

Profile: Alicia Scardetta

In 2010 and 2011 I attended two exhibitions that introduced me to fiber as an art form and changed the way I make my own work. First, at the **Bauhaus: A Workshop in Modernity** at MoMA, on a freezing mid-winter Saturday, I stood before Gunta Stolzl's "5 Chöre" jacquard wall hanging. I was immediately enamored by the design, color interaction, and material. The second occasion was when I visited **Sheila Hicks: 50 Years** at Philadelphia's ICA in the summer of 2011. Surrounded by a lifetime of innovative and influential work created with fiber and made by a woman, I felt empowered and wanted to work with materials that would align me with the female artists I most admired.

At the time I first attended these exhibitions, I was preparing my BFA drawing thesis at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, and found myself longing to take the line off the paper and into a physical, tactile structure. I was drawn to fiber and thread because it felt like the most intuitive way to interpret a line. I sought out opportunities outside of my undergraduate coursework to discover fiber. Interning at Dieu Donne Papermill, I learned how to process flax fiber and cotton pulp into a finished cold-pressed sheet of handmade paper. Then, through an internship at the Textile Arts Center, I learned how to operate a treadle loom and weave tapestry.

I first picked up *Beyond Craft: The Art Fabric* while taking a tapestry workshop at Penland School of Crafts last summer. The weaving studio at Penland looks out on the idyllic landscape of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Inside the studio, facing the view, is a small library packed with fiber and textile books. Among them is *Beyond Craft*. The sheer size and weight of *Beyond Craft* forces you to sit down with it and spend some time—it's an amazing object on its own. There isn't another book with so many artists and information as *Beyond Craft*; it truly acts as a bible for mid-century fiber art. My favorite parts of the book are the two-page detailed shots. It feels as if you are alone with the work. Of these spreads, detail shots of Magdalena Abakanowicz's knotted sisal structures resonated with me the most. The tactility of her work is overwhelming and exciting and that physicality is captured in the two-page bleed image.

My work consists of two parts: line drawings that depict imagined and impossible textiles, and woven tapestries that investigate the physical parameters of weaving. The



Alicia Scardetta, "Friends Forever," 50 in x 18 in, n/a epi, 2015, photo: Will Ellis. Wool and cotton wrapped on cotton rope.



Alicia Scardetta, "Forever," 20 in x 18 in, 8 epi, 2015, photo: Will Ellis. Wool, cotton, cotton rope.



Alicia Scardetta, "Void Veil," 15 in x 15 in, 2014. Pen and Ink on paper.



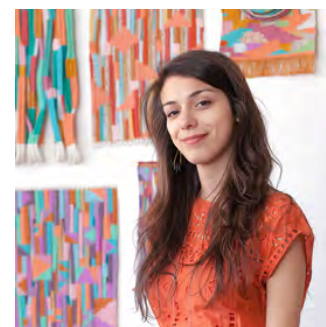
Alicia Scardetta, "Looped," 2015, 23 in x 20 in, 2015. Pen and Ink on paper.

act of drawing mirrors the process of weaving. Each is a structure built line by line, row by row through a repetitive and time consuming process.

Drawing on the ancient system of weaving in its most basic form, I am interested in manipulating its variables to determine what can be produced when the warp and weft are challenged. Using vibrant colors, woven appendages, and negative space, each piece achieves a playful quality within the historical context of weaving and tapestry. The drawings are formed through the build-up of dense mark-making and ominous shapes. Unlike the physical tapestries, the drawings do not adhere to the structural parameters of weaving, though the mark-making is inspired by the patterns found in fabric. The drawn shroud-like forms are free to fail and live in impossibilities.



Alicia Scardetta, "Melted," 21 in x 12 in, 8 epi, 2014, photo: Will Ellis. Wool, cotton, misc fibers.



Alicia Scardetta received her BFA in Fine Arts from Pratt Institute. Her work has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Uppercase Magazine*, *Design Sponge*, and in the forthcoming issue of *American Craft*. Originally from San Antonio, Texas she now lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.