

# LENORE KANTOR TETKOWSKI

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## WORKING WITH FIBERS

by Lenore Kantor Tetkowski

Working with fibers fascinates me because of the infinite possibilities. Weaving is perhaps the most ancient craft, one perfected by birds and beavers long before humans, who discovered early on how to rub and twist fleece into crudely spun yarn. Primitive weaving devices from different parts of the world are displayed in museums, but weaving soon became intricately decorative and highly developed. Today we have such new fibers as tencel and nylon and machines that are amazingly fast, but we have not surpassed the quality of such fabrics as ancient Peruvian textiles.

In 1944, before I graduated from Newark State (which later became Kean University), I was already hooked on the magic of the loom. As an art teacher, I introduced hundreds of students to weaving by providing them with looms that ranged from simple cardboard devices to inkle

looms and complex floor looms, where their creativity flourished. The tactile experience of handling the yarns as they move and interlock and grow is exceptionally satisfying. What a contrast from today's high-tech electronic world!

One can choose yarns that are thick or thin, shiny or matte, fuzzy or smooth, bright or dull, light or dark, and then determine how to interconnect them to achieve various effects. Different weaving techniques allow different design possibilities. When I learned to work with two layers of warp, as in double-weave, I used my art background together with my love of math to control exchanges of shapes and colors. Each fiber wall hanging is an original expression. Some allow light to pass through and may be seen from both sides. Some have two opposite sides—light on the front with dark on the back, and dark on the front with light on the back. This experience led me to twist and turn some woven parts into three-dimensional designs. Weaving is a slow, labor intensive process, and new ideas come faster than it is possible to realize them all.