Patchwork, fiber art, embroidery and creative sewing have been conquering thousands of enthusiasts throughout the world in the past 10 years. Dedicated guilds and groups of quilters, stitchers and creative minds pop up every day under the banner of rediscovering the pleasure of creating. And increasing attention is paid to the thread, no longer considered as marginal. Quality matters and makes such a great difference! With that in mind, the market is increasingly switching towards versatile and reliable natural fiber threads.

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**Many other news on-line:**
ArteMorbida.com

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“ArteMorbida Textile Arts Magazine” is a blog born in 2018 from an idea by Emanuela D’Amico enthusiastically welcomed by Maria Rosaria Roseo, with the aim of contributing to the dissemination of Textile Arts, considered as an autonomous sector of the Arts. ArteMorbida is aimed at artists, textile art and art lovers in general, with the aim, in addition, to encourage and share knowledge and information that can be supportive and inspiration for their own creative experience.

It is our conviction that textile artists, curators, art critics, journalists, and industry associations all have the responsibility and potential to increase interest and promote the recognition of Textile Art as an autonomous medium in the wider field of contemporary art. We started from here. The first few months have passed quickly in the name of hard work, enthusiasm and satisfaction with the results obtained. But there is still so much to do.

At the request of many of the artists that we have had the pleasure and honor of interviewing during this period, “Artemorbida Textile Arts Magazine” is born in a printable version, to meet the need to make tangible what is only visible online.

Contributors

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the ArteMorbida.com Blog uses many collaborations of artists and experts in the textile art sector  
Their support and their contribution makes this project possible and exciting  
You can get to know them better here: http://www.artemorbida.com/i-nostri-autori/

A great story of black women who got rid of slavery, before they did the white masters, using what they had available, or nearly nothing, just imagination and ceratività.

In the late eighteenth century, in the recent creation of the Union, there was a rural community along the Alabama River to the southwest of a place called Selma. It was really small, you will not find on the map. It was covered by cotton plantations, the owners were called Joseph Gee and Mark Pettway. When the Civil War ended and the slaves were freed many adopted the name Pettway, had no other option.

They continued to work on the plantations and turned the place into a place only for blacks, separated but not isolated from the rest of the nation and the world.

Six generations later the descendants of slaves Pettway resisted and continued to reside in that small community.

They survived even to the years of the Great Depression and made a wave of modernization and mechanization of the world around them. They went to many, but helped by the Federal Government, were transformed into an African-American community, a fact rare.

For those interested in photo-documentary point out artist, Dorothea Lange, great photographer and documentary filmmaker, with his shots made that world visible, leaving many.

During all those years the women of Gee’s Bend Farms, had now adopted this name, reminiscent of the past is that of slaves liberated women, had taught their daughters the Quilting.

Although culturally and geographically isolated from other communities, they had developed special techniques that were all of them.

They were reconnected to their heritage of African memories.

They created their own style that departed from weaving and embroidery traditions, which proposed the classic themes of their history of slaves, with colors and shapes.

They managed to conquer its own style, modern, essential in the use of color and a taste for seeking geometries. Those quilt turned out a perfect synthesis, balanced, high artistic level exemplary.
To achieve them, those women used any material they could find: the bags for food to old work clothes. In the moments when you felt discouraged, for the hard work of the fields, singing, he passed down from fathers to son, and the only specimens of their Quilt, represented a consolation to the harshness of life.

In the mid-90s of last century, the outside world finally entered with Gee’s Bend contact, discovered the richness and beauty of their Quilt and even art historians began to give notice. The blankets that once served to keep you warm even families with sixteen children, inside log cabins, were now hanging in the finest museums, as artwork. Those deemed worthless textile products now being sold for thousands of dollars. Critics were left stunned and someone found them inspired and comparable to works of H. Matisse and Paul Klee, artists who those ladies did not know at all. It produced among women a new sense of respect for themselves.

What looked amazing, even if life had put them to the test with a lot of suffering, from their jobs it was clear that these women were not bitter. Wherever they went, leaving behind him an inexplicable ability to communicate, involuntary ambassadors of friendship and their union based on common work, both in the toil in the fields and in sewing and singing, was a demonstration to the world that the key to true happiness lies in the relations between human beings, rather than in material things of life.

In 1949 the territory was equipped with comfort, which made it accessible, was over isolation: there was a post office, but the boat service along the river, was put into operation only in 2006. In 1960 the Community of Gee’s Bend became an attraction: Folk art collectors and enthusiasts, historic African-American art, lit attention to these Quilt organizing exhibitions that made visible the long work of those women. In 2003, more than fifty quilter founded the Collective “Gee’s Bend”.

It should be noted that each Quilt is a unique piece, made individually, expression of a soul, a history, of a culture. Interest in this work has enabled the Community to pay a visit across the country, telling their story and singing their hymns.

We can imagine the emotion and interest, at least among US Democrats (I say).

The Quilt were exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, to Tacoma and Witney specialized in American Art Museum. The success was unanimous we just judgment of Alvia Wardlaw, curator of the Museum of Houston, who wrote: “The composition of these quilts contrasts dramatically with the ordered regularity of Euro-American quilt. In these there is a brilliant improvisation that brings them closer to the best abstract painting of the 20th century to power and invention, all expressed in an Art “textile”.

...
MARY PAL: EXTRAORDINARY CHEESECLOTH PORTRAITS

By Maria Rosaria Roseo

Mary Pal is a Canadian fibre artist best known and appreciated for her cheesecloth portraits. Her work has been exhibited internationally, purchased for private collections and museums throughout North America and published in many books and magazines.

Mary Pal work’s has received many awards in international exhibitions, you can find information on the events in which she took part at link below:

http://marypaldesigns.com/about/

I often ask this question to the artists I have the pleasure of interviewing: why did you choose to use fabric and threads as a medium for your art?

Like most fibre artists, I have always found fabric and textiles to be alluring!

I love the transparency possibilities in silk organza and for texture I turn to linen, canvas, kozo and, of course, cheesecloth.

While a painter is limited to applying paint to a hard surface, we have the suppleness of cloth, the ability to add stitch either by machine or by hand to provide more texture, and our fabrics can be painted or dyed or discharged for endless colour combinations.

Imagery can be included through processes like screenprinting or stamping or collage … or sculpting cheesecloth.

Sheen can be added through gold leaf or foiling or metallic paints or the use of silk. What a versatile medium!!

Can you tell us something about yourself and your artist story? How did you start?

I spent most of my childhood embracing one art form after another, and when it came time to register for university, my parents counseled against a B.F.A., insisting I get a degree that would pay the bills … advising that I could pursue art later in life.

That is exactly how it worked out; I became a high school teacher in Literature, Law and commercial subjects and then a stay-at-home mother with three children.

But once those jobs were done, I had time to devote to art pursuits and SAQA became both the B.F.A. I never got to take and an endless source of guidance in Marketing and promotion.

Life is too short to have regrets, so I now make the most of every day and revel in the moments I have to create art.
Respecting copyright is critical to me, and most photographers are very generous about allowing me to model my work on their photos. The next step involves adjusting the photo so it becomes a usable pattern. I cover it with a plastic sheet that provides a temporary substrate on which I “sculpt” the cheesecloth with PVA (polyvinyl acetate) glue, cutting and dragging and manipulating the threads as needed. Then I consider what elements I might add to the portrait to convey the subject’s lifestyle or personality.

This technique is complex enough that I teach weeklong workshops to show students precisely how to adjust their photos and the various ways the cheesecloth can be teased into position. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to take my students from a place of timid uncertainty to total confidence in just days.

Most of your works are made up of portraits that express a strong personality and a great expressive intensity. How do you choose the subjects of your works?

After my first two cheesecloth pieces were completed, I realized that cheesecloth was an ideal medium for aging skin because it can be sculpted to mimic the lines and folds and even the translucency of older skin.

My quest for photos of interesting faces has led me again and again to the elderly and the homeless, for you can see their whole lives – the expression of their pains and sorrows and laughter – etched in their faces.

If a face captures my attention, then I am intrigued to see if I can convey it in such a way that it will keep a viewer’s interest as well.

Is there a common element for all the characters you portray?

Of course, the more lined a face is, the more it draws my attention for its interesting texture, but I am drawn to any face that conveys the complexity of the human condition.

The protagonist of your works is the cheesecloth. Why do you use such a fragile and delicate material?

Its very fragility – that is, the ease of spreading apart the threads – is what makes it so useful in creating an appearance of transparency. And bunching the threads close together gives the appearance of opacity. In essence, I am using value rather than color to create drama in my portraits.

How do you use it and transform it to make your portraits? May I ask you to describe your technique?

After selecting a photo that I might discover online, the first thing I do is contact the photographer for permission.

Are there artists or artistic currents by which you are inspired?

Of course, I love portraiture – I find the human face endlessly fascinating. But I am also drawn, as many artists are, to the intricacies of nature and I think I will be exploring some ways to convey scenic beauty on textiles over the coming months.

I enjoy seeing the artwork of the many talented fibre artists – and those in other mediums – that I see online and in magazines, but I don’t seek to mimic anyone else’s work – I admire it and then I go about doing my own thing. I encourage this kind of independence in my students as well. We always begin by working on the same portrait, to learn the basics, and then they develop the confidence to tackle one of their own, with some friendly guidance, and every one of them succeeds. That is the greatest reward in teaching.

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below, the work steps:

- Find an image that fires up my imagination.
- Sketch a composition incorporating that image.
- Sometimes that involves using a computer to adjust the image to make a usable pattern.
- Sculpt the cheesecloth.
- Create the background for the image with paint, dye, printing, etc.
- Applique the image onto the background.
- Decide the best finishing method: either quilting, hard-mounting on a stretched canvas, or fusing to felt without any quilting.

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How do you use it and transform it to make your portraits? May I ask you to describe your technique?

After selecting a photo that I might discover online, the first thing I do is contact the photographer for permission.
How did you come to this technique?

I discovered my cheesecloth technique in an unexpected way. In an abstract piece I was working on, some dry cheesecloth I had stitched down randomly had the appearance of a human figure. I wondered how I might create such imagery intentionally. I experimented with various adhesives to hold the cheesecloth in place, and online I found a great photo of an elderly woman by Chalmers Butterfield, which I used for “Waiting.” I cropped the image to just her face for “Portrait,” which I donated to a fundraising auction for Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA). It had a huge impact and drew a lot of attention, which encouraged me to explore its uses further.

Can you tell us about the birth and development of one of your works?

Each piece has its own story, I think. Sometimes I start with a compelling photo I have come across randomly, sometimes because a famous face like Willie Nelson’s appeals to me, and sometimes I seek a photo of a specific subject like the miners I depicted in “Precious Time” for SAQA’s 25th Celebrating Silver exhibition.

Some of your works have been exhibited at the Shenzhen International Patchwork and Handmade Art Exhibitions and at the Third China International Patchwork Invitational Exhibition, Beijing, China. Why do you have this link with oriental culture and its art?

It all began in 2012 when I was invited to teach and exhibit in Taiwan. There I met some wonderful artists from all over the world and in 2015 I met many of them again at an exhibition in Beijing. Eight of us formed a close friendship despite our language differences and began corresponding and collaborating on art quilts. We returned to China this year to exhibit our first series “Beijing Inspirations” and are now working on the next one, “Nature Inspirations.” The history of our connection is outlined on our Facebook page Bing Bing Sisters.

How do you imagine your future works?

Sometimes future work comes from imagining how a particular idea or image might be expressed on fabric – working out the technical challenges. And sometimes I see a photo that grabs my imagination and I want to see if I can replicate it, adding some imagery of my own, to create a new version of it.

Are there any techniques you would like to explore and develop in the future?

Yes, I want to continue working with the concept of transparency and the use of stitch and cheesecloth for texture. Maybe I will combine these in some landscapes that will have a vaguely Asian look to them, based on photographs I took on my trip there in October.
Interview

VERENA GIAVELLI: THE SUBTLE ENERGY OF EMOTIONS

By Maria Rosaria Roseo

Verena Giavelli is an interesting and well-known Italian textile artist who has exhibited in numerous national and international exhibitions of contemporary art and textile art. The three passions of Verena are animals, art and spiritual quest. These aspects are found expressed in his works that show to be a reflection of a creative personality “authentic, spontaneous and visionary.”

http://www.verenagiavelli.com/

Verena, who was the path that led you to become an artist Textile?

I started with the traditional patchwork but I soon dropped to experiment with new techniques that allowed me more creative freedom.

Reworking traditional techniques are quickly passed to the creation of “art quilts” so moving away from predefined methods to test materials, techniques and processes for me the most exciting.

The meeting with the textile art was brilliant.

Finally I could express myself and work in totally spontaneously, developing and transforming textile materials and not in works that expressed full my feelings.

Why did you choose the medium textile as a tool to express your artistic creativity?

I believe its potential for three-dimensionality of contemplation and movement.

Can you talk about your own work that is your and honest.

From the evolution of my deepest inner emotions.

The work to which I feel more connected is always the last born. Maybe because that’s what I see as a mirror to what we are right now.

The last work in chronological order is often the one that represents me the most.

Where do you get inspiration in this period?

From the evolution of my deepest inner emotions.

How to plan a new job?

In reality, not through a precise preliminary design phase, start with a white or black cloth, on which roughly mark the areas or lines that seem interesting.

The rest comes by itself, as if it already existed somewhere, and I should just go with the flow of shapes and colors.

What advice would you give today to a young textile artist at the beginning?

I think it’s important to be authentic, curious and visionary, while having fun experimenting to undertake an individual journey!

How do you see your work in the near future?

In perennial journey and evolution.

Where are materials that you like?

In my work techniques and use different materials, in particular metal, leather, raku ceramics, wood, as well as obviously fabrics and textile fibers.

Lately it excites me enormously working with synthetics and plastic bags handled hot, allowing me to explore the infinite possibilities of creating new multilayered surfaces which then use in my work.

What advice would you give today to a young textile artist at the beginning?

It really is not a suggestion, but a wish: to create in complete freedom, moving away from the paths already path and its own “comfort zone”.

Can you talk about your own work that you're particularly fond of?

The work which I feel more connected is always the last born. Maybe because that’s what I see as a mirror to what we are right now.

The last work in chronological order is often the one that represents me the most.

I like talking about textile art as an energy conversation in which the observer’s consciousness is stimulated by the vibration energy of my work, going beyond the intellect, eliminating any distance and experimentation experience immaterial.

Invitation those who come to my work to put at rest, for the time of observation, the rational mind to watch with the intuitive mind, that imaginative, creative, deputed to the perception of non-logical subtle signals.

And the work resonates with that of his emotions.

But I think, to tie this energy conversation in which the observer’s rational mind to watch with the intuitive mind, that imaginative, creative, deputed to the perception of non-logical subtle signals.

I am convinced that such human soul expressions produce invisible energy vibrations that are transferred and recognized in their work during the creative process.

This for me means working abandoning the technicalities, fashion and prejudices, preferring to listen to my inner self.

Often I represent the eddies and flows of energy urging viewers to follow, feel and experience these vibrations.

I quote from your biography: “I graduated in Veterinary Medicine and love for the animal world has led me to deepen the study of some rebalancing and energy healing techniques such as Reiki and Qi Gong.”

“Everything is frequency and vibration everything is we are energy as is the world around us. It follows that we are all deeply connected, either physically or spiritually, according to the concept of entanglement expressed by quantum physics.”

After years of Reiki practice and Qi Gong I have come to know, I perceive and feel this energy flowing everywhere. With my work I aspire to transmit and radiate subtle energy of my emotions, my feelings, my thoughts and my feelings in a way that resonates with the viewer’s energy.

I record enormously: I’ll try to explain how commenting on a sentence of Nikola Tesla, the famous physicist and electrical engineer: “If you want to discover the secret of the Universe you have to start thinking in terms of energy, frequency and vibration.”

But I think, to tie this energy conversation in which the observer’s rational mind to watch with the intuitive mind, that imaginative, creative, deputed to the perception of non-logical subtle signals.

When someone says “I love this work of yours,” we are seeing an energetic interaction in which the energy expressed by the work resonates with that of his emotions; this is a real dialogue and emotional interchange.

Where do you get inspiration in this period?

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Star Circle

Collision

Solid Love

Alcantara

Chlorophyll

Arancia

Verena Giavelli: The Subtle Energy of Emotions
ANNA MARIA BRENTI: ART THAT INSPIRES THE ART

By Maria Rosaria Roseo

Annamaria Brenti is a well-known and appreciated textile artist on the Italian and international artistic scene. Many of her works are state Exhibited in prestigious exhibitions in Europe, the United States and Japan and have earned her important awards and recognitions. Recently Annamaria Has Been invited to exhibit at the Museum of Embroidery in Pistoia on the occasion of “Pistoia Italian Capital of Culture 2017”. Also Annamaria has held workshops Both in Italy and abroad, including England, Switzerland, France, Japan and the United States.

http://www.annamariabrentiquiltstudio.com/

Annamaria how and when did you get to know quilting and decide that it would be your way as an artist?

What does quilting represent for you compared to other forms of artistic expression?

I approached self-taught quilting in 1986 in Boston. My first quilt for an ecru monochrome double blanket was a mixture of quilting and candle wicking embroidery on traditional colonial-style designs, divided into squares bordered by a lace strip. Followed by a schoolhouse and a log cabin quilt in the calicoes so fashionable then. My first encounter with pictorial quilting was through a Japanese friend who passed on to me her experience of a pictorial quilting workshop on the “quilting as you go” method, essentially a hand appliqué of fabrics that are the real protagonists and our creative muses! For example, if my grandmother was a sculptor of Carrara marble, I discovered that even with fabrics you can “sculpt” and create in three-dimensional, as well as you can ‘paint a landscape, draw and / or photograph on fabric... so for me quilting and the synthesis of many other forms of artistic expression is my favorite fresco of the Guicciardini blanket conserved at the Bargello, by the sixteenth-century Map of the Chain and by the delicate compo si tions of Luca dellaRobbia in the Basilica of Santa Trinita where I got married.

I was inspired by one of the oldest pictorial representations of medieval Florence in the Sala del Bigallo in Piazza Duomo, and remaining always in Tuscany, a constant point of reference in more than one of my quilts, is my favorite fresco of the Good Government of Ambrogio Lorenzetti in Siena.

A connection to the past that goes hand in hand with the search for fine fabrics and silks of which our textile tradition is rich.

When you start a new quilt, what kind of research do you do and what is your design activity?

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You’ve travelled a lot around the world. This has allowed you to get in touch with different textile artists and their unique ways of “doing” quilting, each influenced by their own cultural roots.

Can you tell us what role this has played in your experience as a textile artist? How does it affect the way you make art?

ArtemorbidA
When I start a new work I start from an initial cue, such as the petal of a flower from one of the compositions of Gentile da Fabriano that caught my attention by flipping through an art book about Florence, then documenting myself I discover that there are other 35 (sic), that I can find another 3 or 4 on various art books and that finally I can ask permission to the Uffizi to take pictures of each composition of the gothic floral frame of the masterpiece of Gentile da Fabriano, the Strozzi altarpiece, of which the museum itself does not have the photos in detail …

The photographer I chose sends me the photos of my own trip to Japan through the lens of the passage of time in the various stages of life while in Kyoto, documenting the meaning of the garden itself, which basically represents a synthesis of the cycle of human life, led me to review the photos of my own trip to Japan through the lens of the passage of time in the various stages of life while in the second side of the same quilt, an abstract personal representation of the most spiritual and intimate part of the garden. This quilt is now in a private collection in the United States.

How has your work changed from the first quilts to the present?

Quilts are the source of quilts, and that’s my motto … every quilt has a natural motivation and development for me, maybe influenced by the place where I am, by the techniques I would like to experiment by the colors I would like to use.

I remember, for example, during a very snowy winter spent in Sweden, where white was the predominant colour and of which I started to feel tired, that I began to contrast with a quilt in all-green tones with cypresses …

None of the quilts I made were motivated by participation in a competition.

Maybe the opposite happened, when the work was finished I realized that it was in theme with a certain competition such as my first quilts “Daisen In Garden” that won in England among other prizes the best interpretation of the theme “All the world is a stage.”

What kind of textile choices do you make for your work? Do you like to experiment with unusual materials? Or do you prefer historical research and the recovery of traditional fabrics?

In the United States they are considered fabrics difficult to handle, on the contrary I think that without these fabrics I would never have been able to achieve the details that for example a floral composition by Gentile da Fabriano requires, or to obtain the brightness of a three-dimensional geometric solid. Of course, unlike cottons, silks need a wise lighting to enhance all their reflections and for each exhibition I have always tried to make sure of this small but not negligible detail.

I also like the concept that as in a choir, in a quilt find harmony and unity both the recycled piece of blue jeans and the precious silk from a thousand and one nights, without any discrimination …

How long does it take from the design to the realization of a work?

The long execution times, on average two years for each quilt, and when I was young I devoted myself to it with an average of 6-7 hours a day, allow me to mature and develop a project. Today we do everything in a hurry, and sometimes there is the doubt that even quilting can become an occupation as expensive as a hobby subject to the laws of a market increasingly eager to sell continuously materials and new equipment.

I really admire machine quilting and who knows how to do it with mastery after years and years of practice, even if personally I prefer hand quilting with its imperceptible inaccuracies, I love hand applique with its challenges to the most difficult and intricate curves similar to fractals.

Beyond the aesthetics and the content, a well executed quilt to “rule of art” and “in itself” a valuable object as a Persian carpet if then also becomes a ‘work of art will be’ one more’ that we leave to others to decide ….
Can you tell us about your quilt "In a Mathematician’s Garden" which is part of the permanent art collection of the Jewish University of Jerusalem?

I don’t call myself a mathematician because I only have a degree and I have never done research but having lived a life among mathematicians, including an active one at home, I understood, perceived and breathed the passion, energy, creativity that animates a mathematician to discover new worlds perhaps from a volatile intuition like an organza silk that connects several theories, other worlds ….

Most of your work is large. Why this stylistic choice?

Usually, the size of a quilt of mine is determined by the minimum size that allows me to do the piecing. Let me give you an example: for the "Pe- rusia quilt, the row of houses at the top of the hill has been enlarged from one of my photos to the minimum possible size to allow me to piecing for a total length, surprising for me too, of almost 4 meters!

In conclusion, one of your most famous projects is represented by: “Le Finestre sull’Immigrazione” (The Windows on Immigration), an initiative started a few years ago and which, through the use of a technique imported from the East (“Cathedral Windows”), aims to involve artists and enthusiasts from all over the world on the decidedly current theme of immigration. What does it consist of?

Can you tell us about it? How far has its development come today?

At the end of a long work, finished with the video tutorials to build the windows. I made available on my websites www.annamariabrentiquiltstudio.com the models I prepared for the various rectangular windows that offer endless possibilities of composition. Each artist elaborates them with their own ideas, colours, variations in an impressive succession of quilts that will all together form a single body, a labyrinth where the visitor can go around, interpret or, if he prefers, read the description of each quilt during the first exhibition of the project that will be held in Verona from 25 to 28 April 2019, thanks to the hospitality of the Association Ad Maiora in their beautiful Verona Tissule. We are all in contact via Facebook on "migrant quilts", a group of a hundred enthusiasts of the project with an active international participation from three continents represented by textile artists from Italy (from Sicily and Sardinia to Piedmont), Chile, Argentina, Kenya, United States. The variety of ideas, the beauty of the colors and fabrics, the variety of the techniques of the vorazone of the windows, the multitude of details, the cultural tradition inherent in each of these works and absolutely extraordinary ….

A special mention for their active involvement in the many organizational, popular and creative aspects of this project goes to Silvana Zenatello di Manzano and Piera Quaglia An adventure and another example in which quilting creates friendships and can migrate everywhere without limitations and borders!
After graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design, Betty Busby founded a ceramics manufacturing company. After about 20 years, she sold the company and moved to New Mexico, where she began to devote herself to textile art.

Her background led her to continuous experimentation with techniques and materials, which she uses in her artwork. She is an artist and fiber teacher and maintains an intense program of national and international exhibitions.

I often ask this question to the artists I have the pleasure of interviewing: why did you choose to use fabric and threads as a medium for your art?

I love fiber because it is never boring! the range of materials and techniques we can use in endless, and I enjoy pushing the limits every day.

Can you tell us something about yourself and your history as an artist? How did you start?

As the oldest child in a military family, my two sisters and I were often the only people we knew in the early stages of our frequent household moves. My mother was wonderful at creating things from discarded household objects, and I followed her example by having arts and “crabs” sessions with my younger siblings. We made little sculptures from discarded tin can lids, creatures from cut up egg cartons, and small sculptures from twigs and leaves that we found.

Can you tell us about the birth and development of one of your works? How does a new work come about?

Normally I work on one project at a time when I am in the stitching phase, however I do experiments almost daily. Often I am burning to expand my results, what would it look like over a larger area? What will happen if I add another element to the mix?

These questions occupy my mind as I complete the finishing stage of the previous work, I don’t allow myself to start another until the boring stages of finishing, photographing and labeling are completed.

What are the differences between your first and most recent works?

My initial exposure to quilting was during my early teenage years, when we lived in Pennsylvania and would attend the Kutztown State Fair. On display were magnificent Amish quilts, many of which I felt to be masterworks to this day! Initially started with purely geometric piecing, using fabrics I had dyed myself- or found in the trash! There was no money to purchase expensive materials, and it seemed that handmade and discarded materials were appropriate to the history of the art form.
Several years later, the gallery that represented my work in New England requested smaller pieces that would fit into the smaller homes on the East Coast. That was a big turning point for me, I could abandon the subconscious need to make bed size, washable items.

**How do you choose the subjects of your works?**

I belong to an international challenge group, Viewpoints 9, curated by Martha Wolfe.

Every month and a half we make something inspired by a suggestion by another member, I’m finishing up my “geology” prompt right now. I often choose macro imagery as well, beyond a certain magnification, there is no color, no top or bottom- there is a freedom of expression that is harder for me to find in more expected areas.

**How important is the choice of materials for you?**

It’s essential to what I do. I love the feel and history of handmade cloth, as well as the excitement of new materials that are coming on the market through advanced technology.

Often, I will combine both for visual impact.

The advantage of working with mixed media is that a great range of expression can be achieved.

One material may be good for cutting into fine detail, whereas another might have a rich color, and a third an amazing texture.

**Betty, to design and create your work, do you also use computer tools such as digital printing, photoshop …?**

Yes I use the computer extensively. It’s another, powerful tool, but will never take the place of the human brain, hand and heart.

**Do you work in a series? Why?**

Not officially, but one work springs from another all the time. I will also revisit older works if a new idea pops into my head to expand, or alter, the methods used in making it for another result.

**What are you working on at the moment? Would you like to tell us about your current textile projects?**

I have been working with heat shapable material for several years to make large three dimensional works. I’m beginning a new project that incorporates it combined with a vintage, handmade lace gown from the early part of the 20th century. should be interesting!
Interview

Chiaki Dosho is a well-known and esteemed Japanese textile artist.

Her works are majestic and three-dimensional, they have a strong visual impact and are closely related to Japanese sensibility, symbolism and lifestyle. In fact, the work “Cherry Blossom 10”, which represents the petals of cherry blossoms moved by the wind (“I want to express the sadness hidden behind the sumptuous appearance of cherry blossoms”) is linked to the symbolic value that the cherry blossom takes on in Japanese culture.

Why did you choose to use fabric and threads as a medium for your art?

I was very interested in fashion. I studied fashion first. I went to a school to become a professional. So I learned a lot about the materials. Next I learned quilt. Quilt taught me to make arts freely. My work changed from a traditional quilt to an art quilt. While pursuing the art quilt, it gradually turned into a fiber art quilt. And now I am a Mixed-Media artist and making arts freely.

Can you tell us something about your history as an artist? How did you start?

When I started quilting, I thought that I wanted to stay at home when my child comes back home. I wanted to do a job that I can do at home. However, I realized how great it is to express myself while making a work. And I got into the art world. To me, I needed art to overcome a lot of difficulties that occur in my life. For me now, art itself is to live and is the time of my life.

Let Your Light Shine, 44×67, 2018
synthetic sheers, hand painted, heat cut, non woven materials, LED lights, machine stitching.

Let There Be Light, 60×60″, 2017

Cherry Blossom 10

http://chiakidoshoart.com

http://chiakidoshoart.com
How does Japanese culture impact your work?

I was not conscious of my Japanese-ness before. However, as I made a lot of works, I began to become conscious of the Japanese DNA I have in my body. That is, color, scent, wind, temperature so on. That we have in the transition of the four seasons. And it is the unique seasonal events in Japan, the sensitivity of Japanese people, and how they live. They are stuck inside my body without noticing. I felt that many of those things came out in my work even I was unconscious of them.

What are you inspired by?

I get inspiration from everything that pulls at my heartstrings such as nature, artists’ life styles and work, cloth, paper, paint, DIY, etc.

You make art quilts and fiber art works. How and why did you move from art quilts to fiber art?

I had no intention on the transition. I was a quilt teacher at a patchwork school in Japan. I wanted to do a better lesson. So I decided to go back to college again. And I learned textiles at Musashino art University. I have stepped into the world of fiber art.

How does a new artwork come about? Can you tell us about your creative process?

First, I think about the theme of the work. Once it is decided, I picture an image in my mind. That is the same as making a movie in my mind. Sometimes also a stage. Then I analyze them. What kind of material should be used to materialize the image, which technique should be used, or if a new technique is needed.

I use a lot of materials and techniques to embody my new work.

How has your style changed in the years from the first artwork to the last?

At first, it was a traditional quilt with patterns. Next, it was a creative quilt with an idea added to it. The third one was an original design quilt.

The fourth one changed into an art quilt the new technique. The fifth one started adding fashion materials to it. The sixth one began using Japanese kimono. It worked well on my work.

I started using the kimono for the seventh one and started finding my original technique. I started dyeing, painting and discharge on the last one.

How do you choose the materials of your works? Are there materials you prefer and use more often?

I like individuality materials. I also make good use of fashion. Sometimes I also use gardening and DIY materials. I also use materials of paintings. What I like the most now is Japanese old kimono.

Chiaki, most of your artworks are almost monochromatic. Why this choice?

I do not prefer colorful fashion that much. My favorite clothes are black. Black is the color with the least color, and I think that is the color that makes the most image. Then the next color is white, monochrome, red, purple and so on. Whenever I see monochrome makes me feel philosophical. I would like to show what I felt and my mind through my work. Monochrome matches the best. I love pictures. Especially I love monochrome photos. And that might be one of the reasons why I love monochrome in arts. By the way, I had a dream to become a film director or a play director when I was child.

Chiaki, is there an element common to all your work?

I lost a lot of important people. There are big natural disasters, wars and other problems. The more I get older, the more I think about the important things. When I use kimono, deconstruct it. Kimono began to speak to me while working with many kimonos. There are a lot of processes for kimono. Each process has each craftsman’s heart and thought. By doing so, we can tell the life of people.

Such as poor people, rich people who work at bars. Worn Kimono which were found during the war, and personality. I feel like they’re speaking to me through the kimono. I would like to share my stories.

Can you talk about your artwork you are particularly fond of?

In 2005 I was chosen to the American Quilt National and the French Artexture competition. I’ve been selected to receive award before in Japan. Once, the “SAQA” group, which is the U.S. division of “Quilt National” sent me documents about joining the group. I joined the professional division without knowing anything. This was the chance to start going around the world. Working on “bubbles II” I felt that I was free to do anything, so I started trying out new techniques.

This led to “Cherry Blossom” done in the style of “Artexture”, and the start of my art.
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INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST RUTH MILLER

By Maria Rosaria Roseo

Ruth, where did you learn the art of embroidery?

I learned to embroider at home when I was a young girl of approximately 8 to 10 years old. At this time, needlework was still a somewhat typical womanly skill. Along with sewing, crocheting and knitting, it was a way to pass the time before we had a television and also was a skill I could use to provide products for myself. I forget the knitting right away but continued to make my own clothes and later to crochet small accessories to earn extra money. Embroidery was at first a source of entertainment for me. It added flair to my garments but the time spent on it was also a way of playing with color and geometric patterns.

Why the choice to use thread instead of paint, which is faster?

In childhood, whenever I attended a structured art class, we were handed paint to work with. Then, at Cooper Union, the quality improved but still its slipperiness, greasy texture remained and was combined with the use of noxious chemicals to thin and clean it up. When I was at Cooper, bigger meant stronger in effect and, therefore, better. The same is usually true in today’s contemporary art circles. In order to feel accepted and to have my work valued, I started to work in a larger format.

I also recognized that the change would be a way to offer a personal challenge to myself, a way to allow myself as well as my creations to take up space. I lived up to the challenge and came to enjoy it.

Now, there is the opposite situation. I’m having to figure out a way to work differently. As my work becomes more well-known, there is pressure to make more pieces at greater speed.

In addition to the amount of time embroidery requires, there is the need to travel and publicize the work. And, since I know no one who can help me stitch, the only way to go seems to be toward smaller pieces.

Some famous contemporary painters as well as artists in the past have delegated parts of their art – if not all – to be completed by teams of people. However, some of the ideas for artistic enhancement arise only in working moment to moment.

Changes in design are one thing but there are also calls to make philosophical adjustments that my mind responds to when my hands are busy doing the work.

Can you talk about your creative process? Where do you get inspiration, how do you plan your work and what are the different moments of design? What are the steps that lead you to the finished work?

My favorite method is to make small things that took up little space, that didn’t intrude, no matter the medium. Even my handwriting was small.

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Can you talk about your creative process? Where do you get inspiration, how do you plan your work and what are the different moments of design? What are the steps that lead you to the finished work?

Most often my ideas come from internal struggles in my life. I’m very introspective and analytical. Also, I read a lot. Perhaps heartache, introspection and self-analysis combine with external ideas and by some magic, they coalesce or crystallize in my mind.

I would love to make a funny piece but somehow pain seems more immediate than amusement. I have to get it out so I can rest. Generally, I begin with a few narrative ideas. I search for a model to embody them, then photograph the model. (I’m a pretty bad photographer but I work cheaply). Sometimes an unexpected moment in the photoshoot will suggest an additional narrative.

Next, I choose the most engaging pose and use pencil to make a simple line drawing with no shading. When finished, I photocopy that image several times to make shaded drawings and drawings using colored pencils for different color schemes.

Throughout the whole period of stitching, the photograph, the line drawing, the shaded drawing and the color study will all be kept beside the piece for reference. I observe the progress of the piece from close up and at a distance. If the piece is very large, I cannot reach all the parts from one side so I must turn it and stitch from all sides.

It is ideal if the entire concept is complete on paper before I start. That way I won’t have to remove many stitches to make corrections. In reality, I am often impatient and start before the conception is solid. On occasion, I believe the idea is solid but get a better one once I get going.

I’m the kind of person who is most interested in conversations that involve an exchange of ideas, preferably ideas with a practical application. If I have no ideas, I should at least ask a question. So, at the base of my work is the idea of narration.

In most instances, the narrative is explicit enough so that an observant person will catch at least some of it. On occasion, the narrative is private even if the work is shown publicly. Almost always, I hint at the meaning in the phrasing of the title.

This has been true since 2003, the first time I brought a tapestry to the attention of a wide circle of personal acquaintances. At that time, I felt that I had no stories of my own to tell. Yet, narrative was still essential.

So I borrowed one that was similar to a proverb. As luck would have it, the preparatory work didn’t fit well with the proverb. It was a lot of work and I had no other theme prepared. But, as I worked on the drawing, another more personal narrative arose.

That is the one that helped me realize I might have something to say.
Do you use ancient techniques and materials?

Yes. The grid system of transferring drawings actually came from ancient Egyptian wall paintings. It was used to great effect during the European renaissance as well and was taught to me at Cooper Union.

Many old European tapestries and South American embroideries were made with wool and have lasted centuries. Consider the Bayeux Tapestry. I would love to make one like that with a long time-line. Other parts of Africa and Asia as well have long traditions of hand-stitched embroidery. In fact, the technique is so simple that it is probably found practiced worldwide. My one advantage is that wool now comes in so very many colors — over 400 are supplied by the company I buy from. Their tapestry wool is made with three plies. In order to achieve a smoother surface, I separate the plies and now primarily stitch with a single ply. This is possible only because of the wool's quality. Each of the 3 plies is itself twisted. This type of construction gives it strength. If not for this, it would shred as I pulled it repeatedly through the fabric which is fairly coarse.

New embroiderers can find several antique decorative stitches from books to make their work more interesting. I like those but rarely use more than two or three types because they would take attention away from the narrative. Perhaps I will use more of them in the future.

What, in your opinion, are the artistic, esthetic and stylistic differences between small and larger textile works?

I think the main difference between small and large works is in visual impact. In considering only portraits made with yarn, I believe that more refinement of line is possible with larger works. Because of the thickness of the yarn, life-sized images are required in order to achieve the graceful curves of realistic renderings of flesh. The texture of the wool has an advantage over a completely smooth painted surface. Even a thin strand of tapestry wool casts a shadow that offers depth to our perception of a tapestry. This slight depth increases the subject's presence in the room, especially since most of the portraits are life-sized. Unfortunately, this subtle presence is difficult to capture in a photograph. My tapestries must really be seen in person to be appreciated.

When an embroidery has lots of empty background space, I define it as a drawing. Drawings take much less time to make because of that emptiness.

"The Sisters" 16×20 inches
Hand-stitched embroidery, copyright by Ruth Miller.
"The medium is sewing machine thread on fabric. The models are my daughters. In this piece I taught myself to reproduce both a reflection and a sense of transparency at the same time in the sunglasses. Your readers may also notice the use of colors (black, purple, brown, beige, pink, cream) as well as the expected browns to depict the skin tones. This was also done for a very practical reason: I was running out of browns. They say, "Necessity is the mother of invention."
During this period of contemporary art, embroidery is still somehow difficult. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of embroidery as an expressive medium?

About a year. That is how I estimate the stitching. I don’t count the time it takes to conceive an idea or create the reference materials because those things occur unpredictably. It takes two to three months, if the piece is small and well-planned. Maybe over a year and a half if it is very large. More if the planning is difficult.

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of embroidery as an expressive medium?

During this period of contemporary art, embroidery is still some what unique and unexpected. This adds interest to whatever is created with it. Despite signs that say my work is embroidery, it looks like painting. Even people who work in art industries and know better than to touch the art will instinctively reach out to verify what their eyes are seeing. This interest is an advantage; the touching is a disadvantage since over the passage of time the oil from fingerprints could discolor the wool. For this reason, I try to exhibit my work where there are docents (people who both guard and explain the works on view) to restrain them.

Artistically, I see no disadvantage. You might think that not being able to blend colors as is done in wet media is a disadvan tage. However, if the image is large enough, the different colored stitches can be arranged in such a way that the eye of the viewer will do the color mixing for me.

The long periods of time necessary to physically create a large tapestry are hard on the body but they also give me long periods of mental focus.

Time allows me to see which parts of a piece don’t work. It also allows for development of layers of complexity in the narrative, sort of like what happens in life itself.

How long do you take on average to complete a tapestry?

Ji Seon is a Korean artist who trained at the Faculty of Fine Arts in University of Daejeon.

Ji Seon’s works merge fibers, threads and photography with the use of a subject that is repeated but never the same. In fact, in the “Rag Face” series, to which the artist has been dedicating since 2006, Ji Seon realizes, with a combination of photography and machine stitching, a lot of self-portraits that are always different from each other because with the use of the threads, it deforms his own photographed image on distorted expressions that move between the grotesque and the humorous. The Rag Face series has been exhibited in many Art Galleries and Museums in Korea. Ji Seon also exhibited at Yossi Milo Gallery and Bric House in New York.

Moreover, it became important to me that these old sayings are being realized literally despite of their real meanings. Look at the modern medical technology! Not only it can make horned rabbits and hairy turtles, but also it can engrave letters on people’s bones!

My first solo exhibition began with ‘a chicken foot’ decorated with nail polish and trinkets like a human’s hand, ‘animals’ ho nes’ that imitated jewels and my hairs planted on and ‘a photo graphy of man’s legs. Since painting technique and materials have a long history, there are diverse artwork already exist. Among them, it was difficult for me to find my own way to express myself by drawing. Therefore, it was like freedom to me to use objects or medium that are not paints.

Among various medium that I was using, thread has a special meaning to me. My mother overcame her stress from four chil dren, a patriarchal husband, and tremendous chores by knitting. Threads from my father’s sweater became my sister’s skirt, and later, it became my vest. The thread changed its shape every year as the owner changed. I grew up feeling like the thread was an umbilical cord connecting my family. So, it seems that I use threads when I want to talk a story about a relationship.

In conclusion, it is difficult to tell which one came first or later, because the flow of my work is not sequential, it is mixed with...
Your famous series “Rag Face”, consists of many portraits / self-portraits. Why you use this theme of portraits that are then transformed into a series of masks? why you disguise your face? Or: why you change (modify) your face in your works?

To reconstruct a face is to hide the original face. However, I have a doubt if it is always true. My self-portrait is not very important. I use my self-portrait because I have no reason to use others. The face is my face, but it also represents the face of others.

I work with ‘face’ for many reasons, but what I am currently paying attention to is ‘the face in photography’ and ‘the face in reality’. The face in reality has many different facial expressions, however, the face in photography is unnaturally, awkwardly frozen. This well polished face has become more dramatic due to so-called ‘selfie’. The face in my work is not a pretty face. I can only see my unfamiliar face after I take a photography.

While I photograph myself, I find a lot of unfamiliar faces of mine which even I didn’t realize them before. It is impossible to look at myself in the mirror when unfocused or looking at another place.
If you see self-portrait paintings, a person in the painting usually looks straight ahead. From photography, I can get self-portraits which I don’t look just straight. Facial expressions from photography can be close to our realistic faces, but people feel unfamiliar with their real faces. It is because it is a face from eyes of others (cameras), not from ourselves. It is a process of finding the third person’s ego from the first person. I take pictures of my facial expressions, and then I sew on it as if the sewing makes those facial expressions. I mix up the timeline, so it makes you feel uncertain what comes first – photography or sewing. I think I wanted to express the relationship among myself, time and others. So, the audience can see my work all differently, and in the end, I hope people can find their own eyes to see and feel my work.

You started the “Rag Face” series in 2006, creating lots of different works. What are the most important technical and conceptual differences between the first rag faces of 2006 and the most recent ones?

As I mentioned it earlier, the issue of ‘looking straight ahead’ is important to me. Facial expressions in my early work were like profile photography. I took a picture of myself looking straight to the camera. Lena and the result was a nervous look on my face. And then I awkwardly sewed on that photography as if I doodled on my face. This was the beginning of the Rag face.

At the beginning, my portrait looked like changing to another person or wearing masks as the original photography was being destroyed by sewing. Nowadays I sew on photography with more variety of facial expressions. And I make people think uncertain if the facial expression on the photography comes first or if the act of sewing makes the facial expressions.

I also tried to maintain the square frames in my early work, however, I am currently working on the boundary between the plane and the three-dimensional structur as more I sew, the more distorted and irregular artwork is being created.

Jiseon, on your biography you say: “Many artists say that they are hoping for communicating with people through their work. So I am often asked if I am the same... (omission)... To be exact, I am not the person who wants to communicate with the audience.”

I want understanding and support.” Can you explain what you mean?

I am a bit worried that how these Korean words will be translated into another languages.

Simply say, “Communication” is between the two sides, and I think that “Understanding (or Misunderstanding)” is one-sided.

“Communication” seems to be a precious result which made by thinking of others priority to myself. Talking straight my situation without thinking of others is far different from considering the other’s first before I talk.

Not all, but if you take it to an extreme way, the Artist is a person who just throw his/her questions to the world rather than considering certain others. The person who creates after consideration of certain others would be the Designer, not the Artist. So, the work of the artist is ambiguous, and it is possible to be understood by different viewpoints of each audience. On the other hand, the works of designers will be taken by people who were considered by the designer after thorough analysis of their use, preference and taste. And these works (designers’ items) have intuitive persuasiveness and consensus.

From this point of view, as an artist, I strongly feel that the desire to communicate with the audience seems to take away my and their freedom. I work on things from my own perspective. Others can see me from their own point of view. What I wanted to say is “Let’s enjoy our freedom! (“Jiseon is not the artist who wants to communicate with the audience, she is the artist who wants to talk straight and creates her artwork without thinking of others how they would think about it.”

She wants understanding and support from the others, not communication. Jiseon doesn’t want people to consider the meaning of her work in her ways, she wants people enjoy and feel what they feel about her work. She doesn’t want to give them any instruction how they see or feel the artwork. She wants them to enjoy their freedom to see the artwork in their own ways.”

How does the Korean culture influence your art?

When I was younger, it was very simple and clear to say “YES” to this question, however, now it is a difficult question. First, I do not know what Korean culture really is. Because some of my experience might be Korean culture in general, but they also might happen because of my special circumstance. I am not sure if certain things are only in Korean culture or not, because I don’t know about every culture in the world. For example, it is often reported in the news that a keen competition is a social issue in Korea. But, I don’t think I experience the competition in my daily life since the only competition I have is to fight for a seat in a crowded bus.

There are many people who say the hierarchy culture of the organized society is one of Korean cultures. When I think about it, I am a person who is out of this hierarchy culture. My school years were my only time to be a member of the organized society. At that time, I did many whimsical things as I had a difficultly understanding the culture of the organization. So, I was misunderstood by people and had a hard time. In art colleges, the hierarchy culture and gender discrimination are usually less than the general Korean societies. I am not so sure if I am qualified to talk about this issue though. Many Korean societies don’t like having questions, so I haven’t been welcomed by many places since I am a person with many questions. It is certain that my work has been an exit that I can freely ask many questions to. I am very interested in visualizing words into my work. I think Korean language has many attractive words that I can play with, therefore, these Korean words become good materials for my work.

What are the artists you are inspired by?

I am inspired by many artists. I am mainly interested in musicians, dancers and novelists. Of course, artwork of visual artists is very interesting, but it doesn’t affect my work. I am often affected and impressed by their attitude toward their work, not from their artwork.

Do you define yourself as a textile artist or do you feel more like a photography artist?

I am not building any boundary. I introduce myself as a visual artist.
Do you think you will continue to experiment and use threads and textiles in your future works?

I think so. I have worked a lot with threads apart from Rag face series. There was a work made by sewing a chicken skin and a pig skin, and there were also clothes made from papers. There is a series of hand knitted gloves (each glove’s fingertips are connected) that I worked with my mother.

In fact, the thread is an interesting material that has a special meaning to me and a lot of potential.
Norma Minkowitz is an internationally renowned textile artist. Her artworks express a decidedly personal style that makes her art absolutely incomparable. Norma creates figurative sculpture, fiber drawings and transparent forms which show a sometimes apparent fragility and which are connected with human and natural forms. Her artworks are present in 32 museum collections and numerous private collections.

Norma, how did your passion for crochet begin?

I have always been interested in linear elements. When I was a young girl I spent many hours drawing with pen and ink, as well as learning to crochet at my mother's side. She gave me a great deal of encouragement as well as scraps of fiber and I taught myself to manipulate the threads into sculptural forms at a young age. My first efforts were making round doilies and until this day I always start my sculptural and flat work with a circle. I love the freedom of crochet and the ability to go in different directions creating movement with the line as well as the inclusion of flat areas that become a canvas for the application of other materials and objects.

Creative instincts run free with crochet. My art is based around the repetition of one stitch which I feel has a meditative and spiritual power. It was not until the 1960's that my love for drawing merged with my fascination and need to crochet with fiber.

How did the idea of using crochet to make sculptures come about?

I started crocheting by making circular doilies and as a girl I realized that I could skip stitches after creating a circle. I would then have a form that could be a head and then instinctively I began to cover my dolls with these round hollow shapes. By adding stitches it would enlarge and become a shape for the body.

Of course when I finished I could not remove the crocheted part and the doll would become encased in the fiber covering. I then started making dolls without a real doll inside. These personal and unique dolls became solid forms as they were stuffed with batting.

That is how my first interest in sculptural forms began. Many years later at the beginning of my professional life in the early 1970's I was drawn to the concept of containment, simultaneously revealing and concealing. I started making transparent vessel forms creating numerous sculptures that are now all in Museum and private collections. I explored the possibilities of crocheted, interfaced sculptures stiffened into hard mesh like structures. The blurred web-like fabric defined volume and form. Process became part of the content and both structure and surface were achieved simultaneously. These netted sculptures often made statements about my interest in enclosure and entrapment. They could suggest the safety of a shelter or a cage from which there was no escape.

The effect of the transparency also allowed me to put objects and forms within the vessel creating works that weave the personal and universal together. I strove to develop a personal language. I felt this direction to transparency and delicacy related to my interest of the drawn line.
As far as your figurative sculptures are concerned, how did they evolve, how did they change from the first works to today?

As I exhausted the possibilities of the many enclosed vessel forms I created, I turned to my interest in the human form. Most of my pen and ink drawings created at the Cooper Union Art School and later in my studio have been about the human body as well as the human condition. I now returned to the idea of using the figure in my sculptures. These were at once much larger and more complicated than the vessel forms. Continuing in the technique that I invented for myself, I strove to express the human figure (mostly female) at times as mysterious and ephemeral. The sculptures were transparent and ethereal conveying the human condition. The linear effect always inspired me to this visual direction. It also was connected to the cross hatching of my pen and ink drawings. These veiled figurative sculptures were mostly created in the 1990’s to the mid 2000’s. I still exhibit them and create new ones, but my work continues to change.

In 2007 I started using modeling paste which has a plaster-like consistency to fill in the spaces of the fiber’s open netting. This process creates a surface that focuses on and highlights the lines. I drew with stitches, introducing a bas relief surface of concept, energy and movement. I often highlighted the lines with colors of paint. The concept of the figure was now bolder and darker in concept. My work continues to change. Thanks to the use of threads and transparency, your sculptures take on appearance of fragility and lightness, which contrasts with the idea that the sculpture is something heavy. What more precisely is the role of the empty spaces, negative spaces in your work?

My work with outer netting creates mystery by obscuring the shape within creating a sense of ambiguity in the shadows of the work. I continually delve into the dark side of life as well as the passage of time and other transitions. The transparency of my sculptures work well with the use of interlaced fibers where objects may be hidden inside, but visible from the outside. Despite the repeated use of the same basic stitch, which to me has a spiritual quality, no two are exactly alike. This conveys the intimacy and imperfection of the human hand and makes the work more powerful. I want to simultaneously express fragility, delicacy and power, the complex and the simple. I feel the open mesh gives a feeling of ethereal lightness but also implies the concept of three-dimensional strength. My work with negative spaces retains implications of containment and psychological complexity.

How do you choose the subjects of your sculptures, what inspires you? Do you love classical art and mythology?

Like most artists there is a need to express an idea, tell a story, and remember a memory or perhaps the unknown. In my earliest works, I was inspired by the minimal vessel form. These vessels developed into transparent sculptures that addressed the possibilities of cages with no chance of escape or perhaps shelters that protected. Many of my figurative sculptures were inspired by the human situation, psychological complexities and other personal stories. They often express themes and thoughts addressing mortality or perhaps immortality, fears and relationships. I also think about the passage of time, creatures of mythology and the changes in the human condition. Several of my sculptures are sequential installations that use the female form as a symbol of the ephemeral and are of classical subject matter such as Venus “Goodbye Goddess” is one such piece and is in the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum in Hartford, CT.

This is an excerpt from a book about my work – “Portfolio Collection Norma Minkowitz”, Telos Publications Goodbye Goddess by Kathleen Whitney 2007

“Goodbye Goddess is a series of four nearly identical smaller than life sized Classical Statuettes in a line that leads to a fifth circular shape hanging above them. Their contours are blurred, their features indistinct. Each is dressed in a Roman Style, draped in a toga-like outfit that falls well over the feet. These multiple figures slowly change in detail to become symbols of passage.

In the fifth and final form, the same face that is on the figures is now distant and sky-bound, like a soul departing the body.

To Minkowitz it is a piece that symbolizes the process of mortality or perhaps immortality through a series of subtle visual alterations in each figure.”

I am also inspired by the power, grace and darkness of birds of prey and have often used them in my work. I sometimes work with objects that were once living like flowers, twigs, bones or even food. These objects speak to me through their shapes and suggestive qualities and transition of life to death. I find the subjects of my work evolve as I work with chosen materials and I start feeling the path and inspiration develop. I do not preplan my art. If I knew what is would look like before I started, I would not be excited to create my art.

How is your work evolving over time since you started in the 1960’s to the present day?

My work keeps evolving, but at times I seem to go back to an earlier period with different results. I currently have started another vessel form but in a different way by using metal wire as well as a new wearable art work. In the 1980’s I also created wearable art and exhibited with Julie Artisans Gallery a remarkable space for wearable art in NYC.
So, I go back and forth with different results but similar themes. I am currently doing pen and ink drawings with collage, stitching and intricate free form crocheted borders. They have been received very well and I am excited with this new direction. I am also doing larger wall hangings, crocheting the background which becomes my canvas and then start applying stitched lines, shapes, found objects and more.

You use very fine threads, why not instead prefer thicker yarns and maybe easier to work with?

I love very fine threads; they are like using a crow quill pen and making detailed overlapping crosshatched lines. I could not do that with heavier threads. It also gives me the option of working with several thin threads at a time and changing one or two of the threads to create subtle changes of color. Because of the lightness of the fibers weight, I can also cut out parts to make changes.

My work is based on the repetition of one stitch which I feel is more effective in expressing my concepts with the use of fine thread.

Among the various types of works, such as drawings, sculptures, tapestries… which represents you more?

I cannot separate the work, all of them overlap. My sculptures on the surface are drawn on with fiber and my pen and ink drawings on paper also are drawn on with fiber. I do not make tapestries as I think of them as being woven, but I crochet.

What is the connection between your ink drawings and stitchery?

Drawing continues to be important to me and I find the threads and wires I use mimic the patterns and movement, as well as the irregularities of my pen and ink drawings. My sculpture evolves into three dimensional drawings. The fibers netting creates a surface that focuses on and highlights the lines I draw with the stitches introducing the concept of energy, message and movement. I often highlight these drawn lines with colors of paint. There is a crossover between the stitched line and the drawn line that contribute to my work that weaves the personal and universal together. I use fiber as if I were drawing and often the drawn line as if I were stitching. I find them to be interchangeable.

There is much labor in my work and I like that element of my process. I have time to think about what I am doing and to make changes. I like the look of the fine threads. My work is very personal and unique to me.

What do you think is the most important difference between a craftsman who works with threads and fabrics and a textile artist? When does a fiber work become art?

When fiber work is craft it is often repetitive and structured in technical skill and is more about how the work is made. It is about using a specific technique in a masterful way that conforms to tradition (there are exceptions of course).

Many quilt, sculpture and tapestry artists who work with traditional techniques are not in this category as they are artists making exciting one of a kind art.

Fiber becomes art when it is about why it is made. There must be a message and a fresh concept within the content. The choice of materials becomes important in conveying that message while often using the technique in a new and fresh way.
Perils of Paradise, 2017, private collection
Copyright Norma Minkowitz

Patterns of Flight, 2015, 20 x 15
Copyright Norma Minkowitz

Leaving Paradise, 2010, 15.5 x 22.5
Copyright Norma Minkowitz

I am the Land, 1991, 12.5 x 45 x 16.5, Private Collection
Copyright Norma Minkowitz

Collection Sara Liberman, Copyright Norma Minkowitz

Dryades of the Woodlands, 2014, Copyright Norma Minkowitz

The Path, 2014, Copyright Norma Minkowitz

The Path, 2014, Copyright Norma Minkowitz

Copyright Norma Minkowitz
INTERVIEW WITH JUDY KIRPICH

By Maria Rosaria Roseo

Judy Kirpich is a well known and appreciated textile artist. Her quilts have been seen in museums and quilt exhibitions in Asia, in the United States, South America and Europe. She was awarded the prestigious Quilt National Japan Prize and joined a select group of artists showing their work in Mastery: Sustaining Moment, and Color Improvisations 2, two Nancy Crow curated shows. Her Conflict Series quilts were shown at a one woman show at the Aughinbaugh Gallery in 2017 and she is preparing for a solo exhibit in 2019.

http://www.judykirpich.com/

I often ask this question to the artists I have the pleasure of interviewing: why did you choose to use fabric as a medium for your art?

I love the smell of cloth, the feel of cloth, and the texture of cloth. There is nothing I enjoy more than spending hours roaming stores in the New York garment district hunting down unusual fabrics. When I travel abroad I am always intrigued by the different textiles I find and I am as interested in fine silks as I am with vintage hemp. While I work primarily with cottons I like to combine fabrics I have found in Japan and China with my domestic sources. For the last ten years I have been working with custom dyed cottons, and I have a wonderful source who will dye fabrics to my color specifications. While I have taken a few courses, I rather prefer to the smell of cloth, the feel of cloth, and the texture of cloth. There is nothing I love the smell of cloth, the feel of cloth, the texture of cloth. There is nothing I enjoy more than spending hours roaming stores in the New York garment district hunting down unusual fabrics. When I travel abroad I am always interested in fine silks as I am with vintage hemp. While I work primarily with cottons I like to combine fabrics I have found in Japan and China with my domestic sources. For the last ten years I have been working with custom dyed cottons, and I have a wonderful source who will dye fabrics to my color specifications. While I have taken a few courses, I rather prefer to

Can you tell us something about yourself other than dyeing fabrics.

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If you had to find a different way of expressing yourself as a student and as the owner of a large start?

How did you start?

I will start by giving you a short history of my love affair with fabric. I happened to find a different way of expressing myself as a student and as the owner of a large start. After the comb series I never looked back and only worked with abstract compositions.

I feel very privileged to have Nancy as a mentor. When I first attended her classes I had no idea what I was doing- I just knew that I did not have the patience or interest in conventionally quilting. When I saw Nancy’s work- the first piece I saw was her interpretation of a log cabin quilt. I knew I had found the outlet for my lifelong love of fabric constructions. Nancy starts from ground zero- and teaches the fundamentals of design, figure/ground relationships, color theory, and composition. She is a demanding tough teacher who values hard work and she pushes each of her students to excel. She is not for everyone- and certainly not for a quilter that just wants to dabble in various techniques. She pushes her students to find their own voice and does not countenance Nancy Crow imitations.

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I am motivated by emotions- by events that are happening around me, both personal and political. I almost never make a piece that does not represent how I am feeling at a particular point in my life. For example, the Anxiety series came from the stress I had running a large firm of 35 people during the Great Recession trying to make ends meet: my Conflict series started over breakfast discussions about the war in Syria with my husband who is a Middle East scholar. Memory Loss is influenced by my mother’s slow decline due to Alzheimer’s. Often I will use a technique that allows me to release some of those emotions. I started my Anxiety series by slashing fabric over and over again. I was so nervous and anxious and it was a wonderful way to work out my tension. I do not sketch and I rarely use the computer for composing a piece. Instead I take a lot of photographs, spend time looking at fine art, and use Pinterest as a modern day sketchbook. I work improvisationally cutting fabrics freehand and pinning them into a composition.

Without emotion I find my pieces to be empty. I am motivated by emotions- by events that are happening around me, both personal and political. I almost never make a piece that does not represent how I am feeling at a particular point in my life. For example, the Anxiety series came from the stress I had running a large firm of 35 people during the Great Recession trying to make ends meet: my Conflict series started over breakfast discussions about the war in Syria with my husband who is a Middle East scholar. Memory Loss is influenced by my mother’s slow decline due to Alzheimer’s. Often I will use a technique that allows me to release some of those emotions. I started my Anxiety series by slashing fabric over and over again. I was so nervous and anxious and it was a wonderful way to work out my tension. I do not sketch and I rarely use the computer for composing a piece. Instead I take a lot of photographs, spend time looking at fine art, and use Pinterest as a modern day sketchbook. I work improvisationally cutting fabrics freehand and pinning them into a composition.

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This style suited my own personality and I have never worked so hard - starting my days at 7 am and ending at 11pm - 7 days a week. Even now my studio practice is quite rigorous. I am in my studio most days at 8 and work until 5 or 6 with a ½ hour break for lunch. I still work 6 or 7 days a week.

I must admit, that to this day when a piece of mine is juried into a show, I still wonder what Nancy will think of it. Her approval is still my gold standard.

Perhaps the most instructional of Nancy's classes were her master classes where the students were very advanced designers. Rather than teaching techniques we spent much of our time in discussion. We talked about influence versus derivation. We talked about the place of textiles in the art world. We discussed broader issues rather than construction techniques. We looked and discussed the work of contemporary artists like Agnes Martin and Richard Diebenkorn. Hearing the voices of 20 well regarded textile artists was an amazing experience that formed much of my thinking.

Can you explain us the stylistic and artistic motivations that lead you to work in series?

If one studies the work of Cezanne, you will find in his catalogue raisonne many drawings and paintings of peaches and pears. While most people are only familiar with a few of his fruit still lifes, he used the same subject matter over and over again, trying new techniques, colors, angles, and compositions. Like Cezanne I work in a series because each piece informs the next. In lectures I often show my first piece and my last piece in a series. The difference is astounding. Had I stopped after Quilt No. 1, I never would have refined my compositions. I do not have to put every one of my thoughts into a single quilt but rather I can experiment across a series. Another advantage is that working in a series also means that I do not have to constantly think of new subject matter.

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How has your compositional style evolved over time? Have you always made abstract artworks? What are the differences between your first and most recent works?

My first non-bed quilts were representational. I did a series on chairs (who hasn't?!) and then I did a series on combs. My Cancer Comb series started out as representational – a 7' high representation of the black comb my father used, and it morphed into more abstract work by the 3rd in that series.

After the comb series I never looked back and only worked with abstract compositions. Ironically both my first and my most recent pieces have to do with my parents. The Cancer Comb series follows my father's battle with lung cancer and my most recent pieces have to do with my mother's cognitive loss. With these pieces I am using fabrics with more surface design, hand quilting and embroidery. I feel this is taking me on a new journey but I am not sure where it will lead.

Is there a group of your works that represents you more, that has played an important role in your growth as an artist?

I think that the Anxiety series is the most personal of my work. In the Anxiety series I have worked out tensions from running a business, firing a friend, dealing with a friend's mastectomy, grappling with a family member's battle with depression, and balancing conflicting emotions on my retirement. I keep returning to the Anxiety series when I have personal issues to work out. Currently my work in the Memory Loss series is the only way I can express the sorrow I feel regarding my mother's cognitive loss. With these pieces I am using fabrics with more surface design, hand quilting and embroidery. I feel this is taking me on a new journey but I am not sure where it will lead.
Your artworks are always large. What are the technical or stylistic reasons that lead you to work on large dimensions?

I think size has a lot to do with the way a piece is viewed. I want my pieces to be viewed as art, not as quilts, and not as craft. When I think about the artists that have influenced me—Pierre Soulages, Cy Twombly, Franz Kline, Louise Nevelson—they all worked large, and I think that size is part of the power of their art. In addition, Nancy Crow always pushed me to work larger and larger.

Working at this scale does come with its own set of constraints. I find myself climbing up and down ladders all of the time—which was fine when I was 50 and is a bit harder as I get into my late 60s. Lifting heavy constructions that are over 80” high and sometimes as wide as 120” is hard on my shoulders, and turning the material to quilt them has resulted in some rotator cuff tears. I find myself reducing the size of pieces to 60” since it is more manageable. I still prefer to machine quilt pieces myself on a conventional sewing machine—not a long arm, and that is the hardest physically.

But, I am still committed to working as large as I can manage. How important is the choice of materials for you? Do you like to experiment with the use of unusual materials? Can you talk about the fabrics used in the Indigo Compositions series?

I would not say that I am terribly experimental. I do virtually no surface design on my own, but I do have some unusual sources for some of the fabric I am working with.

I have stashes of wonderful vintage indigo from Japan as well as persimmon dyed fabric (kakishibu) that has made its way into some of my pieces. I have lovely fabrics that previously were sake bags. I have been working/playing with an indigo cotton produced by an ethnic group in China. The villagers spin cloth, dye it with natural indigo dyes, and after the fabric dries they over dye the cloth with a mixture of oxblood and peppers. They finish one side of the fabric by coating it with egg and pounding the cloth with mallets. The result is one side is a very shiny black or brown, and the other side is a matte black or brown. I have been experimenting with this cloth for over 3 years and am just getting to know what I want to do with it. It has a remarkable ability to keep a shape, hold a pleat and it does not fray.

I have completed many small studies and am now ready to work much larger.

What are you working on at the moment? Would you like to tell us about your current textile projects?

My newest pieces involve collaborations with two artists. Jayne Willoughby, a noted artist in her own right, creates some of the painted surface design backgrounds that I am currently using. Annette Wink is the dyer who I have worked with for 10 years, and she is also providing me with a different kind of surface designed fabric. Both artists have very different styles and I am starting to combine fabrics from both of them into my compositions. This is a big departure for me since I have always worked with solid dyed cottons.

I am finishing a piece that I have worked on for two years that is part of The Day After series. I am also working towards a one woman show in October 2019 where I would like to have at least 6-8 pieces from the Memory Loss series. So far I have completed five, so I have a lot of work to do! I can probably finish anywhere from 5-7 pieces a year depending on their size and complexity and it is very easy for me to get distracted with new ideas.
Joe is an esteemed textile artist and expert in the history of American quilting, he creates artquilts inspired by tradition but interpreted in a contemporary key, deconstructing the classic patchwork shapes and transforming them in an absolutely innovative way. Estimator of Brice Marden’s art, Joe explores in his works, the expressive potentialities of the line, the simplest and most powerful sign known to art.

Joe Cunningham, a prominent figure in the world of quilting, shares his insights and experiences in this interview.

INTERVIEW WITH JOE CUNNINGHAM

By Maria Rosaria Roseo

Joe when and why did you approach the world of quilting?

In 1979 I met Gwen Marston when she hired me to play guitar with her on some folk music concerts. At the time she was engaged in documenting Mary Schafer’s quilt collection and archive. When I saw some of the quilts I found them captivating and offered to write the text for the catalogue, a chore she was dreading. Gwen told me I would have to learn about quilts in order to do that, so I read all the available literature, about 6 books. The more I learned the more I came to love the whole history of quilts and what they represented. Also, as I interviewed Mary to learn more about her and her collection, I came to feel that this was a field I wanted to learn even more about. Then Gwen showed up at my apartment with a small quilt in a hoop, needles, thread and a large thimble and told me I should learn how to quilt if I was going to write persuasively. After quilting that small quilt, my stitches were good enough to quilt with Gwen at her frame. In a few weeks I wanted to make my own quilt, and soon Gwen and I were making quilts together. As we neared the end of our documentation project, I came up with the idea that in order to promote Mary Schafer’s collection and find an institutional home for it, we should become quilt professionals.

To me, the most important innovation of the American way of quiltmaking was the idea that a person could sew anything together any way she wanted. It was a realm of infinite creativity. And American women in the 19th century were making 2 meter square abstract designs decades or a century before artists came up with this idea. These quilters, these artists, have never been recognized for their gigantic accomplishments. Instead, quilters are thought to have made quilts to salvage precious fabric in a desperate attempt to stay warm. My mission in life is both to bring glory to these old-time quilters, and to exploit the creative freedom they bequeathed us all by making quilts purely my own.

Joe, when sewing your artwork, do you follow a scrupulous design or do you let yourself be guided by experience and instinct?

The way I work is to start out with a subject or theme, to select fabrics that I think might fit that theme and then to start cutting and sewing with a vague image in mind. Eventually the image becomes clearer in my mind as I work. I do not make a sketch or a pattern, instead trusting my instincts to guide me.

Can you tell us about the birth and development of one of your works?

I have long been interested in the way the right and left sides of our brains seem to be in charge of different domains. So when I decided to make my own interpretation of the classic “Lover’s Knot” pattern I chose to make it a picture of the two domains in our minds and also a picture of a marriage. I started by choosing two fabrics that were opposed in design and color, one a random batik from Ghana and one a woven plaid. Then, using bias tape, I constructed a geometric grid on the plaid side and a knotted tangle on the batik side. Showing how two completely different images can become one, conveyed my feelings about marriage as well as my the way we all employ different modes of thought.

For the quilting design I programmed the classic Lover’s Knot into my computerized long arm machine and used it in an all over grid.

http://www.joethequilter.com/

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What do you get inspiration from?

I get inspiration from everything I have ever seen, felt or thought.

Are there artists or artistic currents that influence your art?

I particularly like cotton crazy quilts that have no embroidery.

Their improvisational piecing techniques taught me how to work. I very much admire the work of Cy Twombly.

The artist William Wiley showed me how to trust myself and go my own way.

And Brice Marden has been an example of someone who knows how to let simple lines tell a whole story.

Would you define your artquilts as “improv”?

I have never thought of them quite in that way.

I prefer to think of my technique as one that allows me to extend the creative moment through the whole process. While I use improvisatory techniques, they are at the service of my theme or subject.

Joe, you’ve always been a musician. How does music influence your way of making textile art?

Learning to write and play music taught me a sense of drama and a feeling for the necessary foreground and background parts of any composition, musical or visual, written or improvised.

How has your style evolved from the first quilts to the present day?

For many years I thought the best way to honor the great quilt artists of the past was to copy or imitate their work.

About 15 or 20 years ago I realized that for me the best way to do this would be to do what those quilters actually did: to make quilts as authentically original and personally meaningful as I could.

Since then I have tried to make each quilt a truly personal statement.

What kind of fabrics do you choose for your work? Do you have a preference for cotton or do you love experimenting with new materials?

In this way I am pretty conventional.

I use almost all lightweight cotton. I have not experimented very much with alternative fabrics.

Are there tools you could never give up?

Once I got a computerized long arm quilting machine—a Handi Quilter Fusion—I have found great joy in creating quilting designs I never could have imagined as a hand quilter.

Also I love my Laurel Star iron from Switzerland. With its unlimited steam I can take care of all sorts of problems.

You are an author and co-author of many books on quilting, the first “Mary Schafer and her quilts”, followed by “Twenty little Patchwork Quilts: with full-size templates”, “Amish abstractions: Quilts from the collection of Faith and Stephen Brown” and many others.

What intrigues me the most, though, is your book “Men and the art of quiltmaking”.

Why a book on quilting men? Can you tell us about it?

Having once written a lecture on the subject, I made a comment about male quilters.

Immediately I received an email from Andi Reynolds, who was at that time the editor of the AQS book division.

She told me I needed to write a book about it. I said I did not want to do that because there were so many more interesting aspects of quilting to write about.

“If you don't do it,” she said, “Someone else will, and they will make it a freak show.”

So I interviewed 30 men from a cross section of the quilting world and let each one tell his story.
INTERVIEW WITH ALICIA SCARDETTA

By Maria Rosaria Roseo

Alicia Scardetta is a young artist from Brooklyn who creates tapestries with vibrant colors, two and three-dimensional textile structures that are inspired by objects associated with femininity. By interweaving elements of her memories and personal identity with the techniques of tapestry art, Alicia achieves a unique and playful quality in each piece.

http://www.aliciascardetta.com

Alicia, how did your passion for textile art come about? Can you tell us something about your history as a textile artist?

In college, I studied fine art drawing at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. When I started preparing my BFA thesis I wanted to take the line off the paper and into a physical, tactile structure. Fiber and thread felt like the most intuitive way to interpret a line. At the time, Pratt didn’t offer fiber or textile classes to fine art majors, so I sought out opportunities outside of my coursework. I held a studio internship at Dieu Donne Papermill in Manhattan, where I learned how to process flax fiber and cotton pulp into finished sheets of handmade paper. Then, I interned at the Textile Arts Center, where I learned how to operate a treadle loom and weave tapestry. I later went on to take workshops at both Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine and Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina, where I further honed my technical skills in fiber.

Are there any artists or artistic currents from which you draw inspiration?

I live in New York City and I make a point of visiting the museums and galleries here on a regular basis. It’s always inspiring to step outside my front door and take the subway to a new exhibition. I recently visited the Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future exhibit at the Guggenheim. It’s the first major exhibition of the af Klint’s work in the states and I think we will see her work influencing many American artists.

Her pieces are vibrant and otherworldly, it’s hard not to be inspired by her use of colors, shapes and content.

How do you design a new tapestry? Do you rely on a rigid design activity or do you let yourself be guided more by instinct?

I usually start with an overall structure and color palette in mind. From there I may make sketches of what I want the finished piece to look like or create some color studies. Then I warp the loom and start weaving. I make a lot of color decisions while I’m actually weaving the piece, seeing how one color interacts with another and making changes as I go.

How much time do you take to complete a new artwork?

The techniques I use are time consuming. I weave and wrap all of my pieces by hand. An 18” x 24” piece can take up to 40 hours to complete.

Sometimes people are shocked by how long the work takes, but as a society we often spend the same amount of time, if not more, on our computers, tablets and smartphones. Time is what you make of it.

Alicia, your tapestries have a fresh and playful style, with the use of solar and vibrant colors. What role does colour play in your work?

The vibrant colors, wrapped elements and unexpected compositions found in my work are largely drawn from objects associated with girlhood; including friendship bracelets, jump ropes and hair braids.

I’m also interested in color interactions, how one color looks when placed next to another.

As for the choice of materials, do you rely on traditional materials or do you like to experiment? Do you hand dye the threads you use? How important is the choice of materials for you?

Rope plays a huge role in my work, it is the base of many of my pieces serving as the warp. I use primarily wool, which is a traditional tapestry fiber.

To balance the softness of the wool I often implement metallics in my work. I do not dye my own fibers but I am interested in exploring new materials as a way to evolve my work.
Do you prefer to make small or large works? Why?

I would love to make more large scale works but I have been limiting myself to smaller, more manageable pieces at the moment due to the size of my studio.

Last year I made my largest piece to date which measures about 5ft x 5ft. It took several months to complete, it now hangs in my living room.

What are you working now?

I always have at least one tapestry going but as for a larger project, I’m currently working on planning for next year. I have a lot of ideas and I don’t always write them down.

So right now I’m spending some time recording my thoughts and dreams and hoping to take action on them in the new year!

How do you imagine your artwork in future?

I’m interested in bringing other elements into my work whether it be wood, metal or ceramic. Lately, I’ve been thinking about the balance of materials and I’m interested in making some pieces that have both hard and soft elements.
The history of Biennials of Lausanne, the rebirth of tapestry and the origins of Fiber Art.

At the end of World War II, the art of the tapestry underwent a phase of deep rebirth and renewal. Tapestry workshops and factories across Europe returned to their reputation, monumental making himself modern. This arte broke free from its dependence on the painting that, in the previous century, had almost doomed to oblivion.

An advocate of this revival was a brilliant artist Jean Lurçat who, in the 40s transformed what was a traditional craft into a veritable art form. Contemporary art.

The intense activity of Lurçat led to the birth of CITAM (Centre Internazionale de Tatapisserie Ancienne et Moderne) and the organization of the renowned Biennale in Lausanne that took place since 1962: the city of Lausanne was recognized as the capital of textile art contemporary and center of the movement New Tapestry.

The book opens with an article by Janis Jefferies that provides a general overview. He puts the textile art in the broader context of art: “The importance of this event (biennials) has been to position the textile art in a broader view of the history of art … you feel a bond with the renewed interest in the fabrics currently shown by the art scene: “most art critics recognize what artists have always known, that the textile materiality with all its severity, responsiveness and access to life and has a loss enormous capacity to talk about problems of our human condition.”

In his conclusion he states that “Lausanne has led to a critical redefinition of the tapestry and textile art claiming a space within a wider field of visual arts.”

The book contains over 150 photographs of works and pictures of museum exhibits, most of which are new and testifies to the vitality of these exhibitions and their strong impact on the international level.

Historical research carried out by the Toms Pauli Foundation, heir to the International Center of ancient and modern tapestries (CITAM) is enriched by essays by specialists from four countries with strong textile tradition: France, Poland, United States and Japan.

INTERVIEW WITH SHIN-HEE CHIN

Shin-Hee Chin is an important and eclectic textile artist who creates installations, sculptures, works of fiber art and art quilts based mostly on the theme of female work and its enhancement as a means of social redemption.

Born and raised in Seoul, South Korea, Shin-hee Chin received her BFA and MFA from the Hongik University. Shortly afterwards, she immigrated to the United States with her husband and received her Master’s Degree in Fiber Arts from California State University in Long Beach.

As professor for 14 years, Chin taught drawing, painting, color theory and mixed techniques at Tabor College in Kansas. She was elected as Distinguished Faculty at Tabor College in 2008. Her artworks have won numerous awards and have been exhibited nationally and internationally in museums and art galleries including the Metropolitan Art Museum in Tokyo, the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., the Palais des Nations (United Nations Headquarters) in Geneva, Switzerland, and Uijeongbu Arts Centre, Seoul, South Korea.

http://shinheechin.com

“Behind the Scenes”, machine and hand stitched, 240”w x 50”h x 30”d (installation dimension), (fabric 30”width x 936”length), 2013. Copyright Shin-hee Chin.
Can you tell us something about yourself and your history as an artist? How did you start?

I was born and raised in Seoul, Korea. I received my BFA and MFA from Hongik University. Shortly after, I immigrated to the United States with my husband and raised two kids while earning my MA in Fiber Arts from California State University at Long Beach.

As a person who has spent half her life in South Korea and the other half in the United States, cultural context has shaped most of my works.

As my worldview has been shaped by my experiences as a woman, a mother, and an immigrant, my work is an effort to draw connections between my inner life and the world beyond.

Can you talk about the birth and development of one of your works? How does a new work come about?

Because of various teaching and committee duties as a professor at Tabor College, I generally don't make big pieces during the semester. During the semester, however, I focus on preparing the next projects by doing research on the subject matters, sketching, preparing art materials such as making fabric yo-yos, dying fabrics and threads, andcoiling fabrics on a daily basis at my basement (aka studio).

The majority of actual art making/production takes place during the summer and winter vacation, which are almost 5 months. During this period, I often take a residency at the Red Barn Studio at Lindsborg to use its space and facility to finish big pieces of work.

What are the differences between your first and most recent works?

In retrospect, I find that I have consistently focused on the issue of humanity. Recently, I began to expand to the abstract and non-figurative aspect in fiber art by exploring text, language, identity, and environment.

How important is the choice of materials for you? Do you use recycled materials?

Yes, I do. My ongoing series of works explore humanity and divinity in human beings, highlighting the interconnectedness. I have also created series of pieces that depict the marginalized and forgotten people who have remained voiceless, faceless, and nameless. My work seeks to valorize the small tasks that together yield a greater sum in positive energy, yet are overlooked or dismissed by history. My work also seeks to acknowledge the trials endured by victims and minorities.

Cultural context has greatly influenced most of my work as I have spent half my life in South Korea and the past two decades in the United States. I have had equal exposure to two vastly different cultures. In my years of dealing with the issues of a bicultural lifestyle, art has helped me reconcile the conflicting nature of these influences. My work reflects this binary approach – female vs. male, East vs. West, art vs. craft – all those paradoxes inhabit the same space just as both Korea and America co-exist in me. I also draw inspiration specifically from the feminist tradition, Christian spirituality, and Eastern philosophy.

The main theme of your work is focused on the female condition and the redemption of the work of the woman. Can you tell us something about this?

In my work, I attempt to carve out what I proudly call a feminine territory in which the voices of effaced and silenced women reverberate, and to translate the experiences of women in a way that people of different ethnic backgrounds and cultural experiences can understand.
"In-between; In search of Identity", 50" x 60", Hand quilted, random stitched. Whole cloth, cotton thread, perle cotton, embroidery floss. Copyright Shin-hee Chin

The slow nature of my technique mimics the creative process of birthing. This recalls the gradual forming of the fetus through the intersection of capillary within the belly of the mother or the silkworm’s patient and continuous spinning leading to the creation of its cocoon.

How long do you take on average to complete an artwork?

Each project differs. Most of my work takes at least one or three months. One extreme example might be the one entitled Behind the Labels, which takes 30 years and is still going on. It is made of about four thousands of labels I have collected from my own family’s clothing. I make a small quilt (24" x 20") every two years with the labels.

Your art quilt “Florence Nightingale” received awards for innovative use of materials and techniques at the Quilt National 2013. Can you tell us about it?

When there was not much rhyme or reason to medicine, and little credence given to the research of a woman, Nightingale created changes that saved lives during the Crimean War. Because of her work as a statistician and nurse, it was found that the most casualties occurred in the British army hospitals than on the field. She used her data to show the correlation between the cleanliness of the hospitals and the mortality rate, creating a chart, often called Nightingale’s Rose or rose chart.

Florence Nightingale cared enough about saving lives that she went to great lengths to improve conditions. In laying out her image with her rose chart, red rose, and red cross, I wish to honor her accomplishments. Also, by synthesizing the Fibonacci Spiral, I wanted to illustrate circles and squares, math and art, beautiful minds and good deeds. I used cotton, recycled fabric, dye, perle cotton thread, embroidery floss, organza and use techniques of twisting fabric cord, blanket stitch, dying and embroidery. I developed this technique by appropriating a traditional Korean paper twisting method called “Ji-Seung,” literally meaning ‘paper cord’ – for the basketry. In Ji-Seung method, cording ‘hanji’ (traditional Korean paper) was done by twisting single strips between the index finger and thumb, and later wound in pairs to make cords. I substituted the recycled fabric for the rice paper to construct fabric tubes.
Then, I connected each fabric tube by stitching. All were hand stitched. I dyed some of the stripes to get the tonal quality.

Your artwork ranges from textile installations, sculptures, fiber art and art quilts. Can you explain why you choose a variety of means of expression?

In a certain sense, it is the unintended result of my experiment in search of the best forms and materials that best fit my themes and subjects. I chose to do fiber art because fabric is universal, versatile, and easy to obtain. Though often seen as mundane material, it can allow a freedom of expression in themes with their tactile richness, vibrant color, multi-layered depth. Through my fiber installation and fiber sculpture, I have attempted to carve out what I proudly call a feminine territory in which the voices of silenced women reverberate, and to translate the experiences of women in a way that people of different ethnic backgrounds and cultural experiences can understand.

For that purpose, I convert the conventional "feminine" activity of needlework into a useful medium for the making of art.

Tiziana Tateo is an esteemed Italian textile artist who has exhibited her works in Italy and abroad, in numerous solo and group exhibitions. Her works are part of public collections such as the Civic Collection of Fiber Art, Municipality of Chieri (To) Italy; the International Quilt Study Centre of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (USA); the Michigan State University Museum (USA) and numerous private collections. Tateo began to devote herself totally to Fiber Art in 1995, working and studying full time to perfect those artistic techniques that have always been cultivated as pastime and self-taught. As a textile artist she has always appreciated the process of experimenting with new techniques in order to discover new results and representative styles. Her love for colour and texture has led her to work with several types of media as paper, paint, fabric and plastic, which are usually the starting point for developing the themes and subjects of her works.

http://www.tizianatateo.it/
Tiziana, can you tell us something about your history as an artist, how you came to textile art and why?

Since I was very young I have preferred to dedicate my free time to stitching and embroidering rather than to other forms of recreation and games. Later, when I had other commitments to fully occupy my life with, I always found time to cultivate and improve those skills just for sheer pleasure.

In 1993 I quit my job as a civil servant, and I worked full time to perfect my artistic techniques always cultivated as a pastime and as a self-educated person. I enrolled in three years art courses, held at the Town Hall of Milan, on techniques of textile, silk painting, batik, interior decoration. Meantime I met the Italian textile artist Marialuisa Sponga, who introduced me to free machine embroidery. I was so fascinated by the possibilities that textiles offered to express myself that I decided to improve the techniques of free embroidering and quilting and in the following years I totally devoted myself to Fiber Art.

In the meantime, I started collaborating with Italian textile-art journals and qualified magazines to create projects that were later reproduced on textile. I read many English and American textile books and studied for two years (2002 – 2003) a distance learning course online about machine embroidery held by famous English textile artist Maggie Grey.

The Quilting and Embroidery Award, which I received in 2002 in the Husqvarna Quilt Competition “Feel Free” for my artquilt “Repainting Boudin”, gave me the input to continue in my artistic journey.

In 2010 I graduated from Opus School of Textile Arts and Middlesex University in London in Arts Embroidered Textiles (BA/Hons).

How important is the experimentation of techniques and materials in your works?

Experimenting with techniques is an integral part of my work. I have a full palette of textiles and nontextile techniques, and I work without defining boundaries. I print, cut, burn, test the materials and sew all of them. The textile techniques I employ vary depending on the inspiration for the work, but they often involve stitching by hand or machine.

I have no favorite technique. It depends on the materials I have at hand, the content, and sometimes the mood of the moment. I am intrigued by the rich surfaces and textures, which I can obtain from a process of manipulation and experimentation of materials and techniques.

My research explores the expressive and symbolic potential of the materials and different techniques with the aim of conveying a strong visual impact to the viewer.

Figurative art or abstract art? Which of these two forms of representation do you feel closest to and why?

Figures are common in my work because of the feelings, emotions and dialogue they convey. I think that like no other subject matter the figure has the ability to speak to the viewer in an extremely intimate manner. In my work “La Pudeur”, the naked body half-covered with black tulle is meant to underline how our education has conditioned us and our inner freedom.

In “Inside and Outside” the face is the visual display and surface of the manifestation of forms and colors that blends in all of us.

The woman’s expression conveys the fear of being devoured by the advance of the colors, representing the vortex of the emotions.

Are there artists or artistic currents that most influence your choices?

I am not influenced by specific artist or artistic currents. We live in a visual society, which gives us a variety of ideas and information that are often my starting point. Any idea can come from everywhere!

How has your work evolved in terms of style and expression? What are the differences between the first and the most recent works?

My methods and techniques have changed, developed and adapted over time. My primary passion for the sumptuousness of materials, without being dropped has nevertheless given space to a stricter-planning and to a progressive deduction of mediums.

Differently from the past I am considering textiles not merely a medium, but a source of meanings, motivating me for working in a more conceptual way.

Do you follow a scrupulous planning activity or do you let your instinct guide you?

My work is unplanned and evolves through a series of processes. I work intuitively and spontaneously most of the time. Occasionally I do a very simple sketch, other times I just have an idea whirling around my head.

While I am working ideas overlap and change and it can happen for instance that initial cold colours become warm or empty spaces fill up.
Do you work in series? Why?

I have tried to make some works in a series, but that approach for me is too boring and the result is unsatisfactory.

I know that in art working in a series is almost a rule, but if you want to push the boundaries, as I like to do, every new work claims a new voice that for me is exciting!

I am aware I run the risk of being considered an artist without his own style, but my choice is to follow new paths. This is the reason because my works are often very different from one another.

To design and create your work, do you also use computer tools such as digital printing, photo-shop...?

I have made some works using digital printed photos, like in my quilt "River Pearls" and "River Pearls #1", where I used printed images, but it is not my preferred kind of work. It is becoming a little bit too widespread and I preferred to find more personal technique.

Do you prefer hand sewing, personal and intima-te, or do you let yourself be seduced by the charm of the sewing machine and its technological potentiality?

I find exciting to use free motion machine embroidery and quilting because the creative potential is great, adding dimension and texture to the work. Moreover, I often find the need to add free hand stitching to give a stronger character to my work or simply for aesthetic purpose. Sometimes few hand stitches can be essential to acquire the desired structure of the work.

In a new work, do you start from the material, around which you then develop the idea of the subject, or do you start from the subject and then you choose techniques and materials?

If I am planning to participate to a textile art context I focus my attention simultaneously on the theme I have to interpret and, on the materials – textile and not textile - that I have at hand at the moment. Soon after, the manipulation of textile leads me to consider techniques and subject to work on, but always following my instinct. This means that what I had planned starting the work might be different before finishing it.

However, even the first step of my inspiration is very often the material, the subject that I have to develop, is at the same time on my mind.

Is the technique or the idea more important? What do you think determines the perfect success of a work? When does creativity risk being suffocated by technique?

Mastering only techniques has its disadvantages because if the technique prevails the creativity becomes impoverished and the work loses appeal.

Today many artists make shocking works to get more attention, but often their works cannot be understood and are made with bad technical skills.

I think that the perfect success of the work lies in the right balance of technique and idea.

What are you working on right now? Do you want to tell us about your current textile projects?

At the moment I am dyeing, screen-printing and hand painting several types of fabrics, which I have collected in the last months. They will be waiting in my studio for my new idea that I hope will come soon!
Pat Pauly is a recognized textile artist and fiber art teacher. Her art quilts have been featured in numerous publications and exhibitions, seen in exhibitions internationally, and is in private and corporate collections. Known for her improvisation technique, Pat uses bold colors and unusual juxtapositions of fabric printed and painted by her personally, to create energetic and spontaneous artworks that have much in common with the pictorial arts. Her art quilts evokes natural and graphic forms, updated in a contemporary key.

https://www.patpauly.com/

I often ask this question to the artists I have the pleasure of interviewing: why did you choose textile materials as the medium for your art?

College studies had me pegged as a painter. But my interests included graphic design and furniture, so a good foundation in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional design. The ability to move part of the image – whether it be parts of a collage or reconfiguring a sculpture – intrigued me. The ability to reconfigure my canvas, or to reconstruct the image, is found in improvisational piecing. So, working in textiles fits my need for painting (color, shape) and my desire for construction.

Can you tell us something about yourself and your history as an artist? How did you start?

I’ve never been without making something. So, I gravitated to majoring in art, and teaching art. Art was encouraged, promoted, fed. While living in Minneapolis in the early 80s I saw my first art quilt, decided to make one, was juried in to an exhibition (Quilt National ’83), and continued on this path. My works look like paintings, and the biggest compliment is from a fellow painter who claims this work as just that – a painting.

Pat, your personal style of composition is abstract and based on improvisationally. Behind an improv process there is always an idea, a project that guides the artist towards a result that will only be partially “improv”.

Can you talk about your design method?

There is a sensibility for how a work starts. Sometime there is an image that drives the composition (Single Leaf) or a theme (Time of Day: Nine to Five), and at times it is just the material that compels the story (Normandy).

Each method calls for a particular way of working, but all coalesce on the design wall. I do build the work there. So, I remind my audience that you must have the largest design wall you can muster because you can only build as big as your wall.

An element that strongly characterizes your artwork is the printing on the fabrics, which you do personally and which is the subject of some of your workshops. Can you talk about it?

My first quilt was made with silkscreened fabric that I made. I think the colorist in me, the painter side of me, is what is longing for applying color to fabric. But printing, like silkscreening, monoprinting, and stenciling, speaks to my need for graphics and repetition of motifs. I’m aware of the textures that appear in the designs, the changes in value, and the clean or messy line that I can get. I love making these prints, which may be seen as a finished piece, but that I force myself to cut apart in the hope of gaining a better composition. Now, teaching is where I see a room of people exploding this technique and the energy is fantastic. It is rewarding to see the designs develop.

Pat, you give lectures on the evolution of traditional quilting and contemporary fiber art, and the influence of traditional quilts in contemporary design. In your contemporary artworks, does the tradition of American quilting still have a role to play?
I do see the link between the traditional craft and contemporary fiber art, and not just because they are both using fabrics and textiles. The contemporary art forms follow the functional foundation set down by traditional whole cloth, block, and appliqué works. The contemporary works just pull out the essentials of the technique and push it far beyond its roots. The link is there, just hiding beneath the surface. But the contemporary works demand you to look at the aesthetic, the design, the relationship of the elements far beyond the obvious. I’m a great fan of historic works because of their delicate craftsmanship and strong graphics. So, when I work, I’m aware of how the design sits with that historic tradition, as well as how it fits in the history of Fine Arts like printmaking and painting. You ask about how traditional works influence my work, and I’ll say that because the works are meant primarily to be functional and are sized to fit a bed, they are by default large. And for my works, I love working large and bold, so that they engulf you should you stand near.

Can you tell us about your “Normandy” art quilt on display at the Quilt National ‘17?

Normandy developed improvisationally with a selection of fabrics. I often put out the “palette” of fabric that I’ll work with, and not return to select more. I meant this piece as a reaction to war, although a personal war, and my original title for it was mundane. A friend, not knowing its theme, saw “Normandy” or more specifically, the Americans landing in WWII at Normandy, and the imagery in the piece spoke to him. Since he referred to war, and my own feelings of conflict, I felt it apt to name it as such.

As for your growth as an artist, are there any aspects of your first textile artworks in which you feel you no longer recognize yourself?

As I look back on my work I can see the progression, and can claim that my work has not changed in its voice, but rather in its complexity. I know which works are stronger than others, and I pay attention so that the next ones can hold that strength.

Pat, you are a tireless teacher, in your workshops you talk about design and compositional techniques. I ask you: first the technique or first the creativity? What do you think determines the perfect success of a work? When does creativity risk being suffocated by technique?
This question may be the only one you need to ask! I will read this fiber art as having two parts – one is design and composition (or the creativity and artistry), the other as the technique and workmanship (or the how to make the work).

I think that technique and creativity go hand in hand. But often, people have one skill greater than the other. For me, my art background had me comfortable with color theory and design principles. I had sewing skills, but needed to learn the language of quilters. I made many quilts before I ever took a class in quilting. I find that the craftsmanship can be learned easily; the design is more intuitive and difficult to move forward. That said, as I work, my skill set for construction doesn’t hamper the composition or creativity. I know how to construct in many different ways. A work’s success is, for me, the whole. That is, how it reads as an entire work. I’ll not see the details, the little additions, or delicate sewing, or craftsmanship. I’m looking for how powerful the statement is. Does it capture my attention? Is it original? If I’m intrigued, I’ll look more closely and visit the technique for construction and finishing. If technique overwheels the work, and becomes stronger and more important than the creative elements, I’ll look to see if the design holds its strength, because for me that is most important. But if the workmanship is sloppy, it’s devalued considerably. Both technique and creativity must be there, but artistry comes first.

Do you work in series? Why?

I find myself returning again to themes. Leaves, Time of Day, Take Two, and Water/Earth come to mind. The evolution of an idea intrigues me, and how I can portray that idea with different imagery and composition. And it serves as a check for me to see if I can improve or diversify, and still have it be part of the series.

What do you think is the most important difference between a craftsman who works with threads and fabrics and a textile artist? When does a fiber work become art?

Fiber art, like Fine Art, must hold no intrinsic function other than for itself. Yes, you can fold yourself into one of my quilts, the same as you might hang a painting to block off a doorway. But my fiber art is primarily meant to hang on the wall. Craftsmanship is a skill set, and a necessity for those who work in textile art, but that skill needs the added design and composition that will move it into the realm of art. So, the medium alone, even if executed skillfully is not a work of fiber art.

What are you working on right now? Do you want to tell us about your current textile projects?

Take Two is a project where I’ve limited myself to two square meters of fabric with no additional fabrics. Used as a constraint, these two fabrics must do the work for the entire piece to give me shape, line, contrast, movement – well, all the design elements I can muster. I found that it is a great exercise in composition, where I may choose from traditional patterning like whole cloth, nine patch, overall – and see how to work with the fabric to achieve that design. It also feeds my delight in printing fabric in bold graphic color. Plus, I love a challenge.
In the last decade a strong modern quilting movement spread throughout the world, starting from the US thanks to patchwork rockstars like Tula Pink, Angela Walters, Alison Glass, Victoria Findlay Wolfe, Elizabeth Hartman, and Amy Friend.

In October 2009, Alissa Haight Carlton and Latifah Saafir founded the Modern Quilt Guild in Los Angeles. This no-profit organization is committed to spread the growth and development of modern quilting through a dedicated online and offline community of enthusiasts.

At the moment, the MQG counts over 14K members, with 200+ active affiliate Guilds in 39 Countries. Every February, the MQG hosts the largest modern quilt show in the world - QuiltCon.

This exclusive event consists of a fantastic exhibition (more than 550 modern themed quilts on display) paired with unmissable workshops and lectures held by modern quilt industry darlings.

Is that a revolution? Probably, it is!

The tough rules and constant search for perfection typical of the traditional style are now set apart in favor of a brand new modern evolution we could friendly identify as “patchwork 2.0”.

A brand new way to think and make patchwork is born: say goodbye to neutral shades like beiges, creams, delicate flowered fabrics and amish inspired patterns. At the same time a revolutionary and pragmatical “better done than perfect” motto spreads and spontaneously conquers thousands of women.

Modern patchwork often involves minimalism. In addition, modern makers love playing with improvisation and color contrast.

It’s a brand new era, made of original and cool projects, of vivid colored fabrics (fantasy-themed and solids, as well) that contrast against gray, black and white negative spaces.

The Aurifil Company, open and sensitive to new market trends and needs since ever, has actively consolidated partnerships and collaborations with modern leading designers and makers putting all our know how at their disposal in order to offer specialized products that respond to their renewed needs.
In collaboration with the main Fabric Manufacturers, we gave birth to a massive series of thread collections and thread sets matched to their bestseller fabric lines.

Our top quality Made in Italy Mako Cotton, well known and appreciated throughout the world for its unique and immediately recognizable features, turned out to be their perfect companion and hundreds of top selling designers wanted to pick their very own collection of the most suitable Aurifil nuances and weights. If you prefer the so called “stitch in the ditch”, then our 50wt Mako Cotton is the best choice for you! Very thin and resistant, light and brilliant, it is available in a beautiful rainbow of 276 colors (including 36 variegated!).

Stitches are a very significant element of your work? No problem! Give our 12wt Mako Cotton a try. It’s simply perfect to give to your quilting importance and definition.

With an extensive range of Cotton threads, available in 5 weights and 3 sizes, Aurifil is highly suited for every quilt and embroidery project.
VERONA TESSILE returns, from Thursday 25 to Sunday 28 April 2019.

The international exhibition of textile art has been organized since 2011 every two years by the Association Ad Maiora with the patronage of the City of Verona and the Department of Culture. In this edition, coordinated by architect Maria Bussolin, Italian and European groups of textile art, artists from all over the world will meet in Verona. Among them Joe Cunningham, a scholar of the traditions of American quilting and an esteemed textile artist whose works appear in galleries and private American collections. Cunningham creates artquilts inspired by tradition but interpreted in a contemporary key, deconstructing the classic patchwork figures and transforming them in an innovative way.

The host country of the fifth edition of the festival will be Hungary; the United States of America will be represented by the Collection Jacques Légeret with an exhibition of ancient and modern works created by the Amish and Mennonite communities. The festival will include group exhibitions of Italian and foreign artists, a world premiere on the theme of migrations entitled "Migrating Windows", the International Competition "Laudato si! Praise be to you, my Lord" - From Francis to Francis and finally, as is tradition, the exhibition of the Association Ad Maiora, this year dedicated to "His Majesty The Hexagon", always one of the favorite patterns of quilters all over the world. Traditional and modern hexagons, simple or combined with other figures will create a mosaic of various and colorful works.

VERONA TESSILE will be presented in different exhibition settings in the city, made available by the Municipal Administration, and by the Civic Museums of Verona within buildings of particular historical and architectural importance.

In the prestigious rooms of Palazzo della Gran Guardia the visit will develop through 5 different exhibitions:

- In Bouvette Room the exhibition of new works by the Association Ad Maiora "His Majesty The Hexagon", curated by Roberta Bugli, focuses on works made up of very small hexagonal pieces, mostly hand-sewn.

- In the Multifunctional Room "Migrating Windows", the first world exhibition of textile art on the theme of migrations conceived and curated by Annamaria Brenti, in collaboration with Silvana Zenatello and Piera Quaglia. It will be followed by Silvana Zenatello, Patrizia Madrassi and Maria Teresa Sansotta.
In the Central Hall of the Noble floor the Collection Jacques Légeret of ancient and modern quilts of the Amish and Mennonite communities (coordinators Donatella Ferri Faggioli and Roberta Sartori).

In another room on the Noble floor, “LAUDATO SI ’’Praise be to you, my Lord’’ - From Francis to Francis, International Competition which interprets Pope Francis’ encyclical on the care of Creation, ideally combining it with the canticle of Saint Francis of Assisi (coordinators Gianna Dalla Pozza and Giovanna Caldana).

Also at Palazzo della Gran Guardia the solo exhibit of Joe Cunningham will be organized by Rosanna Valente and Simonetta Gazzola.

At the Achille Forti Gallery of Modern Art, at Palazzo della Ragione (Sala Scacchi), Susanna Bigardi will coordinate the works belonging to the Guild of Hungarian textile artists.

In the Protomoteca, among the busts of the famous citizens from Verona, and in Nervi Room of the new Library, Daniela Spezatti and Paola Bellotti will follow the exhibition of some Italian groups from Portogruaro, Pazze per le Pezze (Crazy for fabrics), and from Parma, Arte Patchwork and Parma Patchwork.

In the central courtyard of the Natural History Museum of Palazzo Pompei by arch. Sammicheli, Luigina Franco and Anna Tommasi will coordinate the exhibition “Stone Carpets” created by the national association Quilt Italia, reinterpretation of the geometries and figures of the polychrome marble floors of the Italian palaces and churches.

Emanuela Meneghini and Vincenzo Callea at San Francesco al Corso near Juliet’s tomb will coordinate the exhibition “Purgatory and Paradise” organized by the PU.PA group. This is a series of new works presented for the Verona Tessile event by artists who have interpreted the two canticles of the Divine Comedy through textile art.

There will be a lot of other initiatives, with textile workshops, book presentations and theme events.

AD MAIORA - WHO WE ARE

A hundred members who carry forward, through group work, a cultural message of eco-sustainability and social solidarity with their passion and creativity. This is the beating heart of the CULTURAL ASSOCIATION AD MAIORA, which for over 20 years has enhanced craftsmanship and creativity through education and training in the sign of textile and patchwork traditions. In the wake of female arts, following a rediscovery that combines contemporary themes, AD MAIORA promotes cultural, educational and scientific events. In the location of the association, on the hills of Verona, the ample space dedicated to manual activities is transformed into a multifunctional area where conventions and conferences, refresher and specialization courses, meetings, seminars, debates, book presentations and small musical events take place.

SOCIAL PROJECTS IN ITALY AND ABROAD

During 20 years the Association has been involved in numerous social projects in Italy and abroad. The most recent ones:

- VivaVittoria Verona or Juliet’s Blanket has been organized with the Department for Equal Opportunities of Verona and the VivaVittoria Group of Brescia in 2017. 12,000 wool squares of 50x50 cm, hand-crafted by Italian women and covering Piazza Bra and Liston near the Arena, for a length of 1.2 km. The sale has collected more than € 30,000, given to abused and distressed women through the Department responsible for the Pink Telephone center of first listening help.

- In 2018 a project was signed: Re sewing Distances and Places (RICU), coordinated by Prof. Anna Maria Paini of the Department of Culture and Civilization of the University of Verona, aimed at the inclusion of refugees through textile art.

Since 2017, Ad Maiora has been working with Convivio, in a project to support patients waiting for treatments within the DAY Hospital in the Oncology department of one of Verona main Hospitals.
Functional Wearable Art

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Here you will find my efforts to bridge the gap between the artistic and practical; the useful and the meaningful.

Each product is meticulously designed in France, with many items produced and manufactured in the US and Europe.