



# Working With the Traditional Silk Artists of Xam Tai, Laos

Volume 22, Number 4 - Winter 2015

Josh Hirschstein

In the remote Annamite Mountains of NE Laos, and most notably in the Xam Tai District of Houaphon Province, the rich,



*The beautiful and remote Xam Tai valley in Houaphon Province in NE Laos*

cooperative, silk-weaving traditions of the Lao Loum and Tai Daeng ethnic groups still thrive, much in the way it has for millennia. Our family (mom, dad, and our now 22 and 19 year-old sons) has had the great privilege and opportunity to nurture friendships and forge textile-based



*Maren and Josh study a textile with the Xam Tai weavers*

business relationships with Xam Tai's artists for the last 10 years. Their art, traditions and warmth have nourished us and opened up worlds of personal insight.

The silk weaving arts of the region are born from both Buddhist (the Lao Loum ethnic group) and animist (Tai Daeng and other Tai groups) traditions that are focused on healing and maintaining the strength of both the individuals and the community itself. The silk-raising and textile-creation processes have been central to beliefs and spiritual health and have also provided an economic foundation for countless generations. Not to diminish the essential building and farming roles of the men (all villagers participate with planting and harvesting), the women's historical central role in textile creation has supported both core cultural beliefs and access to the cash-based trade-economy of the outside world. Because of this, women have been, on the whole, equally empowered and valued within the culture.



*Souksakone, Xam Tai's leading master-dyer, template designer, and weaver*

## Creating A Connected Textile Community

### MISSION

To foster a global network of enthusiasts who value the importance of textiles to grassroots economies

### PURPOSE

Exchange information

Raise awareness of the importance of textile traditions to grassroots economies

Mobilize textile enthusiasts

Create conversations that result in action

### CORE VALUES

Textiles are an important component of the human experience.

Networking and sharing information creates an environment for constructive action.

Making connections between textile artisans worldwide promotes positive social change.

Interacting with people who have similar values enriches our lives.

*continued on page 11*





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The deadline for  
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Spring issue of the WARP  
newsletter is  
March 11, 2016

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

## The Lennie Project: Keeping the Homeless Warm

Sarah Jean Harrison

Winter in Toronto is cold and long, especially if you are experiencing homelessness. I teach about homelessness at Ryerson Uni-



*The Lennie Project graphic.*

versity in Toronto, Canada. Every semester I invite people who have experienced homelessness into the classroom. They share their stories of homelessness with my students, including the challenge of staying warm when the temperature drops to -25C.

With these stories in mind, last winter I was thrilled to discover The Lennie Project—a series of deliberate acts of kindness and craftivism that includes projects like making upcycled toques and neck-warmers for those enduring winter while experiencing homelessness.

The Lennie Project, started by Nathalie-Roze Fischer of Nathalie-Roze & Co., is a memorial to her late uncle Lennie, a man propelled by compassion. Nathalie-Roze utilizes her skill in making upcycled acces-



*Lennie Project volunteers at a "sewcial"*

sories to organize the creation of winter wear for those who are street-involved. Volunteers are encouraged to attend a "sewcial", a community night held at a local sewing studio where mounds of donated sweaters are upcycled into toques and neck-warmers. The finished products are dropped off to over 25 locations in To-

ronto including youth shelters, drop-ins, meal programs, hospitals, street-outreach organizations and transitional housing providers. Last year The Lennie Project made and distributed over 1100 items. This year Nathalie-Roze is reaching for 2000.

As we head into another winter, The Lennie Project is already in motion. Volunteers are being recruited to run sweater drives, cut and sew patterns, and distribute products around the city. The sewcials are already up and running at Toronto's Sew Be It Studio.

But Nathalie-Roze isn't one to coast on past success. This winter she's taking the project into schools and shelters, teaching students and guests how to make the items themselves, giving participants valuable skills in sewing and a sense of ownership over one of her upcycled toques the final project.

She is also working on plans to introduce The Lennie Project into the prison system.

The success of The Lennie Project exemplifies the significance of textile arts and craftivism. The process of creation for the purpose of helping a stranger expresses our commitment to a world based on respect and justice. The winter wear sewn by The Lennie Project are not simply old sweaters made new; they are a call for justice made tangible.

The Lennie Project is looking for volunteers! If you are in the Toronto area and interested in helping out please contact Nathalie-Roze Fischer! Email: [info@nathalie-roze.com](mailto:info@nathalie-roze.com), Twitter: [@NRandCo](https://twitter.com/NRandCo), Instagram: [@nathalieroze](https://www.instagram.com/nathalieroze).

*Sarah Jean Harrison is an educator, web designer and fibre enthusiast, spinning rather lumpy yarn in Toronto, Canada. Follow her adventures in local fibres at [www.peaceflag-house.com](http://www.peaceflag-house.com) and [@peaceflaghouse](https://twitter.com/peaceflaghouse) on Twitter and Instagram.*



*nathalie-roze*



# Save the Date: 2016 WARP Annual Meeting and IFAM in Santa Fe - July 8-12

Plans are underway for the annual WARP meeting. This year the meeting will be coordinated with the International Folk Art Market in Santa Fe. Read all about this wonderful exhibition and sale at <http://www.folkartalliance.org/events-programs/international-folk-art-market-santa-fe/> Several WARP members have participated in this event in the past. All of the exhibitors are grassroots economies producing crafts and this is a major marketing event for them. The 'textile' search at <http://www.folkartalliance.org/artist-search/?medium=Textiles#.textiles> brings up over 60 exhibitors. The map will help you plan out what to see and possibly buy. It is also possible to volunteer at the Market. Go to the Folk Alliance website for more information

WARP has arranged accommodations at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Retreat

and Conference Center, very close to the Market site. However, the rooms are limited, so register early. Meals will also be provided at the Retreat Center.

After the Market, the usual annual meeting events will occur. We will have our introduction and sharing session. There will be speakers on topics of interest. As always, the business meeting will have reports of WARP activities, the health and finances of the organization, and member suggestions to the Board concerning the future of WARP. There will be the opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones.

This all means that the meeting will be longer than usual, but will be packed with exciting activities. So, mark out the time on your calendar and start saving your pennies for an exceptional annual meeting. Registration details will be in the next newsletter.

## Weave A Real Peace Membership Information

[www.weavearealpeace.org](http://www.weavearealpeace.org)

### 2015 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 access to all publications for the year joined.

Members have access to annual Membership Directory through a secure members only section of the web site, a quarterly newsletter, and can participate in the WARP Google Discussion Group.

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, telephone number, and email address with appropriate check, money order, or Paypal information in US funds payable to WARP to:

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

or join online at  
<http://www.weavearealpeace.org>



## Australian WARP Member Visits Boulder



Wendy Garry (left) with Stephanie Flynn-Sokolov of the Boulder Hand Weavers Guild.

WARP member Wendy Garry, from Australia, recently visited Boulder as a guest of Shuttles, Spindles and Skeins in partnership with the Boulder Hand Weaver's Guild, also long time members of WARP. Wendy taught a two-day workshop on Bhutanese weaving and did an amazing slide show lecture for the guild.



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# From the WARP Office

Rita Chapman

I've much to share with you this time! We have some exciting changes coming in how we handle our membership renewals. Please watch for your membership renewal notice via email in the next couple of weeks. I'm in the midst of building a new system for our website whereby you'll be able to renew online directly simply by clicking a link, plus you'll be able to check your membership status at any time, and learn more about goings on within our membership. To assure that we have your current email address, please send it to [info@weavearealpeace.org](mailto:info@weavearealpeace.org). Please include your name, and let me know if you've moved.



During this holiday season, Weave a Real Peace has two ways that you can support our work, and that of textile artisans worldwide. First, under the leadership of Philis Alvic, the new updated Artisan Textile Resource Guide has been published to our website. Go to <http://weavearealpeace.org> and click the Resources tab. It's beautiful, and just brimming with gorgeous and useful items. Second, when you renew your membership, please con-

sider a gift membership for those friends and family who love textiles and fiber as much as you do! Our membership has steadily climbed to over 280 members. The more members we have, the more we're able to do, and you, our members, are our best recruiters! Let's make it our goal to have 350 members by March 31, 2016. I'll send a gift card to announce your gift, plus a welcome packet. You and your friends will enjoy the satisfaction of helping textile artisans to grow their livelihoods and standard of living, to preserve their textile cultural heritage, and to support their local economies. Plus, being a part of this circle of caring individuals that is WARP is just plain fun!

Finally, and I find this very exciting, when it's time to register for WARP's 2016 annual meeting, you'll be able to do so online. My goal is to have the website ready for registration to open no later than February 1, 2016. The meeting dates are July 8-12, 2016, and we'll be in Santa Fe, NM, during the International Folk Art Market. Watch for more news, coming soon! Plus, feel free to contact me any time at [info@weavearealpeace.org](mailto:info@weavearealpeace.org). ~ Rita

## WARP Governing Board

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## 2016 Newsletter Copy Deadlines

V23N1 - Spring 2016 - March 11

V23N2 - Summer 2016 - May 13

V23N3 - Fall 2016 - July 29

V23N4 - Winter 2016 - November 11

Save these dates and send your contributions to the Newsletter! Contact me at [lgtemple@juno.com](mailto:lgtemple@juno.com) if you have questions. Thanks!

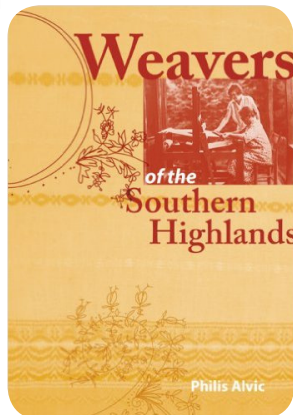


# Books You Want to Know About...

WARP Members are unbelievably knowledgeable about many things, especially textiles. And they generously share their knowledge by writing books and articles about their interests. In response to my request for WARP authors to send information about what they have written, here's a portion what I have received. You can look forward to more in the next issue. Enjoy! LT

**Philis Alvic**  
[philis@philisalvic.info](mailto:philis@philisalvic.info)

**Weavers of the Southern Highlands.** University Press of Kentucky, 2003. This is the history of weaving centers in the Appalachian Mountains in the early part of the 20th century. The centers enabled women to earn money in a largely subsistence economy. Individual chapters are devoted to the Fireside Industries at Berea College in KY; Arrowcraft started by Pi Beta Phi at Gatlinburg, TN; Penland Weavers and Potters in NC; and the Rabun Weavers of northeastern GA.



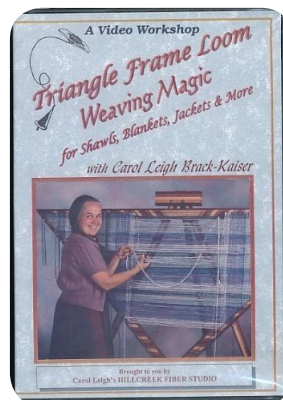
**Crafts of Armenia,** International Executive Service Corps Armenia, 2003. This book features fifty artists shown in their studios, with several pieces of their work. Information is given about the development of each person and the unique approach of each to their craft. This publication was put together with funds to promote tourism. There are lovely photos of the different regions of Armenia.

Besides writing books, I have written lots of magazine articles. Twenty-five of them are available on my website, <http://philisalvic.info/WWriting.html>

**Carol Leigh Brack-Kaiser**  
<http://www.hillcreekfiberstudio.com/>

**Continuous Strand Weaving Method, Techniques and Projects for Triangle, Square and Rectangle Frame Looms.** Self published by Carol Leigh Brack-Kaiser, Rose Estelle Martin, Photographer, 2011. Projects on triangle, square, and rectangle frame looms include simple scarves, shawls and pouches to more advanced double-woven blankets, jackets, coats, flags, household textiles, and more.

**DVD Triangle Frame Loom Weaving Magic for Shawls, Blankets, Jackets & More,** 90-minute Workshop Video. Co-produced by Carol Leigh Brack-Kaiser and Victorian Video, 1999. This video takes the viewer step-by-step through the process of weaving a triangle shawl and adding a second triangle to make a ruana, turning that into a jacket or a blanket.



**DVD Continuous Strand Weaving on Rectangle Frame Looms,** Self published by Carol Leigh Brack-Kaiser, Rose Martin, videographer, 2009. A 30-minute introduction to using the continuous strand weaving method on rectangle frame looms of all sizes. Includes design and project examples for both small rectangles and large adjustable ones.

*continued on page 8*

Please consider making an end-of-year donation to Weave A Real Peace. WARP is designated a 501(c)(3) organization by the Internal Revenue Service, and all donations are tax deductible in the US. If you wish, you can designate your donation be added to the Scholarship Fund, the Endowment Fund, or the General Fund. Mail donations to WARP 3102 Classen Blvd. PMB 249 Oklahoma City, OK 73118

## Noble Journeys

**Inside Morocco,** 15 days  
May 14-28, 2016  
\$4,495 pp in double \$895  
single supplement

**Textile Arts of Morocco,**  
10 days  
May 28 - June 6, 2016  
\$2,695 pp in double \$580  
single supplement

Led by Dr. Susan Davis, experience this exotic, welcoming country in these tours. Personal interactions with Susan's friends, colleagues, artisans. Visit major sites & cities, the Sahara, delicious cuisine, charming hotels, superb local guide.

For more information, contact Joan Noble at <http://www.noblejourneys.com/>





## New Members

Macarla Church  
Brisbane, Queensland  
AUSTRALIA

Andrea Revoy  
Creston, British Columbia,  
CANADA

Lisa Raye Garlock  
Silver Spring, MD  
USA

## Good News!

Long-time WARP member, Gloria Miller, has agreed to continue the Member Profile column in the WARP Newsletter. Candy Meacham, who has done an amazing job of telling us about WARP's interesting members, is working closely with Gloria in this transition. Thanks to both Gloria and Candy!

## Great Gifts

check out the 2015 Holiday Gift Guide on the Fair Trade Federation's website, <https://www.fairtradefederation.org/2015-fty-holiday-guide/>

Also, don't forget WARP's own *Artisan Resource Guide*, 2nd edition, now online at [www.weavearealpeace.org](http://www.weavearealpeace.org).

# Graphic Designer Influenced by WARP

Tonia Dee Martin is the graphic designer who has done dynamic design work for WARP recently, including the artisan resource guide, postcards, and graphic updates to our website.

We want to share Tonia Dee's most recent endeavor, a vibrant illustration



design project called "Smart Girl", meant to empower girls and promote the fight for education for all young women, worldwide. Tonia sells these as art prints and stationery, and donates 60% of profits to the Malala Fund, the organization founded by Malala Yousafzai and her father, to promote free, safe, and quality education for all girls.

Directly aligned with WARP's missions, we thought members would appreciate knowing about the Smart Girl project, and hearing how Tonia Dee has been impacted by her interactions with WARP members through designing for our organization:

"I'm continually inspired by the dedicated WARP members I have collaborated with on design projects. The experiences shared in the monthly newsletters are a welcomed dose of insight to practicing

artisans around the world. The stories of WARP members help me keep perspective and think about a bigger picture.

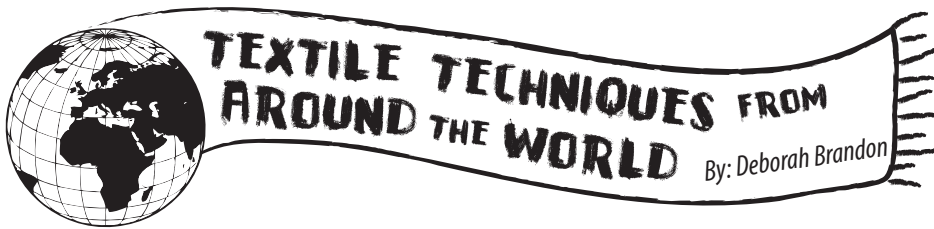
"I aspire to use my design knowledge in meaningful ways. Working with WARP has helped clarify the design endeavors I find fulfilling and the direction I want to take my personal work in the future. Contributing, in my own small way, to the kindred mission and goals of WARP makes me feel part of a global community working towards positive change.

"My "Smart Girl" design originated as one part of an illustration series influenced by daily life with my active, brave, and willful daughter. I strongly believe having a well-educated global population is the first, and maybe most important, step towards making our world a better place and solving our most pressing challenges. My slowly growing "Smart Girl" line is a way for me to use my skill set to contribute to those, especially young females, not born into a society or family that supports a love of reading and learning. I was fortunate enough to have all these blessings and am so excited to share my passion for knowledge with my daughter."

To support the Smart Girl project, please visit [toniadee.etsy.com](http://toniadee.etsy.com), and to learn more about Tonia Dee's work, [toniadee.com](http://toniadee.com).

*If you would like to share your WARP connection story, please email Kelsey at [kelsey.viola.wiskirchen@gmail.com](mailto:kelsey.viola.wiskirchen@gmail.com) or Katie at [ktd26@hotmail.com](mailto:ktd26@hotmail.com).*





## Spain—Espadrilles

When Imelda Marcos fled the Philippines in 1986, she was wearing a pair of black espadrilles. She had a collection of more than one thousand designer shoes to choose from. Why the espadrilles?

Espadrilles, simple fabric slip-on shoes with flexible jute soles, originated in Spain, more than four thousand years ago. Though popular at various points in time, they were designed for comfort and utility, not for high fashion.

Espadrilles used to be the peasant footwear of the Pyrenees, the mountain range between France and Spain. The name espadrille is derived from the French word *esparto*, the grass that was later replaced by jute in the making of the soles.

There is a distinct division of labor in the traditional production of espadrilles—the espadrille-artisans who make the jute soles, and the seamstresses who sew the fabric uppers and attach them to the soles. The artisans coil braided jute rope to form the sole, then shape it by placing it into a mold and sewing through the coils to maintain the shape. The seamstresses cut the two pieces of canvas for the uppers. Next they sew them onto a separate jute braid, which they then sew to the sole.

Espadrilles came into vogue in the thirteenth century in Catalonia, in north-eastern Spain, where they are still artisan-made. In the early 1800s they started being produced in quantity, when the customer base expanded from the farming community to the military, clergy, and later to the mining population. In the late nineteenth century they were also exported to South America.

During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), with both the Spanish military

and the rebels wearing espadrilles, the production of espadrilles kicked into high gear. The next big change in espadrille production took place in 1970, when Yves St-Laurent, the Parisian fashion designer, placed an order for wedge espadrilles, which became all the rage.

Traditional espadrilles were either black or in the fabric's natural color, the former worn on weekdays, the latter on Sundays. Some espadrilles sported ribbons to secure them to the wearers ankles (similar to ballet shoes). As the popularity of espadrilles grew, so did the variety in color and design. Today, espadrilles come in a wide range of fabrics and can vary from a closed shoe to an open-toed sandal. They can be flat or have wedge-shaped heels. There are also platform espadrilles.

I found a photo of Imelda Marcos, the first lady of the Philippines from 1965 to 1986, where she's holding a pair of espadrilles that she claimed were similar to the ones she wore when she fled the country. It's clear from the photo that the shoes were open toed and had no ribbons. It's also clear that the heel was fairly low. They certainly looked a lot more comfortable than many of her designer shoes. Was that why she chose to wear them on her flight?

### Resources:

DeMello, Margo, *"Feet and Footwear, A Cultural Encyclopedia"*, Greenwood Press ABC-CLIO, 2009.

<http://www.espadrillestore.com/en/the-history/>

*Deborah Brandon is a multi-talented mathematician and former board member. She can be reached at 412/963-7416 or at [brandon@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:brandon@andrew.cmu.edu)*

## Next Issue WARP News!

Thanks to a great response from WARP authors, the 'Books You Want to Know About' listing will continue in the Spring issue. If you haven't sent your contributions, please do so by emailing the info to me at [lgtemple@juno.com](mailto:lgtemple@juno.com)

As WARP transitions from one listserv group to another, and until the WARP 'Members Only' Facebook page becomes known to more members, I'd like to ask all of you to think about what you can contribute to the newsletter. Please send that information to me at [lgtemple@juno.com](mailto:lgtemple@juno.com). I'm not able to communicate to the group, so cannot send reminders.

Last, but not least, there will be complete information about the 2016 meeting in the next newsletter.



# Books You Want to Know About

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**WARP on the Web** - <http://www.weavearealpeace.org> features WARP history, annual meeting information, member access to the directory, and past newsletters. You can join or renew your membership online.

**Facebook** - Find 'Weave A Real Peace' in the search bar on your personal Facebook account to follow what WARP members share and to make posts to the page. Click 'Invite Friends to Follow' to promote WARP to other Facebook friends.

**WARP Blog** - To subscribe to receive an email when a new article has been posted, click on 'Blog' in the main menu at <http://weavearealpeace.org>. Enter your email address where you see 'Subscribe to the WARP Blog Via Email!' To contribute an article to the blog, please email [info@weavearealpeace.org](mailto:info@weavearealpeace.org)

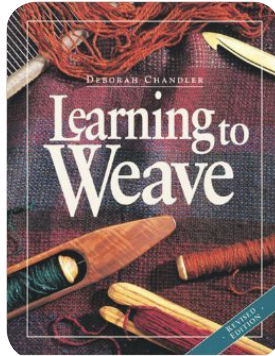
**Google** - You are invited to join our new Google Group. If you are interested in joining please email Katie at [ktd26@hotmail.com](mailto:ktd26@hotmail.com) or Rita at [info@weavearealpeace.org](mailto:info@weavearealpeace.org) and you will be invited. The Yahoo Group is no longer in use.

Katie Simmons also maintains a WARP presence on [ravelry.com](http://ravelry.com), the knitting networking site; and on Weavevolution, <http://www.weavevolution.com>. Please send her information at [ktd26@hotmail.com](mailto:ktd26@hotmail.com).

**Nature Provides: Dyes for Rainbows of Color**, being self-published by Carol Leigh Brack-Kaiser, nearly finished; photography by Rose Estelle Martin. Approximately 200 pages on three natural dye workshops, each obtaining rainbows of color, all offered for 30 years by Carol Leigh at her Hillcreek Fiber Studio: Missouri Dye Plants, Ancient Dyes, and Lesser Known Ancient Dyes. Taking pre-publication orders.

**Deborah Chandler**  
[weavingfutures2012@gmail.com](mailto:weavingfutures2012@gmail.com)

**Learning to Weave**, Interweave Press, 1984, revised 2004. More than 40,000 weavers have used this study guide to learn from scratch or to hone their skills. All of the basics are covered: understanding the tools of weaving, making a good warp three ways, reading and designing drafts, and understanding weave structures.



**Guatemalan Woven Wealth - Preserving a Rich Textile Tradition**, with Raymond E. Senuk, co-author. Friendship Bridge, 2009. The book discusses the Mayan women's wardrobe which reflects the cultural heritage of generations of weavers. Garments being made and worn currently are rooted in long tradition. There is reference to identifying the garments of various regions as well as advice about collecting. Proceeds from the sale of the book benefit Friendship Bridge, Mayan Hands, and Weave a Real Peace

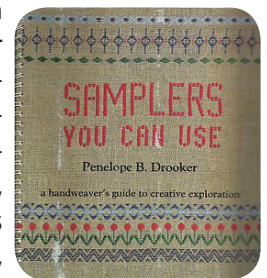
**Traditional Weavers of Guatemala - Their Stories, Their Lives**, with Teresa Cardon, co-author, Joe Coca, photographer. Thrums Books, September 2015. Twenty artisans share their personal histories, hopes, and dreams along with the products of their hands and looms. Over 200 vibrant photographs tell a story of the physical beauty of Guatemala, of the diversity of a landscape that has shaped its people, of the Maya culture, and of the textiles themselves.

**Penelope B. Drooker**  
[pdrooker@gmail.com](mailto:pdrooker@gmail.com)

**Embroidering with the Loom: Creative Combinations of Weaving and Stitchery**. Van Nostrand Reinhold, NY, 1979. Explores ways to integrate hand-weaving and needlework techniques to achieve unique effects and to save time and effort.

**Hammock Making Techniques**. Author, Sanbornville, NH, 1981. Based on research with ethnographic examples, this book describes and illustrates fabric structures, finishing techniques, and hanging devices used to produce traditionally constructed hammocks.

**Samplers You Can Use: A Handweaver's Guide to Creative Exploration**. Interweave Press, Loveland, CO, 1984. Provides design guidelines for using woven samplers—threading and treadling variations, sett, yarn sizes and types, color, etc.—as the basis for finished functional or fiber-art pieces.



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# Books You Want to Know About

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## **Mississippian Village Textiles at Wickliffe.**

University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa. 1992. Presents in-depth research on fabrics produced 900 years ago in a village at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, along with an overview of fabric-making traditions throughout interior southeastern North America during the Mississippian archaeological period, ca. AD 900-1600.

## **Makers and Markets: The Wright Collection of Twentieth-Century Native American Art,**

with contributions by Patricia Capone. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1998. Describes and illustrates an important collection of Southwestern Native American crafts and artwork amassed during the 1960s-1980s, providing context about the makers and the development of markets and marketing for their work. Major portions of the collection include Pueblo ceramics, Navajo and Hopi textiles, Navajo, Hopi, and Zuni jewelry, and baskets from forty different Native American groups.

## **Beyond Cloth and Cordage: Archaeological Textile Research in the Americas,**

ed., with Laurie Webster. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 2000. An overview of current research on New World archaeological fabrics, demonstrating that textile data provide a unique means of addressing questions of broad anthropological interest as well as problems difficult or impossible to resolve by other means. 13 chapters by 19 contributing authors.

## **Fleeting Identities: Perishable Material Culture in Archaeological Research,**

ed. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 2001. Draws from current worldwide archaeological research to highlight the importance to

peoples' lives of perishable materials that rarely survive in the archaeological record but which represent up to 90% of all material culture in some regions, from wooden buildings, containers, and tools to animal-skin blankets and bags to fiber clothing and fishing/hunting nets. 21 chapters by 38 contributors.

## **Liz Gipson**

[gipson.liz@gmail.com](mailto:gipson.liz@gmail.com)

## **Weaving Made Easy.**

Interweave Press, 2008, revised 2015. This book was written for those who know nothing about weaving or the rigid-heddle loom, but they are eager and ready to learn! The rigid-heddle loom is widely recognized as the gateway loom to weaving. It suits the modern lifestyle as it is easy to set up, portable, affordable, and highly versatile. It is the perfect loom for those that are downsizing, urban dwellers, those who have limited space in their living spaces for their yarncraft, or are handspINNERS.



## **Carol Hayman**

[chayman@austincc.edu](mailto:chayman@austincc.edu)

## **La Gamarra,**

self-published. Focusing on the garment district in Lima, Peru, the book is all photos, 113 pages, of the micro-factories, displays, vendors, fashions, and manikins. It's available from <http://www.prestophoto.com/bookstore/99008>. The cheapest version is \$33, but it can be previewed for free.

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With a great deal of sadness, we learned of Judy Allen's death on November 23 in South Hadley, MA. Judy was WARP's Administrative Coordinator from 2009 to 2014. Originally from Oklahoma, Judy worked as a librarian during her professional career, and later as a hospice counselor. Despite battling cancer for the past eight years, Judy's endless enthusiasm and optimism were contagious—she continued to travel the world and to ride her bicycle until the end. We will miss you, Judy.



## Books You Want to Know About

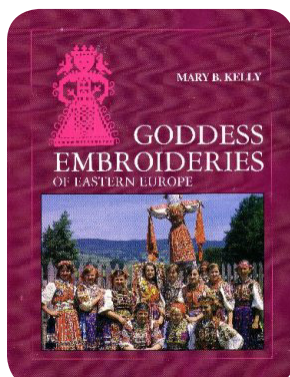
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**Mary B. Kelly**  
kellym13@juno.com

### *Goddess Embroideries of Eastern Europe.*

Studiobooks, Hilton Head, SC, 1996.

Study of folk goddesses portrayed on embroideries and weavings in Russia, Ukraine and Eastern European countries



of Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

*Goddess Embroideries of the Balkan Lands and Greek Islands.* Studiobooks, 1999. Folk tales of the of the Balkans and Greek islands with a focus on symbols rituals and the meaning of local goddesses on embroidery.

### *Goddess Embroideries of the Northlands.*

Studiobooks, 2007. A textile survey of female deities, preserved by women on textiles from the Neolithic to the 20th century on textiles from Siberia to the Atlantic Ocean. Symbolic interpretation on embroidery and weaving is passed down in northern Russia, the Baltics and Scandinavian countries by women in folk ritual.

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## Traditional Silk Artists of Laos

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pattern-template (khao ti dai) contains the instructions for the weaver for the textile's line-by-line creation as the weaver concentrates on her weaving precision and effective use of supplemental colors. A khao ti dai is saved for re-use, allowing certain effective, desirable patterns to be re-woven through the generations.

- The weavers (of whom there are several hundred in the Xam Tai region, age 7 to 80), who sit at their large floor looms and deftly and miraculously create the most intricate and vibrant traditional silks in the world. The region is most famous for its discontinuous supplemental weft patterns, but one also finds superb samples of tapestry weave, ikat and supplemental warp patterning. A single large masterpiece shaman's cloth (phaa phii mon) may take a woman four months to create at the loom. For many families, weaving is the sole source of income, keeping a high level of interest among women with the skill, patience, and talent.

- The businessperson, who gets the silk to the marketplace (assuming that's its destination). This vital role, which requires both economic savvy and outside contacts, is often managed by the dyer.

While factory-spun silk, aniline dyes and synthetic fibers are all readily available in local markets in Laos, the ethic of the silk-artist community of Xam Tai demands that the traditional processes be maintained. This cultural ethic has, for hundreds of generations, supported a cooperative and healthy lifestyle and economy that has allowed their traditional way of life to endure into the 21st century. Their recent efforts to reach larger outside markets, as through our business, will be essential if these traditions are to continue to remain vital and attractive to future generations of Xam Tai's cultural silk artists.

Maren Beck and Josh Hirschstein, with teen sons Ari and Zall, formed *Above the Fray* in 2007 determined to introduce the weaving traditions and cultures of hilltribe Laos and Vietnam to a broader audience. Visit their website at <http://www.hilltribeart.com/>

### Invitation to participate in international weaving exchange

Tiffany York writes: "I manage the Artist-in-Residence program at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. I am writing to ask for your help. We are assisting artist Helen Mirra (one of our residents) by spreading the word about a new project she is working on. Ms. Mirra is attempting to reach weavers all around the world to invite them to make two very simple pieces, with a double aim: to allow an exchange of these weavings between weavers in distant places, and, to assemble a collection for exhibition and publication."

STANDARD INCOMPARABLE, the name of the exhibit, requests a collection of weavings made to the same parameters: undyed yarn from regional plant and/or animal fiber, in two shades, materials, or weights (ply), in seven stripes the width of the weaver's hand. Ms. Mirra is asking that people contact her by December 1 if they are interested in participating.

More information is available at <http://hmirra.net/si>



# Traditional Silk Artists of Laos

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Local tradition holds that these complex weavings grant healers access to the spirits that affect health, both of the individual and of the community. Ancient motifs are woven into the textiles forming



the geometric complexity: river-serpents (ngeuk) emblematic of female power, elephants (saang) that uphold political power, "hong" birds that represent male power, ancestor spirits, and fierce giant spirits (phii nak). These spirits can be invoked by shamans to heal a person from an injury or fever, protect an infant, revitalize an underperforming rice-field, or generate luck for a business venture.

Even today in the shade of the thatched-roof homes in Xam Tai, silk



An 8-year old silk weaver with a "sample-sized" silk, affectionately called a "love token."

shaman, healing, and other ritual and household textiles are still woven for economic support as well as actual village use. However, the textile's role of accessing spiritual and ancestral power for healing is diminishing as their world increasingly overlaps the modern 21st century.

The traditional silk-weaving process in Xam Tai has six distinct roles:

- The seri-culturist, who raises the worms from tiny egg to fuzzy cocoon, all in the shade of their village home, taking great care to avoid disease and predators.
- The reeler, who nurtures the warmed silk strands through her finger-



The design of the template-pattern can be clearly seen on this loom. After each horizontal memory-thread, which represents a line of pattern in the weft, is used, it is moved from the template's top to the bottom; later, the memory threads will be moved from bottom to top, creating the traditional mirror-image motifs in the design-work.

tips, inch by inch, pacing her work to match the cooling rate of the silk's sticky sericin.

- The dye-master, who prides herself on using only natural dyes created from what the jungle provides. A scale-bug secretion, lac, forms the traditional foundation of red that is integral to so many of their textiles, but nearly every hue can be generated and fixed to silk.
- The pattern-template maker, who is likely also an expert weaver with highly-developed visual skills. The floor loom's

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## Postcards for WARP Members

If you would like some beautiful WARP postcards to distribute, contact Rita Chapman at [info@weavearealpeace.org](mailto:info@weavearealpeace.org).





Weave a Real Peace  
3102 Classen Boulevard  
PMB 249  
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Save the Date! 2016 Annual Meeting July 8-12 in Santa Fe!!

## Books You Want to Know About

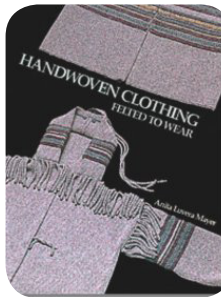
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**Goddess Women Cloth.** Studiobooks, 2011. World-wide symbols of female deities, preserved by women on textiles in Alaska, North and South America, China and Japan, central and south east Asia.  
All are available on Amazon.com

**Anita Luvera Mayer**  
[anita-mayer@comcast.com](mailto:anita-mayer@comcast.com)

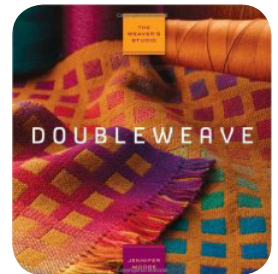
**Clothing From the Hands That Weave,** Interweave Press, 1985. Currently out-of-print but available new and used on-line by entering book title. This book will be republished in the near future by Echo Point Books and Media in VT ([sales@echopointbooks.com](mailto:sales@echopointbooks.com))

**Handwoven Clothing Felted to Wear,** ShuttleCraftBooks, 1988. Available new and used on line by entering book title.



**Jennifer Moore**  
<http://www.doubleweaver.com/>

**The Weaver's Studio: Doubleweave,** Interweave Press, 2010. Doubleweave is the art of weaving two layers of cloth at the same time, one above the other on the loom, creating beautiful cloth that is reversible yet unique on each side.



**Doubleweave Basics** DVD, 2 Disc

Set. Step-by-step instructions for weaving a two-layer sampler on four shafts. Learn to weave separate layers, double-width cloth, tubes, slits, color-and-weave effects, stitched cloth, simple pique, quilted cloth and top layer laces.

**Doubleweave Pick-up** DVD - Learn how to weave any image you would like to create through pick-up on two layers of cloth. Detailed demonstrations teach you how to design and follow a graph, accurately create the pick-up and weave each of the necessary steps.

