

2006

# State of Being

Anne Bradshaw

*Virginia Commonwealth University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

© The Author

---

Downloaded from

<http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/1233>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact [libcompass@vcu.edu](mailto:libcompass@vcu.edu).

© Ann Bradshaw May 2006

All Rights Reserved

STATE OF BEING

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

ANN BRADSHAW

Bachelor of Science, Psychology, Emory University, 1973

Master of Divinity, Theology, Emory University, 1978

Bachelor of Arts, Crafts, Longwood University, 2004

SUSAN IVERSON

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF TEXTILES

Virginia Commonwealth University  
Richmond, Virginia May 2006

Dedicated  
always  
to  
Amy and Zach

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge Susan Iverson and John Hawthorne for sharing their expertise as artists and professors through consistent dedication for many years to the Textile Department at Virginia Commonwealth University. John's passionate spirit and provocative questions transfuse his teaching style asking nothing but the best. Susan's sharp wit and consummate understanding of tapestry launch many young weavers into the world of textiles.

I would like to thank my Graduate Faculty Committee, Susan Iverson, John Hawthorne, Lydia Thompson, Barbara Tisserat, and Sonya Clark for their support, insight, thoughtfulness and unabashed critique and commentary.

Howard Risatti's phenomenal class lectures and challenging discussions about art informed my studio practice in ways only scholars of his caliber are able to do. Jack Wax's brilliant and insightful critiques offer every artist an avenue to another level.

I acknowledge the support of family and friends who listen patiently and wonder honestly about my effort to interface the academic disciplines of psychology and art not only in studio practice but also in life. May you keep your wonder alive!

## Table of Contents

	Page
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
List of Figures.....	v
List of Figures Continued.....	vi
Thesis – State of Being.....	1
Literature Cited.....	22
Bibliography .....	24
Vita.....	26

## List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1: studio view .....	2
Figure 2: untitled drawing .....	2
Figure 3: untitled drawing .....	3
Figure 4: untitled drawing .....	3
Figure 5: untitled drawing. ....	3
Figure 6: details “Imagining On My Own” .....	4
Figure 7: untitled drawing .....	5
Figure 8: untitled drawing .....	5
Figure 9: “Hearing Voices” .....	5
Figure 10: detail “Hearing Voices” .....	6
Figure 11: detail “Hearing Voices” .....	6
Figure 12: detail “Hearing Voices” .....	7
Figure 13: “Every Voice” .....	7
Figure 14: “A Voice To Live by” .....	7
Figure 15: “More Voices” .....	7
Figure 16: “Conversation I” .....	8
Figure 17: detail “Conversation I” .....	8
Figure 18: “Conversation II” .....	9
Figure 19: material investigation .....	10
Figure 20: detail – material investigation .....	10
Figure 21: detail – material investigation .....	11

## List of Figures

	Page
Figure 22: detail – material investigation .....	11
Figure 23: studio view .....	11
Figure 24: detail “Free Association” .....	12
Figure 25: detail “Free Association” .....	12
Figure 26: detail “Free Association” .....	12
Figure 27: detail “Free Association” .....	12
Figure 28: “Free Association” .....	13
Figure 29: untitled drawing .....	13
Figure 30: untitled drawing .....	13
Figure 31: untitled drawing .....	14
Figure 32: detail “Splitting Apart Slowly” .....	15
Figure 33: detail “Splitting Apart Slowly” .....	15
Figure 34: detail “Splitting Apart Slowly” .....	15
Figure 35: “Rearranging My Mind” dimensions variable.....	18
Figure 36: detail “Rearranging My Mind” .....	19
Figure 37: “State of Being” .....	20
Figure 38: studio view .....	21



## Artist Statement

### STATE OF BEING

By Ann Bradshaw, Master of Fine Art

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2006

Major Director: Susan Iverson  
Professor, Department of Crafts and Material Studies

My work speaks to the processes of adaptation and assimilation, phenomena that explain the way in which we transform life experience and incorporate the effects of such experience into the daily workings of our psyche. To this extent my work is a self-analysis, an autobiographical reckoning, a non-verbal representation of collective experiences rendered in forms upon which images are spontaneously drawn or painted with fiber.

The process of making art as a means of accessing creative instincts is a manifestation of the way in which I experience life. Adapting and assimilating to our human condition is an art, a form of survival that allows for self-expression as a technique of understanding, a way of translating beauty into collective consciousness, a means of transforming atrocity too enormous for words, an offer of conversation that transcends human reason, a sharing of imagination that embraces the past, the present and the future.

As the world grows increasingly complex, our very existence is threatened by terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and socioeconomic confusion. A culture driven by

consumerism responds to global competition for technology that races against the speed of light. Human misunderstanding is relegated to war, courts of law and bi-partisan politics. Adapting and assimilating life circumstances and experiences with a sensitivity to the interplay of intensely colorful fiber in my hands affects an optimistic and energetic reinterpretation of life's complexity. In a time of uncertainty, art is a reason for hope.

## **State Of Being**

My work speaks to the processes of adaptation and assimilation, phenomena that explain the way in which we transform life experience and incorporate the effects of such experience into the daily workings of our psyche. To this extent my work is a self-analysis, an autobiographical reckoning, a non-verbal representation of collective experiences rendered in forms upon which images are spontaneously drawn or painted with fiber.

I come to a career in art through one in psychology. Some days I feel like I have left one culture and arrived in another, the language, nuances, and ways of being are different, yet people are the same despite their academic discipline or profession. In both disciplines, psychology and art, there exists an intrinsic continuous thread, the search to understand and give life meaning as well as the yearning to create an environment where one's voice is heard, seen and experienced. I blend knowledge and experiences acquired throughout many years in an extremely verbal and auditory career with one where visual images speak differently and often more profoundly than words. Yet I discover as with the practice of psychotherapy, the art of listening is inherent to creating art and to teaching others to create their own art.

The 'process' of making art as a means of accessing creative instincts is a manifestation of the way in which I experience life. Adapting and assimilating to our human condition is an art, a form of survival that allows for self-expression as a technique of understanding, a way of translating beauty into collective consciousness, a means of transforming atrocity too enormous for words, an offer of conversation that

transcends human reason, a sharing of imagination that embraces the past, the present and the future. In a time of uncertainty, art is a reason for hope.

I make art as a response to the challenges of living, to ease pain and express joy. My interest in art making is less about the final product than it is about the process of examining the thoughts and feelings that spark creativity, trusting that both conscious and unconscious experiences will surface. For this process to occur, I must remain in spontaneous, intuitive relatedness to that which I am creating. A feeling

transfuses a moment or an experience sparking a creative urge. I begin to place pieces of fabric together. At this moment, I am not necessarily aware that I will turn this experience into art; I am only aware that an idea is evolving, an insight is emerging still too fresh and unformed to express in words. I begin to draw and write spontaneously in my sketchbook.

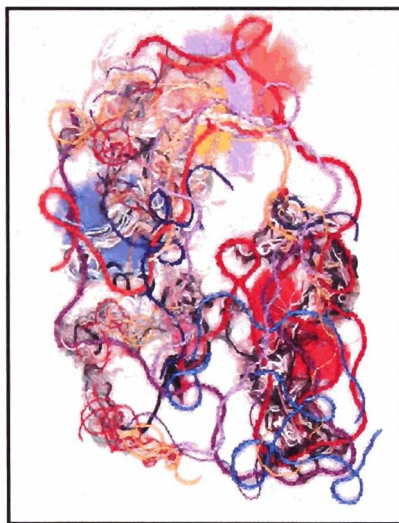


figure 2:  
untitled drawing, 7"x9"

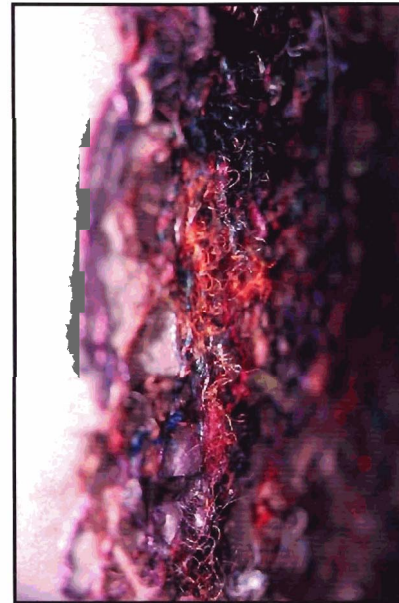


figure 1:  
studio view

Free associations pour onto paper in the form of unrecognizable and often unreadable script. The content is frequently unrelated. Despite the apparent discontinuity, I am engaged in the processes of adaptation and assimilation fueling my creativity and eventually emerging as art. Although I appear to be and am consciously aware of my efforts and surroundings, in a metaphysical sense, I disappear. I enter a world where life is sacred and imagination is born, a world transfused with unconscious drives and impulses interacting with my perception of a conscious world of



figure 3:  
untitled drawing, 51"x37"

everyday occurrences,  
life experiences, genetic  
predispositions, emotional  
strengths and vulnerabilities,  
physical opportunities  
and limitations.

By interacting  
directly, spontaneously  
and intuitively with hand  
dyed fabrics, yarns and  
threads of myriad colors,

textures and dimensions, I translate the messages of personal writing and free-association into abstract images that address the complex and interactive processes of adaptation and assimilation. Often words cannot describe that which an image brings to life. Words help us construct and organize our attempts at communication with one another, yet words also interfere with our imaginative and creative spirit.

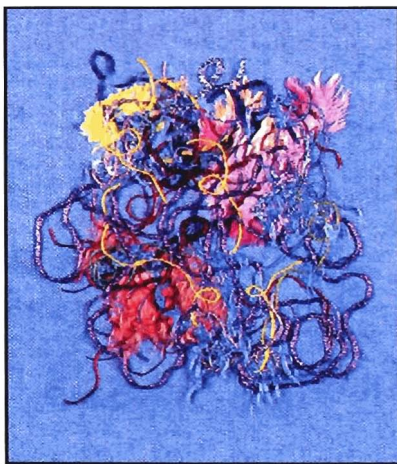


figure 4:  
untitled drawing, 7"x7"

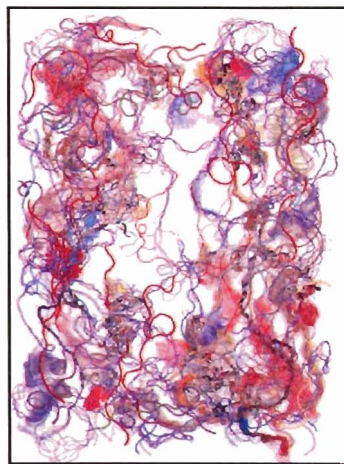


figure 5:  
untitled drawing, 17"x23"

Words suggest an  
encounter of an auditory  
and verbal nature fused  
with intellectual  
understanding and  
emotional participation  
that often escapes into the  
realm of the imagination;  
however, I would argue  
that words do not

describe many of our experiences. That which truly lives in our hearts often cannot be organized by intellect and possibly abates reason. I must look within to create art with passion and integrity. I hold authentic expression of primary importance in life and in creating art, to hold on to that which one believes to be true and to cherish that which comes from the heart and the imagination.



figure 6:  
details "Imagining On My Own"

Like Sam Gilliam, I consider myself a "liberal humanist...(who)...sees in all art the capacity to realize life affirming values." (pg 74) Mr. Gilliam's paintings on cloth appear to disregard marketplace preferences holding of greater merit the artist's pursuit of a singular style. Making art any other way is foreign to me.

My challenge as a professional artist extends beyond my belief in the process through which I create art and the work I create. It extends to others who may choose artistic expression as a means of understanding their lives. It includes the critical challenge to question continuously, 'What is art?' My experiences inform, transfuse and become evident in my art to the extent that I remain in relatedness to the work during its creation. Is this art? Perhaps, but I really don't know. Is the experience of art making that I describe of value? Yes, and of even greater value if I am able to offer to another through my work.

I need to make art. The process of creating is of intrinsic value to me, yet the real meaning in living an authentically creative life comes from the impact my creativity has on others. What we give away in the time that we have is far more important than

what we keep. I want my art to spark another's imagination to look more deeply into their life and the world around them. To the extent this occurs, I believe I have created art. When the abstract images in my fiber pieces open doors to the imagination and offer conversation that transcends human reason, my art has proved to be a reason for hope.

'Hearing Voices' (see figure 9) illustrates the way in which I adapt and assimilate life experience through art making. Noise surrounds us every day, requests, offers, demands, misunderstandings, acceptances, and rejections. What is this about, I asked myself, this bombardment of sensory overload, these external opinions and dictates, this insane society of which I find myself part and participant? 'Everywhere I go, I hear voices, voices of my past, my present, and of my future, voices



figure 9:  
"Hearing Voices" fiber  
collage 45"x51"

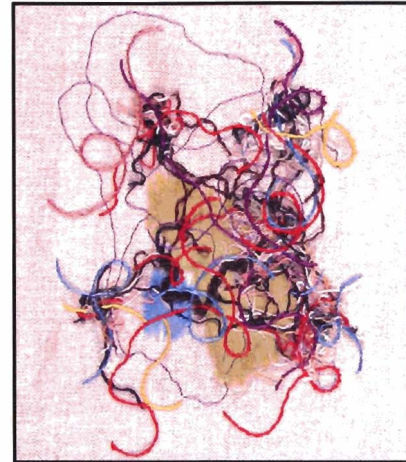


figure 7:  
untitled drawing 7" x 9"

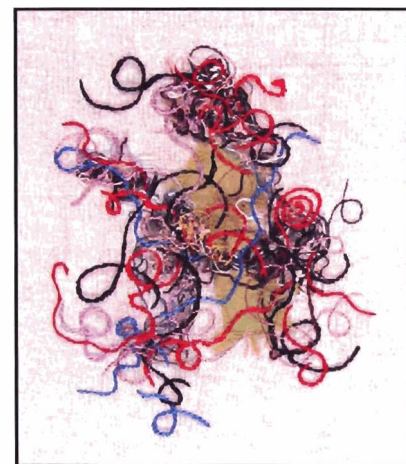


figure 8:  
untitled drawing 8" x9"

transforming reality  
into unreality.'

Words spirited

from my heart and reminders of personal history that insist on adaptation and assimilation. Repeatedly, I wrote these words with alginated dye onto torn scraps of cloth bags once containing sugar, salt, flour and seed, products of domestic and agrarian life used primarily before and during the turn of the twentieth century. As I continued to tear, collage, and sew, I felt these pieces



figure 10:  
detail "Hearing Voices"



figure 11:  
detail "Hearing Voices"

of fiber to represent the resourcefulness of a populace past, the indomitable spirit of the parents of Tom Brokaw's acclaimed greatest generation, the fenders of the freedom from Alvin Toffler's mid-seventies fear and forecast of a generation of throwaway consumers.

Reflecting on the time I practiced psychotherapy and working with fiber of years past, I realized that romanticizing any era proves a seductive illusion for those of us who navigate the turn of the twenty first century amid a culture threatened by ambivalence over ethnicity, violence, classicism, and racism. Ours is a society dominated by patriarchy whose most effective device for undermining individual human expression is to entice American citizens into believing the seductive lie that men and women are treated equally, that organized religion exists for the welfare of human consciousness and that our democracy under the existing federal and state legal systems serves the masses.

To create "Hearing Voices" I reinterpreted a personal era. Sewing the irregularly shaped pieces together with little attention to composition or color, I included evidence of an emerging career life, one of increasing dynamism and velocity. Consciously

endeavored as a scribble of lines constituting a drawing on a zinc plate, the resulting printed image emerged as a profile of a female figure obviously intent on movement. (see figure 12) Fiber pieces represented in the series of work entitled "Voices" illustrates



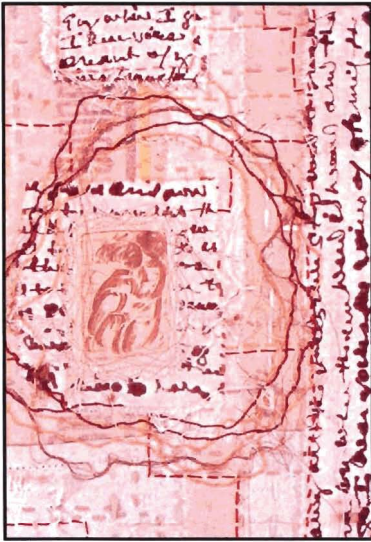


figure 12:  
detail "Hearing Voices"

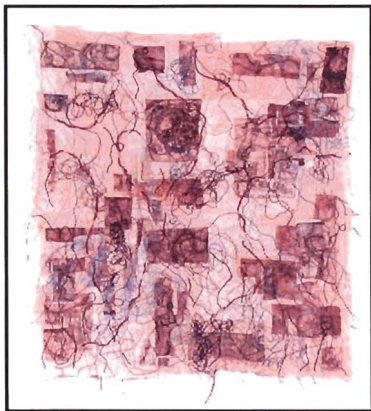


figure 15:  
"More Voices" 42"x 43"



figure 13:  
"Every Voice" 42"x 43"



figure 14  
"A Voice To Live by" 29"x41"

the way in which I adapted and assimilated the conflicting messages of each career in my attempt to interface the nuances that exist in psychology and art. In each of the pieces I created with faded cloth bags, I explored formal design and composition laced with conceptual meaning, my effort to make sense of the merger of two careers amid a backdrop of personal history.

Korean textile artist, Chunghie Lee, reinterprets the eastern textile craft of pojagi in her contemporary rendering using Kekki stitching to attach pieces of hemp fabric.

Regardless of the conceptual meaning Ms. Lee may associate with her process, her piece "Work – 98 Breeze" (1998) resembles the way in which I collaged cloth bags reminiscent of western culture to create works in my "Voices" series. Chunghie Lee employed photo screen printing in her piece, 'Chogakpo Women' (1995), (pgs 17 and 19), where as I used intaglio printmaking process to convey figurative imagery in 'Hearing Voices'.

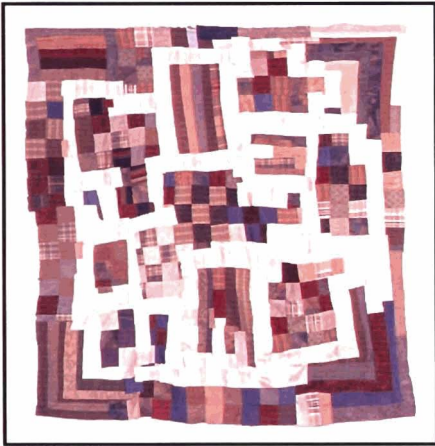


figure 16:  
"Conversation I" 6'6" x 5'10"



figure 17:  
detail "Conversation I" 6'6" x 5'10"

As I consider other work I have completed during graduate school, I believe the quilt like pieces constructed randomly with recycled upholstery fabric appearing architectural in form and composition yet resembling landscape in color and texture reveal an intrinsically accurate conceptual message from which my art continues to develop. Visually, the work appears to be a cacophony of linear areas, the sum of many parts sewn together giving minimal attention to design or composition. On a manifest level, that is exactly the way I constructed the pieces; at a deeper level, I translated life experience and the circumstances I encountered throughout my career as a psychotherapist.

While collecting upholstery samples from furniture stores that discard or donate swatches of material no longer commercially available for public purchase, I found myself intrigued with the myriad textures, colors, patterns, and weaves, a metaphor for the enormity of life experiences I encountered as a therapist, stories maintained by the continuous interconnectedness of the human condition yet unique to each individual perspective.

Countless threads of various sizes, structures, colors, and textures woven to create hundreds of patterns, images, and surfaces filled my studio. I washed them. I cut off the bound edges. I washed them again. I continued to experience the feel of this multitude of

fibers in my hands as well as the tremendous range of possibilities presented by something as tiny and often thought to be irrelevant as a scrap of thread. I cut each square or rectangular section into an array of smaller shapes the only similarity being four right angles. I divided original samples into smaller pieces of the same contour yet varied in size. Breaking down the larger pieces into smaller sections continued as random and spontaneous process. I was left with enormous piles of fabric.

As piles of material accumulated, my thoughts wandered to an accidental meeting with a homeless and schizophrenic woman in Monroe Park. Her circumstances betrayed her true age. Her penetrating blue eyes spoke of a life challenged by the hardships of mere sustenance and desperate survival. Her voice was soft, and her heart was clean. She recognized the beauty of human kindness. Her days and nights were spent walking through the park and surrounding city streets earnestly avoiding the constrictions she feared existed in nearby shelters, non profit organizations whose very existence threatened the core of her being, her independence. A courageous woman, she fought for her dignity.

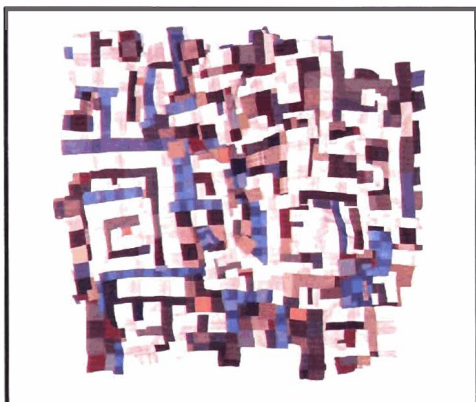


figure 18:  
"Conversation II" 6'10"x7'5"

The few words we exchanged on chance encounters slipped beneath my awareness and memory of her fortitude. As I listened to my friend speak, my visual image of Monroe Park transformed into a landscape that for many years this kind woman called home. Touching multi-textured fiber, remembering years of verbal agony, and despair born of immense loss that proclaimed many of my days as a psychotherapist, I constructed, a second wall piece, "Conversation II," in response to my understanding of the way in which I perceived this kind woman's life and the wanderings of her mind revealed in the words she shared. (See figure 18)

In these topographical translations of a verbal encounter reflecting a microcosm of the raw and often unheard human condition, my artistic voice began to emerge in concept, execution and technique. While interacting with fiber spontaneously and directly, employing traditional and contemporary textile techniques, I was able to realize in concept and actuality the way in which I transpose life experience into art, by translating that which I hear, see and perceive into colorful abstraction.

Does the material matter? Only in as much as the individual properties of myriad materials enhance the process of my art making. To explore materials other than fiber, I considered spools of thin metal a pliable thread whose nature independent of other materials is stronger than that of cloth thread. The structural integrity of metal allowed me to execute traditional embroidery stitches in air adding a three-dimensional quality to the form that I was creating.

In order to contain the ever-evolving sculpture while at the same time allowing it to grow, I built a rectangular wooden support. As I continued stitching, I departed traditional technique to escape the structure that now felt to be an open air coffin from which my work must evolve in order to grow. Spools of thread became endless avenues



figure 19:  
material investigation



figure 20:  
detail – material investigation

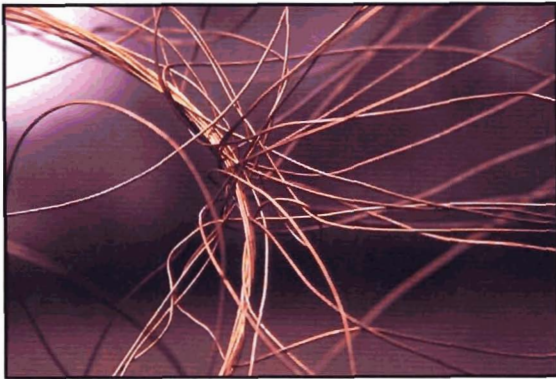


figure 21:  
detail – material investigation



figure 22:  
detail – material investigation

that I could string in and out of tree branches. This aimless wandering of wire enabled me to disappear and reach a deeper level of understanding, one of openness and movement in dimension and composition.

Do I have a preference for materials? Absolutely. To transform fabric from its ordinary context recreating cloth into a colorful passionate expression of the human condition intrigues my restless and energetic nature. I am able to transcend the craziness of the world and retreat into a personal space where my imagination combined with my



figure 23:  
studio view

ever-evolving understanding of the science and art of fiber describes knowledge that life experience has taught me. My neurosensory response to the tactility of cloth as well as my intensely sustained curiosity surrounding fiber as a material for artistic expression actuates the process through which I make art that is a reinterpretation of life's complexities.

Bringing upholstery fabric into the realm of understanding I created with the wire sculptures, I began cutting away the edges, unraveling from one career and one way of life, the scientific analysis of



figure 24:  
detail "Free Association"



figure 25:  
detail "Free Association"

human behavior that is the discipline of psychology, to the mystical, metaphysical and unscientific realm of imagination so vital in art making. Overstuffed chairs in my therapy room offered a place of connection where confidences were born and secrets were shared. Sitting on the floor of my art studio, I held the metaphorical fiber of my former career in my hands and transformed rectangular pieces of upholstery fabric into myriad shapes. Sewing the multicolored, multi-textured pieces into two- and three-dimensional forms until all the parts joined to tear away the boundaries of my conscious mind, I was free to explore uncharted levels of emotional awareness.

The visual interpretation of this process appears in "Free Association" a textile installation revealing my affinity for the juxtaposition of aggressive color combined with my

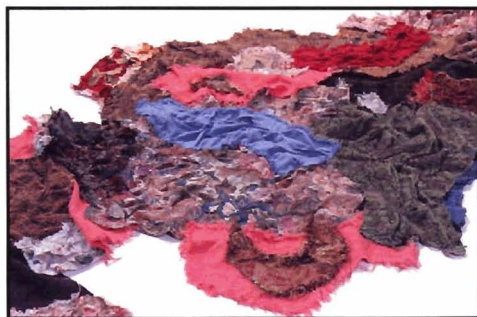


figure 26:  
detail "Free Association"

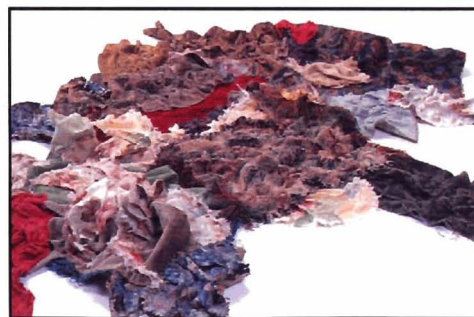


figure 27:  
detail "Free Association"

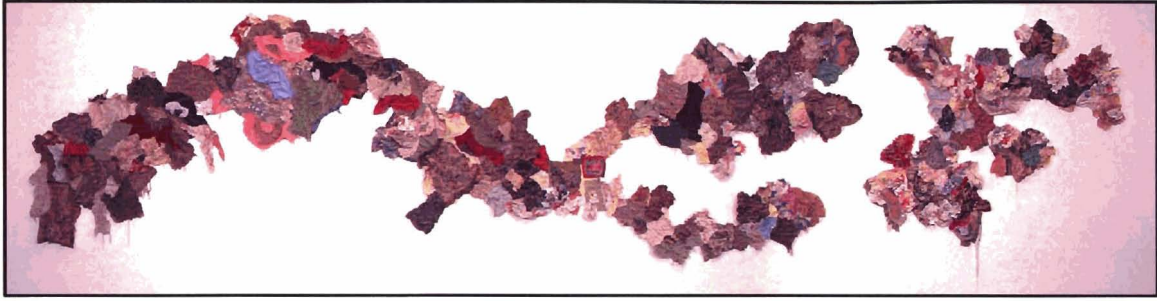


figure 28:  
“Free Association” 40’x9’ or dimensions variable

intense passion for energy. The completed piece measuring forty feet long by fifteen feet tall remains an abstract rendering of intrapsychic exploration born of awareness reproduced in fiber.

Rendering life experience through introspective, spontaneous and intuitive process is how I create art. Pieces from my most recent body of work, “State Of Being”,



figure 29:  
untitled drawing

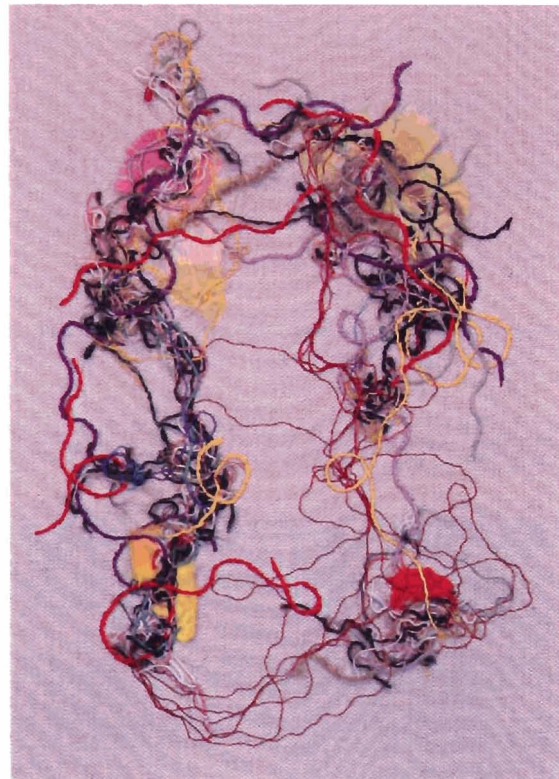


figure 30:  
untitled drawing



figure 31:  
untitled drawing

These pieces, painterly in nature, derive from drawings I created with threads of many textures and colors, faded and weathered scraps of cloth flowers blown by the wind away from cemetery plots, and upholstery fabric unraveled to create a reinterpretation of a new career.

I will present three pieces from “State Of Being” for my

Thesis Exhibition at the Anderson Gallery in Richmond, Virginia. “Splitting Apart Slowly” began with a dye process in which I spontaneously mixed colors. Altering shades by diluting the original dye bath and leaving a variety of threads and fabrics in pots of dye for varying lengths of time produced an assortment of colors and textures. I machine stitched unrelated sizes of fabric together and stapled them to rectangular and square pieces of finger joined pine I built to fit the adjoining pieces of fabric.

With dyed yarns and threads, I spontaneously designed the surface with abstract images. As the initial rectangular section neared completion, I spilled the threads randomly onto adjoining surfaces considering the splitting apart of a whole life into pieces in order to emerge into yet another time and existence. I believe this to be the process of creative growth, this breaking apart and reemerging from that which is familiar into that which is unknown. As I continued to make “Splitting Apart Slowly”, I did not necessarily know how I would complete the work; I only knew that I would.



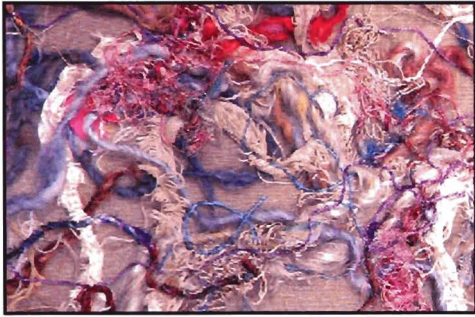


figure 32:  
detail "Splitting Apart Slowly"

Not knowing 'how' my art will evolve yet trusting that it 'will' enables me to maintain a creative tension born of excitement and anxiety that is a necessary ingredient in my art making process. In "Splitting Apart Slowly", separate pieces split apart from the irregularly contoured form emerging as individual expressions of colorful

abstraction. A light poplar frame tries to embrace the edges of the pieces as they emerge from the original rectangle only to be encouraged into the same awareness as that of the surface, one of spontaneity, complexity and color.

Creating art is an examination of my life, communication about all that I know and much of which I am unaware, self-expression through images that may not present themselves to me in intelligible words or even understandable thoughts and associations. I am influenced by artists whose life experience remains at the forefront of their art and whose messages are provoked by thoughtful and determined commitment to reinterpretation through introspection.

Consequently, my work does not always appear visually similar to the work of artists by whom I am influenced. I would argue that it is a risk to the integrity of personal

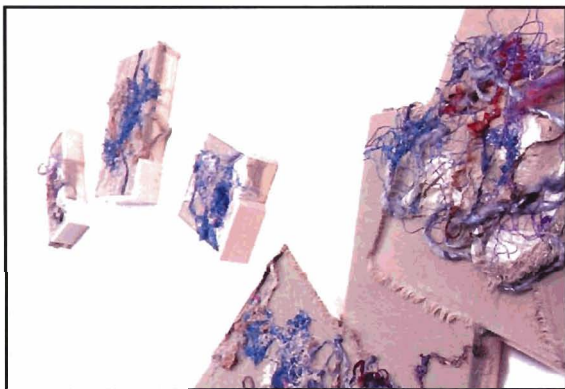


figure 33:  
detail "Splitting Apart Slowly"

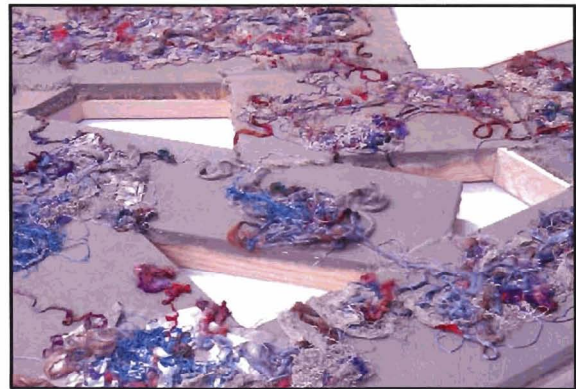


figure 34:  
detail "Splitting Apart Slowly"

creativity to rely solely on the visual likeness of the work of other artists, on movements defined and categorized by the discipline of art history, competitive enterprise, or gallery demand. In choosing art as a career, I challenge myself to think critically, to scrutinize ideology that excludes and oppresses the wealth of creativity shared by like-minded citizens who have and continue to create art.

Real art may be found in places other than the mainstream marketplace where capitalist corporations fueling government policies dictate artistic success. When federal policy commands health care delivery and educational systems that neglect masses and undermine human wellbeing, how widely available is creative expression through artistic medium as a career opportunity? Is the artist as an individual with exceptionally creative talents considered or is the accommodating of those same talents for the sake of market demand of highest order? Can professional artists effect a change in perceptions, activities and possibilities that signals a shift for the art industry, an enterprise today that closely resembles our current political policy of exclusion? Is the dichotomy between the elite of academic art with visionary as stepchild any different than the rapidly emerging two-class economy where status is determined by wealth?

Although considered naïve against a backdrop of competitive capitalist society, my thinking closely resembles that of the abstract-expressionist painters of the late thirties through the early fifties who remained mindfully open to new possibilities amid the confusions of societal demands. A forerunner of this ideology, Wassily Kandinsky, in his book, *Concerning The Spiritual In Art*, published in 1912,

“sought to connect the visual matter of art directly to the inner life of man. Abstraction was not essential to this, but rather the tuning of pictorial means to the emotional or spiritual urge within the artist. Instead of reinforcing the false values of a materialistic society, art thus used would help people to recognize their own spiritual worlds.” (pg. 43)

Such a challenge to introspection and re-evaluation is not unique to a particular time or academic discipline, rather pertains to the entirety of humankind. At some time in each of our lives, the call to solitude offers a gateway to self-discovery, a world undefended by socioeconomic parameters and uninhibited by societal discontent. It is in this time, existence and place that individual creativity springs forth to encounter and embrace pleasures and atrocities always inherent in the clamorous world that we know. I am drawn to contemporary artists whose emotional vision surpasses limitations and parameters of wealth.

Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson is a contemporary fiber artist whose work addresses such self-awareness. Throughout her life, Ms. Robinson has attempted to examine and understand her experience by layering painted and sewn fabric to depict intricate illustrations. I feel my artistic intention similar to that of Ms. Robinson who does not consider her art separate from her life and the life of others, rather she thinks of art as an expression of her life.

“The act of creating is a strange and fleeting thing. Everyday, without distractions ideas flow freely. These ideas stem from and embody a collective memory. They ebb and flow like water in a dream.” (pg. 44)

More popularly known to the North American art world as one of the Gee’s Bend quilters, Annie Mae Young, is another fiber artist with whom I feel a kindred spirit. Of her quilts, Ms Young says, “I didn’t even know how to quilt. I just got some pieces and sewed them together. I just do my way.” (video text) I admire Annie Mae Young’s courage and dignity, her unpretentious offering through colorful fiber that communicates the integrity of her soul. This honest translation of life experience through unabashed immediacy of colorful construction resonates with my approach to creating art.

Was the introduction of Ms. Young’s fiber art alongside other Gee’s Bend quilts at the Whitney Museum an effort to promote art not previously recognized in the mainstream? I trust that it was. Did the project result in a venture capital approach that

demonized social wealth laying bare the true nature of the preponderance of wealth and government policy in the life of the arts? I would argue that it did. I face difficult questions in my attempt to interface my career experience as a psychotherapist with that of my understanding of the art world. Rather than attempting to capture the imagination of a singular few that dangle gallery wealth as an offer of relationship thereby denying social wealth, I am in support of an artistic marketplace that demands the honest creative expression born of individual experience and social consciousness.

I also identify with artists whose work appears visually similar to mine, artists who employ color, movement, and spontaneous drawing to express intensity of emotional passion. Like Elizabeth Murray's paintings, whose "... buoyant, self-assured abstractions reveal themselves to be visual amplifications...of the minor accidents and private exchanges that fuel everyday life," (p. 8 ), my work reverberates with the same aggressive color and altered contours. Whereas Ms. Murray primarily paints individual moments of personal experience, for instance "Table Turning" in which she compares table forms to two persons and then delightfully associates her work as a turning of the tables on herself (p. 62,63), I describe shared conditions of our human existence that require and sustain the processes of adaptation and assimilation.

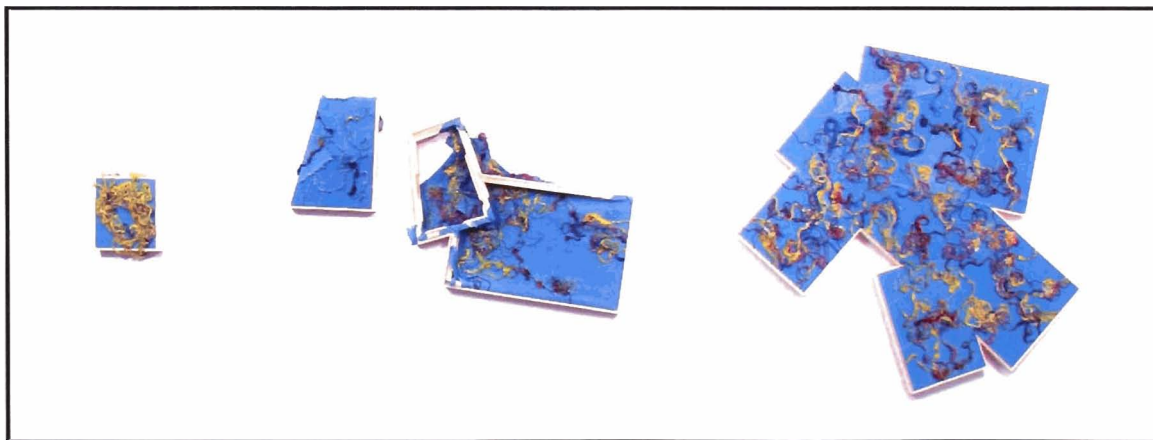


figure 35:  
"Rearranging My Mind" dimensions variable

“Rearranging My Mind,” another piece in “State Of Being”, speaks to the way in which life blindsides all of us. At the very time we feel or believe that we understand, in just an ordinary moment, our lives can be irrevocably altered never to return to the accustomed and familiar. To adapt and assimilate to incipient disorientation, I must rearrange my perceptions to allow for growing awareness. A brilliant blue linen cotton mix fabric declares a sky uninhibited by the glory or possibly the treachery of clouds. Adding to the overall design of the surface creeps a yellow mixture of threads offering the reverberation of sunlight or by contrast presenting the ubiquitous deathly designation of bio-hazardous waste pouring over an asymmetrical form that rivets with energy contained by a poplar frame. In an ordinary moment, our perception of an event can alter our lives forever.



figure 36:  
detail “Rearranging My Mind”

“Imagining On My Own” rests two and a half feet off the floor on structures built to assist the execution of large embroidery. A horizontal right angle is mounted on three legs to create a support that can be moved to accommodate installation. Four such structures provide working as well as presentation possibilities. In each of the three thesis pieces, There is no logic to the placement of fabric squares and rectangles creating a confusing relationship between surface and form provoking an anxiety or tension that creates dynamic contour. Despite the illogical placement, there remains an insistently erratic frame forcing the

textiles away from the wall and off of the floor while rendering the works in the manner of a painting. Aggressive color evokes a competition between organic surface treatment and strong angular form to provide a powerful representation of the psychological processes of adaptation and assimilation.



figure 37:  
“State of Being”

My former career in psychology informs my life, my art and the direction of my continued career ambition. The academic disciplines of psychology and the practice of psychotherapy transfuse my emerging career in art. I carry with me the experiences of many lifetimes, that of my own and of others, of family and of friends with whom I may have only a passing acquaintance or perhaps with whom I share a lifetime of memories. Along with these experiences comes whatever I need to create art, to translate conscious and unconscious processes into visible forms of self-expression, thereby communicating a message of hope in a time of uncertainty.

As the world grows increasingly complex, our very existence is threatened by terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and socioeconomic confusion. A culture driven by consumerism responds to global competition for technology that races against the speed of light. Human misunderstanding is relegated to war, courts of law and bi-partisan politics.

Adapting and assimilating life circumstances and experiences with a sensitivity to the interplay of intensely colorful fiber in my hands effects my optimistic and energetic reinterpretation of life's complexys. In a time of uncertainty art is a reason for hope.



figure 38:  
studio view

## **Literature Cited**



Literature Cited

1. Jonathan Binstock. *Sam Gilliam: A Retrospective* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 74.
2. Janine Vescelius Flynn. "Reinterpreting A Tradition" in *Surface Design – The Journal Of the Surface Design Association*. Volume 23, Number 24, Fall 1999. pgs 17 & 19.
3. Nikos Stangos (editor). *Concepts of Modern Art: From Fauvism To Post Modernism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 43.
4. Columbus Museum of Art. *Symphonic Poem: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 44.
5. Arnett, Paul, William Arnett, John Beardsley, Jane Livingston. *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*, (Atlanta: A Tinwood Media Production Film Documentary, 2002).
6. Sue Graze and Kathy Halbreich. *Elizabeth Murray: Paintings and Drawings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), 8.
7. Graze and Halbreich, 62,63.

## **Bibliography**

## Bibliography

- Arnett, Matt and Vanessa Vadim, producer and director, *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*. Atlanta: A Tinwood Media Production Film Documentary, 2002.
- Arnett, Paul, William Arnett, John Beardsley, Jane Livingston. *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*. Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2002.
- Binstock, Jonathan P, *Sam Gilliam: A Retrospective*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005.
- Flynn, Janine Vescelius, "Reinterpreting A Tradition: New Meaning In Korean Patchwork," in *Surface Design: The Journal of the Surface Design Association*, Volume 23, Number 4, Fall 1999.
- Genshoft, Carole M. and Annegreth T. Nill, *Symphonic Poem: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002
- Graze, Sue and Kathy Halbreich. *Elizabeth Murray: Paintings and Drawings*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987.
- Stangos, Nikos (editor). *Concepts of Modern Art: From Fauvism To Post Modernism*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1994.

**VITA**

## ANN BRADSHAW



## EDUCATION

- MFA candidate*** Virginia Commonwealth University  
 Fine Arts specializing in Fibers Richmond, Virginia  
 Expected graduation, May 2006
- BFA, Summa Cum Laude*** Longwood University  
 Crafts Farmville, Virginia  
 May 2004
- Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
- M. Div., Cum Laude*** Emory University  
 Candler School of Theology Atlanta, Georgia  
 March 1978
- Dean's Award Academic Scholarship
- B.S.*** Emory University  
 Psychology Atlanta, Georgia  
 December 1973

## SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION

- Preparing Future Faculty Certification. Virginia Commonwealth University. Richmond, Virginia. July 2006.
- Weaving Class. Hand Workshop Gallery. Richmond, Virginia. July 2004
- Velvet Scarf Workshop. Studio School. Richmond, Virginia. November 2003
- Contemporary Quilt making Class. Studio School. Richmond, Virginia. Summer 2003
- Fabric Painting Class. Studio School. Richmond, Virginia. Spring 2003
- Elegant Fabrics Workshop. Studio School. Richmond, Virginia. Fall 2003
- Creative Writing Class II. Atlanta College of Art. Atlanta, Georgia. Winter 2001
- Creative Writing Class I. Atlanta College of Art. Atlanta, Georgia. Winter 1999
- St. George's Hospital Medical School, Anorexic Unit. London, England. September 1983
- Directed Study Day and Rounds with Arthur H. Crisp, M.D.
- Clinical Pastoral Education, Basic Level. Emory-Egleston Affiliated Hospitals. Atlanta, Georgia. Spring 1976
- Child Psychopathology Course. Atlanta Psychoanalytic Society. Fall 1976

**EXPERIENCE**

- Psychotherapist*** **Private Practice**  
August 1979-May 2001 Atlanta, Georgia
- Consultant to Eating Disorders Program*** **Peachtree-Parkwood Psychiatric Hospital**  
September 1983-September 1984 Atlanta, Georgia
- Director of Department, Psychotherapist, In-Service Teaching Staff*** **Scottish Rite Children's Medical Center**  
August 1977-March 1978 Atlanta, Georgia
- Conceptualized and Developed Department of Pastoral Care
- Mental Health Provider*** **Grady Memorial Hospital**  
September 1976-July 1977 Atlanta, Georgia
- Developed Counseling Service to High Risk Neonatal Care Unit
- Psychiatric Assistant, Recreational Therapist*** **Peachtree-Parkwood Hospital & Mental Health Center**  
December 1973-August 1974 Atlanta, Georgia
- Provided individual and group therapy as well as in-service teaching for staff

**INSTRUCTOR**

- Graduate Student Adjunct Faculty*** **Textile Department,**  
Summer 2005 **Virginia Commonwealth University**  
Richmond, Virginia
- Presenter*** **American Orthopsychiatric Association Conference**  
April 1985 New York, New York  
"Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia – An overview of Eating Disorders and Their Treatment"
- Presenter*** **Anorexia Nervosa Symposium, Richland Memorial Hospital**  
September 1982 Columbia, South Carolina  
"What is Anorexia Nervosa?" And "The Task of Setting Up a Community Center for the Care of the Anorexic"
- Adjunct Faculty*** **Saint Mary's Seminary**  
September 1978-June 1979 Baltimore, Maryland
- Faculty Research, Teaching Assistant, Colloquy Leader*** **Candler School of Theology, Emory University**  
1977-1978 Department of Pastoral Care and Counseling  
Atlanta, Georgia

**PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS****Book**

*The Motherhood Career Connection*, Anthea Press. 1993.

**Articles**

“Spirituality in Psychology,” in American Academy of Psychotherapy Newsletter.  
August 1998.

“Displacement and Symptom Substitution in Anorexia Nervosa,” in American Anorexia Nervosa Association Newsletter, Volume 5, Number 4. August-October 1982.

“Managing Children’s Stress,” in Youth View Magazine. September 1989.

“Anorexia Nervosa,” in Youth View Magazine. January 1990.

**Book Review**

Adult Education Forum  
Saint Anne’s Church  
July 1989  
Atlanta, Georgia  
*Peachtree Road* by Anne Rivers Siddons

**Presentations**

Building Healthy Families Program	Paideia School
January, February 1998	Atlanta, Georgia
“The Challenge and Opportunity of Parenting Through the Adolescent Years”	

F.E.M.A.L.E. (Formerly Employed Mothers at the Leading Edge) September 1997	Ten Year Anniversary Regional Conference Atlanta, Georgia
“The Motherhood Career Connection”	

Parent Support and Education Groups January 1997	The Children’s School Atlanta, Georgia
“The Motherhood Career Connection”	

Parent Education Group 1995-1996, 1996-1997	The Schenck School Atlanta, Georgia
--	--

Renfrew Center February 1996	Women’s Mental Healthcare Hospital Conference Atlanta, Georgia
“Preparing Your Daughter for Adolescence and Beyond”	

- Faculty, Students  
October 1993  
Pace Academy  
Atlanta, Georgia  
“Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders”
- Three part presentation to the ninth through twelfth grade faculty, the seventh and eighth grade students and faculty, and the ninth through twelfth grade students, emphasizing differing developmental concerns related to each audience
- North Atlanta Parents’ Council  
September 1993  
Westminster School  
Atlanta, Georgia  
“Creating a Connection Between Parents, Faculty, Guidance Counselors, and Students”
- Parent Teacher Association  
November 1990  
Morris Brandon School  
Atlanta, Georgia  
“Stresses of Family Life with Particular Emphasis on the Elementary School Years”
- Parents Organization  
April 1990  
Atlanta Speech School  
Atlanta, Georgia  
“The Stress of Family Life with Particular Emphasis on the Preschool Years”
- Adult Education Forum  
November 1989  
Saint Anne’s Church  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Five week series titled “Understanding Stress”
- Faculty  
November 1989  
Morris Brandon School  
Atlanta, Georgia  
“The Dysfunctional Family and the Child at School”
- Middle and Upper School Faculty  
Spring 1982  
The Westminster Schools  
Atlanta, Georgia  
“Anorexia Nervosa and the Teenage Years”

#### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Team Member**  
March 1998  
Interdisciplinary Treatment Team, Camp Hope  
Quito, Ecuador, South America  
Provided psychotherapeutic and educational services to children attending Camp Hope, an interdisciplinary daycare center providing extensive medical, psychotherapeutic, educational and familial support services to seventy children of low socioeconomic level
- Program Coordinator**  
June 1988-May 1990  
Saint Anne’s Day School, Cultural Arts  
Atlanta, Georgia
- President**  
September 1982-September 1984  
American Anorexia/Bulimia Association of Atlanta, Inc.