

The Nature of Things: Essays of a Tapestry Weaver Release Party

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Introduction

Hello everyone. Everyone should be able to hear me. Hello and welcome to the release party for *The Nature of Things: Essays of a Tapestry Weaver* by Tommye McClure Scanlin. My name is Jillian Murphy; I am the Assistant Managing Editor for the University of North Georgia (UNG) Press. We're so excited to share this wonderful tapestry memoir with you today. We're very excited. During the event, please keep your mics muted to prevent background noise and please submit your questions for the Q&A at the end in the chat feature.

With that said, I'm going to go ahead and turn over the event to Pamela Sachant, head of UNG's Department of Visual Arts to introduce Tommye.

Pamela Sachant: Thank you very much. Thank you for inviting me to introduce Tommye Scanlin on this momentous occasion: the publication of *The Nature of Things*. The collected essays on her art and life are part memoir, recollection of moments and moods, events and achievements, and part guide.

Now, before Tommye reacts in horror to the suggestion that she intended her book as a guide, or that she herself is a guide, let me give some context. I have known Tommye since I arrived in Dahlonega 15 years ago and I have felt her hand gently guiding me throughout the years as she guided so many others in her role as artist/educator at UNG from 1972–2009. She describes her journey to become one of the first faculty members at North Georgia College in the Department of Fine Arts, as in large part thanks to others showing *her* the path and helping her to take the first steps. But she traveled the road and completed her Bachelor of Art Education in 1969 and her Masters of Art Education in 1973, both at the University of Georgia (UGA).

As a faculty member in the Department of Fine Arts, Tommye was always aware of the many roles teachers played in addition to explaining and demonstrating. She was her students' escort as they explored their artistic research. She was their mentor during their creative growth at the college. By the time I arrived at the North Georgia College and State University, Tommye had retired as a full-time professor and department head but was still guiding one more generation of weaving students and their studies, which she did until 2009. She also acted as *my* counselor, making gentle suggestions and sometimes nudging, which I figured out at some point was her very understated way of steering me clear of faux pas and major disasters. During that time and since, she was also devoting herself to teaching workshops and longer study programs at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, John C. Campbell Folk School, and Penland School of Crafts, among other craft-based schools. And—oh, joy—the luxury! She was creating her own artwork. After nearly 40 years guiding others, Tommye was free to dedicate her energy and expertise to her photography, drawing, painting, and, ultimately, her weaving.

Which brings us back to *The Nature of Things*. Within its essays, she writes about her subjects, such as “how to look beyond surface appearance in my [Scanlin’s] search for the essence of things,” becoming comfortable working through uncertainty and seemingly aimless meandering—as Tommye calls it, “the flux” that is part of making art, and truly seeing the small things in nature that call to her, spark her imagination, and populate her imagery.

While in her book, Tommye is writing about discoveries, frustrations, sorrows, and accomplishments in her own life, putting those reflections and memories on paper, they become a guide for others. Not giving directions, but offering opportunities to consider, to expand, to lean in a new direction.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce Tommye McClure Scanlin.

Reading

Tommye McClure Scanlin: Let me unmute myself. I don't know if anyone can see me; can you see me? [thumbs up] I really appreciate your being here but first off, Pam, I can hardly speak because I am teared up about that wonderful introduction. I . . . It's hard to know what to say. I just thank you. You've been a mentor to me and many people and you will continue to be so for many, many years.

I went to North Georgia College as a student. I came back as an instructor and I stayed for many years. North Georgia is where my heart is and always will be, and so thank you for that wonderful introduction. Also, thank you to everybody at the UNG Press. It's with a really full heart that I say Thank you to B. J. Robinson and Jillian Murphy and Corey Parson and I'm just very thrilled that they were willing to take on this book and be my first publisher at North Georgia, since North Georgia College and State University—now UNG—means so much to me over the years. I'm also very, very grateful to everybody who encouraged me over the years in my artistic pursuits and am terribly grateful to everybody who has put up with me as an instructor. I see a few of you in the [Zoom] grid there and it's great. I can't tell you how much I've learned from students through the years,

There are a number of people mentioned for appreciation in the beginning of my book, and I know I've left so many out and I'm sorry about that. It's always been a wonderful thing to work with people and to get to know people and to learn from people in many different ways. I'll have to say, I wouldn't have been able to do the artwork and the variety of stuff that I've been engaged in through the years—or spend the last two and a half years collecting my thoughts and images into this manuscript—without the patience and encouragement of a very special person: my husband, Thomas Scanlin.

What I want to do now is show you images from the book and do a few readings. And in the images, I'll also be showing you a few others that aren't in the book. Can you see that? [thumbs up]. So, *The Nature of Things: Essays of a Tapestry weaver*. I grew up in the mountains of North Georgia. A few years ago, as I was preparing a presentation about my work, it occurred to me that my primary source for inspiration has always been found in the world in which I grew up: the fields and the valleys of the southern Appalachian mountains. I credit my mother, Hazel T. McClure, for being my first guide to the beauties that these surroundings hold. She'd often describe the latest wildflowers that she saw on an afternoon walk. After she died, the flower identification book I'd given her came back to me. In it, I saw her notes sprinkled through the margins of the pages, noting where she'd spotted particular flowers.

[Image of road lined by bare trees] That happens to be the road she would walk up-and-down almost every day while she was still able. It was a gravel road for many years and it was the one my sister and I ran up and down, skinned our knees several times, as we fell in the gravel.

Both my sister and I were raised with the expectation to do our best no matter what we pursued and each accomplishment was celebrated with us. My sister and I chose different paths, each in the teaching field. She loved sports and became an early childhood physical education teacher. I loved art and became an art teacher. Mother was proud of both of us. My journey to becoming an artist began simply and has taken a modest path. I haven't traveled extensively to experience a wider world. Most of my years have been spent close to the mountains where I grew up. Everyday, I still find something to see and wonder about and respond to in a physical way. Maybe in a photograph, sketch, or a tapestry. There's a beauty in the limits of time and place. Maybe Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* said it best: "There's no place like home." So I wanted to write to describe the small things where I lived for most of my life and the artworks that came from those observations.

"Once Upon a Time: An Introduction"

As long as I can remember, I wanted to draw pictures. As a child, I heard others say I was the class artist and that encouraged me to think I could be a real artist when I grew up. What I thought an artist did was pretty limited since there wasn't an art program in the rural North Georgia schools I attended. That's the two-room school building behind the class of 1954–55 that you see. My second grade picture is overlaid on top of that picture, and you'll notice me on the right hand side standing next to the teacher. The next year, we moved to a little bit larger school, so I didn't attend a two-room school the whole time, but we still didn't have an art program in the rural North Georgia schools I attended. Even so, the kids in our class happily cut out stenciled holiday decorations for each season that we colored with crayons and taped to the windows and doors. We drew with pencils on our lined notebook paper and illustrated reports and in our spare time, several of us girls drew horses and pretty dresses while some of the boys filled pages with elaborate battle scenes between cowboys and Indians.

One Christmas under the tree, I found the Jon Gnagy *Learn to Draw* kit that included a pad of manilla paper, some sticks of charcoal, and the book of art lessons. I drew every example in the book many times over, and used notebook paper once the drawing paper ran out. The next year, Santa brought a couple of paint by number sets—and how exciting those were. I loved to fill in the printed-out lines on the canvas board with a brush loaded with that juicy, heady-smelling oil paint. Drawing with charcoal and painting with oil paint—those were the things an artist did, I decided. So, the two charcoal drawings you see on the left were done when I was around 14. The paint by number horses were probably done when I was around 11 or 12, maybe 13.

I wound up at North Georgia College to study early elementary education. I did not want to be an elementary education major; I wanted to be an art . . . person, whatever an art person happened to be. At North Georgia, I was an elementary education major because, financially, we needed assistance for me to go to college and I happened to get an education degree-seeking scholarship. In the course of doing classes for elementary education, I happened upon Bob Owens, whose picture you see. Bob was teaching some art ed classes for the School of Education and at the time, there was no art education program at North Georgia. Meeting Bob Owens, taking classes with him, and expressing to him my desire to be an artist, but I had to be an education major, he said “Why don’t you transfer schools and major in art education?”

Oh my goodness, what was that? I had no clue that such a thing existed. So, because of Bob Owens, he directed me as an informal advisor and mentor to the degree program I wound up in, and [I] became an art educator because of him, and I’m forever grateful for meeting him at that early time.

“The Making of a Teacher”

I guess it’s ironic that someone who said she didn’t want to be an education major in college spent the better part of a lifetime going into classrooms and standing in front of students. Young ones, old ones, and all ages in between. Although I didn’t know it at the time, it wasn’t teaching I was resisting when I entered college as an elementary education major. Instead, I feared that making art wasn’t going to be part of my future. Yes, I now know one can be an artist while occupied with another job while occupied with another job for their livelihood. At the time, I just couldn’t see how that was possible. The art education program at the University of Georgia (UGA) that Bob guided me to opened up the way to be intimately connected to the making side of art. Not only were art education, theory, and practice courses part of the curriculum but also studio art classes were required, and those were most important to me.

The three years I spent in middle and high school art classrooms right after graduation offered many pieces of the larger teaching puzzle I began to put together. Each day, I faced teenage students who were either eager to jump into art making or unsure and unafraid to try things. Then there were a few goof-offs, the kids who were putting up with the system while they did as little as they could to get by. I began to see that almost anyone could become motivated to make something in the art class depending

on the approach I used when presenting a project. I also realized that I needed to say the same thing in different ways. Some students could easily see what to do with the demonstration; others had to have a demo and verbal instructions, and a few only needed to refer to a handout. Some would rather plunge right in and try it their own way.

Looking back on my teaching style, I realized that much of it didn't come from the classes of art education in the university degree program. Instead, much of what I understood about teaching came from having a few exceptional teachers as my role models. Each of those had calm, patient ways that showed how they cared both about their students and the process for making and conceptualizing art. I've already mentioned Bob Owens as one of those important teachers but also there was Edwina Bringle. You see Edwina on the right, standing with me and one of my students, [Allie Dudley]. Edwina is who I encountered first at Penland School of Craft in about 1975 and she began my path into the wonderful world of weaving. Archie Brennan and Susan Martin Maffei both have been my tapestry guides through the years. Like Bob Owens, unfortunately, Archie is no longer in the world with us, but their bright lights continue to motivate me and many other people every day.

I walk into each new teaching experience filled with anticipation about where the journey we're about to embark upon will take us, even if it's only a few days we'll be spending together, immersed in the wonders of image making and tapestry weaving.

"Finding the Way to Tapestry"

I mentioned there wasn't art instruction at the schools I attended in my youth, so my early art-making experiences were limited. The *Learn to Draw* kit introduced me to charcoal and most of the drawings I made in high school were done with that medium. As a college student, I was introduced to other visual art forms that offered many more ways to create images. I began to understand that fabrics and fiber could be artistic disciplines with a variety of methods and techniques. Of course, quilts were familiar because we had many of those at home, made by women in the family. I also knew about weaving on a loom but didn't know anyone who did the craft. Discovering that there were contemporary artists working with fabric and fiber in creative ways was a revelation and I wanted to discover this newly created avenue as much as possible.

What I'm flipping through here in these slides are some of the things I was doing in the 1970s and the early 1980s. Because I loved drawing and painting so much, though, I continued to be drawn to image making with the fiber and fabric methods I was exploring. These are some examples of what I was doing before I was doing tapestry. In 1988, because of a very wonderful summer of serendipity, I finally began to weave tapestry. And now, over 50 years since my first real art class, I still want to be an artist and three decades after beginning to weave tapestry, I still find it to be a challenging medium in which to work. In spite of those challenges, the beautiful surface quality of tradition handwoven tapestry still draws me. I know my childhood heart's desire to be an artist is truly being fulfilled with every pass of the yarn when I weave tapestry.

"Tapestry: A Closer Look"

A bit of a closer look at tapestry. I explain it a bit in the book and I'm just going to talk a little bit about it here, looking at a few slides. Tapestry is woven on a loom. Various kinds of looms can be used. I use upright looms of different sizes. This is the largest loom I have, a 60-inch wide one. The thread on the loom is called the warp; what you weave with is called weft. Various colors can weave back and forth and bit by bit, the tapestry builds up.

I find every stage of weaving a tapestry to be both physically and mentally engaging. Although my thoughts may occasionally wander along with music or an audiobook, I have to snap right back to the reality of the tapestry as my eyes and hands demand the attention to detail and process. This is part of the complexity of the simple plain weave of tapestry that continues to both amaze and delight me every day.

"Seeking Inspiration"

Designs: where do they come from? What will spark an idea that will develop into a tapestry? I continue to find myself challenged to discover ways to tap into the creative process and find inspiration for art making. I search for ideas and once I find them, I'm then confronted with how to turn those ideas into artworks. Early on, I realized I was especially drawn to the work of artists who used the natural world as subjects. Some of the artists whose works strongly called to me were Dutch still life painters and their images filled with lush and vibrant plants. Vincent van Gogh's turbulent views of the world, Charles Burchfield's watercolors depicting symbolically the scenes and sounds of nature. Georgia O'Keefe's beautiful celebrations of small things, and Alex Katz's massively large views of grasses, flowers, and

trees. Poems by Billy Collins and Wendell Berry expressing their encounters with nature also moved me. Emily Dickenson's writings held eloquent insights and observations of the natural world that went far beyond simple descriptions. Quotes like Byron Herbert Reece's, "I know a valley green with corn where Nottley's waters roil and run . . ." find their way into my thoughts when I walk in the woods or fields of North Georgia.

"Time Out to Take a Look"

Walking in the woods delights me but I'm not a bold hiker. I don't seek the wild places for my walks. Instead, joy from these walks comes when I'm on land that's familiar and safe. Meandering hikes offer plenty to contemplate any time of the year. One of the things I wonder about is what a walk in these woods would've been like 200 years ago, so different in many ways and yet it would've been much the same in others. The trees would've been huge like the few that remain in Old Grove Forest, like the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest in North Carolina. No contrails from passing jets would be seen or 4-Wheelers heard. But when I walk amidst the canopy of leaves in the summer, the buzz of insects and the melody of bird songs fill the air, just as surely as they did in the 1800s. In late October and November, the brilliant colors of fall visually shout against the bluest skies in the world. In winter, my feet crunch in the frost covered ground and my breath precedes me on the trail. My heart hurts from the sublime beauty of the new greens of spring.

[Referring to the pictures on screen] There's some favorite places in these mountains and a place along the creek that my husband and I go to periodically. A friend's property in western North Carolina. The Hambidge Center in extreme North Georgia. And the Lillian E. Smith Center. All of these places are ones I return to whenever I can. As I roam through the woods, I wonder how I might possibly represent some of the beauty I'm observing. I know the images I'm making will only dimly represent what I see and feel. I realize noticing is the first step of many on my way from a fleeting observation to finished tapestry. Many hours of making and refining images are ahead of me as I attempt to create a tapestry that will create the essence of the place, the time, and my feelings of the experience—brief though it may have been. The woods and valleys of the Blue Ridge mountains of Southern Appalachia give me a wealth of subject matter to contemplate. My hope is that something of the sense of wonder and gratitude I hold for the nature of things breathes through the spirit of the tapestries I weave.

"Small Things"

Intimate features of the world around us, those are found in the exquisite details of small things. The trees, rather than the forest, are what I see first, but then I want to look even closer. I'm constantly amazed by the similar shapes of thousands of leaves on the oak tree in the yard. And yet, everyone of those leaves of the same tree have subtle variations. Pattern and repetition abound in nature's forms but with remarkable variety within the sameness.

"Spirals"

In the springtime a few years ago, my husband and I were staying at our getaway in the woods. One morning, I decided to walk along the edge of the nearby creek and along the way, I noticed the tiny spiraling green form that emerged from the leaf litter. When I stopped to take a closer look, I suddenly realized it was a fiddlehead, with its fern frond coming up. As I looked around, I saw there were hundreds of fiddle heads, almost carpeting the forest floor as they pushed their way through the dead leaves from the past season. Why hadn't I spotted those before? I'd been out in the woods many times, but I'd never noticed the renewal of ferns as they emerged as fiddleheads. I was entranced and wanted to design a tapestry to record my discovery of this tiny miracle of life. Immediately, I started taking photos and was soon back in the woods with sketchbook and pencils. After many studies, I began weaving a tapestry that is called "Spring Profusion." Woven in 2008, it was the first of those that came from my fiddlehead obsession. The title encapsulated my feelings of coming upon that first fiddlehead and suddenly becoming aware of all the others surrounding it. [Referring to pictures] Those are a few more of the fiddlehead tapestries I've done through the years.

"Feathers"

I once heard that birds are descendants of dinosaurs. For some reason, that thought captivated me. Each news report of another finding in the fossil record showing a link between those ancient ancestors and the birds that are among us today is thrilling to me. I love to think of the crows that are in the yard right now as distant cousins of a velociraptor.

Crows especially fascinate me. I watch their bodies moving through the grass, bodies moving back and forth in a husky rhythm as they pick up walnuts and pecans. But it seems that as soon as I begin to watch them from my window, they up and fly away. Do they know I'm watching? If they do, how do they sense my attention? I make no movement other than to glance up and then off they go. Do they have extra sensory attention to alert them to my notice? Once afternoon, I heard the caws of many crows next to

the pecan tree next to the house. I'd been trying to see if I could sketch some of the birds when they'd be distracted with their nut harvesting. I rushed to the window with pencil and sketchpad and sat down and soon I was ready to draw—and off they flew. I sat there, waiting for them to return, but of course they didn't. Finally, I began to notice there were many other small birds in the branches, busily pecking at insects in the bark. That particular lesson from the crows was perhaps "be patient, wait for the unexpected."

"Stones"

Stones speak to me, not in words but in images. I'm not sure when I first began to notice stones, but I remember as a child I would collect pieces of mica and quartz when I was searching for arrowheads around my home. Later, I spent a summer as a counselor at a camp for girls in Rabun County Georgia. When out exploring, we would often find small pieces of amethyst and garnets embedded in the nearby banks. As I collected stones, I noticed the textures and colors and loved to see the distinct shadows made by the edges of stones when strong sunlight struck one side.

[Referring to the Lillian E. Smith chimney] These particular stones in the old stone chimney are especially significant to me. These are from the Lillian E. Smith Center. Lillian Smith was a mid-20th century civil rights and social justice advocate. She's buried beside that stone chimney. Her grave marker has a quote from one of her writings that I've found very meaningful through the years. "Death can kill a man, that is all it can do to him. It cannot end his life because of memory." I did several paintings of the stones of that chimney and as I worked on the paintings, the quote from that grave marker kept running through my mind like a mantra, especially the ending phrase, "because of memory." After returning home, I designed a tapestry based on one of the paintings. The tapestry I called "Because of Memory," not simply as a reminder of the inspiring moments I've had at the center, but more because I believe memory is held in stones as well as in human minds. The memory of ages and forces shows in the stones and is more permanent than the memory of humans can ever be.

"Threads of Time"

For many years, I've thought about the concept of time and how important it is in making a tapestry. Time is important to me in the making of tapestry. Would there be a way to visually represent the passing of time? In 2008, I decided to give it a try, weaving a small increment that would be determined as it was woven. That's me standing with the first 2008 tapestry. That experiment was the beginning of

what I came to call my “tapestry diaries.” In 2009, this was the whole year, each of those little sections of color represented a different day of the year. In 2015, I continued to do a small section each day of a different color but decided to add a pictorial imagery throughout the month. In 2019, sticks and stones was my tapestry diary. [Close up of feather surrounded by blocks of color] This is the one that’s underway this year, 2020.

“Doubts and Decisions”

The last essay in the book is about doubts and decisions. I’ve used journals for many years and I have some quotes from those that I’ve included in the essay.

2008—Do I have anything to say in my work that would cause a viewer to think about something other than just the visual impression of the work? Do I need to say anything at all?

Nov 8, 2010—Do I have enough years of time? Don’t get discouraged. I can only do what I can do and nothing more.

Sept 30, 2015—Through the details I can better understand and cope with the immense complexity of the work.

In these few fragments of journal entries spanning two decades, one can read some of my struggles with self-doubt. Of course, not all of the journal entries over the years are about my decisions and uncertainties. I’ve also reflected on in-progress artwork and frequently made planning notes for upcoming teaching engagements, as well as writing comments to myself once those classes are underway. I’ve written poems and wondered about many things.

Looking back, I can see that much of what’s in the journals has been concerning my decision making process, usually an affirmative statement, often about a breakthrough of concept or composition that I’ve reached, following an entry like the ones I’ve just read. I realize now that if I’d taken to heart all of the uncertainties written in the journals, I never would have created anything. I finally recognize that the ebb and flow of creative energy I’ve felt through the years is exactly that—the evidence of the cycle of growth and decline and growth once more. Even though I don’t exactly welcome the downside, I now accept that this cycle is one that offers both the high and the low points in my art making abilities.

“Tapestry Weaving Basics: A Primer”

The last part of the book are appendices. One is about tapestry basics and I discuss using a simple frame loom and basic steps for getting started. There are quite a number of great books about tapestry

instruction out in the world, as well as video and online courses. So my introduction in the book is simply that, an introduction. I do have a resource list in the back that gives a number of places that one can go to. I have a few diagrams I've drawn. I wanted to show you a very simple pipe loom that I was putting together with the help of Sam at Home Depot. I wanted to assemble it there before I brought it home to make sure I had all the parts and pieces. Sam was very kind and helpful and didn't mind my opening up packages and screwing T's and elbows together, and he seemed to be very curious about what I was doing, after all.

I hope you enjoy seeing the world through my eyes and reading my words in *The Nature of Things*, if that's what you choose to do. Thank you.

Q&A

Jillian Murphy: Thank you so much, Tommye, for sharing that. It really was, everyone, such a joy to work on this book and be able to see the world and see art through Tommye's eyes. We're going to go ahead and transition into the Q&A portion of the event.

Q: What projects are you working on now? What in nature is currently inspiring you?

A: I'm working on getting some sampling done for a class I'll be doing at John Campbell Folk School in their traditional mentorship program that's coming up. I'll be having a week there October 4–10. The program starts this coming weekend, in fact, so it's going to be an exciting opportunity. The Folk School, like many places, had to cancel regular classes this year, so it's great that the Folk School is able to do that. And I think I see Pam Howard here—hey Pam—Pam will be the first instructor for the traditional craft mentorship program. I'm excited about that.

Q: Wonderful. What is the one most important lesson you learned from your art teachers?

A: Gosh. Be patient and listen. Try to understand what's being asked, not what I think is being asked. That's hard to do. When a teacher goes in, there's usually an agenda in your mind about what you'd like to get across. Sometimes the student's needs meet that agenda, other times there are other needs as well or instead of. Be patient and listen is what I try to do. I don't always do it but I try to.

JM: Well, I think the obvious amount of support you've gotten from past students shows you have successfully done that.

TMS: They're all great. They really are.

Q: What is your favorite tapestry that is included in the book?

A: I think my favorite would be "Flight," the feathers. It was one that meant a lot to me as I was weaving it and still means a lot. In fact, it's right there on the wall behind me. [Gestures to the tapestry behind her] It's one that my husband liked a lot when it was finished and that meant a lot to me, not that it necessarily needs to. He has a good eye and I respect his aesthetic eye very much. I took it off the loom. He and my niece were there, saw it laying on the floor, and Thomas didn't say anything. I finally said "Well, what do you think?" and he said "It's sublime." And I said "What?" I thought he was putting me on, but he really did have that response to it. So for several reasons, that piece is a favorite of mine, and his response is one of those.

Q: It's a really beautiful piece. Which do you find harder to weave: flowers, feathers, or stones?

A: It depends. It depends on the whole overall design. Anything can be as complex or not as you want it to be.

Q: How did you decide to include the chapter about your uncertainties?

A: I just felt like it needed to be there. It has been part of my making process all my time of making. I remember when I was in college doing a lot of writing about my doubts. And I've always done that. I wanted to include those, but I also wanted to include the last paragraphs, that I finally realized the doubts weren't the only thing. The doubts were there, but there are ways out of it. That you've got to keep working, keep thinking forward, moving forward, doing stuff. And I've heard from a few people who've read it, and they appreciate those words being there. It's, you know, [shrugs] being an artist—being anything, being a human—isn't all fun and games. There are lots of doubts we have everyday in our lives.

Q: And it certainly comes through your art; it'd be wrong to deny that part of it, absolutely. What struggles did you experience trying to write about tapestry, which is a visual medium?

A: That's a really good question. I think writing about tapestry is related to weaving tapestry. You spend so much time with a piece that there are a lot of thoughts that go through your head—that go through my head, at least—that relate to the imagery, that relate to the reason the image is being made. And I think in thinking through those reasons for making tapestry, the words came from that.

Q: Have you ever considered redoing an old tapestry?

A: Yes, and I've only redone one. One that was one of my first, early tapestries. I redid it probably 10, 12 years later in a different scale, and my technique was much better than it was the first time around. I think I made a better tapestry the second time around. Other than that, I really haven't redone an image, that's the only one I've really done image wise, but I revisit ideas. Feathers I've gone to several times; flowers I've done many times. I've been obsessed with leaves in the last three, four years, so I've woven leaves quite a lot. I return to thematic ideas.

Q: For our last question: What piece of encouragement would you give to others who want to write books about their art?

A: Start writing. And rewrite and rewrite and rewrite. When I was in college, I'd start a term paper the night before it was due. I don't know if anyone else has done so. [laughs] I'd use avoidance a lot to keep from delving into something, but for the writing I've done with this book, and the other book I've done that's in the work with Schiffer Publishing, I've written and rewritten and re-written many times over. One of the things I tell people in my classes about their art making is that I can't see inside your head, and you can't do your tapestry inside your head. You've got to weave it, you've got to do it. The same thing I've found is with writing. I can't just think the words. I have to start writing and then go back through, reread, rewrite, and then turn things over to trusted editors, like you and Pam and Margot—I see Margot there, I don't know if Sharon is there—Nancy Peacock, Carol Posgrove, people whose eye and minds I trust deeply to take a look at my words and, with honesty and compassion, give me good advice. The advice to somebody writing about their work: Write. Do it.

Jillian: That's always the hardest part of writing, no matter what genre you're in. Well, thank you so much Tommye for sharing your work with us. Thank you everyone for joining us. I'm going to share my screen really quick.

You can buy the book from any major retailer or you can buy the book from our local, independent bookstore, Bear Book Market, or request it from your favorite independent bookstore and ask for them to order it. We're so happy that all of you were able to join us today. Thank you so much. This event link will be available at the UNG Press's website: ung.edu/university-press. That is where you can find more information about the book, a sample chapter, reviews, and all sorts of wonderful things.

Tommye, do you have anything else you'd like to say before everyone leaves?

Tommye: I just again say thank you to everyone who's been involved in this. You, Jillian, and Corey. I love Corey's design for the book. BJ for having faith in me to do this, and Pam. Thank you all. I really love the book and can't wait for it to get into other people's hands.

Jillian: Thank you again everyone. We hope you enjoyed the reading. [Applause and goodbyes]