

Shear delight

La Lana Wools features six fiber artists from California, New Mexico and Oregon

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fiber art.

Two of the
artists will be
holding work-
shops during
the exhibit,
Valentina "No
Rules" Devine
and Ayala "Fiber
Fanatic" Talpai.
The cost of each
workshop is
\$200 and \$150
for locals (a 25
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out patterns, Devine creates an extraordinary array of garments using basic shapes that she then pieces together. She is one of the pioneers of this technique which she also teaches in her workshops titled, "Knitting Without Boundaries." She will teach a two-day workshop while she is in town this week, Tuesday and Wednesday (Oct. 3-4).

Claiming she is the inventor of the first fiber innovation since the Stone Age, Talpai introduced the industrial felting needle to the fiber arts world in the mid '80s.

"Ayala is a true folk artist who has explored nearly every imaginable medium known to the world of crafts," said Rema Ralff, manager of La Lana Wools.

In her background statement, the Oregon resident said she has eliminated the word "mistake" from her vocabulary, having found that "opportunity" and "discovery" are far more accurate and workable concepts. She said she lives in delighted anticipation of what her students will come up with next. Talpai's workshop, titled "A Romp Through the Realm of Wool Sculpture via Needle felting," will be held Thursday and Friday (Oct. 5-6).

Shadow-weaver Helen Summers is a resident of Placitas, N.M., yet her designs have a flair of the Orient about them. She works primarily in the shadow weave technique which alternates dark and light threads to produce bold graphic patterns. Working too with Shibori dye techniques and mechanical resist, Summers creates linings as visually interesting and stunning as the exterior garments.

"When I began weaving professionally in 1985, I was afraid I would start running out of ideas within about six months," she said in her artist statement. "Much to my relief, the opposite has happened. It seems each new project leads to new ideas and new direc-



Courtesy of the artist

"Needlefelted Folk: Hasty Humans"
by Ayala Talpai of Oregon

tions, expanding my horizons as a weaver and an artist."

For the last 20 years, Sharon Cahn of the California Bay Area, has been on a quest to create evermore beautiful garments. One result is a signature technique she developed called "welted knitting," the effect of which enhances the female form.

"Vertical lines, rounded form and sensuous movement combined with texture and color contrasts, have become the hallmarks of my designs," Cahn said. "The vertical corrugation effect of my welted knitting technique also allows for a movement and drape that flatters and all is accomplished with comfort and beauty."

Deborah Dant is a Tesuque fiber artist and Jungian analyst whose dual passions work together in her sculptural pieces, some of which are eerily organic, but she also creates functional sculpture like basket shapes, and fashions for all ages. Her infant garments resemble Tibetan stupas, while her adult-size vests prove that crochet work needn't be bulky or crude.

"This artist's work exemplifies

both the literal and abstract use of fiber while celebrating a love of texture and color," Ralff said of Dant's fiber art.

Fiber artist and fashion designer Katherine Maxwell now resides in Santa Fé. Her work has been shown in Boston, New York City, Milan, Italy and Berlin, Germany. Though she is the youngest of the exhibitors, Maxwell has a bead on pop culture and the future's so bright she's gotta wear shades.

Maxwell was a freelance fashion photographer in Europe, waxing stylistic for a decade with the likes of Giani Versace and Romeo Gigli and as a fashion editor for Italian music magazines. There she utilized companies like Diesel and Benetton to outfit local bands. Finally weakened by the "unhealthy" side of the fashion industry, she turned to the healing arts to express her creativity and returned to her love of knitting. Inspired by local traditions in Navajo weavings and textile art, her 1,200-square-foot studio is draped with her pieces, one-of-a-kind window and interior decorations and designs for local theater productions.

Owned and founded by Luisa Gelenter, La Lana Wool is responsible for one of Taos' primary and successful cottage industries. La Lana includes a custom, natural plant-dye studio on the southside of Taos and a custom-mill spun yarn plant north of Taos, the Taos Valley Wool Mill. Gelenter's enterprises also employ a number of hand-spinners in Taos, using treadle-operated, spinning wheels.

Known worldwide, Ralff said fiber artists arrive weekly from far and wide to visit La Lana Wools — pilgrims of beauty, renewed at a hallowed site.

La Lana Wools is located at 136 Paseo del Pueblo Norte. For more information or to register for the workshops call 505-758-9631.