

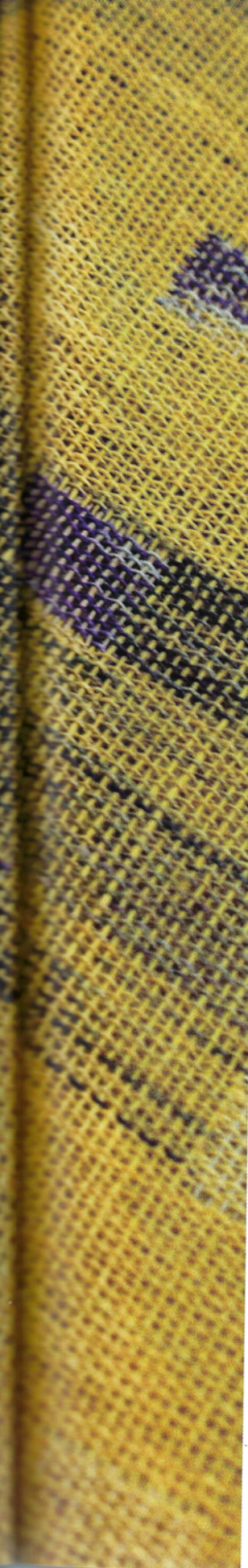
# MATERIAL MEANING

## A LIVING LEGACY OF ANNI ALBERS



**T**here are icons in all art mediums. Textile artists who weave, or who began as weavers, seem to consistently relate in inspiration, if not directly, to the Bauhaus teacher and artist Anni Albers. Albers' teaching continued to encourage and enthuse weavers at the former Black Mountain College (North Carolina) for a significant portion of her career. The seminal works *On Weaving* and *On Design* are destined to be found in the backbone of weavers' libraries, and the well-worn copies are often reverentially referred to. Artist and curator Cameron Taylor-Brown relates, "...when I closely examine her weavings and writings, I can always find something new that provides fresh insights and inspiration."

**BY TRUDI VAN DYKE**



BECCY FLAX



The exhibition *Material Meaning: A Living Legacy of Anni Albers* explores her enduring influence by presenting ten contemporary American artists and designers working with textiles. The Craft in America Center (Los Angeles) will present the exhibition July 13 through September 21, 2019. Guest Curator Cameron Taylor-Brown, with her extensive research into Albers' work and writings, reinforces the understanding of their continued impact on current practitioners. The fields of art, hand weaving, education, and textile design continue to show the hand of Albers' encouragements. The exhibition coincides with the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Bauhaus, where Albers studied and taught. This exhibition can only begin to scratch the surface of Albers' extensive impact on artists' exploration and experimentation with fibers and weaving.

Albers is celebrated for taking the ancient craft of hand weaving and blending it with the language of modern art. She is considered one of the most influential 20<sup>th</sup> century textile designers. Her work broke the limitations of the medium as well as those placed on women—blurring the lines between traditional craft and art. Priyesh Mistry, one of the curators of Albers' recent retrospective at the Tate Modern (London) describes her: "...an artists' artist, and a woman reluctant to label herself as anything at all."

Taylor-Brown, whose work is also exhibited in the show, invited nine additional artists to participate, each of whom draw on different aspects of Albers' artwork and designs. Representative pieces that mirror Albers' varied art and design practices were selected.

OPPOSITE PAGE:  
BACKGROUND:  
Marcia Weiss,  
**Dialogue I** (Detail)

INSET:  
Anni Albers,  
ca. 1939;  
Photographer  
unknown; Photo  
courtesy of the  
Josef and Anni  
Albers Foundation

THIS PAGE  
TOP:  
Marcia Weiss,  
**Dialogue I**; 2011;  
linen; double  
cloth warp ikat;  
28 x 12 in.

BOTTOM:  
Cameron  
Taylor-Brown,  
guest curator



The exhibition includes artwork, woven prototypes, experiments, and functional woven textiles. The project evolved over several years, and artists were thoughtfully researched for inclusion. Throughout the run of the exhibition there will be artist and curator talks and workshops.

The artists included in this dynamic exhibition are Samantha Bittman, Lois Bryant, Christy Matson, Jennifer Moore, Brittany Wittman McLaughlin, Rachel Snack, Susie Taylor, Cameron Taylor-Brown, Suzanne Tick, and Marcia Weiss.

Throughout the representative works in this exhibition stringent geometrics are offset by a sense of spontaneity and movement. The artists have worked to evolve lines and shapes into dynamic rhythms. Working within what might be conceived as the constraints of a grid, the artists have defied expectations and invite the viewers to discard likelihoods and so prompt their appreciation of new directions. Reflecting the same sensibilities as Albers, the artists relate to the structure of the fabric and materials used, experiment with all kinds of fibers, and celebrate the inherent tactile qualities of the medium.

THIS PAGE:  
LEFT: Cameron Taylor-Brown, **Static Animation/Loops in Line** (Detail)

ABOVE: Cameron Taylor-Brown, **Static Animation/Loops in Line**; 2008; cotton, linen and wool yarns, fabrics, wood; multi-layer weave, embroidery, stencil, piecework; 63 x 48 x 1.5 in.

OPPOSITE PAGE  
LEFT: Jennifer Moore, **Parquet Permutations**; 2018; 20/2 mercerized cotton; 7-block doubleweave; 41 x 13 in.

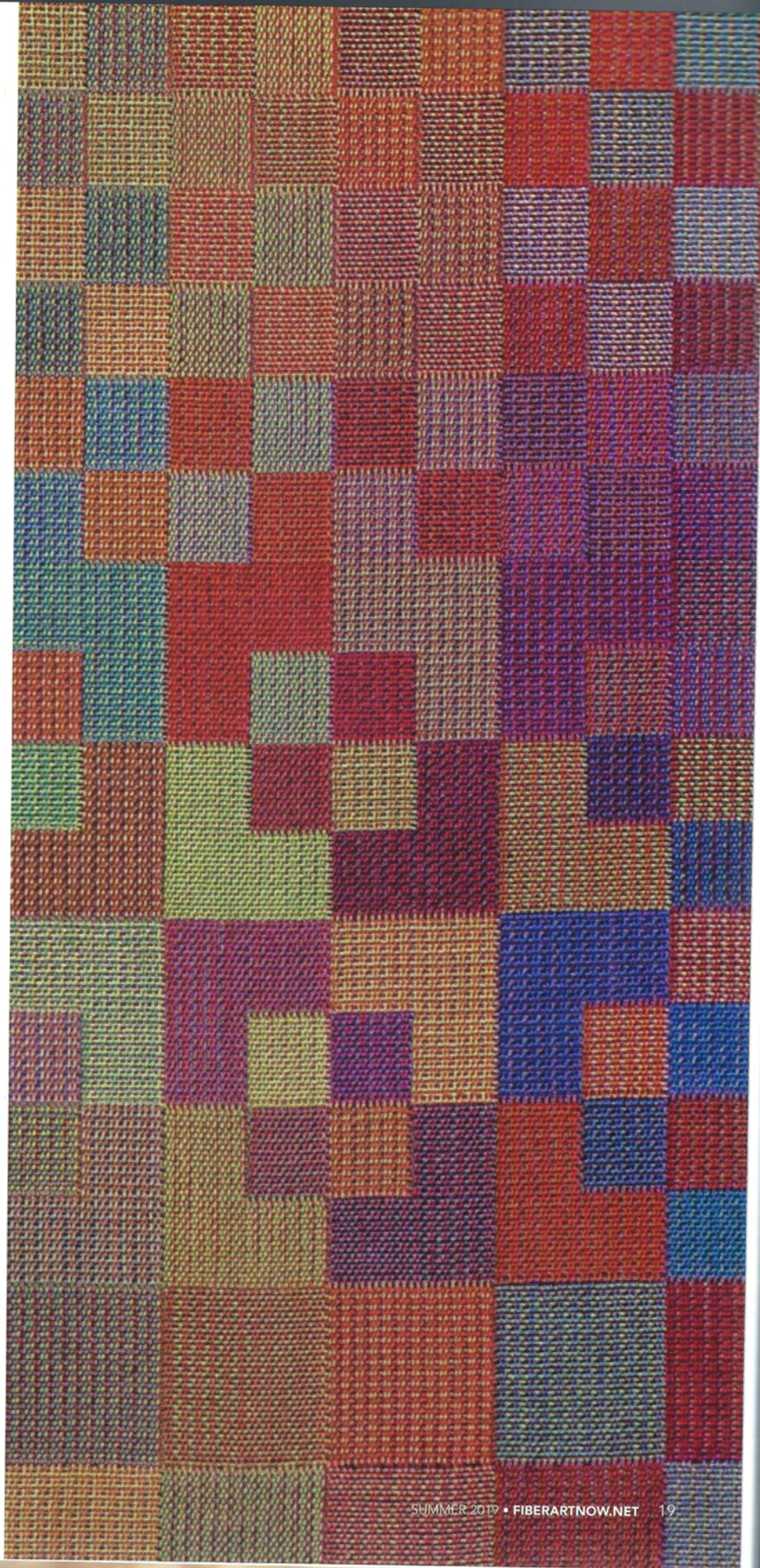
RIGHT: Jennifer Moore, **Parquet Permutations** (Detail)

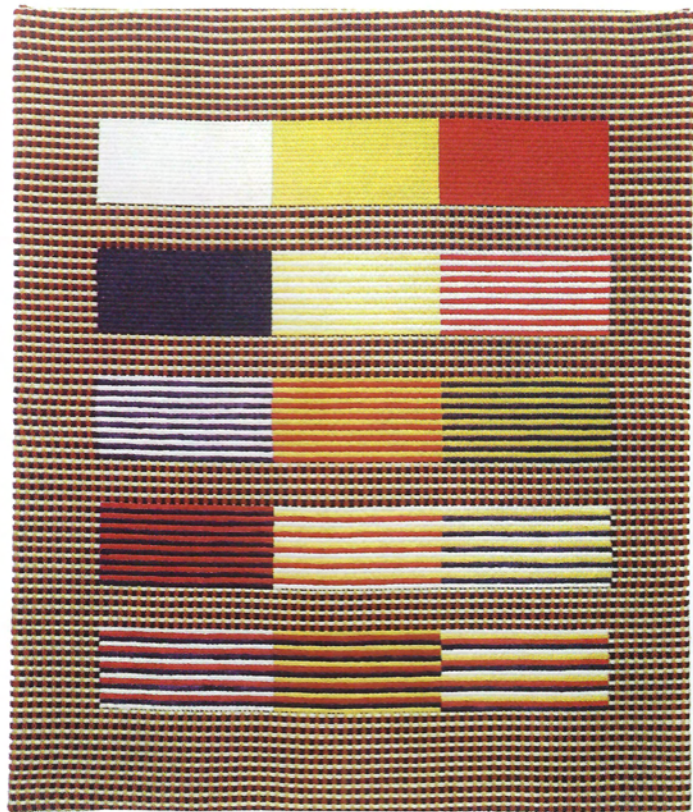
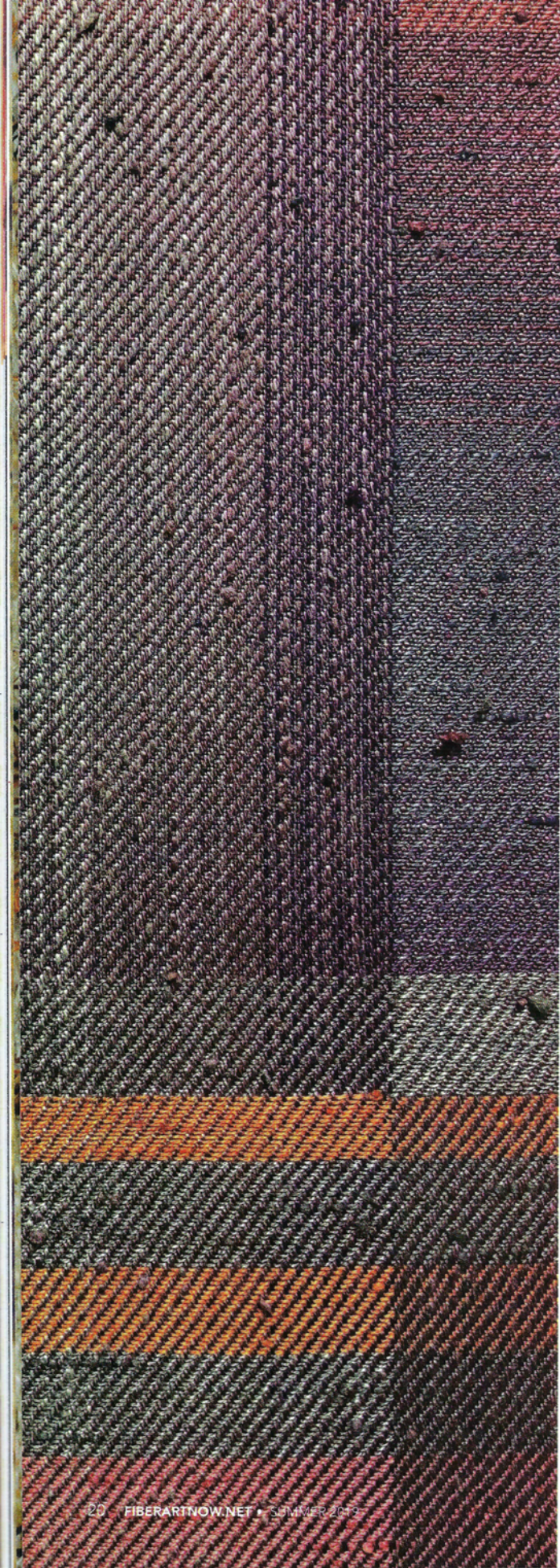
DANIEL CLAY



In her artist statement, Suzanne Tick writes that *Spring Green* explores “innovation through the transformation of refuse into a woven sculpture with deep personal meaning.” Further, she shares, her approach would resonate with Albers’ in that one should begin with the fundamental principles of weaving while pushing innovation in materials and weave structures. “As a structuralist, it is more important to create an interesting texture than a pattern.”

Jennifer Moore’s weavings reflect inspiration from Albers’ signature double- and triple-weave geometric pieces. Albers’ work was woven with jacquard equipment that allowed for complex loom-controlled patterning. Moore mirrors the geometric complexity of those works on much simpler equipment through the technique of double-weave pick up. She often encodes





musical and mathematical information in her oeuvre. Adding to the impact of her woven structures, Moore enhances her work with an exploration of colors and how they visually interact with each other.

Lois Bryant challenges herself by asking, "Can I create compelling imagery by strictly loom-controlled techniques?" Much as Albers reflected, she seeks to create the work with the imagery of the weaving embedded in the very structure of the fabric, not merely applied to the surface. Her work highlights the qualities of the woven surfaces, including the polarization of light on the warp and weft threads and the optical mixing of colors.

Samantha Bittman had the opportunity to complete an artist residency at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation and was deeply moved by the opportunity afforded to weave on Albers' loom and live amongst her works. Bittman is profoundly influenced by the patterns and forms witnessed in nature. Her creativity reflects that influence in her intention to depict her observations in her woven structures and illuminate it in the subjects of her work.

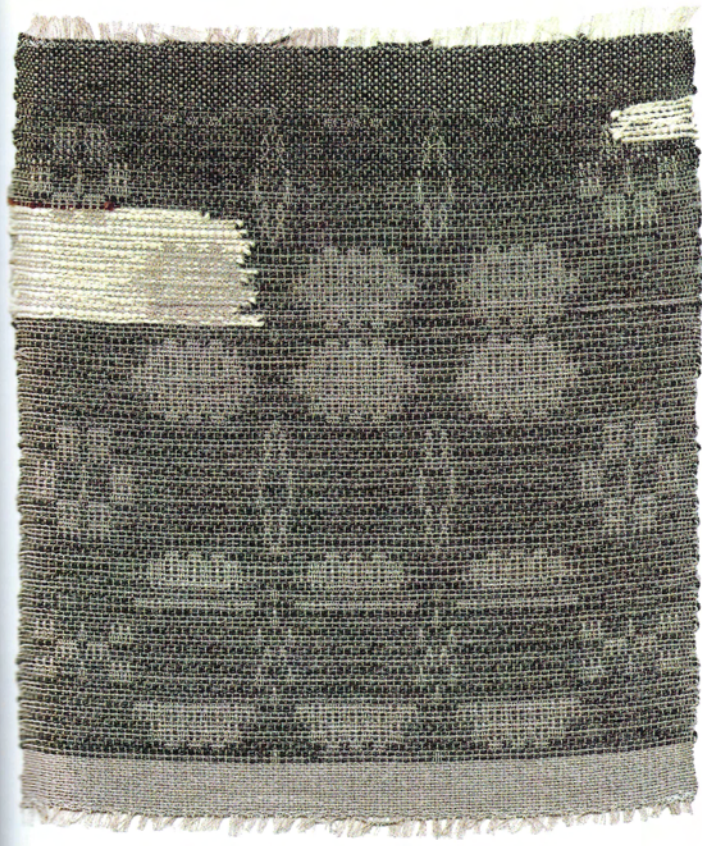
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LEFT: Lois Bryant, **Fog in My Head**; 1981; rayon; 3-block damassé; 18 x 13 in.

ABOVE: Samantha Bittman, **Untitled**; 2018; acrylic on handwoven textile; weaving, painting; 24 x 20 in.

OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT: Rachel Snack, **Weaving No. 12 (Leyland Series)**; 2016; hand dyed silk warp, cotton and wool weft; handwoven on a twelve-harness floor loom, supplemental weft weaving; 12.5 x 11 in.

RIGHT: Susie Taylor, **Untitled (Red Primary)** (Detail); 2017; hand dyed linen; weaving, folding; 28.5 x 20 in.



**Trudi Van Dyke** is an independent curator specializing in fiber and fine craft. She curates exhibitions, speaks about the arts and consults with artists. Her passion is jurying fine art festivals around the country. She can be reached for comments or opportunities at [vandyket@gmail.com](mailto:vandyket@gmail.com).

Marcia Weiss credits part of her joy of weaving as intuitively deviating from a preset plan in her creative process. She reflects on Albers' respect for tactile experiences and of "material in the rough," and she considers her materials for their essential properties of fiber, hand, luster, and surface.

Susie Taylor's work directly relates to Albers' reflection that "simplicity is not simpleness but clarified vision." *Untitled (Red Primary)*, one of Taylor's works in the exhibition, is an altered ground cloth supporting a low relief, geometric composition made from an innovative process that incorporates origami and weaving.

Taylor-Brown worked closely with the supportive staff at the Craft in America Center to ensure the legacy of the exhibition. She extends her special thanks to Amy Jean Porter at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation for providing access to archival photographs and images of Albers' works.

[www.craftinamerica.org](http://www.craftinamerica.org) |  
[www.camerontaylor-brown.com](http://www.camerontaylor-brown.com).

