



Norway House
Summer 2020

The Baldishol

A Medieval Tapestry Inspires
Contemporary Textiles

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The
NATIONAL
NORWEGIAN
CENTER
in America

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Sponsored by:

Norway House
Norwegian Textile Letter
Scandinavian Weavers Study Group
of the Weavers Guild of Minnesota



The Baldishol Tapestry: Inspiration for the Show

The medieval Baldishol Tapestry, from 1180, is a national treasure familiar to most Norwegians—the oldest existing Norwegian tapestry. This tapestry textile fragment, depicting the months of April and May, was discovered in Norway in 1879 after a

church was torn down in Nes in Hedmark. It is also recognized as one of the earliest European tapestries.

This iconic Norwegian image has been replicated many times. A Baldishol Tapestry version even made it to the White House, when a group of Norwegian-American women presented one to President and Mrs.



46" x 80" The month of April is represented by a man sowing seeds, and the May panel features a man in armor on a horse. Photo: Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo, Norway

Calvin Coolidge in 1926, in honor of the Norse-American Centennial celebrated the year before. (It was never hung and is tucked away in a storage area.) The Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, alone has three full-sized copies, and one was loaned to the exhibit.

For the juried show, 26 artists created art works in fiber that looked to the Baldishol Tapestry for inspiration, not replication. Several textile techniques were represented: tapestry, knitting, felting, digital printing, silkscreen, embroidery, rug weaving, quilting, fabric collage—even a pvc pipe sculpture with swimsuit fabric fragments. The works grew from the images, colors, graphic elements, and materials in the historical tapestry. The purpose of the exhibit was to highlight the talent of textile artists, while educating Norway House audiences about the famous Norwegian tapestry. Sponsors included Norway House, the Scandinavian Weavers Study Group of the Weavers Guild of Minnesota, the *Norwegian Textile Letter*, and generous individuals.



Launching the Exhibit During a Tumultuous Year

After two years of planning, the exhibit was nearly upended by world events, including the coronavirus pandemic. One artist was not able to finish her piece because she was working 16 hour days organizing and running logistics for a mask making operation. Minnesota's stay-at-home order was imposed on March 27—what would happen to our Baldishol exhibit? The artists and organizers waited in limbo.

In mid-April Norway House leadership made the decision to go ahead. But could people visit?

Then on May 25 George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer, unleashing sadness and fury in our city and world-wide. Protests and riots against police violence and racial injustice erupted in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Norway House was only two miles

from the scene of the murder and the building's windows were boarded as a precaution.

Despite these challenges, the Baldishol exhibit was mounted as planned, even though everything about the exhibit experience was new. The opening festivities were held online. Information on each artist was posted on the Norway House website. Not everything



Visitors made appointments, wore masks, and no more than six were allowed in the gallery at one time.

was virtual; Norway House staff developed guidelines for safe in-person gallery visits, and the building was opened, a bit, for the first time in months. Norway House was among the very first galleries or museums in the city to allow in-person visits after the lockdown. A man who visited on the first day enthused about the works, and added, "I just had to get out to see some art!"

Over 200 people saw the show with family members or with a small group of friends, and they appreciated the diligence of Norway House staff in making the experience safe from the virus. A robust web presence with photos and videos allowed distant visitors to participate, which was especially important considering many of the artists couldn't even travel to see the show. Nearly three thousand people visited the virtual version.

Many of the artists in this Norway House exhibit are veterans of many shows, but they will never forget the year of this Minneapolis show at Norway House: 2020.

Robbie LaFleur, December 2020



The birds of the Baldishol Tapestry popped up in many of the pieces.

Gratitude

Heartfelt thanks are due to the staff of Norway House, especially Max Stevenson, Curator of the Norway House Galleri, for his support and his ability to quickly master technology for a great online presence. Thanks to the Baldishol Planning Committee and jury: Sara Okern, Lisa-Anne Bauch, Claire Most, Lisa Torvik, and Robbie LaFleur. And thanks to the judges, Carolyn Halliday and Karen Searle.



This replica of the Baldishol Tapestry was a centerpiece of the show. Woven by Alma Guttersen, St Paul MN, in 1928. Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum (1980.090.001)

Award Winners!

The Baldishol exhibit entries were judged by two nationally-known textile artists, Carolyn Halliday and Karen Searle, who wrote: "We were extremely impressed with the outstanding crafting of all of the pieces that were selected for this exhibition, as well as the

thorough, well conceived ideas that linked their creations to the Baldishol Tapestry. The amount of care put into processes that linked to textile practices during medieval times (natural dyeing, hand spinning, weave structure), and materials that were culturally specific (*spelsau* wool) was very rewarding. It was a pleasure to view these captivating works of art."

First Award:
Lindsey Marshall
"Baldishol Banner"

"We chose this piece because of the exquisitely executed detail, the effective scale of the materials within the tapestry, for the originality of the banner shape, and the strength of the composition which reads dynamically from across the room, yet is equally rewarding when viewed up close. We appreciated how the artist melded her background in typography with design choices that directly represent the Baldishol tapestry."



Second Award:
Kelsey Skodje
"Stories from the Future"

"We chose this piece because of its beautiful execution and charming details which follow the original Baldishol narrative while adding her own angle to the story. We admired her dedication to the entire process, especially the spinning of her floss on a medieval spindle, and hand dying some of her threads."



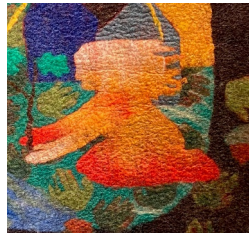
Kristin Anderson
Bigfork, Minnesota

Statement: My hand-felted tapestry was inspired by the original Baldishol's representation of the calendar year in spring. I parallel this theme with the idea of our warming world and growing response to climate and phenological change. My piece also relates to the Baldishol in the format of the two main sections, flanked by columns, or in the case of my piece, trees. The original tapestry's geometric forms are mimicked, from angular, repeated house shapes to falling snow. The bold colors also relate to the Baldishol as well as the figurative duo, who each reside in their own section of the piece. In the April section, a figure shows despair, but as the season warms and change continues, the May figure represents hope and reciprocity in action.

Bio:

Kristen Anderson explores ecological stories of intersection through her work in large-scale felt tapestry. After earning degrees in biology and art from St. Olaf College, she inherited a spinning wheel from her Norwegian relatives and began a journey in fiber arts that included a pivotal feltmaking mentorship with Otlak Studio artist, Mary Reichert. Building on her academic background in science, Anderson's work explores themes around the dynamic growth and survival of organic organisms, as well as human reciprocity with the environment.

www.cardamomstudio.org





Kristin Anderson
Emerging Spring

Dimensions:

40" x 70"

Materials:

Norwegian spelsau wool

Techniques:

Wet-felting

Amy Axen
Stony Creek, New York

Statement: "Baldishol Bandana" recreates medieval techniques as well as imagery, updated to a modern piece. Each iconic image (including flora, fauna, and geometric and organic shapes) in my 21st Century, decorative and functional piece was inspired by those utilized in this treasured, historic, Norwegian antecedent. To create the bandana, I used hand-carved wood block printing, stamped on cloth, akin to printed medieval wall coverings. I also used hand-cut pochoir stencils applied to the cloth. (This technique was used to apply color onto wood block prints, as well as ceramic glaze upon tiles throughout the Middle Ages.) To honor the Baldishol tapestry, I recreated the six original colors with botanical inks and dyes, including black walnut, turmeric, marigold, Osage orange, madder root, buckthorn, coffee, and indigo.

Bio:

Amy Axen majored in fine art for both her undergraduate and graduate degrees, worked in the art departments of two magazine publishing companies and an advertising agency, and finished her formal career with over two decades as an art educator in public and private schools. She is skilled in several media, and especially enjoys drawing, painting, print and book making, ceramics, jewelry, puppetry, and animation. And fiber! Amy remembers two special textile mentors: her junior high school Home Economics teacher who taught her to pin, cut, sew and iron a garment made from a paper pattern and her professor, Margaret Kilbuck Johansen (1921-2004), who introduced her to both dyeing and the beauty of tapestry weaving.



Amy Axen
Baldishol Bandana

Dimensions:
22" x 22"

Material: Cotton
Techniques:

Woodblock printing, pochoir stencils

Katherine Buenger
Woodbury, Minnesota

Statement: I was inspired by the colors in the tapestry and the clusters of seven spots above the horse and rider.



Bio:

Katherine Buenger has a degree in studio art from Macalester College. She has been a member of the Weavers Guild of Minnesota since 2001 and enjoys many fiber related arts. Katherine always likes finding something different and fun to do with her work. Spinning the yellow pages, coffee filters, computer tape, and other non-traditional things and finding ways to weave, knit, and ply-split with them has been a fun challenge. She is not afraid to break the rules and try something new, and encourages others to do the same.

Katherine Buenger
Pleiades (Seven Sisters)

Dimensions:
19" x 8"

Materials:
Wool, cotton, and silk

Techniques:
Rya



Laurie Bushbaum
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Statement: As a sewist, quilter, and minister I was captivated by the image of the coat worn by the seed sower and the fact that the tapestry remnant was found in a church. The panels on this coat move from spring through winter. Sewn into the panels are the names of plants and seeds considered sacred and holy in various traditions, including lilies, sage, sweetgrass, lotus blossoms, mustard seeds, and pomegranates. Included also are the Bodhi Tree, the tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment, and Yggdrasil, an immense, mythical tree that plays a central role in Norse cosmology.

The quote on the sun is a portion of text from a Mary Oliver poem, "This World": "Whatever the subject, the sun glimmers it." On the upper spring panel the text "The wind, the bird flying away. The idea of God" is from a Mary Oliver

poem titled, "Where Does the Temple Begin, Where Does it End?"

Bio:

Laurie Bushbaum learned to sew when she was 10 and has been sewing ever since. It all began with making felt outfits for her troll dolls. Inheriting a box of unfinished quilt squares from her great-grandmother at age 13 was her introduction to quilting. She is a "woman of the cloth" in another way as well; she has been an ordained minister for 35 years. For her, needlework is a form of prayer and meditation. Putting together scraps into a new creation is a spiritual practice, using what is at hand and piecing together life's experiences into a whole. She has been juried into shows around the country and featured in art quilting publications. She lives in Minneapolis and will retire this summer so that she can spend the rest of her life playing with fabric and sharing that joy with others.

"My prayer is that we now plant a garden that rises both for the earth and for humanity. Before it is too late, the greening power of the earth, spoken of by 14th Century mystic Julian of Norwich must rise through our hands. Here in the city of Minneapolis and everywhere, old systems must die. Justice must rise and bloom for people of color. Only then will we all be free in paradise."

Laurie Bushbaum, June 2020

Laurie Bushbaum The Seed Sower's Coat: A Prayer that Justice Might Bloom from Our Hands

Dimensions:

52" x 36"

Materials:

Cotton fabrics

Techniques:

Straight seam piecing techniques,
machine appliqué and machine
quilting, hand quilting and hand
sewing



Shawn Cassiman Ironwood, Michigan

Statement: After much research, and in the spirit of fun, I wove a *skillbragd* coverlet that represents December. *Skillbragd* is a traditional Nordic technique in which supplemental threads in colorful geometric patterns are woven on a plain base of linen or cotton. *Skillbragd* coverlets were often used in connection with important life events such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals; my coverlet is for my daughter's wedding. The color palette incorporates the lovely blue of May as its primary color, with the red of April also represented. For added interest I included other colors from the Baldishol, such as yellow, orange and green, and a bit of purple for whimsy and a contemporary feel. The bleached cotton ground calls to mind the deep snow of winter. The coverlet is a reminder that even heroes (as the April man is described in some texts) enjoy the comforts of a warm blanket and vibrant colors during

the winter months. It also highlights the skills of women who are often missing in tales of glory. However, in my mind, there is not much more glorious than a beautiful piece of weaving.

Bio:

Shawn Cassiman was first drawn to weaving by an object: a fragment from an overshot coverlet. The pattern and complexity were mesmerizing. After learning about Scandinavian weaving traditions, she was drawn to double harness weaving, both *skillbragd* and drawloom weaving. She began weaving samples, wove larger pieces, and then an oversized coverlet in dramatic black-and-white for *FoldUnfold: An Exhibit of Contemporary Coverlets* in 2017. Shawn weaves in many techniques but keeps coming back to *skillbragd*, drawn by the bold patterns and colors of the Nordic tradition. It takes her about six months to weave and finish a coverlet, woven on her vintage Finnish Varpapuu loom.



Shawn Cassiman
Baldishol Coverlet

Dimensions:
85"x 80"
Materials:
Cotton warp, Faro wool yarn weft
Technique: *Skillbragd*

Laura Demuth
Decorah, Iowa

Statement: I was drawn to the image of the man sowing seeds as a way to represent the central activity of April. On our farm, April is very much about lambing, so I wished the coming of new lambs and the hope it always brings for a new growing season to be the focus of my piece. The man in the tapestry is framed by some kind of enclosure, so I chose the barn door as my framework. I included the lily-of-the-valley as an early spring flower, and what is a barn without a few swallows?

Bio:

Laura Demuth has been a wool-worker and weaver for over 40 years and enjoys all aspects of textile production, from raising the sheep to taking a finished piece off the loom. Because she lives on a small acreage just seven miles northeast of Decorah, Iowa, the Vesterheim National Norwegian-American Museum has been a continual source of education and inspiration throughout her weaving career. She is a sought-after teacher at Vesterheim Folk Art School and has won a gold medal in Vesterheim's annual National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition.

Laura Demuth
April in Iowa

Dimensions:

30" x 37"

Materials:

spelsau wool

Technique:

Doubleweave pick-up,
also known as Finnweave



Toni Easterson
Northfield, Minnesota

Statement: Though I am Swedish only on my mother's side, I have enjoyed Scandinavian tapestry since I was a college student at Gustavus Adolphus. Upon seeing the Norwegian tapestry I knew my piece had to include a woman, also on a horse, using the blue and yellow colors of my Swedish heritage. Most important to this piece is the use of other women's work and scraps of fabric from their lives, including bits and pieces of a wedding dress, handmade doilies and embroidery, tie-dyed fabric from the seventies, a table cloth. Even the rider's cheek is a rosebud cut from a hand embroidered handkerchief done decades ago. I am a regular repository of fabric given me by friends who are getting rid of their family linens, collars, doilies, etc. I greatly value old work hand-done by women who received little or no credit for their skills. In this current political climate I have also included the

embroidered words, "Jeg også," (Me Too) in 'quiet' embroidery. Lastly, I have become very environmentally aware of how I live my life and do my work. Everything in this piece, except for new green embroidery thread, is recycled, upcycled, or saved from the trash. My response to the Baldishol is a woman of Then, riding into the Now.

Bio:

Toni Easterson currently lives in Northfield, MN, having lived most of her life in South Glastonbury, Connecticut. She is a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus college and Wesleyan University. She trained as a graphic designer and worked for many years in advertising. After studying surface design at the University of Minnesota, her primary art interest has become fiber art. She has been the recipient of grants and awards and been a participant of many juried shows and exhibits. She is also a social and environmental activist.



Toni Easterson
Jeg Også (Me Too)

Dimensions:
27" x 27"

Materials:
Fabric, felt, thread and beads

Techniques:
Embroidery, quilting, stitching

Dawn Zero Erickson
Rochester, Minnesota

Statement: The Baldishol Tapestry, an historic Medieval Norwegian Tapestry, is brimming to overflowing with symbols, patterns, motifs and pictorial images. No doubt, this was a treasure of inspiration for a pattern textile designer/artist. For my piece, I silkscreen printed yardage with my interpretations of patterns and designs from the surviving April/ May panel of the tapestry—birds, borders, dots and dashes, hands, words and the tail of a horse. With this collection of printed fabric, I stitched and constructed my piece to capture the essence of the Baldishol Tapestry, all the while wondering about the missing ten months.

Bio:

An Honors Graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, Dawn is an independent artist/designer. Following her college graduation

Dawn moved to New York City where she worked as a Textile Designer. Later moving to Minnesota, Dawn continues to do fine art as well as textile designs for the home textile industry. Her fine art pieces have been exhibited extensively throughout the world and are in the permanent collections of the Kyoto Textile Museum in Japan, The Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Design in New York and The Art Institute of Chicago as well as numerous private and corporate collections. Her considerable foreign travel experiences (including Asia, Eastern Europe, India, Turkey, the Middle East, and former Soviet countries) are evident in her work.



Dawn Zero Erickson
Rambling Through
Fragments in Search
of the Lost Months

Dimensions:

104" x 50"

Material:

Cotton

Technique:

Silkscreen



Kala Exworthy Minneapolis, Minnesota

Statement: My piece is a women's embroidered, handwoven wool cowl. Women of this era had a certain strength and would have been included in the original Baldishol calendar. To illustrate the month of January, I've chosen to create a warm, natural wool cowl woven with the snowflakes of winter and embellished with the warmth of embroidery to indicate status and creativity in life. The woman who wears the cowl could be carrying a basket or a spear. Such is the complexity of women throughout time.

Bio:

In 1980, Kala Exworthy learned to weave at Skiringssal Folkehøyskole in Sandefjord, Norway. That year, the non-Scandinavian students were put into the weaving course. It was the best thing that could have happened. (Did you know that weaving has its own language?) She

came home with a new fascination that eventually led to a BFA in Fiber Art from Northern Michigan University. Kala now shares a weaving studio in the Northrup King Building of Northeast Minneapolis where inspiration covers the walls in the form of threads, books, dyes and samples. "Weaving, with its endless possibilities, fascinates me. It's like creating a tangible story with a purpose. The texture of the thread, the color it's next to, the direction it's laying, the light it's exposed to, all influence what we see." Creating purposeful textiles and teaching fulfill the passion that started those many years ago.

www.loomsong.com





Kala Exworthy
Snowflake Cape for the
Imagined Baldishol
Woman of January

Dimensions:
60" x 24" x 12"

Materials:
Wool, linen
Techniques
Handweaving, embroidery

Vladimira Fillion-Wackenreuther
Surrey, British Columbia

Statement: Designs for my tapestries emerge from the books I am reading, from the different subjects of the stories, and sometimes from themes of exhibitions I would like to enter. Some of my tapestries grow from color or color combinations which appeal to my desire to view the world through naive fantasy. I work with swatches of paper and photo collages. My drawing is an undeveloped idea and while weaving I eliminate, add and alter the tapestry as if it's talking to me. For the Baldishol, I found so many small details and beautiful color combinations. I was curious about the design of the clothing at the time the original tapestry was designed. I reinterpreted the original tunics and made them like paper clipping art. I used Norwegian *spelsau* yarn, mostly hand dyed. As the weaving progressed, I made adjustments in my primary design—sometimes for

technical reasons, sometimes for new ideas when the tapestry spoke to me differently.

Bio:

Vladimira Fillion-Wackenreuther lives in British Columbia, Canada, and has been creating through needlepoint, sewing, embroidery, quilting and patchwork for her entire life. Her grandmother was a professional dress maker, so she was exposed from the time she was a toddler to needles, fabrics and fashion. In 2008 she became interested in the fibre arts and learned to spin yarn and weave tapestry. She studied weaving, dyeing and design in the Textile Art Department at Capilano University, British Columbia. She is a member of the Canadian Tapestry Network, the American Tapestry Alliance, and Arts Council of Surrey, BC, Canada. Her work has been displayed at many exhibitions throughout Canada, United States and Australia.

vladimiratapestry.com



Vladimira Fillion-Wackenreuther
Dress Me Up

Dimensions:

24.5" x 16"

Materials:

Linen, wool

Technique:

Tapestry

Jonna Gjevre
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Statement: “An Eye on the Past” uses Norwegian stranded knitting techniques and 100% Navajo-Churro wool from northern New Mexico. Following the arrangement of birds in the Baldishol Tapestry, three sheep face forward, while a fourth sheep faces away. The horned sheep are adapted from traditional Icelandic *lopapeysa* designs. Natural dyes made from madder, indigo, chamisa, and cota (Navajo tea) provide the rustic yarns with soft, plant-based colors, echoing the historic dyes used in the tapestry. Rendered in groupings of seven, the colored dots surrounding the sheep give a nod to the tapestry’s background pattern, while also visually referencing Norwegian *lusekofte*. A collection of traditional *selbuvotter* patterns supplied me with a scrolling motif resembling the Baldishol Tapestry’s wave border, and research into Norwegian artist Gerhard Munthe’s tapestry designs provided additional color and

pattern inspiration.

Having grown up on a sheep farm in northern Minnesota, I’ve long had an interest in the societal significance of wool production and textile arts. In this piece, I’m using naturally dyed wool from Navajo-Churro sheep. Due to culturally imperialistic government interference between 1860 and 1930, this rare, desert-hardy breed was slaughtered in great numbers and nearly rendered extinct. Through the efforts of dedicated conservationists, these sheep—deeply significant to Native American communities—were saved.

Bio:

Jonna Gjevre grew up on a sheep farm in northern Minnesota, where she developed a lifelong passion for fiber arts. With a PhD from the University of Wisconsin, she has taught creative writing in Scotland and film studies in the United States. Author of the textile-themed novel *Arcanos Unraveled*, she currently writes and knits in New Mexico.

jonnagjevre.com



Jonna Gjevre
An Eye on the Past

Dimensions:
16" x 16" x 3"

Materials:
Churro wool

Technique:
Norwegian stranded knitting

Renee Holzkecht
Little Canada, Minnesota

Statement: My piece, inspired by the tapestry's linear sequence of months, depicts the cyclical sequence of human life in its natural stages—the day, the seasons of the year, the generation, the civilization—borrowing characters and motifs from the original.

Bio:

Renee Holzkecht is a Minnesota native and amateur embroiderer. She learned the craft from her grandmother, who learned it from her own grandmother, who was from the Setesdal valley in Norway.





Renee Holzknacht
Menn og Tider
(Men and Time)

Dimensions: 10" x 10"
Materials:
Cotton fabric, cotton thread
Techniques:
Simple, chain, satin,
French knot stitch embroidery

Robbie LaFleur
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Statement: The two figures in the Baldishol Tapestry represent April and May, and were likely part of a 12-month frieze. The imagery in my piece, woven in Frida Hansen-style wool transparency technique, includes design elements from the old tapestry, and a bird. Do you see the four birds in the original? My bird is a wood duck. Wood ducks are pretty, plus they migrate back to Minnesota in April (March, too). With the frame-like elements of the bottom border and columns, perhaps it is a medieval Minnesota duck stamp?



Bio:

Robbie LaFleur, from Minneapolis, Minnesota, has been following a thread of Scandinavian textiles since she studied weaving at Valdres Husflidsskole in Fagernes, Norway in 1977. She continued her study with Scandinavian instructors at workshops in Norway and the U.S. She was awarded the Gold Medal in Weaving from Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in 2006. In 2019 she traveled to Norway on a fellowship from the American-Scandinavian Foundation to study the wool transparency tapestry technique of the noted Norwegian artist Frida Hansen. Robbie coordinates the Weavers Guild of Minnesota Scandinavian Weavers Study Group and publishes the quarterly *Norwegian Textile Letter* (norwegiantextileletter.com).

robbielafleur.com

Robbie LaFleur
Baldishol
Duck Stamp

Dimensions:
33" x 21.5"

Material:
Wool

Technique:
Transparent tapestry



Deborah Lawson
Hagerstown, Maryland

Statement: I was inspired by April Man's tunic to develop a structure with a similar appearance and feel but using modern techniques. The design of the tunic is simple in order to display the details of the woven fabric and trim. I expanded on the original blue and white patterning but extended the color range to give a greater depth to the finished fabric. The sheen of silk combined with subtle metallic elements provides a contemporary extension to the ancient techniques. The designs on the tablet-woven bands reflect the original wave border which seems quite modern-looking despite the age of the original tapestry.

Bio:

Deb Lawson is a fiber artist specializing in wearable art whose work has been shown locally, in regional events, and nationally at Convergence conventions. She

utilizes numerous fiber skills to create her pieces, and most feature more than one technique, including weaving (both on- and off-loom), dyeing, spinning, knitting, embroidery, etc. She especially enjoys the technical aspect of fabric creation and frequently programs her own designs for weaving and computerized embroidery. Recently, she has branched out into workshop teaching, especially in parallel weave structures such as the one used for the tunic in this exhibition. She lives with a fiber-tolerant husband and two cats. In a previous life, she was a managing public defender in a multi-county jurisdiction.





**Deborah Lawson
Dancing Under a
Blue April Sky**

Dimensions:
72" x 24" x 6"

Materials:
Silk with additional metallic threads

Techniques:
Handweaving (Echo-4 structure woven on
24 harness loom), tablet weaving

Mary Logue
Golden Valley, Minnesota

Statement: I was inspired by the birds in the April panel of the Baldishol, as April marks the return of migrating birds to our Northern landscape. Also, April is the month of my birth, so it seemed natural to focus on this section. I have done a number of tree of life images and feel a real affinity to them, so I included one in my design. The egg-shaped dots mimic the spots on the Baldishol horse's back and the pattern in the background of the tapestry. Inspired by the vibrant colors of the original tapestry, I dyed all my wool with natural dyes: madder for the red, indigo for the blue, false indigo for the green and goldenrod for the yellow.

Bio:

Mary Logue grew up sewing and embroidering, but found her true textile passion in rug hooking, more than 25 years ago. Most of her rugs

are influenced by nature—the patterns and landscapes, the flora and fauna. Her rugs have been exhibited in the Minnesota State Fair Fine Arts show, in addition to many other galleries and museums. She has had three one-woman shows and her rugs have been featured in several books. In 2017 she did a month-long residency at the *Textilsetur* (Icelandic Textile Center), resulting in a show of her work. Mary currently teaches rug hooking at the Textile Center of Minnesota and North House Folk School.

marylogue.com



Mary Logue
In April
Come Birds

Dimensions:
48" x 24" x 1"

Materials:
Hand-dyed fabric
Technique:
Rug hooking



Sharon Moe Marquardt Henning, Minnesota

Statement: I added another month, January, including a contemporary scene of a woman shoveling a sidewalk. It commemorates a memorable 2020 blizzard. The piece is a creative exercise, using a traditional Voss *rya* technique to create a tapestry-like image. The border is done in another pile technique. The *varafeldur* edges used unspun locks of Lincoln sheep.

Bio:

Sharon Moe Marquardt started weaving in the 1980s. She became proficient on the rigid heddle loom and taught beginning through advanced levels at the Weaving Works store in Seattle and University of Washington experimental college. In the 1990s she returned to her home state of Minnesota. She became acquainted with Syvilla Tweed Bolson at a Federation of Minnesota Weavers gathering and arranged to meet

with Syvilla in Decorah, Iowa, for her first lessons in Scandinavian weaving. Classes at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah continue to enchant this weaver. Sharon has also studied and observed weaving in Norway and Sweden. She is a member of the Scandinavian Weavers Study Group at the Weavers Guild of Minnesota and the Duluth Fiber Handcrafters Guild.



*Sharon Moe
Marquardt
Birthday
Blizzard*

Dimensions:
24" x 18"

Materials:
Wool warp and weft

Techniques:
Handweaving (2/2/ twill
with rya knots



Lindsey Marshall
Shropshire, England

Statement: My concept derives from the letterforms and the shapes formed by the heads of the figures in the tapestry. The wings at each end reference the birds and also provide end stops to the banner. The idea of the banner came from the information that the original piece may have been a long frieze showing the seasons. In my textile work, I am interested in conveying meaning by the use of abstracted letterform shapes, colour and surface texture. My work merges two disciplines, visual communication and textiles—the influence of my background in typography being evident in the work where words are embedded in the design. Although lettering is an underpinning, fundamental element in most of the work, it is not necessarily intended to be legible or obvious. My work also combines woven tapestry with

other textile techniques such as knotting, wrapping and binding which are often used to intensify the outline or meaning of the work.

Bio:

Lindsey Marshall studied at Liverpool College of Art, followed by a PhD at Lancaster University. After a career in visual communications and research, she began concentrating on textile work nine years ago. Her experience in typography, together with a growing interest in calligraphy, has influenced her textile design which is now her primary area of practice. She has exhibited work internationally, including juried exhibitions in the UK, Ukraine, China, Europe, Russia, Australia, Canada and the USA.

lindseymarshalldesign.com

www.thebritishtapestrygroup.co.uk/artist/lindsey/



Lindsey Marshall
Baldishol Banner

Dimensions:

19" x 4"

Materials:

Cotton, wool, linen

Techniques:

Tapestry weaving with knotted ends

Claire Caughey Most Stillwater, Minnesota

Statement: When looking at the Baldishol tapestry, I love the bold use of color and decorative elements throughout the piece. I am especially drawn to the non-realistic colors used, such as the green beard of the man in April and the red horse with green mane in May. In that light, I wove a tapestry of a horse using elements from the Baldishol but in a more contemporary minimalist manner. The horse has a green mane, the background pattern is reminiscent of the man's coat in April or chain mail in May, and the borders include dots. In a nod to the use of overlapping in pictorial space of the original work, the horse's legs overlap the bottom border.

Bio:

Claire Caughey Most creates contemporary textiles using the dye pot and the slow and ancient

process of hand weaving. She discovered weaving in the early 1990s and since that time has primarily focused on weaving tapestries and rugs. Claire explains, "I love the bold visual language of weft-face weaves and the tactile pleasure of creating art with my hands."

Primarily a self-taught weaver, she has supplemented her knowledge at workshops with professional weavers throughout the country. In addition, she holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in science. Her science training honed her ability to observe; sometimes her observations are visual, as in patterns and color combinations, but other times they are about our world and the human condition. She asks, "Why does that happen?" or "What would happen if...?" Her time at the loom and dye pot translate to color, texture, and image as she explores those observations and the questions they elicit.

*Claire
Caughey
Most
Modern
Baldishol
Horse*

Dimensions:
23.5" x 18"

Materials: Cotton warp,
hand-dyed wool weft

Technique:
Tapestry



Jan Mostrom
Chanhassen, Minnesota

Statement: Taking my inspiration from the background of the May section of the Baldishol Tapestry, I wove a wool rug with wider stripes of various shades of indigo with spots or diamonds of red, gold and natural white. The borders are triangles of black and white, which is another element seen in the Baldishol. I used natural dyes for my wool weft, including indigo, madder, and birch leaves.



Bio:

Jan Mostrom's life-long love of weaving, especially Scandinavian techniques, began with a course at Luther College from Lila Nelson. She bought a loom right after graduation and began her exploration, mostly self-taught, but guided by generous mentors such as Lila Nelson and Syvilla Bolson. She built her skills and knowledge in a variety of weaving techniques through classes from Norwegian instructors at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum and in Norway during several textile tours. She has been a member of the Scandinavian Weavers Study Group for over 25 years; led an international study group on *Danskbrogd*; written articles for the *Norwegian Textile Newsletter*; taught weaving classes at the Weavers Guild of Minnesota and Vesterheim's Folk Art School; and taught and spoke at weaving conferences, including the first Norwegian Textile Conference at Vesterheim.

Jan Mostrom
Indigo Sky

Dimensions:

45" x 28"

Materials:

Linen warp,
naturally dyed wool weft

Technique:

Tapestry



Sara Okern
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Statement: The arch has been employed by visual artists throughout history to highlight the importance of a subject. In the Baldishol tapestry, arches are used to frame the subjects of April and May and the common activities associated with those months in the year. "An Arch, a Moment" is an invitation to frame your present moment and reflect on the current state of society. Every moment is worth reflection but even more so in the times of chaos and change we find ourselves in this year of 2020.

Bio:

Sara Okern works out of her home studio in Minnetonka surrounded by ever-multiplying bags of reclaimed material sourced from the Twin Cities' cut and sew industry. She has been weaving rag rugs from designer quilt scrap fabric since 2016 and has been recently challenged by an expanding network of new material sources to explore other textile techniques.

andasmer.com





Sara Okern
An Arch, A Moment

Dimensions:
84" x 84" x 24"

Materials:

PVC pipe, swimsuit fabric scraps

Techniques:

Fabric wrapping and knotting

Becka Rahn
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Statement: "*Pica pica*", is the genus and species name of the magpie. Magpies are often the unwitting target of the cuckoo, a bird who lays its eggs in another bird's nest. My planned design took a detour when the COVID-virus sent the world into quarantine. I couldn't work in the studio I had intended to, some materials were unavailable, and I was stuck in my "nest" with a proverbial cuckoo's egg; artwork that was going to need to be totally different than what I thought it would be. Inspired by elements and colors from the Baldishol Tapestry, I created this design from cut paper illustrations, from paper pulled from my stash. I wanted to echo some of the woven textures and shapes from the tapestry that inspired the design, so I hand-carved stamps to create subtle textures on the paper. I scanned the paper art and digitally assembled it into a repeating pattern which was then printed on to velvet fabric.

Bio:

Becka Rahn is a digital fabric designer, specializing in complex textured designs from cut paper illustrations using recycled papers and engineered photographic prints. She is the co-author of *The Spoonflower Handbook*, a how-to guide to designing your own fabrics. She has received grants from Jerome Foundation and the MN State Arts Board and was recognized with an emerging artist award by *Fiber Art Now* magazine in 2018. Becka has taught workshops and seminars at national conferences and schools including Surface Design Association, Handweavers Guild of America, and Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts. She has served on the international Etsy Sellers Advisory Board, and on the boards of the Weavers Guild of MN and Hennepin History Museum. She is an active teaching artist in her community, working with local museums, art centers and schools. Becka lives in Minneapolis. She spends a lot of time thinking about pixels. www.beckarahn.com



Becka Rahn
Pica Pica

Dimensions: various
Objects:
Upholstered bench, throw pillow and original framed art
Materials:
Digitally printed polyester velvet, wool/nylon fringe
Techniques:
Cut paper illustration, digital design and fabric printing

Sally Reckert
Richmond, England

Statement: My weaving is inspired by the Norwegian 12th century Baldishol tapestry. The Norsemen were a force for good here in the Northern Dales; bringing their sheep with them in their longboats the men came to find land to farm. The small fragment showing two spring months is all that's left of the Baldishol tapestry, whereas the influence of the Norsemen in upland farming still remains in place-names, ways of sheep management, land tenancy arrangements and inheritance. Non-conformism developed out of their resilience and support for everyone in the community. I have personalised motifs from the Baldishol tapestry by depicting my grandchildren and their generation marching towards a future that is unknown to all of us.

Bio:

Sally Reckert is an avid tapestry weaver who lives in Richmond, Yorkshire, England. She is also the editor of the British Tapestry Group's journal, *Tapestry Weaver*.





Sally Reckert
Children March into
an Unknown Future

Dimensions:
30" x 39"

Materials:
Linen warp, naturally dyed wool weft, including
Scandinavian rare breed (Swedish *güte*, hefted
Swaledale, Norwegian *spelsau*)

Technique:
Norwegian tapestry

Amy Ropple
Reading, Massachusetts

Statement: I am inspired by the imagery and style of medieval textile art. For this work, I focused on the similarity between current and past pandemics using decorative elements, quotes, and imagery directly from the Baldishol tapestry.



Bio:

Amy Ropple is a textile artist who combines her love of fabric art techniques with a serious bead addiction to create unique, highly embellished, expressive works of art. She holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Studio Art Education from Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. Her quilted work has been exhibited in local, national, and international exhibits, including "On the Surface" at the New England Quilt Museum in Lowell, Mass, as well as in *Quilting Arts Magazine* and *Quilters' Newsletter Magazine*. Based in Reading, Massachusetts, she teaches visual and textile art to middle schoolers and adults and explores drawing, painting, collage, hand stitching, mixed media, and digital embroidery as part of living the creative life.

amyropple.com

Stitched by the April man face, "They should wash their hands."

Amy Ropple
April Pandemic,
2020

Dimensions:
32" x 18"

Materials:
Digitally printed cotton, silk,
and other fibers. Surface
embellishment includes
couched silk fiber, cotton
stitching, and glass, crystal
and stone beads

Techniques:
Mixed media collage



Kelsey Skodje Rochester, Minnesota

Statement: The first thing that impressed me about the Baldishol tapestry was how fun and surprisingly modern it looks. I was also struck by the story of the reproduction of the Baldishol Tapestry that was presented to President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge by a group of 5,000 Norwegian-American women who felt that women and their accomplishments were underrepresented during the Norse-American Centennial in 1925. This was nicely illustrated by the Viking women sailing to the White House on the accompanying book cover. Also, the fact that there were female warriors and political/spiritual leaders in ancient Scandinavia—not to mention female spinners, weavers, farmers, healers, accountants, shopkeepers, etc.—lines up nicely with their modern gender equality. I think my Norwegian ancestors would agree that we could use more women, Viking or not, “sailing” to the White House! My concept was to embroider a version of the tapestry fragment that replaces the man on the horse with the women in the boat from the book cover. I used

silk embroidery floss on linen fabric to create an intensity of color and pattern inspired by more modern tastes. The signature was embroidered using floss I spun with a medieval drop spindle and then dyed (as a tribute to techniques available in Medieval Norway).

Bio:

Kelsey Skodje works as a patent agent in Rochester, Minnesota. Her work in fiber and embroidery developed recently, but is a natural outgrowth of growing up with a mother who was both a weaver and professional sewer. A great compliment came from her mother, who once looked over her shoulder while she was embroidering and said, “Maybe it’s genetic?” Her family fiber roots are deep; Kelsey’s grandmother said that *her* mother would have been impressed by Kelsey’s solid filling stitches. Kelsey’s interest in Norwegian art comes from her father, who sculpted models for Leif Erikson and Rollo statuettes. To Kelsey, it felt like destiny to commemorate medieval Norwegian art.



Kelsey Skodje
Stories from the Future

Dimensions:
15" x 9"

Materials:
Linen ground fabric, silk embroidery floss

Techniques:
Hand embroidery, hand spinning with medieval-style drop spindle

Sally Starz
Morgan Hill, California

Statement: When I began to think of how I might interpret the Baldishol Tapestry into my quilting, I studied images found on the Internet, looking for motifs and colors. The simple but sophisticated color scheme is seen in many early weavings and textiles and was my main inspiration. Red, yellow, blue and green are an almost universal commonality and speak to a wide audience. And it was not lost on me that, as a preschool teacher, they are my favorite colors! I noticed the simple background with almost a four square pattern that reminded me of the knitting patterns found across Scandinavia and so I

developed a plan: Honor the wave pattern on the border, integrating the spiral in the red, yellow and blue bands and in the quilting itself while using two classic designs (the Ohio Star and Square in a Square) to celebrate the patterns.

Bio:

Sally Starz is a third generation quilter who has been working on her craft for 43 years. She is proud to continue the handiwork tradition of the women of her family, who sewed, knitted, and embroidered. Sally is part of the modern art quilting movement, which her piece in the show celebrates with its bold colors, negative space and simple patterns.





Sally Starz
Modern Baldishol

Dimensions: 48" x 46"
Materials: Cotton fabric
Technique: Quilting

Lisa Torvik
St. Paul, Minnesota

Statement: The overall composition of the Baldishol tapestry inspired me to create two more panels with biographical themes. The general framework around the months of February and March functions as "display windows" full of symbolic and historic touch points in the lives of my husband Neil and me.

Bio:

Lisa Torvik grew up in Decorah, Iowa, surrounded by Norwegian-American culture. Her mother taught her to knit and weave. She continued her weaving exploration with Lila Nelson, who was the Textile Curator at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. In 1970 she traveled to Valdres, Norway, with the Valdres-Decorah Samband Exchange and met people with ties to the local folk museum and handcraft school. In 1974 she returned to Valdres to attend two sessions of weaving classes, and to

work at the Valdres Folkemuseum. During her working career back in Minnesota there was only occasional time to weave, though knitting remained a constant companion. The sale of her business gave her more time to weave, including the linen transparency depicting her and her husband in the Baldishol exhibit. Lisa explained, "This project is sort of a grand portrait, incorporating techniques I know into a personal expression."





Lisa Torvik
Our Calendar

Dimensions: 38.5" x 85"

Materials: Linen warp and weft with wool,
cotton, and metallic thread, beads

Technique: Open linen plain weave with inlay
and tapestry, embroidery, and appliqué

Credits:

Introductory text: Robbie LaFleur
Photography:
Max Stevenson and Robbie LaFleur
Cover Baldishol Tapestry Photo:
Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo, Norway

For more information about the
Baldishol Tapestry and the Norway
House exhibit and the artists, visit
the *Norwegian Textile Letter*.
norwegiantextileletter.com.



