

**Dear TAC Members,**

Enclosed please find our TAC Fall Newsletter. This special biannual publication is distributed to members only, until the publication of the next issue in 6 months.

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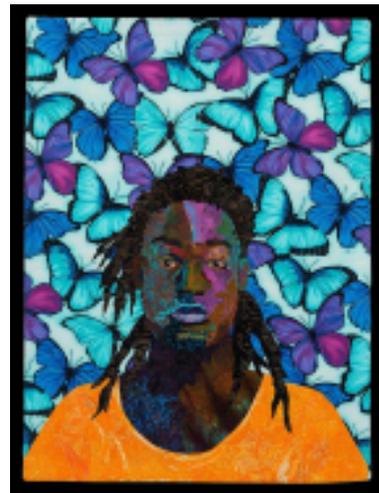
**Fall 2021, Volume XXXVI, Number 2**

As we continue to make our way through these challenging times, TAC remains an innovative organization, expanding and (improving) our programming and outreach. The textile community has responded enthusiastically to our efforts, featuring our programming in their newsletters and on their websites. And we have reciprocated with a recently inaugurated Community Events column on our own website: <https://textileartscouncil.org/community-events>

I am thrilled to welcome **new board members** Alice Beasley, Joan Hart, Mirka Knaster, Susan Miller and Chris Motley. Each of these women is highly recognized for her previous achievements, and each brings her own range of experience and artistry to TAC. I look forward to working with them.....learning from them.....and sharing with all of you their contributions to our programs and events. Also, a thank you to Mary Connors for continuing to serve on the board for another 3 year term.

On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank **retiring board members** for their years of service to TAC: Karen Hazelkorn, Donna LaVallee, Sally-Yu Leung, Jeanette Lurier, Julianna Pennington, Sandra Sardjono and Helen Scully.

One of our most exciting and distinctive projects has been the inception of our **Artist Series** devoted to living San Francisco Bay Area fiber artists. Conceived by TAC board members Sandra Sardjono and Ellin Klor, the series opened in August with Alice Beasley, an Oakland-based figurative quilter, who has recently joined the TAC board. All participating artists will be profiled in a documentary video showcasing their body of work, their creative process, and their sources of inspiration. Each video will premiere as part of the TAC virtual program series and later be made available to the public. This collection will serve as a significant contribution to preserving the important heritage of fiber arts in the Bay Area.



*Floating Into the Heat of the Moon*, Alice M. Beasley, 2019.

New board member Mirka Knaster reinstated our popular program of **local tours**. Beginning early June with *A Beautiful Mess* at the Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek, we have enjoyed curated tours exclusive to TAC members. Recent events included a visit with the artist Kay Sekimachi at BAMPFA's *Special Exhibition: Kay Sekimachi: Geometries* and Carole Beadle's review of the selection process for the *International Fiber Arts Exhibit X* at the Sebastopol Center for the Arts. It was a pleasure to see so many TAC members among the juried artists.



Patrick Kelly Collection. Photograph by Oliviero Toscani

I hope all of you have gotten a bit of a preview regarding the incredibly exciting, upcoming **Patrick Kelly exhibition**, *Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love*. As part of our support for the Costume and Textile Arts Department, TAC has made a \$10,000 supporting donation that will be acknowledged in the catalogue and on the wall of the exhibition. Thanks to all of you for your continuing support which makes this possible.

In conjunction with the exhibition, TAC will host a limited **pair of VIP events**, opening with a virtual presentation by our own Associate Curator of Costume and Textile Arts, Laura Camerlengo, who curated this exhibition. Her presentation will feature a behind-the-scenes perspective on how the exhibition went from an idea to an installation. This event will be followed by an exclusive tour of the exhibit before museum opening hours.

This past June TAC's Development Committee hosted a **special event** *Fashion in the Time of COVID* with Keren Ben-Horin, fashion historian, curator and author. TAC board member Anat Pilovsky served as moderator and joined Keren for an (intimate) conversation following her presentation.

Our **Saturday lectures** will continue to be online via Zoom at least through February 2022. All lectures will be recorded and archived for our future reference. In October we will learn the intricacies of Ikat textiles of Suva Island, East Indonesia with Geneviève Duggan. And in November Associate Curator of Costume and Textile Arts Laura Camerlengo will give us an in-depth view of the Patrick Kelly exhibition, which opens at the de Young on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Virtual workshops** continue to be a popular source of continuing education. Last February Jeanie Low did a 2 session workshop: Designing Pieced Fabric; Barbara Shapiro taught a special form of basket weaving in April; and in August Kathryn Rousso hosted an in-demand repeat of her Knotless Netting. Another 2-part event was Lyra Bobo's August webinar and follow up in-person workshop on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

**My thanks to each of you for your ongoing support and enthusiasm.** You've all participated in so many of our virtual programs, while at the same time, you've reminded us of how much we miss each other. You've shared your thoughts, your feelings, and your creativity through our Member News publication, a vehicle that has served as a bond for our community and as an inspiration for all of us. And through the Ethnic Textile Study Group you've contributed your own time by sharing your treasures with all of us. Please continue to be active participants; and please continue to share our mailings with friends and others who appreciate textiles as much as we do.

On behalf of our **Curator-in-Charge Jill D'Alessandro**, our **Head Conservator Sarah Gates**, and the entire TAC board, I send a special thank you to the many of you who included donations in support of Curatorial and Conservation Department Special Projects in your membership renewal this past year. Your support is truly appreciated.

I look forward to a time when we can all meet. So with fingers crossed, we've reserved space at St. Mary's Cathedral Event Center for our Textile Bazaar on November 13<sup>th</sup> and our Holiday Party on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **Conservation Updates!**

by Sarah Gates, Head Conservator, Textiles Conservation

Now that we've re-opened, you can enjoy seeing examples of both the largest and the smallest of our permanent collection conservation projects, ranging in date from the 15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> c, at both the de Young and Legion of Honor.

### **de Young:**

In early Fall a small but exquisite exhibition of 18th – 20th c printed textile fragments (discussed elsewhere in this issue by Laura Camerlengo) will be on display for the first time ever in the Textile Education Gallery at the de Young. The fragments have been given in-depth conservation attention by Laura Vedrenne Garcia, as part of her Andrew W Mellon Fellowship. Laura has analyzed and conserved the fragments and most importantly, undertaken a new mounting system utilizing magnets. This is a system we hope to employ

more regularly going forward because it causes the least amount of damage to a textile and, once the system is established, takes much less time to mount for display. We are extremely grateful to have a Mellon Fellow to help us "up our game".

**Legion of Honor:**

Two of our finest tapestries have been hung at the Legion Gallery 2. Conservation and display of the tapestry collection is a long-time interest of mine and you'll be able to see my favorite, the 15<sup>th</sup> c *Rabbit Hunting with Ferrets* – which we fondly refer to as 'Bunnies and Weasels' – as well as *Justice*, one of our three, 16<sup>th</sup> c "Triumph" tapestries from *The Triumph of the Seven Virtues* series.

And be sure to note that "Justice" is portrayed as a woman, wielding a sword, seated in a chariot pulled by unicorns! "Justice" is the only tapestry of its design that exists in the world.



*Rabbit Hunting with Ferrets*, ca. 1470–1490. Wool, Silk; Slit- And Dovetailed-tapestry Weave, 304.8 x 363.2 cm (120 x 143 in.). Museum purchase, M.H. de Young Endowment Fund, 39.4.1



*Triumph of Justice*, from *The Triumph of the Seven Virtues* series, ca. 1535. Wool, Silk; Tapestry Weave, 439.4 x 551.2 cm (173 x 217 in.). Gift of The William Randolph Hearst Foundation, 1957.125

## Upcoming Gallery Rotation:

### ***To Teach and Inspire: The Julia Brenner Textile Collection***

By Laura L. Camerlengo, Associate Curator of Costume and Textile Arts

This fall, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco will present *To Teach and Inspire: The Julia Brenner Textile Collection*, in the TB Walker Textiles Education Gallery, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, de Young museum. This concise exhibition celebrates the extraordinary gift and lasting legacy of Julia Brenner (1866–1944). Between 1923 and 1938, Brenner donated more than one thousand textile fragments, as well as nearly two hundred costume components, costume accessories, complete textiles, and tools, to the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum (now part of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco). International in scope, with examples of weaves and techniques from around the world, her collection has served as the foundational holding of the Museums’ textile arts collection for nearly one hundred years.

Born in San Francisco in 1866, Brenner’s parents were immigrants from Germany, and her father worked as a jeweler. Little information is otherwise known about Julia Brenner’s early life, and no photographs of her have been identified at time of writing. She married Gustave Brenner (1862 – 1930) in 1887 (Fig. 1). With his father, Leopold, Gustave was one of the largest manufacturers and dealers of men’s furnishings (or men’s clothing) on the West Coast, and the Brennens were one of San Francisco’s most prominent



Jewish mercantile families. Julia and Gustave had four children: Silvia, Mervyn, Ruth, and Bessie.

Like many members of San Francisco's early Jewish communities, the Brenner's were active civic leaders with a strong sense of community awareness. They gave back to the city through a variety of charitable endeavors. Their participation in these endeavors appears to have coincided with Gustave's retirement from business in 1907. The Brenner's sense of philanthropy was passed down to their children as well; their son, Mervyn, had a foundation formed in his name at his death. This foundation – the Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation – is underwriting the costs for the presentation of Julia Brenner's collection at the Museums.

Julia Brenner had a very clear vision for her collection at the Museums, which she modeled on the textiles collections, study centers, and display practices of other prominent museums with already-significant textiles collections, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. According to correspondence in the Museums' archives, she aspired that her collection would be available "for the good of students of textile design". Her donation reflects her familial sense of civic responsibility, as well as her awareness of museums' educational missions, her appreciation of textiles as art objects, and the popular early twentieth century practice of donating art to public institutions for the betterment of society.

The textiles that Brenner collected came from various corners of the globe; in the wake of Brenner's passing, the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, reported on July 21, 1944 that, "For more than 15 years she traveled abroad searching for various types of materials which might serve as a stimulus and a source of new ideas for weavers, designers and art students". Although the *Gazette* reported that this collection was amassed by travel, records from public databases as well as those housed by local organizations, such as the Maritime Museum and San Francisco History Center at the San Francisco Public Library, show no evidence that Julia Brenner traveled abroad to source her collection. Instead, it seems more likely that she formed her collection in strategic collaboration with private donors, ambassadors, consulates, national industrial groups, and global textiles manufacturing firms. Small notes found in the Museums' Registration files and with the textiles themselves bear the name of the individual or organizations from which the textiles were sourced.

Julia Brenner's textiles donations were widely celebrated during her lifetime, and displayed frequently by the Museums (Fig. 2). Correspondence found in the Museums' archives also suggests that Brenner was instrumental in bringing in gifts of textiles from other prominent San Francisco donors, such as the celebrated art patron Albert M. Bender (1866 – 1941). Although her textiles have been displayed by the Museums' in many exhibitions over the past several decades, they have not been exhibited in a group by the Museums since Brenner's death.





Figure 3. Fragment, ca. 1820. France, possibly Alsace, for the European market. Cotton; block printed, mordant dyed, discharged (Turkey red process). Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of the Julia Brenner Collection, 53810.90



Figure 4: Manufactured by H.R. Mallinson & Company (American, 1915–1955). Designed by Walter Mitschke (American, b. Germany, 1886–1972). Dress fragment: “Paradise Valley, Mount Rainier,” 1927. Silk; plain weave, cylinder printed. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of the Julia Brenner Collection, 55237.7

*To Teach and Inspire* features a selection of printed textiles, spanning the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, from Brenner’s collection. Although printed textiles are common to many international traditions, Brenner’s collection is primarily Western, speaking to the tastes of some American textiles collectors and interior designers during her lifetime. Featuring key stylistic and representational printed textiles, it offers a chronology of common designs. By highlighting developments in technologies and dyestuffs while acknowledging recurring patterns and themes, it creates a visual and intellectual dialogue across two centuries of printed-textiles production (Figs. 3 and 4).

*To Teach and Inspire: The Julia Brenner Textile Collection will be on view from October 23, 2021 - October 30, 2022. The exhibition is generously supported by the Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation.*

## **Image Credits**

### From the Chair:

-*Floating Into the Heat of the Moon*, Alice M. Beasley, 2019. Printed cotton; pieced, appliquéd, 32 1/2 x 24 1/2 in. (82.6 x 62.2 cm). Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Museum purchase, Art Trust Fund, 2020.43

-Patrick Kelly Collection: Photograph by Oliviero Toscani / © Patrick Kelly Estate / Image Randy Dodson, courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

### Textile Conservation Lab Honorees!

-*Rabbit Hunting with Ferrets*, ca. 1470–1490. Wool, Silk; Slit- And Dovetailed-tapestry Weave, 304.8 x 363.2 cm (120 x 143 in.). Museum purchase, M.H. de Young Endowment Fund, 39.4.1

-*Triumph of Justice*, from The Triumph of the Seven Virtues series, ca. 1535. Wool, Silk; Tapestry Weave, 439.4 x 551.2 cm (173 x 217 in.). Gift of The William Randolph Hearst Foundation, 1957.125

### Upcoming Gallery Rotation: To Teach and Inspire: The Julia Brenner Textile Collection:

-Figure 1: Portrait of Gustave Brenner, from Martin Abraham Meyer and A. W. Voorsanger, *Western Jewry: An Account of the Achievements of the Jews and Judaism in California*, 1916

-Figure 2: "Exhibition of Textiles," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 25, 1935

- Figure 3: Fragment, ca. 1820. France, possibly Alsace, for the European market. Cotton; block printed, mordant dyed, discharged (Turkey red process). Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of the Julia Brenner Collection, 53810.90

-Figure 4: Manufactured by H.R. Mallinson & Company (American, 1915–1955). Designed by Walter Mitschke (American, b. Germany, 1886–1972). Dress fragment: "Paradise Valley, Mount Rainier," 1927. Silk; plain weave, cylinder printed. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of the Julia Brenner Collection, 55237.7