

Textile Arts Council

The Bay Area Forum for artists,
aficionados & collectors of
weaving, rugs & tapestries,
baskets, costume & wearable art

September
2019

Volume XXXIV,
Number 2

New Acquisitions: Spotlight on Contemporary Fiber Art

by Jill D'Alessandro, Curator in Charge of Costume and Textile Arts

The costume and textile arts collections at the Fine Arts Museums are incredibly broad in scope, skimming the surface across continents and ranging from the ancient to the contemporary. In the past two years, we have received a number of wonderful contemporary works of art from leading fiber artists. As the Textile Arts Council consists of many members who are artists, I wanted to dedicate this article to featuring artists and their contributions to contemporary fiber art.

Adela Akers

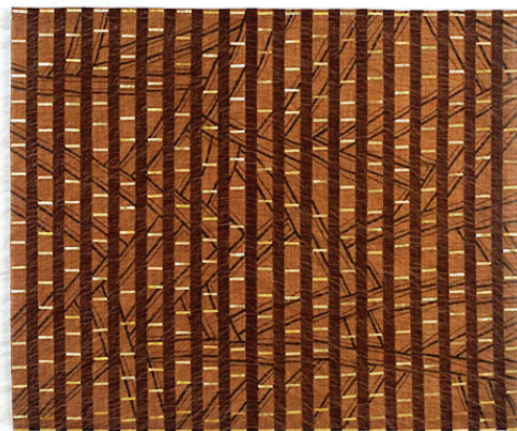
Born in 1933 in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, and raised in Havana, Cuba, Adela Akers is a leading American fiber artist known for her woven wall-works. Before moving to the United States to study at the Art Institute of Chicago and Cranbrook Academy of Art, she received a degree in pharmacy from the University of Havana, Cuba. For over twenty years, Akers taught at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia. Upon retirement in 1995, she moved to Sonoma County. This late career period was particularly prolific for Akers. Retirement offered her the time for artistic experimentation and in her mid-80s, she continues to work in her studio on a daily basis. Her work has shifted away from the heavy fibers she previously used to create large sculptural wall hangings to the use of delicate materials including horsehair, linen, and recycled metal foil.

Akers cites her background in science as influential to her work, relying equally upon mathematical discipline and organic processes of hand weaving and use of organic materials. Her work is both process and material-driven and her wall hangings can take up to three months to complete. Her process begins by hand drawing a cartoon in a similar fashion to tapestry weavers. These drawings are then scaled to size and transferred by means of a painted warp application. She then weaves thin strips, allowing for the long horsehair wefts to extend beyond the edges. Once the strips are woven, she arranges them into a pattern. She then sews hand cut strips of recycled metal foil onto the woven surface. For Akers, this repetitive process is a time to be self-reflective, as she began this series as a memorial to dear friends she had recently lost. *Traced Memories* is the first work by Akers to enter into FAMSF's collections, and resonates specifically with our collections, as Akers cites the Mbuti barkcloth in our holdings of African textile as a source of inspiration.

(continues on page 2)

In This Issue

New Acquisitions	1 - 3
From the TAC Chair	4
From the Conservation Lab	5
Members News	5
Jan Langdon Memorium	6
TAC Joins Instagram	7



Adela Akers, b. 1933
Traced Memories, 2007
United States, California
Linen, horsehair, metal foil and paint
121.9 x 147.3 cm (48 x 58 in.)
Gift of Dr. Jorge Nieva. 2018.49

deYoung\
Legion of Honor

fine arts museums
of san francisco

New Acquisitions: Spotlight on Contemporary Fiber Art

(continued from page 1)

Liz Whitney Quisgard

Nationally renowned artist and Pollack-Krasner Foundation Grantee (2001), Liz Whitney Quisgard, recently gifted a major artwork to the Museums. Quisgard emerged in her practice during the Abstract Expressionist era of the 1950s and 1960s, and since then, has worked across painting, sculpture, and fiber art. Born on October 23, 1929 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, she attended the Maryland Institute School of Architectural Design and Drafting, and studied color field painting with renowned artist Morris Louis in 1958. In 1966, she graduated from the Maryland Institute's College of Art and earned her Master of Fine Arts at the Maryland Institute Rinehart School of Sculpture.

Quisgard's artworks are recognized by their exuberant color palette of geometric patterns that evoke the scintillating shapes found in Byzantine mosaics as well as the repeating motifs found in Oriental carpets and Islamic geometric forms.

"My goal is to surprise and engage the mind by seducing the eye," says Quisgard. "Toward that end I rely on pattern. We all understand a row of triangles, a strip of squares, an arrangement of circles and swirls. No need to ask their meaning. They simply are what they are. They speak to us universally and without apology."

Her textile hangings are formed by the stitching of lightweight acrylic yarns into stiff buckram, and are worked in a diverse array of colored threads and stitch techniques that attest to her mastery of color and texture. "Seven Clones," is formed from seven separate textiles that, when displayed together, form a single work of art. The individual components were conceived to be exhibited in two different configurations, allowing for some diversity in their display. For an artist whose output is formed by an emphasis on the visual aspect of visual art, Quisgard notes, "Though they are identical on the outside, each one is different on the inside. That is the whole point."



Liz Whitney Quisgard, b. 1929
Clone, 2012–2017. United States
Acrylic yarn on buckram (satin, running, raised fishbone, and cretan stitches)
182.9 cm (72 in.) (length per textile)
Anonymous gift. L19.12a-g

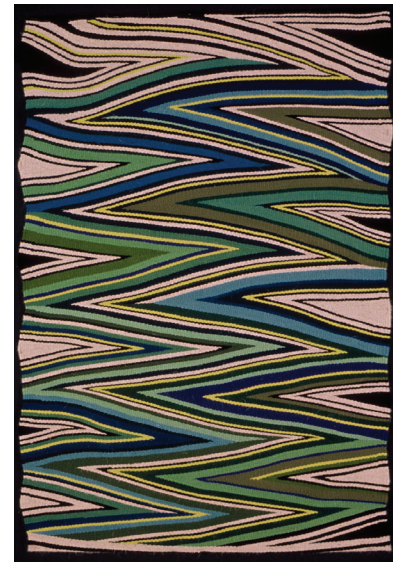
Deborah Corsini

Former Textile Arts Council board member Deborah Corsini has pursued her life-long passion for weaving as a California-based artist, lecturer, teacher, and former curator with the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles. Since 1973, her work has been shown in innumerable solo, group, and juried exhibitions nationally as well as internationally; and are housed in dozens of private and corporate collections, and by government embassies. This spring, Corsini has generously donated three tapestries dating from 1985 to 2005 to the Museums.

While Corsini has experimented with a variety of textile techniques – including ikat, rag rug weaving, tablet weaving, and surface design – tapestry weaving is her primary art form. As Corsini describes, "The interplay of color, line and negative space are the building blocks of my tapestries." She continues, "The lines and forms are a part of a personal calligraphy and convey a suggestion...of things hidden and behind, of kinetic movement and space, and impermanence."

The exploration of this medium is an ongoing creative process for Corsini, which develops as she works. She adds, "I design on the loom—this process is interconnected to the actual woven process. I am always excited to see where the next tapestry will lead." For her tapestry designs, Corsini has received the Award for Excellence from the American Tapestry Alliance.

For the past fifteen years, in addition to tapestry, Corsini has been experimenting with the wedge weave technique, an eccentric weaving technique used by the Navajos whereby wefts are woven at an angle to the warp. "The dazzling designs created by Navajo weavers were my first teachers and I owe my own intuitive style of designing from studying and appreciating their weavings," Corsini recalls. "The process of wedge weave and the design of my work are intuitive and intertwined."



Deborah Corsini, American, b. 1950
Into Tumucumaque, 2002. United States
Wedge weave tapestry
106.7 x 73.7 cm (42 x 29 in.)
Gift of the artist. 2019.44.2

K. Lee Manuel

This past winter, K. Lee Manuel's daughters made a sizeable donation of their mother's work that offers a wonderful overview of different periods of her forty-year career. K. Lee Manuel (1936–November 5, 2003) was born in Loma Linda, California. She earned a Bachelor's of Fine Arts from the San Francisco Art Institute in painting. As an emerging artist in the mid-1960s, Manuel's first body of work was hand-painted cotton tunics in organic art-nouveau inspired patterns. Like many of the fiber artists active during this period, Manuel's work resonated both with the 1960s counterculture and the burgeoning wearable art movement of which the Bay Area would become a center.

Throughout her career, Manuel continued to hand paint garments, jewelry, and accessories on a variety of surfaces from cottons and velveteen to leather. In the mid-1970s, she began to intricately paint individual bird feathers, crafting them into elaborate collars and wall hangings. The intricacy of these works is remarkable—each feather painted with a rich overlay of geometric, abstract, natural, and figurative motifs representing a variety of world cultures from the Ancient Maya and Egyptian cultures to Japanese theatre. These figures symbolized power and took on a shamanistic quality. Manuel rarely explained her imagery in interviews, stating rather that the work should speak for itself. As the years progressed her work became increasingly more detailed. As she told *Surface Design Journal* in 1988, "Each piece has become a novel rather than a vignette."

Once diagnosed with cancer, Manuel embarked upon her final series—three "shaman's robes" to serve as protective talismans for each one of her daughters. This past winter, they generously donated the last work of art she completed, a robe for her daughter Peggy. A literal tour-de-force, the

robe measures six feet tall and five feet wide. Its leather substrate is covered with feathers painted with images of dragon masks from the Kabuki theatre and small serpents. The Museums are greatly honored to be gifted this momentous work along with two tunics from the 1960s, a leather woman's suit from the 1980s, and a feather collar.



K. Lee Manuel, 1936–2003
Shaman's Cape, 2003. United States
Leather, feathers: painted
160 x 182.9 cm (63 x 72 in.)
Gift of Kelly Seymour, Peggie King, and Erin Reese. 2018.79

Linda Gravenites

The Museums would also like to thank the Volunteer Council for funding the acquisition of a handbag made for Janis Joplin, now on view in the "*Summer of Love: Art, Fashion, and Rock & Roll*" exhibition at Palais Populaire in Berlin, Germany.

During the late 1960s, America was at a crossroads: the baby boomer generation was coming of age, grappling with political unrest and striving to create new societal paradigms. The sartorial result was an efflorescence of independent designers in northern California working with a wide array of materials such as denim, leather; techniques such as embroidery, crochet, and tie-dye; and influences such as international travel, religion, Native American culture. These wildly individualistic forms of dress showcase personal expression and reflect each designer's singular philosophy within a culture that encouraged creative freedom.

Like K. Lee Manuel, Linda Gravenites began handcrafting garments during the height of the 1960s counterculture. During that period, Gravenites, a true master of chain-stitch embroidery, would emerge among the preeminent Haight-Ashbury couturiers. Gravenites grew up in a Quaker community in Long Beach, California. Her mother's attempts to teach her to sew on Singer featherweight model failed, so instead she made everything by hand. In 1965, she moved to San Francisco as a self-descript "naive nineteen-year old." Within two years, her first marriage failed and she married folk musician, Nick Gravenites. Having made her own clothes since childhood, she began selling embroidered shifts at a shop called The Hatch along Stinson Beach and worked as theatre costume assistant.

Her creative output during the 1960s and 70s was focused on painstakingly crafted made-to-measure garments for her inner circle of friends, including her roommate, singer Janis Joplin. As Joplin told *Vogue* magazine in 1968, Gravenites "turns them out slowly and turns them out well and only turns them out for those she likes." With each creation Gravenites would try to capture the spirit of the intended recipient. As she explained to Joel Lobenthal, author of *Radical Rags: Fashions of the Sixties*, "I was unreasonable. I wanted every stitch, every buttonhole to be tiny and delicate and perfect. 'Good God, Linda!' even Janis would say."

With this purchase, Roslyn L. Rosen generously donated two other works created by Gravenites: a vest made for poet Lenore Kandel and the cape made for Kandel's husband and fellow poet Bill "Sweet Willie Tumbleweed" Fritsch, thus, making FAMSF a repository for Gravenites' work.



Linda Gravenites, 1939–2002
Handbag made for Janis Joplin, ca. 1967. United States
Goat skin with silk embroidery (chain stitch) and glass beads
45.7 x 30.5 cm (18 x 12 in.)
Museum purchase, Gift of the Volunteer Council. 2019.22

From Shirley Juster, TEXTILE ARTS COUNCIL Board Chair

September 2019

I am thrilled to report on the tremendous success of our inaugural *Talk & Tea* lecture at the Legion of Honor, "The Beauty Who Changed the Metrics of Fashion."

Over 100 attendees joined us for opening remarks from Jill D'Alessandro, curator of Costume and Textile Arts for the Fine Arts Museums, followed by fashion historian Ya'ara Keydar's lecture. Ya'ara explored the shifting fashion ideals and attitudes towards women's bodies at various points in history, beginning with Rubens in the 16th century to Jean Paul Gaultier's celebrated large size muses in the 20th and 21st centuries. The talk was followed by an opportunity to meet members and friends over coffee, tea, and scones in the museum café.

TAC will host the next *Talk & Tea* program on January 7, 2020 in conjunction with the Legion's James Tissot exhibition, "*Painter of the Belle Epoque*."

In the second of our domestic textile tours, TAC's April visit to Los Angeles was timed to coordinate with some incredibly special exhibits. On our first day, we were the lucky beneficiaries of an after-hours tour of the LACMA exhibit "*Power of Pattern: Central Asian Ikats from the David and Elizabeth Reisbord Collection*" hosted by textile and costume curator Clarissa Esguerra. The following day we attended a lecture at the Fowler Museum given by guest curator, Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, Director of the Textile Research Center in Leiden, The Netherlands. The lecture presented an in-depth discussion of the exhibit "*Dressed with Distinction: Garments from Ottoman Syria*." These garments were also from the David and Elizabeth Reisbord Collection. As an extra benefit, we had the opportunity to meet the Reisbords who were in attendance at both events. These two events were reason enough for the trip, but we also had a tour of the FIDM campus museum, a curator-led tour of the Getty Museum tapestries, and a reception at the home of Cheri Hunter, President & Program Chairman of the Textile Museum Associates of Southern California, Inc. Plans are currently in work for next spring's tour to Seattle.

Our board of directors had the pleasure of meeting with Thomas Campbell, Director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums at our June meeting. Director Campbell spoke about his introduction to the study of textiles and his subsequent concentration on tapestries of Tudor England. He will open our fall lecture series with his talk "Henry VIII and the Art of Majesty: Tapestry at the Tudor Court."

Our annual Textile Bazaar is moving to a new venue, St. Mary's Cathedral Event Space on November 9. If you would like to participate or know of anyone who is interested, please contact me. I hope you all had a lovely summer and look forward to seeing you when TAC resumes our active schedule in the fall.

Shirley Juster,
Board chair
Shirle.juster@gmail.com



TAC BOARD

Shirley Juster
Chair

Leslee Budge
*Co-Chair
Operations*

Shelley Wells
Vice Chair

Joy Stocksedale
Treasurer

Alex Friedman
Secretary

Ryen Anderson
Catherine Cerny
Renée Cocke
Mary Connors
Karin Hazekorn
Barbara Kelly
Donna LaVallee
Jeanette Lurier
Juliana Pennington
Sandra Sardjono
Helen Scully
Sally Yu Leung

Advisory Board

Ruth Anderson
Mikki Bourne
Marlene Golden
Robin Hampton
Serena Harrigan
Darlene Jurow
Karine Langan
Barbara Shapiro
Susan York

Honorary Advisor

Peggy Gordon

Adelle Kincell Prepares Fashion Dolls for Photography

*By Jennifer Nieling, Costume Mounting Assistant,
Textile Conservation*

The textile lab has a new intern! We are thrilled to welcome Adelle Kincell to our team for the summer. Adelle comes to us from the University of San Francisco's graduate program in Museum Studies and holds a bachelor's degree in Art History from George Washington University. She will be working on the video component of our Half-Scale Fashion Project, also known more simply as the "Fashion Dolls."

The Fashion Dolls have been a lab project for five years. After in-depth research, complex pattern drafting, and detailed sewing by hand and by machine, former TAC-FAMSF staff member Trish Daly has completed fifteen half-scale ensembles that represent Western women's fashion from 1765 to 1985. Fabric sourcing, dyeing and embellishment hunting was a team effort undertaken by our skilled textile lab volunteers, who contributed time and effort as well as laces and trims. Each of the fifteen ensembles is comprised of three to nine layers of historically accurate undergarments, from corsets and sleeve plumpers to panty girdles and bodysuits.

Adelle's internship involves preparing each ensemble to be photographed in the round, layer by layer, from undergarment to full look. Each ensemble will require between 48 and 144 images, depending on the number of clothing layers. Each set of images will then be incorporated into a video, showing a 360 degree view of each ensemble "getting dressed," so to speak. The videos will be the basis of an interactive digital display that will allow viewers to discover the complex understructures of each period. It is our hope that the fully dressed forms themselves will be on view in the Textile Study Gallery in the near future. We hope that the finished product, a digital timeline of Western women's fashionable silhouettes, will be supplemented with nomenclature, historic references, and garments in the FAMSF collection, and will be made available to visitors both in the museum and online.

We are looking forward to presenting this digital project and ensemble exhibition as an educational tool for students, teachers, and the general public to learn about the evolution of Western women's fashion in the past 250 years, and how the layers of over- and undergarments are integral to the changing silhouettes. With Adelle's help, we hope to share this project with the public in the near future.

Members News

Longtime TAC board member **Barbara Shapiro's** plaited cane basket, *Sedori Vessel*, won First Place in the Great Basin basketry exhibit at Convergence, the Handweavers Guild of America's biennial conference in July 2018 in Reno, NV. Sedori cane is cane that is scraped and then dyed for a striped surface. The dye takes only where the surface has been scraped away. This work is part of Shapiro's ongoing series of vessel forms. Twelve artists displayed a total of 20 works at this exhibit.



O'Hanlon Center for the Arts in Mill Valley featured **Wendy Bertrand's** hand woven carpet, "Global Warming," in its recent exhibit juried by Robert Green.



Peggy Osterkamp was accepted to the international exhibition, "Contemporary Art and Design Works on Natural Dyeing" at the Chinese National Silk Museum. The exhibition and symposium, "BoND: The First Biennale of Natural Dyes," opened in Hangzhou, China on May 11, 2019. There were about 80 works from around the world with a 74-page catalog. Her piece, "A Mobile of Dyed Fragments," was purchased by the museum for their permanent collection of contemporary textile art. The mobile was made of a wide variety of fabrics that she dyed with indigo, black walnuts, and *kakishibu* (green persimmons).



Jan Langdon – A Weaver's Weaver

By Deborah Corsini

I can't remember when I first met Jan, but our paths crossed and our friendship grew over the years. She and I taught at City College of San Francisco in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I taught beginning floor loom weaving and she was the intermediate weaving instructor so many of my beginning students moved on to her classes. When commuting to San Francisco seemed too far, she continued her teaching career at the Richmond Art Center for 16 years. She was a highly regarded and well-loved teacher, evident by the high quality of work that her students produced and the friendships she maintained. Her desire was for her students to really understand the craft and techniques of weaving. Jan expected her students to make samples before beginning a project. Her own work which ran the gamut from rya rugs, to overshot, to tapestry was beautifully executed, well-designed and accomplished. Jan was a weaver's weaver.

Although Jan lived at Point Reyes Station, I would often see her at the Textile Arts Council lectures at the deYoung. As an active board member of TAC, she would be at the front desk checking people into the lectures, always with a warm and friendly welcome to all attendees.

In 2001, the Textile Arts Council offered a tour to Peru and Bolivia. It was led by Lynn Meisch, an anthropologist and textile scholar. My friend Claire and I immediately signed up and Jan was also one of the fourteen people in our group. It was a dream for all of us to go to Peru and visit Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu,



Chinchero, Lake Titicaca, the Sacred Valley and La Paz and see textiles, weaving sites and other historic landmarks. It was a truly fantastic experience and Jan, Claire, and I would hang out and explore together. Jan was so knowledgeable about the various techniques and cultures. And she was easy and fun to travel with. She was tireless when climbing the myriad of steps at countless sites and endlessly fascinated while looking at piles of old mantas in the dim shops of Cusco.

I always looked forward to running into Jan at our favorite event—the San Francisco Tribal Arts Fair—held every February at Fort Mason. It was interesting and informative to walk around with her, looking at the textiles, examining how they were created, and exclaiming about the subtle beauty and intricacies of a technique. It was fascinating to see which textiles stood out, which caught her eye and mine. We bonded at this show through our mutual appreciation of tribal textiles. Her curiosity and understanding of techniques was extensive. What she didn't know she researched. I remember staying at her house in Pt. Reyes and recalling the stacks of textile books that she was reading and researching about a topic. I know that she also brought this curiosity and love of the history and textile techniques into her classes. I have missed seeing her these last few years and sharing the tribal experience with her.

Jan was a good friend, a soft-spoken presence, warm, and kind. Her talent and the legacy of her teachings will live on through her many students. I am fortunate that she was a part of my weaving friends, forged by our love of ethnic textiles and the making of well woven cloth.

Obituary

Janice Bornt Langdon, 1934 – 2019

PETALUMA, CA Janice Bornt Langdon passed on April 1, 2019 at 'Little Bird' where she had briefly been a resident. Born in Troy, December 6, 1934, she was the daughter of the late Clifford L. and Gertrude E. (Smith) Bornt. She attended Lansingburgh public schools, graduating from Lansingburgh High School in 1952. She then pursued her interest in weaving at Cranbrook Academy of Art and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts studying with Jack Lenor Larsen, Annie Albers and other notable artists. Jan (as she was known to most of her friends) achieved early recognition when in the late 1950s her work was awarded the Purchase Prize for the Addison Gallery of American Art from a show curated by Gjorgy Kepes. At the time of the 1964 New York World's Fair a special exhibition was assembled by The Museum of Contemporary Crafts to represent the range of work being done in the country. Janice was one of the 30 artist/craftsmen selected to show their

work. Teaching was an important part of her life. Jan taught at the Rudolph Schaeffer School of Art, the deYoung Museum, and recently retired after 15 years at the Richmond Arts Center. Known to be an inspiring teacher, she enjoyed a loyal following from her students as well as the high regard of her professional peers. She exhibited at the Oakland Art Museum, Detroit Institute of Arts, The Museum of Contemporary Crafts, Scripps College and at various sites in California where she had lived since 1960. Survivors include her children Joel Langdon of Inverness and Margaret (Andrew) Schrock of Petaluma, grandchildren Audrey Land of Santa Rosa and Parker Schrock of Petaluma. Her only sibling, Bernice Bornt Ledeboer lives in Troy, New York. Jan will be greatly missed by her family and her many friends. A celebration of her life is planned for June 14 in Point Reyes Station where she made her home for many years. An exhibition of her work is scheduled for June 15 – August 11 at the Bolinas Museum in Bolinas, California. <http://www.lastingmemories.com/janice-bornt-langdon>

September
2019

Textile Arts Council

Don't miss these exciting TAC events!

■ "Henry VIII and the Art of Majesty: Tapestry at the Tudor Court."

- Thomas P. Campbell, Director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
- Saturday, September 21, 2019, 10 am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

■ "Knitting Together a New Passion."

- Chris Motley, San Francisco Bay Area fiber artist
- Saturday, October 19, 2019, 10 am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

■ Annual Textile Bazaar

- Saturday, November 9, 2019 10:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. in a New Venue:
- St. Mary's Cathedral Event Center, 1111 Gough St. (at Geary)

■ "Ultracontemporary: Collecting Contemporary Fashion in a Time of Change."

- Dennita Sewell, Professor of Practice, Arizona State University
- Saturday, November 16, 2019, 10 am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

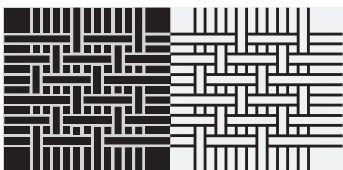
■ TAC MEMBERS HOLIDAY PARTY! at Krimsa Gallery, December 4, 2019

deYoung\
\Legion of Honor

fine arts museums
of san francisco

Visit our web site: www.textileartscouncil.org

Follow us :   



Textile Arts Council

deYoung \ fine arts museums of san francisco

50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive Golden Gate Park San Francisco, CA 94118-4501 415-750-3627

OFFICERS

Chair

Shirley Juster

Co-Chair

Leslee Budge

Vice Chair

Shelley Wells

Treasurer

Joy Stocksdales

Secretary

Alex Friedman

Editor

Caroline Ocampo

September
2019

TAC Joins Instagram!

By Ryen Anderson, Board member

Hello, Textile World!

TAC is joining Instagram under the name [textile_arts_council](https://www.instagram.com/textile_arts_council/). We would love to get our community more connected to share textiles that all of you have collected over the years. https://www.instagram.com/textile_arts_council/

Instagram is a place to share pictures with your friends, family, and to find people with hobbies like yours! We will also be making announcements about our lectures, tours, workshops on Instagram to keep you inspired. Please follow us so we can keep everyone connected, even if you don't live in the San Francisco Bay Area. We are a global village of textile lovers.

Help! I've never used Instagram!

If you've never used Instagram, Here's how you can join:

- Download Instagram on your smartphone (Play Store on Android or the Apple App Store).
- Create a username that is easy to remember and a secure password.
- Click the magnifying glass and type in "textile_arts_council" and search for us.
- Click "follow" to become our friend.

Scroll through our pics and click the heart to show us you love something!

Press the "+" button to take a picture of yourself and write something below. I recommend, "Hi, @textile_arts_council!" so we can see your beautiful face!

Find your friends and family Instagram so you can see what they are doing and share your life with them.