Textile Society of America Newsletter 28:2 — Fall 2016

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Our Mission

The Textile Society of America is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that provides an international forum for the exchange and dissemination of textile knowledge from artistic, cultural, economic, historic, political, social, and technical perspectives. Established in 1987, TSA is governed by a Board of Directors from museums and universities in North America. Our members include curators and conservators, scholars and educators, artists, designers, makers, collectors, and others interested in textiles. TSA organizes biennial symposia. The juried papers presented at each symposium are published in the Proceedings available at http://digitalcommons.unt.edu/textilsoc. It also organizes day and weeklong programs in locations throughout North America and around the world that provide unique opportunities to learn about textiles in various contexts, to examine them up close and to meet colleagues with shared interests. TSA distributes a Newsletter and compiles a membership directory. These publications are included in TSA membership, and available on our website.

About the Newsletter

The Textile Society of America Newsletter is published two times a year. In addition to reports on TSA programs, the newsletter lists conferences, courses, exhibitions, grants, job postings, tours, profiles museum textile collections and unravels textile programs; and reviews books, exhibitions, and conferences. Submissions are welcome.

Recent newsletters can be downloaded from the TSA website as PDFs: http://textilesocietyofamerica.org/newsletters/

Newsletter Submission Guidelines:

To submit content to the Editor please email newsletter@textilesociety.org with the subject line, “Submission.” Text should be sent as .doc and images should be sent as individual jpeg files. Please include image captions and a 1-3 sentence author bio for reviews and articles. Please keep articles and reviews to 600 words.

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Letter from the Editor

At TSA in Savannah we welcomed new board members and said good-bye to those who have provided dedicated service for four or more years to our organization. Our talented executive director, Tali Weinberg has served us well, developing procedures that will serve us into the future and implementing board directed changes during her tenure. Tali is now stepping out to pursue her artwork with a full time residency in Tulsa, Oklahoma for a year. I wish her well even as I will miss working with her.

Our organization has embarked on developing a strategic plan in 2016 and is in the process of gathering input from a broad range of constituents, both members and non-members. This practice is ideal for us at this stage of organizational growth as we approach our thirtieth birthday. I thank the visionaries who created the organization, which over the years has provided me with opportunities to attend events I would have found difficult to manage, and has also been a vehicle for professional growth through the peer review process of the symposiums and now as a board member. The intangible benefits of the social interaction and networking grow richer each time I attend a gathering of members.

I appreciate the dedication and time that my colleagues on the board provide to keep this essentially volunteer group vital. It takes work for an organization to expand and grow, as it has done in the first thirty years. Our final day plenary speaker for the 31st Biennial Symposium, Stephanie Syjuco, raised important questions about our future.

In her wonderful introduction to the plenary speaker, Namita Wiggers said, “Stephanie reminds us we have agency—to construct our own images—and to control our own consumption. Her artwork calls our attention to objects, hierarchies and agency within the commodity based system we call capitalism.” It is important we understand our organizational context is embedded within a capitalist system where structural imbalances can make it challenging to meet our goals.

Stephanie Syjuco engaged with the membership of the TSA from the opening reception to her concluding talk, telling us that when she looked up the term plenary, she understood her role was to soak up the air of the event and reflect back to us what she absorbed. It was impossible to attend every session; she only could hear fragments of the discussion. Even so, she described a broad and deep approach to scholarship, closely linked to material and stretching across disciplines.

Her observations are consistent with her artistic practice, which she went on to describe to the audience. In her project Cargo Cult, begun in 2013, she shot a project (that featured herself as “tribeswoman.” In

Just as she, as an artist, considers the intersections and implications of material, political, and economic forces in her work, she urged us as an organization to consider “Who else needs to be here to generate the discussions and ideas that will fuel what is ostensibly a diverse, interdisciplinary and multivalent field?” What will be the concerns of those who come after us and how can we prepare for their inclusion in this shifting time? What voices are missing? Her call is apt, as the members of the organization engage in reflection and seek to accomplish a forum for sharing ideas, through the symposium and other programs, some as yet to be developed with the formidable creative ideas of our members.

Wendy Weiss
TSA Director of External Relations and Newsletter Editor

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Advertising in the TSA Newsletter

The Publications Committee developed guidelines for advertising in the semi-annual newsletter. Please visit the newsletter webpage to download the guidelines and rates for newsletter advertising.
Dearest Members and Friends,

The 15th TSA Biennial CROSSTRAINS: Land, Labor, and the Port in Savannah provided an extensive and exhilarating program as well as a great opportunity to see old friends and meet new colleagues. Four hundred participants came from 23 countries and 39 US states! Participants gave 146 presentations; seven exhibitions featured the work of 38 artists; and 118 attendees enjoyed the conference workshops and tours. The Teitelbaum Family Workshop Scholarships were awarded to Mae Colburn (Ancient Peruvian Weaving), Sonja Dahl (Indigo Dyeing), Rukhsan Huque (Kalamkari), and Amy Putansu (Myanmar Tablet Weaving).

Thank you to those who are stepping down, you have each brought your special skills and contributed significantly to the development of the organization: Susan Bean, Susan Brown, Laura Camerlengo, Jill D'Alessandro, Eulanda Sanders, and Maleyne Syracuse. A special thanks to Elena Phipps: under her guidance the organization has grown and evolved significantly especially in the areas of grants, awards, and administration. Thank you all for your passion and dedication.

I want to thank all the Board members for their hard work and commitment to the organization over the past few years. Thank you for your many contributions - assisting with all the large and small details that made the Symposium such a success.

I am looking forward to continuing to work with Roxane Shaughnessy, Past President; Ruth Barnes, Awards Chair; Dominique Cardon, International Advisor; Catharine Ellis, Internal Relations Director and Development Chair; Rowland Ricketts, Programs; Wendy Weiss, External Relations Director and Communications Chair; and Lauren Whitley, Programs Chair. Welcome to incoming Board members Lisa Kriner, Vice President; Leslie Robertson, Recording Secretary; Owyn Ruck, Treasurer; Linda Eaton, Awards; Sandy Peinado, Membership; Anne Peters, Communications and Publications; and Lee Talbot, Programs.

After serving TSA as Executive Director for three and a half years, Tal Weinberg will be leaving TSA. As well as overseeing TSA’s day to day administration, Tali has worked to make efficient communication channels with the various TSA Committees and volunteers. She has spearheaded the organization, seeing to the myriad of details for two Symposia: 2014 Symposium in LA and 2016 in Savannah. Her professionalism, dedication, and commitment to TSA have been invaluable and she will be much missed. We wish her all the best as she enters a new stage of creativity at an artist residency in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

TSA is undergoing an important strategic planning process under the guidance of Allison Trimarco of Creative Capacity. We thank Susan Brown, Maleyne Syracuse, and Elena Phipps who have agreed to stay on to guide this process along with Roxane Shaughnessy, Lisa Kriner, and Owyn Ruck. Thanks to all who shared their views by participating in focus groups in Savannah. A survey will be sent out in the next few weeks. We need your thoughts, ideas, and input to help guide TSA into a sustainable financial future, while answering the needs of our membership. As TSA enters its 30th year, it is time to evaluate who we are, who we serve, and how we serve. Issues of program evaluation, diversity, the encouragement of young scholars, as well as accessibility to programs, are some of the issues under discussion and we look to you, the members, to bring new ideas to the table. Please take the time to respond to the strategic planning survey - help us grow TSA into the next 30 years.

This was an great team effort headed by Roxane Shaughnessy, TSA President 2014-2016, and Tali Weinberg, Executive Director, with assistance from Caroline Charuk, Membership and Communications Coordinator, as well as all the members of the TSA Board for your many contributions - assisting with all the large and small details that made the Symposium such a success.

An immense thanks is due the Program Co-Chairs, Susan Falls and Jessica Smith, as well as the entire Savannah team: Cayewah Easley, Liz Sargeant, SCAD faculty, staff, student volunteers, and ArtRise Savannah. After being evacuated and still reeling from the effects of Hurricane Matthew, you wowed us all with a wide ranging program as well as that amazing Southern hospitality! This was an great team effort headed by Roxane Shaughnessy, TSA President 2014-2016, and Tali Weinberg, Executive Director, with assistance from Caroline Charuk, Membership and Communications Coordinator, as well as all the members of the TSA Board for your many contributions - assisting with all the large and small details that made the Symposium such a success.

Thank you and I look forward to serving you for the next two years.

Vita Plume
Letter from the Outgoing Executive Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

For the last three and a half years, three sets of questions framed my daily work as the first Executive Director of the Textile Society of America: First, how do we keep this small organization financially solvent at a time when many membership organizations are struggling to survive? Second, how do we best support the next generation of textile artists, scholars, and professionals with their own challenges and a new set of needs in the face of rising precarity, austerity and privatization? How do we build an organization that actively combats the lack of resources and recognition for people of color, LGBTQ artists and scholars, and a generation of adjuncts and freelancers without institutional support? And third, how do we address these first questions while building on the incredible (volunteer!) efforts and breadth of knowledge of our members, Board, and symposium participants who have created this organization for our field. It is not easy to address these questions simultaneously, but for the TSA to succeed, it is necessary.

The textiles field is small and dispersed, made up of scholars and practitioners from many different corners of academia and art worlds. Opportunities to connect in the same place for international and intergenerational dialogue are limited. Thanks in large part to the incredible work of so many of you – whether teaching or curating or starting organizations – the study and practice of textiles have gained recognition in the last few decades. Yet, they remain marginalized. The field continues to struggle as the broader professional and educational landscape shifts. Textile and fiber instruments are being cut or defunded by many universities and art schools. More students are interested in the medium and hungry for knowledge, but teaching and other professional positions and specialized facilities are few and far between.

In this context, TSA is as important as ever in gathering people from across disciplines, generations, and the world for critical dialogue around textiles. At the same time, the organization must continue to change, to remain relevant as the world around it changes, and to model the field as we would like it to be.

We are at our best when we value and uplift marginalized voices and practices. We are at our best when we share ideas, share resources, and support each other’s efforts. We are at our best when we engage in dialogue across disciplines, cultures, and nations. We are at our best when we represent and promote diversity, and the future of the field.

As I step away from my role as the Executive Director of the TSA, I am hopeful that the organization is now poised to tackle the challenging questions and grow from difficult conversations that still lay ahead:

Membership and Communications

I have been pleased to see our reach as an organization expand since 2013. Our nearly 800 members come from 43 countries and 44 US states. An organization that started as a network of North American curators, conservators, and historians, now includes anthropologists, artists, scientists, designers, and many others, nearly 10% of whom are students. With increased professional, geographic, and generational diversity comes more dynamic dialogue and knowledge exchange. Working towards even greater inclusivity strengthens the field and the organization for all of us.

Our reach extends far beyond our core membership. Since 2013 we have implemented a new elNexvs system, opening communications to 3,000 nonmembers, and we increased our social media presence exponentially (Facebook followers, for example, are up to 15,000 from 900 in June 2013, and we now have a Facebook group where members can generate discussion). We implemented a new online system with an enhanced, searchable membership directory to help you connect with each other. We revamped the Newsletter to make space for more content and critical dialogue. We redesigned the website on a shoestring budget, turning it into a source for listings of events; exhibitions; and opportunities for jobs, grants, residencies, and internships in the field that is available to the public.

Accessibility and Affordability

We have been working towards the goal of increasing the accessibility and affordability of our programs. Starting in 2013 we decided to redirect our time and resources towards programs that could serve more constituents, attract new members, and also raise funds for the organization. These “Textiles Close Ups,” a series of one-day behind-the-scenes programs throughout North America always provide subsidized tickets to students and new professionals. Additionally, we understand that TSA needs to offer programs and services that do not require additional fees, something the Board will consider during the strategic planning process.

Further, knowing that Symposia are out of reach for many, we raised funds to support an increased number of fee waivers and also began recording presentations that are publicly accessible after the event. Our partnership with SCAD in Savannah meant that local students could attend the keynote and art exhibitions at no charge. And many of those students volunteered their time in exchange for attending other Symposium presentations. These are small first steps, but they are steps in the right direction while the Board began the challenging process of rethinking the overarching structure of symposia.

In Los Angeles (2014) and Savannah (2016) more artists, young people, and international scholars attended than in the past, thanks in large part to the dedicated work of Board members to raise funds. We also worked hard to expand symposia to include exhibitions, giving artists a new way to participate. With this growth come changing and sometimes conflicting expectations of the organization. I am encouraged, however, knowing that that this expansion is generating new, if not hard, conversations about the organization’s future.

Revenue Streams

Our last two symposia were our most successful yet. We not only provided more fee waivers than ever before, we also had more registrants and more presentations than ever before, and raised much-needed funds for the organization to cover the costs of producing the event. This revenue came from foundation grants, private sponsors, and generous individual donations, all necessary to supplement registration fees.

In 2014 we initiated an annual fundraising campaign, which has been vital in sustaining the organization. Our donor base in this three-year period grew from less than 50 to over 200 individuals. Your contributions are absolutely vital in enabling us to provide scholarships to those who otherwise would not be able to attend symposia (of which we are still only able to support a small fraction).

Infrastructure

While seemingly unglamorous, TSA now has the infrastructure necessary for an institution to operate and grow. A shared file system for our globally dispersed Board members (who rotate every 4 years) means there is now a way to maintain institutional history. Web-based membership and program registration systems have simplified administration. Web-based applications for awards and scholarships have meant that more individuals can apply for funding. Online program evaluations allow TSA to quickly obtain your feedback.

Strategic Planning

While TSA has changed and grown in valuable ways over the last few years, without question we have more work to do. Last spring, we brought in an outside strategic planning consultant. This skilled facilitator is now guiding the Board through the task of answering the questions posed above. I look forward to seeing how this process unfolds.

Thank You for Contributing Your Voice

On my last day as Executive Director of TSA, I thank you. As a member-led organization, TSA is those who come to the table and give voice to their thoughts. I am so thankful to those of you who have contributed time and financial resources, who have spoken up, raised questions, shared your knowledge, listened, and made space for new voices and difficult conversations. Thank you for continuing to strengthen the field and continuing the work necessary to make TSA the best organization it can be.

Finally, as I write, I must acknowledge that these are terrifying times, both in the United States, where the TSA is based, and around the world, where so many of our members live and work. Every institution has a responsibility and a role to play in countering the racism, xenophobia, homophobia, misogyny, violence, environmental destruction, and economic precarity we face today. I have been heartened to see so many arts organization take a stand for inclusion, social justice, and uplifting marginalized voices; to hear our peers say that we cannot retreat, that we will defend the people, places and institutions we cherish, and that we will continue to work to create more and better spaces for all of us. I firmly believe that culture matters; that art and critical dialogue change the world. Cultural and academic organizations like TSA can and must model the world we want to live in. As others have stated, we aren’t there yet. But, I do believe in the possibility; and in the importance of the efforts it will take to stay on that path.

I look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,

Tali Weinberg
Outgoing Executive Director
Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Social Media Coordinator
The Textile Society of America seeks a volunteer Social Media Coordinator to actively participate in and administer a wide variety of social media activities that maintain and build the organization's social media presence. The Social Media Coordinator works collaboratively with relevant staff and the Board of Directors, to create and carry messages that promote news about the organization.

Responsibilities include:
- Collaborating with organization’s internal teams to develop long-term digital marketing initiatives;
- Establishing consistency of organizational message across multiple networks;
- Generating engaging posts to promote organization’s events and programs;
- Sourcing content for posts that address non-organizational news and disseminate textiles knowledge and scholarship;
- Monitoring, tracking, and reporting on social media performance for internal use.

This is an unpaid volunteer position averaging 5 hours/week. Applicants with social media marketing experience and interest in the field of textiles will be given preference. Please contact Vita Plume, TSA President, if you are interested in this position: vitaplume@gmail.com

Volunteer Marketing Coordinator
The Textile Society of America seeks a volunteer Marketing and Communications Coordinator to actively administer the organization’s marketing and communication strategies in the areas of advertising, branding, marketing, press releases, social media, and website content. The Marketing and Communications works collaboratively with staff, as well as the organization’s Volunteer Social Media Coordinator, External Relations Director, and other members of the Board of Directors, to create and carry messages that promote news about the organization.

Responsibilities include:
- Collaborating with organization’s internal teams to develop long-term marketing and communications initiatives;
- Developing marketing and communications messages to promote the organization’s mission, as well as news and events, benefits of membership, and fundraising;
- Generating press releases, promotional materials, and other marketing collateral;
- Maintaining consistency in organization’s marketing and communications messages and branding;
- Engaging with press and news outlets;
- Sourcing and securing advertising to promote organization and its initiatives;
- Monitoring, tracking, and reporting on marketing and communications performance for internal use;
- Other duties as needed.

This is an unpaid volunteer position averaging 5 hours/week. Applicants with marketing/communications experience and interest in the field of textiles will be given preference. Please contact Vita Plume, TSA President, if you are interested in this position: vitaplume@gmail.com

Volunteer Copy Editors
The Textile Society of America seeks several volunteer copy editors to assist in the production of the semi-annual newsletter. This volunteer job requires detailed work in the spring and fall.

Responsibilities include:
- Collaborating with newsletter editor and staff to copy edit articles for newsletter;
- Reading articles and editing with an eye for typographical errors, grammatical mistakes, run-on sentences, correct and consistent use of punctuation and quotation marks, subject-verb agreement, sentence fragments, spelling, apostrophes, comma use and splices, capitalization, and use of tense

Please contact the newsletter editor if you are interested in this unpaid volunteer position: newsletter@textilesociety.org

Welcome New TSA Board Members

TSA Board of Directors are responsible for the stewardship of the organization, defining and refining its goals and mission as TSA grows and develops, establishing priorities while ensuring that the activities address the mission and core values of TSA, supporting and strengthening the structure, finances and functionality of the organization for the future. They volunteer their time and energy to the organization and contribute their knowledge and skills in various ways, representing the diversity of TSA both geographically and professionally and serve as advocates for their specializations and regions.

The new Board members (2016-2020) began their term in October at the 2016 Symposium and join the standing Board members Vita Plume, Roxane Shaunessy, Ruth Barnes, Lauren Whitley, Roland Rickets, and Wendy Weiss.

Outgoing Board members (whose term expired as of October include Elena Phipps, Susan Brown, Susan Bean, Eulanda Sanders, Laura Camerlingo, Jill D’Alessandro, Maluye Syracuse.)

The new incoming Board members (2016-2020) are:

Vice President/President Elect: Lisa Kriner, Professor of Art, Berea College, Berea, KY
Treasurer: Owyn Ruck, Freelance business consultant, and formerly, Co-Founder/Director of the Textile Arts Center, Brooklyn
Secretary: Lesli Robertson, Principal Lecturer, Fibers, College of Visual Arts and Design, University of North-Texas
Director of Internal Relations: Catharine Ellis, Artist and Educator, former Head of Professional Crafts Fiber Program, Haywood Community College, Clyde, NC
Director at Large: Sandy Peinado, formerly a Board Certified Family Medicine Physician, currently Director, Artist Development and Social Impact, International Folk Art Alliance, Santa Fe, NM
Director at Large: Linda Eaton, John L. & Marjorie P. McGraw Director of Collections and Senior Curator of Textiles at Winterthur Museum
Director at Large: Lee Talbot, Curator, Eastern Hemisphere Collections, The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum
Director at Large: Ann Peters, Independent Scholar, affiliated as a Consulting Scholar with the American Section of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
The Textile Society of America is very pleased to announce the winners of the 2015 R. L. Shep Award for the best book on ethnic textiles. Twenty-one diverse and wonderful books on global handmade textile traditions published in 2015 were nominated, and the Shep Award Committee agreed that two winning books equally exemplify the award’s aims of exceptional scholarship and engaging presentation to promote the field of textile studies.

Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th – 21st Century, by Louise Mackie, is a beautifully illustrated comprehensive survey of current scholarship on Islamic textiles. The culmination of a life’s work, Mackie brings together the most spectacular and important textiles from worldwide collections and clearly situates them within the cultural and historic context of the core areas of Islamic influence. She clearly elucidates the sometimes complex techniques and structures of woven silks, embroideries, and printed textiles, with excellent diagrams. Ideal as an introductory work for students and enthusiasts of all ages, this book will be the standard reference in the field of Islamic textiles for many decades to come.

Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali‘i, edited by Leah Caldeira, Christina Hellmich, Adienne L. Kaeppeler, Betty Lou Kam, and Roger G. Rose, brings a multidisciplinary perspective to these spectacular textiles in a beautifully illustrated and accessible volume. Sensitive incorporating the voices of indigenous Hawaiian artists, the ecology of the islands and the birds that provided the materials, and new scholarship on the historic uses of featherwork by Hawaiians and Europeans, the varied perspectives will appeal to a wide audience while making an original contribution to textile scholarship.

The Shep Award consists of a cash prize. The authors of the winning books were honored at the Awards Dinner at TSA’s 15th biennial symposium, Crosscurrents: Land, Labor, and the Port, October 23, 2016, in Savannah, Georgia. The 2015 Shep Award Committee consisted of Cecilia Anderson, Michele Hardy, and Sarah Fee.

The Call for Nominations for the 2016 Shep Award in included in this newsletter and nominations can be submitted through the TSA web page.

The Winning Books:


The Textile Society of America convened for its 15th Biennial Symposium in Savannah, Georgia, October 19-24, 2016. At the closing awards banquet, artist Joanne Arnett of Kent, Ohio was announced as the 2016 Brandford/Elliott awardee. The Brandford/Elliott Award honors the lives and work of Joanne Segal Brandford and Lillian Elliott, long-time friends and colleagues, extraordinary textile artists and scholars who died within a few days of one another in April 1994. The award is given to an emerging artist working in the fiber medium whose work reflects a willingness to take risks and to explore new visual ideas.

Joanne Arnett received an MFA in Textiles from Kent State University in 2013. She graduated from the California Design College in Los Angeles in 2008 with a major in Fashion Design. She has worked as an assistant to Robert Turturice, Emmy Award winning costume designer in Los Angeles; as a design consultant to Akemi Kessens of GMBH in Dusseldorf, Germany; and as an assistant curator at the Kent State University Museum. She is currently an assistant professor at The Fashion School, Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. Earlier this year Arnett was a semifinalist at the Outwin Bootheer Portrait Competition in Washington DC. Her work was on view during the 2016 Textile Society of America symposium at the Ogletorre Gallery, in Savannah, GA in Source and Sequence, an exhibition with Bhakti Ziek and Janice Lessman-Mass. She will use the funds from the award for material costs, loan rental, packing and shipping to finish the series of portraits she is working on and to mount an exhibition.

Arnett has said that she is fascinated by moments when one is both participant and observer. For the unfinished series of large-scale portraits she submitted for consideration for the B/EA Award, she staged mug shots, transforming herself into a series of people caught, as she says, between guilt and innocence. From graphic images she has woven evocative portraits that draw the viewer in through the complexity of weave and pattern, leaving the viewer wanting to know more.

TSA representatives Jill D’Alessandro and Vita Plume joined 2016 selection committee consisting of the Brandford/Elliott Award Board members: Pat Hickman, Frances Dorsey, Mary Osenbury, Barbara Goldberg, and Catherine Weller. The committee selected three anonymous, internationally known nominees—professionals active in the field, from different geographic regions. Each nominator recommended three artists who were invited to apply. The Brandford/Elliott selection committee reviewed the applications and selected the awardee.


At the close of the 2016 TSA symposium, Pat Hickman, president of the board of the Brandford/Elliot Award, officially turned the administration of the award over to the Textile Society of America.

Contributions of any size help to support the award and ensure meaningful funding for the awardee. They may be made online through the TSA website or via check sent to the Textile Society of America, 1101 St Paul Street, Suite 603, Baltimore, MD 21202.
As someone who attended and presented at this year’s TSA conference, I left with the feeling that we must continue to question the role of the marketplace, the site of a slave trade, in the lives of people and their communities. Even though I was attending a conference on the theme of cotton, indigo, slavery, imperialism, and colonialism in Savannah and the continuing impacts of slavery in the USA, I was surprised by the lack of attention to the histories of slavery that unfolded quite literally across the street and throughout the city. Why were some of the most compelling discussions about slavery and trade, like the exhibition and site seminar on cotton and sugar organized by Namita Gupta Wiggers, not re-enacted through the symposium program? The symposium program could also have been enriched through the participation of the excellent artists whose works were exhibited at the SCAD Museum of Art, notably Atlanta-based Radcliffe Bailey, who explores African diasporas, the slave trade, and commodity. Why were world textiles primarily discussed by white scholars of European descent? How can we respect the work of these scholars while having honest conversations about representation and the colonial gaze? How can those who are writing about their own cultures and traditions be quickly invited and included? How can a traditionally female and cisgendered field be attentive to and inclusive of transgender, gender non-conforming, and queer possibilities? Are expansive conferences feasible in an age of austerity and precarity? What would a more affordable, accessible, and inclusive alternative look like? Is it possible to make the conferences feasible in an age of austerity and precarity? What would a more affordable, accessible, and inclusive alternative look like? Is it possible to make the conferences feasible in an age of austerity and precarity?

As we contemplate the years ahead of us through the strategic planning process, the Board has found it helpful to reflect on TSA’s accomplishments. Ten years ago, TSA was an organization that was primarily focused on the US and Canada. At that time, we were challenged to reconsider how we could reach a more international audience and to expand our reach by offering opportunities for engaging diverse international perspectives on textile topics. When we invite TSA members to join us in a location, it is also an invitation for members to propose papers, panels, exhibits, and organized sessions that further explore the theme as well as the region of the meeting site.

In addition, the Board understands that attending a TSA conference is a commitment of both time and money, so we conscientiously move the conference hotel – was the site of one of the most concentrated slave trading areas in the city. It's concerning that a conference on the theme of cotton, indigo, slavery, imperialism, and colonialism in Savannah and the continuing impacts of slavery in the USA? Why was there so little in the symposium program about the role of the marketplace, the site of a slave trade, in the lives of people and their communities? Even though I was attending a conference on the theme of cotton, indigo, slavery, imperialism, and colonialism in Savannah and the continuing impacts of slavery in the USA, I was surprised by the lack of attention to the histories of slavery that unfolded quite literally across the street and throughout the city. Why were some of the most compelling discussions about slavery and trade, like the exhibition and site seminar on cotton and sugar organized by Namita Gupta Wiggers, not re-enacted through the symposium program? The symposium program could also have been enriched through the participation of the excellent artists whose works were exhibited at the SCAD Museum of Art, notably Atlanta-based Radcliffe Bailey, who explores African diasporas, the slave trade, and commodity. Why were world textiles primarily discussed by white scholars of European descent? How can we respect the work of these scholars while having honest conversations about representation and the colonial gaze? How can those who are writing about their own cultures and traditions be quickly invited and included? How can a traditionally female and cisgendered field be attentive to and inclusive of transgender, gender non-conforming, and queer possibilities? Are expansive conferences feasible in an age of austerity and precarity? What would a more affordable, accessible, and inclusive alternative look like? Is it possible to make the conferences feasible in an age of austerity and precarity?

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Dear TSA Membership,

As co-chairs of the 2016 TSA Symposium, we would like to thank all of the participants who came and shared their expertise, curiosity, art-work, and enthusiasm. We remain extremely proud of a program that linked local, regional, national and transnational textile flows within a global context using historical, critical and artistic methods. The production, distribution, and consumption of textiles are, and have been, marked by intersectional inequalities based on race, class, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion and so forth. With this in mind, we selected plenary and keynote speakers for their ability to explore how local dynamics are embedded within historical global contexts.

The opening plenary by Georgio Riello, Madelyn Shaw, and Lynne Milgram provided the big picture. We began with a masterful presentation of the transnational cotton trade so that well-worn tropes of slavery, race, nationalism, and class in places like Savannah—too often stereotyped and oversimplified—could be integrated into a larger frame. We then saw how historical and ethnographic analyses reveal how the same ideologies and power structures that enabled the cotton trade were brought forward into state-sponsored commercial expeditions in the Global South and then into contemporary consumer practices where Filipino fiber weavers are linked to transnational companies that sell home goods to target markets that disconcertingly resemble those who benefitted from earlier iterations of the cotton trade.

In the keynote address, Ulrich deftly moved from object to social and political history and back again, making pointed critiques of institutional collecting patterns, the devaluation of women’s work, and orientalist advertising of Singer sewing machines (and by implication, to practices surrounding many contemporary textiles).

With the plenary, keynote and session programming in mind, we created opportunities for TSA members to connect the approaches being offered to Savannah’s local and very unique history in regards to slavery, Gullah-Geechee culture, and the global cotton trade—notably a walking tour hosted by Vaughnette Goode-Walker, local historian and executive director of Savannah’s Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum. Another offering was a site visit to the built-by-slaves-for-slaves First African Baptist Church—a storied stop on Savannah’s Underground Railroad—in which Kathleen Wilson and Mrs. Perlista Henry shared the stories and clothes made by Ms. Henry’s enslaved ancestor.

As closing capstone, we chose the artist Stephanie Syjuco because of her provocative work on inequalities powering labor, transnational flows, and capitalism, and she did not disappoint. She, too, talked of global forces while outlining how racist hierarchies remain woefully entrenched in the fibers field. Of course, exclusions of voice are a direct result of the same political, economic and cultural dynamics that many presenters examined.

In light of a call for greater inclusion, which we wholeheartedly support, we suggest four action items to the TSA. The TSA, as the leading professional body in the study of textiles, should:

1. Diversify its board to reflect the demographics and values of the communities it studies and serves. By “diversity” we mean an equitable representation of race, class, gender, nationality, and sexuality.

2. Create a task force to research and implement ways to ensure a more diverse membership and student / faculty body in textile departments.

3. Make more specific calls for the discussion of oppressive hierarchies, including whiteness, at future TSA symposiums. Greater reflection on how race, class, gender, and sexuality play out in hiring, acquisition, funding, and review in university, museum, gallery, and critical media settings is sure to be a painful but productive process.

4. The TSA board should be praised for raising significant external funds to support scholars and artists, including those from Southeast Asia, Africa, and South America. By making the funding process much more transparent, members will be assured that criteria for funding is reflective of TSA values.

Some of the challenges facing the TSA are not entirely in their control. The sustainability of an expensive conference in an age of institutional austerity is uncertain. Precarious adjunct labor, expensive student loans, and decreased funding for the arts and art workers are just some of the issues that limit the TSA’s ability to effect much needed change. Reducing the symposia to the presentation of sessions with no workshops, site visits, exhibitions, marketplace or meals is one option, though these are the very offerings that make the TSA special.

That said, the larger project of ensuring that research and work with textiles remains relevant requires that we take these mandates seriously. We eagerly await continued discussion and the TSA’s decisive actions.

Jessica Smith - Professor of Fibers, Savannah College of Art and Design
Susan Falls, PhD - Professor of Anthropology, Savannah College of Art and Design
This was my first TSA conference and introduction to the organization. I was able to quickly identify many talks and events that sounded intriguing. As an artist and art historian, there were plenty of topics that sparked my interests. I only wish I could have fit more of them in!

Thursday evening’s gallery hop was packed with six shows that were carefully selected and curated to align with the conference and they did not disappoint. I especially enjoyed the exhibition curated by Yoshiko Wada at the Cultural Arts Gallery titled, “Anmatsu to Africa: Shibori Trade, Techniques and Patterns” and another by Catherine Ellis, “Indigo & Beyond.” It was wonderful to see such a range of traditional examples of Shibori from Africa and Japan on display nearly a thoughtfully curated exhibition of contemporary artworks. Each artist in the exhibition takes a unique approach to making a personal exploration of the use of Indigo. I also was blown away by the weaving works at the Ogletorpe Gallery. Curated by Janice Lessman-Moss, the exhibition included work alongside the work of Joanne Arnett and Bhashi Ziek. I am not a weaver myself, but the way that these three artists are integrating digital technologies into a traditional fiber process revealed the possibilities within the technique. Arnett’s portraits transform before the viewer. Her works are woven with metal wire in the weft, which creates a sense of the images emerging and disappearing, depending on the angle you view them from.

One of my favorite talks at the conference was Jeana Eve Klein’s discussion of her work in a talk titled, “For What It’s Worth: The French Knot as a Basic Trade.” The value of her labor and others. Her recent project that involved teaching others to make French knots and share their ideas about what their time is worth was a fascinating project. I plan on continuing to follow the progress of her work online through social media.

On Saturday morning I attended the session on “Legacies and Subversion: Contemporary Stitch Narratives, Cross-Cultural Influences and International Perspectives.” I now have a long list of artists to look up after hearing all about Belinda van Mengersen’s “Slipstitch” exhibition that travelled around Australia. The idea of using the “stitch to speculate” intrigues me and I am excited to look into these established and emerging Australian artists who are imbedding multilayered meaning and stories into their work through the simple stitch.

Following this talk, Alice Kettle, an artist from the UK, discussed her densely machine-stitch narrative work. Her use of the sewing machine as a gestural mark-making tool creates painterly, mythological scenes. During her talk, I made a note to look further into her collaborative ceramic work which I have since explored on her website.

Another highlight of the conference was the Lenore G. Tawney keynote address on Friday night by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich titled, “An Orphaned Sewing Machine.” I admire her dedication to research and investigation of the antique Singer sewing machine she acquired for a course taught at Harvard. Her talk took us on a journey of her search for a home for the machine, and the various approaches to reading meaning imbedded in an everyday object.

I hope to find time to read many of the talks I missed as they are published and made available on-line to the public. I am already looking forward to the next TSA conference and hope to see you all there! Being in the same place with so many artists, scholars and supporters of textiles inspires me to be more involved, create more and continue to think about ways to bring the next generation of scholars and artists into the organization. I am grateful for the scholarship support that brought me to the conference and hope the organization is able to continue this support in the future. I would like to thank the TSA board and conference planning committee, as well as the supporters of TSA scholarships for this opportunity!

Tamryn McDermott is currently working as the Traveling Exhibition Manager for Rooted, Revived: Basketry in America, an exhibition coordinated by the National Basketry Organization and the University of Missouri. McDermott is an active artist working in Philadelphia with a studio practice driven by historical research and experiences with archaeological excavations both in Europe and the United States. Photo Credits: Tamryn McDermott

While attending the 2016 Symposium and hearing about experiences from different presenters it was interesting to find many common ‘threads’ between even the most seemingly different papers. One of these recurring themes was the revival of traditional craft techniques in modern day design practices. Even though a textile’s name stays the same, the techniques, traditions, and materials can change each time the craft is revealed to the present day. I left the Symposium with a question playing over and over in my head: “What exactly is the ‘best’ form of revival, and how pure can it be, can we truly get back to the original practice or form?” Or—if evolution is inevitable—how can we make sure traditional crafts retain what makes them so powerful?

In Anu H. Gupta and Shalina Mehta’s paper, “The Effect of Colonization and Globalization in the Shaping of Phulkari,” they discuss the revival of Phulkari. The process of Phulkari once consumed many hours of leisure time, involving everything from design, spinning, and assembly. As Gupta and Mehta document, Phulkari dramatically changed after colonial discovery and its subsequent reworking into a mass production process. Many years later the craft then almost became extinct until NGOs began working hard to revive it. Now, to further this effort, some artisans receive kits of pre-designed Phulkari. In most cases the handwork has transitioned to a job for payment rather than a leisure time activity. Phulkari prints are now even being produced with digital equipment and printers, spurring entrepreneurship and empowering local designers, but bypassing the tedious individual production process that the Phulkari was known for. Is this an improvement? Progress? It’s hard to say. The undefined balance of the positives and negatives that come from changing textile production hangs in the air.

Sonja Dahl’s presentation, “From Colonial Plantations to Contemporary DIY Ethos,” explored traditional indigo’s place in modern society. It is now the hip and trendy must-have dye for many brands in order to satisfy their millennial consumers’ demands for an “authentic” look. In the current maker craze in America, we see in revived in a crafting setting as well. Indigo dying, known to be a difficult and precise process, can now be packaged and shipped as an easy-to-use craft kit, spurring usage among individual makers, and satisfying their desire for their own pair of stained blue hands. This ease of access to a traditional process often ignores the painful and exploitative consumerism, which fashion houses and local designers, but bypassing the tedious individual production process that the Phulkari was known for. Is this an improvement? Progress? It’s hard to say. The undefined balance of the positives and negatives that come from changing textile production hangs in the air.

As many presentations showed, there is a tension between revival and exploitative consumerism, which fashion houses and local makers are at times not taking into account. This left me wondering about all the missed messages and histories tied to traditionally inspired clothing in closets all around the world. Revival and reuse of traditional textile techniques is necessary to maintain a glimpse into history. We should continually push to explore more positive ways to bring back craft without losing the histories and meanings behind it all. We must be wary of exploitation and remain true to the craft and the original makers.

Design Strategist Brooke McEver is currently at Stanford University focusing on social impact through human-centered design. She founded Tactely, a company focused on creating responsible supply chains within the textile industry, managing everything from raw materials to product marketing.

Photos by Brooke McEver
SNPA Reports continued

TSA: Trading in the Unexpected

by Sylvia Houghteling

It wasn’t until a Friday afternoon walking tour led by SCAD professor and architectural historian, Robin B. Williams, that I realized that in Savannah, the themes of the conference, Cross Currents: Land, Labor and the Port, were materialized literally beneath our feet. As we learned from Dr. Williams, the cobblestones that line Savannah’s historic district were brought to the port as ship ballast throughout the eighteen and nineteenth centuries; each year, over one thousand tons of these stones, quarried in faraway New England, Europe, and even Africa, became one of the foundation of Savannah’s streets and walkways, as the ships that brought the cobblestones sailed away with Georgian cotton. One stone in particular spoke to the material “cross-currents” of Savannah’s streets; a cobblestone paving the Whitaker Street Ramp was inscribed with Chinese characters identifying it as the 1798 grave marker of a man named Zhang Lin’an. This stone was likely taken from China, tumbling through the holds of merchant ships, before being fitted into the streetscape of Savannah.

Material traces of global coincidence were on view throughout the fantastic conference sessions, even in the sessions that dealt between Near East, Central Asia and South-East Asia during exchange. In Thursday morning’s session, “Textile Circulation and Travel Narrative,” with Corinne Debaine-Francfort into the textile fragments found at the Silk Road site of Karadong in the Taklamakan Desert in contemporary Xinjiang, China. Desorosier raised the possibility that her present day’s famous early paintings depicting the mystery of how sericulture reached the region may actually illustrate South Asian methods of wild silk cultivation, which, because they avoid the suffocation of the chrysalis, may have been more welcomed in the relatively arid region of Karadong. This theory disrupts the prevailing idea that all knowledge of sericulture was necessarily disseminated from China.

Like Zhang Lin’an’s cobblestone tucked into Savannah’s streets, each of the textile fragments discussed in the panel told a story of accidential arrival and preservation after a long distance voyage. For these stories to be brought to light requires the intervention of generations millennia later, who articulate the material, historical and metaphorical significance of fragments from the past. Instead of being the quiet recipients of a later generation’s global interpretation, contemporary artist Lavanya Mani’s hand-painted, naturally dyed kalamkari textiles tell powerful stories of European imperialism and anti-colonial activism through formal means.

As Mani described in her Friday morning talk, “Traveler’s Tales: Fabricating Post-Colonial Visual Narratives,” she uses indelible iron-based black dye to paint her monumental cotton works with monstrous, imaginary scenes from early European maps and travel narratives, and with illustrations of curling vines and pungent fruits that represent South Asia’s natural history. By using as her medium India’s richly dyed, color-fast cotton textiles that inspired European trading ventures in the first place, Mani makes it impossible to separate these material objects from their histories of both intercultural encounter and exploitation. When her stunning work, “Emperor’s New Machine,” travelled to the Victoria and Albert Museum’s 2015-2016 exhibition, Fabric of India, it did not need to wait out the centuries for a scholar to interpret its symbolic reference to Gandhi’s tolerance of the Singer sewing machine. Mani imbues her textiles with glories of the plum and pomegranate-rind dyes, but also with an ability to tell their own tales wherever they unfurl.

Sylvia Houghteling is an assistant professor in the Department of History of Art at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania.

Trade in Cotton & Manufactured Cloth from Europe, to Africa, to North America: SNPA Symposium Review

by Mackenzie Moon Ryan

The role of trade textiles in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries from Europe to Africa to North America was the subject of a Thursday afternoon, October 20, concurrent session at TSA’s 15th Biennial Symposium in Savannah, Georgia.

The panel title—The Slave Trade—assumed a correlation between the slave and cloth trades, which existing research has established, however, is misleading. The interconnected stories can illuminate. Two papers dealt with manufactured cloth imports to Africa, delving deeper into the particulars of the demand of the African market, while a third explored new ways of visually mapping the economic relationship between cotton production in the Atlantic South and its relationship to the Atlantic world’s economy of networks.

Kate Frederick presented her amended paper, Trade Dynamics of an Island Entrepôt: Mapping the Diffusion of Foreign Cloth from Zanzibar to the East Africa’s interior, c. 1830-1900. As an economic historian, Frederick argued that by looking at manufactured cloth imports, more attention should be paid to the difference between coastal consumption (here through the island entrepôt, or port, of Zanzibar) and interior populations (corresponding roughly with today’s mainland Tanzania). Coastal populations garnered supreme wealth through the exporting of local east African commodities such as cloves and copal and correspondingly, they consumed high volumes of imported, manufactured cloth. Higher numbers of cloth imports, especially from 1870, properly benefited coastal merchants and were not diffused throughout east Africa’s interior in the nineteenth century. By looking to prices, volumes of imports, and general variations in mass quantities of unbleached, bleached, and smaller amounts of finer manufactured cloth, Frederick argued that treating the region of east Africa as one monolithic market does not account for the variations in trade and availability of British, India or American manufactured cloth. Her paper did not directly address the slave trade, but rather coastal Zanzibari merchants, the caravan trade extending into east Africa’s interior, and what role imported manufactured cloth has among both, quite separate, markets.

Amy Bogansky presented her research on The Management of the Royal African Company’s Textile Trade among the Gold Coast Factories, 1680-1700. Bogansky analyzed correspondence and a few extant textile samples from just a twenty-year period in the late seventeenth century to draw wider arguments about the particularities of the West African cloth market in the Gold Coast trade network. By examining the perceptions of European traders recorded in letters in coastal settlements (such as Cape Coast), she was able to tease out African demand, the wide variety of cloths produced (including checks), and changing preferences across a short period. While she addressed the very real economic terms—pricing an enslaved human being in cloth—she offers a case study that speaks to African consumer power. By quoting from European traders’ occasionally frustrated attempts to please their West African consumers, she captured the ever changing, and quite particular, African market for manufactured cloth in the late seventeenth century.

(Unfortunately, Margaret Olugbemisola Areo and Adebowale Bodun Areo were unable to attend due to travel delays from Nigeria, so the panel went without their research and expertise on Yoruba cotton textiles during the era of colonization and globalization handed down through the oral tradition.)

Benjamin Ehlers sketched out a new digital humanities collaboration between the Universities of Georgia and Liverpool entitled “Slavery, Cotton and the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy.” The project brings together archival material and faculty scholarship from both locations. Many southern states within the United States, including Georgia, produced raw cotton fluff, much of which was transported to and sold in the British port city of Liverpool before being manufactured into cloth. Through digitizing shipping, cargo lists, rentals of ships, routes, owners, and money, Ehlers was able to chart the path of raw cotton from Georgia via transporters to brokers in Liverpool, and then beyond as finished manufactured cloth. His aim is to expand and globalize how the history of the state of Georgia is taught—as part of an interconnected Atlantic world. Students, educators, and scholars will benefit from publication of archival data as well as the website to visually map linkages once completed.

Panelists presented new usages and interpretations of archival material related to the manufacturing of cotton and trade textiles in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Through case study presentations, participants made arguments for a more interconnected, and complex network of producers, distributors, and consumers in different places and at different times. They implicitly argued against the dominance of European manufacturers and rather emphasized the myriad of players who contributed to the trade in cotton and manufactured trade cloth and were able to make their priorities and demands heard.

A TSA member since 2015, Mackenzie Moon Ryan is Assistant Professor of Art History at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. She is a 2016 New Professional Award recipient, and her research and publications focus on African textiles, dress, and fashion, especially the African manufacturing and design history of printed kanga cloth; global networks of trade; and the arts of East Africa as part of the Indian Ocean world and beyond. She also serves on the editorial board for the scholarly journal, African Arts.
The Savannah Cotton Exchange sits on the Savannah River, an ornate brick building built in the 1880s to house the activities of cotton factors, the men who brokered the commodity and cash exchanges between Georgia's cotton planters and a wider global marketplace. On the façade of the building, above the entry doors, are carvings of cotton plants. This use of the cotton plant as a decorative element speaks, on the surface, to the importance of the crop in the economy, culture, and history of Savannah. Looking further, however, we find an incredibly complex and exploitative economic system, we find the totalizing logics of colonialism and capitalism: we find the institution of slavery underpinning it all.

The objects around us—textiles, buildings, tools, to name a few—help us organize and tell our histories. We arrange and explicate them, we draw connections between them, we justify their relevance. This work of analyzing objects, of building history through material, was a recurrent theme at the Symposium, one that provided a filter through which I absorbed some of the wealth of information shared over the three days.

Heather Buechler's paper on the feedbag used this often-overlooked object as a site from which to investigate transformations in American manufacturing, textile production, economics, transportation, and agriculture. Jody Benjamin's paper on the role of cloth trade in 18th century Senegambia included a close reading of the portraits made by Jacques Grasset de Saint Sauveur of a diverse West African population. Benjamin's analysis of these images and the textiles worn by the portrait subjects fleshed out a larger argument about power, market demand, and uneven shifts of influence in 18th century trade.

Sonja Dahlg's paper “America's Indigo Obsession: From Colonial Plantations to Contemporary DIY Ethics” dug into this question of how materials hold histories and how to parse the often-difficult pasts of the material things we make and processes that many of us use in our own work. Her research brings a critical eye to the emergence of indigo as a trend in contemporary fashion, fine art, and DIY culture, asking us to look more closely at indigo itself while challenging us to acknowledge that “loving indigo is not an innocent act.”

Madelyn Shaw's opening plenary talk "The Consular Samples" spoke to the importance of the archive as a site itself, not only for the objects it holds but also for the ways in which it can help us understand evolving constructions and representations of knowledge. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's keynote address on the orphaned sewing machine was proof (made rigorously and with a great sense of humor) that the arguments are as important as the objects themselves.

These questions, of how we organize and explicate objects in the creation of historical narrative, resurfaced throughout the symposium. The work of the artist, the historian and the curator are not so different. In all of our different media, we take stock of the objects it holds but also for the ways in which it can help us understand evolving constructions and representations of knowledge. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's keynote address on the orphaned sewing machine was proof (made rigorously and with a great sense of humor) that the arguments are as important as the objects themselves.

Jean Kares is an independent scholar, instructor, writer, editor, artist and occasional curator. She holds an MFA in Art History from the University of British Columbia, specializing in China, and currently teaches topics in Asian art history and textile history for Simon Fraser University Continuing Studies. In 2015, she curated the exhibition Interwoven Stories: Textiles, Costumes, Cultures for the Chinese Cultural Centre and Museum in Vancouver, BC. Jean is also a member of the planning committee for the 16th Biennial Symposium to be held in Vancouver Sept 26-29, 2018.

Of her research, Jean wrote, “for reasons not completely understood, touring Cantonese opera companies visiting Vancouver in the first half of the twentieth century left costumes and properties behind rather than return them to China. The University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology acquired these materials in 1971 and 1991, including a number of costumes used in specific ritual dramas.” Jean’s paper examined the historical moment captured in archival photographs of members of Vancouver’s Chinese immigrant community participating in the city’s Golden Jubilee Parade of 1936, dressed in resplendent opera costumes now in the collection of MOA. She argued that the parade participants employed this material culture in a strategy of perfor-
Symposium Workshop Reviews

Seductive Scripts: Myanmar Tablet Weaving

by Virginia Davis and Hillary Steel

“Seductive Scripts: Myanmar Tablet Weaving” was a post-conference workshop presented by Dr. Tomoko Torimaru. It began with a well-illustrated talk which gave an overview of four distinct tablet-woven structures: warp twine weave, double-faced weave, double plain weave and three-thread warp twine weave. Dr. Torimaru shared images and drafts for these particular structures as well as other information that she has collected as part of her research in Myanmar as well as in other countries with established tablet weaving traditions.

Much of the workshop was focused on woven bands, which are still actively made in the farming village of Shwe Yin Mar, near Mandalay. There, the whole community is engaged in either making or selling the handwoven waist belts and begging bowl holders, which are used by Buddhist monks. The women do the tablet weaving and as many as fifteen pieces might be woven on one continuous warp in one solid color. While weaving the bands that will eventually hold bowls, weft threads are bundled and extend freely on one selvedge edge. Later when the narrow band is finished the loose wefts are knotted with macramé and the individual pieces are cut apart, seven in the round and again ends knotted to form a bottom. Typically children will do the macramé work. The village men are responsible for sewing and other finishing tasks as well as bringing the products to market and purchasing raw materials for the weavers. For these products the three-thread warp twine structure is used; this is the same structure that we learned to prepare in our workshop.

Dr. Torimaru also discussed double faced weave—the structure that was used for the rare Sar Htoke Kyo belts with script weaving; these belts were used to tie up the outer boxes that contained sacred palm leaf sutras/manuscripts. Dr. Torimaru said that not many people remember how to do this complex weaving process anymore. She also stated that translators have discovered that the script woven into these narrow bands were dedications to donors and patrons of temples that housed these sutras. The scripts poetically told of family stories and histories and were written in a mix of local languages. Myanmar has 135 ethnic groups and 89% of the population is Buddhist.

After Dr. Torimaru’s introduction we looked at many examples of tablet weaving. In particular we saw beautiful examples from the collections of Dr. Torimaru and Jon Eric Riis. Among these were examples from Thailand, Laos, Northern India, Bhutan, China, and of course, of Myanmar. Pieces from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were embossed with embroidery and we saw a loom with a partially woven textile with metal tablets from Tibet. All of these examples were quite interesting to inspect.

Next we began the hands-on part of our workshop and launched into setting up a continuous, circular warp with twenty-six cards. The goal was to make a water bottle holder; similar to the food begging bowl holders that we learned about and which are widely used and made in Shwe Yin Mar. We were provided with cards (tablets), yarn and clamps around which we wound our warps. We had a draft that indicated how to thread and arrange each tablet. Rolland Rickets, our class assistant, was an excellent studio hand and untangler of mischievous tasks as well as bringing the products to market and purchasing raw materials for the weavers. For these products the three-thread warp twine structure is used; this is the same structure that we learned to prepare in our workshop.

We had filled both warp modules, we detached the weaving from the dowels and removed the temporary weft yarns. This gave us two stepped triangular modules that we separated and dyed before weaving them back together. We worked on looms made of wooden stretcher frames with four dowels laid across, affixed so that they could be removed these dowels before we began weaving and replaced them with temporary weft yarns. Using needles, we filled both warp modules in plain weave, one in white and one in grey and at our own pace. In its simplicity plain weave begets conversation, and we each shared a little about ourselves in the process.

When we had filled both warp modules, we detached the weaving from the dowels and removed the temporary weft yarns. This gave us two stepped triangular modules, which we tied and dyed in vats of indigo and cochineal. Later at home I insertnew weft yarns where the temporary weft yarns had been, creating dovetail joins where the modules met. When I stitched up the remaining slit, the sample became a complete rectangular unit.

In this workshop an approach to cloth-making was revealed that rests between weaving, embroidery, needle lace and even darning, especially when the scaffold system on a frame loom is used. We extended many thanks to Tomoko and all in presenting a fascinating topic as well as to all our fellow participants who made a congenial and fun group to spend a final conference day.

Ancient Peruvian Discontinuous Warp & Weft Weaving

by Mae Colburn

The discontinuous warp and weft weaving workshop, part of the 2016 TSA post-symposium program, was instructive and inspiring, a happy reflection of many years of research and experimentation on the part of our instructors. Jane Rehl located discontinuous warp and weft weaving in an historical context, presenting its possibilities and variations, and Catherine Ellis placed the technique in hands, with implements and materials prepared for each of us to create a sample. Participants contributed insightful thoughts throughout the workshop and Yoshiko Wada shared her expert knowledge of resist-dye techniques as we prepared our samples for dyeing.

During the workshop we wove two stepped triangular modules that we separated and dyed before weaving them back together. We worked on looms made of wooden stretcher frames with four dowels laid across, affixed so that they could be removed. Our warps were lashed to the two end dowels to create finished edges, and the two center dowels were used as scaffold sticks to create a stepped warp. We removed these dowels before we began weaving and replaced them with temporary weft yarns. Using needles, we filled both warp modules in plain weave, one in white and one in grey and at our own pace. In its simplicity plain weave begets conversation, and we each shared a little about ourselves in the process.

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This stimulating workshop ran short of time for the actual warp making and weaving. We really did not have time to create other structures or to delve into how the script is created. One suggestion for future workshops is that examples of the other three structures or to delve into how the script is created. One suggestion for future workshops is that examples of the other three structures or to delve into how the script is created. One suggestion for future workshops is that examples of the other three structures or to delve into how the script is created. One suggestion for future workshops is that examples of the other three structures or to delve into how the script is created. One suggestion for future workshops is that examples of the other three
Women’s Work (1995), on the instrumental role that Elizabeth Wayland Barber’s majestic studies, fabric such deep feelings about body and soul that it remains to this day something that we, as a species, profoundly connected, almost as a second skin that gets hot and cold need fabric for comfort, protection, and, strangely, the object, nondescript and without value, becomes sacred in a way. I am pretty sure Hicks was playing with this effect, and that was what I got it, and it works time and again. Nor are these precious; they feel like lucky tokens a person might carry on their person, carefully wrapped in a pouch made of something substantial enough to keep them. All of these works are intriguing; they come off as cunous relics with stories, no doubt, woven in (Barber makes a special point of linking fabric-making to storytelling and both to women, the first storytellers), votive offerings, or even sacred reliquary artifacts. As art objects with specific agency their small cloth nature remained me of brandos, which were swatches of cloth medieval pilgrims brought back from sacred places, the small cloth touched to or wiped on the holy place, to bear the holiness home with them. In Lores and Penates, Hicks more explicitly brings fabric into the ritual realm. Lores were the household gods of Roman homes, represented usually by inexpensive statues placed in a small painted niche, and then offerings were made to it on a daily basis. Penates were gods created to more specifically focus their good will on household provisions, and they were also set up at crossroads in every neighborhood in Rome to watch over the wellbeing of that district. Psychologized, all this sanctification of everyday worry was simply a daily prayer to keep the home safe. While Westerners no doubt would lay flowers or such to offer up to them each day, Romans offered cakes, and other oddities; other societies might well bundle them, and Hicks perhaps bundles into a memory pack a twisting and twining of fabric that its shape and particular size or contours, captures a day. The shape, the intensity of the twining, then the layering with sometimes metallic fiber to intensify the magic, all create very ‘alive’ works.

At some point, Hicks graduated to freestanding fabric structures which, while in forms getting ever more elaborate, became self-sustained works of art that stood on their own, free of ritual. And yet for that, they only elevate it to a higher level. By far the knock-out masterpiece of this show is Tapes of Time (1972), a gantt chart (say mammoth (18 ½ feet long))! expanse of wool woven in two layers in accordance with Moroccan prayer rugs to create a sacred place closed to greater, consisting of lighter wool inside a broad expanse of luxuriating darker wool. My initial reaction was, wow, what a 70s vibe, and what I meant was, in the 70s it did seem like all-over carpeting was the thing, design-wise. It swept over floors and even walls; it went everywhere (before the world returned to hardwood floors), and Hicks’ piece, though too heavy to start to fly, has just this awe-inspiring, cosmic volume that takes one in and makes one respect the very substance of which it is made.

Are there prayer rugs today, smaller, but with more dimensionality, thick, coming up out of the wall; it too is territorially present. When Hicks ventures into form, and form in its own right, she sometimes waves: the more formalist works that work best here were those that worked with the raw tangle of natural fabric, enlarged into installation forms. The base idea here is drawings, for example, Jan Van Eyck somehow understood that the floral designs on his cloth of honor those things in life we cherish, acts here as a final baptismal blessing for the whole proceedings. This is by no means an exhaustive Hicks show; I could not really call it a retrospective, though, in a way—it is. It is rather a revisiting, a pointed memoir, curator Campbell and Hicks looking back and considering the meaning of it all, exemplified in one overall theme.

Robert Mahoney is a freelance art critic, movie critic, and cultural critic and former reviewer for Arts magazine, Time Out New York, Artnet online, and numerous other publications. He is currently based in Lincoln, NE.

Images: Sheila Hicks, Tapes de Priere, 1974, wool, 68” x 48” x 1 ¼”, courtesy Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York. Art © Sheila Hicks. Photo credit: Jason Wyche.

Perpetual Migration (1989), in another terrifically weird corner piece, all black, and then the expanse of Perpetual Migration crawling across the far wall. Some of these works are really sized tableaux that imply, compared to the original inferred materials, memorialization of horror, such as Overflow (2006), where a spill of seagrass rope metaphorically overflows out of a bathtub. This tendency culminates, though there are some vertical efforts by Hicks that get too droopy and lifeless for me, with a bright white recreation of a waterfall, that in its exultation in the ritual power of fabric to enrich and keep and protect and offer and honor those things in life we cherish, acts here as a final baptismal blessing for the whole proceedings. This is by no means an exhaustive Hicks show; I could not really call it a retrospective, though, in a way—it is. It is rather a revisiting, a pointed memoir, curator Campbell and Hicks looking back and considering the meaning of it all, exemplified in one overall theme.

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Curating 3 Left Coast Artists for the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles

April 22, 2017 - July 16, 2017
by Barbara Shapiro

As a TSA Board Member I was encouraged by my colleagues to submit a paper for the 2012 13th Biennial Symposium Textiles and Politics, in Washington DC. I presented three California artists whose work I knew well. In each case I found the deeply felt political antecedents of their art to be entirely authentic.

Linda Gass is an artist who thinks globally and acts locally. She has studied the impact of the loss of San Francisco Bay wetlands and the efforts to restore them. She has researched where the water used in her Silicon Valley neighborhood comes from, where it is treated, as well as where garbage and waste go. The delicacy of her stitched paintings belies the gravity of water policies she illustrates. Her artwork has become the banner for her political activism.

Gyongy Laky’s sculptural assemblages, often composed of discarded tree prunings, lament the waste of natural resources. Her legacy as an environmentalist and supporter of women’s rights at the University of California, Davis attest to her commitment. Much of her work is strongly anti-war, a life view she acquired as a young girl fleeing post-war Communist Hungary. Sculpted words and symbols take on a deeper meaning when modeled by Laky’s deft hands.

Forest conservation has long been the subject of Linda MacDonalld’s painted whole-cloth quilts. Humorous imagery engages the viewer as her vehicle for serious content. Her ongoing engagement with “big lumber” is documented in her artwork, as are her concerns for populations of threatened wildlife. Her huge outdoor installations, two recently for Humus Park in Italy, were beyond our reach. Linda MacDonald’s environmental musings are now beautifully rendered on paper.

More than six years had passed since my original studio interviews with the three artists in the TSA paper, and each has continued to develop. There are some new stitched paintings in this exhibit by Linda Gass, but I did not include her beautiful new glass artwork. Gass told me six years ago that she yearned to make monumental outdoor works that spoke of water issues. Her glass works have a layered textile feel to them and allow her to speak in an “outdoor voice.” The glass medium, however, seemed inappropriate for this museum. Gyongy Laky has continued to create works in the Currency series, which I will include in the exhibit, as well as several of her basket forms with a strong environmental message and a visual link to the textile derivation of her work. Her huge outdoor installations, two recently for Humus Park in Italy, were beyond our reach. Linda MacDonald’s environmental musings are now beautifully rendered on paper or canvas. These paintings are inspired by the walks she takes in the forest, and speak with the same keen sensitivity to the importance of our precious environment, but as they are not textile works, I excluded them as well.

Reconnecting with all three artists reconfirmed my appraisal of each one as an artist profoundly committed to sharing what they believe is crucial for all humanity to understand: a respect for nature through conservation, sensible use of life sustaining resources, and an abhorrence of the waste and tragedy of war. I am proud to have given them a platform at SJMQT from which to speak to us in their unique and poignant visual voices.

Barbara Shapiro is a Textile Artist who shares her love of weaving, dyeing and basket making as an educator and frequent author of articles on textile subjects. She is a former Board Member of TSA, 2008 - 2012. Shapiro’s TSA paper can be accessed at Digital Commons.

Featured Research

Specialized Conservation & Analysis Of Archaeological Materials From Huaca Malena

Ann Hudson Peters announced a ten-day conservation and analysis workshop for specialists in fiber perishables and certain other types of artifacts, involving colleagues who have worked with artifacts from Huaca Malena or materials closely related in form and archaeological context. Participants plan to exchange evaluation processes, analytic procedures, and conservation strategies, and to publish the results of this conversation and practicum as a series of short illustrated essays. The event takes place in Lima, Peru, May 1-13, 2017. The workshop leaders will be Rommel Angeles Falcón, Camille Myers Breeze, Luis Alberto Peña Callirgos.

The Huaca Malena Project has transformed how specialists recover and analyze textiles from disturbed archaeological contexts. Directors Rommel Angeles and Denise Pozzi-Escot made a long-term commitment to site protection, systematic recovery of artifacts, international collaborations in analysis and conservation and local community involvement. In the process, they have demonstrated that a local polity, spanning approximately AD 1000–1500, exchanged high status textiles with many other societies from distant parts of the Andean cordiller. As a result, scholars now distinguish many previously unknown styles and are alert to the potentially vast difference between the community that produced a textile artifacts and its final point of deposition.

Participants will work together on Huaca Malena textiles and other artifacts, discuss issues that arise, explore analytic options, and each develop a report that can be the basis of a book chapter. They also will visit conservation labs and new museum exhibits in the Lima region.

Each has a different connection to Andean archaeological materials and to Huaca Malena, and will participate different ways. Therefore, some participants may principally develop their analysis and essay within the context of the workshop, while others will bring prior analytic experience and insights to the discussions and the publication project.

Workshop coordination:
Ann Hudson Peters
ann.h.peters@gmail.com

Images (top to bottom): Rommel Angeles points out the Huaca Malena site; Archaeology graduate students Erica Quigge and Kathryn Thompson show how textiles are recovered, cleaned and stored at the municipal museum.
Yoshiko Wada received The George Hewitt Myers Award, named for The Textile Museum's founder and given by the Board of Trustees. The George Hewitt Myers Award recognizes an individual’s lifetime achievements and exceptional contributions to the field of textile arts. [Link to museum website]

Gerhardt Knodel was presented The Textile Museum’s Award of Distinction, which recognizes exceptional contributions that have significantly advanced the museum in the fulfillment of its mission. [Link to museum website]

Rebecca A. T. Stevens was presented The Textile Museum’s Award of Distinction, which recognizes exceptional contributions recognized by the state in the “individual artist” category. [Link to news article]

Janice Lessman Moss was recently named the winner of a 2016 Governor’s Award for the Arts in Ohio. She is one of two artists that have significantly advanced the museum in the fulfillment of its mission. [Link to news article]

Outgoing Board Member Eulanda Sanders was featured in the Legacies Project, a project of Colorado State University’s College of Health and Human Sciences, which seeks to honor former faculty and staff members in order to preserve history and bonds among peers. Sanders is a former design and merchandising professor, and CSU alumna. She recently established the Eulanda A. Sanders Student Award to support young design students competing in national and international juried exhibitions of their own design work.

TSA recognizes members who have earned significant honors in 2016.

Do you know other TSA members who have been honored or received awards? Please submit the information to the Newsletter Editor: newsletter@textilesociety.org

Member Exhibitions

Online

Fiber Face, May 29, 2016 - ongoing

“Fiber Face 4: Resources” is a series of exhibitions that focus specifically on contemporary and traditional Indonesian fiber arts. Member Sonja Dahl is part of the curatorial collective. [Link to exhibition]

California

Sanchez Art Center, Pacifica, CA. Jan 13 – Feb 12, 2017

“Woven Together: Experience and Expression” Art pieces, fashion, sculpture, wearable art, weaving for the home, and fine craft made by members of the Loom and Shuttle Guild will be displayed, reflecting a wide range of techniques and skills. Items include woven scarves, shawls, bags, jackets, table runners, tapestries, baskets, carpets, and stitched textiles. Member Wendy Bertrand is part of the exhibition. [Link to Sanchez Art Center]

University Art Gallery, CSU Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA. Sep 14 – Oct 1, 2016

“Peeling Back” features work by six California artists with divergent approaches and materials who peel back boundaries between the recognizable and abstracted and explore the power of symbolism and personal revelation. Curated by Carol Shaw-Sutton. [Link to news article]

Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA. Sep 11, 2016 – Jan 15, 2017

“The Box Project: Uncommon Threads.” This exhibition features commissioned works by 36 international artists in response to a challenge from collector Lloyd Cotsen and his curator, Mary Hunt Kahlenberg (d. 2011). TSA members exhibiting include Virginia Davis, Ana Lisa Hedstrom, Nancy Koenigsberg, Gerhardt Knodel, Cynthia Schira, and Sherri Smith. [Link to news article]


“Social Justice: It Happens to One It Happens To All” Curated by Gustavson Cornett Art, this international exhibition showcases 43 artists on the themes of social justice that examines timely subject matter debated during this election year. Linda Friedman Schmidt is one of the exhibiting artists. [Link to news article]


“On the Grid: Textiles and Minimalism” presents a broad range of textile traditions from around the world that share many of the same aesthetic choices ascribed to Minimalist works. This exploration underscores the universality of the movement’s underlying design principles, which include regular, symmetrical, or gridered arrangements; repetition of modular elements; direct use and presentation of materials; and an absence of ornamentation. Outgoing board members, Jill D’Alessandro and Laura Camerlengo are curators of textiles and fashion at the De Young. [Link to exhibition]

King Street Gallery at Montgomery College, Silver Spring, MD. Sep 12 – Oct 14, 2016.

“Fiber/Re:Active” Patterson Clark, Catherine Day, and Kate Kretz use fiber-based work to engage with activism, daily life, and the fragile human experience. Artwork includes handmade paper, fabric printing, embroidery, printmaking, sculpture, and photography. [Link to art program]

Tugboat Gallery, Lincoln, NE. Sep 2 – Sep 29, 2016

Tugboat Gallery proudly presents “There’s Always an Apex Predator” featuring Jay Kreimer and TSA board member Wendy Weiss. [Link to news article]

Member News

Connecticut

Bradleigh Gallery, Greenwich Arts Council, Greenwich, CT. Sep 16 – Nov 4, 2016

“Contemporary Art Influenced by Korea and Japan: An Unexpected Approach” includes select works of ceramics, textiles, baskets and sculptures by 23 artists from Japan, Korea and the US. Among the exhibiting artists is member Glen Kaufman. [Link to news article]

Hawaii

Honolulu Museum of Art, Honolulu, HI. Oct 20, 2016 – Apr 23, 2017

Los Angeles-based textile artist Karen Hampton examines the African-American diaspora in an exhibition that explores her personal and ancestral narrative. “Karen Hampton: The Journey North” organized by the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, features new and recent textile works that tie together stories of Hampton’s multicultural heritage from her family’s colonial past to her present experiences as a person of African, Caribbean, and American descent. [Link to news article]

Maryland


“Kimono & Obi: Romantic Echoes from Japan’s Golden Age” A selection of late 19th- and mid-20th century kimono and obi from Japan’s Meiji era. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a furisode long-sleeved early-20th century kimono that is yuzen-dyed and hand-embellished with gold and silver leaf, gold and silver metallic paints and embroidery, and lined in red silk decorated with gold pigments. Six other kimonos, 8-10 obis, and related Japanese objects will be displayed. Organized by curator of textiles Anita Jones with consulting curator Anne Moeller. Exhibition sponsored by The Coby Foundation. [Link to news article]

San Diego

Korea---Japan.html

Glen Kaufman sculptures by 23 artists from Japan, Korea and the US. Among the exhibiting artists is member Glen Kaufman. [Link to news article]

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New Jersey
Huntedon Art Museum, Clinton, N.J. May 15 – Sep 4, 2016
Works in “Interconnections: The Language of Basketry” range from a large interactive floor sculpture to a small intricate construction of metal and paper. Artists include Past President Patricia Hickman and member Nancy Koenigsberg. The exhibition was curated by Carol Eckert.
http://huntedonartmuseum.org/portfolio-items/interconnections-language-basketry/

New York
“Scraps: Fashion, Textiles and Creative Reuse” presents the work of three designers who put sustainability at the heart of the design process. The exhibition highlights contemporary design that embraces the tradition of using handheld to give new life to scraps and castoffs. Outgoing Board member Susan Brown and member Matilda McQuaid are the curators. http://www.cooperhewitt.org/2016/04/16/cooper-hewitt-to-present-exhibition-on-textile-industry-innovations-this-fall/

“Painting, Decoration, and Revelation: Carved Encounters by Renee Magnanti” is an exhibition of her work that spans the past twelve years. http://www.artmora.org/renee-magnanti

“Making Sense of the Senses.” This exhibition presents artists’ books and related works that employ one or more of the senses: hearing, smell, sight, taste, and touch. Among the artists is Susan Martin Mafiei. http://centerforbookarts.org/event/making-sense-senses/

“Agnès Martin: With My Back To The World,” the 2002 documentary directed by Mary Lane, will be shown several times in conjunction with the Agnes Martin retrospective on display.
https://www.guggenheim.org/event/event_series/agnes-martin-events

Washington
Through a series of pairings connecting The Wing’s collections with Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, Seattle, WA. With My Back To The World,” the 2002 documentary directed by Mary Lane, will be shown several times in conjunction with the Agnes Martin retrospective on display.
https://www.guggenheim.org/event/event_series/agnes-martin-events

Wisconsin
Center for the Visual Arts, Wausau, WI. Sep 23 – Nov 12, 2016
“Ancestral Women. Elders from Wisconsin’s 12 Tribes” Jacquier weaver Mary Burns honors women’s journeys by creating their portraits in jacquier weavings.
http://www.cvawausau.org/

Member Publications

Molas: Dress, Identity and Culture by Diana Marks, based on original research, explores the origin of the mola in the early twentieth century, how it became part of the everyday dress of Kuna women in Panama, and its role in creating Kuna identity. Published by University of New Mexico Press. 10 x 8 in. 288 pages 142 color photos, 2 color illustrations, 9 halftime, 8 figs., 2 maps, 11 tables.
Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts & Context in the Civil War connects personal stories about the Civil War with the broader national context and history, examining how textiles were both an expression of and a motivating force behind American politics and culture during the most divisive period in American history. Awarded a bronze medal in the 2013 Independent Publisher Book Awards for the U.S. History category, the book is authored by recent TSA Symposium Plenary Speaker Madelyn Shaw and Lynne Zacke Bassett and published by the American Textile History Museum.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE. Oct 13 – Oct 16, 2016
“Natural Dye Intensive Workshop” led by Lavanya Mani offers a hands-on exploration of the traditional techniques of kalamkari and block printing and their contemporary adaptation as studio practices.

Member Awards & Honors

Center for Craft, Creativity & Design (CCCD) Announces 2017 Curatorial Fellows
CCCD’s Curatorial Fellowship is a yearlong program created to give emerging curators a platform to explore and test new ideas about craft. Of 54 applications received, three Curatorial Fellowship teams have been selected to fully develop and mount their proposed exhibition in CCCD’s Benchspace Gallery & Workshop, during the 2017 exhibition season. The Curatorial Fellows will work with CCCD staff to produce the exhibition, develop didactic material and an exhibition catalog, and deliver a curatorial talk.

Member News

New York
Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York, NY. Sept 23 – Apr 16, 2017
“Making Sense of the Senses.” This exhibition presents artists’ books and related works that employ one or more of the senses: hearing, smell, sight, taste, and touch. Among the artists is Susan Martin Mafiei. http://centerforbookarts.org/event/making-sense-senses/

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