Lewis Knauss
Jane Lackey
Olga de Amaral
Lilian Tyrrell
Margot Rolf
Ásgerdur Búadóttir
Shigeo Kubota
Rena Thompson
Laura Foster Nicholson
Lia Cook
Ewa Latkowska-Zychska
Cynthia Schira
Foreword

This catalogue and exhibition on "Contemporary Woven Work: America and Abroad" reflect the Gallery's long-term commitment to exhibiting the work of innovative contemporary artists. Moreover, the interest in woven art is appropriate since Ohio, particularly the northeastern part of the state, has traditionally been an important center of fiber art. There is now a renewed interest here and elsewhere in creating works on the loom. Art galleries and programs — such as those at Kent State University — have been a catalyst for increased public appreciation and awareness of woven forms as art. The focus of this exhibit is on the innovative merging of technique with artistic vision. Each participating weaver embraces distinctly different aesthetic sensibilities and technical interests; yet in spite of the differences, they all produce their work on some type of loom.

The exhibition represents the support and collaboration of many individuals and organizations. First of all, I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Ohio Arts Council. Additional assistance was provided by the Cuyahoga Weavers Guild, The College of Fine and Professional Arts, and the Friends of the Gallery. Janice Lessman-Moss served as guest curator, and I am deeply indebted to her for her expertise and enthusiasm. It has, in fact, been a great pleasure working with her. In addition, I would like to thank the Gallery staff — especially Bruce Morrill, our designer — and Melanie Holliday for their hard work and dedication.

Without the lenders there would be no exhibition. Therefore I am grateful for the cooperation of the artists as well as The Miller Brown Gallery-San Francisco and The Allrich Gallery-San Francisco.

Finally, I acknowledge the support of Nancy Smith and Al Moss.

Fred T. Smith, Director
School of Art Galleries
Kent State University
Woven art is rarely organized into an exhibition exclusive of other media because weaving is not often segregated from the general category of Fiber Art. Exhibitions which include such varied processes as netting, feltmaking, papermaking, wrapping, knotting, plaiting, as well as, weaving present the breadth of the Fiber Arts but seldom the depth of any particular aspect of the field. Today however, probably more than at any other time in history there are many serious artists from around this country and the world utilizing weaving as a vehicle for self-expression. It seems like an appropriate time to present an exhibition which focuses on this distinctive and vital medium.

This current utilization of weaving as an expressive art medium is really in its infancy. Although exquisite weavings were executed by ancient cultures such as the Egyptian Coptics or the Peruvian Indians, the pieces were produced as decorative or symbolic embellishments to garments, blankets, or other utilitarian cloths. The technique of tapestry weaving has also been utilized throughout the ages to create large textile paintings. Often the motivation for executing the pieces was a functional one, that of insulating against cold and noise. Artists or designers would create a painting or composition that would be translated into yarn by a factory of anonymous weavers. Little, if any, concern was given to the way the structure would affect or enhance the image or design. It was not until the late 1920's when Anni Albers began to weave that the structure or pattern of weaving and the fluid fibrous materials characteristic to the medium became an integral part of the final design. Although many of her works had objective references, the textures of the threads, and structure of the weave were the essence of the piece. Sometimes she utilized complex weave structures while at other times the simple structure worked effectively with the more distinctive or dimensional yarns. By the late 1950's and early 1960's Fiber Art, particularly weaving, gained popularity among artists as a valid means of expression. The characteristics of the materials and structural processes of weaving provided the foundation for the development of unique visual relationships. The organic quality of the materials and the yarn’s response to gravity were at the center of interest for many of those artists. And the weave construction provided a way of organizing or stabilizing the yarn in contrast to its natural tendencies. The majority of the pieces produced at this time were abstract, expressive, large in scale, and utilized elementary weaving techniques with fibrous yarns and ropes. These pieces conveyed a strong sense of the object. In the 1970's many other artists joined the ranks of fiber artists. The medium itself expanded to include such newly recognized art processes as feltmaking, papermaking, and netting. Other processes, which were used only infrequently before, became popular as well. They include plaiting, wrapping, coiling, knotting, etc. There was also a new interest in incorporating non-traditional and non-fibrous materials into the fiber structures. In 1973 Cynthia Schira used aluminum tape in a sculptural weaving while Lia Cook used foam rubber in the weft of one of her early works. With the acceptance of these new processes and innovative incorporation of materials, the field of Fiber Art took on a new dimension. At this time, many artists rejected complex weaving techniques; some, in fact, left the loom in favor of pure structure, particularly that of the grid. Loom weaving often seemed to be too time consuming and not spontaneous enough for the artist of the late 70's. Many preferred to investigate the grid (as symbol) through a variety of hand construction processes (i.e., wrapping, netting, papermaking etc.) that were more immediate and more responsive to
additive and subtractive alterations. However, because of the pared down quality of the form, the pieces soon appeared redundant. Fiber artists in general began to search for a way of working that would be more personally significant and less generic. Many began to look more seriously at ancient textiles for inspiration. There was, and is, much to be learned about a fiber sensibility and its relationship to patterns, symbols, and images by examining these resources from the distant past. The possibility of utilizing these examples to convey contemporary thoughts began to be realized. Weavers such as Rena Thompson and Laura Foster Nicholson have brought new images and personal significance to ancient techniques of pick-up double weave and twill tapestry respectively.

The artists featured in this exhibition utilize the loom as a tool to facilitate their creativity mechanically in the manipulation of materials or in the pursuit of patterns. For some weavers, such as Ewa Latkowska-Zychska who uses an elementary plain weave structure in the creation of her landscape tapestries, the loom need only be a simple upright (high warp) loom with, or without, harnesses. Cynthia Schira, on the other hand, takes advantage of computer technology with the execution of her complex triple weave compositions created on a 32 harness floor loom. For contemporary weavers there seems to be no prejudice regarding simplicity or sophistication of the weave. There is freedom of selection, especially with complex patterns becoming easier to realize as the accessibility of computer aided looms increases.

The artists selected for inclusion in this show have exhibited a commitment to the vocabulary of weaving and a reverence for the medium throughout their young or established careers. Some artists, such as Olga de Amaral and Lewis Knaus, choose weaving as an art medium because they are interested in its inherent qualities, which include the repetition or systematic structuring of fluid linear elements. Others such as Asgerdur Búadóttir and Margot Rolf are attracted to the resultant manipulable plane into which images or diverse materials may be structurally integrated; while the rhythm of the pattern of the woven structure provides the visual and physical foundation for the images in the work of Lia Cook and Laura Foster Nicholson. The specific weaving techniques are selected on the basis of the artist's intent and reflect the individuality of the artist's aesthetic. By isolating the medium and limiting this exhibition to works that were executed on some type of loom the viewer will have a clearer understanding of the spectrum of works being woven today and the realm of diverse structures that are possible within the broad field of weaving.

Janice Lessman-Moss
Assistant Professor, School of Art, K.S.U.
"Mardi Gras Harlequin" 1986
Woven, knotted, hemp, linen, paint
36"x40"x5"

"Adirondack Rococo" 1986
Fiber & paint, 72"x36"x6"
(Not pictured)
Jane Lackey

“Celebration in a Pink Portico” 1982
Linen, rayon, wool, wire, wood paint

Olga de Amaral

“Alquimia Verde LX” 1987
Linen/gold leaf, 62”x59½”
Photo: Jaques Gael Cressaty
“Sabotaged Aeroplane” 1987
Wool and linen 60”x120”
Photo: Jorden Davis
“Message” 1987
Twill/wool/cotton/elastomer/nonwoven
150x225cm
Photo: Huib Swets

“Aurora” 1984
Wool and Horsehair, 2x185x100cm
Photo: Huib Swets
“Echo of Ocean VII” 1987
195 (H)x300(W)x20(D)cm
Rena Thompson

"Touch" 1987
Wool weaving, 70"x53"

Laura Foster Nicholson

"The Orange Show: 800" 1986
Wool with silk, 30"x29"
"The Orange Show: Oasis" 1986
Wool with silk, 32"x29"
(Not pictured)

"Touch" 1987
Wool weaving, 70"x53"
Lia Cook

Ewa Latkowska-Zychska

Cynthia Schira

“Crazy Quilt III” 1987
Ewa Latkowska-Zychska

"Two" 1986/87
Mixed technique, wool 225x240cm

Cynthia Schira

"Westport Winter" 1987
Cotton Rayon, Mixed Fibers,
64½" x 74"

Courtesy of Miller/Brown Gallery
Olga De Amaral  
Born: 1932, Bogota, Colombia  
Current Residence: Bogota, Colombia  
Studio Artist  
Awards:  
1977-78 Guggenheim Fellowship  
Selected Exhibitions:  
1987 American Craft Museum, New York  
1983 The Rohsska Museum, Gottenburg, Sweden  
1981 The University Art Collection, Reykjavik, Iceland  
1977 The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (Solo Show)  
Selected Collections:  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, N.Y.  
Museum De Arte Moderno, Bogota, Colombia  
Musee Cantonial Des Beaux Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland  
Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio  

Asgerdur Buadottir  
Born: 1920, Borgarnes, Iceland  
Current Residence: Reykjavik, Iceland  
Studio Artist  
Awards:  
1963 City of Reykjavik, Artist Stipend  
1962 Artist of the Year, Dagbladio & Visir  
1976 Art Critic's Selection, Reykjavik  
Selected Exhibitions:  
1987 Scandinavian Craft Today, Tokyo-Kyoto, Japan  
1983 Nikolai, Copenhagen, Denmark  
1982 Modern Nordic Art, Stockholm, Sweden  
1974 W.C.C. Exhibition, Toronto, Canada  
Selected Collections:  
The National Art Gallery of Iceland  
The University Art Collection, Reykjavik  
The Rohsska Museum, Gottenburg, Sweden  

Lia Cook  
Born: 1942, Ventura, California  
Current Residence: Berkeley, California  
Professor of Art, California College of Arts and Crafts  
Awards:  
1986 National Endowment for the Arts, Fellowship  
1977 National Endowment for the Arts, Fellowship  
1974 National Endowment for the Arts, Fellowship  
Selected Exhibitions:  
1987 American Craft Museum, New York  
1984 42nd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (Solo Show)  
1983 Musee Des Ecoles Des Beaux Arts, Paris, France  
1981 The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California  
1977 8th International Biennial of Tapestry, Lausanne, Switzerland  
Selected Collections:  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, N.Y.  
Museo De Arte Moderno, Bogota, Colombia  
Musee Cantonial Des Beaux Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland  
Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio  

Lewis Knauss  
Born: 1947, Macungie, Pennsylvania  
Current Residence: Philadelphia, PA.  
Teaches, Moore College of Art  
Awards:  
1984 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship  
1981 Pennsylvania Council of the Arts Fellowship  
1977 National Endowment for the Arts Craftsman's Fellowship  
Selected Exhibitions:  
1986 Contemporary Crafts: A Concept in Flux, Society for Art in Craft, Pittsburgh, PA.  
1983 Miller/Brown Gallery, San Francisco, California (Solo Show)  
1982 Crafts of the Eighties, Newark Museum, Newark, N.J.  
1977 Fiberworks, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio  
Selected Collections:  
E.F. Hutton Corp., New York City  
Citicorp, New York City  
Hyatt Hotels, San Antonio, Texas  

Shigeo Kubota  
Born: 1947, Kyoto, Japan  
Current Residence: Kyot0, Japan  
Assistant Professor in Art, Seian Women's College of Kyoto  
Awards:  
1985 The New Figure Prize from Kyoto Municipality, "Kyot0: The Supreme Prize"  
1984 Japanese Government Overseas Program in Art Fellowship for Research on Fiber Art in U.S.A.  
1980 Shinkogeiten: Kyoto Governor's Prize  
Selected Exhibitions:  
1987 13th International Biennial of Tapestry, Lausanne, Switzerland  
1985 Shinkogeiten, Tokyo, Tokyo, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art  
1984 Modern Textilkunst Aus Japan, Museum Bellerive: Zurich  
1982 Michoacan International Exhibition of Miniature Textile Japan/Mexico  
1980 Fiber As Art, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Philippines  
Selected Collections:  
Jyuraku Textile Museum, Kyoto  
Instituto Michoacano de Cultura, Mexico  
Kyoto Trade Fair Center, Kyoto  

Jane Lackey  
Born: 1948  
Current Residence: Kansas City, Missouri  
Associate Professor, Chairman, Fiber Dept.  
Kansas City Art Institute  
Awards:  
1985 National Endowment for the Arts, Fellowship  

Laura Foster Nicholson  
Born: 1954, Waukegan, Illinois  
Current Residence: Philadelphia, PA.  
Studio Artist  
Awards & Honors:  
1986 National Endowment for the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship  
1985 Venice Biennale of Architecture, "Leona Di Pietra" Prize  
Selected Exhibitions:  
1987 Van Straaten Gallery, Chicago (Solo Show)  
1985 Venice Biennale, Third International Exhibition of Architecture, Venice, Italy  
Selected Collections:  
Chicago Board of Trade, Chicago  
AT&T Corporation, Lisle, Illinois  
Ernst & Whinney, St. Louis, Missouri  

Margot Rolf  
Born: 1940, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Current Residence: Amsterdam  
Teaches: Gerrit Rietveld Academie  
Awards:  
1985 Produiktebudget Gemeente Amsterdam  
1984 Produiktebudget Gemeente Amsterdam  
1975 Grant from the Dutch Ministry of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs for Travel Study in the U.S.A.  
Selected Exhibitions:  
1977 "8th International Biennial of Tapestry", Lausanne, Switzerland  
Selected Collections:  
Dienst Verspreide Rijkscollecties, The Hague  
Gemeentemuseum, Arnhem  
King Faisal Summer Home, Yan Bu, Saudi Arabia  

Individual Fellowship Grant  
Selected Exhibitions:  
1986 "Fiber Revolution", Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin  
1984 "Fiber Crosscurrents", John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin  
1983 The Elements Gallery, New York, New York (Solo Show)  
1982 "Three Weavers", Fiberworks, Center for the Textile Arts, Berkeley, California  

Selected Collections:  
Chubb Insurance Group, Warren, New Jersey  
Robert L. Pfannebecker, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
King Faisal Summer Home, Yan Bu, Saudi Arabia  

E. F. Hutton Corp., New York City  
Citicorp, New York City  
Hyatt Hotels, San Antonio, Texas  

Selected Collections:  
Dienst Verspreide Rijkscollecties, The Hague  
Galerie Nationale De La Tapisserie Et D'Art Textile, Beauvais, France (Solo Show)  
1980 British Craft Centre, London England: (Miniature Exhibition)  
1977 The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan "Fiberworks: Japan and the Americas"  

Selected Collections:  
Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin  
Oakland Museum, California  
Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas  
Metropolitan Museum, New York  

Recent Acquisitions from the Permanent Collection"  
Galerie Nationale De La Tapisserie Et D'Art Textile, Beauvais, France (Solo Show)  
1980 The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan "Fiberworks: Japan and the Americas"
Cynthia Schira

Born: 1934
Current Residence: Lawrence, Kansas
Professor of Design, University of Kansas

Awards:
1983 National Endowment for the Arts, Craftsman's Fellowship
1974 National Endowment for the Arts, Craftsman's Fellowship

Selected Exhibitions:
1977 "8th International Biennale of Tapestry, Lausanne, Switzerland"

Selected Collections:
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Museum Bellerive, Zurich, Switzerland
Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution, New York

Rena Thompson

Born: 1950
Current Residence: Chalfont, Pennsylvania
Studio Artist

Awards:
1987 National Endowment For the Arts — Visual Arts Fellowship
1980 National Endowment For the Arts — Visual Arts Fellowship

Selected Exhibitions:
1987 Marion Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Solo Show)
1985 "Fibers East/West", Fiberworks, Berkeley, California
1984 "Visual Reservoir", Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art, Monterey, California
1984 Modern Master Tapestries Gallery, New York, New York (Solo Show)
1981 The May Show, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio

Selected Collections:
The Central Museum of Textiles, Lodz, Poland
Savaria Museum, Hungary
Centre of Art and Culture, Brussels, Belgium

Lilian Tyrrell

Born: 1944 London, England
Current Residence: Ravenna, Ohio
Studio Artist

Awards:
1986 Ohio Arts Council Fellowship
1983 Ohio Arts Council Fellowship

Selected Exhibitions:
1988 "World Tapestry Today", Melbourne, Australia
1981 "World Tapestry Today", Heidelberg, Germany
1985 Hiram College, Hiram, Ohio (Solo Show)
1984 Akron Art Museum, Akron, Ohio (Solo Show)

Ewa Latkowska-Zychska

Born: 1950
Current Residence: Warszawa, Poland
Teacher, Higher School of Fine Arts, Lodz

Awards:
Awarded the medal at the second All-Polish Exhibition of Artistic Fabrics in Lodz, 1981

Selected Exhibitions:
1987 Polish Tapestry — Allersmaborg Ezinge, Holland
1984 Polish Contemporary Tapestry "Artistic Individualities", Madrid and the Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
1982 4th International Biennial of Miniature Textiles, Szombathely, Hungary
1978 3rd International Triennale of Tapestry, Lodz, Poland
1977 8th International Biennale of Tapestry, Lausanne, Switzerland

Selected Collections:
The Central Museum of Textiles, Lodz, Poland
Savaria Museum, Hungary
Centre of Art and Culture, Brussels, Belgium

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