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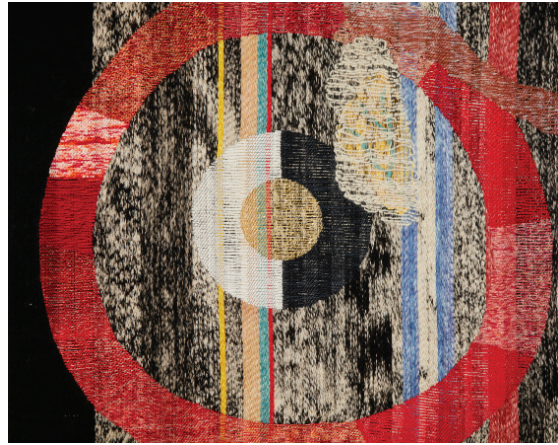
Bhakti Ziek, Tali Weinberg, Jovencio de la Paz,
Anastatia Spicer, Susie Taylor, Ann Morton

A Tenuous Thread

February 23 - April 26, 2024

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, February 23, 5-7 PM



Master weaver Bhakti Ziek unravels a globe-spanning textile history with monumental, suspended weaving that encapsulates a lifetime dedication and respect for all forms of fiber work.

(February 2024) *Bhakti Ziek: A Tenuous Thread* is a contemporary fiber art retrospective that begins 1,470 years ago with the theft of silkworms from China. In 552 AD, the Byzantine Emperor sent two monks to China to steal the secrets of silk production. With silkworm larvae stuffed in the hollows of their walking sticks, the monks slipped by the guards of the Silk Road and returned to the Byzantine Empire with their wiggly cargo intact, marking the end of China's silk supremacy. In the 1970s, Bhakti Ziek wove this textile-related espionage tale into her thesis project at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Ziek's exhibition features this monumental, suspended tapestry series along with selections from six decades of the master weaver's output exploring the dissemination of knowledge in craft community and the remarkable storytelling potential of fiber art. The exhibition is a tribute to Ziek's teaching career, featuring an installation of her backstrap loom surrounded by dozens of her weaving studies, and works by five of her former students. *A Tenuous Thread* opens with a reception at form & concept on Friday, February 23, 5-7 PM. Starting Thursday February 29, Ziek will be in the gallery weaving on her floor loom every Thursday and Saturday for the duration of the exhibition.

"I didn't intend to be a weaver; it began as a tenuous thread, but it became my lifeline," says Ziek. In the early 70s, Ziek embarked on a journey to Latin America to study textile arts and trace links between disparate cultures, ideologies, and systems of knowledge. As the Vietnam War, soaring inflation, and a cultural revolution tore at America's social fabric, Ziek honed her fiber practice with the help of her mentors' grace and her humble and assiduous disposition. Unlike the Byzantine monks, Ziek returned to her homeland with her teachers' blessings and the respect of the master artisans who guided her. "I have tried to live a holistic life, honoring my general curiosity, acknowledging the wonderful diversity of human societies while noting the similarities of our species," says Ziek, "In essence, I see my life as the latest iteration in the long line of weavers that stretch back beyond recorded history. I feel blessed to be in this lineage."

Ziek has honored her kinship to humanity's weaving lineage with her storied career as an educator, passing on weaving to generations of students with an emphasis on empathy, respect, and curiosity. Scores of these pupils remain woven into the fabric of Ziek's current life and have gone on to become distinguished artists and educators themselves, some of whom will be featured alongside Ziek in this retrospective, opening a figurative and material dialogue between a teacher and her students that evokes the respectful knowledge sharing essential to textile craft and innovation.

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For press or image inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@formandconcept.center.

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BIOGRAPHY

Bhakti Ziek is an advocate for weaving in all of its forms, as exemplified by her teaching at an industrial textile program (Philadelphia College of Textiles & Science [PCT&S], tenured), where she exhibited her weavings as an art form. She has also taught at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of Kansas, and Arizona State University. She has also been proud to mentor students at non-traditional facilities, such as Penland School of Crafts, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, and Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts. Many of her students and collaborators have stayed current in her life and gone on to run programs on their own merits.

Over her lifetime, Ziek has become an expert in weaving technology. Her two co-authored books (*Weaving on a Backstrap Loom* and *The Woven Pixel: Designing for Jacquard and Dobby Looms Using Photoshop*) serve as bookends on her long weaving career.

Ziek's work is in many collections, including the Racine Art Museum, WI; Whitman College at Princeton University, NJ; the Museum of Arts and Design, NYC, NY; the Spencer Museum, KS; and the USA Embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania. Her exhibitions include prestigious venues, such as the Rijswijk Textile Biennial in The Netherlands, the New England Biennial at deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, the Morris Gallery at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the USA Embassy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

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 and teach the next generation of weavers.

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