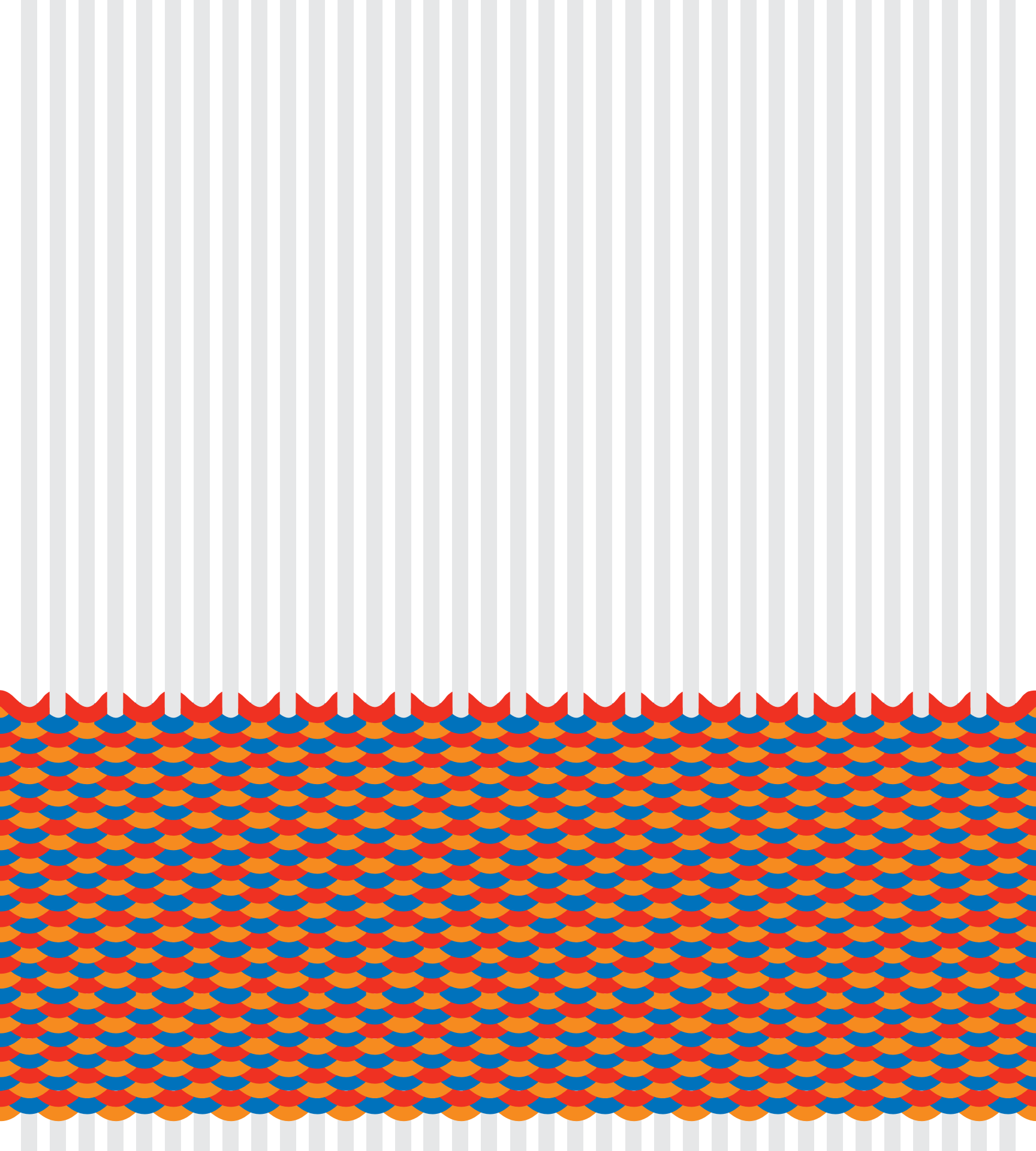


Three Contemporary Canadian Tapestry Artists
Murray Gibson /// **Jane Kidd** /// **Ann Newdigate**

overandunderandoverandunder



overandunderandoverandunder...

Three Contemporary Canadian Tapestry Artists
Murray Gibson // **Jane Kidd** // **Ann Newdigate**

FOREWORD

In a time of instantaneity and the global outsourcing of skilled labour tasks, tapestry by artist-makers rather than artist-designers is rare indeed. Nevertheless, weaving is one of humanity’s most ancient creative and technological practices, and in some form has existed for at least 12,000 years. The works by Ann Newdigate, Jane Kidd and Murray Gibson in *overandunderandoverandunder...* raise provocative and pertinent questions about the use of traditional skills, changing perceptions of time, and how tapestry, a seemingly anachronistic practice, is relevant as contemporary art.

Herself an artist and educator, Deborah Forbes has brought her considerable experience as a tapestry-maker to her role as guest curator of *overandunderandoverandunder...* for which we are grateful. I thank her also for the main text, in which she applies her astute, questioning intelligence

to the significance of the ubiquitous and enduring practice of tapestry, bolstered by thoughts from the three artists.

Ann Newdigate’s ongoing artistic and educational practice spans four decades and multiple continents, earning her the Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor’s Life Time Achievement Award. The Saidye Bronfman Award, part of the Canada Council’s prestigious Governor General’s Awards, recognized Jane Kidd’s lengthy, varied and continuing contributions to the fine craft of tapestry in 2016. Murray Gibson, himself an alumnus of ACAD who studied with Jane Kidd, exhibits internationally while teaching in Nova Scotia, and was named a Master Artisan by Craft Nova Scotia in 2015. We are privileged to present their intricate and accomplished works in the exhibition and the catalogue, and thank them for their many contributions.

Thanks also to Kelly Hartman of Hartman Design Studio for her imaginative and sympathetic design of the publication, and to the Canada Council for the Arts and the City of Medicine Hat for their ongoing support of Esplanade Art Gallery’s exhibitions, publications and programs.

Joanne Marion,
Director/Curator,
Exhibitions & Collections
Esplanade Arts &
Heritage Centre

overandunderandoverandunder...

Three Contemporary Canadian Tapestry Artists

Murray Gibson // Jane Kidd // Ann Newdigate

By Deborah Forbes, 2018

I have had a passionate interest in tapestry since, as a teenager, I dropped down a rabbit hole in the millefleur¹ of the Unicorn Tapestries (1495–1505 CE) at the Cloisters in New York City. Later, I learned to weave tapestry in Edinburgh from Archie Brennan, internationally renowned tapestry artist. Although my art practice has moved away from tapestry, I remain curious about the breadth of contexts that adopt the word tapestry, as well as the breadth of contemporary contexts and content that make their way into tapestry weaving. There is a book or article in almost every area of fact or fiction with *tapestry* in the title: military history, democracy, family constellations, critical theory, Tudor and Elizabethan history, enchantments, mythologies. It would seem that tapestry has enormous and straggly clusters of meanings, and that people think they have a common understanding of how the word can be used, and what it could mean.

However one looks at it, the word tapestry seems to draw us into thinking about relatedness and rich complexity. In trying to write words with meaning about contemporary art and tapestry weaving, it has been difficult not to talk about everything at once. Ideas run away into collisions at intersections, everything is talking simultaneously and colliding, so that only fragments of meaning audibly surface at any time. In deep frustration, I began to realize that the troubles I am having in keeping discreet sections in writing is very much akin to the processes of weaving tapestry. Regarding the collisions at intersections: you cannot weave the intersection, then the vehicles, then the shouting people with their mouths open, in a tidy sequence. They all have to be woven at the same time.

The complexities embedded in our understandings of the word tapestry are similarly embedded in trying to decode the place tapestry weaving occupies in contemporary art. The following discussion with and about three contemporary Canadian artist-weavers, Murray Gibson, Jane Kidd, and Ann Newdigate, reveals that what makes tapestry weaving a pursuit so distinct, and so grounded in a continuum of history, is its ability to construct meaning in ongoing contemporary worlds. Even in current contemporary times, the history of tapestry is present in tapestry weaving, sometimes as subject, always in process. Tapestry weaving has been practiced for hundreds of years in diverse cultures, almost exactly as it is practiced today. The exquisite mystery, however, is how an archaic process can comfortably carry content contemporary to every age in which it has lived. Nova Scotia tapestry artist, Murray Gibson, writes of the incorporation of history as subject and content:

*The Drapery Series is a collection of tapestries inspired by women of myth and legend, poetry and prose who are textile practitioners; with their practice, they control the lives and deaths of others, and at times, of themselves. These tapestries share a common aesthetic of an abstracted background overlaid by a delineated image. The abstracted background is derived from images of gowns these heroines wear in other, historical artistic depictions.*²

When Gibson writes *overlaid*, he means overlaid only in a visual sense, in how it appears. Creating this appearance of overlaying is a complex journey that requires the physical integration of images. This is a singular potential of tapestry weaving which changes both the visual impact and the transmission of content.

See Fig 1 >

Fig 1
Murray Gibson
**Valkyrie:
Web of War**



Divided and Undivided?

In the deep history of tapestry weaving, there have been artists who are also weavers; they design the tapestries and weave them. There are also tapestries that result from divisions of labour: artists (often painters) who design the tapestries and work out the visual ideas, and weavers, who with technical skill, interpret these visual ideas and make them into finished tapestries. Interestingly, the history of tapestry is filled with anonymous makers and viewers. Often, only the commissioner of the work, and sometimes the designer, are recorded for posterity. The weavers, however, remain present in their extended physical contact with the object. It delights me to think their DNA might still be detectable in the threads.

Sometimes these divisions of labour between designer and weaver are highly collaborative³, more often they are not. In early history, artist-weavers such as the Copts of 3rd, 4th, and 5th century CE Egypt, were the norm. Moving into

and out of the Medieval period (roughly 12th to 15th centuries), the connections between designer and weaver remained close enough for them to use the medium to its most singular and beautiful ends. Into the Baroque period (roughly late 16th to 18th centuries), larger scale tapestries, prestige items commissioned by the church and various monarchs, required large studios with distinct divisions of labour between designers (rock-star painters) and weavers (happy worker bees).

Without a deep understanding of the workings of the medium, painters designed tapestries to look as much as possible like paintings. The practical advantage to this is that tapestries are better insulation for stone walls than paintings; I can see no aesthetic advantage. The imagined reversal of this would be to have tapestry weavers, with no understanding of painting, design paintings, to be executed by painters, to look as much as possible like woven tapestries. As I said, *imagined*, as no one seems to have taken this on.

Just as discussions of snow in Inuit languages would lose their depth and breadth of meaning when translated into English, the success or failure of the aesthetic consequences of one medium designing for another (if the processes of each are not in some way connected) usually results in – ‘oops! meaning lost in translation’.

It was not until the later 19th and 20th centuries that tapestry experienced a minor liberation from the deadening influence of painters designing for tapestry, and the return of the artist-weaver. Artist-weaver, one and the same, describes the practices of our three contemporary Canadian tapestry artists, Murray Gibson, Jane Kidd, and Ann Newdigate.

Given tapestry’s deep historical roots and laborious production, why would a 21st century artist choose tapestry as a medium, over other media, to express many kinds of content? I always ask the question when I look at a tapestry: would it have made a better print, or painting, or collage? Could the subject matter be presented as, or more, effectively if executed in another (less labour intensive, perhaps?) medium. If the answer is that it could only be tapestry, then it has everything to do with the perfect alchemical concoction of subject, process, and content, which Gibson, Kidd, and Newdigate seem to consistently and adroitly mix.

Text, Affinities, and History Intertwined

In an age in which nearly anything can be communicated in code of zeros and ones, there is a strange binary affinity in the

Fig 2
Ann Newdigate
**Colonial Gents:
Henry Settler**



ubiquitous and rapid flight of digital information and the slow production of tapestry in its *overing* and *undering*; meaning the weaving of weft thread over and under the warp yarn that is held in tension by the loom. Endemic to the binary nature of the human brain, neurons have two states: fire, don’t fire. I see the binary system of *overing* and *undering* in tapestry weaving as aligned with both digital communication and the functioning of the human brain.

West Coast-based Ann Newdigate, whose decades-long practice inextricably links drawing and weaving, writes: *...drawing can intersect freely with the warp of the unconscious. In contrast, the pixelated grid, which is shared by medieval style woven tapestry (ends per inch) and digital prints (dots per inch), dictates a taut saga between old and new technologies.*⁴

This excites me; whenever I see processes that are nested and aligned, I suspect they are connected to larger alignments in the universe that speak to larger ideas. In tapestry weaving, at its highest artistry, process is always honoured in both subject and content of the image. This has something to do with technical virtuosity, but much more to do with the sensitivity, intelligence, and connected creativity of the maker. **Fig 2.**

Weaving, in some form, has been with humans since the Neolithic times of 12,000 years ago; even deeper roots have been found 20,000 – 30,000 years ago with pre-weaving twisting, knotting, twining, and interlocking. Both Ancient Egyptians and Incas buried their dead in tapestry-woven clothing. Important civic buildings of Classical Greece, including the Parthenon, had walls covered with tapestries. Tapestry weaving, as it is practiced today,

Fig 3
Jane Kidd
**Curiosities Series:
Pairing #3**



has been known for hundreds of years in diverse cultures. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the Church of Rome recognized the value of tapestries in illustrating Biblical stories to its illiterate congregations, and, while medieval tapestries told visual stories, they also provided insulation for cold stone walls.

Governor General Award winner and retired Alberta College of Art + Design faculty member, Jane Kidd, writes: *The history of tapestry as an object created for the elite to express their power and prestige is of interest to me. It brings me a certain amount of subversive pleasure to use this process to explore issues that have come about largely through greed and abuse of power. As artist-weaver, I wander into areas of contemporary environmental politics; my approach is always personal in reflecting my own confusion and uncertainty and what I find to be an increasingly bewildering world.*⁵ **Fig 3.**

In tapestry weaving, apparent simplicity of process defies complexity of content. Do not be misled! The seemingly uncomplicated process of *overing* and *undering* is perilously nuanced and affected by the tiniest of perturbations in the hands of the artist-weaver. Sometimes the perturbations begin to move the artist in fertile directions different from conscious intention; sometimes they set the process off course in directions to be ignored only at the artist’s peril.

There is no opportunity to later ‘go back and fix that bottom corner,’ so the artist-weaver must be an acute listener to the hum of the threads. As the process of weaving staggers toward completion in constantly diminishing diagonals, the past really is the past. Just as in life, one can only fix the past with actions in the present and going forward.

Fig 4
Murray Gibson
Babel



The title of this exhibition, *overandunderandoverandunder...* comes from an intention to consider tapestry as a semiotic text with codes, a text that has endured over the course of time.

Tapestry’s conventions likewise have deep roots. Gibson notes, for instance, “*I have frequently used decorative borders in my designs alluding to a long history of tapestry aesthetic and functionality.*”⁶ In one of the early seminal works on tapestry, Helen Churchill Candee writes, “*For a long time there had been gropings, the feeling that some sort of border was needed, a division line between the world of reality and the world of fable.*”⁷ Fig 4.

My intention here is not to be reductionist in my allusion to the fundamental integrity of tapestry and its materiality, but to look at tapestry as text in a semiotic sense. While not going as far as textual determinism, in which the form and content of a text very prescriptively determine how it is decoded by the viewer, tapestry, as text,

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Fig 5
The Devonshire Hunting Tapestry: Boar and Bear Hunt (detail), 1425–1430
Probably made in France.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Gibson writes: *The narrative of the imagery precedes the making of the cloth, but it is the artist’s vision married with the weaver’s skill that brings the story to life as a tapestry. The Devonshire Hunting Tapestries* (London, Victoria and Albert Museum) *are woven texts telling contemporary scholars about courtly life in 15th century Europe, particularly hunting techniques and high fashion worn by noble personages. It is these noble men and women and their costumes that are inspiration for much of my tapestry practice for the past many years. What interests me is the shorthand approach the weaver uses to drape the clothing over the body beneath it. The complex silhouette of the garment – the actual shape and surface area it would take up in a tapestry – is decorated with a flat rendering of pattern. The garment is flat: there are neither layers nor drapery – only illusion.*¹⁰

Fig 6
Murray Gibson
Visitation



The Devonshire Hunting Tapestries, woven in a studio in Arras, France, are excellent examples of designer-weaver collaboration, in that the potentials of the medium are taken advantage of fully, as described by Gibson. This illusory approach is not the same as that used by painters of the time. It is, rather, an integrated approach, an approach that brings together the particular demands of the medium and the imagery that is depicted therein. That is, it is about the weaving of woven textiles. Fig 5 & 6.

Here, I am thinking about Marshall McLuhan’s¹¹ famous quote, “The medium is the message,” which presages the deconstruction work of semiotics. I am also thinking about Julia Kristeva’s writing¹² wherein she proposes that a text is intelligible only through “a mosaic of references and quotations that, in many cases, have lost their origin.”¹³ Kristeva uses mosaic in a sense that is very similar to the popular use of the word tapestry. Woven tapes-tries, as works of art that are

Fig 7
Jane Kidd
Wonderland
Series: *Curiouser and Curiouser* #2



texts in a semiotic sense, and in their materiality, are mosaics of implied references and responses that have endured in some form for roughly 12,000 years. *overandunderandoverandunder...*, as a title, recognizes the importance of this. In the words themselves, there are implications of the layers of history, process, ideas, and developments in different bodies of work. The exhibition title acts metaphorically, as well as literally; it acts in linear progression as well as in manners layered and webbed. John Berger has famously noted, ‘Metaphor reconnects that which has been separated.’ In considering tapestry as a text with codes that has endured over the course of time and which, it could be argued, remains one of the oldest processes still in use by humans, one has to wonder why tapestry weaving has endured as a process to express, interrogate, connect, and communicate in the 21st century. One has to wonder why tapestry weaving has not been reduced to merely an historical process to which we cling through fear of loss.

Tapestry weaving, however, simply continues to speak to us about itself over millennia, while at the same time talking about the ongoing present, the contemporary. Kidd writes: *I use a compartmentalized composition to collect and juxtaposition historic and contemporary tools, [making] reference to botanical drawings, taxonomy, diagrams and mapping. I also reference historic textiles emphasizing those that show evidence of colonialism and cross-cultural exchange, drawing parallels between the human urge to transform the natural world into material culture and the West’s preoccupation with accumulating and possessing other cultures.*¹⁴ Fig 7.

Newdigate’s small woven portraits flow, in part, out of an archaic tradition of woven Coptic portraits of the 4th–5th centuries CE in Egypt. Large, soulful eyes were particular features of fully developed Coptic art¹⁵, in both painting and tapestry. Fig 8 & 9.

Fig 8
Coptic Tapestry portrait of a youth, Egypt, 4th – 5th century.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Newdigate’s *Sad Little Coptic Ancestor* stares inside its own little head. Inward-looking eyes focus on hurt and pain that is visible to the viewer through the constructed tears. The tears themselves are created before the eyes are woven, which sets up particular import to the tears. It is as if the tear determines the eye rather than the eye determining the tear. In tapestry weaving, the order of construction is from bottom to top or side to side as it lurches toward completion. By contrast, as in painting for instance, the underlayers build up toward the final visual surface. Due to the language of each medium, differences in the construction of images tell different stories.

These woven tears appear so very intentionally built of experiences. The *overing* and *undering* performed by the artist to build each tiny tear of the *Sad Little Coptic Ancestor*, as well as several of the *Colonial Spinsters*, has allowed time for contemplation and ritual as part of the text. Fig 10 & 11 (next page).

Fig 9
Ann Newdigate
Familiars: Sad Little Coptic Ancestor



Newdigate writes: *I find tapestry to be a natural extension of drawing. Drawing, which preceded writing, is a basic method of communication. Tapestry adds a dimension of ritual for the maker and for the viewer because it can signify the presence of time and convey the drama of mythology through its physical presence.*¹⁶

Kidd also references writing and units of language: *A sentence is the basic unit of communication, a meaningful statement. In this series sentence also references the punishment imposed by mankind on the environment. Through the slow and intimate process and flawed language of tapestry weaving I am reinterpreting and rewriting the dispassionate certainty of these technological sources to refocus on our complicity in the sentencing of the world we live in.*¹⁷

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Fig 10
Ann Newdigate
Guilt is time consuming



Time

The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once. ~ Albert Einstein

In weaving tapestry, however, everything sort of does happen at once in terms of building an image, which sets it apart from work in many other media. Few practices could make one more aware of the slipperiness of time than weaving a tapestry. The practice of tapestry is hard. It takes time. It takes concentration. Single actions are repeated and repeated. Hard decisions are made, and remade. All of these statements may be true of work in many media. Some aspects of the work that set tapestry apart, however, are that undoing takes more time than doing, and there is no going back to fix up anything without great difficulty. Of critical importance to understanding the process is to comprehend that images which appear to overlap other images are constructed simultaneously. Illusions of three dimensions on a two-dimensional plane are built, not applied; these

Fig 11
Ann Newdigate
Colonial Spinsters: Carrie A. Crosse inherited considerable property provided that she did not marry certain people



Fig 12
Murray Gibson
Arachne



illusions are accomplished in real time and at the same time, as evidenced by the strands of thread that appear to overlay the folds of fabric beneath in Gibson's *Arachne*. Fig 12.

The strands and the folds occupy the same space. Illusions are rampant and structural. The artist-weaver focuses, dreams, meditates, and then returns to hard decisions along the way, dropping in and out of frontal lobe consciousness to a dreaming brain state. Tapestry, and its potential for integrating disparate content provokes intertextuality, because of the physically integrated manner the construction of images. This greasy quality of time seems to incite the kind of intertextuality of which Kristeva speaks. Differential and historical traces, and tracings of other texts, are manifested in the process of making. There is time for the

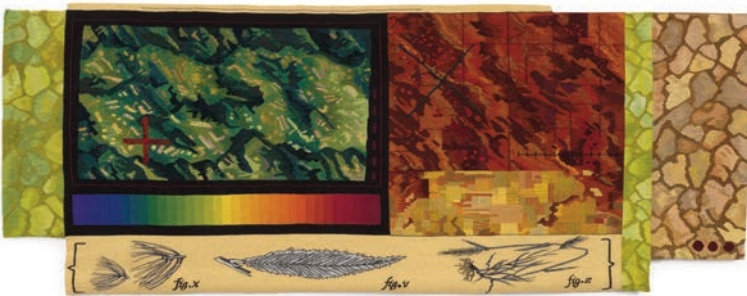
tapestry artist, in the slippage of *doing*, for drifting into webs of connection and interconnection over time and space, into texts of every kind. The sensory intimacy of sitting with a tapestry, in connection, for sometimes months at a time (and over the course of years), situates the weaver in an unusually sustained relationship to the work. It is one in which their experience of the present is both functional and metaphorical.

Greater genre or textual knowledge can help the viewer to enter the experience of looking. One of the questions most frequently asked of tapestry artists is, “How long did it take you to make this?” This used to mildly annoy me as it seemed to place value only on the time spent in constructing instead of on the beauty, artistry and, ultimately, the meaning of the tapestry as text.

Eventually I came to realize that the time spent in the meditative ritual of the genre code¹⁸ of tapestry should not be minimized. Speed has become of such value to us at this time in history, that anything deeply time consuming, which has time invested in it, seems to almost shock!

Kidd writes: *In our contemporary culture, which is dominated by the reproduced object and the mediated and appropriated image, handmade objects such as tapestry can stand for authentic experience. Their material presence provides a direct link to the original act of making that circumvents anonymity for both maker and viewer.*¹⁹ Fig 13.

Fig 13
Jane Kidd
Land Sentence: Arbour



Chaos

... does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?
~ E. K. Lorenz (1972)

This metaphor has become part of the common vernacular of Western culture. Lorenz, a pioneer of chaos theory, proposed that “small perturbations,” could have disproportionately large effects, thus making weather prediction difficult if not impossible.²⁰ Tapestry weaving is a highly structured system that regularly encounters small perturbations: very small weaving decisions on the path to construction of a particular shape can profoundly influence the future growth of the work of art because, as previously stated, going back to fix or alter things is extremely difficult. Tapestries, produced by artist-weavers, as a means to produce contemporary art, can be viewed through the lens of chaos and complexity theories.

With extraordinary skill, imagination, experience, and connected knowing, the artist-weaver's intimate relationship with a seemingly simple, binary process expands into an enduring marriage of rich complexities.

David Pye²¹ architect, industrial designer, and artisan, discusses the *workmanship of risk*, which he locates in contrast to the *workmanship of certainty*. The latter could be described as a goal of mass production of identical widgets. He describes the *workmanship of risk* as: *... simply any kind of technique or apparatus, in which the quality of the result is not predetermined, but depends on judgment, dexterity and care which the maker exercises as he works. The essential idea is that the quality of the result is continually at risk during the process of making; and so I shall call this kind of workmanship the workmanship of risk: an uncouth phrase, but at least descriptive.*²²

This would seem consistent with the principles of chaos theory in that the very small perturbations, which, in this case, are decisions of the artist-weaver, significantly influence the outcome; and that process of decision-making cannot be replicated. The *workmanship of risk* sets the work of the artist-weaver apart from the work resulting from a division of labour of designer and weaver. The artist-weaver operates in the land of chaos, complexity, and risk.

To me, good art is worth spending time with. It shows me something – some way of looking at life in the universe. It makes me tilt my head a bit, it provokes questions, it inveigles curiosity, it catches me off guard, it delights in a prickly sense, and it disperses energy.

Tapestry can do this in a very particular way: the integration of form and function has to be so intimate if it is to hit this exquisite point of *art worth spending time with*. Gibson, Kidd, and Newdigate do this in their work and each does so very differently. They honour the poetry of the imperfect language and history of tapestry weaving to explore contemporary experience.

Deborah Forbes is an artist and educator living in Medicine Hat, Alberta. She has worked in a number of media including tapestry, painting, and mixed media installation. Her work has been shown in public galleries in Canada and the USA. Forbes has taught art education and art history at Medicine Hat College, AB; lectured widely across Canada, and has been a visiting scholar at Xiangfan University, Hubei Province, China.

ENDNOTES

¹ Millefleur is a kind of tapestry characterized by a background motif of many small flowers.

² Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Murray Gibson, 2018.

³ An example of a true collaboration of designer and weaver is Dovecot Studio, Edinburgh, with painters such as David Hockney and Edwardo Paolozzi.

⁴ Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Ann Newdigate, 2018.

⁵ Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Jane Kidd, 2018.

⁶ Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Murray Gibson, 2018.

⁷ Candee, H. C. (1912). *The Tapestry Book*. New York: Frederick Stokes and Company. P. 203.

⁸ Berger, John (1973). *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books.

⁹ Berger, J. (2005). *Berger on Drawing*. Cork Ireland: Occasional Press. P. 41

¹⁰ Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Murray Gibson, 2018.

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¹¹ Marshall McLuhan, Canadian professor, philosopher, and public intellectual. His work is one of the cornerstones of media theory that essentially predicts the World Wide Web 30 years before it was invented.

¹² Julia Kristeva, Bulgarian-born French psychoanalyst, critic, novelist, and educator, best known for her writings in structuralist linguistics, psychoanalysis, semiotics, and philosophical feminism.

¹³ Kristeva, J. (1980) *Desire in language: a semiotic approach to literature and art*. Columbia University Press, New York. P. 31.

¹⁴ Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Jane Kidd, 2018.

¹⁵ The term Coptic was originally the Arabic term for the native Egyptians, but came to refer to the practicing Christians in Egypt. Coptic art is art produced by the Copts.

¹⁶ Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Ann Newdigate, 2018.

¹⁷ Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Jane Kidd, 2018.

¹⁸ Genre code. Codes are systems of signs, which create meaning. Genre codes for movies could be comedy, thriller, horror.

¹⁹ Correspondence between Deborah Forbes and Jane Kidd, 2018.

²⁰ Lorenz, E.N. (1972). *Predictability: does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?* 139th Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (29 Dec 1972), in *Essence of Chaos* (1995), Appendix 1, P. 181.

²¹ David Pye: Craftsman, theorist and Professor of Furniture at the Royal College of Arts from 1948–1974.

²² Pye, D. (2002). *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*. Cambridge, UK: Cambrian Press. P. 20

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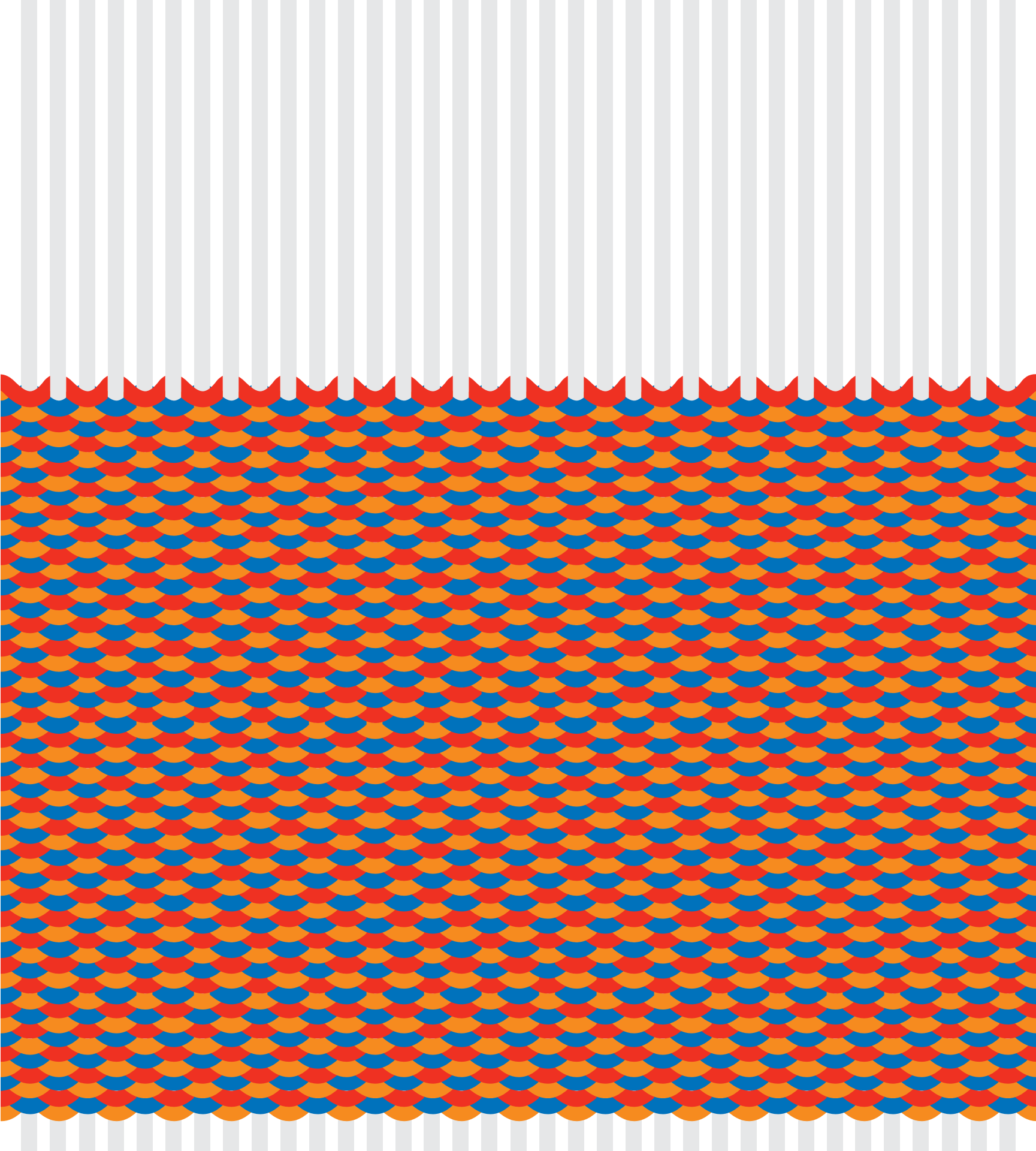
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Murray Gibson



Murray Gibson
*A Numbering
of Days*, 1994
153 x 92 cm
Wool and silk

Murray Gibson

**Annuciation:
Conturbatio,
Cogitatio,
Interrogatio,
Humiliatio,
Meritatio**, 1995
50 x 35 cm each
Wool and cotton

Murray Gibson

**Revenge: Tereus,
Philomela, Procne**, 2014
44 x 164 cm overall
Wool and cotton

Murray Gibson

**Valkyrie: Web
of War**, 2018
45 x 117 cm
Wool and cotton



Murray Gibson

Cross Town, 1991
170 x 163 cm
Wool and silk



Murray Gibson

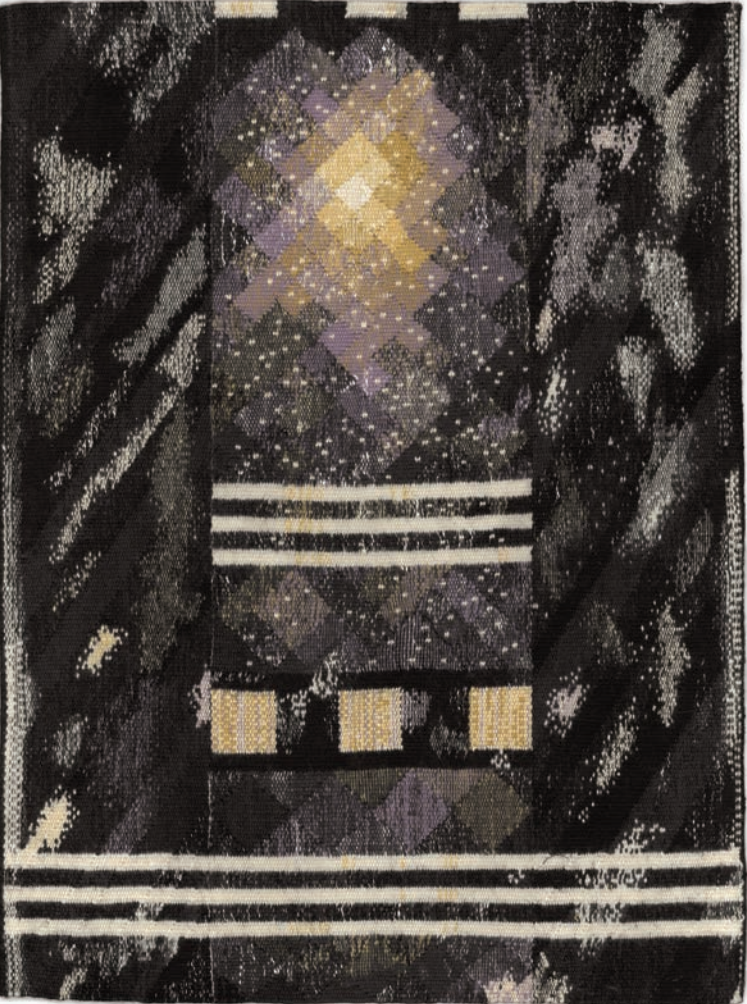
**Statue of
Llimitations**, 1990
170 x 160 cm
Wool



Murray Gibson
Ariadne, 2018
57 x 47 cm
Wool and cotton



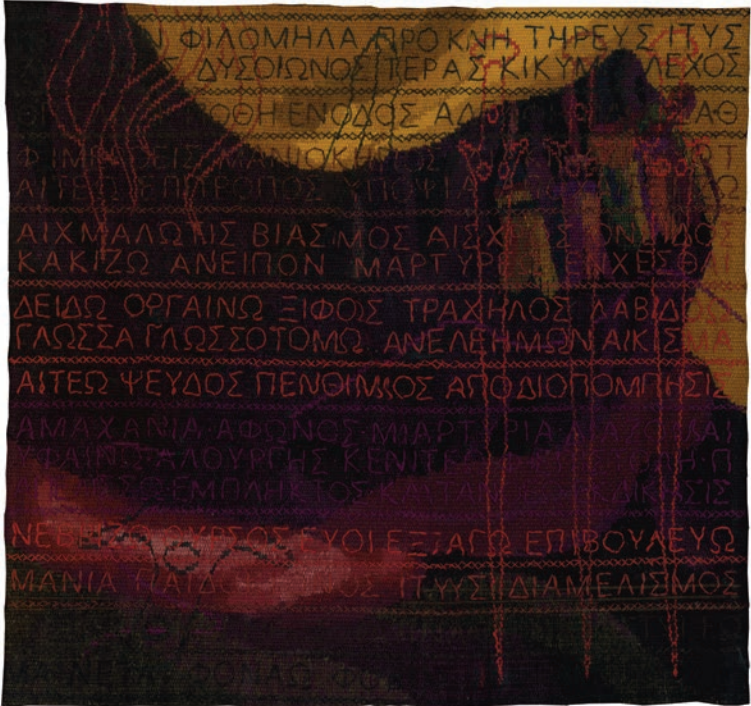
Murray Gibson
Unknowing, 2012
60 x 45 cm
Wool and silk



Murray Gibson
Arachne, 2016
57 x 60 cm
Wool and cotton



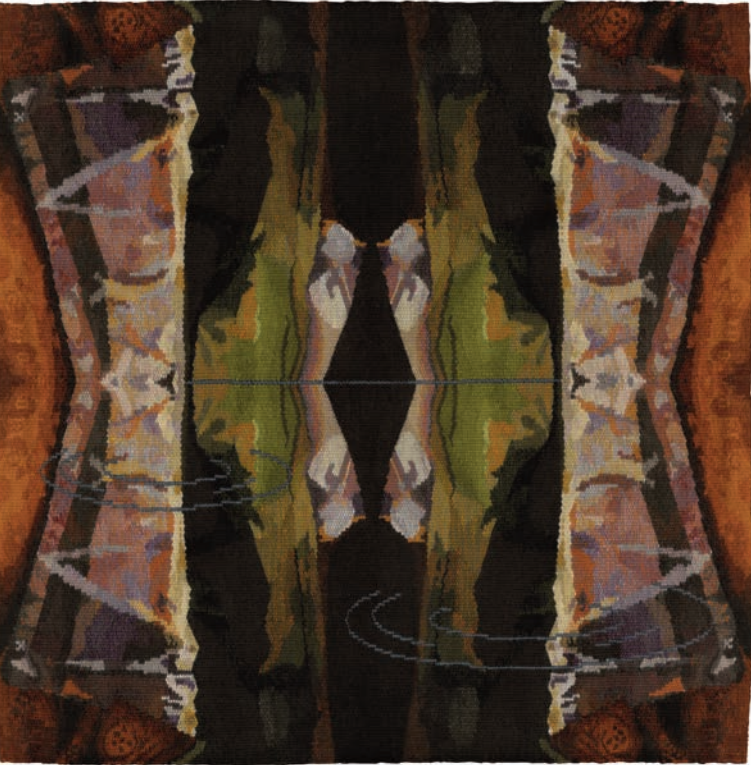
Murray Gibson
Plot, 2014
44 x 44 cm
Wool and cotton
with embroidered
embellishment
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation
for the Arts.



Murray Gibson
Babel, 1991
157 x 155 cm
Wool



Murray Gibson
The Lady of Shalott, 2008
60 x 60 cm
Wool and cotton



MURRAY GIBSON
ARTIST STATEMENT

I have been a tapestry artist for almost 35 years. During this time my artistic concepts, designs and technical approaches to weaving have changed and developed, but there is a common thread that runs throughout my practice; that is, my concepts and imagery are best realized as woven cloth, rather than being more suited to presentation in some other art form, or being woven “translations” of other artistic media, unless this approach is the means to an end rather than the end itself.

I have often referenced other textile forms: Kente cloth motifs, Middle-eastern kilim symbols, and traditional quilt and coverlet designs. I have frequently used patterning for its decorative qualities; also border elements directly reference a European tapestry tradition. I admire medieval tapestries for their aesthetic of flat pictorial space, and shape and form articulated by classic tapestry weaving techniques.

My most recent tapestries reference women of literature and myth who are textile practitioners; their practice in some way involves life and death. The Three Fates spinning, measuring, and cutting the Thread of Life are the primary example.

In these ways – directly referencing cloth and its making by means of my own woven cloth – I hope that my artistic concepts have integrity as tapestries.

I wish to acknowledge the financial support of an Arts Nova Scotia Creation Grant to support my studio practice during 2016-18.

ARTIST BIO

Murray Gibson studied tapestry weaving at the Alberta College of Art and Design (ACAD) with Jane Kidd, graduating in 1985. After ten years of studio practice, Murray received his MA Textiles from Goldsmith’s College, London, UK in 1995. In 2015, Murray was named a Master Artisan by Craft Nova Scotia. Murray currently teaches at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, NS. Murray’s tapestries have been exhibited across North America, in Poland and Australia. His tapestries – many commissioned – hang in private, public, and corporate collections.

Jane Kidd

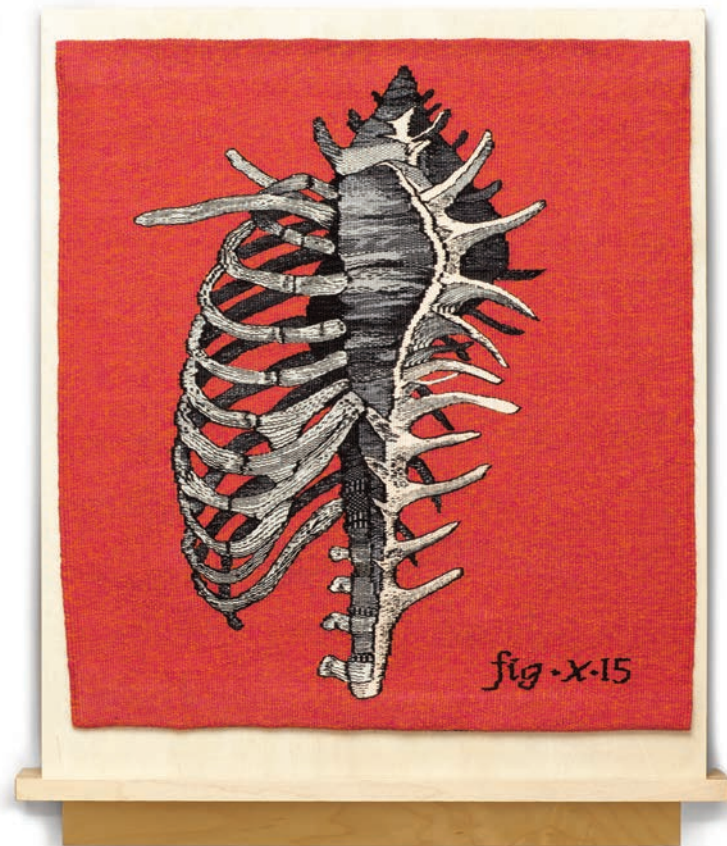


Jane Kidd
Wonderland
Series: Folly, 2016
182 x 121 cm
Wool, cotton,
rayon, silk, linen

Jane Kidd

**Curiosities Series:
Pairing #2, 2013**

Front and side view
66 x 56 cm
Wool, cotton, silk,
mounted on a
wooden board
and shelf



Jane Kidd

**Curiosities Series:
Pairing #6, 2013**

66 x 56 cm
Wool, cotton, silk,
mounted on a
wooden board
and shelf



Jane Kidd

**Curiosities Series:
Pairing #3, 2013**

66 x 56 cm
Wool, cotton, silk,
mounted on a
wooden board
and shelf



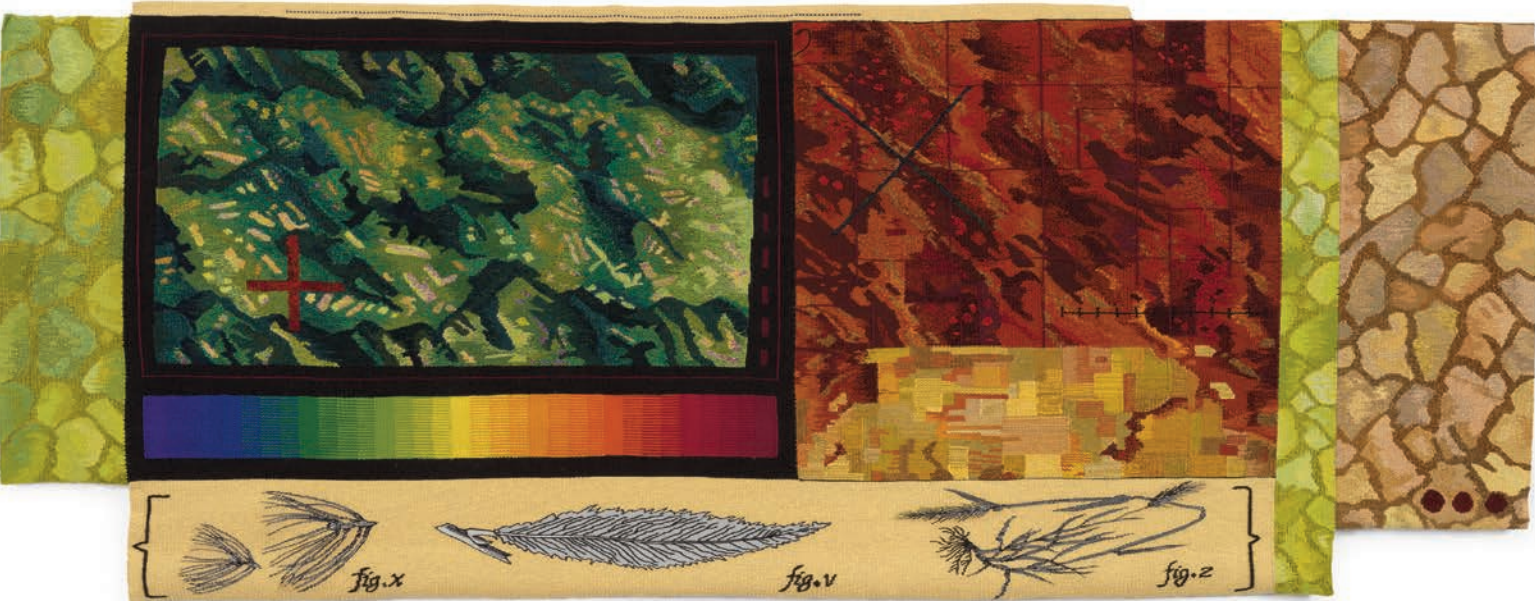
Jane Kidd

**Curiosities Series:
Pairing #4, 2013**

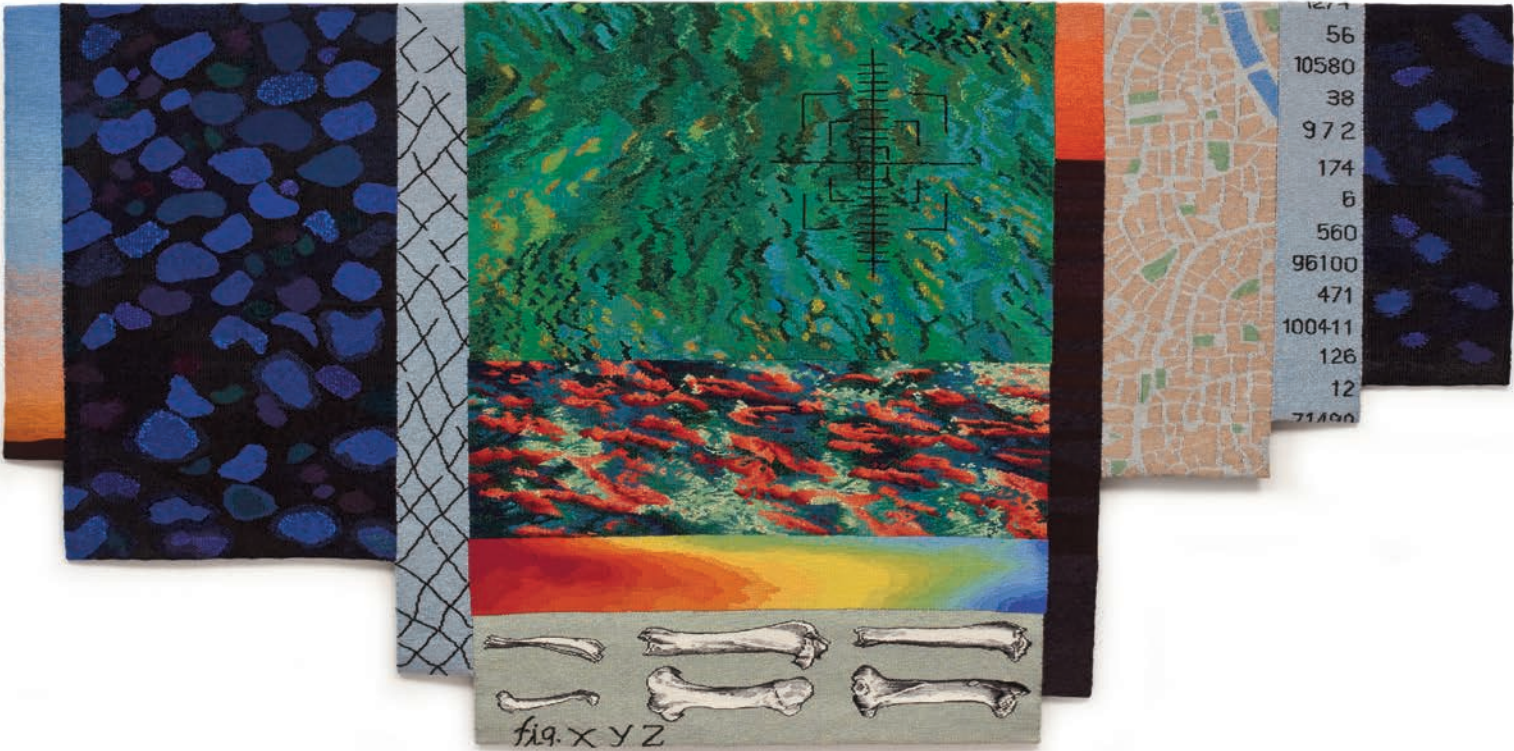
66 x 56 cm
Wool, cotton, silk,
mounted on a
wooden board
and shelf



Jane Kidd
Land Sentence:
Arbour, 2009
83 x 205 cm
Wool, cotton,
rayon, silk, linen
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation
for the Arts.



Jane Kidd
Land Sentence:
Zoo, 2012
99 x 200 cm
Wool, cotton,
rayon, silk, linen
Collection of Salt
Spring Island
Public Library



Jane Kidd
Wonderland
Series: Curiouser
and Curiouser #2,
2015
46 x 183 cm
Wool, cotton,
rayon, silk
mounted on a
wooden shelf



Photo:
John Cameron



JANE KIDD
ARTIST STATEMENT

As an artist, I explore ideas that reference my experience of the world. I work almost exclusively with woven tapestry, which I find to be a compelling medium because it provides a means to develop content through imagery. I am drawn to the material identity of tapestry and committed to finding meaning and relevance in the process of handwork.

For a number of years, I explored the implications of accumulating, collecting and displaying objects from material culture and the natural world. I examined the desire to possess and assimilate nature into material culture through its translation into decorative pattern, systems of notation, and collections (*Possession Series* 2005 – 08). I continue to explore an interest in human/nature relationships, developing imagery from technological data including aerial and satellite photography, forms of technology that record the result of our complex and often

destructive relationship to the world around us (*Land Sentence Series* 2009 – 2012). More recently I have become increasingly interested in the use of technology to manipulate and engineer the environment. Recent advances now provide the means to disrupt evolutionary biology, altering genetic material to create genetically modified organisms, clones, and hybrids. For a layperson such as myself, these developments are both intriguing and disturbing (*Curiosities Series: Pairings #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 and #6,* 2012 – 2016 and *Wonderland Series* 2014 – 2017).

My work reflects the complications and contradictions of issues with which we live. Through symbolic imagery, materials and the labour intensive process of hand weaving, I call attention to the precarious nature of our environment. Ultimately, I hope my tapestries will be seen as objects of expressive and sensual beauty, which celebrate the handmade and encourage reflection on our changing world.

ARTIST BIO

Jane Kidd taught at ACAD from 1980 – 2011 and has exhibited in numerous solo and over sixty group exhibitions in Canada, the USA, Japan, Poland, Hungary, and Australia. Kidd’s work is held in private and public collections including Canada Council Art Bank, Department of Foreign Affairs, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and Canadian Museum of History. She was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Art in 2001, awarded the Alberta Craft Council Award of Excellence in 2008, and the Saidye Bronfman Award (Governor General’s Award for Visual and Media Arts, Canada’s foremost distinction for excellence in the visual arts) in 2016.

Ann Newdigate

Ann Newdigate
Familiars Series:
Sad Little
Coptic Ancestor,
n.d.
28 x 23 cm
Cotton warp, weft:
silk, linen, cotton,
wool and synthetics



Ann Newdigate
Familiars Series:
Carrie A Cross
inherited
considerable
property provided
that she did not
marry certain
people, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
Cotton warp, weft:
silk, linen, cotton,
wool and synthetics



Ann Newdigate
Constant Familiar
#2, n.d.
 28 x 23 cm
 Cotton warp, weft:
 silk, linen, cotton,
 wool and synthetics



Ann Newdigate
Constant Familiar
#6, n.d.
 28 x 23 cm
 Cotton warp, weft:
 silk, linen, cotton,
 wool and synthetics



Ann Newdigate
Colonial Spinsters:
Inexpicably
Miss May B.
went blind for the
duration of the
qualifying exam,
 n.d.
 28 x 23 cm
 Cotton warp, weft:
 silk, linen, cotton,
 wool and synthetics



Ann Newdigate
Colonial Spinsters:
They said that
Miss May B. read
too many books.
But she did write
a history of her clan,
which was published
posthumously by
her aging aunt, n.d.
 28 x 23 cm
 Cotton warp, weft:
 silk, linen, cotton,
 wool and synthetics



Ann Newdigate
Familiars Series:
Needle tears, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
Cotton warp, weft:
silk, linen, cotton,
wool and synthetics



Ann Newdigate
Colonial Gents:
Henry Settler, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
Cotton warp, weft:
silk, linen, cotton,
wool and synthetics

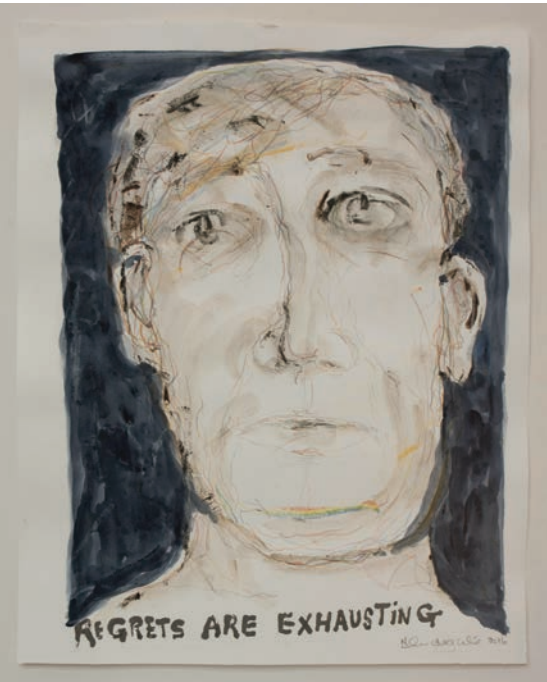


Ann Newdigate
**Nowadays you
don't know who
to believe**, 2016
61 x 46 cm
mixed watercolour,
dry pencil crayons,
and wax resist on
archival paper



Ann Newdigate
**Good ancestors
are lucky**, 2016
61 x 46 cm
mixed watercolour,
dry pencil crayons,
and wax resist on
archival paper

Ann Newdigate
**Regrets are
exhausting**, 2016
61 x 46 cm
mixed watercolour,
dry pencil crayons,
and wax resist on
archival paper



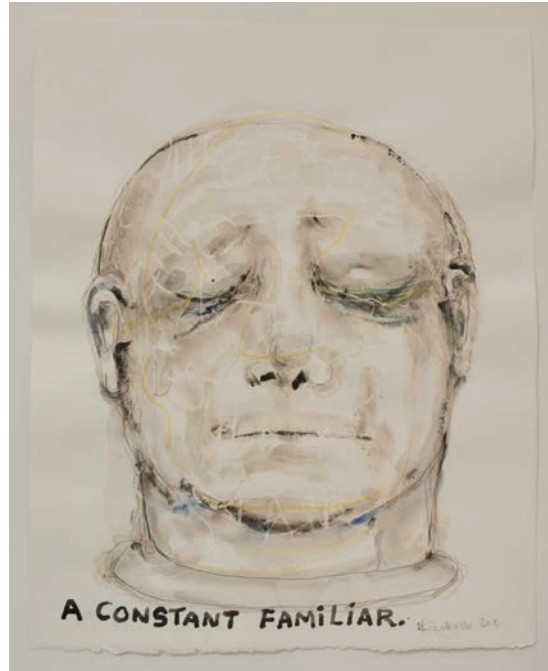
Ann Newdigate
**Guilt is time
consuming**, 2016
61 x 46 cm
mixed watercolour,
dry pencil crayons,
and wax resist on
archival paper



Ann Newdigate

A Constant Familiar, 2016

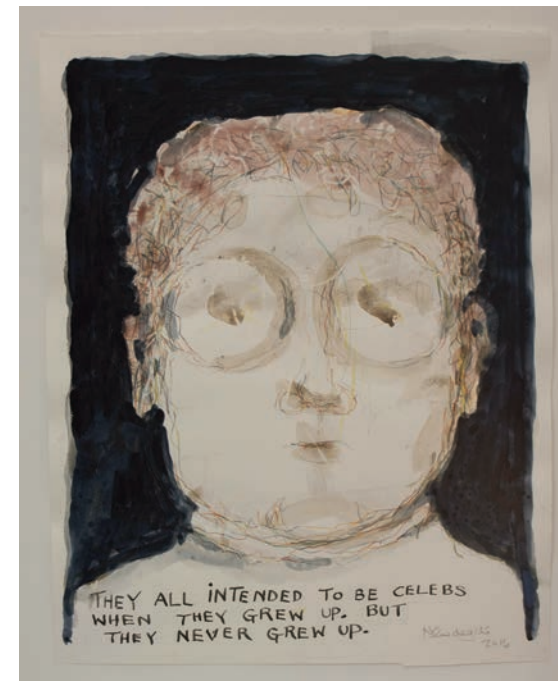
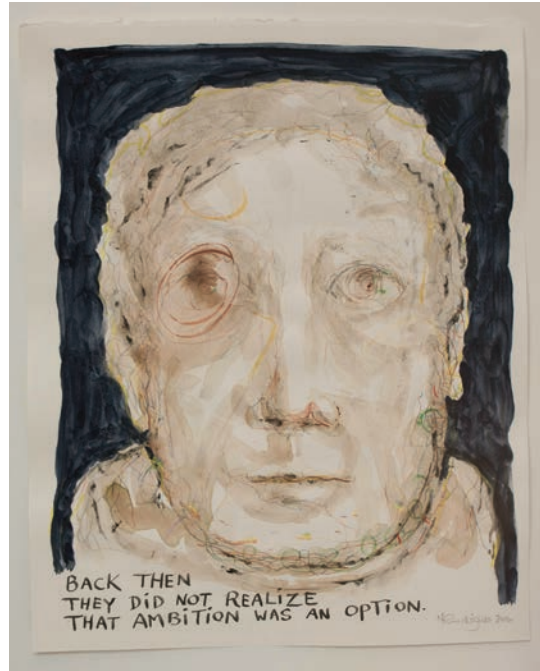
61 x 46 cm
mixed watercolour,
dry pencil crayons,
and wax resist on
archival paper



Ann Newdigate

Back then they did not realize that ambition was an option, 2016

61 x 46 cm
mixed watercolour,
dry pencil crayons,
and wax resist on
archival paper



Ann Newdigate

They all intended to be celebs when they grew up. But they never grew up, 2016

61 x 46 cm
mixed watercolour,
dry pencil crayons,
and wax resist on
archival paper

Photo:
S. Farrington



ANN NEWDIGATE
ARTIST STATEMENT

I believe that artists do not choose to make tapestry.

Tapestry chooses the artists. Tapestry is a tyrant.

But it is a generous tyrant that bestows many rewards, and even over time a little sanity.

Tapestry has nurtured my interest in portraits.

Images of faces reflect official histories and private emotions. Now at a venerable age I conjure up, and combine, my childhood preoccupation with drawing and story telling.

Whether it be tapestry or computer or watercolour that chooses me it is the simplicity of mark making that feeds my eye, my hands and my soul.

ARTIST BIO

Ann Newdigate holds degrees in African Studies and English Literature from Cape Town University, South Africa, and has a BFA and MFA from the University of Saskatchewan. She completed a post-graduate year in the Tapestry Department, Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland. She taught drawing while inaugurating the tapestry department at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, as the 1990 Visiting Fellow. She has exhibited internationally, representing Canada in the Lodz Tapestry Triennial in Poland, and most recently at Contemporary Calgary in 2017–18. Her work is collected internationally and is held in numerous public collections including the Canada Council.

overandunderandoverandunder...

LIST OF WORKS

MURRAY GIBSON

1. *Statue of Limitations*, 1990
173 x 160 cm
Wool

2. *Cross Town*, 1991
170 x 163 cm
Wool and silk

3. *Babel*, 1991
157 x 155 cm
Wool

4. *A Numbering of Days*, 1994
153 x 92 cm
Wool and silk

5. *Annunciation: Conturbatio, Cogitatio, Interrogatio, Humiliatio, Meritatio*, 1995
50 x 35 cm (each)
Wool and cotton

6. *The Lady of Shalott*, 2008
60 x 60 cm
Wool and cotton

7. *Unknowing*, 2012
60 x 45 cm
Wool and silk
8. *Plot*, 2014
44 x 44 cm
Wool and cotton with embroidered embellishment
Collection: Alberta Foundation for the Arts

9. *Revenge: Tereus, Philomela, Procne*, 2014
44 x 164 overall
Wool and cotton

10. *Arachne*, 2016
57 x 60 cm
Wool and cotton
Woven while holding an Arts Nova Scotia Creation Grant

11. *Valkyrie: Web of War*, 2018
45 x 117 cm
Wool and cotton
Woven while holding an Arts Nova Scotia Creation Grant

12. *Ariadne*, 2018
57 x 47 cm
Wool and cotton

JANE KIDD

1. *Wonderland Series: Curiouser and Curiouser #2*, 2015
46 x 183 cm
Wool, cotton, rayon, silk
mounted on a wooden shelf

2. *Curiosities Series: Pairing #2*, 2013
66 x 56 cm
Wool, cotton, silk, mounted on a wooden board and shelf

3. *Curiosities Series: Pairing #3*, 2013
66 x 56 cm
Wool, cotton, silk, mounted on a wooden board and shelf

4. *Curiosities Series: Pairing #4*, 2013
66 x 56 cm
Wool, cotton, silk, mounted on a wooden board and shelf

5. *Curiosities Series: Pairing #6*, 2013
66 x 56 cm
Wool, cotton, silk, mounted on a wooden board and shelf
6. *Wonderland Series: Folly*, 2016
182 x 121 cm
Wool, cotton, rayon, silk, linen

7. *Land Sentence: Arbour*, 2009
83 x 205 cm
Wool, cotton, rayon, silk, linen
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

8. *Land Sentence: Zoo*, 2012
99 x 200 cm
Wool, cotton, rayon, silk, linen
Collection of Salt Spring Island Public Library

ANN NEWDIGATE

- Tapestries: medieval style woven tapestry, constructed on a Melbourne, Victoria Tapestry Workshop mini frame loom.

1. *Familiars: Sad Little Coptic Ancestor*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

3. *Colonial Spinsters: Inexplicably Miss May B. went blind for the duration of the qualifying exam*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

3. *Colonial Spinsters: They said that Miss May B. read too many books. But she did write a history of her clan, which was published posthumously by her aging aunt*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics
4. *Colonial Spinsters: Carrie A. Crosse inherited considerable property provided that she did not marry certain people*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

5. *Colonial Spinsters: Miss Carrie A. Crosse was said to have been a beauty*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

6. *Colonial Gents: Henry Settler*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

7. *Constant Familiar #2*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

8. *Constant Familiar #6*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

9. *Constant Familiar #3*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

10. *Familiar Series: Needle Tears*, n.d.
28 x 23 cm
cotton warp, weft: silk, linen, cotton, wool and synthetics

11. *Guilt is time consuming*, 2016
61 x 46 cm
Mixed watercolor, dry pencil crayons, and wax resist on archival paper

12. *A Constant Familiar*, 2016
61 x 46 cm
Mixed watercolor, dry pencil crayons, and wax resist on archival paper

13. *Back then they did not realize that ambition was an option*, 2016
61 x 46 cm
Mixed watercolor, dry pencil crayons, and wax resist on archival paper
14. *Nowadays you don't know who to believe*, 2016
61 x 46 cm
Mixed watercolor, dry pencil crayons, and wax resist on archival paper

15. *Regrets are exhausting*, 2016
61 x 46 cm
Mixed watercolor, dry pencil crayons, and wax resist on archival paper

16. *Good ancestors are lucky*, 2016
61 x 46 cm
Mixed watercolor, dry pencil crayons, and wax resist on archival paper

17. *They all intended to be celebs when they grew up. But they never grew up*, 2016
61 x 46 cm
Mixed watercolor, dry pencil crayons, and wax resist on archival paper

overandunderandoverandunder...

Three Contemporary Canadian Tapestry Artists
Murray Gibson /// Jane Kidd /// Ann Newdigate

This publication was produced by the Esplanade Art Gallery in conjunction with the exhibition *overandunderandoverandunder...* Three Contemporary Tapestry Artists: Murray Gibson / Jane Kidd / Ann Newdigate. The exhibition was presented at the Esplanade Art Gallery December 1, 2018 – January 26, 2019

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