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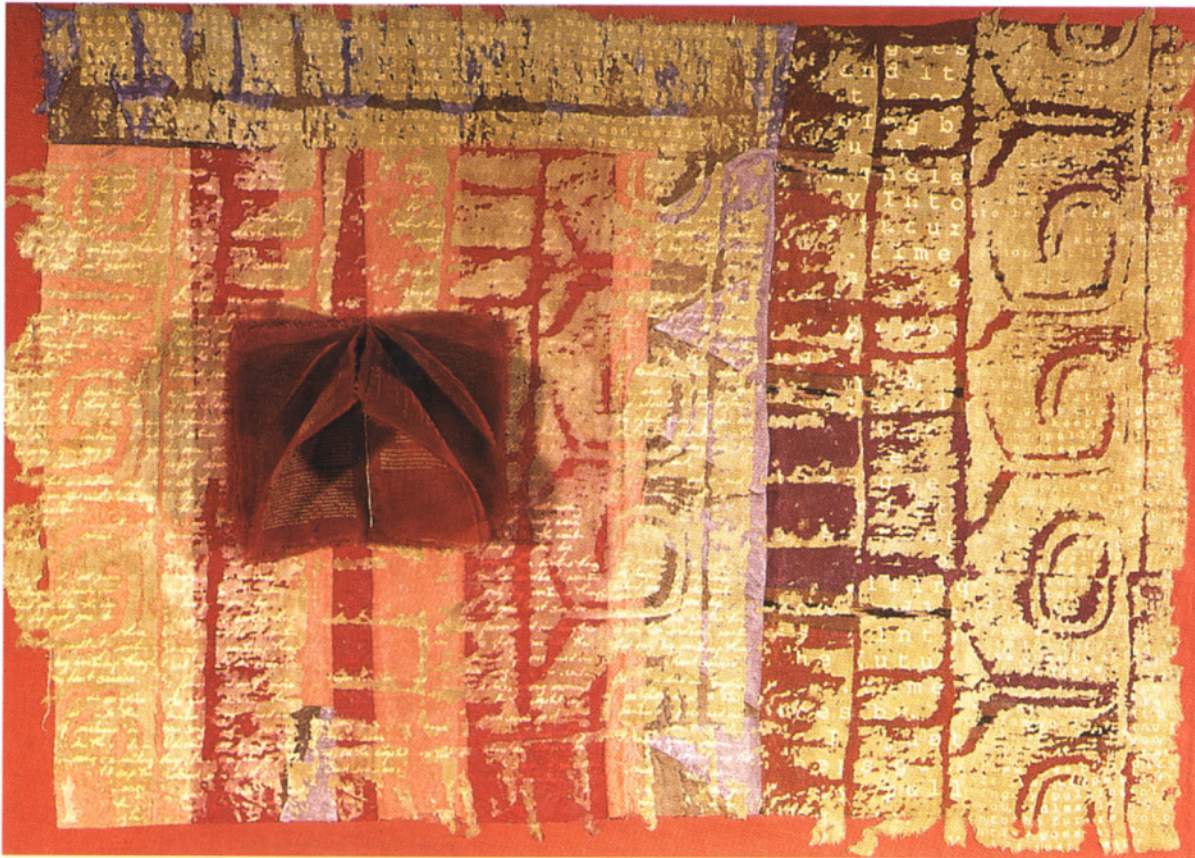
Laura Strand

Informed Source

The Latin word *texto*, meaning “to weave” is the root word from which the words “textile” and “text” enter the English language. The visual and metaphorical links between textiles and text are myriad and rich with potential. Writers weave together the thoughts and words of a story while textile artists build their narratives from materials and images. Textiles speak a language which has the extraordinary power of familiarity through which it may speak to and about our experience as human beings. We all have daily contact and emotional associations with the clothing we wear, the curtains on our windows, sheets, quilts, coverlets and blankets on our beds, and towels in our kitchens and bathrooms. These objects have entered our lives and language as metaphors for hearth and home, for covering and protecting, for warmth and vulnerability. Textiles are a tactile link to visual sensual memory just as the text of a book is a mnemonic link to the story.

I work with textiles as a language with which to talk about the human condition. My engagement with my artwork has always been to make objects that allude to myself as a woman and the position of women within Western culture. Textiles are particularly appropriate to that goal since through the familiar fabrics noted above, textiles are a formal language that comes to us as an oral tradition through a long line of women. The traditional languages of painting and sculpture come to us through generations of formal intellectual critique—a language formed and explored primarily by masculine culture. I continue to look for a feminine voice in artmaking and find it most often through the language of textiles.

—*Laura Strand is Associate Professor of Art, Textiles,
at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.*



Laura Strand *Endlessly Pulling You Into the Future* Devoré and discharge photo silkscreen on cotton damask over pieced silk, silk organza book with thiox discharge, 30"x 42"x 2", 2002. Text from Laurie Anderson: "Days go by and they just keep going by pulling you endlessly into the future." Photo: Tony Deck.



Laura Strand *Be Ahead of All Parting* Indigo shibori and devoré photo silkscreen on cotton damask, silk organza books, vat dye discharge and thiox discharge, 40"x 47"x 2", 2002. Text from a poem by Rilke. Photo: Tony Deck.