

Kathe Todd-Hooker

Very simply, I weave flat woven, traditional style tapestry, mostly stylized pictorials with collage-style images. I tell stories and narratives of the past and present, and sometimes the hopes for the future. Some of the narratives are beautiful, some are not. Without an understanding of our histories, trite as it sounds in this day and time, we may be doomed to relive the past.

My stories are amalgams of many events and happenings- some happy, some sad, some annoying. The pictorial nature of tapestry allows me to use relics of the past- symbols, materials, words, history- within my tapestry narratives. By using reclaimed elements such as sewing thread, wool, and embroidery floss, I weave into each tapestry a feeling of continuity between generations, completing another person's life, and hopefully fulfilling my artistic life and abilities...a world of ideas and lives I wish to give to my family, friends and yes, strangers.

My medium is small format, small scale tapestry weaving, one of the oldest (almost) universal arts, and something that was seldom allowed in exhibits because of its size. These small tapestries function in a world where large is often considered more artistic and forgetting that preciousness has nothing to do with size. My generation of tapestry weavers changed all that. I want to weave and tell the stories of those who made it possible and are often overlooked because the work is a textile.

I have developed a style of weaving that works for me and for others to tell our stories. Many of these weavers are unrecognized and undervalued because of race, gender, age, or lack the economic ability to create art full time. As my work has become stronger, more skilled, and more visual, I am able to pass these skills and ideas on to others. I wish to continue this growth.

A well-known fiber arts writer, Charles Talley, once said that tapestry is subversive. We weave it for the now, but it can last 1,000 years and has lasted for thousands of years into the future, bringing with it innovative ideas of technique, design, and meaning.

Bio

Kathe Todd-Hooker is an award-winning tapestry weaver and instructor, dreamer, writer, tapestry list mistress, sometimes historian, journaler, and writer of design, color, journaling, symbolism, Russian Old Believers, and tapestry techniques. She is a native of the Pacific NW and an ardent student of myth and symbolism that often seeps into her tapestry imagery. She has studied Gobelin, Swedish, Navajo, British, Coptic, Middle Eastern, and Kesa techniques, which she synthesizes to solve technical and design problems in her work. Todd-Hooker holds BA's in Craft Design from Oregon School of Art and Craft and Oregon State University in Craft Design. She teaches internationally and has private students that come to her studio, Between & Etc. in Albany, Oregon, where she also publishes and writes books on tapestry and sells supplies.

betweenandetc.com