COMING UP!

The Fourth Annual GFR Lecture
Thursday evening, May 9, 2002
Minneapolis Institute of Art
Minneapolis, MN

"Building American Collections of European Tapestries: The Role and Influence of French & Company"

Presentation by Charissa Bremer David
Associate Curator of Decorative Arts
The J. Paul Getty Museum

The Gloria F. Ross Center for Tapestry Studies
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On the University of Arizona Campus

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MISSION—2001
The GFR Center strives to increase public appreciation and scholarly understanding of tapestries (which have been handwoven and used worldwide from prehistory to the present-day) through artistic, historical and cultural research and educational programs.

WHAT IS TAPESTRY?
True tapestry weave, with which the GFR Center is principally concerned, is a specific textile construction: “a weft-faced plain weave with discontinuous weft patterning.” Tapestry-woven designs are formed by different colored threads (wefts) interlacing with the foundation threads (warps) in areas where the color is needed. This gives the tapestry medium a special capacity for pictorial and other expressive imagery. Our interests include many variations of this basic technique.

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Archie Brennan, O.B.E. (Officer of the British Empire), New York, NY. Master tapestry weaver, represented by Gail Martin Gallery, New York, NY. Weaving instructor, Penland School of Crafts and numerous other institutes. Numerous national and international exhibitions, awards and publications.

Darienne L. Dennis, M.A. (Secretary), New York, NY. Director, Media Relations, Accenture New York, NY. Former Director, Communications, Philip Morris Companies, New York, NY. Advisory Board, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, MA.


Mary Lane, M.A., tapestry weaver, Olympia, WA. Visiting faculty member: Evergreen College (WA), Coupeville Center for the Arts (WA), Parsons School of Design (NY), Scheuer Tapestry Studio (NY), and others. Numerous publications, exhibitions and commissions.


Alice Zrebiec, Ph.D. (President), Santa Fe, NM. Curator, Textile Arts, Denver Art Museum. Former Curator of Textiles, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Numerous lectures, grants and fellowships.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Associates and Friends:

It’s hard to believe that the GFR Center is almost five years old. Founded in 1997, we are proud of each program and collaboration that’s blossomed. Tapestry is a narrowly defined textile medium (see page 2), our rootstock if you will. But it truncates into opportunities to address many artistic, historical and cultural subjects. And each of these branch into more specific topics such as the implications of early sheep husbandry on tapestry’s origins in the ancient Middle East; cultural interactions in the American Southwest as Pueblo, Navajo and Hispanic weavers came into contact with each other in historic times; and the personal and aesthetic trajectories of modern tapestry artists working today. Each year’s programs are like our developing tree’s flowers and, dare I say, the fruits of our labor.

Our founder Gloria Ross was an inveterate New Yorker and she would have been deeply affected by the recent terrorist assaults on America. In such troubled times for the nation and globe, I find myself reiterating two simple aphorisms that she lived by—“art matters” and “art heals”—in seemingly small but profound ways. In our own specialized approach, the GFR Center contributes by bringing the beauty and diverse messages of tapestry weaving to a variety of audiences. Connecting weavers, scholars, collectors and others for meaningful exchanges among themselves and with new audiences is always our goal.

This past year’s projects and programs represent some conclusions—completing a major book manuscript—and some beginnings—writing grant proposals for new projects that may extend for as many as five to eight years into our future. Last May, our Trustees agreed to embark on a phase of formal Strategic Planning for our five-year old Center. In coming months we are excited to learn much more about how the GFR Center can refine our mission and reach our varied constituents.

We look forward to 2002 with great anticipation, as a fertile time of exploration and growth continues.

With very best wishes,

Ann Lane Hedlund
Ann Lane Hedlund, Ph.D.
Director
PROGRAMS & PROJECTS 2001

RESEARCH

• *Blanket Weavers of the Southwest* by the late Joe Ben Wheat and edited by Ann Lane Hedlund was submitted to the University of Arizona Press. Completion of the book’s text (introduction materials, scholarly notes, references, and appendices) and the preparation of illustrations (color plates, technical drawings, tables and maps) filled the past year with lively and interesting activity. Our projected publication date is Fall 2003.

• Development of the Gloria F. Ross Archives database in preparation for a retrospective exhibition and catalogue of GFR tapestries.

EDUCATION

• In our program’s third and final year, fourth graders at Lawrence School learned to weave tapestries from artist Ann Keuper. Along the way, they learned about wool, cotton and other fibers; about basic color theory and natural dyes like cochineal, indigo and fustic; and about patience when warping and weaving. They created a skit about Rapunzel and the spinning of flax into gold and much, much more. This model program sets an excellent example for other schools and communities interested in enriching their programs.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

• For the second year, more than 5,000 people watched Navajo weavers from Barbara Teller Ornelas’s extended family and tried their own hand at spinning and weaving during the annual Southwest Indian Arts Fair at the Arizona State Museum. The GFR Center’s “Learn About Weaving!” tent was a popular site for children who carded and spun wool with the help of members from the Tucson Handweavers and Spinners Guild.


• “Kenneth Noland: The Navajo Tapestries,” an exhibition at the University of Arizona Museum of Art, January 14-February 25. Lectures by Professors Lee Parry (Art History) and Ann Hedlund (Anthropology) on Kenneth Noland and the Navajo tapestry series, January 26.

DEVELOPMENT

• Grant proposals were submitted to the Getty Grants Program, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Christensen Foundation, for projects to begin in 2002.

VISITORS

• Artist Sherri Smith, Michigan; Dr. Dorothy Washburn, New Jersey; Dr. Gaetano Promipolini, Florence, Italy.