

Cultural Daily


Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Thank you for the Pottery and the Fiber

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I am thankful for the porn star J. D. Long. Thirty years ago, while I still felt like a displaced New Yorker, J. D. – at the time my neighbor in Beverly Hills Adjacent – was moving to his sugar daddy’s ranch in Texas and he sold me a luncheon set of solid-color dishes – green, orange, cobalt blue, yellow – that had been made by Vernon Kilns in Vernon, California, in the 1930s. I soon learned that that company was just one of many that had made “California pottery.” From California pottery I made the unexpected, though inevitable leap to California design – everything from cups to cars, chairs to guitars, teapots to laptops. Along the way I met their designers, historians and collectors and their friendship made me feel that I belong here.

– *Bill Stern is director of the [Museum of California Design](#).*

 Thank you Dawne Rudman and Gareth Bate for publishing your “Weekly Fibre Artist Interview Series.” While searching the web for exciting contemporary fiber artists I recently found Dawne and Gareth’s weekly interviews. Together Dawne and Gareth curate an international festival to showcase contemporary fiber art. The [World of Threads Festival](#) takes place in two locations: Toronto Canada, and a small community 45 minutes west of Toronto, called Oakville. You may ask, “What is fiber art?” Fiber art is work created in any medium that is manipulated the way we used to manipulate old-fashioned needle and thread. In other words, anything (including metal, paper, recycled materials, etc.) that is sewn, quilted, woven, embroidered, braided, hooked, knitted, laced, platted, crocheted, felted or twinned into two or three or four-dimensional work. For 40 consecutive weeks, Dawne and Gareth have interviewed a different artist and published the interview on the web with generous pictures of the artist’s work. And, every week the email alert is like a gift in my in-box. Through Dawne and Gareth I have been exposed to some of the most interesting and cutting edge artists working with fiber and the stories behind their work.

– *Lori Zimmerman is a California mixed-media artist.*

Top image: Left pitcher, Modern California, Vernon Kilns, Vernon, California, 1937; right pitcher, Early California, Vernon Kilns, Vernon, California, 1935. Photo credit: “California Pottery: From Missions to Modernism” (Chronicle Books, 2001); text: Bill Stern; photographs, Peter Brenner.

Bottom image: “We” by artist Rochelle Rubinstein, woodblock printed and dyed organza, draped and photographed, 2002.

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