juror

Juror

Kay Lawrence, Australian fiber artist, author and Head of the South Australia School of Art.



Small Tapestry International: Passages 2011

Calendar **Entry Deadline:** November 30, 2010 (postmark date)
Jury Notification: January 30, 2011

Entry Fees **\$35 ATA Members; \$45 Non-Members; \$70 Membership and Entry fee**
Payable by check or credit card
Make checks payable to: American Tapestry Alliance

Credit Card payment: ___ MC ___ VISA (check one) Amount of charge _____
Card number _____ Expiration date _____
Signature _____

We also accept payment through **PayPal**. Use the "Send Money" tab on the PayPal website (www.paypal.com) and send your payment to americantapestryalliance@gmail.com with a note saying ST12.

Mail Entry to:
American Tapestry Alliance
c/o Fran Williamson
P.O. Box 11429
Olympia, WA 98508 USA

Check list

- ☐ signed entry form
- ☐ payment
- ☐ CD with JPEG images
- ☐ return envelope

Please make a copy for your own records.

Entrant Information (please print)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Postal Code _____ Country _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

Authorization

I understand that submission of artwork to Passages constitutes my permission for ATA to photograph the work and/or duplicate my submitted digital images for publicity and promotional purposes, including the internet. I acknowledge that ATA will allow the public to photograph all ATA exhibits. I agree to these terms.

Signature _____ Date _____

1. Title _____

Materials _____ Date Completed _____

Dimensions (h x w x d in inches) _____ Insurance Value USD _____

2. Title _____

Materials _____ Date Completed _____

Dimensions (h x w x d in inches) _____ Insurance Value USD _____

3. Title _____

Materials _____ Date Completed _____

Dimensions (h x w x d in inches) _____ Insurance Value USD _____

Calendar and Fees

Entrant

Authorization

Entry 1

Entry 2

Entry 3

SMALL FORMAT continued...

show of ideas, designs, color, humor, and pathos, all woven up into 10 by 10 inch (or less) squares.

This year's SFT exhibition, **Enchanted Pathways**, will include art work from 180 artists. Representative works from eight foreign countries are included. The SFT show is one way to connect with what is happening globally with tapestry. The challenges from the many tapestry study groups provide a glimpse through the selection of a variety of topics in order to form a connecting thread for exploration. There are seven challenge groups represented in the show and many independent entries responding to **Enchanted Pathways**.

The William and Joseph Gallery has graciously offered to host the exhibit this year along with their regular scheduled exhibitions. The gallery owner, Mary Bonney, is very open and interested to learn about our medium and to have the show housed in her gallery.

The William and Joseph Gallery is located at 727 Canyon Road in Santa Fe. The exhibit will open on July 10th and close on the 31st. The Railrunner train takes people from Albuquerque to Santa Fe and back, a beautiful ride up 2000 feet through the volcanic and mountainous high desert. Once off the train, there are a number of options to get to Canyon Road, one of which is to ride the Pickup. These are charming vehicles with a pickup painted on the side that serve as bus-like taxis going to various areas of the city. These Pickups are fun to ride and come in all shapes and sizes. There will be printed schedules of all types of transportation at the Convergence tables to assist you in getting to Santa Fe from Albuquerque.

It is hoped that you are all planning trips to Convergence and will take the time to explore Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Santa Fe is celebrating its 400th anniversary this year, and there is always something wonderful happening in the city's plaza. You will find many amazingly wonderful museums here that hold treasures galore to delight the eye. The numerous galleries on Canyon Road and elsewhere in the city are open to the browser or buyer. Santa Fe is a city of many cultures, and it is an exciting venue for the Eighth Small Format Tapestry show.

A REMINDER FOR ALL SFT ENTRANTS

PLEASE do not forget to sew the security strips on the reverse side of your tapestries. These strips are very important to avoid the unthinkable, theft of a

SFT. Just because SFT is housed in a gallery, it is not a time to become complacent about the security strips. Remember, wires are passed through the strip and are twisted together on the back side of the panel. This protects your work from being stolen. Works without a security strip cannot be hung.

Also, please make certain that your works arrive on time. The foreign entries are especially challenged as the postal systems cannot always deliver exactly when needed. Please remember to include a set of signed customs forms in the package with your tapestry. These are necessary for returning the tapestries. Make certain that your tapestries get the attention needed by the post office to get to New Mexico by March 15th. This is important as catalogue publication will begin as soon as all the entries are checked in.

Kudos

Compiled by Merna Strauch

Send items to mstrauch@mac.com

July and August 2010 bring *The Bauhaus Project* to Albuquerque, New Mexico. **Interwoven Traditions: New Mexico & Bauhaus**, an exhibition of handwoven tapestries by **James Koehler**, **Rebecca Mezoff** and Cornelia Theimer Gardella, will be shown at the Open Space Gallery. Using the same title, different bodies of work will be shown in September and October in Erfurt, Germany. With this exhibition, the artists hope to show the interweaving of their artistic subject matters with design principles taught by the Bauhaus. Visit www.bauhaus-tapestry-project.com to learn more.

One of **Donna Contractor's** tapestries is displayed in a new exhibit at the Albuquerque Museum of History, **Albuquerque Now - Winter** from January 24, 2010 to April 18, 2010. Donna's work was also displayed at Albuquerque's Open Space Visitor Center Gallery in January and February 2010.

Shining Brightly: Tapestry Weavers West Celebrates 25 Years, on view in January and February at the Petaluma Arts Center in California (www.petalumaartscouncil.org), showcases 55 pieces woven by 21 Tapestry Weavers West members. The exhibit includes Saturday tapestry weaving demonstrations in the gallery. A discussion by the artists and a lecture by **Alex Friedman** on Contemporary Tapestry was held on January 24, 2010 as part of the ArtsLive! Series in Petaluma.

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Kathy Spoering showed tapestry and miniature oil paintings at the Blue Pig Gallery in Palisades, Colorado in November and December 2009.

Tommye Scanlin, no stranger to these pages, was honored by her peers last November. She was given a beautiful hand-blown glass piece and an award that read "*Lifetime Achievement Award Presented to Tommye McClure Scanlin, Our Mentor and Friend. In recognition of a lifetime dedication to craft education, 2009 GAEA Conference. Celebrating American Craft in the Southern Mountains November 12, 2009.*"

Craft in America honored **Michael Rohde** with a page on its website (www.craftinamerica.org/artists_fiber/story_526.php). He joins a select group of today's fiber artists showcasing the best of what Craft in America calls our oldest craft material. In November 2009, Michael was the subject of a WeaveCast (a podcast for weavers) episode. Visit www.weavezine.com/content/45-michael-rohde to listen to Michael talk about his development as a weaver.

James Koehler joins the Greater Vancouver Weavers' & Spinners' Guild at Interlacements, an event celebrating their 75th year, in North Vancouver, British Columbia (www.gvws.org/interlacement/overview-of-events). James will present a workshop and lecture as a part of the symposium. His lecture scheduled for May 21, 2010 is titled "Bauhaus Influences on Textile Design".

Important Dates to Remember

SOFA WEST: SANTA FE, July 8 - 11, 2010
(www.sofaexpo.com/santa-fe/2009/index.htm)

Handweavers Guild of America (HGA) Convergence
2010 Albuquerque, July 18 - 25, 2010
(www.weavespindye.org)

Textile Society of America (TSA)
October 6 - 10, 2010
(www.textilesociety.org/symposia_about.htm)

Correction

Tapestry Networking: An Enchanted Evening on Saturday July 24, 2010 in the Convention Center will **not** require reservations as announced in the last newsletter. This event is free and open to all. A no-host (cash) bar will be available.

Announcements

Habsburg Treasures

Habsburg Treasures: Renaissance Tapestries from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, a touring exhibition initiated by ATA member Dirk Holger, contains eight huge tapestries that demonstrate why this period of the 16th century is labeled as the "Supremacy of Brussels". The story of "Romulus and Remus and the founding of Rome" unfolds in these magnificent weavings with typical Flemish lust for detail in design and exquisite craftsmanship.

Habsburg Treasures is currently showing at the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida (January 16 - April 11, 2010). The exhibit will also travel to the Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina (May 21 - September 19, 2010) and the Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida (October 7 - December 30, 2010).

A 40 page exhibition catalog can be ordered at a reduced price specifically for ATA members, \$12.00 (plus shipping and handling). Contact Nicole Forrest to order your copy (nicolef@artsandartists.org or 202-338-0680).

Textile Society of America (TSA) Scholarship

TSA offers scholarships for members who are students and new professionals to attend their biennial symposium, "Textiles and Settlement: From Plains Space to Cyber Space" scheduled for Lincoln, Nebraska during October 2010. The scholarship award will be in the form of TSA symposium registration and banquet event admission ~ the recipient will need to cover all other expenses.

Further information will be posted on the TSA website (www.textilesociety.org) after February 1, 2010.

TSA's 12th Biennial Symposium 2010

The Textile Society of America's (TSA) 12th Biennial Symposium 2010, "Textiles and Settlement: From Plains Space to Cyber Space"

scheduled for October 6 - 9, will be hosted by the Textiles, Clothing and Design Department of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The symposium will feature two focus areas: natural dye history and technology and Native American culture and textiles. International guests will speak in a two-part panel conference session entitled *Dyes and Colors: Materials and Culture*. Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, Judi M. gaiashkibos, will provide a context for the rich Native American legacy in the Great Plains. Exhibitions and seminars that showcase the artifacts in Lincoln will be available to conference participants.

The organizers are proud to present the debut exhibition of the American Tapestry Alliance **American Tapestry Biennial 8** at the Elder Gallery on the Nebraska Wesleyan University campus. In addition, **A Turning Point: When Modern Navajo Weaving Became Art**, featuring the work of 18 - 24 contemporary Navajo women from The Santa Fe Collection curated by **Ann Hedlund** will be presented at the Cooper Gallery in Lincoln. These exhibitions are two of sixteen shows planned for fall 2010 that feature textile-based artwork in conjunction with the biennial conference. Other significant venues include the Sheldon Museum of Art, International Quilt Study Center and Museum, the Museum of Nebraska History, the Eisentrager/Howard Gallery at Richards Hall and the Robert Hillestad Textiles Gallery. Visit the TSA website (www.textilesociety.org) for more information.

Contact ATA

PO Box 28600 San Jose, CA 95159
www.american Tapestry Alliance.org

Director of Member Services

Becky Stevens stevensreb@gmail.com

Director of Resources

Mary Zicafoose mzicafoose@gmail.com

Treasurer

Rosalee Skrenes rosaleeskrenes@tds.net

Member Chair

Diane Wolf membership@american Tapestry Alliance.org

Education Committee: Distance Learning

Barbara Heller bheller@telus.net

Ed. Com. Coordinator, Events & Online study groups

Mary Lane marylane53@mac.com

Online Study Groups

Dorothy Clews adsl8633@tsn.cc

Library Chair, Archives & Slide Registry

Joyce Hayes joyce.hayes@gmail.com

ATB8

Michael Rohde mfrohde@mac.com

Susan Iverson siverson@vcu.org

Small Format Exhibition

Letitia Roller rollerletitia@gmail.com

ATA Awards

Elisabeth Quick ataaward@american Tapestry Alliance.org

PR Chair

Elaine Duncan elaine@elaineduncan.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Joan Griffin Joan@joangriffintapestry.com

Web Editor

Christine Laffer christinelaffer@gmail.com

Webmistress

Jeanne Bates jeanneb@jeannembates.com

Web Exhibits

Sarah Swett swett@moscow.com

Dave Johnson urbanwild@earthlink.net

Artist Pages

Sarah Warren swtapestry@ne.rr.com

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	1 year	2 years
Individual	\$35	\$65
Studio Circle	\$60	\$110
Curator's Circle	\$125	\$225
Collector's Circle	\$250	\$450
Student*	\$25	\$45

*enclose copy of current student identification card with payment

☐ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities

Send payment to: ATA Membership
 c/o Diane Wolf
 18611 N. 132nd Ave.
 Sun City West, AZ 85375
 (480) 200-1034

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Use the "Send Money" tab on the PayPal website and send your payment to american Tapestry Alliance@gmail.com with a description of what it applies to. Make your check, money order or credit card form payable to ATA.

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