

# Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners Guild

Newsletter - April 2019



We love celebrating together almost as much as we love spinning, dyeing, and weaving together! (Photo courtesy of Vanessa Herman)



Neilson Park  
Creative Centre



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>EHS STUDIO TIME</u></b></p> <p><u>Fibre Fridays</u> - 9:00 - 12:30</p> <p>April 5, 12, 26          May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31          June 7, 14, 21, 28          July 5, 12, 19, 26          August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30</p> <p><u>Wednesday Spinning Days</u> - 9:00 - 4:30</p> <p>April 10          May 8          June 12</p> <p><u>Sunday Open Studio Days</u> - 1:00 - 4:30</p> <p>April 28          May 26          June 23</p> <p><u>Tuesday Evening Meeting</u> - 6:00 - 9:30</p> <p>April 2          May 7          June 4</p> <p>Thank you for continuing to put \$2 in the box for half day and \$5 for full day studio time. This helps to offset our rental costs.</p> <p><u>NPCC Studio Drop-in</u></p> <p>Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 9:30 - \$5.00 to NPCC reception</p> <p>Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:30 - \$5.00 to NPCC reception</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Dorothy Thomson          Membership and Treasurer</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>UPCOMING GUILD PROGRAMS</u></b></p> <p><u>April 2</u> Working with variegated and hand dyed yarns - Kate Atherley</p> <p><u>May 7</u> The Aga Khan Textile Collection - Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director, Collections and Public Programs</p> <p><u>June 4</u> The Guild, Annual Meeting and Pot Luck</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sharon Airhart          Program Convenor</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>WEAVING</u></b></p> <p>At the moment, the tea towel loom has now been warped and the first tea towel has been started. The colour gamps are about halfway done and a new set will be put on soon. The warps for the 60"loom are being prepared and in the next couple of weeks we will start to dress the loom.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Karen Fowler          Weaving Convenor</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>SHOWS</u></b></p> <p>Late in December, we were asked by NPCC to put up a show in the beginning of January. As we had less than two weeks to pull the show together, we decided to call it "Spontaneity." I want to thank everyone who submitted their favourite pieces and who helped to put the show up. Your efforts made the show a tremendous success.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Karen Fowler          Show Convenor</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>MEMBERSHIP</u></b></p> <p>Our guild membership now stands at 51 members. As a member of Neilson Park there are many benefits. A complete list of retailers that offer discounts and Galleries that offer reciprocal program admission can be found on the Neilson Park website.</p> <p><a href="http://www.neilsonparkcreativecentre.com/index.php/en/join-us/npcc-membership">http://www.neilsonparkcreativecentre.com/index.php/en/join-us/npcc-membership</a></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Dorothy Thomson</i></p>
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**SPINNING and DYEING** Joan McKenzie, Spinning Convenor

Spring! And the lambs are frolicking already!! Soon it will be shearing time, and lots of lovely fleece just waiting for you.

We have some new spinners!! Fresh from the Intro to Spinning Wheel spinning course in February. Did you know that you can rent a spinning wheel from the Guild?? Rentals are very reasonable - just \$30 for 3 months. A deposit cheque is kept on hold till the wheel is returned. If interested, please contact Joan McKenzie, Spinning Chair.

Fibre Wednesdays see many of you coming out - to spin, dye some yarn or fleece, or do whatever you want to do in the Studio. Thanks to Cheryl Michaelson for the donation of Brazilwood chips to our dye pot! A lovely coral was obtained from them, and an after dip in ammonia produced lovely pinks!! The colour in the pot lasted way beyond expectations... I was sad to have to dispose of it ... however I still have the wood chips, and they may be able to be revived (another time).

In March one of the Indigo dye pots from the Indigo workshop was revived - the banana one!! - and was very generous to those who waited for it to work. Indigo pots are a bit tricky - you need to get the temperature and the pH just right. But when you do, they reward you very nicely. The pots will be out again in April.

Coming up in June is the Ontario Handspinning Seminar - this year featuring Linda Cortwright, founder and publisher of Wild Fibres. The workshops all have a Wild theme - check them out! It's a fabulous seminar - great speaker, vendors, and good workshops. London is the host city, and accommodations are at a university residence. Hope to see you there! <https://www.ontariohandspinningseminar.ca>

Starting to emerge are our Dye Garden plants!! Just a few are poking their heads up - along with a few weeds. Any volunteers to help with the weeding?? Bring your gardening gloves on a Fibre Wednesday and it'll be cleaned up in no time!!

**Indigo workshop:**

For the first three days of March, a number of us along with a few Quilters were in a very blue-ish mood - but it was a very happy blue mood!! Harriet Boon led us into the magic of Indigo, with a nod to Shibori. With her assistance, each team of two prepared an Indigo pot - each team had a different recipe and preparation. Then, the fun began, dipping the prepared sample yarns and roving into the pot - sometimes multiple times - and watching them turn blue!! Harriet showed us a number of samples from her travels, and introduced a number of simple shibori techniques, folding, scunching, and clamping a silk scarf. Participants also brought their own fabrics to put into the selected pot and great results were obtained. Additional dye pots of fustic, Osage orange and cochineal were prepared, and were used along with indigo to obtain a wider range of colours! A good time was had by all, and we have the dye pots to continue to play with. Income from the workshop was used to purchase a pH meter, and will fund the purchase of some indigo books to our Library.



MOOD INDIGO!!!



**EHS WEAVING WORKSHOP:**

**IMAGE + CLOTH: EXPLORING TRANSPARENT WEAVING METHODS WITH JOANNA SCHLEIMER**

February 9-10, 2019

In February, several members of the Guild, along with one outside participant, had the opportunity to partake in a workshop on woven transparencies led by Joanna Schleimer. Joanna is a graduate of the Material Arts and Design program at OCAD. In her Hamilton-based practice, she specializes in using fine weight, natural materials to create imagery in delicate woven cloth that evokes memories and feelings from nostalgic or heirloom objects. Examples of her work are available to view on her website <http://www.joannaschleimer.com>. Joanna also teaches weaving classes and workshops at various venues in the city, including The Workroom and will be teaching Weaving for Beginners at Neilson Park Creative Centre starting in April.

Participants arrived at the workshop with looms pre-warped with a fine weight 2/20 cotton at a loose sett required for creating the fine mesh background cloth of transparencies. Joanna also asked that participants bring old photos and small, simple sketches to be used in the workshop samples. Joanna's warm and down-to-earth personality, along with the abundance of tasty treats that were provided by the workshop participants, quickly created a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere in the studio. Joanna began by giving a brief overview of her weaving background and education, and showed us samples of her beautiful work. This in itself was a highlight of the workshop for me, and a source of inspiration for all as we next moved ahead with the instructional portion of the workshop. We were all very impressed by Joanna's teaching methods, which most participants had not seen before. As opposed to us all hovering over Joanna's loom as she demonstrated each technique, she set up a tripod with camera attached and facing down toward her work. Her work was then projected onto a screen in front of her, making it easy for all to see!

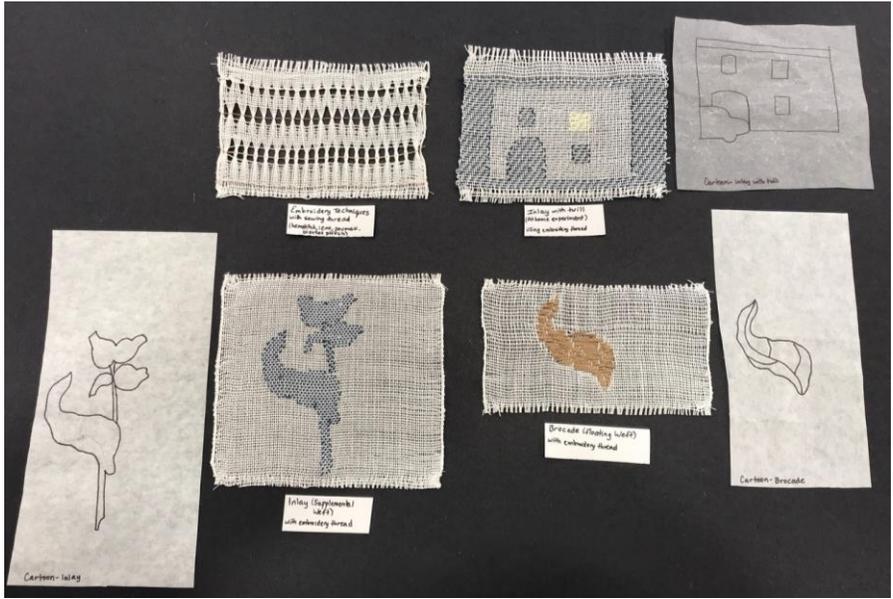
We created four samples of transparent weaving techniques over the two days of the workshop. Each sample was woven in plain weave with a light beat to maintain an open mesh background. Joanna provided an assortment of threads, fabric, paper and other materials to be used for the various techniques. See photos of my samples from the workshop for further illustration.

- *Embroidery Techniques:* These techniques essentially utilized the loom as a tensioned embroidery frame, creating open work that resembled drawn or pulled thread work. The embroidery techniques included hemstitch, soumak, leno and blanket stitch.
- *Inlay (Supplemental Weft):* For this technique, we pinned one of our sketches under the warp threads as a reference for the image. After each weft pick of our background weft, we laid in our supplemental weft following the drawing underneath.
- *Brocade:* As with the inlay technique, a drawing was pinned underneath as a reference. Essentially this was a satin stitch over a woven background cloth.
- *Inlay with Inclusions (Mixed Media Supplemental Weft):* Prior to completing this sample, Joanna copied and printed the photographs we brought onto cotton fabric. We cut the photos into thin strips and used the inlay technique to recreate the photo (or a portion of the image) in woven fabric.

Joanna was a fantastic teacher! I think we all appreciated her patient, thorough explanations of each technique, as well as her recommendations for books and additional materials and methods to try if we chose to continue our exploration of this type of weaving at home. Her experience and approach as an OCAD-trained visual artist brought a feel to the workshop that I found refreshing and added further depth and variety to the experiences offered here at the Guild.

*Sandra Dammizio*

Sandra's workshop samples





Commented [CC1]:

Come One - Come All! Just a reminder that the Handmade is just around the corner! Please do attend and bring your friends, family, and neighbours. Tell anyone and everyone you know about the event and help us make it a smashing success!

Thanks to all the Guild members that have volunteered their services and contributed to the Guild table! You ladies rock!!!

*Denise Larocque*

This year there is a secondary table booked for the sale. This table is for quality items that do not fit the description of weaving, hand spun yarns and items made from handspun. If you have items that fit that description and are a member of EHS you are welcome to join this table. I want to stress that this is not in competition to the EHS table in the gallery, but a place to showcase "Other Things We Do".

A reminder that both tables will require volunteers, to set up, work the table and knock down. Hope to see everyone there, regardless of whether you are selling items.

*Gloria Williams*

#### SHEEP TO SHAWL

I noticed Karen's "call to action" in the last newsletter and I am interested in being part of the organizing team for the Royal Winter Fair. I'd like to share "my vision" with you (tell me what you think!):

1. Let us know who would like to be on the team for the Royal Winter Fair. We'd be looking for people to help plan and prepare and for people to physically participate at the event. I would like to see more people involved - a way to include new members in the prep stage, experienced spinners at the "end" stage.
2. We'd be looking for 1 weaver (and one back up), 3 spinners (1 back up), 1 pleyer, 1 doing fibre prep (drum carder?) and one PR.
3. The rest of the preparation team would assist in dyeing the warp, have input in the weaving design and put a display together.

The guild would like to see more people involved in the preparation stage. I would point out it is still a "fun" thing for us to do and we're not getting caught up in competition fever. At the same time, we'd like to put our best foot forward, be prepared AND involve more people of the guild in the process.

Let us know who is up for the challenge!

*Friedl Ballaban*

### OUTREACH

Thank you to every guild member who contributed items to our very successful outreach program in 2018. We had about 140 items donated including many hats, scarves and cowls which will go a long way to keeping some individuals warmer this winter. We selected three charities in Etobicoke to receive our donations:

- Women's Habitat provides services to women and children who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing any type of violence or abuse. In addition to a 25 bed shelter, Women's Habitat also operates an outreach center in South Etobicoke and offers individual and group counselling, transition and support services, housing assistance and parenting support. Women's Habitat focuses on increasing their client's independence and has asked if our guild would consider providing knitting lessons in 2019. If you are interested in participating, please contact Moyra MacKay.
- Out of the Cold at St. Margaret's Church in South Etobicoke. St. Margaret's runs a community dinner as well as an overnight hostel on Monday nights for 25 men who are also offered dinner and breakfast when staying overnight and a TTC token to get them to another Out of the Cold facility the following night.
- Since opening its doors in 2009, The Haven on Queensway has been assisting people in the community struggling with poverty or a crisis situation. They run a number of programs including a food bank which provides groceries, household products and personal hygiene items to anyone in need. They also have a focus on meeting the material and nutritional needs of pregnant women and parents of newborns to the age of one year by providing food aid, clothing, diapers, formula and moral support. Their Pathway to Peace runs a 12 step support and recovery group and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held twice a week. Their Stepping Out program provides mentorship and alternatives to individuals who are involved or have been involved in sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Their Clothing Boutique provides a selection of new and used clothing which is provided free to those less fortunate who meet a needs test. The Children's Book Section provides free new children's books to parents and children who visit the Haven. Seniors Helping Seniors in partnership with Nurse Next Door supports seniors in need and/or isolated within the community. Hope with Wheels responds to the needs of the homeless in downtown Toronto and Etobicoke by providing water, hot food, sleeping bags, toiletries and hope. Inmate Rehabilitation provides monthly visits to Kinark Child and Family Services and the Toronto South Detention Center, providing music, encouragement and one-on-one mentorship to those transitioning back into society from prison life. In the event any guild member is clearing out their cupboards and is looking for a home for the items, The Haven would be grateful to receive clothing and household items for distribution to their clients. The Haven is located a couple of doors west of IKEA at 1533 The Queensway.

Outreach items can be delivered to EHS all year long and put in the bag hung in our cupboard. In addition, if any member would like fiber for outreach, please contact Moyra MacKay as we have a supply of fiber which has been donated to EHS and can be used for this purpose.

*Moyra MacKay*

Just have a look at the beautiful items you have donated to Outreach in 2018!  
*Thank you Vanessa Herman for the photos!*





#### Shadow Box Fundraising Event

Friday May 10, 2019

7:00 - 10:00

First of all, thank you to all the EHS members who agreed to make shadow boxes for the fundraiser (and to those of you who have already completed and submitted yours)! This is a great opportunity to show how we can create art that incorporates weaving, spinning, or felting. We have around 100 shadow boxes for the event from all NPCC members so our goal has been reached.

Now for the event itself. The evening will be structured as follows:

**7:00 - 8:00 Refreshments, mingling, and shadow box preview.** There will be appetisers and a cash bar and lots of time to select the piece of art you might like to go home with. Hopefully you will have a chance to chat with the artists who have created the shadow boxes.

**8:00 - 9:30 Shadow box draw.** When you arrive at the event you will receive a draw ticket. Ticket numbers will be drawn starting at 8:00. When your ticket number is drawn you will be asked to select your piece of art from the shadow boxes hung on the wall.

**9:30 - 10:00 Auction of remaining shadow boxes.** The remaining shadow boxes will be auctioned by our guest auctioneer (stay tuned to see who that might be!). Starting bid will be \$20.

So how do you attend? Tickets will be available at the front desk at NPCC, or I will have them for sale at the April meeting. Each \$60 ticket holder will receive access to the event and a draw ticket for a shadow box containing an original piece of art. There will only be 80 of these tickets available. As well there will be \$25 tickets for others who would like to attend but who do not want a shadow box. And, both sets of ticket holders will be eligible to participate in the auction at the end of the evening.

I am making a shadow box and will be there handing out the draw tickets. I hope to see many of you, your friends and family there. In previous years it has made for a fun evening out - and how great to be able to go home with a small piece of original art - all for \$60! As there are limited tickets available, don't miss out and get yours today!

*Jennifer James*

**RESOURCES TO KNOW ABOUT - OUR OWN GUILD LIBRARY!**

Our guild has a wonderful library of approximately 400 volumes. From weaving, spinning and dyeing to sprang, information on sheep and their fleece, and history of fibre arts and textiles. Members are actively encouraged to borrow, borrow, borrow. We suggest the borrow time limit to be 3 months. Then, once you have enjoyed one of our books, please write a review for the newsletter so others will be inspired to borrow as well.

The library includes a Reference Only shelf or two. These are volumes that are rare, and/or expensive to replace. Please take advantage of them while at Neilson Park when the library is available.

Our magazine collection is also very extensive. We have many different subscriptions:

PLY, Handwoven, Spin-Off, Wild Fibers, Weavers and others of less known lineage. They are available to borrow as well.

Library Thing, an online library software also houses our book collection.

Visit: <https://www.librarything.com/>

User: EHS\_library

Password: Et0b1c0ke

A great way to visit the depths of the library's shelves is to volunteer! Always in need of Library volunteers.

*Carolyn Ramos*

**BOOK REVIEW**

*Weaving Bateman Blend: My Own Journey*

Margaret Franklin



If you are interested in complex weave structures - especially those that focus on 8 plus shafts - then you may well be interested in this book. Bateman Blend was originally named "Atwin" - after Mary Megs Atwater (Dr. Bateman's neighbour) and summer and winter weave. And the information provided about Dr. Bateman provides wonderful colour to the discussion about the weave structures. Margaret Franklin has completed an in-depth study of Bateman Blend and in this book guides the reader through a number of "workshops" to help them explore this weave structure. The book is well laid out, with wonderful pictures and clear drafts and illustrated practical uses for the fabric that is described. This is a structure that I personally have no experience in weaving and really know nothing about. However, I am finding it fascinating enough just reading about it, that I plan to begin with Warp 1 described at the start of the book and weave some samples this summer! The author of this book is a Toronto weaver - and I understand that we now have a copy of the book in the Guild library.

*Jennifer James*

**BOOK REVIEW:** *Weaving for Beginners: An Illustrated Guide* by Peggy Osterkamp.

I bought this book about 10 years after I first learned to weave. To me it is step-by-step, nuts and bolts of basic weaving. No detail is too small to leave out. "Back to Front" warping starts on page 13 and ends on page 90 and is full of good ideas. This is her preferred method, but she also has instructions for "Front to back warping" (page 149 through 182). I wish I'd had a book like this when I first learned. When I first read the book it filled in a lot of gaps for me and, although I don't follow her methods exactly, I've inserted certain ideas from this book into the methods I have developed for my own situation. There's a section on Rigid Heddle looms, Knots, selvages, mixed warps. Great book. I'm going to read it again. I highly, highly recommend this book.

*Elizabeth Evans*

**LOCAL AUTHORS MAKE GOOD!**

*Handwoven* magazine - March/April 2019

This issue is titled "North American Weaving: a Proud and Lasting Legacy" and Canada and Canadian weavers are well represented!

- Throughout, the book "Keep me Warm one Night" features prominently. It is highlighted in our own **Sharon Airhart's** article (where some of our guild members are pictured!) and is referenced in many of the articles that discuss overshot history and patterns. **Congratulations to Sharon on the article** - it is wonderful to see a fellow guild member "in print".
- Ingrid Boesel is remembered as a weaver who contributed greatly to weaving here in Ontario (EHS engaged her as a speaker and I believe a workshop leader as well) and in North America through her weaving software.
- Carol James (no relation to me!) has an article on Fingerweaving and Assomption Sashes - as well as a fingerweaving project to try.
- And I noticed that suppliers as well - Camilla Valley and Maurice Brassard et Fils - were listed as project suppliers.

I can't seem to remember an issue where there was as much Canadian content - it is great to see! You can borrow a copy from the guild library!

*Jennifer James*

*Complex Weavers Journal* - October 2018

**Elizabeth Evans** wrote an article about a study she did as part of her participation in the Oscar Beriau study group. The task was to weave one sample according to the instructions given in his book, *Home Weaving*, and then, to weave a creative interpretation of the same design. Elizabeth drew on a strategy described by Dinette Boer in another issue of *Complex Weavers Journal* (called Leonardo da Vinci's Creativity Strategy!) to stimulate her creative process. She identified some possible alternative choices in colour, material, weave structure, and sett, and used random numbers to choose which of these alternatives she would weave. She said she loved the fabric that she wove, but typical of Elizabeth's mindful approach to living and weaving, she also reflected on the process and identified some questions. I encourage you to look up Elizabeth's article, look up the article on the creative strategy, and then ask her more about it!

*Claudia Clipsham*

**WHO ARE WE??? MEMBERS OF OUR GUILD - OLD AND NEW - INTRODUCE THEMSELVES**

From our president, **Carolyn Ramos**: I hope our newer members as well as members that have been with the guild a little longer will come forward and let us know what they want to get out of their experience.

I just satisfied one of my fibre bucket list items and that was the indigo dyeing we did a few weeks ago.

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Hi, my name is **Vanessa Herman**,  
If you don't know me yet, I joined the guild last fall.  
I love to spin wool!

I am open to bartering spun wool for knitting or weaving. If you might be interested in such an arrangement please feel free to contact me.

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From **Helen Benninger** - Why I joined the Guild:

I met a couple of the EHS members at a sale that I was involved in and then visited the 50 Mile Coat exhibit and had a chance to talk to several other members. They were all very pleasant and friendly and obviously very enthusiastic about the work they were doing. I had just moved to the area and did not know very many people so I really enjoyed chatting with them. I had once been a weaver and spinner so I understood what the guild was about and I have always been a *fibre* person so I joined the following September and have never regretted it.

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When I came to my first guild meeting, Helen Benninger was the first person I met! She was very warm and welcoming, and she made me feel at ease from the start. Then I joined our study group, and felt truly grounded in the guild. They gave me a home base, while constantly open my vision in new directions. I love weaving, spinning, and dyeing, and my great love is seeing how colour shines through in fibre. **Claudia Clipsham**

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From **Elizabeth Evans**: I joined the guild more than 25 years ago. I learned to spin in the basement of Romni Wools and bought a spinning wheel from them. I didn't know any other spinners. I didn't know about Spin-off Magazine or any other spinning resources and thought I might need help. Marilyn at Romni told me she thought there was a guild in Etobicoke. There was. Carole Gay was the President. She called me and invited me to a Wednesday spinning meeting and the rest is history.

Informal studio times continue to be my favourite way to participate in the guild. I continue to prioritize coming to the monthly open studio times on Wednesdays and Sundays. Spinning, threading, hemming, talking, listening, debating, trouble-shooting, asking for advice, admiring and being inspired by other people's work, browsing the library, planning, dyeing or just being quiet and working on my own project...that's what I treasure the most about being a member of EHS.

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From **Karen Bota**: I joined the EHSG this year, after considering joining for a few years. I have been a knitter off and on for almost 50 years, and started weaving about 6 or 7 years ago. I took lessons with Line Dufour at the Mimico adult education centre through the TDSB. I stopped taking the classes a few years ago when I was working in Markham and could not get to Mimico easily after work. I missed the camaraderie and discussions that would happen with a group of creative people working away on a project. I do not have many friends that create in the textile area, so wanted to find more people who get excited about sheep, fleece, colour, texture and anything textile related, so it is so nice to find people with similar interests. I have a few weaving looms, and started spinning but still have lots to learn! I am hoping that by joining EHSG I will be inspired to try weaving things I have not woven before, improve my spinning, and continue to explore and be creative in the textile area.



Something that I saw recently that really got me thinking about weaving was the Chanel Fall/Winter 2020 show. I am obviously not a slave to designer clothes :), but I was so taken by the woven fabrics used in this collection. Check out some of the pictures attached. This looks like weaving that we could do. One of the things that I would like to learn how to do is to use my woven cloth to make clothes. Of course, I could never make or wear a Chanel outfit...but it is really interesting to see Chanel using such beautiful woven cloth!

*Karen Bota*

#### **Who is to be believed?**

On the one hand, the New York Times trumpets a revival of crafts, demonstrated by [patchwork on the fashion runways](#).

“Resourcefulness” is not a word one immediately associates with high fashion. Yet patchwork and quilting – homespun, traditionally feminine crafts that in times past transformed worn-out clothes or leftover bits of fabric into things beautiful, useful and warm – are having a moment on the runway....This revival is no coincidence. Craft’s last big hurrah was nearly half a century ago, when the world seemed to be spinning out of control. We’d put a [man on the moon](#) and witnessed the assassinations of [Martin Luther King Jr.](#) and [Robert Kennedy](#). Handicrafts spoke to both our need for comfort and to the emerging hippie class’s longing to relegate the gray flannel suit to the dustbins of history....today, as our closets fill with industrially produced fast fashion and the headlines swirl with lies and inhumanity, is it any wonder that designers are once again banking on the appeal of the unique, the authentic, the handmade? When “sustainability” is the watchword on everyone’s lips, these age-old practices promise if not salvation, then at least a balm for tired spirits, and remind us that the greatest luxury is time for creation.” - New York Times, Sept 2018

But, on the other hand, the British Heritage Crafts Association recently published a [Red List of Endangered Crafts](#). On the critical list for 2019 - apart from many non-textile related crafts - are damask weaving, hat plaiting and spinning wheel making. Endangered are carpet and rug tufting, gansey knitting and smocking. Currently viable - healthy with sufficient practitioners to transmit the skills to the next generation - are batik, braiding, carpet and rug weaving, crochet, dyeing, felting, Harris Tweed weaving, knitting, lacemaking, patchwork and quilting, spinning, tailoring, tapestry weaving and weaving.

At least in this corner of the world, the EHS membership continues to grow - a very positive sign, I think, that, as is always the way, everything old is new again.

*Sharon Rose Airhart*

**AND WHAT, MAY YOU ASK, IS A POKER CHALLENGE? LET CHERYL MICHAELSON EXPLAIN!**

As a member of the Toronto Guild of Spinners and Weavers, I recently participated in a “Guild Poker Challenge”, here is how it worked/went ....

**Guild Poker:**

..... challenge to yourself to create an item for yourself, meeting the criteria outlined by your 4 card poker hand.

- Draw 1 card/paper from the FIBRE bag (yellow)
- Draw 1 card/paper from the COLOUR bag (hot pink)
- Draw 1 card/paper from the SPIN bag (turquoise)
- Draw 1 card/paper from the WEAVE bag (green) or KNITTERS bag (orange)
- You may exchange only 1 card, either with a friend or from a bag

The selection of the “poker hand” took place last Fall and we had until March 2019 to complete it. I drew the following cards:

**SPRANG:** a form of finger weaving. SPRANG items have been found in archeological sites from the Vikings, e.g. hair nets, and bags. Evidence has been found that Persians used this technique. It enjoyed some popularity in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States, i.e. the military sashes for the soldiers in the war of 1812 were made using the SPRANG method and it is said that George Washington also wore a military sash made by the SPRANG method.

**1 PRIMARY COLOUR.** I used blue

**FOUND OR MYSTERY FIBRE.** My choice was Norbouillet (a blend of three breeds, rambouillet, mohair and a secret third breed). This fibre came from Pine Hollow Farm in Norwood, Ontario. The colour was white.

**SPIN AND USE FLEECE FROM IDENTIFIABLE BREED.** Blue - Corriedale, Louet North America (product of Belgium). Culled from Ontario Handspinners seminar baggie challenge of a couple of years ago.

After spinning the required fibers, I began making a bracelet. It was a challenge. I asked a couple of experienced weavers about the SPRANG method and if they had ever tried it. They sort of wrinkled their nose and stepped back from me! Hum!!! I acquired a copy of Carol James book, Sprang and with a couple of tips from Joe Lewis of the Toronto Guild, I proceeded to weave a bracelet. If I were to do it again, I would use a fiber with a much tighter twist, perhaps a cotton. In the meantime, I have put this type of weaving on my “bucket list” to try again at some future time!



**WHAT'S THE BUZZ??? A NEW FOCUS ON TAPESTRY WEAVING IN OUR GUILD!!!**

At the most recent meeting, Carolyn Ramos announced that our guild received the donation of a 60" Leclerc Tissart tapestry loom. She will be picking it up soon, and it will be assembled in Studio C.

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**Judith Logan Junop** will be heading up a study/working group focused on tapestry weaving. She is asking for anyone who is interested to contact her. As a kickoff, she shared an article about a Canadian tapestry weaver, and is proposing a road trip:

- ***Tapestry Study Group Road Trip***

TAPESTRY OF SPIRIT: THE TORAH STITCH BY STITCH PROJECT



*Date: June 12 - October 27, 2019 Textile Museum of Canada*

*Tapestry of Spirit* presents the ambitious and inclusive social project to cross stitch the first five books of the Bible as well as selections from the Scriptures and Qur'an, reflecting on the theme of creation. It is an immersive installation that has been collectively created by almost 1500 volunteers of many faiths, under the artistic leadership of Temma Gentles (Toronto). Visitors will journey through nearly 1000 panels in three languages (Hebrew, Greek and Arabic) including illuminations and embellishments by stitchers from 28 countries who have interpreted these ancient narratives into contemplative, often highly personal expressions.

The award-winning documentary short film *Stitchers: Tapestry of Spirit* (directed by Tassie Notar and produced by 90th Parallel) will play throughout the exhibition.

- ***Canadian Tapestry Treasure***

"Woven together, the dramatic threads of Tamara Jaworska's 97-year life create a story as compelling as the tapestries she shaped on her 12-foot loom."

<https://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://www.theglobeandmail.com/amp/arts/art-and-architecture/tamara-jaworska-tapestry-weaver-was-a-canadian-cultural-treasure/article27434364/&ved=2ahUKewjxqqultYnhAhUSi6wKHQbDAkkQFjABegQIDRAF&usg=AOvVaw0gKNN8MJHtPXJDFWmC1Mhw&ampcf=1&cshid=1552833980386>

**Yvonne Lane** responded to this new focus on tapestry weaving with enthusiasm: “Congratulations. I am pleased ER is at long last showing some interest in tapestry weaving as that is not the impression I have had over the time that I have been a member...I do love it and have a number of ideas and designs I am personally working on, time permitting, so will appreciate the enthusiasm generated by other members.” Here are two examples of Yvonne’s work:



Yvonne Lane  
Bells Across The Meadows  
Tapestry Weaving  
NFS

**Sandra Dammizio** reviewed a tapestry exhibition and gave us a sneak peek at her work in progress, inspired in part by the exhibition:

**Exhibition Review: Premier International Tapestry Exhibition** (Feb 16-Mar 9, 2019) at the Queen Elizabeth Park Community Centre, Oakville

Tapestry has been an area of weaving that I have wanted to explore for some time. In early February, I visited Ixchel Suarez, a renowned textile artist working in Oakville, to inquire about potentially beginning lessons at her studio, the Canadian Tapestry and Texture Centre. Ixchel was in the process of organizing a major international tapestry exhibition. She highly recommended that I visit the exhibition, as it would be a great opportunity to see the work of several fantastic international tapestry weavers and a source of inspiration and motivation for someone just starting to work in tapestry.

The exhibition took place in two locations- one in Oakville and the other in Milton. I visited the Oakville location, which was situated in the main gallery at the Queen Elizabeth Park Community Centre. This is the same location as the World of Threads exhibition that took place in the fall. The show was very nicely presented. Although the gallery space was small, holding perhaps 20 tapestries in total, each tapestry was so different from each other in terms of materials, scale, technique, and overall style. I found three tapestries to be particularly engaging and inspirational.

*Suzanne Paquette- "Pulsion"*

Wool, cotton, acrylic

I was immediately drawn to this piece and its use of dramatic colour and blending. At approximately 8 x 5 ft, it was impressive in scale. It gave the impression of the vibrant colour and movement of the aurora borealis or a crackling campfire. I loved the artist's use of a variety of yarns- variegated and solid, thick and thin.



*Eva Farkasvolgly- "Millefleur in 2018"*

What a contrast to the piece by Suzanne Paquette! Unlike the abstract, large sett of the piece by Paquette, *Millefleur* was amazingly detailed and fine. The materials, monofilament and metallic threads, were completely novel to me in a tapestry format. The piece was beautiful from both front and back, with the tails of the woven threads left to hang beautifully on both sides. The piece appeared to be woven in parts, with the central rectangular section woven first and then attached to a larger monofilament-warped frame with woven selvedge.

*Lurdes Elizalde- "Looking Toward the Light"*

Wool, cotton, silk

I loved the beautiful colour blending in this piece and the lovely sheen and vibrancy added through the use of silk thread. The piece was woven in several sections, which is something I had not seen before. I had typically thought of tapestries as being single pieces of woven fabric, in a standard shape such as a rectangle or square. Each section was tacked in position to the wall using a small, almost invisible nail.



I thoroughly enjoyed this exhibition and incorporated some of the techniques from the show into my own tapestry project. I am currently working on a tapestry that I designed in the fall, inspired by a piece of bundle-dyed fabric. The design is reminiscent of a prism or panes of glass, inspired by how bundle-dyed fabrics are imprints of an image or time in the past that is reflected in fabric. I dyed the yarns in the fall using a variety of foraged dye-plants from the GTA: black walnut, sumac, aster and goldenrod, among others. The tapestry is currently on the loom and is being woven (slowly!) in three sections, inspired by the Lurdes Elizalde piece I saw at the exhibition.



*Sandra Dammizio*

**COLOUR AND WEAVE - NOTES ON A PROJECT BY ELIZABETH EVANS**

Last year I participated in the Guild of Canadian Weavers (GCW) tea towel exchange for the first time. (If you don't know about GCW, ask me or someone else, or find their Bulletin in the library - I think the Winter 2108 issue is great.) The theme this year is "Colour and Weave". Each participant weaves one tea towel and receives a tea towel woven by someone else.

This is what I think "Colour and Weave" means. It's really not about colour. It's about colour value: darks and lights. It's about the way that combinations of dark and light threads in both the warp and the weft interact with a particular weave structure.

Log cabin weave is a good example of "Colour and Weave". The structure is plain weave, so it can be woven on a rigid heddle loom. The arrangements of dark and light threads create vertical and horizontal lines in the cloth. I wove a log cabin tea towel and thought that was going to be the end of it, but....

Claudia Clipsham loaned me a book: Ann Sutton's Colour and Weave Design Book. It's a great book and I barely scratched the surface of exploring and understanding "Colour and Weave". I was attracted to the idea of improvisation on a gamp.

There is a colour gamp project on the one of the EHS looms that you've probably seen. The colour gamp is threaded in a series of colours across the width of the loom. When it is woven in the same series of colours, you can see how a particular colour interacts with each other colour. You could improvise on this colour gamp by using different colours in the weft, by treading it differently or changing the tie-up.

A "Colour and Weave" gamp is similar. In my gamp I threaded the first section Light, Dark, Light, Dark, etc... The second section was 2 Dark, 1 Light, etc... I ended up with 6 sections of different combinations of dark and light threads warped across the width of the towel. When I wove the towel my first section was woven with two shuttles: 1 throw Dark, 1 throw Light, etc.... The second section was 2 throws Dark, 2 throws Light, until I had woven squares in all 6 combinations. This is the towel I submitted for the exchange.

I wove this gamp on my 8 harness loom and threaded it: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1,8.

Can imagine the possibilities for improvisation? You can improvise around the Light/Dark combinations - even using different colours. You can improvise around treading and tie-up and I did. It is so much fun to improvise on these.

By coincidence, unsolicited instructions for a 12 section Log Cabin Colour and Weave gamp arrived from Mary Underwood (a weaver from Ann Arbor, MI who has taught EHS workshops). I thought the coincidence was too strong to ignore. I split the 12 sections into two gamps of 6 sections each. I followed the instructions and also improvised along this plain weave gamp. It can be woven with 2 shafts. If anyone wants these instructions, Mary Underwood has given me permission to share them. Or, you could improvise your own gamp. Mary also sent me instructions for a 4 shaft twill gamp which I've resisted weaving so far.

While looking for something else, I noticed a "Colour and Weave" gamp in Carol Strickler's *A Weaver's Book of 8-Shaft Patterns*, pages 92 and 93. I couldn't resist. I put a warp on my loom and improvised my way through it. What I think (hope) is my final version of this project for the time being is on my loom from Chapter 1 of Carol Strickler's book. (See picture on next page.)

*Elizabeth Evans*



Elizabeth's 8 shaft colour and weave gamp based on Strickler (p. 92-93)

#### A SPINNING TIP

When spinning for small amounts of thread I single ply on one end of my bobbin, then single ply on the other end. Plying them together short circuits the need for 3 bobbins (only 2 needed - 1 for the singles and 1 for the plying off both ends on the 1 bobbin).

*Suzanne Wylie*

#### JUST FOR FUN

A US yarn company suggests that you buy a box of crayons and then, when you are looking for a particular colour of yarn, call them with the colour name so they can match.... clever! <https://thewooleryguy.wordpress.com/>

*Sharon Rose Airhart*

#### A LOOK TO OUR WEAVING PAST...

The article below talks about the lost town of Mt. Charles which was at Dixie and Derry. There was a Weaver in this town, which was a great benefit to the women who did not have to weave all their own cloth!

<https://hikingthegta.com/2016/03/11/mt-charles-ghost-towns-of-the-gta/>

*Karen Bota*

#### ...AND A LOOK TO THE FUTURE: PASSING ON OUR WEAVING HERITAGE

I'm going to a Kindergarten Class to demo a loom they have. It's really basic - a frame with warp wrapped around it. Used for rag rugs or seat cushions for little bums! I'll gather some cotton rags, but if you have any colourful sheets etc., bring them to me. Since I don't know their skill level, I was going to have them all weave stout thread around plastic green berry boxes, however the boxes in the grocery store have been replaced with clam shell packaging. Any other ideas for a group activity?

*Suzanne Wylie*

#### LOOMS ARE AVAILABLE

An email went out earlier in the winter to let everyone know that a member of the community was looking for a home for 3 looms. The sizes are as follows: Small: 16" L x 10 1/2" W x 11" H; Medium: 19" L x 23 1/2" W x 10" H; Large: 43" L x 33" W x 43 1/2" H. If you are interested, email me (Claudia) and I will forward the email to you again.



Ontario Handweavers & Spinners presents their Biennial Conference

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#### WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

F & W Publishing, which owns Interweave Press, has filed for bankruptcy. Apparently they are trying to reassure their customers and carry on as usual, while working to find buyers for their various publications, including *Handwoven* and *Spin Off*. While we can certainly hope for the best, it is probably prudent to download and save any e-books or videos that we've bought from them!

*Claudia Clipsham*

#### GEMINI FIBRES TO CLOSE ITS DOORS!

**RETIREMENT SALE! Deep Discounts - Great Bargains! EVERYTHING MUST GO!**

**25% OFF EVERYTHING** (\*Some Exceptions Apply - see \* below)

Yes, sadly it's true. After 40 years of serving the fibre arts community Gemini Fibres will be closing. Exact date to be determined but expect it to be by the end of May.

**ALL INVENTORY MUST BE SOLD (including store fixtures).** We still have a considerable inventory of a variety of products, books, yarns, small looms & spinning wheels, etc. and we can still special order items in as required (50% deposit required when ordering). We have been working on our new website to keep it up to date with products we have sold out of and/or which items are in stock or "special order". Orders must be shipped or picked up immediately. Shipping & tax is extra and will not be discounted. All sales are final. Please contact us if you have any questions or need assistance. If you already have items on backorder or special order, they will be fulfilled as soon as available but will not be eligible for extra discount.

**HOURS:** Monday to Thursday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm **PLUS the following Saturdays:** March 16<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> and April 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

\* **Discount will be applied to IN-STOCK items ONLY - it will NOT be applied** to merchandise already discounted, previous orders or backorders, special order or out of stock items.

We invite you to contact us by phone, fax or email.

Toll Free: [1-800-564-9665](tel:1-800-564-9665)  
Phone: [905-473-1033](tel:905-473-1033)

**A VIEW OF THE WIDER WORLD OF SPINNING, WEAVING, AND TEXTILES, by Elizabeth Evans**

Textile Museum

“Beads: They’re Sewn So Tight” continues until May 26<sup>th</sup>. Although I’m sure the upcoming exhibitions will be interesting and inspirational, they aren’t specifically about weaving or spinning. “Nadia Myre: Balancing Act” opens April 25. Nadia Myre is a renowned Canadian Indigenous artist whose work “Tree of Shifting Forms” is installed at the Canadian Embassy in Paris.

“Tapestry of Spirit: The Torah Stitch by Stitch Project” opens June 12. This project involved more than 1500 volunteers of many faiths cross stitching the first five books of the bible.

On April 6, the Textile Teach-In will be “Métis Fingerweaving” led by Manitoba Métis weaver Alicia Blore. It is free, but you must register here: [http://www.textilemuseum.ca/programs/programs/textile-teach-in-metis-finger-weaving-\(1\)](http://www.textilemuseum.ca/programs/programs/textile-teach-in-metis-finger-weaving-(1)).

The annual Textile Treasures sale will be at new location this year: May 3 and 4 at St. Matthew’s United Church on St. Clair West near Christie. [http://www.textilemuseum.ca/programs/programs/textile-treasures-sale-\(2\)](http://www.textilemuseum.ca/programs/programs/textile-treasures-sale-(2)).

If you are interested in know more about these exhibitions and what’s going on at the Textile Museum check out their website and get on their mailing list to receive their monthly newsletter. <http://www.textilemuseum.ca/home>

For inspiration or information, most of the Textile Museum’s collection is searchable. There are more than 12,000 objects. Just go to the “Collections and Research” tab from the homepage.

Ontario Science Centre

I am very happy that Joan MacKenzie has joined our team of volunteers. In celebration of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a temporary exhibition, Inventorium 2.0, is in the Great Hall of the Science Centre. One of the themes is weaving. If there is a volunteer or host at the loom, visitors can weave on a 4 shaft counter-balance Swedish loom. They have also constructed two looms by cutting a large rectangle out of the centre of a table. They’ve drilled holes along opposite sides of the rectangle and have threaded string through the holes so that visitors can weave on them. Steamlabs has partnered with the Science Centre and they are developing laser cut small looms and rigid heddles that visitors can use to weave designs. Later on in the project we hope that visitors will be producing designs that will be woven on John Campbell’s Ingrain Carpet loom (most people call it a Jacquard Loom) from Steamlabs laser cut cards. If you’d like to come sometime when one of us is on duty, please get in touch with either Joan or me.