

Wilmette **Arts** *Guild* **NEWSLETTER**



Caminante Silencioso
yarn painting of José Benítez Sánchez

FIBER ARTS

Mission Statement: The Wilmette Arts Guild encourages, supports and promotes the development of the visual arts in a welcoming spirit of creative community.
2009 Volume 2, Issue 4



The Yarn Paintings of José Benítez Sánchez

by Julie Ressler

Art critic, Corinne Geeting of the Christian Science Monitor commented, "Paintings with yarn? Such a technique sounds contrived and unsophisticated until you see the masterworks of the Huichol Indians of Mexico. The fluidity and richness of coloring almost surpasses even that of the lushest oils."

The master of Huichol yarn paintings is José Benítez Sánchez who was born in 1938 in the Sierra huicola de Nayarit. He was trained as a shaman* and chose to dedicate his life to creating these religious masterpieces that are a direct reflection of his divine inspiration. He has only contempt for the newer artists because "they work only for money." The Huichols protect their people from the divine. It is forbidden, but also relies on man's need to transgress! Any initiate into the esoteric aspects, particularly shamanism, must participate in a series of transgressions, learning things that are too dangerous for the ordinary man, being willing to wreck the lives of those around him in his quest and committing himself to carrying out impossible acts.

Those who do not "reach the place where the sun rises" are characterized by *horror vacui*, a ritual of frenzy and repetition without renewal or result. Peyote and sleep deprivation create ritual ecstasy. There is animal sacrifice, renunciation of money-making, sleeplessness and endless dancing and physical deprivation and exhaustion, abstaining from consuming salt; all of this to achieve *nierika*, the gift of sight. To create these works a board is spread with beeswax and the contours of the design drawn out. The figures are outlined and filled in. The artist signs the back and writes an explanation of the symbolism. "The cosmic mythology of the great nayar explains how the world itself is a textile woven from the hair of the first goddess. This divinity, equivalent to the Spider Woman of the Pueblo Indians, wove the world in a diamond shape and her sons did a ceremonial dance on top of it to stretch it out."

This art form combines the taste of earth and animal fiber with the occult and spiritual. José Benítez Sánchez is the grandmaster. He is considered one of Mexico's most creative artists.

From sources of the Museo Zacatecano and their reference work *Arte Huichol, Artes de Mexico, Número 75*

(*For an interview with the artist and more on the Huichol world view go to www.wilmetteartsguild.org the Richard W. Davis Cultural Preservation Award)

Cover: *The Silent Traveler* by José Benítez Sánchez

The Divine Art: 400 Years of European Tapestries

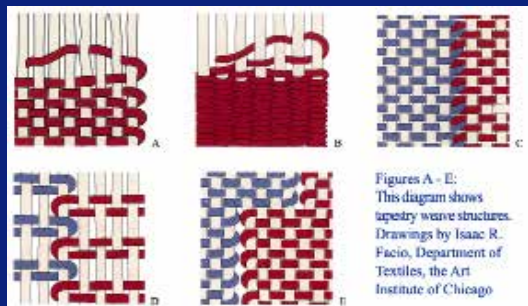
by Julie Ressler, from Textile Society sources of the Art Institute of Chicago



The Textile Society of the Art Institute under the guiding hand of Christa C. Thurman produced an un-paralleled tour de force in 2008: The presentation of seventy works that had been part of a 13 year conservation and restoration project of the Art Institute's unparalleled tapestry collection. Many of these exquisite works were found rolled in the basement, in dire need of repair. All of them were so dirty that the colors were nearly indistinguishable one from another. Christa Thurman took on this daunting labor of love, raised the money, found the laboratory in Belgium and accompanied all the pieces from Chicago and stayed until they were safely home again.



Although it is not known exactly when the first tapestry was produced in Europe, by the early Middle Ages workshops throughout the continent were producing treasured wall hangings for the well to do. In the 14th century suddenly stories were appearing in these weavings instead of simply decorative patterns. Suddenly tapestry was raised to the level of painting. They also had the unique advantage of being very portable, enabling the nobility, clergy and wealthy merchants to take them along on their travels. They acted as room dividers, party decorations and cut the drafts in unheated castles, abbeys and manor houses.



Figures A - E:
This diagram shows
tapestry weave structures.
Drawings by Isaac R.
Facio, Department of
Textiles, the Art
Institute of Chicago

Tapestries were frequently produced in "suites," a series that allowed the whole story to be told.

The golden age of tapestry was 1500 to 1750. The painters who made the designs were usually well known. The master weavers were respected.

These manufactories became an economically important factor in their regions and were often tax exempt. A visit to the Gobelins manufactory in Paris makes a fascinating afternoon. The old looms, the size of a large room, are still in use. You can see how the artisans work from behind the tapestry and follow the progress of the weaving with a mirror all the while referring to the cartoon (the full sized desired pattern). The cartoons were valuable in themselves and reused many times.

There are two kinds of looms: high warp on which the warps run perpendicularly to the floor and low warp on which the warps are parallel to the floor. On the low warp the cartoon cut into strips would be laid under the tightly stretched strings. On the high warp, the weaver would use a mirror to look behind his seat to the full-sized cartoon hung on the wall.

Tapestries have always been affected by European politics. The Eighty Years War (1568-1648) sent Netherland artisans scurrying to France, England and Italy. During the French Revolution (1789-1799) many of the tapestries were either defaced or destroyed to retrieve the gold from the threads, not to mention destroying the symbols of monarchy and nobility.



The mechanized culture of the Industrial Revolution led to the near demise of this hand-labor intensive art form. However, William Morris established a tapestry workshop at Merton Abbey to combat the

"soul-lessness of art" this mechanization encouraged.

Chemical dyes, synthetic and aniline, were not invented until late into the 19th century. The radiant, luminous, exuberant colors in these tapestries were produced by woad and indigo for the blues; mustard gave the yellows; Red in all its glory was produced from brazilwood, the cochineal insect and madder. The lustrous beauties of the colors after they had been cleaned was really indescribable.

Tapestries are only recently beginning to be taken seriously as works of art, not merely desirable decoration. When Mrs. Thurman graciously took the Textile Society on a personal tour with anecdotes, the gasps were audible as she described how this or that work was cut to go around doorways or fit into a particular space or go behind a particular chest. The modern mind boggles at the lack of respect for both art and craft. Like so much that comes from human hands working long and carefully, we seem to be able to value it the more, the farther away we go.

Many thanks to Mary Ann Crotty and Ryan Paveza

Engelstein on Engelstein



photo Jonathan Roob

Back in the '70's I was a figurative painter and I needed to get some tactility into my work. I started sculpting. One evening I tried to bring the sculpture closer to the water source and I hurt my back. I couldn't sit and do nothing! I had my husband get my Aunt's needlepoint out of the closet. I took it apart to see how it worked. As I learned, I felt that needlepoint would be even more beautiful with even more texture...I began to work in my own way.

I made this as a wedding gift and then got three commissions from it!

One of the professors at the Art Institute asked me if he could use one of my wall hangings as the cover of his book, I can't remember his name just now, but the book didn't get published. When

he saw the back of my work he said I would never pass his course! So I said, "I'll take lessons." He said, "Don't! ...but go work with Park Chambers' class at the Art Institute. This great man announced to the



class in fiber art, "There are no shortcuts! Insanity is very helpful, actually a prerequisite for fiber art. It cannot be taught. Each person has to teach himself. This is where I got the idea that what I was doing was using "Ancient techniques to create modern tapestries."

One day after the class was finished, Park Chambers invited me to his house and showed me a box of string about sixteen different balls and each a different color of cream or white. He asked me what I thought. "It is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. " At that moment fiber found me! From that time on I worked a palette from white to dark cream.



Everyone thinks that disappointments are all bad but I can tell you that's not so. I wanted to join a Coop on Wells Street, they took one look at my whites and creams... they couldn't throw me out fast enough, my work was too plain for them. Well, right after that an interior decorator saw my work and I got into the Merchandise Mart! What luck! And that's the whole story, lots of hard work to prepare for your luck when it arrives.

Fiber Arts

Editorial by Julie Ressler

Fiber Arts are usually thought to be woman's art. Penelope was at her loom. The house-proud housewife's needlework distinguished her and made her family seem precious and comfortable. When my daughter was born, my stepmother made her a dimity christening dress with Irish lace and tucks and a bonnet. Every stitch was sewn by hand. She said it was the only way she knew to get enough prayers into one little dress and bonnet. When my elderly aunt took a long time dying in the hospital, I sat with her and crocheted a baby blanket using my Russian grandmother's pattern for a young friend's new baby. These ways go very deeply into the human psyche. They defy definition as "craft" or even "fine craft" ...they are art, life art, even though the execution can be very flawed, they retain a rich archetypal value.

It is only within the last forty or fifty years that things like "home-made," "prayer," "feeling precious" and having enough time at home to carefully and individually be "at home" has come into such a confusion of definition. It is part of having too much, personally and as a society. There are too many people doing too many things for us. We work too much outside our homes and bring the world too much into our homes with TV and computers. We haven't enough time to exhale. We go to spas instead of our homes. Our young mothers are so tired. It used to be Dad was far away, but now Mom is in Iraq or in London working hard away from home, as well. Yet, one of the brightest "corporate" members of WAG crochets jewelry as she flies and waits in airports. Handwork is powerful.

So how do we define fiber art and fiber artists? ...not male and female... not a commercial group of Haitian ladies making quilts for Bed, Bath and Beyond...not the exquisite needlework coming from the Far East. These works may be very beautiful, but they aren't fiber Art. Works of art must emanate from the mind and soul of an individual and express that passionate vision uniquely. In the case of "traditional" patterns i.e. "Oriental" rugs or Indigenous peoples' customs and handwork, I am a little conflicted about this definition, except that the effort is so extraordinary to produce beauty in such harsh and deprived environments. We rarely know the artist's name, but the best designs are frequently excellent abstract art. Even though made by many, this is definitely fiber Art. The Ikat patterns, the weaving, the tapestries...It has to be Art. It is so visually stunning and unique to the region. Yet, I wonder if we have to quibble over definition or just enjoy the view?

Well, please share your thoughts with me. I have labored long with all sorts of fiber arts and love them viscerally. This issue of the WAG Newsletter was made with special affection, no, with passion!



Spools of threads in Fez, Morocco by Laura Rodriguez



Needles & Threads by Jessie Lee

Simply Complex

Please see the fascinating full version of this article online at

[R. W. Davis Award, www.wilmetteartsguild.org](http://www.wilmetteartsguild.org)

by Dick Davis



Zenon Hipolito, Master Weaver is preserving his own Zapotecan cultural heritage using the figures and symbols neglected for hundreds of years that were relics from destroyed temples. They are featured in Oaxacan carpets that have been turned into wall hangings because of their complexity and beauty. Today's weavers follow traditions without full knowledge of their origin or significance. On the contrary, Zenon Hipolito conscientiously incorporates both his life and these symbols into his work.

Hipolito began weaving when he was

8. His father, a master weaver taught him. He had to learn the most difficult designs first, the curves. He builds his own looms up to ten feet and then has smaller ones to take for demonstrations.

Zenon seems to live his weavings and freely shares his stories, "The moon is in eclipse," he said, pointing to a shape on the carpet, "But a sliver shadowing the crescent moon is a deeper blue. Every time my mother saw an eclipse she put water outside to relieve the sun." This personal experience became part of the work.

To learn more of these fascinating anecdotes and Zapotecan symbols and to discover Zenon's secrets of native dyes and wools please visit the Wilmette Arts Guild website at www.wilmetteartsguild.org



Zenon Hipolito, Master Weaver



Don't miss! The work of the Weavers Guild of the North Shore

Fine Art of Fiber Show - Chicago Botanic Gardens

November 6th - 8th 10AM - 5PM

wgnsil@gmail.com - <http://www.fineartoffiber.org>

Unmatched Selection & Craftsmanship



GOOD'S
Fine Picture Framing

714 Main Street in Evanston
847-864-0001

Open Sunday 11-6, Weekdays 9-7, Saturday 9-6

Joan Hall
Pastel Portraits

847-394-4735

joanlouisehall@gmail.com



Inc. COMPUTER COACHING, Inc.

Personalized Instruction for PC & Mac

Quickbooks
Quicken
Excel
Outlook
ACT!
Word

Powerpoint
Email & Internet
Bookkeeping services
PowerPoint presentations
Word processing services



847-736-6152 • dorothyc617@ameritech.net

Al Anile Entertains



847-967-8850



Huichol Bead Artist

The Huichol Art and Textile Collection in Zacatecas, Mexico is home to 166 wall hangings, which appear simple but incorporate a plethora of symbols, both in design and color. In the stairwell leading to the museum there is an 80-panel beaded mosaic, which is called the Huichol Bible, or Mystic World View. It is the glory of the museum and an artistic treasure for all humanity.

José Acevedo Alvarez, a quiet man, was sitting on a wicker chair when I entered the Huichol Textile Museum Room. He rose and turned on the lights. I assumed he was security, a job requiring patience for a long day of little activity. But he surprised me with his personal background and a depth of knowledge that would require a book to record.

José introduced himself. He was half Spanish and half Huichol. "My father was 15 and my mother 12 when they married. Father was a miner and the Huichols banished my mother. My parents saved and bought goats and cattle. But we children never went to school." José said that he had married and raised 9 children, and although he had no schooling, all of his children were educated and two went to college. He said, "I came to Zacatecas and I learned. I learned how to dress and how to speak with people."

José became my guide to the textile collection. He called the Huichol textiles on display "mantas." Blankets, in my vocabulary, but the better translation is "tapestry". José pointed out, "Three colors are dominant: green (nature) red (energy, life force) and black (death)." Huichols are known for brilliantly colored bead and yarn painting. Often these works are psychedelic visions influenced by peyote and interpreted by shamans. They contain pre-Hispanic religious elements and are considered transcendental interior visions.

When did the beaded art begin? "In 1935," he said. "Enrique Merten, a Belgian physician, brought beads to the Huichols as a substitute for yarn in their 'paintings.'" He



José Acevedo Alvarez

took me to a case. "This is our oldest example." It was a bowl, and beads had been strung on a string and glued to it. "Artisans found the beaded strings were difficult to



work with. Curves posed a problem; spaces were not filled in as with yarn. The design and color had to be thought out before threading the string. The solution was to place beads individually, to set them in campeche glue mixed with bees wax."

He told me that Huichols associate the scorpion with a parched spring, bad harvest and an increase of these venomous insects. But a wet spring brings snakes and an abundant harvest; hence Huichols revere snakes and fear scorpions.

He pointed out symbols in the designs and tried to educate me. José said that Tata, the sun, was the supreme source of en-

ergy, everlasting, in the past, the present, and the future. Deer were messengers to the gods. Christians would call them angels. Lizards were vigilant (watchers) for the sacred spirits.

There were three Sacred Spirits:

Man: Tatuiche, he is often seen with a deer's tail.

Light-Shadow: Tatehuari, the interplay of light and shadow. (Black is used in textile design to create the effect of an optical inversion like a negative photograph.)

Women: Tacuche are often portrayed in animal form.

I looked at the designs. Each one teased my sight with a notion of symmetry that was not.

I had been astonished to learn that



of millions of beads

Huichol beadwork, a major art form, had been inspired by a European and the museum room was dedicated to Enrique Merten.

I asked José about the huge “mural” over the staircase that could have been the Mad Hatter’s checkerboard. It covered the wall and was made up of 80 individual panels, 10 across 8 high, each about a foot square. A sign said that the artists had used over 2 million beads in the mural. It was titled: “Visión de un Mundo Místico” (Mystic World View). From a distance the mural looked like a tapestry exploding in color as if the artist was inspired by a picture of a supernova or wished

to create a symbolic view of the Big Bang. It appeared to be a random mosaic of millions of scrambled, scattered beads acting as the background for childlike stick figure drawings of animals, plants, flowers and snakes. But a closer view brought the chaos into a new focus. Like peering into a microscope and adjusting the lens, it became clear that the art was intentional and organized.

José said, “It’s the Huichol Bible.” The mural was both a religious and cultural record, like Genesis and the Book of Chronicles, I thought. José pointed out the panels showing the Supreme Vital Force, the Creation,



Dick Davis

the Flood and the mystery of Three Sacred Spirits coming from one Supreme Force. A line of deer divided the composition in half. “Deer are messengers,” José said. “Christians would call them angels.” My eye followed the two serpents that looked like trails passing through different mosaic squares. “That’s the story of the Flood, a new beginning (re-creation).” Huichols believed that after the Flood, Huichols and sustenance (beans, corn and squash) were created.

Looking at the center, José said, “The Bible is divided into two parts, left and right, good and evil, drought and abundance, birth and death. Each side has 40 panels.” Squares were within squares as if they were chapters and paragraphs, patterns within patterns.

The imagery and artistry was complex with each drawing being iconic. “Within the good there is evil,” José said, and commented on the black figure of Death within the good half of the mural. Likewise the wicked side had a sub-text of benevolence, as if to warn the good of the potential for evil and to instill hope among the wicked for benevolence.

José went on to explain that it mirrored the Huichol community’s heart and soul. José explained and pointed. The sacred disk at the center of the mural represented Tepari, Vital Energy. There were symbols for the four elements: air, water, fire and earth. Also, the mural contrasted two epoch struggles, drought and rain. “The left side represents the male whose symbol is the scorpion, which represents scarcity, darkness and evil. The female side represented by the firefly (glow worm) brings abundance, light and good. The mural recorded ancient, pre-Hispanic beliefs in a most contemporary piece of art!

As I studied this glorious complexity, I thought of the childhood nursery rhyme:

There was a man in our town,
And he was wondrous wise,
He jumped into a bramble bush,
And scratched out both his eyes;
But when he saw his eyes were out,
With all his might and main,
He jumped into another bush,
And scratched ‘em in again.

Women's Journeys in Fiber

by Jan Gerber

www.womensjourneysinfiber.com

July 2009



Jan Gerber

In 1998 as President of the North Shore Weavers Guild, I was helping plan the first "Fine Art of Fiber" show and sale hosted by the Chicago Botanic Garden each November. The show features work of members of Illinois Quilters Inc, North Shore Weavers, and North Suburban Needle Arts Guilds.

I had taken a workshop with Seattle Textile Artist Anita Luvera Meyer who created several Mantles to honor her life passages. These garments combined the textile techniques used by participants of all three guilds. I convinced Anita to teach a Mantle workshop. Thus, Women's Journeys in Fiber began.



After exhibiting the Mantles, the group wanted to keep going, and going, and going.

Throughout the six process projects over eleven years, the focus has been on the work of women's hands, the creative process, how each Fiber Artist connects to her work and communicates both verbally and artistically to the viewer.



We call them Process Projects. Each participant is aware of the Problem Solving Process from Gestalt psychology. She traces her steps through the creative process by journaling, sampling and sketching, until that AHA! (moment of knowing), when her creative vision is clear and the work materializes. We all start with the same Problem Statement and parameters and end up with as many different works as there are Fiber Artists. Here are some process photos from my Robe "Male Fantasy."

The sheer fabric is constructed by using water-soluble carriers during construction and machine stitching to hold the ribbons in place. When the carriers are washed away Voila! Fabric.

The group meets regularly to share steps along the way and present their work as it progresses. This allows each artist the opportunity for input from the group. I admit that at times it is like herding cats! The ideas and creative energy flow so freely that sometimes we can barely hear each other, so we stop and try to honor the person speaking, always aware that it is the creative energy that drives us.

The statement that is displayed with each piece is the link that informs the viewer. It is often personal, includes information about techniques used, as well as the steps of the creative process.

It is the powerful growth in and among the artists over time, as we have shared very personal expressions of our creativity that has kept me going. Some have paid tribute to spouses or friends, and in the process have conquered grief, and revived life. Some have grown by trying new techniques, or learning new skills. Others have celebrated memories, mentors, or passages in their own lives. There have been personal transformations, celebrations, questions, and humor.

Sheryl Kinney honored her father by making a garment of

his ties, "Ties that Bind", Cynthia Kuo celebrated her Australian and her husband's Chinese heritage with "After the Rain" and "Family Robe," Kaye Lange created something humorous as a tribute to her friend who loves flamingoes, "Ode to Miss Joy", and Joy Lavrencik's "It took Guts" is a play on words, using materials that reference a passage in her life.

Mantles: Women's Journeys in the Year 2000, was the first process project. Each participant was to construct a Mantle (a long reversible sleeveless vest) using any textile technique/s, journaling, sampling, and observing the creative process as she worked. The garment conveyed something about who each fiber artist was in the year 2000. Each Mantle would be exhibited with a printed statement by the Fiber Artist describing the significance of the work, including what inspired it, what techniques were used, steps of the creative process, and her connection to the work. The Mantle exhibit at the Chicago Botanic Garden, North gallery, drew a crowd that read each statement and often the viewer identified with the work. CBG Curator Roger Van Diver asked Me, "When was the last time you saw an audience this engaged?" When subsequent projects were exhibited at the Lubeznik Center for the Arts, Edwin Shelton remarked "This is an amazing group, I have not seen and am not aware of a group of men or women artists working over time in this way, this should be published." This is serious work that engages the viewer.

That was eleven years ago! The Group has remained together, completed five projects, and has exhibited in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Vancouver BC.

A Retrospective of Women's Journeys in Fibers' first ten years is planned for January 2010 at the Lakeside Legacy Arts Park, Dole Mansion in Crystal Lake IL, where Mantles, Cycles & Circles, Blooming Botanicals, Purse-n-alities, and Robes (over 100 pieces) will be exhibited.

The Sixth project, Ten Easy Pieces, will be exhibited Nov 5-9 2009 as part of the "Fine Art of Fiber" at the Chicago Botanic Garden, Joutas Gallery.

Jan Gerber at: jdgerb@comcast.net



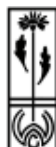
Sheer Fantasy



Sturt Desert pea flowers by Cindy Kuo



Miss Ode to Joy



DON'T MISS!

The Fine Art of Fiber Show

November 6th - 8th

10AM - 5PM

Chicago Botanic Garden • 1000 Lake Cook Road,
Glencoe, IL 60022 • (847) 835-5440

Candace Stack's Latin American Fibers



Painted Silk by Carol Cohen

"A Snapshot of Rug Restoration"

by Sara Tiger and Job Youshaei
Job Youshaei Rug Company, Inc., Highland Park, IL



This rug is unraveling at the end. Wool pile is missing, and the foundation threads are too short to use as the support system for new wool knots.

This is not the time to economize.

Ask to see examples of the artisan's work and ask for references. Be blunt. These are very special people who take pride in what they do. The woven repair should be hard to detect and blend with the surrounding area. The coloring should be "aged" appropriately. The texture should be a perfect match. This may be accomplished through shearing, burning or washing. Shearing the face of the rug, when there is sufficient pile length available is actually the best way to restore overall color that has faded due to age and exposure to sunlight.



Sometimes it is appropriate to dye worn areas where the cotton

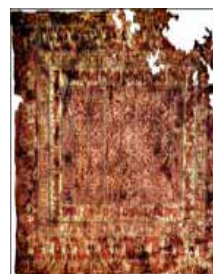


New cotton threads are sewn into the intact portion of the rug, and the ends are fastened to a wood frame. This becomes the repairman's loom. Wool strands are hand-knotted onto the foundation in order to recreate the original colors and pattern of the rug.

foundation is exposed. Delicately painting in dye can restore the vibrancy when color is lost due to wearing away of the pile. The foundation must be sufficiently strong to accept the dye. Any work done must first and foremost stop the deterioration. After that the extent of repair and cost can be determined according to both the intended function and the actual value of the rug. Good restoration can extend the life of an heirloom into many generations.

In some cases the historical or academic value of a rug would rule out

a complete restoration, as in the case of the Pazyryk Rug, which was discovered in 1949 during the excavation of burial mounds in Siberia (Eastern Altai Region). This rug, which is dated to the 5th Century BC, was preserved when water that poured into the raided burial mound froze, encasing it in ice. The rug now resides in the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia). Rather than being restored, a rug of this significance would be maintained through the international efforts of textile conservation specialists.



Pazyryk Rug
5th Century B.C.



There are 189 Ghiordes knots per square inch in the Pazyryk Rug



Pazyryk Corner



Art Quilts

by Mary Jo Bowers

I am an artist using art quilts as the means of expression to translate into a nonverbal medium the power of my soul. I create stories with the wonders of color, fabric, papers and embellishments in my art quilts. The stories that I envision will not be the same as yours. You, as the viewer, are asked to play with the abstract images in my art quilts and take delight in your own interpretations.

My art quilts are characterized by bold colors, shapes and dimensions using multiple pieces of dyed and painted fabrics and papers. These contemporary quilts are put together traditionally; that is, in three layers: the top layer may have many layers of pieces, the backing and the batting (the middle) layer. These layers are hand and machine stitched together not just to hold them as one piece but to add another layer of interest and design to the quilt.



With a color and a schematic idea

I pull out of my stash anything that might work with what I have in mind. While the fabrics dance on the work table I begin free cutting different sizes and shapes using a rotary cutter rather than a scissors and start pinning these on the wall work space. Hundreds of straight pins are used as pieces go up and down by the dozens – sometimes a “finished” piece comes completely unpinned and redone in a totally different arrangement.



Like other artist mediums fabric has its own language and rhyme – you let go of your preconceived ideas and let the fabric do its work. Stitching either by hand or by machine and embellishments also have their own rhythm so again you drop the lead and follow.

Color, fabric stitching and design create harmony and tension to the piece, yet complementing and playing off each other to draw the viewer into the quilt. My titles are becoming even more loose as I increasingly value the viewer's comments on my pieces.

To see more of Mary Jo's work visit her website and show:

www.maryjobowers.com at S.A.S.I. Show, Evanston until October.

Art-full Quilts

by Mary Ley

A Traditional Approach



Finger Lakes

When I first started I did take a class, but the instructor said I was so hyper and fussy he was sure that I wouldn't make to the end of the class, much less devote myself to it! Well opposites attract and compliment each other.

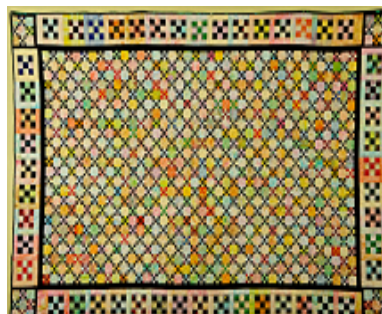
Quilting is painstaking, slow and peaceful! I can dive right into it and lose myself for hours.

I think of my quilts as my way of making contemporary art. I use traditional methods of piecing and I adjust traditional patterns through color and choice of fabrics.

I began quilting in Madison Wisconsin. I would have a cup of coffee with my neighbor and watch as her quilts took form. I thought, "I can do that." I had never sewn a single stitch before I began my first quilt and even now... quilting is it for me!



Bargello with a Twist



Itsy Bitsy

Mary belongs to the Village Quilters of Lake Bluff & Lake Forest who will show at:

Lake County Fairgrounds
1060 E Petersen Rd.
Grayslake, Illinois
Friday September 25th
10a.m.-6p.m.
Saturday September 26th
10a.m. - 5p.m.

Framing Textiles

by Anne Coats, Certified Picture Framer, Goods of Evanston



Framing is the best way to safely display and show off textiles, such as family heirlooms, original fabric art, or mementos from traveling. Done properly, with good design and archival methods, textiles can become a focal point to a room or a unique addition to a traditional art collection.

Textiles should always be framed using techniques that are completely reversible and materials that are museum quality, such as cotton rag mat boards and UV filtering glass. When choosing the frame molding, the thickness of the artwork must be considered to make sure you have a frame that is deep enough to allow for spacers or mats that will create airspace between the glass and the textile. Because they are not stiff like most paper art, textiles require some special attention to prepare them for framing, such as attaching them to a rigid board. Sewing is one technique - using small, discrete stitches, textiles as big and heavy as a quilt or as small and dainty as a handkerchief can be beautifully and safely mounted for framing. Needlework such as counted-cross stitch or embroidery can be pinned or laced to a board to provide more even tension around the edges. Even extremely fragile textiles can be framed using a fine mesh fabric that rests over the entire textile, holding it in place for display.

Using these types of techniques and materials, a properly framed textile will have a beautiful design and will be protected and preserved.

"Long Life" by the hand of Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧太后 on Imperial silk paper for Effie Louise Ragsdale, December 27, 1901. The effect of not having UV glass is obvious by fading from original red to tan. This piece was never subjected to direct light. From the collection of Julie Ragsdale Ressler.



Removed from frame for this photograph

Ikat Silks In The Guido Goldman Collection

by Julie Ressler



Processing silk cocoons at an ikat weaving mill in Margilan

In 1997 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, I saw the Ikat silks of the Guido Goldman Collection for the first time. The blistering colors practically seared the air of the darkened rooms. My two companions covered their eyes and said, "Too Much!" and went to have tea. I was enchanted onto the Silk Road at the desert oases of Bukhara and Samarkand (in what is now Uzbekistan) that were once thriving, trading capitals. The labor-intensive, richly colored, explosively patterned silks known as ikats were used in robes, in tent hangings. As panels, hung on house walls or used to construct tempo-



Ikat from Bukhara, late 19th Century.

repeated for a second color, a third, and so on. Finally, the colorful, patterned threads are woven together with others, usually un-patterned, on a loom. The ikat process is used in many areas of the world but reached extraordinary heights in nineteenth-century Bukhara and Samarkand. Tadjiks, Jews, and Uzbeks cooperated to make ikat fabric. The earliest, most durable, and most intricately patterned type, adras, had resist-dyed silk warps and cotton wefts. Later in the nineteenth century, weavers also produced all-silk and silk-velvet varieties. To see how this technique is used in a contemporary setting <http://dept.kent.edu/museum/exhibit/ikat/jlm.html>. Note the breathtaking works of Janice Lessman-Moss.

When I look at the setting in which this art reached its zenith, I am reminded of the line from Percy Bysshe Shelley, "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair! Nothing beside remains.... The lone and level sands stretch far away." Almost as a reminder of where real power lies, we do have the Ikat silks, the extraordinary, radiant abstract art created in a unified spirit by both Muslim and Jew out of the threads made from the spit of a worm.



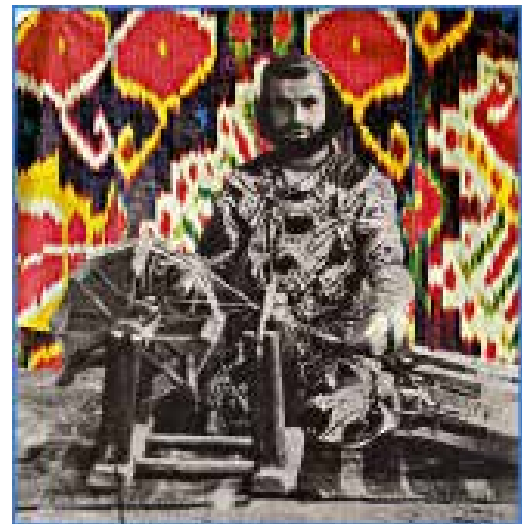
Dyeing warp threads



Old Tajik from Bukhara dressed in silk ikat coat about 1900.

rary outdoor pavilions. These textiles became a family's backdrop for its private rituals, from intimate wedding ceremonies to vast clan reunions.

Ikat comes from a Malay-Indonesian verb *mengikat* meaning to tie, bind, wind around. It denotes a cloth-making process in which threads are resist-dyed before weaving but has become synonymous with the cloth itself. Threads are grouped in tiny bundles and wrapped in selected areas to prevent color penetration. After dyeing, the wrapping, or "resist," is removed, and the procedure is



Jewish spinner, in ikat coat, twists silk filaments on bobbin. Turkestanskii al'bom 1871-72

Many thanks to Kalter Pavaloi, "Heirs to the Silk Road, UZBEKISTAN"



NON PROFIT 2012
U.S. POSTAGE
19¢
SILVETTE L.
PERMIT NO. 3

PREMIER BANK
CORPORATE BANKING
COMMERCIAL BANKING

Feather Dye Basins in the City of Santa Rodríguez