

Textileartscenter.com: 'A Man With A Loom: Ethan Cook, Ben Barretto and Brent Wadden', by Francesca Capone, August 29, 2013

A MAN WITH A LOOM: Ethan Cook, Ben Barretto and Brent Wadden

By Francesca Capone / August 29, 2013 / Artist Highlights, Inspiration Board / No Comments

In my studies and in my travels I have carefully taken note of the role that gender plays amongst weavers in various cultures. In Guatemala the women weave on wide and tall floor looms, creating housewares and clothing. In Panama, the Kuna Yala women of the San Blas Islands use a reverse embroidery technique to create the Molas that are their everyday attire. In Ghana the men take great pride in their Kente cloth, creating them on narrow looms and operating the treadles with strings tied to their toes, both to decorate the home with giant wall hangings as well as to create costumes for important occasions. In Morocco both men and women share this cultural role, creating their incredibly detailed woven tapestry rugs. In early North American history, the American Indian women were the textile makers, as were the women in the American colonies and so lives on this association today. I haven't yet studied the textile traditions of every culture of the world – but I have a hunch, and so I raise this question: why are women predominantly the makers of textiles? It is with this thought in mind that I share with you three contemporary male artists who have chosen weaving as their medium.

Ethan Cook, master of minimal compositions, hand weaves simple constructions in a variety of colors and assembles his fabrics into a machine sewn framework of aesthetic perfection. He formerly worked in paint and dye and still refers to himself as a painter – which is incredibly apparent in the work. See for yourself: <http://ethanfieldingcook.com/>

Last but not least, Brent Wadden has been weaving up a storm. His world of *Alignments* continue to develop into further forms of abstraction. The loom has moved to the forefront of his studio practice, as he was formerly a painter as well. Using almost exclusively black and white yarns he creates narrow tapestry weavings and stitches them together to create larger pieces. These new works show incredible restraint in the exploration of a very particular geometric tension. See the whole series here: <http://www.brentwadden.com/>