

4 Weavers

Petaluma is located an hour north of San Francisco. Its railroad station, no longer in service, has been converted into an exhibition space by the local art association. This is where the exhibition **4 WEAVERS – Contemporary Expression of an Ancient Craft.**

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR for the weavers is Candace Crockett who taught textiles for many years at San Francisco State University. Shapiro, Russack and de Larios were all at one time her students and have kept in contact with Crockett by forming a critique group together with a few more friends. When the group meets twice a year the newest work is shown, the latest news is related and advice is freely given to those who want it.

CROCKETT SELECTED the other three weavers from this group and together with Kathleen Hanna, a freelance curator, approached the Petaluma Art Center with the concept of an exhibit of contemporary hand-woven art.

Although all four started out doing home textiles and clothing, as they matured, each has followed a divergent personal path. Crockett has concentrated on card weaving and has published a book "Card weaving" on the subject. Russack weaves pick-up double-weave where the two layers have different materials and density.

De Larios creates both two and three-dimensional weavings that are suspended in space, and Shapiro weaves cloth that undergoes further manipulations and dyeing in her specialty, indigo. Her work in this show also consists of vessels woven in basketry techniques.

THE PETALUMA ART CENTER has three different areas for exhibitions. The entry contains semi-circular walls where small niches show many of Shapiro's cane vessels. In an area to the left is a display



Suki Russack, Candace Crockett, Barbara Shapiro, Ulla de Larios.

of hand woven clothing by Crockett, de Larios and Russack.

THE MAIN PART of the exhibition is housed in what was the railroad station's storage hall. The first work to meet you is Transparency? by de Larios. It consists of five columns woven with very fine silk warp and weft with wool weft added towards the bottom. The columns were washed in the washing machine where the wool felted giving them their form. "Transparency in government" was the impetus for the work. Started in 2008 as the government in the US changed, de Larios draws parallels between how the two fibers react to identical treatments and how different administrations affect the country. The five pieces are named The Last Eight, Malfeasance, Hope, Par for the Course and The Next Eight? It is up to the audience to

identify which one is which depending on political preference.

ON A WALL to the left hangs a dramatic installation of Suki Russack's panels called Woven from Memory. Hanna chose to hang the seven panels close together, at different heights and distances from the wall. This enhances the impression of the work as a documentation of an internal journey of discovery. All of the images of women Russack creates come directly from her dreams. Her exploration of the feminine form has served as a vehicle for her own spiritual growth. Using a complex interplay of color and density in two different layers, she seeks to capture how feelings and experience shape the body and the psyche that it contains. Her work speaks very personally yet universally of life experience.



*Contemporary Expression of an Ancient Craft
A Textile Exhibit in Petaluma, California.*



bildtexter beroende på bilder



" Through textiles I bring balance and perspective to my life. In particular, the discipline and labor-intensive activity of weaving are both a joy and an anchor for me"

CANDACE CROCKETT



BARBARA SHAPIRO'S vessels made from raffia dyed in indigo come next. One of three installations of baskets in various techniques, they are examples of Shapiro's ten year focus on basketry. From the simple early explorations of form and color, her work has evolved to the tactile expression of universal themes of companionship and grief. In one installation of seven cane baskets, four are further wrapped in indigo dyed cloth serving as a metaphor for holding on to memories. The study of historic textile traditions has informed her artistic approach, especially her research into the widespread story of indigo. During the process she has developed a "greener" more ecological way to dye with indigo and has taught it widely.

OPPOSITE THESE VESSELS hangs the first of Candace Crockett's five luminous, large-scale tablet-woven works that are built incrementally of multiple narrow bands dyed, woven and manipulated to create dimensional surfaces that absorb and reflect light. In some of them the warp remains un-woven except for small squares sprinkled over the surface.

The gradations of colors speak of nature and the compilation of many small parts into one whole: of the many parts of daily life that each has to be attended to. She says that, "through textiles I bring balance and perspective to my life. In particular, the discipline and labor-intensive activity

of weaving are both a joy and an anchor for me."

IN HER INSTALLATION of the gallery, Hanna has successfully mixed the work from the four artists as well as creating a focus for each. For example in the blending of Shapiro and de Larios' works, the lovely blue of indigo is the connection. Shapiro's work Testing Testing, is a new installation of coiled disks wrapped with the saved test strips from 25 years of indigo dying.

These recycled bits of cloth spiral into a statement about the nature of artistic creation and the repurposing of valuable materials. In a series of woven works called Indigo Landscapes she explores the liminal space of controlled seepage of indigo with a nod to environmental concerns.

AN INSTALLATION of six of Ulla de Larios' Crossings series hangs nearby. Although different they all deal with her status as an immigrant from Sweden and with the feelings that are inherent to anyone who has crossed a border and ended up in a third space, the in-between. Of the six two are small, woven of handspun linen, two are tall three-dimensional, winged, and made of silk and two are double ikat indigo dyed panels. All contains a small walking human woven into the cloth symbolizing the movement of people around the world.

ACROSS THE ROOM hangs several of Candace Crockett's Dress Series. The inspiration for the "dresses" came from a kimono and a Native American buckskin dress that hung in her studio. They are two-sided, non-wearable and hang suspended in space, embodying a human presence that is now enlarged and abstracted.

FOR ALL OF US INSPIRATION builds on inspiration, creativity on creativity. Our friendships have nurtured our artistic growth. We go to our studios and we work, laying thread upon thread, building our textiles in slow incremental steps as we discover our individual voices. Sharing our progress with each other has enriched us all. We are delighted to be able to share our work with the readers of Vävmagasinet.

1/ Barbara Shapiro, Mali II, korgflätning med indigofärgad bast.

2/ Suki Russak, detalj av Interlude, plockad dubbelväv.

3/ Candace Crockett, Ghost Dress, 1991, 122x127 cm. Lin/bomull.

4/ Ulla de Larios, detalj av Crossings, lin med dubbelikat.

5/ Candace Crockett, Awaken, 2010 ca 168 x 135 cm. Brickvävd; lin, ull, silke och bomull.

ovan/En av Barbara Shapiro's, Testing Testing, gjorda av provlappar samlade under de 25 år hon tog hand om skolans indigobad.