

# Newsletter

## The Woven Word: Sasigyo

Kathleen F. Johnson and Tsai Yushan

*Translations by Kotoh*

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THE TEXTILE SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC. PROVIDES AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR THE EXCHANGE AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT TEXTILES WORLDWIDE, FROM ARTISTIC, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, HISTORIC, POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVES.

**S**ASIGYO IS A BURMESE tablet-woven cord which is used to bind Buddhist scriptures. In Burmese the word literally means “cord for tying manuscript leaves into bundles.”<sup>1</sup> These pieces have not been woven in Burma for many years; very few written records exist about their history; most of what we know of them must be inferred from the objects themselves.

The sasigyo are just one part of an integrated and complex artistic craft tradition surrounding the Burmese Buddhist scriptures called *kammavaca*.<sup>2</sup> These scriptures, which pertain to the regulation of Buddhist monastic life, were often commissioned by devout lay persons and presented to a monastery, thus generating religious merit for the lay person. In some cases they were a memorial offering on behalf of a departed loved one, and presumably the departed was the recipient of the merit. The volumes were often lavishly decorated with ornamental medallions and patterns, and were written in elegant script using lacquered letters. The finished pages were stacked and sandwiched between two carved wooden covers. Two strings



Rare antique sasigyo for sale in the Bangkok weekend market. Photo by Kathleen F. Johnson.

were passed through holes in all the pages and the covers and tied, thus preserving the proper succession of the leaves. The finished manuscript was wrapped in a special mat called *sa-pa-lwa*, made from thin bamboo ribs wrapped or woven with colored cotton threads.<sup>3</sup>

The weavers of the sasigyo and the mats were women, whereas the manuscript makers were men. Although women were barred from making merit

through entering the monkhood, weaving for religious purposes offered them an alternate way to make merit.<sup>4</sup> Some of the sasigyo weavers were skilled private craftswomen, but most were paid professionals who took on commissions for weaving sasigyo for individuals.

The weaving of sasigyo is a highly skilled and time-consuming job. Apparently it took a full three months to train a weaver. Even then the pay was poor.<sup>5</sup> Some, but not all, of the commissioned sasigyo were inscribed with the name of the weaver and the donor, plus the place and date it was made. Noel Singer has done a landmark study of the *Kammavaca* manuscripts and their binding ribbons. He notes that the first dated sasigyo we have is from 1785 and the last from the early 1970s.<sup>6</sup>

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Whole *sa-pa-lwa* of the wrapped variety, collection of Kathleen Johnson, gift of Keosiri Everingham, Bangkok.



## Stephen Beal Receives 2008 Lillian Elliott Award at TSA Symposium

THE LILLIAN ELLIOTT AWARD, established to recognize excellence in fiber arts, was presented this year to embroidery artist Stephen Beal. He was not able to attend the ceremony, but sent the following message:

"First, I would like to thank the members of the Lillian Elliott Award committee for this signal honor. I am very, very sorry not to be able to be with you at the conference. A double disk fusion in July has been painfully slow to heal. If I were with you tonight, I would speak of color, the prime motivator in my art. The minute I walked into a needlepoint shop in the 1970s and saw a whole wall of Paternayan yarn I was hooked. I could work with color, hold color, create with color, have fun with color. Like Donald Duck's nephews with Uncle Scrooge's millions, I could throw color up in the air and let it fall on my head. I felt that I was home.

I later switched to DMC embroidery floss for ease of mixing colors, and those colors led to my first collection of poetry, *The Very Stuff*, in which each poem is inspired by a shade of DMC floss. For me color led to poetry, and now the written word often leads to a canvas. Gertrude Stein is a constant inspiration, and I've done a series of Flaubert-inspired works."

Stephen Beal's website, [www.stephenbeal.com](http://www.stephenbeal.com), reveals an intriguing body of work, of both poetry and stitched pieces. While working as a teacher, writer, or editor for Interweave Press, he published a volume of poetry as well as an impressive body of small cross-stitched images.

The early work is engaging, funny, playing with human foibles, but with a slight edge, and with elaborate titles that serve to contextualize the observations.



**"Vincent Tries on Rembrandt's Hats", 21" x 23", by Stephen Beal, 2008 winner of the Lillian Elliott Award for outstanding work in contemporary textile art by an emerging artist. This work appeared in the exhibition, "Pricked!", at the Museum of Art and Design, New York, 2007-2008.**

The piece "They were Young, They were Rich, They were Happy—Gertrude Stein's Troop Presents Don Quixote" is visually complex, rich in iconography, and is both amusing and poignant. "Peaceful Day on the Persian Gulf" has another kind of poignancy.

The later work becomes less literal and more metaphorical, as in "The Periodic Table of Artist's Color." Beal plays with the art historical canon in "Vincent Tries on Rembrandt's Hats." "Nature is Never Spent" is inspired by Hopkins' sonnet "God's Grandeur," one of Beal's favorites. "Level Crossing" explores space while joyfully abandoning good taste in color choices. Beal's most recent piece, "The Dude Abides," presents a 17th-century portrait of the Amsterdam Wine Merchants Guild, into which Beal has inserted six male characters from the Coen Bros. film, *The Big Lebowski*. This is an Elliott-worthy canvas. The

pieces are exquisitely constructed, with rigorous attention to composition, animated by rich and full color mixing.

Beal's work has been included in several significant recent exhibitions, including "Men of the Cloth," and, most recently, "Pricked: Extreme Embroidery" at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, in 2007.

The next Lillian Elliott Award will be presented at the 12th Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, to be held Oct. 7-9, 2010 in Lincoln, NE. The LEA Board welcomes contributions in the name and memory of Lillian Elliott or Joanne Segal Brandford in support of emerging artists working in Fiber. Please send donations to: Barbara Goldberg, 74 Sargent Beechwood Brookline, MA 02445

—Fran Dorsey

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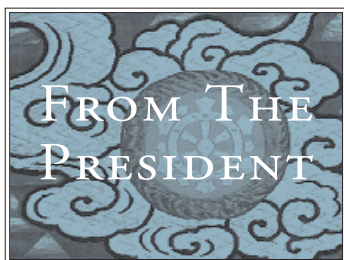
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**T**HE WEATHER HAS TURNED cold in New York; however, I'm still feeling the warmth of our being together in Honolulu. Thank you to all TSA Members who came to Hawaii, traveling great or small distances. Your presence and attendance significantly contributed to the success of TSA's 11th Biennial Symposium, Sep. 24-27, 2008. Nearly 300 participants attended from 25 countries and 32 states. While a large percentage came from NY, CA, and HI, new and old members also came from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and from as far away as England, Scotland, France, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, Italy, Chile, Taiwan, Thailand, Uganda, Norway, Denmark, Greece, Israel, Turkey, India, Laos, Japan, Korea, China and Qatar! Foreign attendance was far higher than at any previous Symposium.

Holding our Symposium in the middle of the Pacific increased our audience and our membership—especially from the Pacific Rim and Asia. For all who came, this was an unforgettable experience—the culmination of more than two years of planning. For some, it was an introduction to important Hawaiian fiber knowledge and technologies, to

rare and unique collections in Honolulu, and to the exhibited work of the local contemporary fiber arts community. For me it was also a return visit to a place I love that was home to me for 16 years, and to colleagues and former students to whom I had said goodbye when I retired from the University of Hawaii's Art Department in 2006.

### Symposium Thanks

Since the Symposium, immediate Past President **Carol Bier** and I have sent countless thank-you letters to Hawaii expressing our deep appreciation to the inspired leadership of Co-Chairs of Symposium 2008, **Tom Klobe** and **Reiko Brandon**, and to the "cast of thousands" on the Hawaii Organizing Committee who worked so hard to present Hawaii's rich cultural heritage and its creative involvement today, as expressed through textiles. The participation and contribution of more than 30 arts and cultural organizations to the theme, "Textiles as Cultural Expressions," celebrated Hawaii's diversity. The textile community in Honolulu came together as never before, and the city and state responded with welcoming proclamations from the Mayor of Honolulu and the Governor of the State of Hawaii.

So many people, both locally and internationally, contributed to the success of this Symposium. It will long be remembered for its generous and professional program of organized sessions, panels and discussions; for the keynote address and plenary presentations; for its abundance of site seminars, tours, workshop, and arts demonstrations; and for its many excellent exhibitions—not to mention the beautiful setting, fragrant leis, and gentle trade winds.

Even if you were not able to attend, we can all look forward to the publication of the *Proceedings* in 2009. A sincere thank you to Task Representative

**Ann Svenson Perlman** for generously offering (again, this time as Designer and Senior Editor) to guide this publication along.

### 2010 Symposium

Now we look ahead with anticipation. Co-chairs **Diane Vigna** and **Wendy Weiss** and their committee are carefully planning the 12th Biennial Symposium to be held in Lincoln, NE Oct. 6-9, 2010, with the working title, "Textiles and Settlement: Plains Space to Cyber Space." The keynote speaker, Sheila Kennedy, Director of Design & Applied Research with KVA Kennedy & Violich Architecture in Boston, is known for her Portable Light project. She has accepted our invitation to present her innovative research that bridges scientific applications of materials, weaving technology and illumination to the Huichol people of Mexico and beyond.

As an organization, TSA selects Symposium venues which, through their unique site-specific offerings, broaden our understanding of diverse textile collections and institutions in different geographic settings, encouraging new and old members to discover what each location offers of special interest to textile specialists. Each gathering has its own flavor and distinct sense of place where unexpected connections happen. In Lincoln we will have the opportunity to visit the International Quilt Study Center and Museum, the Robert Hillestad Textile Gallery at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and to see remarkable collections of Native American fiber knowledge and technologies from the Great Plains. We will also have another opportunity to meet and communicate with colleagues, establish new and renew friendships, and experience our shared passion in a symposium context. Lincoln will offer us a very warm welcome in Fall 2010. Please plan on joining us there.

### Board Concerns

The 2008-2010 Board will meet in New York City Mar. 6-7 at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Our business will include a discussion of TSA Membership, expansion and involvement, and the upcoming Membership Survey. I am asking each Board member to bring in five new Members to TSA, and I encourage each member to bring one new member into the organization. Presently we have nearly 700 members, and would like to increase that number to stabilize our base, both nationally and internationally.

At this upcoming meeting we will also address the TSA budget—how to keep it balanced with our increased organizational activities and awards (which necessarily bring additional costs), while at the same time we face unexpected losses in our long-term investments during this current financial crisis. I have asked Board member **Elena Phipps** to chair a new subcommittee devoted to Financial Development.

### Study Tours

In the last Newsletter, TSA announced two exciting Study Tours for 2009: A TSA-sponsored tour to Uzbekistan Sep. 21-Oct. 6, with Board member **Mary Anne Jordan**, and a TSA-recommended tour to Peru, Oct. 30-Nov. 13 with Peruvian textile specialists **Mary Frame**, **Christine Franquemont**, **Nilda Callañaupa**, and **Betty Doerr**. Please see the TSA website, [www.textilesociety.org](http://www.textilesociety.org) for details, of these tours. One of my personal goals as President is to encourage more international TSA-sponsored study tours, further expanding our international network. A future trip is being planned to Korea, with details to be announced in 2010. Please send **Matilda McQuaid**, Program Chair, your suggestions for other possible study tour destinations with names of potential leaders.

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membership forms, study tour  
information and latest news.

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## The Next Two Years

My presidency begins with a strong TSA that is growing in visibility and membership. I thank **Carol Bier** for her professional leadership, for her organizational skills, for mentoring me, and for all of the important work she has done for TSA and continues to do as Past President.

I am most grateful for those who have led TSA since its beginning 20 years ago. Now we need the ongoing, generous support of members to sustain our programs, scholarships, and awards—the Founding Presidents Awards, the Student New Professional Scholarships, Travel Scholarships for our Study Tours and TSA Workshops—all addressing the financial needs of a younger generation. We are committed to offering more awards that recognize excellence in the field and advance textile study and practice. Planned growth can only be implemented and sustained by seeking additional revenue sources, including donations.

As we shape these next two years, I invite you, as TSA members, to communicate with me or with other Board members via email or phone about how TSA might advance your personal and professional goals. Let us know how you would like to contribute to our shared goals, envisioning opportunities and ways to make them happen. Please remind us why you belong to TSA, as it helps guide our work and to reflect the diversity of our membership—our strongest asset.

This is an exciting time for TSA. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish by working together in the next two years, as we advance the goals and plans of this remarkable organization.

— **Pat Hickman**, TSA President



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*Nominations & Elections*

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*Development Committee:* Elena

Phipps

*Parliamentarian:* Carol Bier

## First Founding Presidents Awardee

THE FIRST FOUNDING Presidents Award, established to recognize excellence in the field of textile studies, supports the presentation of outstanding research at the biennial Symposium. The recipient of the first FPA was Katia Johansen, presenter of the selected paper, "Perfumed Textiles." Katia is a textile conservator and costume curator for the Royal Danish Collections at Rosenborg Castle in Denmark. The award was presented at the Symposium's gala Banquet and Awards Ceremony on Sep. 26, 2008 in Honolulu.

All finalists received a monetary travel grant and complimentary conference registration. The

finalist papers included in this exceptional slate of nominees were: "Trade Cloth on American Whaleships, 1820-1870" by Susan Jerome; "A Poem is a Robe and a Caste: Inscribing Verses on Textiles and Architecture in the Alhambra" by Olga Bush; "Bristle: Haptic Interfaces" by Ingrid Bachman; and "Suturing Old Wounds: The Act of Sewing in Works by Contemporary American Nations Women Artists" by Cynthia Fowler. Selections were made by the Founding Presidents Award Committee: Chair **Pam Parmal**, with **Pat Hickman**, **Vita Plume**, **Lotus Stack**, and **Susan Brandeis**.

The next Founding Presidents Award will be granted to a presenter at the 12th Textile Society of America's Biennial Symposium in Oct. 2010 in Lincoln, NE. Look for details and deadlines in our newsletter or on our website, [www.textilesociety.org](http://www.textilesociety.org)

— **Janice Lessman-Moss**

## Student/New Professional Awardees

THE 2008 RECIPIENTS OF TSA'S Student/New Professional Scholarships were recognized at the 11th Biennial Symposium Awards Ceremony, Sep. 26, 2008 in Honolulu. This year's awardees were selected from a diverse pool of exceptionally qualified applicants by the TSA Awards Committee chaired by **Vita Plume**, with **Mary Ann Fitzgerald**, **Ruth Scheuing**, and **Mary Dusenbury**. The scholarships consist of a fee waiver for the organization's biennial event and banquet. Each awardee is asked to write a review of a Symposium session or exhibit for the *TSA Newsletter*. Recipients are:

**Nao Namura** (Tokyo, Japan) holds a double major in Textile History with an emphasis in Quilt Studies and Museum Studies from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (MA, May 2004). In April 2008, she began

her PhD. in the Department of Area Studies at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo. Her scholarly work focuses on textiles and quilts. Her graduate research will explore the subject from the perspective of cultural studies, particularly the investigation of how different cultures develop their textile traditions in the age of globalization.

**Margarete Ann Ordon** (Madison, WI) received her M.S. in Design Studies with a focus on the History of Clothing and Textiles. She plans to pursue a Material Culture Certificate and PhD. in Design Studies. Research for her Master's thesis, "Making Sense of Dress: Multi-Sensory and Embodied Elements in Fashion Exhibits," was funded by the 2007 Costume Society of America's Stella Blum Research Grant. She is committed to researching textiles, dress, and related artifacts. As a future curator of textiles and clothing, she wants to devote herself to sharing the unique stories of objects.

**Anne Peranteau** (Wellington, New Zealand) is currently working on contract at the Museum of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington. Prior to that she served as Textile Conservator at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. She received a Master's Degree in Fine Art Conservation from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation in 2004. As part of her graduate and post-graduate training, she worked with a broad range of collections in several museums, including the Museum of Fine Arts-Boston and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and completed research travel to Japan, India, and Bangladesh to learn more about the textiles of these regions.

**Lesli Robertson** (Highland Village, TX) has been Adjunct Professor in Fibers at the University of North Texas-Denton since 2006, where she teaches



weaving, and a course on the use of alternative fiber processes. Since 2005 she has been actively working and doing research in Uganda. What began as an opportunity to train underprivileged girls in weaving skills now involves spreading awareness of Ugandan cultural arts. Currently she is creating a body of work that focuses on her relationship as an artist to the cultural arts and artisans of Uganda. She is also working on a multi-media bark cloth exhibition in conjunction with the University of North Texas.

**Sarah Scaturro** (Brooklyn, NY) is the textile conservator at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. She is also completing her graduate thesis at Fashion Institute of Technology on the subject of fashionable camouflage, and gave a presentation on the cultural appropriation of military camouflage at the Symposium. Sarah believes in approaching each object she handles with a keen understanding—of how it was made, by whom, and for what purpose.

These awards are presented biennially to selected TSA members who are currently either students in a textile-related field, have graduated from a textile-related field within the past three years or have been in their first job in the textile field for less than three years. Deadline for submission of applications is during the summer prior to each Symposium.

—Janice Lessman-Moss

## Shep Award Nominations Sought

NOMINATIONS FOR THE BEST book on ethonographic textiles published in 2008 are now being accepted. Please send the full bibliographic citation to the address listed below. When possible, three copies of the book should accompany the nomination. The award, endowed by R. L. Shep in 2000, encourages the study and understanding of ethnic textile traditions by recognizing and rewarding exceptional scholarship in the field. The award also enhances the position of The Textile Society of America as a thriving professional organization serving many disciplines. Nominations should be sent to:

Mattiebelle Gittinger  
Research Associate  
The Textile Museum  
2320 S Street NW  
Washington, D. C. 20008  
[Mgittinger@textilemuseum.org](mailto:Mgittinger@textilemuseum.org)

## TSA Study Tour 2009 Uzbekistan

Sep. 21- Oct. 6, 2009

TRAVELERS TO THE BEAUTIFUL Central Asian country of Uzbekistan with **Mary Anne Jordan** will visit the private studios and workshops of craftspeople making traditional and contemporary textiles, ceramics, and metals. Stops include the ancient cities of Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara, with

splendid architecture and museums. Enjoy the embroidery, weaving, natural dyeing, felt-making, knitting, and papermaking of area craftspeople, as well as costume traditions and shopping in the bazaars in Tashkent, Margilan, and Urgut. For further information, see: [www.textilesociety.org/events\\_tours.htm](http://www.textilesociety.org/events_tours.htm).

—Mary Anne Jordan

## Publications Initiative Summary

*A detailed survey report is available from the TSA office. The complete Executive Summary text is posted on the TSA website.*

THE PUBLICATIONS INITIATIVE, funded in 2007 by the Coby Foundation, Ltd., was launched by TSA at a challenging time for publishers, authors, and readers. Both for-profit and nonprofit sectors of the publishing industry, including university presses, are experiencing declining reader rates and a transition to electronic formats for publishing, data storage, and retrieval. These changes have an impact on TSA members who depend upon publication for tenure and visibility, and who rely upon access to new research in many fields. Two surveys—one for authors/readers, one for publishers—were designed to assess current publication needs in the fields of textile studies.

**The Surveys:** The first survey addressed authors and readers; the online questionnaire probed the reading habits, demographics, attitudes to electronic publications, and experiences of authors among the TSA membership and kindred organizations, with a sample of 720 respondents. The second survey consisted of a series of telephone

interviews with 43 publishers of books on textiles and related topics; it sought quantitative and qualitative information on current and future book lists, as well as editorial and production processes, especially with regard to illustrations and electronic publications.

The online survey reveals that members of TSA and its sister organizations are passionate, knowledgeable, appreciative of publications of superior quality in content and illustrations, and are generous in suggesting ideas for future book lists and research endeavors. The publishers' responses point up significant differences between policies of for-profit and university presses, especially in terms of production, but show commonalities in editorial contexts and cautious experimentation with new technologies.

**Next Steps:** These include disseminating the report to organizations and media in academic and textile-related fields. TSA's continued role is vital in this process:

- Provide professional workshops and seminars to facilitate interactions between authors/prospective authors and publishers.
- Refine and disseminate survey results to publishers.
- Establish inventories of specialists' names to create speakers' bureaus, curatorial pools, prospective contributors for reference volumes, peer reviewers, etc.
- Assess new and innovative media for publication and other means of dissemination of information, data, and research.
- Develop proposals and solicit funding to support research and sustain publication in textile fields.

**Task force:** The online survey was designed in Spring, 2008 by consultants Kaye Kittle Boyer and **Sara J. Kadolph** with **Désirée Koslin**, aided by Advisory Committee members **Ruth Barnes, Ann Lane Hedlund, Sumru Belger Krody, Jane Pryzbysz, Mary Schoeser, Madelyn Shaw, R. L.** to p. 6

**Symposium Scholarship recipients I. to r:** Nao Nomura, Margarete Ordon, Anne Peranteau, Lesli Robertson, Sarah Scaturro. On the dais are Board members Carol Bier, Mary Dusenbury, Pat Hickman, Roxane Shaughnessy, and Pam Parmal.



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**Shep**, and **Carol Bier**. **Kathryn Earle** and **Anne Pollard Rowe** provided supplementary advice. **Pamela Long**, **Mary Pluckhahn Masilamani** and **Melissa Scheld** assisted with telephone surveys.

The project task force expresses its gratitude to the Advisory Committee for its help in the project design, and to **Carol Bier**, TSA President 2006-2008, for sustained and inspiring leadership during the entire process. We extend our deep appreciation to The Coby Foundation, Ltd.

—*Désirée Koslin, Project Director*



## Andean Textile Tour Oct. 30-Nov. 13, 2009

**A**N INSIDER'S VIEW OF THE LIFE of Quechua weavers and the traditional techniques they have revitalized is best offered by someone who has led that life. **Nilda Callañaupa**, Founder and Director of the Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco,

can provide that view for travelers to Andean weaving villages. **Dr. Christine Franquemont**, anthropologist/ethnobotanist, and **Mary Frame**, Andean art and textiles specialist, will share their knowledge of Incan textiles, culture, and history. In a natural dye workshop, Nilda will report on CTTC's newest initiative, the cultivation and processing of indigo by villagers. Through opportunities to try spinning, knitting, braiding, and weaving, participants will gain insight into many steps in textile production. Each village will share its own traditional designs and color patterns. This unique tour directly benefits the weavers' associations visited. There will also be visits to major Incan archaeological sites, including Machu Picchu, Pisac, Ollantaytambo, and Sacsayhuaman. Visits to museum collections in Lima and Cusco will round out this remarkable tour. For information, contact the Tour Coordinator, Elizabeth Doerr, [bettydoerr@gmail.com](mailto:bettydoerr@gmail.com). TSA members are encouraged to register for this tour. Details are posted on [www.textilesociety.org](http://www.textilesociety.org).

— *Betty Doerr*

**Cecilia Anderson** has taken a teaching post in the Smithsonian Institution's Decorative Arts Graduate Program. She is pursuing independent research and spending time at home with her new baby girls, Maggie and Ingrid. [ceciliagunz@mindspring.com](mailto:ceciliagunz@mindspring.com)

**Regina Benson's** unique and environmentally friendly art-making process on the snows of Colorado is featured in the Nov./Dec. 2008 issue of *Fiberarts Magazine*, [www.fiberarts.com/back\\_issues/Nov-Dec-2008/contents.asp](http://www.fiberarts.com/back_issues/Nov-Dec-2008/contents.asp). The City of Aurora, CO, Art in Public Places program recently acquired Regina's environmental textile installation "Hard Rain." The work will be included in the city's "Moveable Art Collection," a sub-collection of the public art program consisting of more than

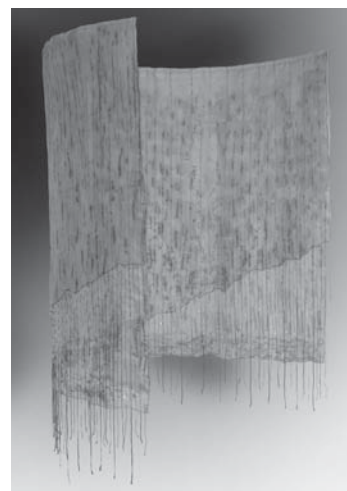
50 two-dimensional artworks that are displayed in the lobbies of public buildings. Regina creates dimensional textile art wall pieces and sculptures incorporating surface design techniques. [www.reginabenson.com](http://www.reginabenson.com)  
[regina-b@comcast.net](mailto:regina-b@comcast.net)

**Virginia Davis** was the featured artist on [www.Fiberscene.com](http://www.Fiberscene.com), Nov. 15, 2008-Jan 15. In Jan. 2009 she will teach a workshop on ikat weaving in Guatemala, "Ikat and Jaspé: from Start to Finish," at Centro Cultural La Azotea near Antigua, [www.indigoartestextiles.com](http://www.indigoartestextiles.com). She will lecture on her work at El Sito in Antigua on Jan. 21. In April, Virginia will lead a study tour in Oaxaca, Mexico with anthropologist Marta Turok: "The Mexican Rebozo: Jaspé (Ikat) Traditions, Heritage and Threats," April 17-26. [www.tiastephanietours.com](http://www.tiastephanietours.com)  
[virginia@eipye.com](mailto:virginia@eipye.com)

**Evelyn Kennedy** offers a textile appraisal service. Her business, Sewtique, also provides restoration and preservation services for textiles and wedding and baptismal gowns, as well as alterations services. Her Directory information is: Evelyn Kennedy Textile Specialist 391 Long Hill Road Groton, CT 06340 TEL 860-445-7320 FAX 860-445-1448 Conservation and Restoration [textileappraisal@aol.com](mailto:textileappraisal@aol.com)  
[www.sewtiqueonline.com](http://www.sewtiqueonline.com)

The **Lisio Foundation**, located in Florence, Italy, offers a new course, "Historical Techniques and Technologies: from basic weaves to brocade and other weft effects," with Instructors Eva Basile and Julie Holyoke. [www.fondazione.lisio.org](http://www.fondazione.lisio.org)

**Patricia Nguyen Wilson** presented a workshop on Tudor Embroidery in December at the Bard Center for Graduate Studies. Patricia is owner of



"Hard Rain," by Regina Benson, 7 ft. high, undulating in an 8-ft. curve, is constructed of three layers of rusted, stitched and seared silk. It was purchased for the Aurora, CO Moveable Art Collection. Photo by John Bonath.

Thistle Threads, which specializes in embroidery designs based on her research on materials and techniques used in early embroidery. She is also a partner in Redefined, Inc., manufacturers of Tokens and Trifles™ sewing cards based on Victorian examples. She holds several patents in the field of electronic textiles. [tricia@alum.mit.edu](mailto:tricia@alum.mit.edu)

**Barbara Shapiro's** "La Femme" an indigo-dyed raffia coiled basket will be exhibited in "Web And Flow" at the Textile Center of Minnesota's Joan Mondale Gallery, Minneapolis, MN, Mar. 6-Apr. 18. Several of Barbara's shibori-dyed velvet "Mantles" are included in "Adorned Cloth: Contemporary Surface Designed Fiber Art" at the historic Mills Building, San Francisco, CA, through Mar. 10, curated by **Margot Blum Schevill**. [boneweavr@aol.com](mailto:boneweavr@aol.com)

**Nell Znamierowski** lectured on the tapestries of Mary Merrill (1921-1999) in conjunction with a reception and exhibition to celebrate a new storage and conservation home for the tapestries located in a renovated historic textile mill in Harrisville, NH. Originally woven at the Merrill home in NH, the 17 tapestries

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## Fran Reed, 1943-2008

Alaska artist and teacher, Fran Reed, died September 11, 2008 after a valiant struggle against cancer. She was known for a unique style of fine art basketry that used dried fish skins and other natural materials. Her work attracted national attention and was shown widely in Alaska and the lower 48. Over her career, she received fellowships from the Western States Arts Federation and the Rasmuson Foundation. In 1996 she received the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Artists at Giverny fellowship in France, which allowed her to spend three months at the home and gardens of impressionist master, Claude Monet. The following year she was commissioned to create the prizes given to recipients of the Alaska Governor's Arts Awards. Earlier in 2008, she received the Anchorage Mayor's Award for Outstanding Individual Artist. Fran was born in LaJolla, CA, and moved to Fairbanks, AK, in 1969. There she worked with *quiviut* (musk ox wool) and taught weaving at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. She also spent 15 years as a lecturer on Alaska Native Arts for Alaska Pacific University and the Alaska Marine Highway Elderhostel program. In the course of her art work, she became an expert on fish skins and their traditional uses. Despite her illness, she spent four days at the Smithsonian Institute helping staff identify, understand, and restore Native Alaska skin garments in its collection. She is survived by her husband, Dick, whom she met in 1961 when they were students at the University of Oregon-Eugene; son, Collin, and daughter, Jocelyn Davis. Fran's TSA Symposium paper, *Feathers, Fibers and Fur: Embellishments for Gutskin Parkas*, was read in her honor by her friend, Audrey Armstrong.

— Adapted from an obituary by Mike Dunham, *Anchorage Daily News*

## Peter Collingwood, 1922-2008

In October I received an email forwarded from Jason Collingwood that stated: "Sadly my father, Peter Collingwood, died unexpectedly yesterday afternoon, 9th October, 2008. He died in the place he loved, his workshop." Collingwood's books have become ubiquitous sources of inspiration and technique in the libraries of weavers, designers, engineers, and architects since 1968, when he first published *The Techniques of Rug Weaving*, followed by *The Techniques of Sprang*, 1974, *The Technique of Tablet Weaving*, 1982, and so on. This short bio is adapted from one of my favorite Collingwood books, *The Maker's Hand*, in which his consuming interest in structure probes the intricacies of over 90 beautiful objects from around the world. Trained by some of the finest British weavers of the mid 20th century, Collingwood produced handmade rugs that sold at Liberty's and Heal's from 1952. He taught in art schools from 1954 and held annual workshops in the US starting in 1962. He was the first living weaver to be given an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum and his awards are numerous. His iconic shaft-switching rugs and airy macro-gauzes are widely imitated. And his authority on the subjects of tablet weaving, sprang and ply-splitting is not disputed. I saw his huge, architectural-scale woven stainless steel Macrogauze in Japan. He was generous with his knowledge, and above all, loved what he did. He was the consummate handweaver and an inspiration to us all.

— Barbara Shapiro

have been touring the US for the past five years. Merrill's forte was color in a lush, fauve-like palette, which she used in impressionistic scenes based on sketches and photos of her travels; particularly to Latin-America. The tapestries will soon be available for future exhibitions. For information, contact Amy Merrill, TEL 617/876-0108; [merrilamy@comcast.net](mailto:merrilamy@comcast.net).

## Member Publications

**Beverly Gordon** has contracted with Thames & Hudson to publish her book, *The Fiber of Our Lives: Why Textiles Matter*. As the title indicates, the work will be comprehensive, looking at the meanings of textiles in all aspects of human life, from basic survival to the mythic and spiritual realms (this also includes textiles and social life, textiles and power, aesthetic meaning, textiles and invention, etc.). The book will be heavily illustrated. Beverly asks TSA members willing to share their high-quality photographs of textiles in use—in ceremonies or ritual contexts, for example, or used for practical purposes, and art pieces as well. Textiles of all kinds (both handmade, manufactured) and from all periods or areas of the world will be considered. Contact her at [bgordon@wisc.edu](mailto:bgordon@wisc.edu).

The **Lisio Foundation** publishes a biennial review publication, *The News: Jacquard*. The magazine, in Italian and English, contains information on art textiles and historic textiles, as well as on weaving. For subscription information: [didat@fondazioneisio.org](mailto:didat@fondazioneisio.org). Lisio has also recently published a book, *Moda a Firenze 1540-1580: Lo stile di Eleonora di Toledo e la sua influenza*. To order: [didat@fondazioneisio.org](mailto:didat@fondazioneisio.org).

**Mary Louise Totton**, Assistant Professor of Art History, Frostic School of Art, Western Michigan University, served as guest curator for the exhibition, "Wearing Wealth and Styling Identity: Tapis from Lampung, South

Sumatra, Indonesia," at Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College. The exhibition combines over 50 tapis from the Stephen A. Lister Collection with contextual archival and contemporary photographs. Dr. Totton's text of the same title will be published by the Hood Museum of Art and available through the University of Washington Press in Spring, 2009.

**Joanne Dolan Ingersoll** discusses the nuances of curating the textile and costume collection at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in the Jan./Feb. 2009 issue of *FiberArts* magazine. Also in the latest *FiberArts* is a review of the exhibit, "Writing with Thread: Traditional Textiles from Southwest Chinese Minorities," curated by **Tom Klobe** for the University of Hawaii Art Gallery in Honolulu, and now traveling to mainland US venues.



**Deadline Apr. 4: Costume in the American West: Historic to Modern Times**, Sep. 25-26, 2009, Sacramento, CA. The Western Region Symposium of the Costume Society of America offers an opportunity for members to present research on a variety of topics related to the theme "Costume in the American West: Historic to Modern Times." A student stipend is available for one student member of CSA to present an oral research paper at the Symposium. All submissions must relate to the conference theme. See the complete Call for Papers on the TSA website. Information: Shelly Foote [satalexandria@aol.com](mailto:satalexandria@aol.com) TEL 805/642-4466

from p. 1

## Sasigyo in Kathleen's Collection: Sasigyo #1

From my collection of 45 sasigyo, I have examined three which I consider to be exceptional. The first piece has a black background rather than the more usual indigo blue, red or multicolored striped background. Remarkably, the name of the weaver is woven into the piece in English! Perhaps there is some cultural ostentation here, since the piece was probably woven during the British colonial period. The sasigyo can be read as text starting from the loop and ending with the tail. (See translation below.)

Ralph Isaacs is a well-known scholar of Burmese craft and has contributed much to the knowledge about sasigyo. He kindly looked at the inscription on my black sasigyo, translated the dedication, and commented that, in general, much of the first part of

the text of sasigyo is formulaic and largely unremarkable. "Still, the inscriptions reflect the beliefs and practices of the Burmese Buddhist donors. The second part of the inscription may contain a more personal expression of the pious hopes and wishes of the individual donor. The dedication on this black sasigyo tells us that the weaver was named Ma Hpwa Mya, and that she was weaving the band as an act of filial piety in order to bind a kam-mavaca manuscript, made with the best silk hip wrapper (*pasoe*) of her dead father."<sup>6</sup>

Subsequently, I received another communication from a translator in Yangon, Myanmar, which puts another slant on the inscription. He notes that ashes from the funeral pyre of the departed might have been included in the lacquer composition, called *thayo*, which is used to create lacquer objects, including manuscript pages. It is equally possible that the silk *pasoe* was cut up and used as a foundation

overlaid with lacquer layers to create the blank pages. Sylvia Lu has affirmed this possibility in a personal communication.<sup>7</sup> Cutting the *pasoe* into page-sized pieces and then stiffening them with layers of lacquer composition containing bone ash from the cremation of the deceased would create a powerful memorial and create special merit for the donors and the departed. My Burmese informant tells me that the practice is well known among Burmans. Ralph Isaacs recently presented a paper at the Burma Studies Conference called, "Dammacedi: Manuscripts and Other Objects Made with Cremation Ashes," in which he details this practice.<sup>8</sup>

All of the sasigyo examined for this article were woven with the double-faced tablet weave technique. This allows for a nearly unlimited range of weaver-controlled design, including numerous unique decorative motifs, and yards-long texts in ornate script within a single piece. The weaver uses a series of square tablets with holes in each corner which must be threaded with two light and two dark warp threads from front-to-back or back-to-front in a prescribed order. These threaded tablets are then rotated to create a shed opening through which a weft thread is passed to create

the interlacement. The weaver controls the pattern by bringing the required pattern threads to the surface of the warp while the rest of the tablets weave the background. The pattern appears in the opposite color on the obverse side. This technique requires great skill and patience in the weaver, plus a lively sense of design.

## Sasigyo #2

During a trip to Thailand in 2008, I was given several beautiful old sasigyo. One is in remarkably pristine condition. It was woven on a multicolor striped warp of fine mill-made threads, placing it within the British colonial period. Because of its color pattern, I call it "the rainbow sasigyo." (See Image p. 1) I stopped in Taiwan on my way home and contacted my friend, Tsai Yushan, who teaches at the Fu Ren University Graduate Department of Textile and Fashion Design. I met her when we lived in Taiwan ten years ago. She is an accomplished tablet weaver and has published a book on the subject in Chinese.

When I showed her the "rainbow sasigyo," she was immediately intrigued and readily agreed to analyze it. Within a few months I had her very thorough documentation of the



Detail of signature on "tail end" of sasigyo #1. Gift of Robert McCarthy, Bangkok.

### Translation of Sasigyo #1 (Translation by Kotoh)

*May all beings be blessed!*

*U Hpo Kyoo was a very pious Buddhist always practicing the Buddha's teachings in life at Myin-Gun, a town where Buddhism glows brilliantly.*

*U Hpo Kyoo was married to Ma Ka-lay, famed as a dutiful loving wife.*

*They had seven children, namely Maung Ba Kyaw, Ma Hpwar Mya, Ma Hpwar Toke, Maung Ba Thet, Maung Soe Oo and Ma Choke in descending order of ages.*

*When U Hpo Kyoo passed away in due course, the family members with great enthusiasm gave their personal belongings to charity in the name of the deceased.*

*Their generosity and faith in religion was so immense, like a flower being showered in heavy rain, that they transformed U Hpo Kyoo's fine possessions such as *pasoes*, shawls and carpets into a volume of Nine-Chapter - Kamawar Scripture.\**

*For the meritorious donation of this adorable holy scripture, by the miraculous fruition of paying homage to the Lord Buddha's Teachings, We make our wish:*

*May we attain Nirvana straight and surely. May all beings, gods as well as humans, from our masters, parents and relatives To uncountable numbers of beings in the countless number of universes, share our merit, and gladly say Sadhu! Sadhu! Well done! Well done!"*

*"Manufacture by Ma Fwar Mya"*



A sasigyo with a multi-colored striped warp, probably dating from the early twentieth century, is shown with a full length weaving graph by Tsai Yushan. With this graph, a competent tablet weaver could conceivably re-construct the whole piece. Sasigyo in the collection of Kathleen Johnson, gift of Robert McCarthy.





**Tsai Yushan at her sample loom in Taipei. Tai reproduced the band shown below.**

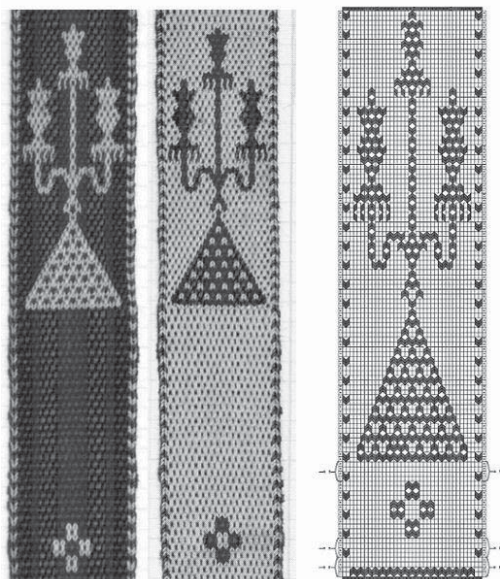
piece, including a hand-drawn graph for its entire six yards! As a part of her study of this piece, she first graphed and then reweave a few sample motifs. Her skill, patience, and diligence are a good match for the sasigyo weavers! Her comments are below. Graphs illustrating stages of her analysis are included in the web version of this article. She comments:

"I think that long Burmese sasigyo is an incredible work! The length of this band is very long (4.7 meters), width: 1.5~1.6cm, warp density: 95~100 threads/1 cm, weft density: 22 threads/1cm. It was woven with 38 cards and the total of its warp threads is 152 threads (38x4).

After analyzing and graphing this long sasigyo, I was astonished at the person who created it. I admire its rich and beautiful ornamental motifs and content, although I do not know the meaning of the text. I can imagine that the weaver spent much effort and time in designing the motif and text.<sup>10</sup> The design shows considerable aesthetic sensibility. The weaving of such a textile required admirable skill and discernment."

In working on this article I am a step closer to understanding these pieces; the mystery of their meaning, the manner of their production, use and the beauty of their design. More cultural background in my article, "Little Masterpieces," and a complete set of weaving drafts from Tsai Yushan are available on my web site: <http://www.travlin-weaver.com/Sasigyofulllength.html>. I hope my work will preserve information which may be of interest and value to other weavers and scholars now and in the future, perhaps one of them may even be able to weave sasigyo again.

*This article has been abridged for the newsletter. See the complete article with detailed drafts for a third band and an exciting update on the TSA website, [www.textilesociety.org](http://www.textilesociety.org)*



**Left: Original band, Side A and Side B. Center: Color draft of design motif. Right: reproduction band by Tai Yushan.**

## Notes:

1. Ralph Isaacs, "Sasigyo: Textile Texts," in the *Oxford Asian Textile Group Newsletter*, #34, June 2006, p. 17.
2. Noel Singer, "Kamavaka Texts, Their Covers and Binding Ribbons," In *Arts of Asia*, May/June, 1993, p. 97.
3. Sylvia Fraser-Lu, *Burmese Crafts, Past and Present*, pp 285-86,87.
4. Suriya Smutkupt, *Female Lower Garment or Holy Manuscript Wrapper? The Role of women in a Buddhist Society*, p.172.
5. Noel Singer, "Kamavaka Texts, Their Covers and Binding Ribbons," In *Arts of Asia*, May/June, 1993, p. 104.
6. Ralph Isaacs, personal communication by e-mail.
7. Sylvia Fraser-Lu, personal communications by telephone and e-mail.
8. Ralph Isaacs, Dammasedi: Manuscripts, p. 1.
9. Otfried Staudigel, *Tablet Woven Magic* pp. 95-106 and 164-199.
10. Tsai Yusan, personal communication by e-mail.

\*All translations by Katoh, a translator inf Yangon, Myanmar, who works with foreign scholars.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Burmese Crafts Past and Present*, Singapore, Oxford University Press (1994).

TEXTILE SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
11TH BIENNIAL SYMPOSIUM



TEXTILES AS CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

2008 SYMPOSIUM REVIEWS

**Keynote Address**

**"A Needle Woman," Kimsooja**  
**Thursday, Sep. 25, 2008**

The 11th Biennial Symposium opened with a meditative, yet stimulating, keynote address by the Korean-born artist, Kimsooja. Her work, best described as conceptual or performance-based, explores issues such as disembodiment, identification, and displacement. Her role as the keynote speaker was poignant and expansive, as her work explores the body's ability to negotiate and connect natural and social spaces through the metaphorical actions of stitching, penetrating, and weaving. The title of her address, "A Needle Woman," refers to her videotaped performances of the same name which took place from 1999-2001 in populous cities like Tokyo and New York, and again in 2005 in cities with a history of conflict, like Havana and Jerusalem. In all performances, she stands solitary and unmoving, while crowds of people stream around her, alternately accepting or questioning the insertion of her presence into that space. In this and other video works, like "A Beggar Woman" and "A Homeless Woman," Kimsooja uses her body as a needle, weaving it spatially and temporally into nature and society.

Kimsooja's talk explored the chronological development of her art with an emphasis on the importance to her of sewing and fabric. She described the "thunderbolt" she felt the first time she pierced fabric with a needle, when she instinctually realized

the metaphysicality of sewing—the duality inherent in the back-and-forth movements, the front and back of the cloth, and the connective power of intertwining one to another. As she continued to develop her voice, she expanded the dual nature of the needle, reflecting on its hermaphroditic ability to both attack and heal with its pointed, precise end, and its empty, voided eye.

Less metaphysical, but no less symbolic, are Kimsooja's fabric works. Earlier in her career she used old clothes belonging to family and friends, creating works that were essentially portraits impregnated with the remnants and memories of the bodies who once wore them, representing a network of invisible existences. She soon after turned her attention to a three-dimensional object, the *bottari*, a bundle wrapped in a cloth and tied with a single knot. Using bedcovers made for newly married couples, Kimsooja's bundles of fabric took on deeper dualistic meanings, with the actions of wrapping and unwrapping serving as metaphors of separation and delineation, inside and outside, birth and death (such as when a woman leaves her home for marriage—i.e. becomes wrapped, or the unwrapped, unfettered state of the fabric upon which a new couple makes love). Her "Bottari Truck" and "Cities on the Move" performances investigated the nomadic and transformative meanings of the wrapped bundle by playing with ideas of traversing space and time.

The choice of Kimsooja as the keynote speaker was an inspired selection that

introduced the stimulating and thought-provoking program of the Symposium. Her work broadens the cultural significance that textiles hold by elevating and expanding their meanings metaphysically. To Kimsooja, the needle and cloth allow one to journey to all dimensions, across time and space.

— Sarah Scaturro, SNPS Awardee

**Colonialism and First Nations People**  
**Friday, Sep. 26, 2008**

Many of us who have accessed the history of indigenous groups through objects are keenly aware of the links between events of the Colonial era and the collecting of ethnographic artifacts now in institutions around the world. The Symposium session, "Colonialism and First Nations People," explored ways in which the experiences and reactions of Maori and First Nations people to their own history have given rise to renewed traditional practices and contemporary modes of expression.

Cynthia Fowler's presentation "Bodily Presence and Collective Experience: Examining Sewing as Artistic Practice in the Works of Marie Watt and Bonnie Devine," nominated for the Founding Presidents Award, focused on artists affiliated with the Seneca Nation and the Serpent River First Nation. These women connect to their history through the technique of sewing and the use of materials that, like wool blankets and ribbonwork appliqué, simultaneously recall textile techniques of their ancestors and the devastation brought upon them by trade goods carrying the smallpox virus. The content and form of Watt's intimate "Ledger: Ladder" (2004) references creation myth and life cycles, while Devine's transcendent "Canoe" (2003), uses a traditional form rendered in a non-traditional way to convey the severity of 20th-century

environmental crimes committed against native groups.

Chanel Clarke, Curator Maori at the Auckland Museum, began her presentation with a *mihi*, or greeting and introduction, and in doing so made the vitality of the native language of Aotearoa New Zealand immediately clear. Her presentation on "Horiwear" discussed how language and subversive humor have been used by T-shirt designers to undermine the derogatory label of *Hori-Maori* as meaning 'uncivilized radical antagonists.' T-shirts sold under the label "Horiwear Aotearoa," for example, have the phrase "Honor Our Respective Iwi" placed under the word *Hori*, showing that the term has been appropriated in celebration and acknowledgement of *iwi*, or tribal group solidarity.

Other efforts to strengthen Maori culture have focused on practice and teaching of traditional arts. Christina Wirihana and Kahutoi Te Kanawa are weavers who work with *harakeke* (*Phormium tenax*, New Zealand flax), helping to maintain one of the most important technologies of the Maori people, and promoting an understanding of the significance of historic artifacts. The discovery of a group of archaeological textiles, and the subsequent reproduction of one of them was the focus of Te Kanawa's paper. Working with a conservator and curator, Te Kanawa helped to correlate data from microscopic examination of the artifacts with the working properties of the varieties of *harakeke* preferred for use in traditional weaving. Other fibers such as *kiekie* (screw pine, *Freycinetia banksii*) and *toi* (cabbage tree, *Cordyline indivisa*) were discussed as well.

Wirihana's paper on "Kakahu" described different types of cloaks made and worn according to the status of the wearer and the occasion. *Kahukuri*, a cloak made only for men of high rank using strips



of dog skin and dog fur applied to a twined fiber foundation, is thought to perhaps pre-date the *Kahu huruhuru*, or feather cloak. Adoption of wool ("Berlin") yarns, cotton candlewick yarn and tapestry techniques indicate that methodologies evolved within the parameters of the Kakahu as a result of trade with the West.

— Anne Peranteau, SNPS Awardee

### Site Seminar: Presenting Culturally Sensitive Exhibitions Friday, Sep. 26, 2008

The 2008 Symposium Site Seminars offered opportunities to become immersed in Honolulu's cultural institutions. The Bishop Museum seminar, moderated by Karen Kosasa, included a tour of the historic restoration of Hawaiian Hall currently in process, followed by presenters intimately involved in crafting public perceptions of their heritage. With the museum transitioning to a new physical and conceptual format, the presenters augmented the call for change with their personal experiences and understandings of the complex issues around exhibiting indigenous culture, artifacts, and art.

Museum staff walked seminar participants through the museum. We stopped at the "Ili Iho" exhibit which featured four textiles from the museum's collection to which eight Native Hawaiian artists responded in a variety of media. The staff passionately described how Hawaiian Hall, then gutted of objects, will be transformed into a physical manifestation of the Hawaiian worldview. Once completed, the display cases, paralleling lunar cycles, will highlight the arts and lives of Native Hawaiians. Visitors will be able to open drawers to explore stories in the indigenous language or dispute misconceptions. Seeing the museum physically in flux illuminated challenges

confronting staff during the exhibit reconstruction.

Panelist Noelle Kahanu's poignant discussion thoughtfully situated the restoration within the museum's mission to be a part of a living culture by celebrating contemporary practitioners as well as acknowledging Hawaii's complex history. Maile Drake's exhibit critique asserted that museum professionals must conduct thorough research into objects and include indigenous perspectives from the beginning of a project, in order to ensure accurate, sensitive representations. Keola Awong's personal experience bringing together indigenous community members with Hawaii Volcanoes National Park staff, clearly illustrated the feasibility and importance of integrating communities with institutional projects.

Although the seminar was not primarily focused on textiles, the presenters' diverse backgrounds enhanced the content. Textiles cannot be isolated from their cultural circumstances or from the people who make and use them. The presenters intimately spoke about this concern, as they cogently argued for inclusive involvement of indigenous peoples and respect for objects.

While the presentations could easily stand independently of the site, the immediate experience of the Bishop Museum complemented the papers. In Hawaiian Hall, I felt the exhibit grow around us as we helped students bundle grass for a replica building. In the exhibition, "Ili Iho," I reflected on contemporary and historic Native Hawaiian textile arts curated by Native Hawaiians. An afternoon spent at a museum only allows a glimpse into complex realities, rich aesthetic experiences, and essential textile practices. Nevertheless, I appreciated the presenters' personal stories and sensitive opinions on how museums can best share and celebrate cultural beliefs, practices, and objects.

The seminar renewed my spirit to create relevant exhibits that communicate the depth and beauty of textile practices.

— Margarette Ordon, SNPS Awardee

### Exhibition: Beaten and Basted: A Collection of Rare Kapa and Quilts Sep. 20–Oct. 30, 2008

A blend of the popular mid-19th century Greek Revival style and Hawaiian architecture, the Queen Emma Summer Palace reflects the multicultural influences in Hawaiian culture represented by the objects in its collection. The Palace houses both indigenous artifacts—pieces of indigenous *tapa* or *kapa* (bark) cloth, feather artifacts, and wooden dishes, all made of native materials—and European style furniture and sumptuous gifts presented to Hawaiian royalty by countries including England, France, India, and Japan. This collection demonstrates the foundation for Hawaii's receptivity to diverse ethnic cultures.

Stepping into the palace's spacious entrance hall with its high ceilings, visitors are welcomed by the portraits of Alexander 'Iolani Liholiho, Kamehameha IV (1834-1863), Emma Kalanikaumaka Kaleleonalani (1836-1885), and Prince Albert Edward Kauikeaouli Leiopapa a Kamehameha (1858-1862). Although not all the objects in the collection are original to the Palace, a comprehensive array of artifacts offers a glimpse into the royal family's life as well as into more general Hawaiian culture. The large *loa* wood bed that Queen Emma slept on contrasts with the traditional bedding of layered *tapa* cloth preferred by King Kamehamea. Multicultural influences were embodied in objects of everyday life, such as bedding and furniture in the period rooms.

In addition to the glorious objects that belonged to Queen Emma and her family, the Palace exhibited nearly twenty dazzling

Hawaiian quilts from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These included rare flag quilts in red, blue, and white, as well as the more familiar two-color graphic appliqué quilts that continue to be popular among modern quilt and textile enthusiasts. Draped over the grand piano, beds, and a chaise lounge, these quilts represent changes in textile production with Western influences of the late 19th century. Native Hawaiians traditionally used bark cloth for textile products including clothing and bedding. With the introduction of European culture, the indigenous textile tradition was replaced by European-influenced textile products.

Although the historic house had some limitations in its ability to interpret the Hawaiian past through its period rooms, and to function as gallery space for objects such as quilts, the Queen Emma Summer Palace offers an inspiring and engaging exhibition that introduces the multicultural influences of Hawaiian material culture to the visitor.

— Nao Nomura, SNPS Awardee

### Exhibition: Tattered Cultures: Mended Histories

In the exhibition "Tattered Cultures: Mended Histories" at the Academy Arts Center in Honolulu (Sep. 6-20, 2008), the concept of mending has a physical presence expressed through the work of 20 artists from varying countries and backgrounds. Artist and curator, **Mary Babcock**, presents the idea of "mending" as a potent metaphor for cultural enrichment and transformation, bringing together artists who desire to reconnect to the cultural narrative of their life, addressing the tattered ends of their histories.

Through numerous materials and techniques, each artist tackles this subject, inviting the viewers into an intimate and

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personal conversation. Lisa Solomon's work, "3 Generations: Obasan, Ocasan, Grammy and Me," explores the intersection of her two cultures through a series of four stitched portraits. Each incorporates layers of translucent silk stretched over an embroidery hoop; visually and conceptually separating each figure from the thin outline of the US or Japan. Singular woven pieces of cloth are pinned to the wall in Sharon Marcus's "Undocumented," a work inspired by the pieces of cloth left behind at border crossings between the US and Mexico. She engages the subject of immigration by creating intimate pieces that reflect the individual who is leaving his culture behind. In "Part and Particle," Denise Ava Robinson uses coralline algae, an ocean "fabric" native to the coastal regions of Tasmania, to investigate the journey of life, death, and transformation of the aboriginal people of her native land.

This by no means adequately addresses each of the narratives present in this exhibition. The works mentioned are just a few of the stories that unfold as these artists focus on "Ithel concerns of marginalization, colonialism and social justice as an essential discourse within textile arts." These artists remind us that textiles are strong communicators; they have the ability to mend the often fragmented ends of our past, present, and future.

Quotes by Mary Babcock, from the exhibition catalog.

— Lesli Robertson, SNPS Awardee

## Pre-Symposium Workshop: Identifying Textiles: Surface Finishes and Techniques

Wednesday, Sep. 24, 2008

For over twenty attendees, the 2008 Symposium kicked off on a beautiful Wednesday morning while heading to the Bishop Museum to participate in the

Textile Identification Workshop.

**Désirée Koslin**, adjunct Assistant Professor of Fashion and Textile Studies at the Fashion Institute of Technology, headed the workshop, assisted by Susan Brown, assistant curator at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York.

Susan began the workshop by showing different printed textiles and illustrating such print techniques as stencil and silkscreen, block print, batik resist, and engraved print and roller techniques. Fabric samples representing a comprehensive overview of major historical and current techniques were distributed to the class. As Désirée explained the unique characteristics of each printing technique and surface finish, we matched each sample according to the outlined specifications.

The diagnostic approach to identifying standard printed fabrics involved a methodological investigation of the textile, beginning with the substrate and working up to the surface design. Identifying the textile substrate helps to determine the printing technique. Other identifying features, such as colored backgrounds, can help distinguish between piece-dyed textiles and dyes applied directly or through a stencil. A close examination of the printed motifs provides additional cues, according to the registration of motifs, stylistic features, texture effects, and colors used in the print.

All of these techniques were applied in the afternoon practicum, as groups of students examined historic textiles for identification. In addition to hands-on activities, participants were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the Bishop Museum's storage area to view printed barkcloth textiles (*kapa*), and kapa-making tools. As the bus returned to the hotel, Susan passed around modern textiles from Japan with unique textures, ending the workshop by tying in contemporary surface finishes.

— Elizabeth Nunan



## Centre National du Costume de Scene et de la Senographie

The CNCS (National Centre for Stage Costumes) opened in Moulins-sur-Allier, France in May, 2008, under the chairmanship of Christian LaCroix. The institution was founded by the French Ministry of the Arts and Communication in partnership with the Moulins Town Council, the Allier Department Council, and the Auvergne Region Council. The Centre is dedicated to the history of the performing arts and theatrical professions, specializing in costumes and fashion, and houses a prestigious collection of 10,000 stage costumes from the French National Library, the Paris National Opera House, the Comedie-Francaise, and from private theatrical companies. It mounts a regular schedule of exhibitions and its archives are available to researchers. CNCS has published the following books since 2006: *Betes de Scene*, Theodore de Banville et le Theatre, *J'Aime Les Militaires!*, Christian Lacroix *Costumier*, Jean-Paul Gaultier/*Regine Chopinot: le Defile*, and *Costumes des 1001 Nuits*. — Vanessa Portut, Head Librarian [documentation@cncs.fr](mailto:documentation@cncs.fr)

## Coby Foundation Grants

In 2008, The Coby Foundation, Ltd. supported projects in the textile and needle arts field with grants totaling \$25,000 to 14 organizations. **Exhibition Grants:** Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, for "Arts and Accomplishments: Early American Needlework in Connecticut, 1740-1840," (fall 2010); Philadelphia Museum of Art for "Nakshi Kantha: The Embroidered

Quilts of Bengal" (Fall, 2009); The Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, NY, for "Common Threads: 150 Years of Adirondack Quilts and Comforters." **Planning Grants:** Ukrainian Museum, New York, for an exhibition of Ukrainian wedding-related textiles; Yeshiva University Museum, New York, for an exhibition of Torah binders; Shelburne Museum, VT, for "In Context: Clothing and Interiors, 1750-1950." **Additional Support:** projects based on modern and contemporary textiles and fashion include: Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA, for a Sheila Hicks retrospective; Japan Society, New York, for "Serizawa: Master of Japanese Textile Design;" The Museum at FIT, New York, for "Gothic: Dark Glamour;" Erie Art Museum for "Kanga & Kitenge: Cloth and Culture in East Africa;" Grey Art Gallery, NYU, for "The Poetics of Cloth: African Textiles/Recent Art;" Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum for "Fashioning Felt." Coby funds also supported "Wedded Bliss: The Marriage of Art and Ceremony," at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA, and distribution of the film *Blue Alchemy: Stories of Indigo*, by independent filmmaker Mary Lance.

The Foundation funds projects in the mid-Atlantic and the Northeast that combine excellent scholarship and effective interpretation in the arts or humanities, contemporary or historical, and with a public benefit. Direct proposals and inquiries to: Executive Director Ward L.E. Mintz The Coby Foundation, Ltd. 511 Ave. of the Americas #387 New York, NY 10011.

## Tapestry Collection Seeks Curator

Family-owned tapestry collection based in southern New Hampshire seeks a part-time curator to prepare a brochure and research exhibition opportunities. If interested, please contact Amy Merrill, [amy@comcast.net](mailto:amy@comcast.net).





## New Costume and Textiles Facilities At Philadelphia Museum of Art

**T**SA MEMBERS WILL WANT TO include Philadelphia in any future travel plans. Between the autumns of 2007 and 2008 the Philadelphia Museum of Art opened two new galleries and a study room for costumes and textiles and moved into spacious, state-of-the-art conservation and storage facilities. Nine years in the making, these spaces advantageously showcase the collection, as well as the scholarship, creativity and dedication which the museum and its staff bring to it.

In the early 1980s, the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) closed its popular, long-running fashion galleries, and during this interim the textile department mounted a special exhibition every few years. In the early 1990s, one tiny 400 sq. ft. gallery was allocated for the display of costumes and textiles. Since that time, curators, donors and the museum administration collectively imagined new ways to provide the public, students

and scholars with access to the PMA's renowned collection. One of the largest in the US, it counts some 30,000 pieces of western high-fashion textiles, as well as costumes from around the world.

Ample room for the project to spread its wings—and its wares—was assured with the PMA's purchase in 2000 of an adjacent art deco-style building. Gluckman Mayner Architects, NY, was hired to transform the historic edifice into contemporary office and gallery space, and this it accomplished admirably by adding a new wing and converting the interior of the existing building. A covered atrium bridges the two structures and infuses the entire space with warm natural light. Renamed the Ruth and Raymond G. Perelman Building, it opened to the public in the fall of 2007.

Within this new structure, textiles are given a choice placement. One of three first-floor exhibit galleries is the Joan Spain Gallery for Costume and Textiles. Measuring 2,000 square feet, the Spain Gallery hosts feature exhibitions, both traveling shows and those drawn from the museum's holdings. The open room and versatile lighting can be adapted to radically different installation modes. On the second floor of the Perelman Building is the intimate 1,200 sq. ft. Textiles Study Gallery, opened in Fall, 2007. With two walls of deep cases and another wall of smaller cubicle-like vitrines, it aims to highlight the collection and allow for the easy rotation of objects. Located as well on the second floor is the Dorance

H. Hamilton Center for Costume and Textiles, including a Study Room inaugurated in Sep. 2008. Finished with light wood flooring and dark cabinetry, it provides bright and spacious quarters for scholars, students and specialists to examine pieces by appointment. With Philadelphia's numerous university fashion, textile and design courses, the Study Room is already in high demand. Connected via a corridor with departmental offices are the state-of-the-art Conservation Lab and 7,600 sq. ft. new Collection Storage Area. Curators and conservators were closely involved in designing these facilities, including the lab's expanded capacities for wet and chemical cleaning, and easy access to exhibit staging areas.

In addition, the Costume and Textiles Department has retained its original Gallery 271 on the second floor of the main building. Located within the wing housing European Art from 1500 to 1850, it will display American and European objects before 1900.

While infrastructure is vital, so, too, are the creative minds that give it life. And thus far Senior Curator Dilys Blum, and Kristina Haugland, Associate Curator and Supervising Curator for the Study Room, have demonstrated admirable vision and range, producing appealing displays supported by serious scholarship. Building on strong Indian and Asian collections, the department has in recent years striven to add African pieces, and to date their exhibitions have covered a variety of times, places, and the meetings of East and West.

The Spain Gallery has thus far hosted three exhibits, including "A Passion for Perfection: James Galanos, Gustave Tassell, Ralph Rucci" (Fall 2007-Spring 2008), "Fashioning Kimono: Art Deco and Modernism in Japan" (Summer, 2008), and "Quilt

**"Recent Acquisitions A-Z" in the new Joan Spain Gallery for Costume and Textiles, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Photo by Andrea Nuñez.**



**Art handlers move the costume and textiles collections to the new storage space at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Photo by Andrea Nuñez.**

Stories: the Ella King Torrey Collection of African American Quilts and Other Recent Acquisitions."

The Costume and Textiles Study Gallery opened in Nov. 2007 with "Costumes and Textiles: Recent Acquisitions from A to Z," followed by "Hello! Fashion: Kansai Yamamoto, 1970-1973." At the time of the author's visit in Sep. 2008, on view in Gallery 271 was an informative display on Chinoiserie featuring 18th- and 19th-century European fabrics.

In 2009, the public can look forward to similar variety, with a late spring exhibition on Paris fashion from the PMA collections dating from the mid-19th century to the First World War, and a fall installation of Bangladeshi *kantha* embroideries from the PMA's extensive holdings. During that same time the Study Gallery will display modern fashion. For more information, see [www.philadelphiamuseum.org/exhibitions](http://www.philadelphiamuseum.org/exhibitions) and [www.philamuseum.org/collections/22-398-552-440.html](http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/22-398-552-440.html)

**Note:** The author thanks Kristina Haugland for providing a guided tour and supplementary information. All photos are used with permission.

—Sarah Fee  
Postdoctoral Fellow,  
Musée du Quai Branly, Paris





## THE FUTURE OF WEST INDIAN EMBROIDERY: HANDWORK, GLOBALIZATION, AND NGOS

SYMPOSIUM NOV. 3, 2008  
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
ETHNOLOGY, OSAKA, JAPAN

## SPARKLING INDIAN EMBROIDERY: THE WORLD OF INDIAN HANDCRAFT

OCT. 9, 2008- MAR. 31, 2009  
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
ETHNOLOGY, OSAKA, JAPAN

ALTHOUGH NOT WELL KNOWN outside of Japan, there is considerable Japanese scholarly interest in India, particularly in Indian textiles. There are significant private and public collections of Indian cloths in Japan, notably Hiroko Iwate's collection (partially featured in her books *Textiles: The Soul of India*, 2007, and *Desert Village: Life and Crafts*, 1984), as well as close associations between Indian and Japanese craftspeople, designers, and NGOs, and numerous publications in Japanese.

In 2007 the textile collection of Mr. B.B. Bhasin joined the permanent holdings of The National Museum of Ethnology (MINPAKU) in Osaka, Japan. The collection, made by Bhasin during his tenure with various state and federal crafts development organizations, 1984-1995, numbers 360 pieces and enhances MINPAKU's holdings of Indian artifacts. The Bhasin collection—coupled with the insights of the venerable collector—contains important examples of mid-20th century folk embroideries from Western India, enhancing the historic and ethnographic record of

the communities represented. For example, the collection contains a heavily embroidered skirt, likely stitched by the Mutwa community of northern Kutch, the likes of which have not been made or worn since the '60's. Some of the most outstanding pieces in the collection are featured in the exhibition, "Sparkling Indian Embroidery: The World of Indian Handicraft." The Mutwa skirt, for example, is prominently displayed and graces the cover of the exhibition catalogue.

Other examples include a Sodha Rajput blouse yoke, heavily stitched and encrusted with cardamom pods and cloves. Whether the spices are meant to scent the wearer, ward off malignant forces, or prevent insect damage, is unclear but evocative. Another fine example is a woollen, tie-dyed and embroidered veil, made and worn by Bopa Rabari women in Saurashtra, Gujarat. The exhibition includes contemporary photographs of craftspeople, interactive videos on various cultural and technical topics, and embroidery samples, thoughtfully placed throughout the gallery. The exhibition catalog, *Sparkling Indian Embroidery: The World of Indian Handicrafts* based on B.B. Bhasin's Collection," published in Japanese by Showado, Kyoto, Japan, 2008, (ISBN978-4-8122-0846-5), examines the ethnography of Western India and technical features of embroidery, as well as the history of NGO and governmental involvement in handicrafts development since 1947.

**Symposium.** The exhibition was further enhanced



with a one-day international Symposium, "The Future of West Indian Embroidery: Handwork, Globalization, and NGOs," held Nov. 3, 2008. The Symposium provided an opportunity to reflect on changes that have occurred to embroidered textiles in Western India, the role of NGOs in facilitating those changes, and future directions for craftspeople working with textiles. The Symposium included presentations by Katsuhiko Kano, Michele Hardy, Laila Tyabji, with comments and discussion by Miwa Kanetani, Minoru Mio, and B.B. Bhasin. Presenters highlighted the lived experiences of craftspeople, the many challenges they face in production, and their negotiations between local and global contexts. While the future of West Indian embroidery lies in the resilient, creative hands of embroiderers, the dialogues surrounding them and interpreting them to wider audiences/markets, have never been more impassioned or sparkling.

— Michele A. Hardy  
Calgary, Canada

— Miwa Kanetani-Funakawa  
Osaka, Japan

## TRANSPARENCIES

BRAUNSTEIN QUAY GALLERY  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
JUL. 3 - AUG. 30, 2008

WHEN CURATOR MYRA BLOCK is involved in an exhibit, we are treated to exquisite examples of fiber art. Block is known for giving exposure to emerging artists in the fiber field, and she follows the careers of established artists through her online art gallery, *Fiberscene.com*. She is a frequent guest curator at the esteemed Braunstein Quay Gallery in San Francisco, a "crossover gallery," where

**Woolen tied, dyed and embroidered veil, made and worn by Bopa Rabari women in Saurashtra, Gujarat, collection of the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan.**

Ruth Braunstein has exhibited "sculptural clay, fiber art, art furniture, and glass, alongside paintings, drawings, and sculpture, in a fine arts environment" for 47 years.

Seven chosen artists were given free rein to explore personal interpretations of transparency. Their responses provide both cohesion and tension, for among many works created of sheer cloth, there are also works of a surprising physical solidity, in particular the works of Charissa Brock and of installation/performance artist Adam (the late Paul Cotton). In Adam's "Random House Converter/Trance-Former #5." One peers through a series of open doorways expecting a mirrored reflection of oneself, and sees instead a blank wall or, occasionally, another gallery visitor. The successive framed openings function as portals where, according to Adam, the viewer becomes both subject and object.

Charissa Brock's solid, sculptural work is an intriguing choice for the concept of transparencies. In the past 10 years, she has made innovative and masterful use of bamboo as an artistic medium. "Speaking from Below" and "Dwelling" are fabricated from bits of bamboo which fill a gracefully shaped framework. The viewer peers through holes created from cross-sections of bamboo *culms*, as if looking through an exotic, oversized mask into another time and place. This new work of Brock's is self-assured and graceful in her use of Persian *boteh*-like shapes reminiscent of Indian or Islamic decorative art, strange musical instruments, or tribal masks.

Other artists in the collection use sheer materials such as organza or screening that fit comfortably into the theme. Connie Utterback's colorful, dyed nylon screening elements are hung with their overlapping layers close to the wall to take on the appearance of an ethereal quilt. Line is important in Utterback's



work, and the colorful shapes in "Lorenz" resemble animals or athletes or other fluid forms. "Grain of Sand" is more static, due to its grid-like structure, and recalls traditional pieced quilts.

The five quiet white organza objects by Linda Hutchins deal with issues of memory: holding and letting go. Formed over common articles such as her grandmother's goblet, an egg basket, or an old hammer head, these now-empty ethereal forms evoke hazy memories of their past lives. Hutchins patiently hand stitches her organza forms and it is this touch of handwork that makes her art so poignant. A sixth piece hung on a far wall and glowing in the spotlight, is the most emotionally provocative work in the exhibit. Constructed as a "slipcover" for a live jade plant that is now shriveled and broken, it speaks of the maternal struggle between nurturing and smothering. In her quiet voice, Hutchins touches a chord of universal human truth.

Of note is the work of recent CCA graduate, Ali Naschke-Messing, whose intriguing site-specific installation, "Two Hundred and Twenty-Nine" consists of green threads suspended from the top of the gallery wall and glued into a fortuitous jagged crack in the concrete floor. Block's eye for emerging talent is evidenced by this work and the accompanying "What City Girl" from the "Dirty Poem Series," with its floating machine-stitched fragments of text.

Susan Taber Avila's two large panels, "Streets of Saigon" and "Recuerdos de Guatemala" are created from pieced layers of digitally printed silk gauze over printed cloth. She makes effective use of the moiré quality of layered sheer fabrics and of her signature technique of machine stitching on a dissolving substrate. The work evokes complexity of memory along with references to Avila's travels to Vietnam and Guatemala. The frenetic sense of Vietnamese motor scooter traffic

results from layering similar transparent images. These works recall Katherine Westphal's delightful travel memory kimonos, but Avila's work draws us into hazy layers of personal memory, where deeper issues abound.

Occupying the back of the gallery is a monumental work by Marie-Laure Ilie which addresses the question of permanency. A dense forest of tall columns of printed sheer fabric is inhabited by headless sculptural forms in classic togas and robes, and also in the classic contemporary garb of white T-shirts with male or female attributes. Suspended in the middle of the installation is a mysterious circle of white masks. For Ilie, the generic faces represent our ubiquitous human presence and beg the question: "what is beauty?" The artist spoke of "populations on the march," and of constant change. Certainly the printed Greek and English words on the columns remind us that just as the Ancient Greek language passed into oblivion, so could our English language and T-shirt-wearing culture fade away. But for Ilie, the essence of humanity will remain. It is interesting to go behind the columns to see that they are only half-tubes. The perception from the other side is no longer that of architectural strength, but the fragility of sheer cloth.

"Everyone has a concept of transparency," according to Block, "from the simplicity of thin fabric or the porous openings in a sculptural work, to the concept that transparency implies the unknown or unseen." These seven artists explore the theme in their unique styles, and we are the richer for looking at the world through their eyes and through their art.

— Barbara Shapiro

**"Colza Reeve," by Sheila Hicks, 2008. Woven cotton, silk, and linen, 9 3/16" x 5 3/8". "A violet granite quarry is lodged in yellow fields of vigorously growing Colza. It struggles to not be overtaken but next season it will surely disappear."**

## MINIMES: SMALL WOVEN WORKS BY SHEILA HICKS

DAVIS AND LANGDALE CO. INC, NYC  
OCT. 1-NOV. 8, 2008

IF ONE WANTS TO SEE WHAT ART in fiber is all about, the Sheila Hicks miniature exhibition last fall was the place to spend some time understanding how expressive yarn can be when it transcends material emphasis, and instead suggests abstract expressions of landscape, history, and emotion. The medium was *not* the message here, but the color, shadows, shine, and textures showed that only yarn can create such a complex, beautiful surface for the message.

The show consisted of 23 small (approx. 5.5" x 9.5") mounted miniature weavings executed in 2008, accompanied by statements of the artist's intentions. These consisted of two or three lines of Hicks' thoughts written while creating each weaving. These poetic musings served to bring the viewer even deeper into each piece—a nice touch, but not really necessary, for the beauty of each weaving was enough to stand on its own. A catalog is available for \$4 from Davis and Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. New York, NY 10022; TEL 212/838-0333.

This was the second show of Hicks' small works in New York City. The first exhibition in 2006 at the Bard Center for Graduate Studies was a retrospective of her early miniatures. Although primarily noted for large, commissioned installations in venues around the world, miniatures have been an important

part of her oeuvre since Hicks first appeared on the scene in the 1960s. A native of Nebraska, Hicks



received her MFA from Yale in 1959. She has been based in Paris since 1964. Her work—large and small—is found in museums and private collections in the US, Europe, Asia, and South America. A major traveling exhibition of 50 years of the artist's work will open in 2010, curated by Susan C. Faxon, Associate Director of the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA; and Joan Simon, Curator-At-Large, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. A two-year touring schedule will be available soon.

— Nell Znamierowski



### *One Needle, One Thread: Miao (Hmong) Embroidery and Fabric Piecwork from Guizhou, China.*

by Tomoko Torimaru

Translator: Yoshiko I. Wada  
University of Hawai'i Art Gallery  
ISBN 978-1-60702-173-5 \$38.00

ONE NEEDLE, ONE THREAD by Tomoko Torimaru completes the trilogy of books resulting from twenty-plus years of research on Miao textiles by this mother-and-daughter team of Drs. Sadae and Tomoko Torimaru. *Spiritual Fabric* (2001/2006) and *Imprints on Cloth* (2004) investigate weaving of complex patterns and dyeing the shiny indigo fabric which is iconic to the Miao costume. This volume builds on the earlier scholarship while delving into the gorgeous variety of embellishment techniques still in use by the Miao to distinguish among village groups. The Western mind longs for explanations of the symbolism in each

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## United States

### CALIFORNIA

**Design Museum**, University of California, Davis. May 7-Jul. 5: "Feet Forward: Footwear from the UC Davis Design Collection." [designmuseum.ucdavis.edu](http://designmuseum.ucdavis.edu)

**Asian Art Museum**, San Francisco. To Mar. 1: "Arts of the Islamic World from Turkey to Indonesia." [www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org)

**De Young Museum**, San Francisco. To Apr. 5: "Yves Saint Laurent." [www.thinker.org/deyoung](http://www.thinker.org/deyoung)

**Craft and Folk Art Museum**, San Francisco. To Feb. 15: "The Shape of Things: Paper Traditions and Transformations" explores the history of cut, folded, and molded paper, alongside artists who introduce fresh perspectives on those traditional forms. [www.mofca.org](http://www.mofca.org)

**Lacis Museum of Lace & Textiles**, Berkeley. To Feb. 3: "Lace Comes of Age: Tape Lace from the 17th to the 21st Centuries." [www.lacismuseum.org](http://www.lacismuseum.org)

**LA County Museum of Art**. To Mar. 15: "Five Centuries of Indonesian Textiles: Selections from the Mary Hunt Kahlenberg Collection." [www.lacma.org](http://www.lacma.org)

**Mingei International Museum**, Escondido. To Mar. 22: "Nomadic Legacy: Tent and Textiles from Central Asia and Iran." [www.mingei.org](http://www.mingei.org)

**Mingei International Museum**, San Diego. To Jun. 28: "Shibui: The Subtle Beauty of Japanese Craft." [www.mingei.org](http://www.mingei.org)

**San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles**. Feb. 3-Apr. 26: "Changing Landscapes: Contemporary Chinese

FiberArt," in partnership with the Fiber Arts Institute of the Academy of the Arts and Design at Tsinghua University, Beijing. May 5-Jul. 26: "Connections: Small Tapestry International," American Tapestry Alliance juried exhibition. [www.sjqquiltmuseum.org](http://www.sjqquiltmuseum.org)

### CONNECTICUT

**Wadsworth Atheneum**, Hartford. To Jan. 25: "Who Was Anna Tuels? Quilt Stories, 1750-1900." [www.wadsworthatheneum.org](http://www.wadsworthatheneum.org)

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**The Textile Museum**. To Feb. 1: "The Finishing Touch: Accessories from the Bolivian Highlands." To Mar. 8: "Timbuktu to Tibet: Rugs and Textiles of the Hajji Babas," with over 70 North African, Middle Eastern and Asian textiles and rugs. Mar. 6-Jan. 3, 2010: "Recent Acquisitions." Apr. 4-Sep. 6: "Constructed Color: Amish Quilts." TEL 202/667-0441. [www.textilemuseum.org](http://www.textilemuseum.org)

### HAWAII

**Bishop Museum**, Honolulu. To Apr. 5: "Ili Iho: The Surface Within," selections from the Bishop Museum's collection and works by eight Hawaiian textile artists. [www.bishopmuseum.org](http://www.bishopmuseum.org)

### INDIANA

**Indianapolis Museum of Art**. To Apr. 5: "Shared Beauty: Eastern Rugs and Western Beaded Purses" looks at influences of Eastern art on Western art and fashion through the motifs on flapper-era beaded purses. To Jun. 14: "Orly Genger," installation. Apr. 4-Oct. 25: "Fashion in Bloom." TEL 317/923-1331. [www.ima-art.org](http://www.ima-art.org)

### KANSAS

**Wichita Center for the Arts**. Mar. 13-May 10: "Fiber Directions 2009," juried exhibition. [www.wcfca.com](http://www.wcfca.com)

### MASSACHUSETTS

**Fuller Craft Museum**, Brockton. To Mar. 8: "Portions of the Re-Possessed: Fiber Work by Xenobia Bailey." Jun. 6-Jan. 3, 2010: "The

Perfect Fit: Shoes Tell Stories." [www.fullercraftmuseum.org](http://www.fullercraftmuseum.org)

**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**. To Jun. 21: "And so to Bed": Indian Bed Curtains from a Stately English Home." [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)

### MINNESOTA

**American Swedish Institute**, Minneapolis. Jan. 23-Mar. 29: "Radiant Knits: The Bohus Tradition," history of the Swedish Bohus knitting style and industry (1939-69). [www.americanswedishinst.org](http://www.americanswedishinst.org)

**Textile Center of Minnesota**, Minneapolis. To Feb. 23: "A Common Thread," member exhibition. Mar. 6-Apr. 18: "Web and Flow," juried basketry exhibition. [www.textilecentermn.org](http://www.textilecentermn.org)

**Minneapolis Institute of Arts**. To Jan. 25: "Outside Influences: Jack Lenor Larsen and African Aesthetics," African textiles with Larsen's 1962 African Collection. To Mar. 1: "Working with Nature: Twentieth-Century Textile Art," nine textile artists use imagery from the natural world to reflect on art and community. To May 31: "Sleeping in Style: Textiles for the Bedroom." Feb. 7-Aug. 2: "Outside Influences: Jack Lenor Larsen on the Silk Road." [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org)

**Goldstein Museum of Design**, University of Minnesota, St. Paul. Feb. 7-Jun. 14: "Expressions of Stability and Change: Ethnic Dress and Folk Costume." <http://goldstein.che.umn.edu>

### MISSOURI

**Belger Arts Center**, Kansas City. May 29-Sep. 4: "Stitches in Time: The Art of Ray Materson," "Small Wonder, Secrets of a Collector," Jennifer Angus; "A Pause in the Rhythm of Time," Alice Kettle; and "Special Showing: Two Pieces by El Anatsui." [www.belgerartcenter.org](http://www.belgerartcenter.org)

**Byron C. Cohen Gallery of Contemporary Art**, Kansas City. May 1-Jul. 11: "On the Curve," installations by Regina V. Benson. [www.byroncohen-gallery.com](http://www.byroncohen-gallery.com)

### NEBRASKA

**International Quilt Study Center & Museum**, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. To Apr. 5: "Yikes! Stripes." To May 17: "Chintz Appliqué: From Imitation to Icon." Apr. 10-Jun. 14: "Grace Snyder: A Life in Extraordinary Stitches." May 23-Nov.: "American Quilts in the Modern Age." Jun. 19-Jul. 19: "Quilt Japan: Selections from Ninth Annual Quilt Nihon Exhibition." Jul. 24-Oct.: "Crazy Quilts." [www.quiltstudy.org](http://www.quiltstudy.org)

**Robert Hillestad Gallery**, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Feb. 9-Mar. 6: "Praha Fashion: Two Designers and their Stories," 15 years of Czech fashion. Mar. 16-Apr. 10: "Lia Cook In Touch: Faces and Mazes," woven works. Apr. 20-May 15: Mary Pattavina, MFA exhibit. [www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org)

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Hood Museum of Art**, Dartmouth College. Apr. 11-Aug. 31: "Wearing Wealth and Styling Identity: Tapis from Lampung, South Sumatra, Indonesia." Curated by Mary Louise Totton. Catalog. <http://hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu/>

### NEW MEXICO

**Museum of International Folk Art**, Santa Fe. To Feb. 15: "Needles and Pins," needlework tools and techniques. May 15-Aug. 16: "Writing with Thread: Traditional Textiles of Southwest Chinese Minorities." [www.internationalfolkart.org](http://www.internationalfolkart.org)

### NEW YORK

**American Folk Art Museum**, New York. Apr. 21-Sep. 13: "Kaleidoscope Quilts: The Art of Paula Nadelstern." [www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org)

**American Folk Art Museum**, Lincoln Sq. Branch, New York. To Mar. 15: "Recycling and Resourcefulness: Quilts of the 1930s." Mar. 24-Aug. 23: "Textural Rhythms: Constructing the Jazz Tradition—Contemporary African American Quilts." [www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org)



**Bard Graduate Center**, New York. To Apr. 12: "Twixt Art and Nature," English Embroidery from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1580-1700. [www.bgc.bard.edu](http://www.bgc.bard.edu)

**Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum**, New York. To Mar. 1: "Curators Select: Recent Acquisitions, 2003-2008." Mar. 6-Sep. 7: "Fashioning Felt," historic examples and contemporary art works. TEL 212/849-8400. [www.cooperhewitt.org](http://www.cooperhewitt.org)

**Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York. To Apr. 5: "The Essential Art of African Textiles: Design without End," works from 19th century to present, including an installation by Yinka Shonibare. May 6-Aug. 9: "The Model as Muse: Embodying Fashion." [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

**Museum at FIT**, New York. To Feb. 21: "Gothic: Dark Glamour." To Jun. 16: "Seduction." Mar. 10-Apr. 4: "Muriel King: Artist of Fashion." [www.fitnyc.edu/museum](http://www.fitnyc.edu/museum)

**Museum of Arts and Design**, New York. To Apr. 19: Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary. [www.madmuseum.org](http://www.madmuseum.org)

**Museum of the City of New York**. To Feb. 22: "Paris/New York: Design Fashion Culture 1925-1940." [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org)

**Memorial Art Gallery**, Rochester. To Mar. 16: "Wild by Design" quilts. [mag.rochester.edu](http://mag.rochester.edu)

## OHIO

**Canton Museum of Art**. Feb. 8-Apr. 26: "Kimono as Art: The Landscapes of Itchiku Kubota." [www.cantonart.org](http://www.cantonart.org)

**Kent State University Museum**. To Feb. 8: "In Bloom: Patterned Silk Design Innovations in Eighteenth Century France." To Mar. 1: "Galanos" and "Japanese Obi Sashes." To May 31: "Rudi Gernreich: BOLD." To Aug. 30: "The Art of the Embroiderer." TEL 330/672-3450. [www.kent.edu/museum](http://www.kent.edu/museum)

## OREGON

**Coos Art Museum**, Coos Bay. To Feb. 21: "New Focus: Art Quilts in Small Format" and "Stitch," works by five Oregon fiber artists. [www.coosart.org](http://www.coosart.org)

**Museum of Contemporary Craft**, Portland. To Apr. 5: "Mandy Greer: Dare alla Luce." To May 31: "Darrel Morris: The Large Works 1999-2008." [www.contemporarycrafts.org](http://www.contemporarycrafts.org)

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Allentown Art Museum**. May 17-Aug. 9: "Fashion in Film: Costumes for the Screen." [www.allentownartmuseum.org](http://www.allentownartmuseum.org)

**Philadelphia Museum of Art**. To Mar. 1: "Quilt Stories: The Ella King Torrey Collection of African American Quilts and Other Recent Quilt Acquisitions." To Apr. 19: "Cultural Convergence: Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Craft." To Spring 2009: "Hello! Fashion: Kansai Yamamoto, 1971-1973." [www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)

## RHODE ISLAND

**Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design**, Providence. To Apr. 26: "Sartorial Sanctuary: Clothing and Tradition in the Eastern Islamic World." [www.risdmuseum.org](http://www.risdmuseum.org)

## TEXAS

**The Women's Museum**, Dallas. To Mar. 29: "Partisan Pieces: Quilts of Political and Patriotic Persuasion." [www.thewomensmuseum.org](http://www.thewomensmuseum.org)

## WISCONSIN

**Design Gallery**, University of Wisconsin-Madison. To Mar. 8: "A Fairyland of Fabrics: The Victorian Crazy Quilt." Mar. 27-Apr. 26: "Design 2009." [www.designgallery.wisc.edu](http://www.designgallery.wisc.edu)

**Tapis (woman's sarong) (detail)**, by unknown artist, Lampung Province, Sumatra, Indonesia, 19th century; cotton with silk embroidery and mica appliqué. Collection of Stephen A. Lister. Photo Courtesy of Hood Museum of Art.

## International

### CANADA

**Bata Shoe Museum**, Toronto. To Feb. 15: "On Pointe: The Rise of the Ballet Shoe." To Nov.: "Chronicles of Riches: Treasures from the Bata Shoe Museum." To Nov.: "Beauty, Identity, Pride: Native North American Footwear." [www.batashoemuseum.ca](http://www.batashoemuseum.ca)

**Textile Museum of Canada**, Toronto. To Jul. 7: "The Cutting Edge" examines the simplest methods for dressing the human form and traces the development of ever more complex garments through the 21st century. Feb. 11-Sep. 7: "When Women Rule the World: Judy Chicago in Thread" and "She Will Always Be Younger Than Us," work by artists influenced by Judy Chicago. [www.textilemuseum.ca](http://www.textilemuseum.ca)

### ENGLAND

**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London. To Mar. 29: "Magnificence of the Tsars." Feb. 24-May 31: "Hats: An Anthology by Stephen Jones." [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

### THAILAND

**Bank of Thailand Museum**, Chiang Mai. To Feb. 10: "Bhutanese Textiles: Weaving from the Heart." [www.bot.or.th/EnglishBOTMuseum](http://www.bot.or.th/EnglishBOTMuseum)

**The Patricia Cheesman Collection Gallery**, Studio Naenna, Chiang Mai. To Feb. 28:

"Woven Wisdom: Masterpieces from Studio Naenna Archives." [www.studio-naenna.com](http://www.studio-naenna.com)

## Virtual

[www.fiberscene.com](http://www.fiberscene.com) To Mar. 1: "Ana Lisa Hedstrom."

fibreQUARTERLY volume 4, Issue 4/Fall, 2008 is now on line at [www.velvethighway.com](http://www.velvethighway.com)

## Lectures

**Bard Graduate Center**, New York. Feb. 26: "Dramatic Fabric: Textiles in the English Theater," with theater historian Victoria Abrash and actress Barbara Feldon. Mar. 5: "The Needle's Excellency: Tudor and Stuart Embroidery in British and American Collections," Nicola Shilliam. Mar. 26: "Present Tense: Embroidery in Contemporary Art," artists Elaine Reichek and Richard Saja and independent scholar Vicki Halper. Apr. 2: "The Great Refashioning of Europe: Global Trade, Needle-crafts, and Gendered Material Culture, 1500-1800," Beverly Lemire. Reservations: Sarah Wilson, TEL: 212/501-3011 [wilson@bgc.bard.edu](mailto:wilson@bgc.bard.edu)

**De Young Museum**, San Francisco, CA, Textile Arts Council Lectures. Jan. 24: "Fabric and Form," Robert Curry. Feb. 14: "Dragon Covers of the Li People, Hianan Island, China," Lee Chinalai. Mar. 28: "On the Text in Textiles; Cultural Stories, Unfolding Fashions," Susan B. Kaiser. TEL 415/750-3627; [tac@famsf.org](mailto:tac@famsf.org)

**University of Wisconsin-Madison**, Chazen Museum of Art. The Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection's annual Ruth Ketterer Harris Lecture. Mar. 26: "The Sun and the Moon, Protective Motifs in Central and South Asian Embroideries," Victoria Rivers. TEL 608/262-1162.

**International Quilt Study Center**, Lincoln, NE. Feb. 10: "Yikes! Stripes," exhibition discussion with curator Elizabeth Andrews. May 1: "Chintz: Indian to p. 18



Textiles for the West," Rosemary Crill. [www.quiltstudy.org](http://www.quiltstudy.org)

**Minneapolis Institute of Arts,** Textile Curatorial Council Lecture. Mar. 1: "Are All African Textiles African?" Joanne B. Eicher. [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org)

**San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles,** San Jose, CA. Feb. 22: "Chinese Folk Art Tradition, Transition and Influence," collector Sally Yu Leung on traditional Chinese textile art as a context for the contemporary fiber art in the "Changing Landscapes" exhibition. Reservations: TEL 408/971-0323 x14

**The Textile Museum,** Washington, DC. Mar. 5: "Interwoven: Business, Artisanal Design and Social Responsibility," Stephanie Odegard. Registration required. TEL 202/667-0441 x64 [www.textilemuseum.org](http://www.textilemuseum.org)

**Bata Shoe Museum,** Toronto. Apr. 13: "Moccasins and Music." [batashoemuseum.ca](http://batashoemuseum.ca)

**Textile Museum of Canada,** Toronto, Lectures. Feb. 12: "Judy Chicago Today: Art, Feminism and Activism in the 21st Century," panel discussion with Judy Chicago, Maura Reilly, and Jenny Sorkin. Mar. 20: "Artist Talk: Lyn Carter." Apr. 8: "Textile Seminar: Garments from Around the World," Natalia Nekrassova and Roxane Shaughnessy. May 30: "Made to

Measure with Alison Matthews David," discussing tailoring changes from the 18th to the 19th centuries. TEL 416/599-5321 x2221. [www.textilemuseum.ca](http://www.textilemuseum.ca)

## Workshops

**Textile Museum of Canada,** Toronto. Mar. 21: "Free-form Patternmaking with Lyn Carter." Participants will create complex three-dimensional forms from cloth with artist Lyn Carter. TEL 416/599-5321 x2221 [www.textilemuseum.ca](http://www.textilemuseum.ca)

**Fiber Arts Retreat.** Bulgarian fiber artist Silvia Haralambova has opened an artist retreat center in the village Patalenitza in the Rhodopa Mountains, Bulgaria. For information see <http://silviaretreat.googlepages.com/>

## Professional Internship Program

The PATHWAYS INTO PROFESSIONAL NEEDLEARTS (PiPN) internship program is an academically acclaimed partnership between The National Needle Arts Association (TNNA), based in Zanesville, OH, and the University of Akron, Akron, OH. Designed for college juniors, seniors and graduate students from throughout the US, the 2009 program has two distinct phases: Phase I, starting Jun. 1 at UA's campus, is a hands-on workshop on the fine points of crochet, knitting, counted cross-stitch, embroidery and needlepoint, from creative and business points of view. After being guests at TNNA's June trade show in Columbus, OH, students begin Phase II on-site with a host company. The deadline for student applications is **March 1, 2009**. For an application and for more information, please visit [www.tnna.org/Outreach/College/tabid/154/Default.aspx](http://www.tnna.org/Outreach/College/tabid/154/Default.aspx).

## Tours

Textile Odyssey Tour to Southwest China with Mary Connors and Serena Lee Harrigan, Oct./Nov. 09. TEL 415/279-9426. [textile\\_odyssey5@yahoo.com](mailto:textile_odyssey5@yahoo.com)



**Feb. 13-14:** SUBCULTURE AND STYLE, The Museum at FIT, New York. In conjunction with the "Gothic: Dark Glamour" exhibition, the museum's Seventh Annual Fashion Symposium will feature noted scholars, authors, and curators from a range of disciplines, who will discuss themes related to fashion and subcultural style. Reservations required: [museuminfo@fitnyc.edu](mailto:museuminfo@fitnyc.edu). TEL 212/217-4585

**Apr. 2-4:** THE GLOBAL QUILT: CULTURAL CONTEXTS, International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Participants will explore the ways in which quilts communicate cultural values, reflect cross-cultural transmission of style or techniques, serve as a medium for social connection, or reflect and express the influences of the society in which they were made. Keynote speakers are Jacqueline Atkins, Allentown Art Museum, and Jennifer Harris, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Registration: [http://www.quiltstudy.org/education\\_research/symposium.html](http://www.quiltstudy.org/education_research/symposium.html)

**Oct. 15-17:** BUILDING BRIDGES: CREATING A NEW CRAFT CULTURE, American Craft Council Conference, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Minneapolis, MN. For anyone interested and involved with craft, new and emerging artists, collectors, curators, editors, educators, gallerists, students and writers from craft, art, design, architecture, fashion and industry. Scholarship support will be available. Speakers include Helena Hernmarck and Gareth Clark. Information: Monica Hampton, Director of Education, 212/274-0630 x272; [education@craftcouncil.org](mailto:education@craftcouncil.org) [www.craftcouncil.org](http://www.craftcouncil.org)

from p. 13

aspect of folk costume, since we dress by fashion or fad and have a diminished sense of costume as identity. For the Miao it may be enough to simply wear what they wear as a statement of who they are.

With excellent photographs, this book provides a thorough view of the role of embroidery and piecework in the textiles of this group from the remote, mountainous Guizhou Province in southern China.

Chapter One illustrates the popular Miao saying, "100 Miao 100 costumes." The Miao have "long used textile making as the visual language in which to record their history and beliefs." Various costumes, shoes, hats, and baby-carrying slings are pictured.

Chapter Two, "Bridging Skill to Skill: Language of Materials," deals with the self-sufficiency of the Miao in all aspects of textile creation, from growing plants for thread and auxiliary substances like sizing, to spinning, weaving, dyeing, finishing and embellishing. "Every choice is purposeful and logical," from cotton cultivation and raising silk worms for flat cocoons, to glossy indigo dyeing, making special threads of ramie, silk and metallic foil, and finally, to the creation of decorative wrapped threads and braided yarns.

We need to understand these processes before moving on to Chapter Three, which presents 23 embroidery stitches, both counted and uncounted. There are clear "how to" instructions for the stitches and braids. An explanation of alternate means of creating some stitches clarifies why contemporary embroiderers cannot imitate certain historic cloths. Torimaru's discovery of the "Ancient Chain Stitch" is particularly interesting as it creates a narrower and more fluid line. She thus subtly encourages us to avoid a contemporary Western prejudice when looking at old textiles.

## TSA NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

March 30  
July 30  
November 30

Please send news, reviews, listings, and articles to:  
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Please send calendar listings to:  
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[rebecca\\_klassen@yahoo.com](mailto:rebecca_klassen@yahoo.com)



Chapter Four broadens the scope by covering piecework techniques: patchwork, three variations of appliqué, folded-cloth piecework, couched braid embroidery and flower-shaped frog closures.

Chapter Five, "Folk Life," tells of the role these textiles play in the lives of Miao villagers. We learn the dozens of steps necessary to produce a Lion baby cap, a pair of handmade shoes, or a complex folk costume with multiple techniques, including metal gimp work. One wonders how one woman can be so adept at producing the many articles so important to village life.

Two other Chinese minorities are discussed in this chapter. The Dong are a recognized minority people in Guizhou, and although some of their textile making processes overlap those of the Miao, Torimaru presents several unique ones "not seen in any other minority people." The Gejia are not considered by the Chinese government to be a separate minority population, in spite of their distinctive dress and separate ancestor/creation story of descending from a legendary general of an ancient kingdom. Torimaru gives them due respect, seeing this ancestor story reflected in their "militaristic, armor-like folk costumes" so distinct from Miao style.

The Appendices broaden our vocabulary by explaining parallels between embroidered and woven patterns and the symbolism found in some black-and-white Miao patterns.

Finally, Torimaru touches on 21st-century changes in Miao life. Longing to visit these distant villages, we finish her book with a greater appreciation for the distinctive Miao art, and a better understanding of the integral role textile making plays in their everyday lives. Like the author, we hope that these remarkable traditions and crafts are "handed down to future generations in Guizhou and beyond."

— Barbara Shapiro  
Textile Artist and Educator

*Knitting Art: 150 Innovative Works from 18 Contemporary Artists*  
by Karen Searle  
Voyageur Press, 2008  
ISBN 978-0-7603-3067-8 \$35.00

**K**NITTING, A METHOD OF constructing fabric by interlocking a series of loops of one or more yarns, is the medium employed by the artists selected by Searle to represent the broad range of subjects, styles, formats, and materials explored with this technique.

In her introduction, an excellent, if somewhat brief background of the field of textile arts, Searle, a textile sculptor, revisits a familiar academic controversy—art vs. craft. She provides a short history of fiber art's beginnings in the context of American education from the late 1950s through the 1970s by exploring the development and works of four "pathfinders in art knitting" who most influenced her: Mary Walker Phillips, who Searle credits as the "first professional art knitter;" jewelry artist and educator Arline Fisch, who incorporates textile techniques in her metalwork; and two leaders of the wearable art movement: Painter-turned-knitting artist Janet Lipkin, and artist and educator Robert Hillestad.

Following this historical background is a brief mention of "recent innovations" in knitting art. Searle suggests the performance and "community-oriented" knitting art projects by artists such as Anni Holm and her "Musical knitting Band" are natural extensions of knitting's historical place as a "portable and community-based craft" tradition. These considerations, coupled with questions about how "femininity, masculinity and domesticity" are associated with the making of textiles, provide the context in which Searle investigates the work of 18 representative North American artists.

The almost folksy tone the author develops in referring to artists by their first names sharply contrasts the carefully written,

well-organized, and consistently informative text. Technical terms are well-defined and, for the uninitiated, a brief glossary is included. Those seeking clear, technical information will not be disappointed, while readers more interested in each artist's creative processes, individual perspectives and statements will find plenty of food for thought.

The excellent color photographs and clear, consistent graphic layout contribute to the book's visual appeal. Each artist is introduced with a full-page photo of a major work followed by a page of text that includes a small photo of the artist. Contextual and detailed photographs of the artwork provide the reader with a clear visual description of the work and an excellent sense of the materials and techniques each artist incorporates.

Overall, the selection of artists and artwork represents a broad technical and aesthetic perspective of knitted art. Kathryn Alexander's "energized yarn" *entrelac* knitting technique is clearly explained and documented. Her work, more clothing than sculpture, reminds this reviewer of Australian *coogi* sweaters. Anna Maltz's knitted suits, "Naked Suits," "Superman Suit," and "Big Blue Rabbit; and Mark Newport's superhero costumes, "Batman 2003," "Batmen," and "SSSKOW," follow in the "wearable art" tradition.

Lindsay Obermeyer's 'sweaters' and performances "offer rich metaphorical possibilities for exploring the idea of identity... and make sense of the experience of living," and while the artist is certainly sincere, the underlying humoristic perspective Obermeyer brings to the work does not go unnoticed.

Both within and outside the wearable art tradition, politics is a popular knitted art subject. Barb Hunt knits politically-charged, antipersonnel devices, while Lisa Ann Auerbach literally inscribes her sweaters and banners with political statements and slogans.

Katharine Cobey perhaps goes furthest in her installation work to create art that could easily be constructed of non-knitted, non-handmade materials. Her 30-ft.-long "Boat with Four Figures," is hauntingly evanescent. "Ritual Against Homelessness" is reminiscent of a native American ceremony. "Pillars," a diaphanous installation work-in-process consisting of twelve Greek-style knitted columns, is also an "homage to ancient outdoor sites of worship."

In contrast to the reverence and references in Cobey's work are the golden-hued, delicate, complex textures of Carolyn Halliday's knitted copper wire and paper-pulp sculptures, "Perfect Nest" and "Deconstructed Body Quilt." "Sense Spin" by Janet Morton is reminiscent of the installations by artist Carlos Amorales.

The last artist presented is Karen Searle. The section, written by Kari Cornell, maintains the tone, format, and perspective that Searle applied throughout. Searle's abstract art, represented by two mixed media pieces, "Vessel" and "Bark Quilt III," leaves the question of art and craft behind. The rest of the works, all more figurative, are metaphoric. Of particular interest is the finger-knit and crocheted steel wire dress with accessories entitled "Essence Part 5: Formal Dress." The open-work dress, floating in space, casts its shadow on the blank wall behind to effectively redraw itself.

*Knitting Art: 150 Innovative Works* will appeal to a large audience, especially to those with an interest in textiles, but will hold special significance for textile artists.

— Mona Berman  
Hampshire College  
Director, Mona Berman Fine Arts

# TSA 12th Biennial Symposium, Oct. 6-10, 2010, Lincoln, NE



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The 2010 TSA Symposium, *Textiles and Settlement: From Plains Space to Cyber Space*, will be held in Lincoln, Nebraska, home of the International Quilt Study Center and Museum (shown above), Oct. 6-10 2010. Keynote Speaker will be architect Sheila Kennedy, whose *Portable Light* project creates new ways to provide renewable power in solar textiles that can be adapted to meet the needs of people in different cultures and global regions. The Portable Light uses a thin-film photovoltaic textile and LEDs to harvest electrical energy and provide a completely self-contained source of renewable power and light. The 2010 Symposium will be housed at the recently remodeled Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in downtown Lincoln. Mark your calendars today, and plan to join us in Lincoln! The Nebraska Organizing Committee hopes members will encourage students and recent grads to start thinking about topics for presentations, and to communicate with their peers and colleagues to formulate potential panels or sessions with overlapping ideas and research.

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