

Susan Barrett Merrill

### ***Curriculum vitae***

Fiber sculptor and life coach Susan Barrett Merrill attended Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, studied art at the Aegean School of Fine Arts in Greece, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in education and art from Goddard College in Vermont, and received a graduate degree from New Experimental College in Jutland, Denmark.

Susan holds professional certifications in education, career development and life coaching, and is a member of the International Coach Federation. She is a pioneer in the field of fiber arts education for people with disabilities, and has represented the United States at symposia on arts and disabilities in Kobe, Japan and Washington, D.C.

Susan has been spinning and weaving for over 35 years. She has studied advanced weaving techniques at Penland School of Crafts, North Carolina and in New Mexico with Cordelia Coronado. Her work has been exhibited in museums and galleries on both coasts. She has taught weaving and spinning at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, in Waldorf schools, summer camps, and in studios in California and New England, and currently teaches in her studio in Brooksville, Maine.

### **Zati Masks**

Zati is an Urdu word meaning "from the inside out" or "from a sacred place". Fiber artist Susan Barrett Merrill has been creating these masks for many years. The faces are woven flat with hand-spun wool. Facial features are created in the weave, using weft-wedging and other techniques, and sculpted into three-dimensional masks. The faces are then felted onto headdresses using soft Merino wool. Each mask is an individual work of art.

Of all the techniques used to create masks throughout history – carving, clay, basketry, leather, metalwork – not one is similar to Merrill's method of using warp-and-weft weaving to create three-dimensional faces, making the Zati mask unique in world mask culture.

Susan's Zati masks have seen performance and exhibition in the US and abroad, including performance in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Tblisi, The Republic of Georgia; and exhibition in the Fiber Biennale in Chieri, Italy, where one of her masks is in the permanent collection.

2007            Publication of *ZATI The Art of Weaving a Life*, by Susan Barrett Merrill,  
February 2007  
*Singing Into the Wind* acquired by Fiber Biennale, Chieri, Italy for  
permanent collection

2006            *Earth Loom Installation*, Belfast, Maine, Oct 2006

Workshops throughout the year at arts organizations and schools

2005            *Zati Mask Exhibit*, Penobscot, Maine, Blue Hill, Maine

*Directions, Maine Craft*, Falmouth, Bar Harbor, Augusta, Maine

- 2004 *Zati Masks*, Muir Gallery, Bath Maine, Oct 2004
- Un/Coverings*, William A. Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine, Sept 2004-Mar 2005
- Ancient Forms in Maine Fiber*, Blue Hill Library, Blue Hill, Maine, June 2004
- 2004, 2002 *The Zati Mask*, lecture and slide presentation, McCurdy's Smokehouse Museum, Lubec, Maine August 2002, 2004
- 2002 ***Terza Biennale Internazionale Di Fiber Art*** Chieri, Italy, May - Sept 2002
- Local Color*, Hammond Hall, Winter Harbor Maine, Zati Masks, Rugs by Susanne Grosjean Sept 2002
- 2001 *Characters in Hand*, William A. Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine USA Nov 2001- Feb 2002
- Fabric & Fiber 2001*, The Civic Center, juried exhibition, Portland, Maine USA May 2001, piece in permanent collection.
- In Living Color*, The Clown Gallery, Portland, Maine USA April 2001
- 2000 *Winter's Work*, Frankie's Gallery, Ellsworth, Maine USA March 2000
- 1999 *Work of the Hand*, Maine Coast Artists, Rockport, Maine October 1999
- Directions: Maine Craft Guild*, Mount Desert Island, Maine August 1999
- Island Artisans Gallery*, Bar Harbor and Northeast Harbor, Maine, May-Dec 1999
- The Art of Fiber*, The Gallery at 357 Main, Rockland, Maine May 1999
- Fabric & Fiber '99*, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine April-May 1999
- 1998 *Masks – Union of Maine Visual Artists invitational*, Ellsworth and Bangor, Maine Public Libraries October 1998
- About Face*, Wenham Art Museum, Wenham, Massachusetts Sept-Oct 1998

### **Symposia and presentations**

*Weaving Between the Lines*, Symposium for American Association of University Women and Canadian Federation of University Women, at University of Maine, Orono, Maine. With co-presenter Vita Plume

*Paleolithic Spinning, Weaving, Felting*, Schoodic Arts Festival, Winter Harbor, Maine

*Primitive spinning techniques*, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, Maine, 1993

*Masks and Amulets*, Bio-Energetic Retreat, Canon, New York, 1992

*Weaving in the Public School Curriculum* Teaching the Teacher International Symposium, Bangor, Maine, 1991

*Saori International Weaving Symposium*, symposium on weaving in the lives of people with disabilities, Kobe, Japan, 1990

*Grants reviewer*, Maine Arts Commission, Augusta, Maine, 1989

## Leadership

1987-1990 *Director*, Spindleworks, a creative arts center for people with disabilities

## Memberships

American Craft Council  
Handweavers of America  
Directions: Maine Crafts Guild  
Maine Crafts Association  
Wednesday Spinners  
International Coach Federation