

British Columbia Society of Textile Arts
B.C.Stars

The British Columbia Society of Tapestry Artists (B.C.Stars) was founded in 1993 and became a non-profit society open to all those living in the province of British Columbia with an interest in tapestry in 1998. It was created with a mandate to "promote the art of tapestry through exhibitions, lectures, classes, projects, symposia, publications, and other means". All events are open to the general public.

B.C. Stars' first project was to hold an international symposium, attended by 110 delegates from 10 countries, called "*Making a Place for Tapestry*" (with help from the Canada Council) and publish a 106 page record of the proceedings. This document on contemporary issues in tapestry is now in major public institutions in North America and Europe, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Manufacture des Gobelins in Paris, and the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., the National Gallery in Ottawa, as well as in libraries and art institutions across Canada. In conjunction with the symposium three large exhibitions and numerous lectures were offered to the public at no charge.

In 1996 B.C.Stars completed a Community Tapestry project with the help of private donors and grants from various foundations. A 6'x8' tapestry was woven by B.C.Stars and members of the community and now hangs in Dr. Peter AIDS Hospice at Comox and Thurlow. The tapestry was designed by five members of B.C.Stars and over forty weavers, professional and amateur, contributed to its weaving from June to November, 1996, at the downtown branch of the Vancouver Public Library. The tapestry was woven on the fifth floor of the Vancouver Public Library, Main Branch, so that the public could see the work in progress. In 1999, B.C.Stars published a book documenting this project. This book, *Weaving Between the Lines: BC Tapestry on the Edge*, includes colour photos of the exhibition of the same name, as well as essays on the history of tapestry in British Columbia and on community tapestry projects world-wide.

During 1997 and 1998 the Dr. Peter tapestry travelled throughout the province in conjunction with "*Weaving Between the Lines*," an exhibition of contemporary tapestries by British Columbia artists. This exhibition was another project of B.C.Stars with the assistance of the B.C. Arts Council. In 2000, B.C. Stars produced a book entitled "*Weaving between the Lines: B.C. Tapestry on the Edge*" with the help of grants from the Canada Council. The book has articles on the history of tapestry in B.C., contemporary B.C tapestry, as well as community tapestry projects in B.C. and around the English speaking world. It also includes a catalogue of works in the 1997 exhibit of the same name.

In 1996, B.C.Stars made a one hour presentation on Canadian Tapestry at Convergence 96 held in Portland. (Convergence is the biennial convention of the Handweaver's Guild of America.) B.C.Stars was on the organizing committee for Convergence 2002 which was held in Vancouver and initiated an exhibition of Canadian Tapestry shown at the Roundhouse, organized a tapestry interest group meeting at the conference, and hosted meetings and get-togethers for visiting tapestry artists.

Since its incorporation, B.C.Stars has organized tapestry shows of members' work. It has also sponsored weekend workshops and evening classes in tapestry weaving. The Canadian Tapestry Network (CTN) and B.C.Stars were part of the organizing committee for Convergence, the biennial convention of the Handweaver's Guild of North America, which was held in Vancouver in 2002. In conjunction with Convergence and the American Tapestry Alliance, they organized several tapestry exhibitions and hosted a panel discussion on the subject of contemporary tapestry. CTN and B.C. Stars work closely with other arts organizations on a community, national and international level. Such co-operative ventures further our mandate of educating the arts and general communities about tapestry, and benefit all the participating organizations by introducing them to new and wider audiences.

B.C.Stars has sponsored workshops, public lectures and slide presentations by visiting and local tapestry artists such as Archie Brennan, Susan Maffei, and Lia Cook from the U.S., Tass Mavrogordato from Australia, Joan Baxter from Scotland. Members Jane Kidd, Line Dufour, Kaija Rautiainen, Anthea Mallinson, Barbara Heller and others have offered public lectures on tapestry topics.

B.C.Stars supports and promotes classes in textiles at local schools, colleges, and universities. Members open their studios to students on field trips from various schools.

With the closure of the textile department at Capilano University in 2014, B.C.Stars broadened its focus from tapestry only to include all facets of the textile arts. In 2018 it was an active participant in the Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America held in Vancouver.

In 2023, B.C.Stars has a new Board of Directors. The outgoing Board promised to sponsor a new project in conjunction with the Crafts Council of BC – an exhibition of textile work by emerging artists.