

# UNRAVELED, ONE THREAD AT A TIME

## EXHIBITING ARTISTS' INFORMATION & FIBER ART DEFINITIONS/HISTORY

### YLVIA ASAL OF ANATOLIA

I am a multi-disciplinary teaching artist. I was born in the Black Sea area of Turkey. My formative education was followed by an intensive arts program in Istanbul, focusing on technique and design along with accounting. My cultural and folk-art contribution draws from the deep Anatolian culture and traditions. I work with a wide array of mediums: sculpture with Clay, wax, and fabric (soft sculpture), Turkish Paper marbling " Ebru", and textile art such as working with fabric and yarn. I also give new insights into nature, people, and shapes in her photography. My greatest passion is the Anatolian Lace art of "Oya", which is a centuries-old technique of hand-made lace. This classical Anatolian lace art, "Oya", has been adorning domestic objects with delicate artistry for centuries. The skills required to master this art have been passed down from generation to generation. My work is built up from knitting needles, tiny crochet hooks, shuttles, hairpins, and the fine threads which create the myriad loops unique to lace making. The result is a beautiful collection celebrating this unique fusion that has culminated in my own business, the [Anatolia Art and Craft Studio](#) in Downtown Haddonfield, NJ waiting for visitors. I have been successful in sharing these Anatolian women's art skills to a wider American audience, making that cultural experience available and at the same time, allowing me to do what I love.

My artistic mission is to carry the thread of traditional folk art through the eye of the needle and to create loops large enough to embrace women globally.

### KAREN BORGA

#### *Creating One Thread at a Time*

Karen's journey into fiber arts began early with her Grandmother teaching her the traditional fiber crafts. She studied fiber arts and graphic design in college. Once retired, she jumped into the fiber world's "rabbit hole" and spends her days learning and creating. And, sharing her knowledge with her own grandchildren continuing the tradition. For more information: [kborga@karenborga.com](mailto:kborga@karenborga.com)

### PENELOPE CAKE

Penelope is a visual artist, choreographer, performer, teacher, and writer who currently lives in Cape May, NJ. Her work has been viewed and performed in NYC art galleries and theaters, as well as in Cape May at Cape May Sage, The Cape May Artists Cooperative and the End of the Road Theater. Considered an "outsider artists", Penelope is self-taught in visual arts. Sampled of performances, video and artwork can be viewed at <http://www.penelopecake.com>.

For more information: [penelopecake@yahoo.com](mailto:penelopecake@yahoo.com).

#### Artist's Statement

"My art is personal and reflective. I started embroidering photographs in an effort to "see" them more deeply, investigate the feelings that I attributed to the people or places picture, and create a relationship with them. I do not know the people in these photographs they were found in antique stores, thrift shops and yard sales. Their provenance is generally unknown. They have been discarded and have become obsolete, so I strive to give meaning and value through this process."

## **LAURA CHANDLER**

### Artist Statement:

Hello, I own a small farm in Lumberton, New Jersey where I raise a flock of Gotland sheep. I use their wool for knitting and weaving but enjoy working with all types of fiber. I originally learned to weave so I could work with our Gotland wool, making lap throws and small blankets. I also enjoy weaving household textiles like kitchen towels and accessories like silk scarfs.

Bio: Laura Chandler is a retired microbiologist. Originally from Connecticut, she and her husband Bill have lived in New Jersey for 22 years, where they own a small farm (Smiling Dog Farm), in Lumberton. They raise chickens and sell free-range eggs, grow vegetable, herb and dye plants for home gardeners, and raise Gotland sheep, whose wool is used for knitting and weaving. <http://www.smiling-dog-farm.com>. Laura is a member of the South Jersey Guild of Spinners and Handweavers, and the NJ Fibershed.

## **LINDA EPPS**

### Artist Statement

Everyone needs something in their life that elevates their innate creativity, confirms their uniqueness, calms their nerves, and is appreciated by their friends and family. Once upon a time, for me, it was my turkey chili. Now it is my one of a kind needle point/bargello pillows.

These were created at very stressful time in my life. My husband was hospitalized for an extended period of time with a complicated illness and my son, in another hospital about ten miles away was waiting for a new heart. These pillows, created as Christmas gifts for my supportive sister/friends, helped make my sitting in the hospital days more palatable. Their appearance in this exhibition is a dedication to them.

## **HOPE GAINES**

### Artist Statement

Hope lives in Cape May and likes to tackle challenging needlework and quilting projects. She has been quilting for about 15 years, but occasionally picks up a counted cross-stitch project like these two, which she designed. Her work is from Matthew 7:17, words encountered in a now-forgotten non-Biblical context. They convey the same principle of gardening as Jefferson's advice. Hope's own garden, where she tries to follow these precepts, contains an impulsive collection of annuals, perennials, vegetables, and herbs. She has too many houseplants.

She is a professional copy editor and writer and an amateur student of history and a member of the Center for Community Arts Community History Committee that recently published Black Voices of Cape May, the first study of that city's Black community.

## **ALICE GARBARINO**

Bio: Alice learned to knit as a child, but did not get serious about her knitting until well into her 50s. She perfected her craft by taking lessons from well established teachers and experts in the fiber industry. In addition to knitting, Alice also crochets and weaves and is currently the President of the South Jersey Guild of Spinners and Handweavers.

The *Breathe and Hope Shawl* was made from a natural cream fingering weight wool yarn speckled with springtime colors including fluorescent green, bright orange, marine blue, a bit of pink and purple. This yarn was combined with a solid heather green wool yarn in a pattern using a slip-stitch motif. The shawl is a boomerang shape which begins at the small pointed end and increases with each row until the desired length has been reached.

## **LENA GREY**

### Artist Statement

For as long as I could remember, I was drawn to anything that is made of fiber. In my early years I dabbled in sewing, embroidery, cross-stitch, knitting and any other craft that uses fiber as a medium. I loved it all! Yet, macramé stood out. It intrigued me enough to start making delicate bracelets, necklaces, belts and purses. It felt different, more modern of a craft maybe. But I did not focus on it at the time... 35 years later I rediscovered Macramé as a unique form of Fiber Art that is perfect for Interior design. There's so much to play with – color, texture, volume, rhythm and light. You can create a functional object, a sculptural piece or design a delicate tapestry that resembles lace. I continuously learn and experiment with different types of cord, gravitating towards large wall hangings. My goal is to go bigger and bolder with my macramé creations, make it contemporary and classy rather than bohemian and to introduce the art of Macramé into high end interiors.

## **ANNA KEENAN**

I was born and raised in Metuchen, New Jersey. I am currently in my 3rd year at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, majoring in fine arts. I usually work in fiber, ceramics and sculpture. Most recently I have been assisting the Ocean City Arts Center with the July fiber art exhibition.

### Artist Statement

Ever since I was young I have gravitated towards the arts. It was not until I came to the Art Institute of Chicago that I had started to really experiment with fiber arts. Patterns and repetitive motion have always played a role in my work. When I found I could translate those ideas from canvas to fibers and other materials I was hooked. Fiber art has allowed me to unlearn the idea of making art strictly for others and has taught me to create for myself. The goal of my work is to bring peace to myself as I am creating it and to the viewers as they observe. I have recently been experimenting with weaving, stitching, knitting, and needle felting while using materials such as yarns, wools, muslin and thread. My artistic process surrounds the ideas of my materials growing into organic patterns and shapes with little strict planning.

*Watashiato*, the bib necklace, is a piece I made about a year ago for a fashion class of mine. We had to take a texture in everyday life and replicate it using only muslin. I spent time studying moss and attempting to recreate the texture by dyeing, shredding, needling felting and stitching muslin together into organic shapes. I wanted the piece to grow on the body, so I had attached the muslin around the neck and continued my process until the work was bib-like. I liked how the muslin was in a spot of the body not covering anything or used as an everyday garment but naturally growing off the skin.

## **JANE MEDIO**

### Artist Statement

Through my artwork, I strive to capture the beauty, movement and abundance of color found in nature. As a result of daily distractions, we rarely stop to appreciate the art that nature provides. I have been inspired to focus on landscapes in my work as a method of taking the time to slow down and see the beauty in every day.

My artwork is created through the process of needle felting, a method similar to that of tattooing. Rather than using ink, my medium is vibrant hand dyed roving, or unspun wool. Small pieces are pulled off the roving, like pulling off a piece of cotton candy. Using a barbed needle tool, the wool is forced into an organic cotton backing which serves as a canvas. The two large pieces I am including in this exhibition were first created using the wet felting technique, where loose roving is layered in different directions, then wet and agitated to set the pattern, and then rolled more than eight hundred times to shrink the fibers and condense the layers of fiber into a strong fabric canvas. Needle felted designs were then combined with this method to add detail and texture.

I am drawn to the freeing, unpredictable, method of working with soft wool, as my work in other mediums is often very realistic, and this technique forces me to explore a looser art-making path. While each element of a work is planned, fibers will pull and shift throughout the felting process. It can feel almost like I'm having them dance around the surface of my work until they settle. I decided to give my pieces titles with wooly puns as another way of "playing" with my work.

## **RUTHANN MEYER (1956-2023)**

Ruthann was born in New York in 1956 and grew up in Long Island, the oldest daughter in a large family. A studious and creative child, she aspired to be an art teacher. After earning her B.Sc. in art from Ladycliff College, she moved to Southern New Jersey to begin her long career as an educator. At Brigantine Public Schools, where she worked for over three and a half decades, she taught generations of students not only how to make art for themselves, but also how to appreciate art made by others throughout history and around the world.

Next, Ruthann earned a Master's degree in instructional technology, which she used to develop an innovative, student-run television studio that broadcasted news and entertainment for the community. During this period, she also raised five children. Upon finally retiring, Ruthann turned her talents to training student teachers, supporting local arts initiatives, and pursuing her own artistic development in watercolor, pastels, and decorative and fiber arts. The most frequent subjects of her artistic works were the landscapes and fauna she encountered in her frequent travels and daily life.

Ruthann was a longtime member and supporter of the Ocean City Arts Center and we are thrilled to have her work featured in this exhibit.

## **SOUTH JERSEY GUILD OF SPINNERS AND HANDWEAVERS**

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

The purpose of this Guild shall be to promote excellence in the fiber arts, to foster the exchange of ideas, to provide continuing educational opportunities to its members in pursuit of these goals, and to educate the community about fiber arts.

The greatest benefit of belonging to a weaving or spinning guild is the tangible and substantial reward of increased creativity and productivity by regular contact with fellow fiber artists.

### *The Modern Day Shepherdess (Shawl)*

By Susan Makuka, (Team Captain), Nekell Bjorn, Karen Blisnuk, and Lora Stout

In addition to the items exhibited by individual members is a group effort , a shawl which was entered in the Garden State Sheep Breeders' first NJ Fleece to Scarf competition in 2019. Their theme was "The Modern Day Shepherdess". Only the warp was store bought, the rest was hand dyed, hand spun (some even on-site as part of the competition) and then hand woven and hand finished. Over 2,000 yards of dyed warp yarn was used. The team included members, . Amazingly, they won 1st place with this entry.

### *Making One Hat at a Time (Hat)*

By Nancy Turner

The need for hats became urgent when Putin began bombing power stations in the Ukraine in the fall of 2022. Nancy's brother, William Steagall, Jr., organized the Ukraine Knitting Resistance to get warm clothing, hats, scarves, mittens, shawls, and small blankets to the people in war torn Ukraine.

He asked the several knitters he knew to knit some hats to send. The first month he sent 40 lbs. of knitted items. Word spread and in February 2023, he bagged up to 100 lbs. of knitted items and actually went to and assisted a missionary group over the Carpathian Mountains, into Ukraine. For a week he and the missionaries distributed the knitted work, medical supplies and a ton of food.

All is documented on Facebook. So, I knit hats to send along. THIS one goes when the exhibit ends. Please see the Facebook page for The Ukraine Knitting Resistance to see the more complete story, and the photographs. My favorite is the little boy and the raccoon.

### **MEMBERS EXHIBITING**

Karen Blisnuk  
Nekell Bjorn  
Karen Borga  
Laura Chandler  
Alice Garbarino

Holly Loza  
Susan Makuka  
Lora Stout  
Nancy Turner

## **KATIE STRANO**

Katie Strano has a one-woman weaving studio, [Heddle Over Heels](#), located in Southbury, CT. The items that she creates are made to be used and enjoyed. Adding beauty to life with the special satisfaction that a lovely useful object can bring. Original handwoven items can be found in her shop. She is also available for custom weaving projects. From specially woven fabric by the yard, to piece work for farms using their own yarns, to a special one of a kind piece for your home. Contact her website for inquiries. In addition to production weaving, she also teaches floor loom and rigid heddle weaving classes, and is a proud Ashford Wheels & Looms dealer. She works out of my home studio, and items are available for local pick up and consultation by appointment only at this time. Please contact her.

### Artist Statement

Since this is a one-person business my personal and business beliefs are intricately entwined. I believe that Black lives matter. I believe that LGBTQ+ rights and lives matter. I believe in a world that values the lives and experiences of BIPOC, and a world that actively works to do better, to rectify our wrongs, and to create a more just, safe, and caring world for all.

## **FIBER ART DESCRIPTIONS & HISTORIES FOLLOWING PAGES**

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## Fiber Art Descriptions and Histories

### SPINNING & WEAVING

#### Description

Textile literally means 'that which has been woven'. It derives from the Latin word 'texere', which means 'to weave'.

**Spinning** is the process of creating yarn (or thread, rope, cable) from various raw fiber materials. Several fibers are twisted together to bind them into a strong, long yarn. Characteristics of the yarn vary based on the material used, fiber length and alignment, quantity of fiber used and degree of twist. The earliest spinning probably involved simply twisting the fibers in the hand. spinners spin their own yarn in order to control specific yarn qualities and produce yarn not commercially available. They also may spin for self-sufficiency, sense of accomplishment or sense of connection to history and the land. And, of course, for the meditative qualities of spinning. Animal materials used: wool, goat (angora or cashmere goat), rabbit (angora), llama, alpaca, camel or silk.

**Hand weaving** is the art of producing woven textiles by hand using any of the many weaving techniques in the world. Weaving produces textiles by interlocking two yarns, typically in a perpendicular relationship. This is contrasted to knotting and looping techniques that create fabric out of a single piece of yarn, as is the case in knitting or crochet. There are many different hand weaving traditions in the world, and any weaving technique that is not automated or industrial is typically considered hand weaving, even though many weaving looms might be considered machines. The tools, materials, and techniques used in hand weaving all impact the look of the finished fabric.

#### History

Weaving is among the most ancient and widespread techniques in the world and one of its peculiarities, in addition to having a practical utility, is that it has represented a means of artistic expression for all civilizations – in ancient times, fabrics were a way of spreading symbols and images, by all means a language, and in time they started identifying the single characteristics of people, culture and social status.

It is impossible to tell with certainty when weaving started, mostly because it is fragile and it was easily deteriorated. Some theories state that the observation of bird nests suggested the idea of interlacing and consequently the invention of weaving, because weaving is essentially interweaving thanks to which fabric is created. The development of spinning and weaving purportedly began in ancient Egypt around 3400 before Christ (B.C). Technically it is the art of creating fabric through a combination of warp and weft. (*Warp and weft are the two basic components used in weaving to turn thread or yarn into fabric*) *The lengthwise or longitudinal warp yarns are held stationary in tension on a frame or loom while the transverse weft is drawn through and inserted over-and-under the warp.*

#### Artists

Karen Blisnuk	Alice Garbarino	Dianne Snodgrass
Karen Borga	Anna Keenan	Lora Stout
Nekell Bjorn	Holly Loza	Katie Strano
Laura Chandler	Susan Makuka	Nancy Turner

## **MACRAME**

Since this art form has regained popularity in recent years, macramé artists are coming up with innovative ways to take macramé beyond the basic plant hangers.

### **Description**

Macramé is a technique or method of crafting a textile that uses several knots to form the basic shape and function of the piece. Each knot can be created with your hands, and there are no other tools required other than a mounting ring to keep the item in place while you work.

For something to be considered macramé, the project should incorporate at least one macramé knot. In most cases, macramé projects are pieced together with several knots. In some cases, you can have macramé elements joined with other techniques like weaving or knitting.

### **History**

When most people think of macramé, their mind travels back to the bohemian-inspired wall hangings of the 1960s and '70s. To get to the origins of this method, some suggest the knotting began in the 13th century. Other historians believe that the ancient Persians and Babylonians used knotting in artifacts that date to BC centuries.

In modern history, macramé was an art form that was brought west from Arabic countries. Weavers from this part of the world used several knotting techniques to finish the edges of woven tapestries, rugs, and shawls with fringe.

As these textiles were distributed throughout Europe, more people began to experiment with knotting as a pastime. By the 17th century, the technique had reached as far as England where the ladies in waiting were taught it under the guidance of Queen Mary II.

Women weren't the only people practicing macramé. Sailors would knot for practical purposes, but on long voyages, the act of knotting served as a way to stay engaged and ward off boredom. These sailors ultimately helped this art form spread throughout Europe. They became merchants when they entered new ports and would trade the macramé items they made on the ship. Popular items included hammocks, hats, and belts.

Eventually, Victorians were knotting textiles during the 18th and 19th centuries until the technique was largely replaced with sewing machines after the Industrial Revolution. The hand-knotting became popular again in the late '60s and '70s and is back once again as you can see from the current work here by Lena Grey.

### **Artist**

Lena Grey



## **FELTING**

### **Description**

Needle felting is a creative craft that involves sculpting shapes and figures using wool and special felting needles. It's a simple yet versatile technique that allows you to create amazing creations with just a few supplies

### **History**

Felt, particularly made from wool, is considered to be the oldest known man-made textile. Felt clothing and other items have been found in tombs dating 6,000+ years ago in areas where nomadic sheep herding was the norm.

### **Types of Felting**

#### **Wet felting**

Wet felting utilizes hot soapy water instead of needles. By rubbing and agitating the wool fiber with water, it tangles and locks together. This technique is often used for flat felting, resulting in smooth and versatile felted fabric.

Only certain types of fiber can be wet felted well. Most types of fleece, such as those taken from alpaca or sheep, can be put through the wet felting process. You can also use mohair (goat), angora (rabbit), or hair from rodents such as beavers and muskrats (but you've got to catch them first).

#### **Needle felting**

Needle felting is a creative craft that involves sculpting shapes and figures using wool and special felting needles. It's a simple yet versatile technique that allows you to create amazing creations with just a few supplies. This method doesn't require any water. You use a special needle that has notches along its shaft; these catch the wool fibers and tangle them with other fibers to produce felt

#### **Artists**

Jane Medio  
Ruthann Meyer

## **EMBROIDERY**

### **Description**

Embroidery is the art of decorating material, primarily textile fabric, by means of a needle and thread (and sometimes fine wire). The basic techniques include crewel work, needlepoint, cross-stitch embroidery, and quilting, as well as quillwork and featherwork. This exhibit features needlepoint and embroidery.

**Counted cross-stitch embroidery** - carried out on canvas or an evenly woven fabric in which the strands of the weave can be counted and the embroiderer counts stitches out from the center of the fabric to ensure an even finished look. Canvas work was executed at least as early as the Middle Ages, when it was known as opus pulvinarium, or cushion work. As its name implies, cross-stitch is a double stitch diagonally crossing intersections of the horizontal and vertical threads of the fabric. Because it is based on regular squares, it imposes a certain discipline and squaring-off of forms; flowers and the like are thus schematized rather than naturalistic.

**Needlepoint** - **needlepoint is a much more complicated art form than cross-stitch.** While cross-stitch only involves one type of stitch, needlepoint uses more than half a dozen.

### **Artists**

Ylvia Asal, Embroidery  
Jo-Ann Carroll, Needlepoint  
Linda Epps, Needlepoint  
Hope Gaines, Counted Cross-Stitchery

## **Embroidered Paper/Postcards/Photographs**

### **Description**

It is a way to embellish images, add color, texture, and enhance the story of what is going on in the post card or making up a new story.

### **History**

The first known cards appeared in 1899 and there were many publishers from this date up to 1914 as each of them created their own variation of designs and styles. The golden period of the embroidered silk postcard was between the years of 1914 and 1920, and they are widely associated with the First World War. Thousands of different designs were produced during this period for a ready market among the Armed Forces of the British Army and its Allies during the First World War. By about the middle of the war, cards were at the height of their popularity and being sold within the countries of the British Isles.

Photographic postcards have been embroidered from the turn of the last century. These paper cards are embellished with decorative embroidered stitching that were created for tourists, and most of these seem to have come from Spain, Portugal, Germany and other European countries. More recently, an Italian born artist by the name of [Maurizio Anzeri](#) has found great success with his embroidered photographs, obviously inspiring a few other artists to take the needle and thread to photographic images. [CLICK HERE: More info on the renewed art of embroidery on photographs.](#)

### **Artists**

Ylvia Asal  
Penelope Cake

## SEWING

### Description

Sewing is stitching cloth, leather, furs, or other materials, using a needle and thread. Sewing can be done on a sewing machine, or by hand.

### History

The art of sewing is at least 20,000 years old. Ancient peoples joined pieces of material using bone and horn needles and animal sinew for thread. Around the 14th century iron needles were invented, and by the 15th century there were eyed needles. Later sewing needles were made of steel, as they still are today. In the 1800s the first practical sewing machine appeared, and today most sewing is done by machine, though some sewers still choose to perform fine sewing and finishing by hand.

#### Artists:

Karen Borga

Jo-Ann Carroll

Anna Keenan

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