

American Tapestry Alliance

ANNUAL REPORT 2005 /2006

American Tapestry Alliance continues to grow. Our membership has expanded not only in the number of artists we serve, but also in the countries these artists represent. ATA's services to its members have become more diversified and our programming has increased the visibility of tapestry outside our own community. ATA's success stems from a strong and committed Board of Directors and a talented group of volunteers, whose continued involvement and support validate the direction of the organization.

Membership

Ellen Ramsey has fostered a steady increase in ATA membership. We now have more than 425 members, with over 25% renewing at Studio Circle level or above. Our current annual fees are \$25 for Students, \$35 for General Membership, \$55 for Studio Circle, \$125 for Curator Circle and \$250 for Collector Circle. The goal for the coming year is to expand to 500 members. Linda Wallace, our Canadian Board member, will concentrate on increasing ATA membership in Canada. Increasing our funding base through membership is key to the continued success of ATA and we hope all members will promote our organization whenever possible.

Treasurer

Barb Richards is our new treasurer, replacing Amy Kropitz. American Tapestry Alliance has a positive balance sheet and healthy savings. See the Annual Budget for more information.

Newsletter

Linda Rees, editor of *Tapestry Topics*, continues to produce an informative quarterly newsletter. Her use of themed issues has helped unify the newsletter and her inclusion of articles from many writers has added to the diversity of voices. Linda also takes advantage of guest editors, who provide different approaches and fresh ideas. An excerpt from each article in

Tapestry Topics is posted on the ATA website and accompanied by color images. This is a satisfactory solution to offering color imagery. The paper quality of *Tapestry Topics* has been upgraded. Ellen Ramsey handles distribution and has set up bulk mailing for favourable postage rates. In 2007, a special Anniversary Issue of *Tapestry Topics* will celebrate our 25th year.

Website

The ATA website has grown enormously as a rich and diverse resource. It is visited over 2300 times per day. Our Web Exhibition program was initiated with 'FindingHome@tapestry.au/ca,' curated by Linda Wallace and Dorothy Clews. The show featured an exchange of woven postcards between Canadian and Australian artists.

As the new Web Exhibition Coordinator, David Johnson has developed guidelines for web exhibitions and will solicit curators to mount three virtual shows a year. Under this program, Sharon Marcus curated the first exhibition, 'Between Two Worlds.' It highlights the work of artists Sara Lindsay and Valerie Kirk, both from Australia.

The ATA Study Groups, sponsored by the Education Committee, are another successful web program. Four different Study Groups have offered small groups of ATA members an opportunity to focus on a specific topic of research. This program has been very popular and new Study Groups are being planned.

Artist Pages, a benefit of Studio Circle and higher memberships, offer artists a chance to exhibit their work on the ATA website. Higher-level members should be encouraged to take advantage of this benefit.

Christine Laffer, ATA web mistress, added a website portal, ATA Core, to our virtual resources. It offers a virtual filing cabinet with controlled access for key volunteers. By downloading policy documents, guidelines, letter formats and promotional materials to the ATA Core, future volunteers will be saved from reinventing the wheel.

Education

Priscilla Lynch continues to manage the Distance Learning program, formerly known as the Mentoring Program. This year, two mentoring “couples” have worked together under this program.

Mary Lane organized two educational programs for 2006. *The Way In*, a two-day educational retreat following Convergence 2006, will offer participants an opportunity to study tapestry design with Sharon Marcus, Susan Iverson and Jane Kidd. *Exhibitions A to Z*, held in conjunction with Convergence, will present three speakers – Jon Eric Riis, Brett Colley and Dan de Graaf, each addressing different issues surrounding exhibiting.

As part of ATA’s activities at Convergence 2006, David Johnson organized a no host dinner for tapestry weavers. Overseas artists who travel to attend the opening of the Biennial will be especially welcomed at this event.

Exhibitions

ATB5 completed its run at the Rochester Art Center, Rochester, Minnesota, in 2005. Although some of the tapestries lost their paperwork while travelling, Christine Laffer capably returned all the tapestries with the necessary customs and travel documentation.

ATB6 attracted 209 entries from 99 artists. Dr Lotus Stack and artist Shelly Goldsmith juried the exhibition. They selected 43 pieces from 38 artists. Five of the accepted entries were from Canada or Mexico and ten tapestries were from overseas. The rest were from the United States. ATB6 opens at the Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts in Grand Rapids, Michigan and then travels to the Bellevue Arts Museum in Bellevue, Washington. It concludes its run at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles in San Jose, California.

Peggy Strang’s background in systems has been invaluable in documenting and tracking ATB6. We will be able to use the models she developed for future Biennials.

Lynne Mayne’s stewardship of the ATB6 catalog committee will provide ATA with a model for effectively organizing a group of volunteers. Her team shared the workload and the catalog was produced both on time and

under budget. For the first time we offered the catalogs at a pre publication price and this proved to be a successful way to raise funds and promote the catalog. We sold about two hundred catalogs before the opening of the exhibition.

American Tapestry Alliance also sponsored 'Grand Ideas,' the Small Format show at the Kendall Art School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Priscilla Lynch capably carried out all aspects of organizing this show, including working with art students at Kendall in order to create a catalog for the show. Priscilla's collaboration with university design students provides a model for future catalog production.

Promotions

We will not attend SOFA in 2006. In order to participate we must sponsor a speaker who has an affiliation with a gallery at SOFA. This might be possible by collaborating with Friends of Fiberart International. A presence at SOFA would help promote tapestry to collectors and gallery owners.

Elinor Steele created two postcards utilizing images from ATB6. These cards will be mailed to ATA supporters, the ATB6 artists and our promotions mailing list. They will also be available at the Grand Rapids venue.

Catalogs and Slides

Joyce Hayes successfully sorted over 2000 slides from the Slide Library. Labeled and organized, some will be loaned out as part of our lending program. The balance will be put in safekeeping. The guidelines developed for slide rental are working well, but the program needs to be advertised more aggressively.

We decided not to loan out the books that have been donated to ATA. Many of the books are available through interlibrary loan and most of the books that have been donated to ATA are irreplaceable.

Archives

Karen Crislip has offered to organize the ATA archives. Many files need to be sorted and organized so that the information remains complete and available to future researchers.

Awards

This was the inaugural year for ATA's Student Award. Mary Caitlin Sellers from Virginia Commonwealth University was selected to receive the award.

Beverly Kent administers the ATA Award that is given in recognition of superior American tapestries exhibited in a juried show. This year Trudi Roberts and Pat Williams received the ATA Award.

Fundraising

ATA's most reliable and successful fundraiser is the annual giving program, administered through Studio Circle memberships. These memberships bring in several thousand dollars each year above standard membership rates. Additionally, grant proposals are written seeking support for ATB. This year we received a grant of \$500 from Friends of Fiber Art International in support of the ATB catalog. After our great success with the NEA in 2004 for ATB5, it came as no surprise that we were turned down by the NEA this funding cycle. Planning is underway for a special 25th Anniversary fundraiser and gala celebration in the coming year.

Nominating Committee

Barbara Heller chaired the Nominating Committee, which successfully identified new Board members. Her committee included Joan Griffin and Tommye Scanlin. They not only assembled a list of candidates for the current Board openings, but also a group of people interested in future Board positions.

Volunteer Coordinator

The addition of this position within the leadership of ATA has been invaluable. Joan Griffin stepped up to support her belief that many hands

make light work. Volunteers make American Tapestry Alliance successful and Joan's recruitment has added a number of key volunteers.

Board Retreat

For the second year we held a board retreat attended by Board members and key volunteers. The Board retreat is an opportunity to meet together and strategize. For two and half days we discussed and made plans for each area described in ATA's operating plan, known as the Red Book. After lively discussion we chose to direct extra attention to four areas of ATA programming: Promotions, Fundraising, Exhibitions and Educational Programs. A Five Year Plan was drawn up incorporating objectives and activities in those areas. The Five Year Plan, and its implementation, will continue to be refined through discussion on the ATA Board email list. For anyone interested in receiving a copy of the Five Year Plan, please contact Mary Lane, at marylane53@mac.com.