



Annette Kaplan

Comments About Annette Kaplan's Tapestries

"... Ms. Kaplan has succeeded to a remarkable degree, in meeting the challenges of exceedingly complex mechanical devices. In addition to making a strong aesthetic statement, her work reflects her fascination with and thorough understanding of her medium."

Rita Adrosko
Curator, Division of Textiles
Smithsonian Institution February 28, 1978

"... Annette Kaplan is one of the highly talented and disciplined artists who have been inspired by the processes of a particular medium to create unique works of art ..."

Elena Canavier Assistant for the Arts, Mrs. Mondale's Staff Office of the Vice President
(Formerly: Crafts Coordinator, Visual Arts, National Endowment for the Arts), February 1978

"... Your proposal ... was in the group of finalists considered by the Panel ..."

J. Price Gittinger Coordinator, McNamara Fellowship Program
Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, March 18, 1983

"... You have been selected as a candidate."

Wayne S. Peterson, Chief American Republics Branch USIA , Fulbright Committee, April 7, 1983

"... Ms. Kaplan is a very well trained artist, as well as a seasoned and productive journeyman in a number of media. Her tapestry work is especially impressive."

David Frey , Business Consultant & Art Collector , October 22, 1983

"Annette Kaplan's black and white tapestries are striking. She has employed the possibilities offered, but seldom explored by artists, in using the jacquard loom. She is an inventive weaver, stimulated as an artist and as a technician to use the capability of her tools ..."

Lloyd Herman, Director
Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution , December 3, 1980



Annette Kaplan

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"... Everyone is equally impressed with the high purpose and dedication she brings to her unique art form. She is indeed an artist that will produce memorable works ..."

Samuel Phillips, Art Collector
November 23, 1981

"... she is a serious artist and has remarkable energy in pursuing new ideas which she can use creatively. The number of exhibitions of her work which she has presented attests both to her creativity and her energy in getting her work recognized."

Lloyd Herman, Renwick Gallery
National Collection of Fine Arts,
Smithsonian Institution
January 24, 1980

"The illustrations you sent of your works demonstrated to me that your tapestry shows research work and personal realization ..."

Walter Zanini, General Curator
Fundacao Bienal de Sao Paulo
October 1982

".. Ms. Kaplan has the most interesting didactic resources and a deep commitment to her work."

Professor Anna Carolina K. P. Regner
Porto Alegre, Brazil
August 1983

Tapestries by Annette Kaplan were first exhibited in 1972, and her work is now in the Smithsonian Institution Art Collection, the Phillips Collection, the National Collection of Fine Arts and the Health, Education, and Welfare Building, all in Washington, D.C. Her art work also appears in the Gulf Resource Art Collection, Houston; IBM World Headquarters Art Collection, Armonk, New York; Bank of America Corporate Collection, San Francisco, Sir Roland Penrose, curator of the Picasso Estate, plus numerous other public and private collections in the United States, England, Spain, France, and Brazil.



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INTRODUCTION to The Phillips Collection Solo Show Catalog

Tapestries and walls have long had a natural affinity for each other. The bright colors, soft textures and intricate patterns of fiber works contribute complementary qualities to solid walls of stone and concrete. textile wall hangings have also been used to provide physical as well as visual warmth – and, given the current energy crisis, insulation may once again become a factor in the selection of wall art.

The United States has had no major tradition of architectural tapestries – the great weaving studios have been and remain centered in Europe. Our textile arts have been associated with the useful fabrics of the home- woven bedspreads, embroideries, small rugs, and quilts- created by thrifty and artistic women.

Today, however, the textile arts in America are flourishing in new and innovative ways. Perhaps we can be thankful for the lack of a strong historical tradition in this area; for the contemporary works are being created by artists, not by artisans. The result is a rich and provocative outpouring of textile art. Instead of artisans faithfully executing cartoons drawn by painters, we have trained artists exploring the techniques, processes, methods and materials of the fiber media.

Annette Kaplan is one of the highly talented and disciplined artists who have been inspired by the processes of a particular medium to create unique works of art. Her inspiration came from the technology of production weaving.

Given the great and growing demand for architectural fiber works, it seems inevitable that we will soon have shops of highly specialized artisans executing the designs of artists. Therefore it seems that we should take special pleasure in the present time- and in this exhibition – for it marks a particular creative moment in the history of fiber art. A time when artist and artisan are one and the same, weaving both aesthetic and technical knowledge into the work.

Elena Canavier,
Assistant for the Arts,
Mrs. Mondale's Staff
Office of the Vice President



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COMMENTS ON THE ARTIST'S TECHNIQUE for The Phillips Collection Solo Show Catalog

Annette Kaplan is one of the very few contemporary textile artists who has successfully used a loom equipped with a Jacquard mechanism.

This mechanism makes use of punched cards to control the development of woven patterns. After each interlacing of the design is plotted on graph paper and a card is punched for each horizontal line (weft), the Jacquard mechanism makes it possible to weave patterns with relatively little effort. Motifs can be handled as straight repeats or as vertical and/or horizontal mirror images. It is also possible to rearrange the order of the cards to form new designs.

The Jacquard was designed by Joseph Marie Jacquard in Lyon, France in 1804 as an aid to weavers of elaborately patterned silks. Until that time, drawlooms, which were used for the same purpose, required a weaver and one or two drawboys or drawgirls to lift different combinations of warp yarns in the process of weaving large-scale patterns in brocarded cloths and damasks. The drawloom was less accurate and more time – and labor- consuming than the Jacquard which replaced it.

Ironically, Ms. Kaplan, in executing her most recent works, has gone back to a modern version of the drawloom, a loom she finds more flexible than the Jacquard. It also frees her from the demands of hand punching and setting up the Jacquard cards.

Ms. Kaplan has succeeded to a remarkable degree, in meeting the challenges of exceeding complex mechanical devices. In addition to making a strong aesthetic statement, her works reflect her fascination with and thorough understanding of her medium

Rita J Adrosko
Curator, Division of Textiles
Smithsonian Institution
February, 28, 1978



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The Pericole Gallery Solo Retrospective Show, NYC 1980

Seen at Pericole Gallery, the tapestries of Annette Kaplan are perhaps a bit different than most of contemporary fiber art as they do not emphasize texture; rather, their concentration is, like painting, design. This exhibit is a retrospective of works from 1974 to the present, with the pieces done up until 1979 executed mainly in black and white; after that, the artist began to work more extensively with color. The black and white pieces are rich in their special geometry; compelling effects are achieved through intricate fractured grids and sections of highlight.

Such an optic achievement gives an impression of dimensionality, particularly in the instances where Kaplan turns the grid loose, allowing the pattern to branch out and develop along its own lines. The technical constant of the medium, the loom, dictates the grid as being the structural basis for all the tapestries; it is the artist's obvious skill which can modify that demand and adapt it for her own aims.

"Energies in Silver," a horizontal that stretches thirteen feet along the wall at a height of five feet, is woven from wool and linen and is seen as a major breakthrough in the works that deal with color. Yellow, red, blue, black, and white strands soar through the composition in an asymmetric rhythm, sometimes in hard and sharp configurations, but more often in looser images that are found in the earlier work. The patterns are more intimate in tone and construction, as they are a visual translation of a musical score for piano and flute. Looking at "Energies in Silver," one can almost hear the music to which it corresponds.

Annette Kaplan's art is very personal purposeful; she has chosen a difficult medium through which to express her thoughts and emotions, and has successfully done so with her extraordinary talents.