

Shuttle SPINDLE & DYEPOT

Fiber Quarterly

For Handweavers, Handspinners,
Dyers and Basketmakers



Convergence 2002
HGA's Fiber Arts Conference
Vancouver, British Columbia
August 1-4, 2002



Handweavers Guild
of America, Inc.
VOLUME XXXII NO.4
ISSUE 128
Fall 2001

Convergence 2002 Presents



Louise Lemieux-Bérubé

Louise Lemieux Bérubé, a Jacquard weaver, is the co-founder and director of the Montréal Centre for Contemporary Textiles, where she teaches computer-assisted textile design. She has written the textbook, *Le Tissage Createur* (Creative Weaving), and her woven works have been widely exhibited. At Convergence, her lecture, *I Have a Dream: a Jacquard Loom for Every Weaver!* will be presented on both Friday and Saturday mornings. She will also lead a four-day preconference workshop, *Introduction to Jacquard Weaving*, and a seminar at Convergence, *Issues in Fiber Education*, with panelists Jane Kidd, Sharon Marcus, and Ruth Scheuing. See article on page 33.



Reiko Sudo

Reiko Sudo of Tokyo, Japan, has been the textile designer for NUNO since 1984 and became the director in 1990. She also lectures at the Faculty of Textiles at the Museum of Art University. Her works are in permanent collections throughout the world. Sudo's keynote address at Convergence on Friday evening, August 2, *Sense and Skill*, will focus on traditional textile techniques being shaped by generations of sense and skill to become the contemporary textiles of today. See article on page 35.



Mary Frame

Mary Frame has been studying the textiles of Peru since 1974 and is the author of many articles and the book, *Textiles Chuquibamba*. Her background as a weaver and spinner continues to shape her research on reconstructing ancient techniques, identifying women's garments and exploring pattern systems. Frame will present a lecture, *Digging into the Past: The Art and Archeology of Andean Textiles*, on Sunday morning, August 4, at the Closing Ceremony for Convergence. Her one-half-day preconference workshop on Tuesday, July 30, *Ancient Peruvian Textiles: A Guided Introduction*, will introduce participants to selected textiles in the collection of the Museum of Anthropology. See article on page 38.



Karen Selk

Karen Selk, co-founder of Treenway Silks Ltd., designs and weaves silk clothing and accessories. She travels and researches the history, culture and heritage of silk traditions throughout the world, sharing her discoveries in workshops, lectures and textile magazines. On Friday evening, August 2, at Convergence, Selk will present *Tidal Treasures*, sharing her knowledge of silk and its history with participants. She will also present a three-day preconference workshop, *Fused Silk Felt*, beginning Sunday, July 28. See article on page 40.

Louise Lemieux-Bérubé



by Christine Spangler

The enormous windows on three sides of the huge room flood it with light and give a spectacular view of downtown Montreal. Rows of looms stand on the shiny hardwood floor along with warping equipment, bobbin winders, shelves of yarn, and dye facilities. In the near right corner is an enormous loom—the French TIS Jacquard—attached to a computer. Further along the corridor there are classrooms, an exhibition space, offices, a machine-knitting lab, and a Macintosh computer lab with ten stations. In the reception area, a shimmering quartet of diaphanous textile forms hangs on the wall as if in flight. This is a weaver's paradise.

It is the Centre des Métiers d'art en Construction Textile (The Montreal Center for Contemporary Textile Art, MCCT). Its founder and director is the sparkling Louise Lemieux-Bérubé. Master weaver, computer-aided weaving pioneer, author, school founder, exhibiting fine artist, art historian, curator, master teacher in two languages, and even politician, Bérubé has accomplished much in the last twenty years.

Studying with Bérubé during one of her two-week summer workshops in Jacquard weaving was a pleasure. She teaches these small workshops in perfect English, although her first language is French. With a computer for each student, she clearly and patiently guides students.

Eight students from Canada and the United States spent the first week creating a sampler of twenty-five techniques, learning the basic steps in translating a sketch into Jacquard cloth, and learning some of the structural possibilities of Jacquard. The second week we worked out problems related to our individual projects.

Recently Bérubé reflected on her career (via e-mail) while she toured Australia with her *e-textiles* show and lectured in Victoria and New South Wales.

She began her textile career as a young mother with two children at home—with a fashion/sewing background, she made garments for businesswomen and wedding dresses. "I was not very happy with the kind of fabrics my clients were bringing me or with what was available in fabric stores in Montreal. One day I saw a show on television in which a well-known Quebec weaver, Lucien Desmarais, and a well-known fashion designer, Marielle Fleury, presented their collection of handwoven garments. I was very excited about the woven fabrics, and the next day I contacted Lucien Desmarais for a weaving class."

Bérubé took her first class about 1970 and quickly mastered structure and design. In the first years she wove linen and cotton clothing and sold her finely woven shirts and dresses at the Quebec Craft Council's annual Christmas show and in small, specialized boutiques around Montreal.

During the early 1980s, her work took a new turn. "I was not completely satisfied with my sewing and weaving," says Bérubé. "As my children were older and in school, I was searching for a new career. Since I was a teenager, I had wanted to be a teacher



Louise Lemieux-Bérubé. *Poppies*, 1999; cotton, linen, metallics; 42 by 42 inches. Photograph by Michel Roy.



Louise Lemieux-Bérubé. *Flora*, 1999; cotton, linen, metallics; 42 by 42 inches. Photograph by Michel Roy.



Louise Lemieux-Bérubé. "Sterile Fields" by José Navas, 1997; cotton, linen, metallics; 42 by 60 inches. Photograph by Michel Roy.

or an artist. I chose art history, because there was no university degree in fine craft or design in those years in Montreal. I wanted to keep a close connection with my textile ambitions, and fine art departments were not really supportive of craft professions."

Bérubé found that her studies in art history changed her approach to textiles. "I did an in-depth study of how color applied to textiles and, more specifically, to weaving. I realized that it was not fashion or clothing that interested me the most—it was the fabrics themselves," says Bérubé.

She began to explore the relationship between textiles and computers, studying in France and at the Rhode Island School of Design. When she finished her degree, she went to France and met with weavers who were starting to use the computer. "I first studied [for] one week with Henri Lazennec, who was already involved in designing software for the handweaver. I met Oliver Masson and François Roussel who were working with Lazennec. The following year, Roussel came to Montreal on my invitation to give a computer weaving class. I met with Roussel or Masson almost every year after that, exchanging our experience and views for the future of Pointcarré software." In Montreal she facilitated the publication of their book, *Network Drafting and Shaft Weaving*. "I found [Roussel and Masson] so brilliant and passionate about weaving and computerized weaving!" she exclaims.

Bérubé is also vitally interested in her community and in the state of the arts in Quebec. In 1983 she was elected and served three four-year terms as city councilor in Lasalle, and from 1990 to 2000 she served as president of the Quebec Craft Council. "These experiences certainly gave me confidence in myself," she says. "I discovered and developed new abilities. I became a better communicator [and] a good administrator, which facilitates my role as the founder and director of MCCT.

In between she co-founded MCCT and wrote a 500-page textbook of weaving, *Le Tissage Createur* (Creative Weaving).

She feels the central mission of the Center is to develop the professional crafts of textile construction. "This mission has three aspects—education, research and promotion," says Bérubé. "...we offer a three-year, college-level program in constructed textiles, mainly knitting and weaving, in collaboration with a public college in Montreal (College du Viex Montreal)."

Different aspects of research in weaving, knitting, felting, and embroidery are initiated by inviting established artists to the Center. Through the acquisition of the best equipment and by supporting researchers in their endeavors, the Center offers services and facilities to other artists and researchers worldwide. "We [also] try everything to bring textiles to the professional scene, locally and internationally. We are doing our best to develop a close relationship with other related fields like industrial textile design and fashion."

When asked what woven textiles have taught her as an artist, Bérubé replies, "Weaver-artists have to be both scientific and creative. You cannot create if you do not master the tools. The appreciation and understanding of woven textiles have developed my sense of touch; it has also developed an understanding that cannot be, or stay, superficial. I have to study every aspect of a new idea. What you see, in life as in textiles, is more complex than you first think."

Christine Spangler is an accomplished dobby weaver and novice Jacquard weaver. She teaches textiles in the Fine Art Department at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Louise Bérubé will present a lecture at Convergence 2002 Vancouver, I Have A Dream: A Jacquard Loom for Every Weaver! And a seminar, Issues in Fiber Education. She will also lead a four-day preconference workshop, Introduction to Jacquard Weaving.