

WARP



WEAVE A REAL PEACE

Volume 17, Number 4

Winter 2010

Untangling Threads: An Interactive Exhibit Raises Awareness about Moroccan Weavers

Alia Kate

When I began importing Moroccan carpets in 2008 with my fair trade business, Kantara



Crafts, I sought not only to inspire a growing appreciation for Moroccan weaving among textile enthusiasts, but to raise awareness about Moroccan culture.

My desire to change perceptions so that the rugs are seen as art and the weavers as artists



was the beginning of it all; one phone call and months later I was ready with *Untangling Threads: Women Artisans in Morocco's Rug Weaving Industry*, a unique exhibition featuring

hand woven Moroccan rugs alongside photographs of the women who wove them.

The phone call that began this adventure was to my documentary photographer friend, Anna Beeke. I had an idea: what if Anna were to come along with me on my next trip to Morocco so that we could document the lives of the weavers and eventually create a cross-disciplinary exhibit that would be unconventional yet at the same time educational? It would combine her photographs of Moroccan women weavers with their rugs.

To make a long story short, that glimmer of an idea took form quickly. Over the next several months Anna and I set our itinerary and focused on what we hoped to accomplish in Morocco.



Through Kantara, I had already established a deep relationship with the artisans but this was the first time I had ever brought anyone along with me. Furthermore, knowing about Moroccans' apprehension of photographs (both for their mystical soul-stealing powers as well as their more real tendency to appear on the internet in pornographic mashups), I had no idea how the women would react to Anna, who carried two large cameras everywhere.

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Mission

WARP serves as a catalyst for improving the quality of life of textile artisans in communities-in-need. We provide information and networking opportunities to individuals and organizations who value the social, cultural, historic, and artistic importance of textiles around the world.

Core Values

Textiles are an important component of the human experience.

Providing support to textile artisans from communities-in-need gives them tools to shape their own destinies.

Networking and sharing information creates an environment for constructive action.

Making connections among textile artisans worldwide promotes positive social change.

Interacting with people who have similar values enriches our lives.

Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Centre: Producing Wonderful Weavings in Egypt Since 1950's



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Editor: Linda Temple

Send address corrections to:
WARP
3102 Classen Boulevard
PMB 249
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
or to
info@weavearealpeace.org

The deadline for contributions to the Spring issue of the WARP newsletter is **March 4, 2011**.

Send articles and correspondence for the newsletter to:

Linda Temple
1230 NE 70
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
lgtemple@juno.com
405/478-4936 (phone)
413/622-1504 (fax)

Information about an organization or service in this newsletter does not constitute an endorsement by WARP.

Submissions may be edited or shortened at the discretion of the editor.

I recently revisited this art center near Cairo, and found the untutored weaving of natural scenes as beautiful as I remembered it. I thought WARP members would be interested in this experiment and philosophy, and asked the director to write about it for our newsletter. You can see more examples of the art on their web site, www.wissanassef.com, and I highly recommend you visit if you go to Egypt.
Susan Schaefer Davis

Ikram Nosshi

The Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Centre has for the last fifty years been the setting of a remarkable undertaking. There in the 1950s, Ramses Wissa Wassef, architect, potter and designer, set up a tapestry workshop to be

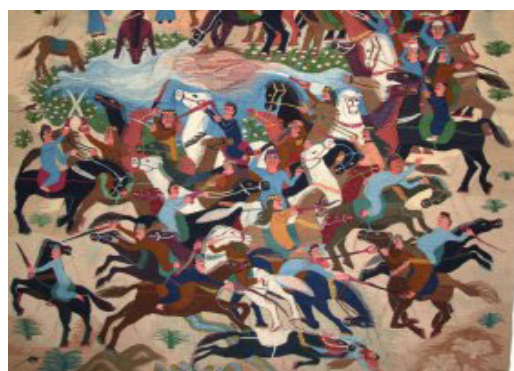


Farm animals 1956, an early work by Karima Ali, now 68 years old.

used by the local village children. With neither formal education nor artistic training the children of Harrania, near the Giza pyramids outside Cairo, were to become an important part of his ongoing experiment. They would be introduced to the craft and guided from then on in a rather extraordinary way.

Ramses adopted three rules which he strictly adhered to:

1- "No criticisms or interference from adults." Because Ramses considered adult criticism as a crippling intrusion on a child's



War, by Karima Ali, 25 years later

imagination, no criticism whatsoever was tolerated. In the closed environment of the at-

elier, each child was free to work at whatever came to his or her mind. In this way the



Banks of the Nile

young weavers were able to develop their confidence and personality in the work, depending solely on their own imaginations.

For Ramses, hand-weaving was at one time a highly expressive and pure art which was quickly losing ground to machine production. It was his hope to revive the fine sensibility of the craft by making a fresh start with a group of children and simple looms,



proceeding, as he put it, *"as slowly as may be, so as to give wide scope for the play of deep, natural impulses."*

2 - "No cartoons or drawings."

All the weaving had to be done without the aid of any sketch or design. Even the most complicated tapestries, which took many months to complete, were improvised on the loom and arose from everydaylife impressions.

Ramses believed that *"The continuous effort of working directly with the material leads to a constant change in the work of these young artists. The free play of their creative power starts at the mysterious moment when the child seizes instinctively and in a flash of joy, the idea for the picture that he or she intends to weave."*

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Plans for WARP 2011 Annual Meeting Gearing Up

The agenda for WARP 2011, our annual meeting to be held May 6-8 at the Blue Ridge Assembly YMCA in Black Mountain, NC, is taking shape. The meeting will begin with a guided tour of the Folk Art Center (www.craftguild.org) on Friday afternoon. On Saturday, two WARP members will present projects they are involved with in western North Carolina. Judi Jetson will represent HandMadeInAmerica (www.handmadeinamerica.org) and Beth Ross Johnson will present her work with Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (www.rtcar.org).

Following lunch, a panel discussion will explore the craft livelihood process from 'Start to Finish' and will address the making, marketing, and sustainability of craft production. Panel members will include local project participants. We will then proceed to the River District area of Asheville for select studio tours.

Look for a full meeting agenda in the Spring newsletter.

The Registration Form for the meeting is on page 9, with a deadline of February 1.

International Market - As in the past, there will be an International Market at the 2011 Annual Meeting. This provides a great opportunity to sell handcrafts from the communities that many of us support. Please note on the Registration Form if you are interested in participating. WARP requests 10% of sales from each vendor.

The **"Recycle-Your-Gently-Used Ethnic Textiles"** silent auction will also be a part of the annual meeting. If you have clothing or other textiles in good condition, please bring them with you to donate to the auction. All proceeds of the auction benefit WARP, and in the past this has raised several hundred dollars for the organization.

There will be information in the Spring newsletter for those who don't plan to attend the meeting but want to participate in either of these activities.

WARP Brochures Available

If you would like copies of WARP's brochure to distribute to your guild or at local conferences, please contact Sarah Saulson at sfsaulson@twcny.rr.com

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Weave A Real Peace

Membership Information

2010 Annual Dues

- * \$35 - Individual, U.S. and Canada
- * \$40 - Individual, international and sister memberships
- * Simple living - Choose an amount you can live with
- * \$50 - Group/supporting
- * \$100+ - Patron/donor

All memberships are based on the calendar year and expire on December 31. Members receive all publications for the year joined.

Members receive an annual Membership Directory, a quarterly newsletter, and can participate in the WARP listserv.

Dues are used for printing, mailing, and office expenses. Weave A Real Peace (WARP) is designated a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service. All donations to WARP are tax deductible in the United States.

For membership or additional information, please send your name, address, and telephone number with appropriate check or money order

in US funds payable to **WARP** to:

Weave A Real Peace
3102 Classen Boulevard
PMB 249
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

or visit the website at weavearealpeace.org

From the WARP Office...

Judy Allen, Administrative Coordinator

As you know WARP has undergone a change in the membership directory format and accessibility. All of you with web access can now get to our membership directory through a secure page on the WARP web site. I had very few questions, so I am taking that as a positive sign that everyone who tried could get to the directory. Once membership renewals start to come in, I will update the online directory on a regular basis. For those of you without email or web access, you will be able to purchase a paper copy of the directory for \$5 by checking that off on your membership renewal form. We will produce WARP Membership Directories once in paper in the spring of each year.

And speaking of membership renewals – it is that time of year again. WARP's membership year ends December 31. You can determine if your membership is expiring by

checking the year on the mailing label on this newsletter. Most of you will see 2010 meaning that your membership ends December 31, 2010. When you receive your renewal forms, please be sure to update information that has changed. You will also notice there is a place on the membership renewal to make a contribution to WARP. If you would like the gift to be in memory or in honor of someone, you can let us know to whom to confirm the gift. You may contribute to the Alice Brown Memorial scholarship fund, the general fund, or the Endowment Fund.

The annual meeting which you will read more about in this issue, promises to be fabulous. The Asheville, NC, area has so much to offer. WARP members who live in the area are making helpful programming and tour suggestions to the WARP Board. So mark your calendars for the first weekend in May 2011!

If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns, you may reach me at info@weavearealpeace.org.

WARP Governing Board

Jackie Abrams

Brattleboro, VT
802/257-2688
jackieabramsvt@gmail.com
Term expires 2013

Linda Bowden

North Ft. Myers, FL
239/218-0350
kpbowden@comcast.net
Term expires 2013

Deborah Brandon

Pittsburgh, PA
412/963-7416
brandon@andrew.cmu.edu
Term expires 2011

Susan Schaefer Davis

Haverford, PA
610/649-7717
sdavis@uslink.net
Term expires 2012

Kathryn Keegan

Birchrunville, PA
610/827-7975
birchrunstudio@gmail.com
Term expires 2012

Candy Meacham

Bellingham, WA
360/671-9079
mchkee@earthlink.net
Term expires 2011

Administrative Coordinator

Judy Allen

info@weavearealpeace.org



Judy Allen

Morocco in the Spring: A Holiday Gift?

Anthropologist and WARP member Susan Schaefer Davis would like to invite you to join the cultural tourism trip that she leads to Morocco in the spring. The small group (spouses are welcome too) will visit weavers in their village homes, as well as women social activists, a noted woman author, and just ordinary women.

Join me and my travel organizer friend Joan Noble as we explore exotic Morocco—fabulous textiles and crafts, perfumed markets, and delicious food are just a few of the experiences you'll enjoy! But the truly unique feature of these trips is meeting many local people in their homes and villages. We travel over the Atlas Mountains, ride a camel into the dunes of the Sahara, stay in comfortable hotels in Marrakech, Fes, Rabat and the charming seaside town of Essaouira...and in a tent in the Sahara! Meeting local people, we have the opportunity to discuss weaving, education, parenting, health, and other topics with them firsthand. Highlights include

meeting with some of my Moroccan colleagues who will share their professional lives and experiences with us. I last visited Morocco in June, and found people as friendly and welcoming as ever.

In order to make this a more personal experience, the trip is limited to 14 travelers. The value is exceptional, as there are few out-of-pocket expenses. The trip is 15 days; you can see the full itinerary plus photos at http://noblejourneys.com/open_doors.php.

May 14-28, 2011 - \$3295 per person, based on 11-14 travelers, not including international airfare

If you would like more information, or wish to discuss the trip further, please contact Susan at 610/649-7717 (or 218/562 4904 from December 15-January 6) or at sdavis@uslink.net, or Joan Noble, trip organizer and escort, at 800/566-9228 or jungljoan@yahoo.com. We can also arrange personalized trips and trips for groups (your Guild?) to Morocco.

Member Profile

Linda Bowden – Army nursing to Saganishiki

Candy Meacham

Within a few years of her retirement as a registered nurse and Lieutenant Colonel in the army in 2002, Linda had immersed herself in the Japanese art of Saganishiki. In the army, Linda's life was one of regimentation and Standard Operating Procedures. Opening "Learning to Weave" by Deborah Chandler opened a new chapter in Linda's life, one that she was truly ready for. She says, "Now I look at everything differently."

Linda is one of WARP's newest Board Members and is responsible for organizing this year's Annual Meeting in Black Mountain, NC. She lives in Ft. Meyers, FL, where she has spent the last eight years turning her interests and skills from the sciences, where she spent her career years, to weaving. The world of fiber arts has opened up a new and challenging arena for Linda and created opportunities to meet interesting people and participate in rewarding projects.

Linda took weaving classes from the Yarn Barn in Lawrence, KS, and now weaves for personal growth and satisfaction. She began learning Saganishiki in 2007, and she continues to focus on the structure and research the history to better understand the issues related to the slow demise of this ancient art. Saganishiki is a Japanese weaving technique

using Japanese paper specially coated with gold, silver, or laqueur as the warp, and a weft of dyed silk thread.

Philosophically Linda believes fiber arts is a legitimate career field, and weavers, spinners, or other skilled artisans should have opportunities to explore, practice their art, and receive compensation for what they produce. While women tend to make up a majority of fiber artisans in many countries, they struggle to receive support and just financial reward for their endeavors. Support to these groups through organizations such as WARP can help towards parity and sustainability.

Linda joined WARP in 2004 after she visited the WARP booth at Convergence. She liked what she saw: the people, the activity, the variety of fiber art, the energy. They all represented her values and interests, something she wanted to be a part of. She says, "Fiber arts people see the world through a different lens and their sharing contributes to my growth."

You can contact Linda by email at fatcatkaw@yahoo.com. She has also started a blog about Saganishiki at <http://saga-nishiki.blogspot.com/>

Candy Meacham is an educator, a weaver, and a WARP board member. She can be reached at candy.meacham@earthlink.net.

Rachel Biel, TAFE Founder, writes...

Greetings! I would like to invite you to become a member of TAFE: The Textile and Fiber Art List, www.tafalist.com. TAFE's mission is to help its members find larger markets for their work. Our members are both fiber artists and textile related businesses which have an online presence. Target members are small businesses (working studio artists, organizations working with indigenous people, galleries, etc.) who seek to make a living from their work.

TAFE was launched in February 2010, and uses social media as its main tool in expanding its market base. We have a fan page on facebook and I encourage you to visit and click the like button if you are on facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/TAFAList>. I am

focusing on making TAFE as diverse as possible, hoping to reflect Native textile traditions from around the world. My personal commitment is to grow the fair trade presence and I would really like to see FT as a strong presence.

There is a membership fee to join TAFE. It is currently \$48 and will go up to \$60 in the Spring and then stay there. There are no renewal fees. Every TAFE member has a profile showcasing their presence on the web. Some see this as purely an ad, while for others it is the first step into the larger TAFE community.

I will happily answer any questions you may have and do hope that you will join us on TAFE! Contact me at rayela@comcast.net

WARP Newsletter 2011 Publication Information

Projected copy deadlines

(page 4 of each issue will confirm deadline for next issue):

- V18N1 – Spring WARP newsletter – March 4, 2011
- V18N2 - Summer WARP newsletter – June 3, 2011
- V18N3 - Fall WARP newsletter – August 19, 2011
- V18N4 - Winter WARP newsletter - November 4, 2011

Author Guidelines

Length of articles:
Because of the format of the WARP newsletter, articles can typically be **no more than 400 words (with photos) or 500 words (without photos)**. If impossible to meet these limitations, please communicate with the editor to explore options **prior** to submitting an article for publication.

Photos or other graphics:
submit as .jpg or .tif files,
saved at 300 dpi

Contributions of unsolicited articles that meet publication guidelines are encouraged.

Please email articles to LGTemple@juno.com

Reconnecting our Communities

Carmen K. Iezzi, Executive Director, Fair Trade Federation

WARP on the Web -

www.weavearealpeace.org features WARP history, annual meeting information, member access to the directory, past newsletters, and a new 'Hand to Hand' page. You can join WARP's Listserv from the 'Contact Us' link on the website.

WARP also has a group on ravelry.com, the knitting networking site; on Weavevolution, <http://www.weavevolution.com>; and on Facebook.

We all know that the holidays are a time for reconnecting with family and friends. They are also a time to connect with our global community. When you support Fair Trade, you become part of a network of people dedicated to facilitating change for disadvantaged artisans and farmers.

To make this process simpler amid the busyness of the holiday season, the Fair Trade Federation was pleased to launch a new Holiday Gift Guide on November 1.

Available online at www.FairTradeFederation.org/holiday and featuring twenty-three pages of product ideas, the Guide includes suggestions for Him, Her, the Gourmet, Kids, Pets, the Home, Under \$20, and more from nearly fifty Fair Trade organizations. The Guide also features detailed information on where to shop for Fair Trade in Canada and the United States.

With items from twenty-five countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, the Guide demonstrates the wide array of options that are available under Fair Trade principles.

In addition to the great items in the Guide, there are more ideas to Fair Trade your holiday and your life:

- Prepare a great Fair Trade dish,
- Educate your community with films and speakers,
- Invest in or donate to a Fair Trade organization,
- Host a Fair Trade Home Party when the weather's too bad to go out,
- Suggest your office choose Fair Trade for its Corporate Gifts,
- So much more!!



At www.FairTradeFederation.org/GetInvolved, you can find these and other great ways to be an advocate for change throughout the year.

For more than sixty years, Fair Trade organizations have connected you with artisans and farmers across the globe by delivering high quality products that create a tremendous impact on their communities. This holiday season, let our choices continue that momentum for change.

Carmen Iezzi can be reached at cki@fairtradefederation.org

Textile Society of America News...

Study Tour to South India

January 16-30, 2011; TSA Tour Leader Sandra Evenson; number of participants limited to 17 plus the tour leader. Tour Cost: twin/double occupancy: \$5250; single occupancy: \$6130.

The tour begins in Chennai (formerly Madras). Travel to Chennai may take up to two calendar days, depending on your starting point, so your travel may need to begin a couple of days before the actual start of the tour. See the TSA website, <http://www.textilesociety.org> for complete tour information and online registration forms.

Founding Presidents Award Winners Named - The Textile Society of America announced the recipients of the 'Founding Presidents Award' at its 12th Biennial Symposium, recently held in Lincoln, NE.

The winners of the 2010 FPA award are

Nancy Feldman, for her paper titled "Shipibo Textile Practices: 1950-2010." This paper was co-authored and presented with Claire Odland of the Field Museum at the 12th Biennial TSA Symposium, October 2010. It will be published in 2011. Research for this project was conducted in the upper Amazon basin of Peru in the summers of 2008 and 2010.

Deborah Barkun and Jools Gilson-Ellis, for "Choreographed Cartography: Translation, Feminized Labor, and Digital Literacy in half/angel's The Knitting Map." More information about this paper at <http://www.halfangel.ie/knitting-ie/millersville.html>

These two, jointly authored winning papers reflect the theme of the 12th Biennial Symposium by connecting space and technologies in innovative ways.



Deb Brandon

British Isles: Ganseys

Ganseys, Guernseys, knit-frocks, and in some places jerseys, refer to the navy blue fishermen's sweaters that originated in the British Isles in the 1800's. The characteristic seamless square-shaped sweaters with dropped shoulders and patterned yokes are still a common sight among British seafarers, though in most cases the knitted parts are now machine made; the hand knitting tradition has essentially disappeared from within the fishing communities.

Ganseys were designed to be hard wearing and practical. They are tightly knit with worsted weight, high twist, four- or five-ply wool yarn, making them practically waterproof and windproof. The bottom edge, the neck, and the cuffs were tight in order to keep the wind out. Traditionally, back and front were identical so that the sleeves wore out evenly. Sleeves ended short of the wrist so as not to impede the hands and to avoid soaking the cuffs. Underarm gussets (elongated diamond shapes) were knitted to link sleeves to body, in order to allow freedom of movement. Originally, there was no patterning at the bottom of the body and sleeves to save on yarn and knitting time but also in order to facilitate repairs on worn elbows and cuffs. On the other hand, patterning in the upper half of the sweater provided additional warmth.

Patterns, formed by combinations of knit and purl stitches, as well as cables, originally spread through the community by word of mouth, so most ganseys had distinctive designs characteristic of their geographical origin. Patterns consisted of basic geometric shapes such as diamonds, zigzags, and chevrons; less common was the use of pictorial designs which included anchors, flags, hearts, stars, and starfish. The initials of the wearer were often worked into the plain knit areas, usually towards the bottom, off to one side.

Stitches were cast on and worked 'in the round' on five double pointed needles up to the armhole, where the stitches were split in half for the front and back, which were

worked separately on two needles, back and forth, to the shoulders. The two sets of shoulder stitches were joined, then neck stitches were picked up and worked in a variety of styles: unshaped, ribbed, rolled, turtlenecks, or with buttons and button holes. Last, the sleeve stitches were picked up at the armholes and the underarm gussets, knitted in the round, and cast off at the cuff.

Fast knitters could finish a gansey in a week. Many women in the fishing villages knitted ganseys to supplement their family income. Contract knitters usually worked through an agent who visited them regularly to provide new yarn, collect the work, make payments, and arrange for marketing. Some women sold their knitted goods directly to local shops and agencies and were paid in cash or goods.

Contract knitting was essentially eliminated by the 1930's. However, in the late twentieth century, partly in an effort to prevent the art of traditional gansey knitting from dying out, a couple of companies started employing contract-knitters once again.

Resources:

Cornish Guernseys & Knit-Frocks by

Mary Wright, Polperro Heritage Press.

Knitting Ganseys by Beth Brown-Reinsel,

Interweave Press.

Patterns for Guernseys, Jerseys & Arans:

Fishermen's Sweaters from the British Isles

by Gladys Thompson, Dover Publications, Inc.

Cables, Diamonds, Herringbone: Secrets of Knitting Traditional Fishermen's Sweaters

by Sabine Domnick, Down East

<http://www.manorhouse.clara.net/knitwear/ganseys.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guernsey_%28clothing%29

<http://www.suite101.com/content/guernsey-sweaters-a53374>

<http://www.flamboroughmanor.co.uk/pdf/FMCataloguePDF.pdf>

Deborah Brandon is a multi-talented mathematician and President of WARP's board of directors. She can be reached at 412/963-7416 or at brandon@andrew.cmu.edu

Address Changes

Wendy Garrity
c/- 3 Rummer Way
Bateman WA 6150
Australia

Fern Herman
Good Samaritan
Health Care Unit
3025 Terrace Drive
Room 208
Las Cruces, NM 88011

Molly Martin
4600 Rosedale Ave.
Austin, TX 78756
512/366-5563

Bonnie Tarses
319 South 2nd St. West
Missoula, MT 59801
406/471-7610

WARP 'slide show' now in CD format!

Carole Pierce reports that the WARP slide show is currently in Indiana, and that a CD of the show is now available! To schedule the WARP presentation in your community, contact Carole at cpierce@mis.net.

New Members

Catherine Morley
1080 Millstream Road
West Vancouver BC
Canada V7S 2C7
604/925-1799 home
604/925-1209 work
catherine.morley@gmail.com

Otavalito
Robin Tinholt
6187 Bayou Trail
Saugatuck, MI 49453
269/857-7199 work
info@otavalito.com

Alyssa Pitman
1188 Alpine Trail
Topanga, CA 90290
310/741-7255
alyssapitman@gmail.com

Marilyn Romatka
5527 166th Pl. SE
Bellevue, WA 98006
425/603-0591
marilyn.romatka@comcast.net

Alice Brown Memorial Scholarship Applications Due February 15

Each year WARP awards two Alice Brown Memorial Scholarships for students to attend our annual meeting. Alice Brown was a generous WARP member who had the foresight to donate the funds to establish the scholarship. Now, other members are helping to make the fund both sustainable and greater in scope. Those of you who have attended meetings since 2008 know how much these special young people have added to the event!

Please also help by spreading the word that it is time to apply again! The recipients

should be 35 years old or under and be enrolled fulltime at a college or university. The application can be downloaded from the WARP website (www.weavearealpeace.org). Go to the main menu at the top of the page, click on About, and then click on Alice Brown Memorial Scholarship to download a copy of the application. Interested professors and students can also e-mail Sarah Saulson with questions or to receive the application (sfsaulson@twcnny.rr.com). The application deadline is February 15, 2010.

Untangling Threads: An Interactive Exhibit

continued from page 1

My fears were quickly allayed as I realized that the artisans' generosity coupled with Anna's sensitivity and curiosity made for an ideal situation. We were welcomed into the artisans' cooperatives and homes; in addition to being offered food and some three hundred cups of tea, we were also offered a glimpse into their daily lives.



Traveling from village to village, Anna and I spent three weeks meandering through the Atlas mountains and desert plains, visiting different women's weaving cooperatives, watching the artisans card and spin wool, and participating in memorable community events with the artisans.

Initially we had hoped to create a project that would expose the inherent injustices in Morocco's carpet weaving industry. After having returned from our three weeks in Morocco, though, it was clear that we had captured a much different story. At its core, *Untangling Threads* is about women weavers working in rural Morocco. On the one hand it showcases their artistry through their rugs and kilims, and on the other hand it offers audiences in the United States a glimpse into the way these women live their lives, both within and outside of the weaving cooperatives. In some cases, the two are inseparable.

Ultimately, *Untangling Threads* transmits the humanity of the artisans as they maintain a craft that has endured centuries and as they fight against all odds to keep their craft pertinent in a globalizing world. Now on the eve of our two gallery exhibits, we recognize that this is an ongoing project that has only just begun. We hope to return to Morocco several more times to follow up and expand this project as both an educational tool as well as comprehensive exhibit—after all, we have a lot of threads to untangle still.

Anna and I invite you to join us at our two gallery receptions in December:



Synchronicity

Fine Arts (106 West 13th Street; between 6th & 7th Avenues, NY); Opening reception: Thursday, December 2nd, 6:00-8:00pm. Regular gallery hours December 1st, 2010 – January 8th, 2011: Wednesday - Saturday; 1:00 - 7:00pm or by Appointment.

Lawrenceville School's Marguerite & James Hutchins Gallery (2500 Main Street; Route 206 N. Lawrenceville, NJ); Opening reception: Friday December 3rd, 7:00 - 8:30pm. Regular gallery hours December 3rd-December 16th, 2010: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 9:00 – noon & 1:00 - 4:30pm; Wednesday & Saturday; 9:00 – noon.

For more information about this exhibit, or how to schedule it in your community, go to their website at www.untanglingthreads.kantaracrafts.com, or contact me at akate@kantaracrafts.com.

WARP Annual Meeting

Blue Ridge Assembly YMCA

Black Mountain, NC

May 6-8, 2011

Registration Form

(due to WARP with payment by February 1, 2011)

Name _____

Address _____

phone & email _____

- _____ Yes, sign me up for the **2011 WARP Annual Meeting**.
I will attend the full meeting. My check for \$225 (double occupancy) is enclosed. (This is the member rate; see page 5 for how to become a member.)
- _____ I plan to attend the Folk Art Center tour, Friday, May 6.
- _____ I am attending Saturday only; my \$50 is enclosed
- _____ I plan to participate in Marketplace; please reserve ____ tables for me.
- _____ I would like to contribute to WARP's scholarship fund to help pay for students to attend the meeting.

February 1 is the deadline for registration. Space available, registrations will be accepted after February 1 with a \$25 late fee. Full reimbursement can be made for cancellations prior to April 5. Unfortunately, after that date, no cancellation refund is possible because WARP will have committed the number of attendees with the Conference Center.

Please list special needs below. Be specific.

Questions? Contact Deb Brandon at brandon@andrew.cmuj.edu

Complete this form and send it, with your check or money order (US funds) made out to **WARP**, to:

Deborah Brandon
1325 Old Freeport Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Centre

continued from page 2

Interestingly, many of the weavers work 'sideways' on the upright looms, saying this allows them to better see the full picture develop.

3 - "No external aesthetic influences."

During the course of the experiment, Ramses took great care not to provide the weavers with works of art to imitate, nor did he ever take them to visit museums or art galleries. It was his contention that, "*adopting someone else's feelings and attitudes, or yielding to his influences means a loss of contact with one's own emotions.*"

To better understand how the tapestries were created, it is important to consider the role played by the Wissa Wassef family. "*A work of art*", Ramses once wrote, "*is similar to an address. It happened that we were for these children persons to whom they addressed themselves through the medium of their work and we have been able to seize their expression and intention. This role was neither forced nor exclusive, but was played with affection and comprehension.*"

Ramses' main concern rested with the child's individual potential. Modern society he felt, more than ever was concerned with the population *en mass*, giving less attention to the individual. Indeed it is so, for the results are clearly revealed through the excellence of the tapestries produced at the centre. At present, approximately seventy individuals are actively engaged at the centre, including adults, adolescents, and children. Out of the fourteen weavers who began with Ramses and Sophie back in 1953, six are still actively weaving.

Since Ramses's death in 1974 his widow Sophie and daughters Suzanne and Yoanna have continued his experiment: under their guidance several further generations of children have now mastered weaving at the Art Centre. The project has transformed the lives of the villagers, bringing prosperity, education, better health, self-respect, and satisfaction to all and high status to the women.

Although the centre has expanded since its first days in 1953, now housing a museum and textiles for sale, the same spirit and philosophy remains alive. There, in a most impressive setting, the elements appearing in the tapestries spring to life. One part of the garden is entirely devoted to plants strictly grown for vegetable dyes which are used in colouring the wool.

Visitors to the Art Centre and international exhibitions hail the collection for their beauty, humanity, and significance. Remarkably, these vivid depictions of Egypt's flora, fauna, and people were created by individuals who have had no formal art training.

Tapestries produced by weavers of the Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Centre have been acquired by international museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, British Museum London, the Royal Museum of Scotland, the Art Institute of Chicago and Musée Jean Lurçat, Angers, France.

Ikram Nossbi is the Executive Director of Wissa Wassef Art Centre in Harrania, Cairo, Egypt. For more information about the Centre, visit their website at www.wissawassef.com.

...and the story behind one of the weavings...

Susan Schaefer Davis

The weaving "War" (photo, page 2) grew out of Karima's personal life. She was earning well for her family from her weaving - so her husband decided to take a second wife. She was distraught, and told Mrs. Wissa Wassef that she could not keep weaving. They talked over a long period, and she was encouraged to weave just anything, to keep working and engaged. She came up with the idea for the War weaving...the man in the pool of blood

at the bottom is her husband. It took over a year, and as time progressed and she put her feelings into the weaving, she felt able to deal with the situation (they are still married). The horses calmly drinking from a lake at the top of the weaving reflect her resolution of this crisis. This also shows how close the weavers are with the Wissa Wassef family; I heard this story from the daughter Suzanne on my recent visit.

Upcoming Exhibitions at the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C.

Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats

October 16, 2010 through
March 13, 2011

Second Lives: The Age-Old Art of Recycling Textiles

February 4 through
July 10, 2011

Green: the Color and the Cause

April 16 through
September 11, 2011

Weaving Abstraction: Kuba Textiles and the Woven Art of Central Africa

October 15, 2011 through
February 19, 2012

For more information about these and other exhibits, visit the Textile Museum's website at textilemuseum.org

Also on the website is a useful article about the Care and Display of Textiles.

A Bolivian Quechua Weaver's Comments on TINKUY 2010

Editor's Note: The Spring issue of the WZARP newsletter will provide in-depth coverage of Tinkuy 2010 - The Gathering of Weavers - with an article by Marilyn Murphy and comments from several other WZARP members.

Dorinda's account below gives a foretaste of more to come.

Dorinda Dutcher

Kudos and a huge thank you to Nilda Callañaupa, the Centro de Textiles Tradicionales de Cusco (CTTC) staff, volunteers, and the weavers who hosted the Tinkuy 2010 in Urubamba, Peru. The colorful event was dynamic, and beautifully orchestrated down to the most minute detail. I'll leave the reporting of the events to others. Thanks to the generous donations during the WARP conference and fundraising efforts on the part of WARP members Irene Schmoller and Bonnie Tarses my PAZA counterpart, Doña Maxima Cortez, and I were able to attend. Following are a few comments and observations on the part of Doña Maxima at the Tinkuy.

"I'm going to make a traditional pollera (skirt), rebozo (shawl), and sheep wool sombrero to wear to the next event." She doesn't remember even her grandmother in traditional dress. However, her mother-in-law's community has



The conference breaks always took longer than scheduled because of the interest in the weaving demonstrations. In the photo are the 2 Independencia weavers, Doña Margarita and Doña Maxima, with Laverne Waddington the other WZARP member living in Bolivia.

retained more customs including the rebozo, which Doña Maxima plans to copy. At the very least, the photos and Doña Maxima's enchantment with the traditional dress of the weaving groups of Cusco will foster discussion in Independencia. Perhaps, the local weavers will choose to add traditional dress to their movement to honor their ancestors through the revival and preservation of the traditional weavings.

"I want to try to weave a sequence of five columns of pick up figures side by side." The weavings of Independencia currently sold include 1-3 columns of figures spaced symmetrically across the warp-faced weaving. Doña Maxima's timidity is almost paralyzing when she is outside of her comfort zone. Her curiosity and hunger to learn new techniques overcame all



Peruvian, Bolivian, and Guatemalan (Mayan Hands) weavers working together rinsing skeins at the end of the natural dye workshop in Chinchero.

reticence as she observed and spoke with numerous weavers during the weaving expositions. She was very definite in which weaving techniques resonated with her and which did not.

"I have never seen a man weave before." Doña Margarita, another Independencia weaver attended the TINKUY sponsored by a Bolivian non-profit organization. Doña Maxima shared Doña Margarita's comment about her surprise to see foreigners of all ages spinning and weaving. Doña Margarita also commented on the foreign assistance which made the event possible.

Survival of these Andean indigenous weaving cultures is at a crucial point. The weavers must choose their future path but need knowledge to weigh the available options. Thank you Nilda, for making your vision of a weaving encounter hosted by indigenous weavers for weavers a reality.

Dorinda Dutcher lives in Independencia, Bolivia continuing PAZA, a Peace Corps project that became her life's calling, and working with volunteers. To learn more about PAZA, a natural dyeing project in Bolivia, see the Fall issue of the newsletter or go to www.pazabolivia.org. Dorinda can be contacted at dkdutcher@hotmail.com

Khampus

An interesting article in the New York Times (8/16/10) explores preservation efforts and attempts to decipher the *khampus* found in Peru. The Incas used *khampus*—strands of woolen cords made from the hair of animals—as an alternative to writing. *Khampus* (or *quipus*) were used in pre-Hispanic times, but there is still no Rosetta Stone to decipher them. Researchers at Harvard have been using databases and mathematical models to understand the knotted threads (*khampus* means knot in Quechua). "Only about 600 *khampus* are thought to survive. Most were thought to have been destroyed after Spanish officials decreed them to be idolatrous in 1583." Currently, "the most immediate threat to the *khampus* may be from [the region's] tilt toward Protestantism....which views rituals near the *khampus* as pagan sacrilege."

The article and a video can be accessed by going to www.nytimes.com and searching in the last 12 months for 'khampus.'

Linda Temple



Weave a Real Peace
3102 Classen Boulevard
PMB 249
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Register today: 2011 Annual Meeting - May 6-8, 2011 (form on page 8)

Shop Fair Trade This Holiday Season

Here are only a few of the fabulous products that you can purchase from your local fair trade shop or order online—go to www.fairtradefederation.org/holiday (read Carmen Iezzi's article on page 6).

...or, for friends and family who have everything, think about giving an 'alternative' gift. Some of the many great options are

Heifer Project, www.heiferinternational.org - "Choose a meaningful gift to give a loved one and help children and families around the world receive training and animal gifts that help them become self-reliant."

Good Gifts, www.goodgifts.org - "Providing practical help to those in need."

Kiva, www.kiva.org - "Kiva's mission is to connect people, through lending, for the sake of alleviating poverty."

Or consider a gift membership to **WARP** and think of WARP as you make your end-of-year donations.

Products pictured, clockwise from top left: Shawls from Upavim (upavimcrafts.org); Tree of Life Rug, SERRV (serrv.org); Bologan Wall Hanging, Ten Thousand Villages (tenthousandvillages.com); fair trade coffee; Glaoui Rug, Kantara Crafts (kantarcrafts.com); poptop coin purse, Gifts With Humanity (giftswithhumanity.com); space dyed chenille scarf, Mayan Hands (mayanhands.org).

