

I still marvel at the Macramé Vest, included here, which I created in 1972. I was all of 17 years old. Macramé was of course, the textile technique of the times, and along with a copper enameled disc, made in art class in high school, I was able to take a bunch of yarn, using half hitches and square knots and create a shaped dimensional piece which became a vest. Dimensional clothing was a language I spoke and moved into effortlessly.

In college, studying fine arts with a crafts concentration, I found the textile studio, and that was a perfect fit for me. I wove my *First and Only Bog Jacket*, in my junior year, proud of myself for creating cloth on the loom that fit the intended shape of the final garment. The garment was not well received as a final project in that it was functional, and that was not the focus of a fine arts degree in academia. At least not in the 1970's.

In my senior year of college, I interned as a rug weaver at *Einstein Moomjy, The Carpet Department Store* at their flagship store in Paramus, NJ. I wove a series of five rug/wall pieces, using pile and tapestry techniques on a large floor loom provided by the college. The first four were sold, one of the tapestries sold while the piece was still on the loom. The last one, shown here in the exhibition, hung in the vice president's office. I knew from that experience, among other things, that I would not be pursuing custom rugs or tapestries, or two-dimensional works, which in textiles did not appeal to me the way clothing did. Clothing had dimension, front and back, inside and outside. So, I purchased back the last tapestry, knowing I wouldn't be making another one.

I should mention my beloved mother-in-law here. I spent another internship with a weaver/spinner/bobbin lacemaker, living in Vermont, where I learned to spin yarn and make bobbin lace. I was already a weaver. This jacket, created in 1979 was entirely handspun weft. It was created the year after I married her son.

After graduating from college, I struggled to find my niche, and I went back to college, just for inspiration. Academia can force you to explore techniques and mediums previously unknown and can give you tight parameters and deadlines to light that fire. I did an independent study on a Theo Moorman technique of inlay, which was a much faster way of creating imagery on the surface of a

textile but was still largely a two-dimensional technique. The image or content becomes the main focus, and the piece is only as strong as that image.

There were a few of the inlaid tapestries from those years circa 1980-1 still in my archives. They are shown here. I did have success selling some of the pieces, but I wasn't happy creatively.

I began to sell my work and created goods, and eventually garments that could be sold in craft markets throughout the northeast. I had a lot to learn about running a business, but there were opportunities out there to earn a living and I just had to weave fast enough to be able to develop a line of goods that satisfied my creative self, and that the public would want. Garments made the most sense. Over the next ten years, I wove 30 yards of fabric at a time, usually 3-4 times a week, and cut many many garments from that yardage. Each new year brought new color palettes and new and updated silhouettes. Shown here in the exhibit are two complete ensembles, one from 1983 and one from 1985, given back to me some 30-40 years later when the client no longer fit into the garment.

I used to have a saying taped to my studio door, "Say yes, then worry". In the early years it was important as I struggled to find my creative voice, to try everything, say yes to every opportunity, because I had no idea what path I would find myself traveling. Saying yes to a request for an article for Handwoven Magazine, back in 2000 was the beginning of a long career in writing, more than 100 articles later and looking back over this long and colorful career, I can honestly say I have not a single regret.

-Daryl Lancaster