

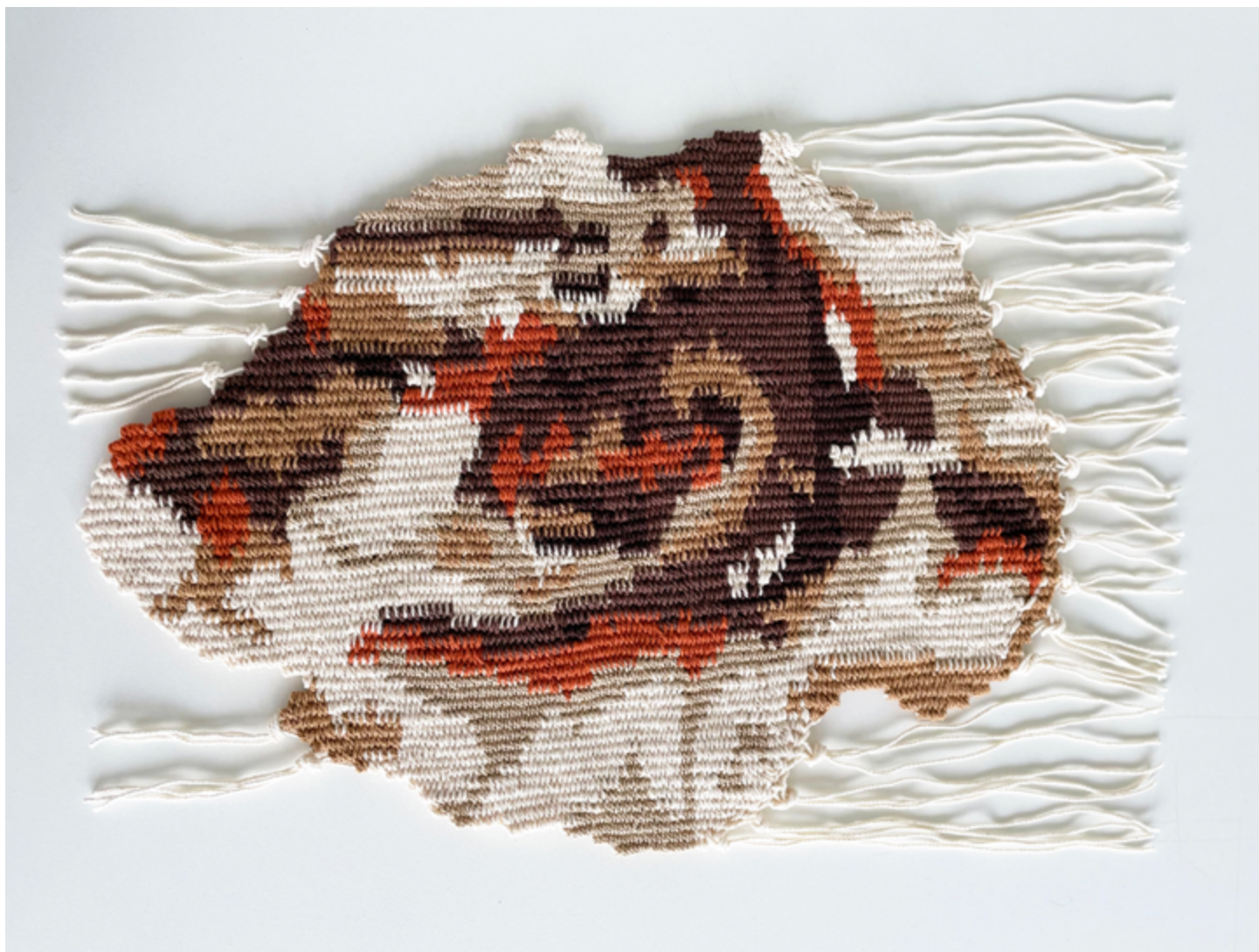


AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE

A TRIANNUAL REVIEW OF TAPESTRY ART TODAY

WWW.AMERICANTAPESTRYALLIANCE.ORG

Fall 2021, Vol. 47 Issue 3



Weaving Communities

HONORING TRADITION, INSPIRING INNOVATION

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WEAVING COMMUNITIES

Maggie Leininger, Theme Coordinator

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COVER IMAGE Minsun Kim, "Growth-peeling," 42 cm x 30 cm, 2021,
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DIRECTORS' LETTER, FALL 2021

Dear Members,

We welcome you to another issue of Tapestry Topics, "Weaving Communities." The title serves as a positive metaphor and appropriately provides a perspective we must all be sharing in this moment: one of hope, enthusiasm, excitement for new collaboration and shared experience, and feelings full of bright anticipation looking forward!

It's been a busy couple of months at ATA as we have begun to reopen our exhibition programming! **ATB13** and **STI7** have both opened to the public with gorgeous installations and much public enthusiasm. The publishing, shipping, and sales of catalogs for both exhibitions are currently underway, and we have many volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make all of this possible!

A very special thanks to Maggie Leininger, Leslie Munro, Robbie LaFleur, Patricia Williams, and Kim Mumbower for their work coordinating, editing, and indexing this selection of articles, and to our new TT layout editor Lindsay Kronmiller!

Forthcoming, fresh and new on the horizon will be the facelift of our new ATA website! Sure to delight both members and non-member visitors, it will be filled with easy to locate information and provide an enjoyable interactive experience for all.

We also want to thank all of you for responding to our recent membership survey. We received some excellent feedback, critique, and requests communicating the ways in which you would like to see ATA grow and evolve. Your feedback is essential, as it informs the direction of our organization and

program planning. We have collected and analyzed the results and look forward to sharing with you some exciting new programming that carefully considers your responses in the coming weeks.

Finally, we would like to thank retiring Board Members Nicki Bair, Promotions Director, and Ginger Thomas, Membership Director, for their years of service. These two women have done an outstanding job servicing ATA in two demanding posts. As we send them off with gratitude and best wishes in their next pursuits, we would also like to welcome Susan Gangsei who will take the helm as Director of Promotions, and Claire Most, our new Director of Membership.

To our wonderful ATA community, we hope you will enjoy this latest edition of Tapestry Topics!



Shelley Socolofsky
President



Sue Weil
Director at Large

HONORING TRADITION, INSPIRING INNOVATION

Fall 2021, Vol. 47 Issue 3

WEAVING COMMUNITIES IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

Maggie Leininger

The pandemic affected us all in so many different ways, including how we think about what it means to be a part of a community in an era when we could not be physically together. As many of the contributors to this issue note, Zoom not only saved us from further isolation, but rather brought us possibly closer together. Barbara Heller talks about the momentary glimpses of life in other continents while attending a Zoom workshop. Many of us took advantage of technology to attend workshops, lectures, and view online exhibitions. Many of us also took a moment to pause, reflect, and consider what weaving, whether tapestry or other forms of cloth, means to us as makers.

My artistic background is firmly rooted in the community of textiles. Earliest memories include my grandmother and her sisters gathering together to share their latest project, from crocheted hangers, intricately designed and stitched quilts, hand knitted slippers, or impeccably sewn outfits. As I got older, my grandmother taught me to sew my own clothes, knit, and design and sew quilts by hand. My community, however, didn't stop there. During my childhood, I lived in numerous mill towns in South Carolina. My bus driver, Miss Ruby, worked in the local textile mill during the night, and drove our bus during the day. As I got older, my peers spent their summers working at the local textile mills. They shared stories about the grueling hours spent operating very large equipment that churned out tons of yardage. During high school, my art teacher introduced me to weaving and surface design, which was her creative passion. However, it wasn't until I went to art school at the School of the Art Institute that I fell deeply in love with weaving. It was the one thing I could do for 12 hours straight and get up the next morning and do it again. I am fascinated by the history of weaving as it is the instigator of the

Industrial Revolution. Who knew that in 1733 the invention of the flying shuttle would impact cloth production, manufacturing, farming, trade, labor, and wealth on such a global scale? Growing up in a textile mill town, I saw that weaving yardage at a mill was not glamorous. It was a blue-collar job that was sometimes there and sometimes not. This was during the twilight years of the industry in the United States, before most of it went overseas.

I love weaving of all kinds. I have woven production yardage both in my home studio and as a weaver for a custom textile design house. I have designed and woven Jacquard fabric for commission, and I have woven experimental forms using a wide variety of materials including copper, steel wool, buttons, nails, and more. Finally, after going down the rabbit hole of hand-spinning and natural dyeing, I made my way to tapestry weaving, where I am learning so much through my work with ATA.

Communities that formed around these mills and our connections with one another are not that different than those that form between weavers all around the world. Pride is taken in the massive amount of knowledge that is required to even throw that first shot of weft across the warp or manipulate individual warp threads to create exquisitely designed compositions. As Deb Chandler, founder of Weave A Real Peace, describes in her contribution, she never stops learning. Judy Newland shares a wonderful memory that we had together when we installed the International Honor Quilt in Louisville, Kentucky. Though not a tapestry, each of the 540 quilts were made by a community of women honoring those who are not often recognized for their contributions. And speaking of honoring those that inspire, Terry Olson's loving tribute to Audrey Moore encapsulates her generous spirit as a teacher and talent as an

artist. The community that Audrey Moore created over the years and the impact that she had upon her students is similar to what Sally Reckert describes in her telling of community weaving experiences. We hear from the founder of Gist Yarn, Sarah Resnick, who shares how she is building community through her love of yarn, and how she is supporting U.S. textile manufacturers with her new line of tapestry yarn. Our keynote contributor, Melissa Potter, tells us about her journey from paper-making to tapestry weaving. Potter shares what she has learned and gained as part of a much larger network of people who are willing to share their knowledge.

As we progress past the pandemic, I hope that we take away the good parts of experiencing social distancing, from the Zoom opportunities to exchange

and share our knowledge to the reflective time that is needed to be in the moment.



Maggie Leininger is the Administrative Manager for American Tapestry Alliance and is the Curator and Director at Peeler Art Center at DePauw University. Leininger's studio practice explores cultural, sociological, and economic patterns of cloth-making in the form of weavings, paintings, drawings, and sculpture.

Currently, Maggie Leininger is remodeling a storefront space in Greencastle, Indiana, where she plans to host community textile making events.

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THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Including Maggie Leininger, Theme Coordinator



Deborah Chandler is the creator and director of Weaving Futures, where she has had the pleasure and honor of working with many Mayan weavers. She leads cultural tours to communities in the Guatemalan Highlands, with a focus on indigenous artisans and their work. She is the author

of *Learning to Weave* and *Traditional Weavers of Guatemala*. She lives in Guatemala City.



Terry Olson learned to weave from Audrey Moore and from workshops with Archie Brennan, Susan Maffei, and others. She currently teaches tapestry at Damascus Fiber Arts School in Oregon. She exhibits wherever she can. She is a founding member of the Willamette Tapestry Artists.

www.damascusfiberartsschool.com.



Barbara Heller has been weaving tapestry for more years than she cares to think about. As well as trying to be at her loom every day, she has exhibited widely, organized symposia, written articles, given lectures, edited publications and juried and curated exhibitions.

She served on the board of the American Tapestry Alliance for eight years and filled other volunteer positions for ATA and her local crafts council. Barbara founded the British Columbia Society of Tapestry Artists, a non-profit society for the promotion of tapestry, and also the Canadian Tapestry Network which produces a newsletter with a Canadian slant three times a year. Tapestry has filled her life.



Melissa Hilliard Potter is a feminist interdisciplinary artist, writer, and curator whose work has been exhibited in numerous venues including White Columns, Bronx Museum of the Arts, and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, to name a few. Her films have been screened at international

film festivals. She is a three-time Fulbright recipient to Serbia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. Through these programs, she built two papermaking studios at university art departments. She has been the recipient of other awards and residencies including the Soros Fund for Arts and Culture, ArtsLink and the Trust for Mutual Understanding. As a curator, Potter's exhibitions include **Social Paper: Hand Papermaking in the Context of Socially Engaged Art** with Jessica Cochran and **Revolution at Point Zero: Feminist Social Practice** with Neysa Page Lieberman. A prolific writer, her critical essays have been printed in *BOMB*, *Art Papers*, *Flash Art*, *Metropolis M*, *Hand Papermaking*, and *AfterImage* among others. Potter is an Associate Professor at Columbia College Chicago and collaborates with artists in the medium of hand papermaking.



Judy Newland addresses culture and the environment in her textile art. She has been working in textiles for more than forty years as a maker and later as a textile historian. Her background in textile history and museum anthropology allows her to bring a deep cultural

engagement to everything she produces.

www.clothgirl.com.



Sally Reckert lives in the English Northern Pennine Dales from where, through her iPad, she joined in online courses from London and beyond. She is a past editor of the British Tapestry Group magazine, *Tapestry Weaver*. She works with children whenever

possible. She was a beneficiary of ATA's "Weaving the Future" grant both as mentor and facilitator. She initiated weaving projects with local Young Careers and Syrian refugee children who have now come together in weaving a tapestry for a BTG exhibition, **Fabric of the North**.



Sarah Resnick is the Founder of Gist Yarn. She manages the finances, works to keep the team happy and thriving, and builds partnerships with mills and dye houses to bring new lines of yarn to life. Sarah started her career as a community and union organizer and made the switch to small business when she

helped to launch a sewing factory in 2016. Sarah also designs a line of [Jewish ritual textiles](#). Email sarah@gistyarn.com.

WEAVING COMMUNITY IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

sought submissions that share stories of how communities of practice help to not only sustain our field, but also enrich our lived experiences. We posed eight questions with the option to answer one or more, in whatever way suited the respondent's experience. We are fortunate to have contributors with rich and varied histories, many of whom we have come to see as family, as we expand our knowledge of the craft that weaves us together.

BARBARA HELLER



Barbara Heller, "We Are All the Same Under the Skin #2," detail of Left Wing (part of a diptych), 15 in x 15 in, 2020, photo: B. Heller. Linen warp, hand-dyed wool and perle cotton weft.

Please share your journey of how you discovered or learned about textile practices.

While supposedly getting a masters degree in humanistic psychology in the early seventies in California, this young hippie took a course in basic tapestry weaving in someone's basement. I was immediately hooked, built a small frame loom, scrounged wool and other fibres, and began a love affair with the craft. Five years later I was delighted to gain further knowledge while getting (and finishing this time) a degree in art education. The design

class was taught through textiles—surface design, natural dyes, spinning, weaving—and the love affair bloomed into a life-long passion and happy marriage. Since the teacher was not a tapestry person, I taught myself through doing, only to discover, when I took my first workshop, that I had reinvented the wheel. Basic technique is embedded in the grid of the weft and warp, whether you weave in the French style, the Polish style, the Navajo style, or your own style.

How has your sense of community expanded as a result of learning or enhancing your textile skills?

Being part of the “international tapestry mafia” has changed my life, both pre-pandemic and during the past 16 months. (My late husband coined this term for the fact that, through tapestry, there are very few countries in the world where I do not have a tapestry friend or where being a weaver has not led to adventures and new connections.) I have met wonderful people through teaching, having a

studio in a public place, being an online mentor for ATA, attending conferences and international symposia, traveling, and showing my work to other weavers from Peru to China or even North America. Tapestry has led me to make new and close friends all over the world. It has helped to define who I am and my place in the world. It has helped me to feel connected during the social isolation of Covid.

Barbara Heller, “We Are All the Same Under the Skin #7,” 15 in x17 in, 2021, photo: B. Heller. Linen warp, hand-dyed wool and perle cotton weft.





We all have experienced quite a year and a half of cancelled events, conferences, group meetings, classes, etc. due to the pandemic. How have you maintained your relationship to your textile practice and community?

In 2020 I was lucky that the exhibitions I was in went online rather than being cancelled. Zoom opened the world through online openings, lectures, meetings, and simple conversations. I don't think the tapestry world or the whole world will ever be the same. When I organized an international symposium in Vancouver in 1973, sending and receiving a fax was a miracle. When I was involved in organizing a tapestry exhibition during Convergence in the early 2000s, email made all the difference. Now we have Zoom and other online platforms to shrink our world—and to expand it.

In what ways do you find the various acts associated with textile production to be healing, restorative, mindful, or other form of positive influence to our over-scheduled hectic lives?

During times of extreme stress in my personal life, going to the studio every day and weaving has made all the difference. Weaving is a form of meditation, giving peace and strength and a shape to my daily life. Like spinning or knitting, any tension is evident in the work but can melt away through repetitive action, leaving space for the mind and spirit to roam free.

Barbara Heller, "Leah's Giraffe," 16 in x 25 in, 2020-21, photo: B. Heller. Linen warp, hand-dyed wool weft. "Leah's Giraffe" is a melding of 2 drawings by my granddaughter, on the loom at the studio being woven sideways. Something cheerful during Covid winter gloom.

DEBORAH CHANDLER

Please share your journey of how you discovered or learned about textile practices.

I was a horse-crazy little girl and my parents indulged me. Horses led to cows which led to goats, then pigs, and finally sheep, which led my knitter mother to spinning and then weaving. By then I had grown up and left home, so my mother introduced my husband to weaving, who finally got me into it. That was half a century ago.

How has your sense of community expanded as a result of learning or enhancing your textile skills?

As a shop owner and teacher, weaving was my entire community. Almost every friend I have is a textile maker, but I will name just one who represents so much: Linda Temple. I met Linda at the first SOAR (Spin Off Autumn Retreat) in 1982, and in 1992, along with six other women, we founded Weave A Real Peace (.org). Thanks to WARP and moving to Guatemala, my weaving community is now fully international, and we all strive to do just that—weave a real peace. Through textiles it just might be possible.

What have you learned about other cultures, ways of living, and viewpoints that are different from your own as a result of expanding your textile knowledge?

When I moved to Guatemala in 2000 there were an estimated $\frac{3}{4}$ million weavers in a country the size and population of Ohio. Mayan women have been weaving on backstrap looms for 3,000+ years and it is as much a part of their lives as driving a car is part of ours. Mayan men have been weaving on foot looms for a mere 500 years. In my time working with them there has never been one encounter in which I did not learn something new. Here's one to ponder: if you buy a new reed you also have to buy new heddles. It took me ten years to learn the answer to that.



TOP Esteban and his scarf. photo: Deborah Chandler.

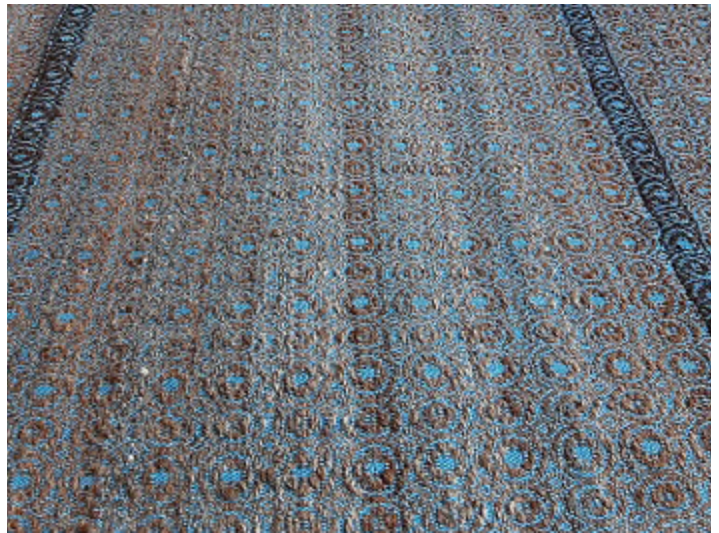
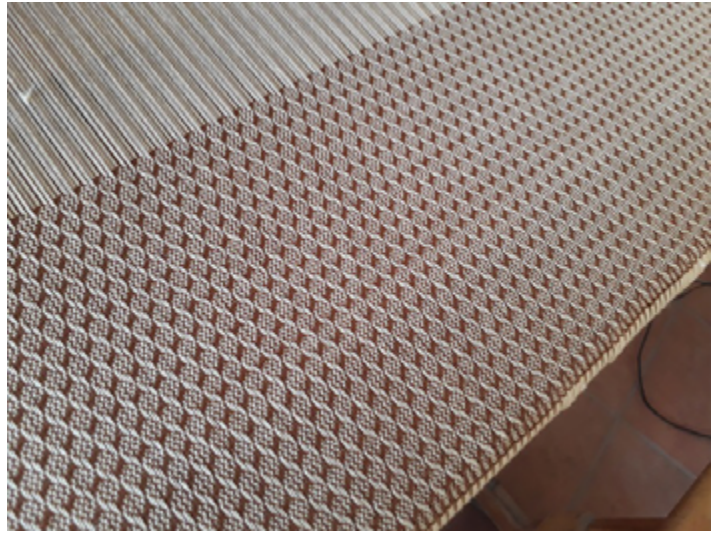
BOTTOM Deborah Chandler with Ana Ceto.

We all have experienced quite a year and a half of cancelled events, conferences, group meetings, classes, etc. due to the pandemic. How have you maintained your relationship to your textile practice and community?

Working full time with weavers meant that for many years I did not spend much time on my own loom. The gift of the pandemic for me was that it got me back on my loom, and led me to discover the weaving pages on Facebook. "Being" with all those weavers, many of them beginners, offered some of the fun of being in the classroom again, a real joy. It probably never would have happened without covid.

Can you share the most meaningful experience you have associated with weaving, mending, designing, dyeing, spinning, etc.?

In 2007 the 15th Annual Meeting of WARP was held in Guatemala. Sixty textile people from North America came to spend time with even more Mayan weavers. As I watched them together, sharing and enjoying their common spirit, I knew, "If I die right now it will be fine. My life is complete at this moment."



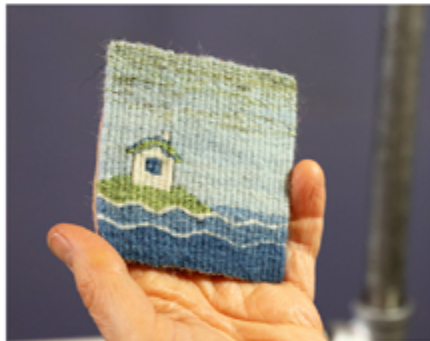
TOP Karina's shawl photo: Deborah Chandler.

BOTTOM Jeanette's bedspread. photo: Deborah Chandler.

LEFT Deborah Chandler with Ana Pu..



Fringeless: Four selvedge warping with
Sarah C. Swett
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JUDY NEWLAND

Please share your journey of how you discovered or learned about textile practices.

I built my textile foundation in weaving and spinning with a group of amazing friends in Desert Fiber Arts (Washington State) who generously shared everything they knew. One mentor in particular, Edith Marsh, inspired us all and impressed into my soul the guild motto, Each One, Teach One. I carry this message with me whenever I am teaching or traveling to explore textiles.

How has your sense of community expanded as a result of learning or enhancing your textile skills?

I met one of my favorite young textile friends while she was working on her MFA in fiber and I was running a museum. She helped me create some innovative textile exhibits, we shared weaving time in the studio, and gathered dye plants together on the Navajo reservation. Her love of textiles, instilled from her grandmother, flows from her heart into everything she does. She is an amazing part of a new generation that inspires me every day to keep working with textiles and sharing all I know.

What have you learned about other cultures, ways of living, and viewpoints that are different from your own as a result of expanding your textile knowledge?

Fieldwork in Peru, both working with textiles in the field and in collections, has influenced the way I think about cloth. Cloth has a history, relates to society and culture and tells a story. Every story is different and it is important to share all of our cultural stories of cloth with one another.

Judy Newland, "Indigo Girl," 18 in x 84 in, 2015. Wool honeycomb weave, felt bundles, indigo dyed cotton.





Judy Newland, "Indigo Armor," 42 in x 46 in, 2019. Indigo dyed fabrics, woven and stitched.

How do you currently share your passion of textiles with your community?

Growing dye plants to share with others brings me back to my roots and digging into the history and knowledge of natural dyeing has been my inspiration lately. Sharing plants and dye pots with the Boys and Girls club is the most fun I had during the pandemic.



Can you share the most meaningful experience you have associated with weaving, mending, designing, dyeing, spinning, etc.?

Judy Newland, "Sonoran Souls," 8 in x 10 in, 2018. Wool resist bundles, natural dyes.

Being part of a week-long installation of "The Honor Quilt" at the University of Louisville, a feminist art project initiated in 1980 by Judy Chicago as a companion piece to "The Dinner Party," was an amazing experience. I was invited to assist by my friend Maggie Leininger, and the opportunity to see over 500 small quilts dedicated to so many causes was amazing and very inspiring. The ability of cloth to bring people together to support a cause and each other is heart-warming.

SALLY RECKERT



Please share your journey of how you discovered or learned about textile practices.

As a child I learned to knit from my mother and my parents gave me presents of paint-by-number sets. Later I watched over my children's play and needlepointed to occupy my hands. But why tapestry? I really can't remember. I hadn't seen any nor had I delved into any workshops. I couldn't draw and there was seemingly no reason to take it up until about ten years ago when I watched Shane Waltener creating an outdoor installation with people of all ages; they wove simple shapes to add to his spider web hung between trees and buildings. I asked him to create outdoor weaving workshops for the hard-to-reach young people in Darlington (north-east England) that we were working with. Weaversbazaar and subsequently the ATA sponsored the workshops, first outdoor and then indoor.

What have you learned about other cultures, ways of living, and viewpoints that are different from your own as a result of expanding your textile knowledge?

I don't live in a multicultural town. I came to fibre art whilst living where I do in a rural market town in the north of England. Unlike an international city, a country town tends to be monocultural because work, housing, and family connections to support incomers are almost non-existent. This was beginning to change before Covid when we received our first Syrian refugees in 2019. Again sponsored by Weaversbazaar, members of the weaving studio I attend and I designed and wove a tapestry with local Syrian children and Young Carers.

We all have experienced quite a year and a half of cancelled events, conferences, group meetings, classes, etc. due to the pandemic. How have you maintained your relationship to your textile practice and community?

For me Covid lockdown has been a period of exploration—drawing and composition with the



ABOVE Shane Waltener & Dave Bent creating a weaving at the YMCA in Darlington, 2015, photo: (c) Sally Reckert.

BELOW Sally Reckert weaving with Leslie Fox in the Darlington Weaving Rooms, photo: (c) Becky Sunter.

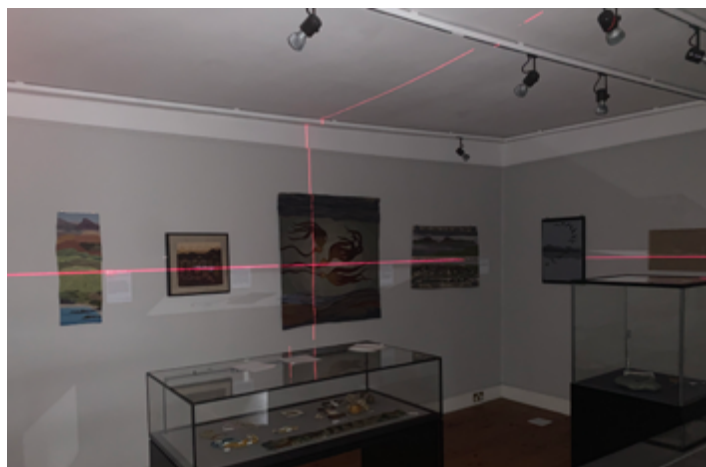
Royal Drawing School, and developing character expression with the Little Angel Puppet Theatre. Both are down south in London and their courses wouldn't have been an option for me without Zoom. Both schools attract national and international students. For someone like me, who enjoys people watching, Zoom provides a fascinating insight into personal lives of people in other countries: Palestinians, Americans, Brazilians, Kenyans, Lebanese, Singaporeans, Maltese, French, Germans and many others all sharing their cultures and creativity. A fascinating privilege.

People intrigue me; their lives are filled with stories which they reveal through their movements and expressions—even the clothes that they wear tell a story. Everyone perceives and responds to their world in different ways; sitting at a cafe table and people-watching endlessly absorbs me.

Did you learn something new during the pandemic?

Drawing, sketching, and expression through puppetry arts. My ATA mentor, Christine Laffer, always encouraged me to draw but it's only been in these last few months that I've taken her suggestion seriously and recognised what a good one it was. The pencil has become an extension of my hands and eyes for looking and as I sketch the looking turns to seeing with my mind. And, like my weaving bobbins, the pencil is not just about colour and pattern, but it is also a tool to sculpt with; I can feel my way to forming the shapes beneath my hands.

I like to bring other human beings into my work, not as a person but as an expression of a different perception. How to depict a person as an abstract figure in tapestry has been a challenge for me. The angle of the head and neck, an egg balanced on a column, should suffice if I can sufficiently persuade the viewer of what the egg on a column stands for.



ABOVE Graeme Bowman and Syrian refugees filming the cutting-off ceremony for The Weaving Children's tapestry "Living Local."

BELOW Richmond, North Yorkshire Market Place, photo: (c) Sally Reckert.



Hanging **Fabric of the North** at Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar, 2020, photo: (c) Sally Reckert.

Through sketching and puppetry I'm learning to abstract and give expression to an abstract form (the egg on its column). In one memorable puppetry workshop we spent two hours animating our biros; watching them sleeping, waking them up and setting each of them as individuals stumbling into their first moments of the day.

How do you currently share your passion of textiles with your community?

The group learned to use Zoom, enabling us to continue meeting weekly, not in the studio but in our homes. Through using Zoom we've developed skills of listening and focusing while posing and responding to questions and each other's work.

We're now back in the studio, happily renewing our hobby as a craft within a community of friends sharing and improving our own and each other's skills. We are all at different stages—some have gone back to tapestry basics or to exploring possibilities using the studio's library of books, yarns and looms. Two of us are taking the opportunity to weave in large scale on pipe looms. It's like art school in miniature, led by Jane Riley who trained in Edinburgh both as a ceramicist and tapestry weaver.

Importantly our constantly Covid-cancelled exhibition **Fabric of the North** is once again open and extended for another eight months!

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SARAH RESNICK: GIST YARN

ATA is pleased to have Gist Yarn as a supporting business member. Sarah Resnick, the owner of Gist Yarn, shares her story about what she has been up to since the pandemic started and how the new line of tapestry yarn came into being. If you are interested in learning more about Array, Gist's new line of 2/12 wool tapestry yarn, for pre-order, promotional discounts, etc., [join Gist's email list](#).

In March of 2020, when COVID hit, I was just emerging from the cocoon of maternity leave after the birth of my daughter. My weaving yarn company, Gist Yarn, had big plans for the year that included our most ambitious project to date—launching a line of wool tapestry yarn grown, spun, and dyed in the US with over 70 colors.

And then, as we all know, everything changed. At work, it was no longer safe to gather our team together in our studio, where most of our collaboration and creative dreaming had happened. Our supply chains were unsteady and for a while our yarn shelves were almost completely bare as we struggled to restock. At home as a new parent, I desperately missed the camaraderie and support of my friends and their new babies, who had spent many long, sweet hours in my living room that fall and winter as we learned the ropes of being new parents together.

I also missed the childcare that I had expected to access as a working parent, even while reveling in having more time to spend with my daughter and recognizing the tremendous privilege I had to be able to safely work from home.

In the early days of the pandemic, we started to notice the volume of emails from our community of customers increasing significantly, with a clear theme. We heard from weaver after weaver that time at the loom, watching fabric form under their fingers, was some of their greatest source of comfort and strength in a time of such isolation



Sampler using Array yarn at 8 e.p.i., photo: Ian Justice.

and fear. It was clear that even in this time of upheaval, our community was keeping steady with the craft, looking for new ways to weave love into cloth and bring more beauty into the world.

On the supply end of our business, I had a lot of conversations with our production partners about how they were adapting to this new environment, and what we could do to support them. The crisis around the lack of domestically available Personal Protective Equipment brought into even sharper focus the necessity for supporting domestic textile production. Many of the mills who are making craft yarn in the US also shifted to making Personal Protective Equipment or working on other government contracts, showing that a vibrant and diversified textile manufacturing sector is critical so that we have the flexibility to adapt when there is a pressing need.

Our customers clearly wanted to keep weaving, and the mills and dye houses we work with wanted to make more yarn. When we launched our first line of weaving yarn in 2018, we did it with a pre-order model for eight colors. Our community rallied to support this project, purchasing the yarn in advance so that we could have the funding to put down deposits with the mill. In July of 2020, we used this model again to launch our new organic cotton yarn Beam. This pre-order business model is one of the things I am most proud of—instead of turning to credit cards or investors who might pressure us to turn this company into something we don't want to be, our community lends us the capital to fund our growth, and we pay them back in yarn.

The steady encouragement and support from our customers and production partners throughout the pandemic taught me a lot about our place in this community: as a partner to textile mills, and a partner to weavers, helping both do what they do best by bringing quality weaving materials to market. Our company is thrilled to join the American Tapestry Alliance, and we appreciate the opportunity to share a bit about our story and the tapestry yarn we are developing with this community.

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

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

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MELISSA POTTER



I have been fascinated by the hand papermaking process since I was 17 years old. During a sculpture course my college professor, George Lorio, encouraged me to source cotton lint from a diaper service in Greensboro, North Carolina, where I lived and studied. It was cheap, lightweight, and pliable, not to mention a charmingly absurd mission. Looking back, it made sense I took his recommendation: as a small child I was introduced to the handmade paper works of my aunt, Maria Epes. Once I started making paper by hand, I never stopped. I made it in blenders and with mallets, and mixed it with debris, paint, and other found objects. I went to graduate school at Mason Gross School of the Arts, where I assisted Eileen Foti and Gail Deery in the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper (now Brodsky Center at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts). There, I learned more sophisticated techniques in the medium. I continued to gravitate to the wet materiality of paper, and its relative obscurity in the art world. It was fertile ground for me to research and speculate on its relationship to craft practices by women.

In the 1970s hand papermaking experienced a revival in the United States through organizations such as Dieu Donne Papermill in New York City (where I worked after graduate school for some years). Surrounded by generations of feminists in my family and peer network, it didn't pass my notice that many of

Melissa Potter, "Plant Protection, Paper Protection, Archive" as a wearable, 2020.



ABOVE Melissa Potter, “Archive” left side, 2020. Hand-spun flax handmade paper, weaving, handmade paper samples in switchgrass, milkweed, and corn.

BELOW Melissa Potter, “Archive” detail, 2020

the main proponents of hand papermaking were women. They grew their own fibers from plants, studied international traditions, and wrote books on the subject. For instance, papermaker and artist Helen Hiebert created a New York City school-based papermaker’s garden exploring food, biology and the science of turning plants into paper. (I came to understand such projects later under the rubric of socially-engaged art when I moved to Chicago in 2008.)

In the wake of the war in the former Yugoslavia, a host of arts and culture funders emerged with programs aimed at “democracy building.” Through programs such as CEC ArtsLink, I hosted Serbian artists as Dieu Donne residents, which influenced me to go to Serbia and do a residency myself with the same funding. Thus began my decades-long fascination with the textiles and craft history of the Balkans.

With the help of professor and artist, Biljana Vuković, I was invited in 2000 to teach papermaking at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Fine Arts. There I introduced Western and Eastern papermaking methodology and contemporary art applications to undergraduate and graduate students with materials foraged from kitchens, markets, and printmaking studios. I began traveling to the region in earnest—usually twice annually. In spring of 2006, through my first Fulbright Scholar award, I was able to dedicate the time and resources to implement a semester-



long program at the Faculty of Fine Arts that would focus on locally available papermaking fibers. I also wished to introduce methods that worked well in other international hand papermaking initiatives for economic revitalization and cultural preservation in Serbia.

I sourced local fibers with the research and travel assistance of two Belgrade-based biology professors, Branka and Vlada Stevanović. Both had deep knowledge of regional ethnobotanical species, and invited me to a preserve called Deliblatska Peščara to collect material. Here, they introduced me to wild flax, hemp (likely left over from wartime parachute-making efforts) and mulberry. Adam Pantić and Vlada Veljasević, also professors on the faculty, prepared the studio space and piece by piece we assembled the shop. Once the studio was completed and we started actually teaching papermaking, we found the students hungry for information. I traveled around the country teaching at universities and art colonies, sometimes with audiences of over 50 people.

I discovered there was no papermaking tradition to speak of in the Balkans (most of it had been imported from Italy). I began to conduct textile research at the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade. Many of the same fibers used for papermaking are also used for textiles, and in this region, the ones with a strong cultural tradition included flax and hemp. The curators of Belgrade's Ethnographic

Museum ultimately offered the information that became the key to my fiber research in Serbia. Founded in 1891, the museum was the first ethnographic collection in Eastern Europe. Curator of textiles, Marina Cvetković and conservator Danieljka Radovanović offered a private tour of the museum's textile holdings featuring a spectacular array of household linens representing all parts of the former Yugoslavia. Handspun, dyed, and woven specimens made from locally grown crops of flax, hemp, and cotton exhibited a wide range of cultural and artistic influence, from the most basic to the highly ornate. The symbols and ornamentation are a language of their own, and have fueled my research ever since, as I explore their local meanings, and well as similarities with traditions all over the world. I have been fortunate to work with international ethnographers, including Robert Chenciner in London, and Saša Srečković at the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, who have generously guided my research and line of inquiry into the symbolic language of women through their textile crafts and customs.

In 2008 I was hired as the first full-time professor in hand papermaking at Columbia College Chicago's Book & Paper MFA program. Like other programs throughout the country, paper was taught alongside printmaking and artists' books. I found I was

ABOVE Melissa Potter, "Archive" right side, 2020. Hand-spun flax handmade paper, weaving, handmade paper samples in switchgrass, milkweed, and corn.



Melissa Potter, Notebook, handmade flax paper, switchgrass and other samples, 2019.

always making arguments for hand papermaking's conceptual and material relevance beyond a decorative substrate. I did so through a series of artist editions I developed with my graduate students. One project in particular lasted three years with Venezuelan Yanomami community leader, Sheroanawë Hakihiwë, which marked the second time in history a Yanomami community member traveled to the United States (these works can be further explored at: <https://shero.omeka.net>). Exploring Yanomami symbol systems to produce his pulp paintings in our studios deepened my interest in the language of body and textile adornment.

Unsatisfied with the limitations of printmaking discourse, I began to locate my hand papermaking practice in the context of fiber arts. I explored the

feminist history of hand papermaking through the material process and the places from which the fiber is grown. As there is little-to-no critical discourse on the hand papermaking movement, books like *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years* and the newly-published *Shedding the Shackles: Women's Empowerment Through Craft* have been pivotal in developing my thoughts and have helped me consider topics ranging from ecofeminism, ethnography and labor.

Weaving was a natural trajectory for this exploratory work, which I came to know in part through the work of my parents, both remarkable weavers and textile artists. Inspired by the work of Chicago-based socially-engaged fiber artist, Monika Neuland Thomas, I invited her to do a module on the weaving

process in my papermaking course at Columbia College. What was meant as short series of two or three classes turned into a semester long collaboration. Students learned how to dress a loom, drop spindle scrap materials, and integrate paper into the weaving process. The resulting works were remarkable, and since that time, I have a goal to bring tapestry weaving into my classroom. I have a drop spindle my mother bought me when I was about 17 years old, and I started experimenting with various handmade papers spun into thread. I took sheets of paper I made, cut them into continuous strips of varying thicknesses, wet them, and spun them on the spindle.

I turned to my weaving friend, Bobbie Tilkens-Fisher, and she helped me buy a large Grizzly tapestry loom, which I installed in my bedroom during late 2019. Little did I know how it would save my practice at the time. In March of 2020, Columbia College Chicago closed the campus and moved all courses online in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. For more than a year, I was cut off from the college's papermaking studio where I do all of my work. As a city apartment dweller without a personal studio, it was the first time in more than 12 years I had no access to the papermaking process. It was devastating to my practice, and like many, I quickly devolved into a space wondering what would be on the other side.

Over many experiments with various fibers, I found flax, hemp, and rag papers worked best for spinning. Handmade paper is a completely different material



Melissa Potter, "Red Tide," 2020. Hand-spun flax handmade paper from recycled artworks.



Melissa Potter, "Mokosh's Rug," 2021. Hand-spun flax handmade paper, weaving, handmade paper samples in switchgrass, milkweed, lichen, hemp, abaca, okra, mulberry, corn.

than wool or silk, commonly used in textiles and tapestries, and has a mind of its own: beautiful, but stiff, and unforgiving in a warp. My work "Archive" was the first piece to incorporate the material as it wanted to be with the paper-spinning and weaving process. In this work I included my scraps of handmade paper from locations as diverse as a Bosnian corn pasture, to the Lurie Garden at Millennium Park with the paper thread spun from flax. I highlighted the scraps as objects themselves with various textures, colors, inclusions, and sources. "Archive" and some other recent works are featured in an exhibition curated by Reni Gower and Jorge Benitez called **The Garden** which opened at Piedmont Arts in August of 2020.

I was fortunate my own journey with weaving coincided with an incredible revival of the medium. The Art Institute of Chicago exhibition **In a Cloud, In a Wall, In a Chair: Six Modernists in Mexico at Midcentury** was perhaps the most influential exhibition on my work in a decade. Ruth Asawa, in particular, used paper as a material to explore

interlocking pattern development as artworks in and of themselves.

More recently, the blockbuster Bisa Butler exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago draws all kinds of formal and conceptual parallels between textiles and fine art media.

I describe handmade paper in my recent film, *Marilyn's Paper* (filmed and edited by my long-time friend and collaborator, Jelena Jovčić) as a material autobiography, a fiber-based diary. These ideas evolved from an intensive exploration of the process itself from seed to sheet. The film is centered around an unmarked portfolio of works from the late papermaker Marilyn Sward. I speculate on the type of fiber, where it might have been sourced, the age of the work, and the conditions under which it was made in a symbolic collaboration with the late Sward herself. Her work with plants, the prairie, and different biomes around the world is so timely in the face of climate crisis. As I finalized the edit for the film during the Covid lockdown, I considered again everything at risk, and at the same time, embraced the digital world as a way to record and tell these

stories. Since then, I asked a Daghestani kaitag embroiderer to teach me her practice on a Zoom call. I am currently performing kaitag embroidery on my handmade papers. (I learned about the extraordinary women's craft of kaitag from my ethnographer colleague, Robert Chenciner.)

My papermaking process to plant seed, harvest fiber, cook and process the pulp, pull the paper, then cut, spin, and weave the resulting works is tremendously labor intensive. Each step is deeply satisfying as they connect me with the origins of my material, and by extension to practices quickly disappearing. These practices are collaborative by necessity. This year, as I grow flax from seed in the face of climate change, I depend on the elements to produce my material. The production of fiber materials requires vast networks of labor, today much of it invisible, as it is imported from factories around the world. Materials, like artwork, do not magically appear, they are made by humans, machines, and the earth itself. In making all these steps of production an experiential part of my process I have found handmade paper to be more



Melissa Potter, Paper thread, recycled antique textiles, flax, linen.

enthraling than ever, my appreciation for it increases sheet by sheet and row by row. I am not exactly sure what took me so long to connect this practice to the world of fibers, textiles, and weaving, but I believe I am finally home.

IN MEMORIAM: AUDREY MOORE 1926-2020



Great sadness passed through the community of weavers at the Damascus Fiber Arts School in Oregon on November 17, 2020, when Audrey Moore passed away. She was halfway to her 95th birthday when she had a stroke, leaving behind the family she had raised and the family of weavers who loved her.

Audrey is best known for her series of colorful tapestries known as *The Ladies*, which have been displayed at the Contemporary Craft Museum in Portland and at the Latimer Quilt and Textile Museum in Tillamook, Oregon, among other venues. During her award-winning fifty-year tapestry career, her work was seen in juried and invitational shows across the country. Her tapestries were featured in publications, including *Fiberarts Design Books* 4,5, and 6, *Handwoven Magazine* and *Shuttle, Spindle and Dyepot*. She was featured in an online exhibit by the American Tapestry Alliance, Tex@ATA. This comprehensive exhibit, curated by Cheryl Silverblatt, can be seen here: **Dancing Colors—Audrey Moore's Tapestries**.

IN MEMORIAM: AUDREY MOORE 1926-2020

In 1967, Audrey learned to spin and weave at the Damascus Pioneer Craft School. After discovering the book *Working with the Wool* by Noel Bennett and Tiana Bighorse, she sought out Noel, invited her to Oregon, and learned Navajo style weaving from her. She and Noel remained lifelong friends. Audrey also joined the American Tapestry Alliance shortly after it was founded by Hal Painter and Jim Brown, both of whom she knew personally.

Audrey wove for several years, learning Navajo techniques. As her skills grew, she created her own designs, but continued to use Navajo style techniques and tools such as the traditional wooden fork and batten.

Audrey's tapestries were created on a large, handmade Navajo style loom permanently installed in the walkout basement studio of her home near Mt. Hood, Oregon. Her tapestries employ a tightly spun wool warp and a thick, single-ply wool weft. Audrey first created a sketch, then a full-size cartoon that served as the model for her tapestry. She chose colors from her large selection of mostly hand-dyed yarns.

Audrey often wove tapestries that depict textiles, usually in abstract form. She combined the flowing, organic shapes of textiles with sometimes-sharper geometric background shapes, adding a ribbon to hold it all together. These textile-based tapestries led to her series, *The Ladies*, of which she said, "I almost feel like a kid again, playing with paper dolls.

When I make my ladies, I choose their colors, their shapes, and their outward character and personality. Do clothes make the person? How do we evaluate people? Are our first impressions important? I put my own interpretation on each lady, where she comes from, where she is going."

Along with her studio practice, Audrey shared her passion for tapestry by teaching for fifty years. She taught at the Damascus Pioneer Craft School for 35 years. After her two business partners retired in 2005, she founded the Damascus Fiber Arts School in the same historic school building.



Audrey Moore, "The Ladies Series ... to Frida."

IN MEMORIAM: AUDREY MOORE 1926-2020

She was only 80 years old, why retire? Together, Audrey and I taught Tapestry and Tapestry on the Navajo Style Loom there for 15 years. In the spring of 2020 she finally retired and trusted me to help a group of dedicated weavers form a non-profit organization to carry on her legacy.

Over the years, hundreds of women and men learned to weave from Audrey. She was a great teacher, able to see a problem, diagnose it, and gently explain how to fix it. She was not the person to barge in, but when she saw that a weaver was stumped, she would just appear at their loom to help. Every day she would spend a little time at each loom, teaching and learning. Audrey also had an uncanny ability to correctly tie and tighten the dreaded bowline knot so important when making a Navajo style warp. In the afternoon, she would sit on the edge of the library table and read to us from one of her many books on the Navajo people. She had great respect for the Navajo, their history, and traditions, and enjoyed sharing what she learned of their culture with her students.



Audrey Moore, "Gotcha!"

Audrey created a warm and friendly atmosphere at the Damascus Fiber Arts School. Her smile and gentle conversation lit up any room she was in. Students came to learn to weave but stayed because they were captivated by Audrey's personality and the fun, friendly community they met. Many of the people there now started well over twenty years ago. This will be part of her legacy.

One part of Audrey's personality so important to me was her ability to encourage. She changed my life forever when she became my mentor. Although she always preferred Navajo style techniques, she encouraged me to learn more European tapestry techniques, take workshops, teach others, join the American Tapestry Alliance, and enter juried shows. Audrey encouraged me to bring in more tapestry students, hire workshop teachers, carry finer yarns, looms, and tapestry tools in the shop. She cheered me up when my work was not accepted in a show. She told me I was funny. We laughed together a lot.

IN MEMORIAM: AUDREY MOORE 1926-2020

Audrey always entered the ATA juried and unjuried tapestry exhibits and encouraged others to do so as well. Our school entered the Group Challenge in the last eight **Unjuried Small Format** exhibits. Audrey's entry always fit the theme so well. One year our theme was Bugs: All Dressed Up. Audrey's entry was a very obviously squished bug underneath a strappy red high heel on a fancy stockinged leg. Gotcha!!

Even in her 80s and 90s Audrey was an active and vibrant person. She loved traveling in a car full of friends to the regional weaving conferences, taking back roads, stopping on a whim, and eating ice cream in the evening. She traveled with her sons, including nearly annual trips to the Southwest, visiting the Navajo reservations, museums and trading posts, villages, and art galleries.

We knew Audrey as a weaver and teacher, but as her friend I also know that her family was a source of pride for her. She was born in April of 1926, nearly

the same day as Queen Elizabeth. Although the Queen did not know, she and Audrey celebrated together. Audrey was born in Ohio and trained as a nurse in the WWII era. She married Dr. Richard Moore, moved to Oregon, raised four children, and learned to weave and teach tapestry. After her husband's death, she and her son, Rick, continued to live together, until he predeceased her by four months. Rick was an artist and helped Audrey define her cartoons. Audrey loved it when her family came over for holidays, summer barbecues, and to cut firewood for the winter. I felt like I knew each of them from the stories she would tell.

The influence of Audrey Moore as a tapestry artist, teacher, mentor, and personal friend is strong. Her legacy will continue with the Damascus Fiber Arts School and beyond. She is and will continue to be greatly missed.

Terry Olson



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ATA VOLUNTEER: KENNITA TULLY

What brought you to tapestry weaving?

I fell in love with tapestry weaving when I was first introduced to it in college in the 70s. I was close to finishing a BFA degree in photography at the time. When I discovered weaving, I added textiles as a double major.

How did you find out about ATA?

I discovered it online when researching tapestry. I was blown away by the wealth of information on the website and quickly hit the “join now” button. Life’s changes and demands had led me to give up tapestry weaving to pursue a career in knitwear design in my early 30s and I had missed out on so many years of tapestry history! ATA was just what I was looking for when I typed “tapestry weaving” in the search bar.

Describe what you do for ATA.

I have been the administrator for ATA’s private facebook group for members, Let’s Talk Tapestry (LTT), since the spring of 2019. It is my job to come up with a monthly topic with weekly prompts, monitor and encourage engagement and discussion, and submit quarterly reports.

What do you value about volunteering for ATA?

I feel more connected to an organization when I’m involved in some way. ATA has given me so much in just the website content alone and I believe it’s important to reciprocate. Volunteering is an easy way to do that.



Kennita Tully, “Prairie Colors,” 9.75 in x 5.5 in, 8 epi, 2020, photo: K. Tully.



Kennita Tully is a tapestry artist, author, and teacher living in Pottawatomie County, Kansas. She recently returned to tapestry after a 30 year career as a knitwear designer. Finding tapestry to be the perfect medium for expression, she is inspired by her surroundings and the

interconnections of life. She writes about tapestry on her weekly Tapestry Journeys blog and newsletter and recently began teaching online tapestry courses. You can find out more on her website at tapestryjourneys.com.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AWARDS

The International Student Award is a juried award given to a student enrolled in any accredited university around the world who demonstrates strong creative and technical understanding of tapestry as an artistic medium. Any student can apply, and the awardee is given \$750 and an opportunity to submit an article to *Tapestry Topics*.

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO: HANNAH COFER

Though I am the daughter and granddaughter of three fiber artists, my first true encounter with tapestry was in a weaving course taught by Danielle Andress at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the fall of 2019. It was there that I realized the ways in which this form, with its long tradition and history, could be used to contribute to the conversation about the history of women's representation in the western art canon. And this history of representation is far from benign.

As said by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*, his landmark essay on the theory of the "gaze" in visual culture, "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also

the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object—and most particularly an object of vision: a sight."

Gender does not exist outside our social experience. It is created in the eyes of others. These "ways of seeing," these "sights," are then permanently affixed on canvas and film and photo paper, and they are what we use to shape our identities and behavior.

With my tapestry practice, I explore my relationship to this dynamic as a modern, queer woman. These

"ways of seeing" have irreversibly affected the way I look at and understand myself and others. With my work, I address this conflict by materializing the gaze and bringing this theory into a specific art historical context.

Within broader culture, fiber and craft work is commonly thought of as "women's

work." In today's world, these techniques are highly gendered: women knit, crochet, and construct clothing as hobbies or small businesses on sites like Etsy—hardly pursuits commonly associated with men. Historically, industrial textile production



Hannah Cofer, "Saturday Afternoon in My Mother's Kitchen," detail

has also been heavily associated with women and children, as they made up the vast number of workers in textile factories. Before that even, the term “spinster” came from the phenomenon of a class of professional women making their livelihoods spinning and carding wool, all the way from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance.

However this is far from a universal truth. Before the industrialization of textile production, it took as many as a dozen spinners to keep one weaver in work. Meaning that everyone

spun, men and women and children alike. In the evenings, in the mornings, in all their free time—they spun. Weavers were also commonly men, as for much of history it was a respected professional position, and artisanal guilds throughout Europe commonly restricted their membership to men. As a result, despite fiber’s common associations, textile production has (generally) been gendered by history, and less the other way around.



Hannah Cofer, “Saturday Afternoon in My Mother’s Kitchen,” 12 epi, 2021, 48 in x 60 in. Cotton, polyester, photos of my little sisters: left—Emily, depicted age 7, right—Rachel, depicted age 9. Woven in two panels on a 4-shaft floor loom, combination of slit and interlock techniques.

However, specifically within the history of western tapestry production, male painters were almost universally the ones designing the compositions, while other artisans would produce the actual tapestry. By working within this world, I am claiming this history of production for my own, and bringing my complex relationship to gender into conversation with the complex relationship between gender and textile production.

But why weave? Why take the immense amount of time to reproduce

what are essentially finished paintings as large scale, complex, and detailed tapestry weavings?

Although time is a large and complicated factor when planning, executing, and pricing a finished piece, time is also the quality that is most sought after by me in these works. Without the time, you wouldn’t get the sense of care, or attention to detail, that they have as tapestries. Because of the time, the figures depicted in these works become precious in a way



they couldn't any other way. Rendering them so slowly and so carefully becomes an expression of love for the women being depicted, almost as a way to combat the violence our system of gender and gendered looking has enforced upon them.

Though the figures have been (figuratively) well-loved by time, my technique has not been quite as kind. With my practice, I have always been interested in exposing the technique of weaving, almost like revealing the man behind the curtain. Instead of tamping all my weft threads down to hide my warps, I use a more balanced weave, revealing

ABOVE Hannah Cofer, "Woman at her Toilette," 20 in x 30 in, 8 epi, 2019. Silk cording, silver metallic thread, stiffened fabric. Abbreviated quote from Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*, "Even pretending you aren't catering to male fantasies is a male fantasy. You are a woman with a man inside watching a woman. You are your own voyeur." Double-woven on an A-frame tapestry loom, combination of slit and interlock techniques.

BELOW Hannah Cofer, "Woman at her Toilette," detail. Left: back of piece, right: middle of double woven structure, reveals hidden text.





LEFT Hannah Cofer, "Woman at her Vanity," 24 in x 40 in, 8 epi, 2019. Silk cording, 20-ply cotton thread, silver metallic thread, quote, "I've got other people's eyes inside my head." Double-woven on an A-frame tapestry loom, combination of slit and interlock techniques.

ABOVE Hannah Cofer, "Woman at her Vanity" detail. Shows the double woven structure, with text hidden behind mirror.

the structures that create these images. Instead of cutting off or hiding my weft ends, I leave them be, letting them fall in front of the tapestry in a frenetic, almost anxious, pattern. In exposing these structures of making, I hope to reveal the lie that is image-making. To reveal the artist's hand.

Structure is also a very important consideration of mine when planning a weaving. Often in my work, I like to hide certain elements, making it more difficult for the viewer to discover the complete composition. My most recent work, "Songbird," employed a combination of plain woven tapestry and a complex variation of rosepath pointed twill in the

shape of repeating eyes, hidden in the sections of wall behind the seated figure. However, I also have experimented with double-woven structures, where I weave two panels at once, both of which are tapestry woven. This has allowed me to create two panels of tapestry simultaneously, sandwiched together into one complete work. In "Woman at her Toilette" I used this technique to hide a line of text behind the mirror in front of the figure, saying, "I've got other people's eyes inside my head."

All of these elements: tradition, history, technique, structure, and color alike, are essential in creating the final piece. Together, they create a deeper



meaning that would not be possible without the complex structures, textures, and traditions of tapestry weaving. Though I am by default making a political statement with these works, for me they are a way to explore my relationship to gendered structures, and my own gender identity, as well as a way to honor the experiences and pain of the women that I am close to. They have also become a methodical, meditative way for me to process my own experiences and distress.

There is a common phrase, that “beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder.” If so, then beauty itself is created through the act of looking. Is something beautiful if it was never seen? What happens when beauty looks back? These tapestries are my way of looking back at a world that saw me as nothing but a “sight.” A way for me to sit on the walls of a gallery, and look out at the spectators watching me. Maybe even a way to make them feel watched.

As Simone de Beauvoir once famously said, “One is not born, but becomes a woman.” I will never know who I would be, or how I would think, without the effects of gendered looking. But through making, I can address the ways in which I have ‘become.’



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



ABOVE Hannah Cofer, “Songbird,” 78 in x 48 in. Plain weave and a variation on a rosepath pointed twill weave.

BELOW Hannah Cofer, “Songbird,” detail, 78 in x 48 in.

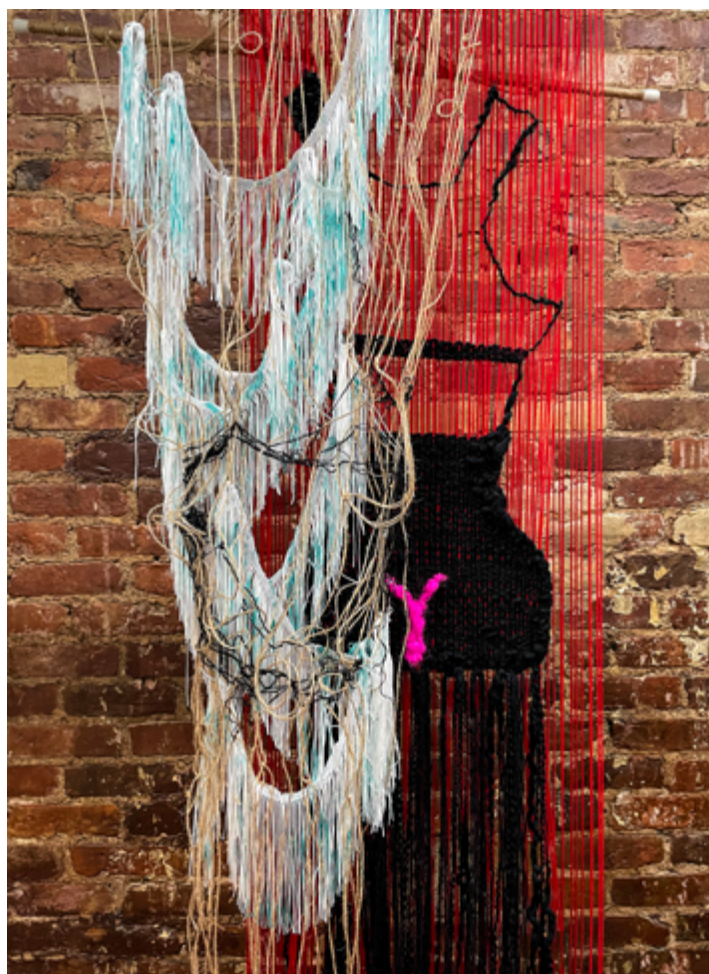
THE NEW SCHOOL | PARSONS SCHOOL OF DESIGN: JONGBUM KIM

I am a textile artist/designer. Graduating from Central Saint Martins with BA(Hons) in Fashion design womenswear in 2014, I am now studying MFA Textiles at The New School | Parsons School of Design.

Since childhood, I have lived in many countries and have encountered many cultures, resulting in a chameleon-like character. Through all my different experiences, I absorbed all the different cultures into my own identity. With many different aspects rationing a portion to fill my identity, I worked hard to find my own colors among the varied mix.

My last experience since the pandemic was Shanghai. The city's duality of Eastern and Western culture resonated with me and once again made me think about what kind of person I am. This realization enabled me to realize that I am not a person identified by a specific color but have multiple colors harmoniously interwoven. This journey requires me to rebuild my own reality and rules for my multicultural creations. Through objects that are simultaneously primitive and advanced, and created with various mediums, I am able to express my identity.

The three pieces submitted are my first tapestry artworks. My dreams, surreal illustrations, and abstract paintings that I drew depicting my world inspire my textile artwork. I merge biomaterials, printing, weaving, tufting, quilting, knitting, and crocheting into my tapestry work. Many fabric-making techniques I use are hundreds of years old, and I combine them with materials that contain a source of light such as strontium aluminate (glow in the dark powder), El wires and optical fibers. I experiment with the various plain, eccentric, and three-dimensional qualities of tapestry. I am focusing my practice on every textile technique, but weaving is the perfect technique to illustrate my vision with



Jongbum Kim, "Love," 80 in x 35 in. Upcycled yarn, upcycled trimmings and hemp. There is a deep connection with nature whilst embracing the ethos of love life, love yourself and love others. The exploration of myself in relation to the hedonistic world is a key concept that is seen through my textiles. With textiles I create my sanctuary of surreal dreams and bringing them into reality. We are spirits, we are minds, we are emotional beings. I belong to the world and see the world as one. It is love itself.

textiles. Tapestry is great for storytelling. Just like in illustrations and paintings, you can give visual emotions to the viewer by using certain colors, mediums, images, structures, and combinations.

I have always admired woven tapestries in exhibitions, but the process seemed to be

extraordinarily complex and I felt it would take too much time to make one tapestry. So, in the beginning I thought it was hard for me to try for myself. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to study at Parsons, where I could experiment with tapestry.

When I first started tapestry, it was slow. I did not know what I needed to do but after a few trials it felt like I was meditating. The most enjoyable aspect in tapestry is concentrating upon rhythmical moves. As I said, it is meditative for me, and it has joy found within no other medium. It is calm and I increasingly think of how I could improve my tapestry creatively.

Tapestry is the technique that challenges me and lets me express my thoughts and feelings. It is like painting with yarns instead of oil painting, acrylic or watercolor.

Tapestry can offer similar, even fuller artistic experience and potential. When people think of tapestry, they often think it is an old technique, but I feel tapestry has become very modern. The freedom of my own hand, technology, and materials allow you to create a wonderful piece of art that will decorate any space. So, I think the study of tapestry should



Jongbum Kim, "Spiritual tea rug," 25 in x 16 in. Alpaca wool, cotton yarn, rubber, tissue, chiffon. Less rule-bound and not to be accompanying existing baggage. Rewriting my rules and deciding my own way of life within reality. We are spirits, we are minds, we are emotional beings. I believe in Hedonism. There is a deep connection with nature whilst embracing the ethos of love life, love yourself and love others. This spiritual tea rug tapestry is healing and expresses the spiritual world I perceive.

change from historical process to modern design.

The exploration of myself in relation to the hedonistic world is a key concept that is seen through my tapestries. My recent focus has been a project that consists of interior objects and installations. With textiles for my sanctuary of surreal dreams, I bring them into reality. I believe in Hedonism. There is a deep connection with nature whilst embracing the ethos of love life, love yourself and love others. My work is healing and expresses the spiritual world I perceive.

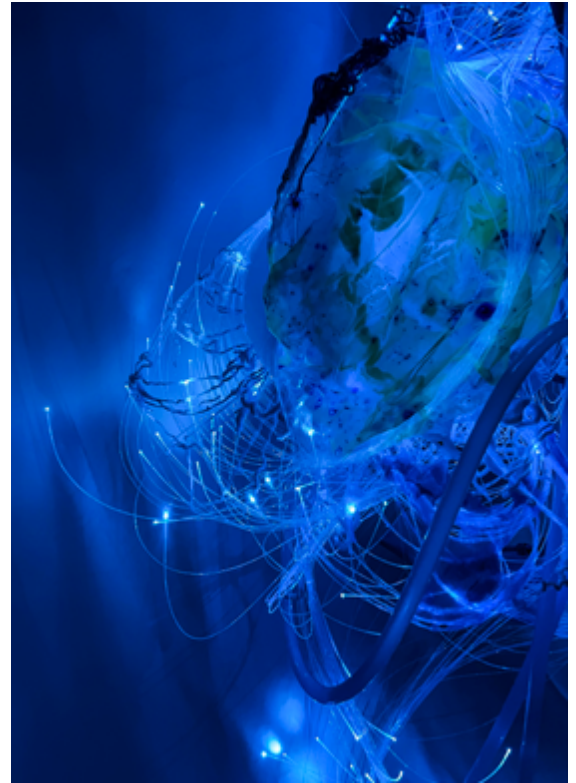
We are spirits, we are minds, we are emotional beings. I belong to the world and see the world as one. My journey of identity, color, and

the eventual full bloom of myself through my works are documented through textiles combining low technology with high technology and natural objects. I use hybrid techniques and materials because it makes it more modern and contemporary. I create designs that are personally meaningful, and I produce and finish my artworks myself.



Jongbum Kim, "The road not taken,"
10 in x 24 in. El wire, recycled plastic bag,
upcycled embellishments and trimmings.
I was inspired by the poem called the
road not taken. My interpretation of this
poem is about life being like a game.
I must choose which path to go in order
to know myself and to move on with life.
There is always a conflict of choosing
what is the right choice in life. Even if it
is not the right choice, you will always
learn or gain knowledge of something.
Tapestry-making technique I use are
over hundreds of years old, and I
combine them with materials that
contain a source of light such as El wire
and Christmas decoration lights.





Jongbum Kim, "Be like water," 65 in x 16 in x 17 in. Bioplastic (potato starch, tapioca starch, agar, gelatin, spirulina powder, glycerin), optical fiber, water tube, water pump. It is a 3D biomaterial lamp tapestry. I used bioplastic, which is biodegradable, sustainable but inside the bioplastic I added strontium aluminate (glow in the dark powder) and used optical fiber as a structure. I can light up the optical fiber for stronger light or the glow in the dark powder lights up itself in the dark. This is about my swimming pool memory in the dark when I was a child. I feared the unknown in the other side of the pool, but I overcame my fear in the dark water. After facing my fear and reaching the other side, I gained courage. This object is my imaginary water alien.

Also, I love to create textile art to make the world a better place or that draws attention to societal issues, changing the broader thinking of mankind.

Handmade items are being replaced by identical and unemotional things. Therefore, tapestry is a remarkably interesting medium for me. It is time-consuming, but people need this kind of slow activity these days. It gives you a clear mind away from all the quick stimuli we get from our phones. In addition, to advance tapestry art, organizing more interesting archive exhibitions is a way to raise interest in textile art. Auctions with young and modern artists can be organized. Also, working with interior designers and fashion designers to create tapestries that are more suitable for modern buildings and for sustainable fashion.



Jongbum Kim is a textile artist/designer. Graduated from Central Saint Martins with BA (Hons) in Fashion Design (womenswear) in 2014 and is now studying for an MFA in Textiles at The New School | Parsons School of Design. Parson School of Design offers opportunities to learn many techniques and

tools to create new and innovative works in textiles.

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Jongbum Kim, "Nyx Goddess of Night," 80 in x 14 in. Upcycled wool yarns, upcycled cotton threads. I made a tapestry- weaving artwork, and it is a figure of a goddess that led me at night, called Nyx. Since childhood, I was afraid of the dark. I had imagined a lot of imaginary monsters, aliens and even ghosts around my bedroom before I fell asleep. After I went to sleep, I dreamt of surreal worlds which brings out my creativity. I needed a guardian who could be by my side while I was sleeping and while I was awake when imagining things.



ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART: MINSUN KIM

Having spent my childhood in Korea without hanging tapestries on the wall or making carpets, I first encountered tapestry when I was a sophomore at Ewha Womans University in Seoul. To study more about textile art, I enrolled in the MA program in Woven Textiles at the Royal College of Art after finishing my undergraduate in arts. What makes tapestries so fascinating is that they can express sophisticated emotions with simple techniques. Unlike paintings, tapestries give a warm feeling of depicting with thread. When asked what it is that separates tapestries from paintings and patterns done with brushes, I would say there is a certain atmospheric feeling surrounding tapestries. A lot of techniques are employed in textiles, such as printing, knitting, embroidering and weaving. The delicacy, mood, and texture of woven textiles make them special to me. How yarns depict designs captured my mind. Also, unlike in dyeing or printing, nothing comes by accident when creating tapestries. From starting stage to the outcome, there should be planning, consistent work and intention. For this reason, I feel making tapestry is an honest art that cannot be exaggerated. The thickness and size of the thread and the delicate techniques make me imagine the time dedicated to the work. So, the slow process of making tapestry is another expression of a long period of time from a different point of view. Piling wefts slowly makes the warp tighter and the height of the piled weft accurately reveals the time spent on the work. While I am working on a tapestry, I feel like I am meditating on myself for many hours and feel at peace. Being able to focus on conveying various expressions with simple interlocking techniques makes me to focus only on work, ignoring reality. When the thread gets tangled and my expression is not what I intended, the process of loosening the thread and starting over gives me feel a small sense of accomplishment as well.

Minsun Kim, "Out of Joint 1," 150 cm x 50 cm, 2018, photo: Myoung Studio. Lambswool. Techniques: plain weave, twinning, interlock, slit.

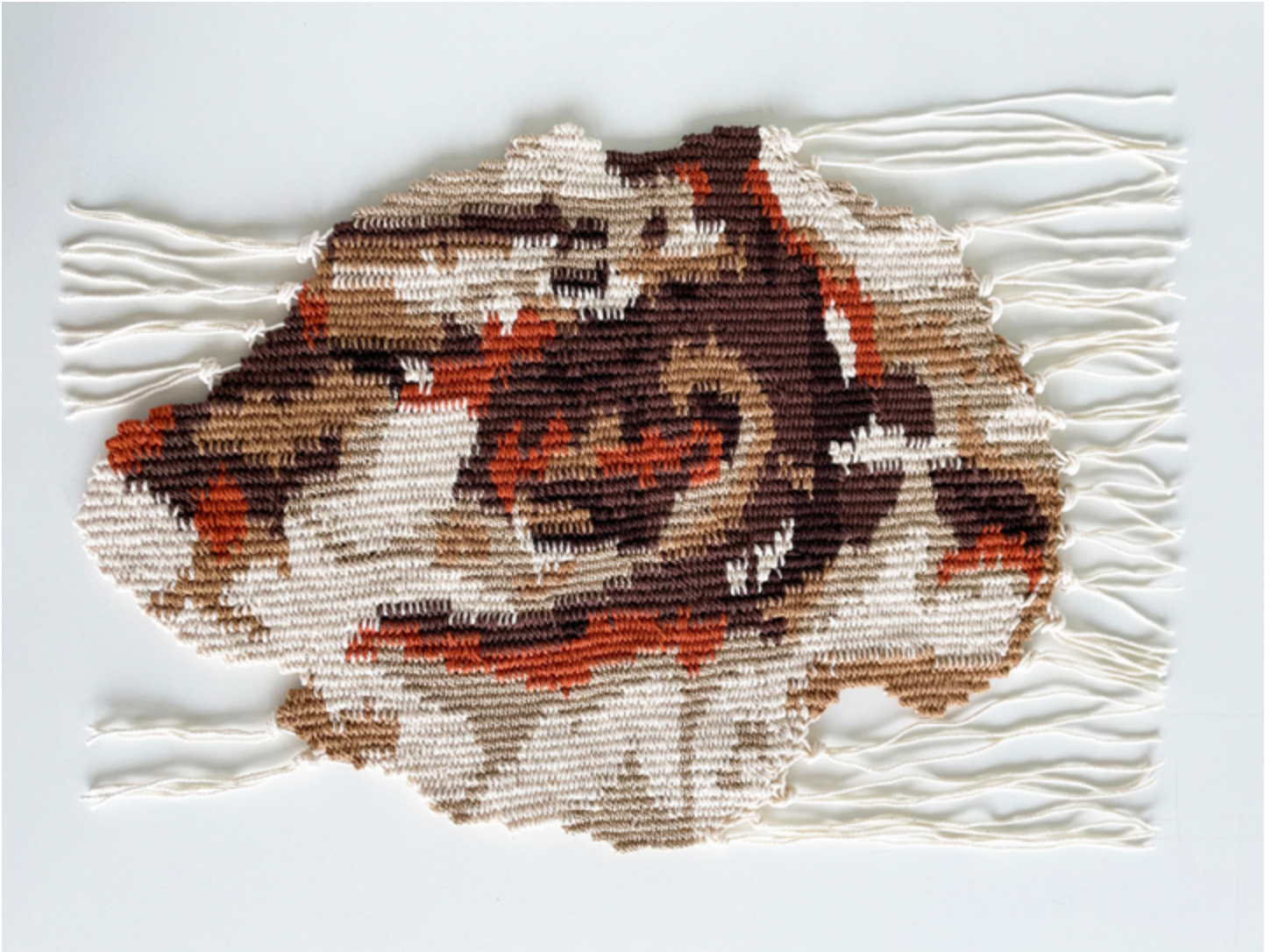




Tapestries have a long history, and as they are made using old techniques, it can give the public a feeling of the past, which may prove difficult in getting people interested in tapestry. However, the long history of tapestry allows modern tapestry to exist, and the attempts of artists to study it in more contemporary ways. Contemporary tapestries are more bold, formative, and experimental, unlike the tapestries made in the past, utilizing of warp and weft techniques. I also recreate modernized tapestry by using interlocking techniques. Even though I recreate tapestry using modified techniques, the basic principles of tapestry, with its time-consuming and labor-intensive characteristics, do not change. What is most important in my artwork is the process of visualizing my inspirations into tapestry images. I usually get inspired by the relationship between humans and something abstract and keep questioning about an undefined subject. To express something that is not visible into tapestry, I do drawings, perform small experiments, and plan for the actual design and size. As I am transforming my work from inspiration to actual outcome, I consider myself as an artist and a craftsperson. If I could only do tapestry techniques without having a stage for continuous motivation I might have thought of myself only as a craftsperson. Also, if I had not known the skills of tapestry, I would have needed a technician at the stage of expressing

ABOVE Minsun Kim, "Out of Joint 2," 130 cm x 80 cm, 2018, photo: Myoung Studio. Lambswool. Techniques: plain weave, twinning, interlock, slit.

BELOW Minsun Kim, detail "Out of Joint 2," 2018, photo: Myoung Studio. Lambswool. Techniques: plain weave, twinning, interlock, slit.



Minsun Kim, "Growth-peeling," 42 cm x 30 cm, 2021, photo: Minsun Kim. Cotton. Techniques: plain weave, twinning, interlock, slit.

ideas into work. So, I would call myself an artist with the workmanship of an artist and craftsperson. I think various attempts and attitudes to find new inspirations are important factors for artists these days of the pandemic. With different mediums, the ability of creators to experiment became essential, and workmanship is necessary in limited situations.

The most important thing about modern tapestry is that it does not set a limit in terms of technique and the expression of boundaries. Nowadays,

the boundaries of the art field are becoming not meaningful, and artists feel free to cross fields. In addition, making tapestries are now becoming an entertainment for the public beyond the arts sector. People learn basic tapestry skills easily in their spare time, and they enjoy the peace of mind it imparts. Tapestries used to be an art form that only professional artists could handle, but now it is becoming more accessible to non-artists, and it is expanding in more creatively diverse ways.



Minsun Kim, detail "Growth-peeling," 2021, photo: Minsun Kim. Cotton. Techniques: plain weave, twinning, interlock, slit.



Minsun Kim, detail "Out of Joint 1," 150 cm x 50 cm, 2018, photo: Myoung Studio. Lambswool. Techniques: plain weave, twinning, interlock, slit.

As a basic principle of warp and weft, the straight border could be changed into a curve, and a two-dimensional piece to a three-dimensional piece. Works can be installed on walls, displayed in exhibition spaces, hung on the ceilings or laid on floors. Tapestry can be a craft, soft sculpture, or painting with threads that can impart the warmth to creators and audiences.



Minsun Kim is a Korean weaver with an academic background in fibre art and textiles. She completed her BA in South Korea in Ewha Womans University and subsequently attended the Royal College of Art for her MA. AAs an undergraduate, she broadened her knowledge

of various textile techniques, and also gained significant experience through her internship as a women's wear designer at 8 Seconds. Following this, Minsun concentrated her work in print, weaving, and installation art, and she is currently pursuing her master's degree. Now she seeks to express via formative experiments that move away from flat textiles and aims to reveal the characteristics of crafting and soft sculpture inherent in textiles.

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ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART: EMMA WRIGHT



Emma Wright, Home Grown bio based e-textile objects.

Hacking Tapestry

I have always been fascinated by the blurred boundaries of nature and technology—two opposite ends of the spectrum, yet vital for everyday living in 2021. I see textiles as a tool to develop alternative products within technology and as a means to engage in speculative thinking about how we can interact with and care for our everyday environments.

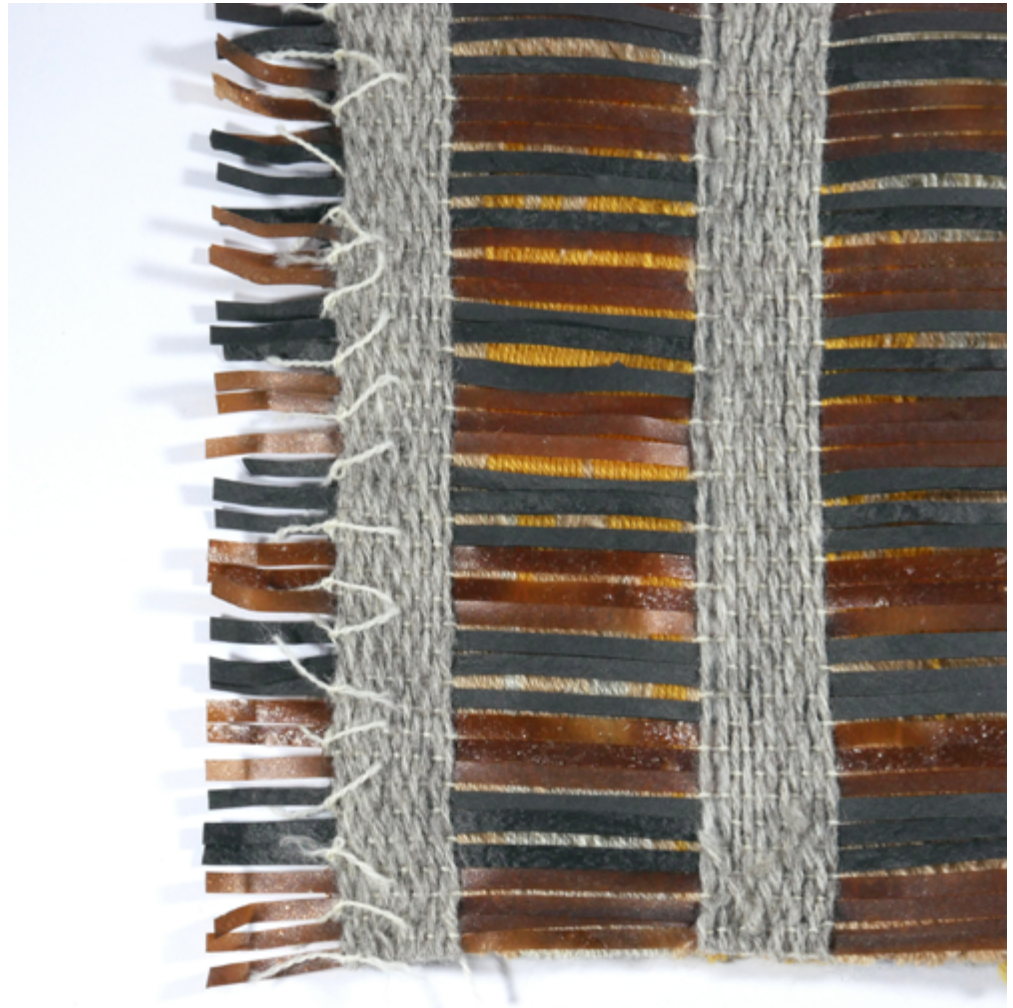
For my graduating MA project at the Royal College of Art, I was inspired by the lack of mindfulness for the

afterlife of technology. I steered towards exploring alternative materials and traditional craft techniques within design, using ambient technology as a visual language to uncover the relationship between these objects and the user, exploring how levels of care towards these within our daily interactions can create a deeper understanding and longevity within the everyday object.

This inspired me to create my textile research project, Home Grown, which is a bio-based collection of objects created as alternative tools to interact

with our digital products. Using materials locally sourced from the UK and Ireland, and using traditional tapestry techniques such as tabby weaving and taqueté, I integrated conductive biomaterials and recorded the user's interaction with the sample.

This work explores local conductive and bio-based materials that could create speculative alternatives for the current multinational ingredient list within technologies today, replacing metal components and interfaces and reducing the material, and moving the making process to a localized area. I generated stories and thoughts about mindfulness towards the everyday objects in our home, not treating objects as 'us and them,' but as cohabiting together. It brings mindfulness into our daily interactions with the environment.



Emma Wright, Example of the techniques Taqueté and Tabby used together.

Tapestry was a key element within my work, as it allowed me to work more intimately with my biomaterials and evolve them from their original form as dehydrated sheets into more tactile integrated surfaces. The next stage was to develop these within a woven piece. Initially I was just working with the biomaterial by itself before deciding to incorporate another local material from the UK—wool. Weaving the biomaterials and hiding them allows the wool to take over the tactile, aesthetic, role of the sample, while using the biomaterials for conductive performance. It allowed me to move away from the plasticky feel of the biomaterials I had created, as

well as apply colour within my work. Colours were either predefined from the natural wool, or dyed from UK-sourced plant matter such as onion skins, kelp and blackberries.

Many of my samples were created using a matrix resistor sensor. This type of sensor is designed similar to a grid co-ordinate system on a map pinpointing the pressure points, i.e where you touch the fabric. This allowed my sensors to become more sensitive to touch interactions and not just on/off switches.

A key weaving technique I used to create this sensor matrix was taqueté, a technique created using two warps. The biomaterials are the main warp whilst the second is a binding warp where the wool weft weaves between to hide the main biomaterial warp. However, as the binding warp then insulates the conductive biomaterials, I needed certain areas to be revealed and connect to other conductive biomaterials to create the electrical circuit and sensor.

To do this I alternated strips of traditional tabby weaving with taqueté to reveal and then hide the biomaterials on the wrong side of the weave. This allowed me to create a grid co-ordinate system, or matrix, into an electrical circuit. For instance, when I would touch the top left corner of my fabric, this interaction would be registered and visualized on my computer screen. If I then moved my finger across the fabric to the right, this would also be mapped and shown on my screen.

For me tapestry provides intimate control during the weaving process, allowing my hands to gain an understanding of the properties of the biomaterials as I work. As my biomaterials are still in their infancy stage and haven't yet been commercialized, every new batch is slightly different from the last. This can depend on the various limiting factors in the making process, from the amount of time materials are heated to the number of materials dehydrating at any one time. The immediate reaction you have from the materials while you are weaving allows you to adjust your technique more readily, and potentially change the loom or technique you're working with to be more accommodating for the biomaterial. This personalization of a technique, I feel, is an unrealized potential of tapestry for many makers.

Taqueté technique is not only important because I'm able to hack the looms and techniques readily to adjust to my biomaterials and create these matrix

pressure sensors. It also promotes the long-standing craft-based history this technique is associated with. I find the juxtaposition of traditional craft used with modern technology very alluring. I've always questioned why technology-based products need to be smooth and hard. How can traditional weaving and craft techniques evolve into the 21st century to aid the design and aesthetics of our technologies?

If we begin to initiate conversations incorporating craft within technology, I believe it will open up discussions within communities to add their own elements to the technology, moving away from the universal design approach and opening up avenues to something more personal. If we move towards this more mindful making of technologies, we would rethink the way we interact and consume them. If the making of technologies could become slow, localized and personal, would this slow down our desire to replace items, such as mobile phones and laptops, to a much slower consumption rate compared to now?

Traditional craft-based practices such as tapestry can be more readily promoted when its application has been refreshed and evolved into a modern application, whether that's in technology, graphic design or even advertising. Its future applications have the potential to be diverse, especially with the ease of access to equipment and knowledge, compared to more mechanical large scale looms and processes.

In the future I plan to branch out in many directions within textile research and material innovation. I will carry on my bio-based practice, refining my materials and samples with the potential to apply them to a commercialized context. I feel the future of tapestry has a role within the textile applications of biomaterials and instigating ideas around the future for healthier material processes within the textiles industry. This will only gain traction through projects



Home Grown sensory position blanket using Taqueté and Tabby weaving techniques.

like mine and others, who promote craft-based practices through research and artist-based projects.



Emma Wright has always been fascinated by the blurred boundaries of nature and technology—two opposite ends of the spectrum, yet vital for everyday living in 2021. She reimagines textiles as a tool to develop alternative products within technology and engages in speculative

thinking on how we can interact with and care for our everyday environments. She studied Womenswear design (Print) at Ravensbourne College and designed prints and jacquards for Versace couture and other mainline collections. A recent graduate from the Royal College of Art in 2021, Emma now positions herself as a sustainable communicator and innovator within textiles across product design fields.

www.emmaharriet.com

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

2021.rca.ac.uk/students/emma-harriet-wright

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ATA NEWS

TEX@ATA

If you are not familiar with TEX@ATA, we invite you to check out the latest online curated exhibition by Barbara Burns featuring the work of Mariana Ortega. This is ATA's first bilingual exhibition as Mariana lives in Mexico. Please check out the exhibit on ATA's website [here](#).

IMPORTANT DATES

October 1, 2021 (Ongoing)

TEX @ATA New Exhibit Goes Live!

October 31, 2021

heARTscapes Postcard Exchange Submission Deadline

January 17-21, 2022

Media Tour

June 1, 2022

Tapestry Topics Deadline: Tapestry Weaving in Russia and the Former Soviet Republics

TAPESTRY TOPICS THEMES AND DEADLINES

Tiny But Mighty

Submissions are now closed for 1 October, 2021 and 1 February, 2022.

Tiny But Mighty: The Art of the Small Tapestry will showcase tapestries that are 10 inches or smaller. In addition to inviting members to share images of their work, we also encourage weavers to share any tricks of the trade for weaving small format. The purpose behind sharing these images and words of wisdom is to encourage weavers who might be new to exhibiting, or weaving small format, to create a tapestry that will be a part of the unjuried exhibition,

Tiny But Mighty: The Art of the Small Tapestry which will take place in Knoxville, TN in conjunction with Handweavers Guild of America's Convergence conference. More details will follow regarding the exhibition and will be included in the next issue of *Tapestry Topics*.

Given the overwhelming response to the call for *Tiny but Mighty* tapestries we will publish the material in the next two two issues. Thank you!

Tapestry Weaving in Russia and the Former Soviet Republics

Deadline: June 1, 2022

While exploring social media, I am often struck by beautiful and ambitious tapestries by Russian and Ukrainian weavers. I would like to know more, and I'm sure that other Tapestry Topics readers will enjoy a focus on another part of the world that values tapestry as an important skill and art form. Ideas for articles include profiles of contemporary weavers or translations of articles about tapestry history or exhibitions. Where are tapestry weavers trained in these countries? If you are a weaver from Russia, the Ukraine, or another of the former Soviet republics, would you like to write about your work or the work of other tapestry artists? Are there museums or galleries in these countries with important tapestry collections? Or public buildings with tapestries to visit? (We will travel freely again, I certainly hope.) Please let me know if you have ideas for articles or know about people I should contact. Thank you, Robbie LaFleur (lafleur1801@me.com)

Call for Theme Coordinators

Do you have an idea for a theme? Would you like to be a Theme Coordinator? Email: newsletter@americantapestryalliance.org

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THE (FRONT) BACK PAGE



Terracotta lekythos (oil flask) Period: Archaic; Date: ca. 550–530 B.C.; Culture: Greek, Attic; Medium: Terracotta, black-figure; Dimensions: height 6 3/4 in. (17.15 cm); Fletcher Fund 1931; Accession number: 31.11.10.

“On the shoulder, a seated woman, perhaps a goddess, is approached by four youths and eight dancing maidens. On the body, women are making woolen cloth.”

THE (BACK) BACK PAGE



“Two women work at an upright loom. Three women weigh wool. Four women spin wool into yarn, while between them finished cloth is being folded.”

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Retrieved 5 March 2021,
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/253348>