

Bhakti Ziek

The process of weaving takes hundreds of individual threads and combines them into a cohesive plane. It is the perfect metaphor for how we build our lives from multiple identities and interests into a singular personality. Weaving doesn't always yield narratives, but in my work, the resulting combination of images and words reveal a propensity towards storytelling. Rooted in the physical making of my work, I honor the skill that has developed in my hands from years of weaving; and I listen for the insights that arise from my hands to my head, and vice versa.

Buddhist literature talks about the constant chatter of jumping thoughts as "monkey mind." For many years, I have tried to map my mental activities in a series of woven digital collages. Just as thoughts loop, certain imagery is found again and again- my handwritten calculations for converting images into physical threads, repetitive counting, diagrams, and glimpses of nature are some of the phenomena that fill my head and these canvases.

The nature of weaving itself is also a constant theme in my work. And since I consider all work as studies, just one step on the path from here to there- and who knows where there is going to end up being- my weavings often involve notations about how they are made, diagrams of weave drafts, and recordings of their materials.

It all adds up to a holistic life, with weaving as the thread that has held it all together for more than fifty years. One has to fill the minutes, hours, days, and years that are given to you, and I have chosen the activity of weaving. Perhaps weaving chose me. In any case, I see my life as the latest iteration in the long line of weavers that stretch beyond recorded history.

Bio

Bhakti Ziek is an advocate for weaving in all its forms, as exemplified by her teaching in the industrial textile program at Philadelphia College of Textiles & Science (tenured) while exhibiting her weavings as an art form. She is an expert in the technology of weaving and the two books she has co-authored, *Weaving on a Backstrap Loom* and *The Woven Pixel: Designing for Jacquard and Dobby Looms Using Photoshop*, are bookends on the long history of weaving.

Numerous collections hold her work, including Whitman College at Princeton University, NJ; the Museum of Arts and Design, NYC; the Spencer Museum, Lawrence, KS; and the USA Embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania. She has exhibited in the United States and abroad, including the Rijswijk Textile Biennial, Netherlands; the New England Biennial, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum; the Morris Gallery, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; and the USA Embassy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Ziek taught fulltime at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Arizona State University, Tempe, and has led summer courses at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has also been proud to mentor students at important non-traditional facilities, such as Penland, Haystack, and Arrowmont. Many of her students have gone on to run programs on their own merits.

Ziek has a M.F.A. from Cranbrook Academy of Arts, a B.F.A. from the University of Kansas, and a B.A. from SUNY at Stony Brook, NY. She resides in Santa Fe, NM where she continues to explore weaving and art, as well as teach private students.

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