

no room for error

Philis Schroeder

Text and photographs
by Philis Alvic Schroeder

Philis Alvic Schroeder is a former HGA representative for South Carolina.

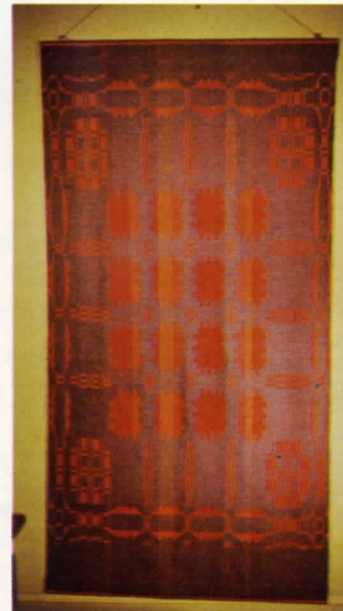


Philis Alvic Schroeder modeling her Victorian Parlor Dress.

My approach to weaving may be viewed as directly opposite to improvisational methods where the weave is arranged and rearranged at the weaver's whim. I'm a planner. My pieces are a finished statement when cut from the loom.

One of my constant joys is that the weaving world is sufficiently wide to allow two very different people to share a part of it. Art is richer for our diversity. While I appreciate improvisation very much, I could no more produce that type of work than I could fly. Since I've been weaving for years, I could certainly master the techniques. The problem would be conceiving ideas in the framework. Different approaches to working lead to different results. The method is suited to the item produced. Improvised weaving may be bold, impressive, and dynamic; while mine is subtle, exacting, and intimate.

See **SCHROEDER** page 7



Cover photograph shows detail of "Sixteen Snowballs for Gary" wall hanging by Philis Alvic Schroeder. Original weaving measures 38" x 90".

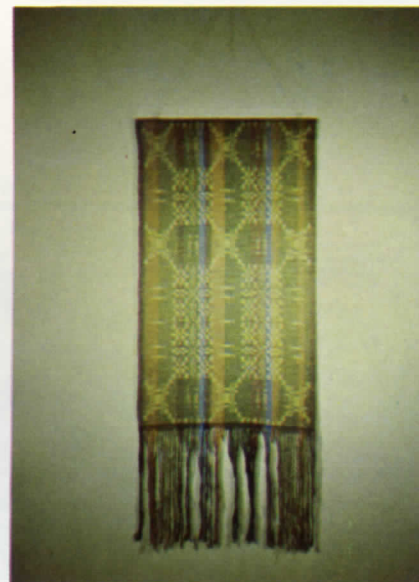
Sixteen Snowballs for Gary.
38" x 90".



Red Overshot. 16" x 40".



Summer Flowers (detail).



Sunlight on Leaves. 25" x 54".

Most of my work consists of multi-harness, entirely loom controlled, two-dimensional, rectangular wall hangings. (In school I was once told by a teacher to be honest in my work, a philosophy difficult to challenge.) Planning begins with a careful study of the weave structure and an investigation of patterns to be worked. After the general design of the piece has been determined, patterns may be reworked and varied or originated within the weave structure. Often two related four-harness patterns are combined and the intersections must be planned and plotted. This requires many, many sheets of graph paper because proportion is of great importance in the all over statement. Many of my warps are striped, sometimes corresponding to the pattern figures while random at other times. This calls for more precise calculations and more graph paper. There is no room for error. Both pattern and color must be accurate to the thread.

The loom is dressed to yield four or five wall hangings from one warp. Usually I have a concept of weft colors, textures, and treadling sequence when I start the weave, but I experiment freely with about half a yard of warp. When weaving the first hanging, many variations occur to me. Unless I am doing a traditional pattern, I vary the treadling as the emerging piece seems to demand. As the weave progresses I get much bolder. Patterns become less formal. Color then becomes more daring as I begin to understand the warp. By closely relating two elements, their differences seem to be emphasized. Closely related colors are not planned in advance but are selected by section as the eye dictates. Textures, as well, lend to the subtlety, too. Within a rigid pattern formula, the possibilities are infinite. Completed hangings differ so much from each other that observers fail to recognize them as having come from the same warp.