

# Conference on Norwegian Woven Textiles

Hosted by Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum and Luther College

Decorah, Iowa • September 25-27, 2009

This is the fourth textile conference initiated by the Norwegian Textile Guild (NTG). NTG formed in 1994 with the aims of studying Norwegian weaving techniques, expanding knowledge by translating key publications from Norwegian to English, compiling bibliographies of publications on topics related to Norwegian textiles, and registering traditional textiles in private collections. In addition to a quarterly newsletter, the group stays in touch during gatherings at conferences such as *Convergence*, tours to Norway, and the *Conference on Norwegian Woven Textiles*.

## KEYNOTE AND SPECIAL SPEAKERS

**Mary B. Kelly** was Professor of Art at Tompkins Cortland Community College in Dryden, New York, from 1973 to 2000. For more than 20 years, Kelly has researched pre-Christian motifs on embroideries and weavings from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Greece. Kelly has written numerous articles and books, most recently *Goddess Embroideries of the Northlands* (2007). She is guest curator of Vesterheim's *Sacred Symbols, Ceremonial Cloth* exhibition.

**Britt Solheim** lives in Gjøvik, Norway, and teaches courses all over Scandinavia in the old technique of *skinnfell* making. A *skinnfell* is a coverlet made of sheep skins sewn together. Some of these coverlets are printed with wooden blocks and alder-bark dye. Solheim will speak on the products, processes, history, folklore, and future of the *skinnfell*.

**Dr. Mikel B. Tin** was born in Copenhagen and has studied in Oslo, Rome, Paris, and Prague. He is Professor of traditional arts at Telemark University College in Rauland and recently published a book on symbols, *De første formene: Folkekunstens abstrakte formspråk (The First Forms: Abstraction in Folk Art)*. At the conference he will speak about symbols on woven and embroidered textiles, with an emphasis on female motifs.

**Inger Anne Utvåg**, currently Dean of the Faculty of art, design and drama at Oslo University College, started weaving traditional versions of *båttrya*, or "boat rugs," woven coverlets with one side of knotted fringe. Now she uses vibrant colors and contrasting textures to make contemporary artworks that still honor Norwegian coastal history.

---

## EXHIBITIONS

***Sacred Symbols, Ceremonial Cloth*** explores the many symbols that have come down from ancient times to be used in family rituals in Norway in the nineteenth century. Four themes explain and demonstrate the important pre-Christian functions of symbols: good luck, fertility, protection, and connecting the human and spiritual worlds. Scenes with furniture and enlarged historic photos show symbols and textiles in use at birth, marriage, and death. On view September 18, 2009 to February 21, 2009, in Vesterheim Museum's Main Building.

***Knitting Along the Viking Trail*** is a traveling exhibition of knitwear designed by Elsebeth Lavold featuring Viking and Iron Age interlaced motifs. Her work also shows an innovation in knitting. More than 50 knit items are exhibited alongside photos and sketches of archaeological finds from all over the Viking world and replicas of rune and picture stones. Lavold is author of *Viking Patterns for Knitting*. On view July 12 to October 11, 2009, in the Hong Gallery in Vesterheim Museum's Main Building.

***Woven Women: Representations of the Female in Norwegian Weaving*** is a special juried exhibition of contemporary weaving in the Norwegian tradition as interpreted by members of the Norwegian Textile Guild. To celebrate the long and varied tradition of Norwegian weaving and its many talented women weavers, artists have created handwoven artworks that depict females abstractly or realistically. On view September 1 to 26, 2009, in Vesterheim Museum's Westby-Torgerson Education Center.

***Exhibit of the Rya Study Group*** Traditional and contemporary objects woven in *rya*, a pile-weave technique, by members of the Norwegian Textile Guild's *Rya* Study Group. On view September 22-26, 2009, in Vesterheim's Westby Torgerson Education Center.

***Exhibit of the Bandweaving Study Group*** Finely patterned bands woven by members of the Norwegian Textile Guild's Bandweaving Study Group. On view September 20-26, 2009, at the Gregerson Gallery in Luther College's Center for the Arts.

## SCHEDULE

Friday, September 25, 2009

*Hotel Winneshiek, Steyer Opera House*

- 10:00-1:00 Conference check-in (Lobby)  
1:00 Welcome  
1:10 *Woven Symbols on the Oseberg Tapestry*  
Mary B. Kelly, Hilton Head, South Carolina  
1:45 Keynote Presentation: *Weaves and Worlds: Ancient Motifs in Traditional Norwegian Textiles*  
Mikkel Tin, Telemark University College, Rauland, Norway  
2:45 Break with refreshments  
3:15 *The Contemporary Rya Rug in America*  
Marion T. Marzolf, Ann Arbor, Michigan  
3:45 Presentation t.b.a.  
4:15-7:00 Dinner on your own
- 

*Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum  
and Westby-Torgerson Education Center*

- 7:00 - 9:00 Open House. Refreshments served in museum lobby.  
Museum Stores open.
- 

Saturday, September 26, 2009

*Hotel Winneshiek, Steyer Opera House*

- 8:00-10:30 Conference check-in (Lobby)  
9:00 *Weaving and Design in Norway*  
Carol Colburn, Cedar Falls, Iowa  
9:30 Report on the Rya Study Group  
Judy Ness, Eugene, Oregon  
10:00 Break with refreshments  
10:30 Keynote Presentation: *Tradition and Innovation: Rugs from Fishermen's Boats Transformed to Tapestry*  
Inger Anne Utvåg, Oslo University College, Oslo, Norway  
11:30 *Hard Times and Scandinavian Spinning in the Upper Midwest at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Another Look at Alfred Andresen's Catalog for Home Industries*  
Patricia Hilts, Columbus, Wisconsin  
12:00-12:45 Shuttle from Hotel Winneshiek to Luther College



Schedule subject to change without notice. Please, no videotaping.  
For more information: [vesterheim.org](http://vesterheim.org) • 563-382-9681 • [info@vesterherim.org](mailto:info@vesterherim.org)

**Saturday, September 26, 2009, cont.**

*Luther College, Center for the Arts*

- 12:15 Box lunch (menu: smoked turkey sandwich, chips, fruit, cookie, beverage)  
Time to view exhibits of bandweaving, Navajo rugs, and knitting
- 2:00 *Double-Weave and the Warp-Weighted Loom*  
Katherine Larson, Bainbridge Island, Washington
- 2:30 Concurrent Sessions:  
Discussion Groups, including warp-weighted looms and handwoven clothing  
Gallery Talk: *Navajo Rugs* with Deb Norland, Luther College
- 3:15 Refreshments at Bandweaving Study Group Display
- 3:45 Concurrent Sessions:  
Discussion Groups, including bandweaving and spinning wheels  
Gallery Talk: *Navajo Rugs* with Deb Norland, Luther College
- 4:30 Shuttle returns to the hotel
- 

*Hotel Winneshiek, Steyer Opera House*

- 6:30 Cash bar opens
- 7:00 Dinner (menu: salad and roll, pork loin wrapped in bacon with Dijon cream sauce, Yorkshire pudding, vegetable, *krumkake* with lingonberries, beverage)
- 8:00 Scandinavian music with Tulla, with band members Beth Hoven Rotto, Jon Rotto, Bill Musser, Ann Streufert, Otter Dreaming, Ingrid Rotto, and Ida Rotto
- 

**Sunday, September 27, 2009**

*Hotel Winneshiek, Steyer Opera House*

- 8:00-9:00 Conference check-in (lobby)
- 9:00 Keynote Presentation: *Skinnefell: A Living Tradition*  
Britt Solheim, Gjøvik, Norway
- 10:00 Break
- 10:15 *A View of Norwegian Textile Production in 2008*  
Patricia Williams, Brighton, Michigan
- 10:45 *Munthe's Myths: National and International Designs in Gerhard Munthe's Tapestries*  
Erica Warren, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 11:15 Closing Comments



**2009 Grace Rikansrud Memorial Lecture**

2:00 p.m., Vesterheim's Bethania Church, 113 N. Mill St., Decorah, Iowa

*Finding Sacred Symbols: A Life of Textile Travel* by Mary B. Kelly

A travelogue featuring textiles and folk costume from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe.

This lecture is free and open to the public.

## TRAVEL TO DECORAH

The easiest way to travel to Decorah is by car. The closest airports are: Rochester, Minnesota (1.5 hours), La Crosse, Wisconsin (1.5 hours), Minneapolis/St. Paul International (2.5 hours), and Cedar Rapids, Iowa (2.5 hours). Rental cars are available at all airports. The closest Amtrak station is La Crosse, Wisconsin.

---

## LODGING

The Hotel Winneshiek is offering special rates for the conference and pre- and post-conference classes. Contact Tessia Wangsness (800-998-4164) to make the reservation. Rate is per person, tax not included.

Hotel Winneshiek  
104 East Water St., Decorah  
Rate per weekday (Sunday-Thursday) night: \$85,  
Rate per weekend (Friday-Saturday) night: \$155

---

Blocks of rooms for September 25-26 have been reserved at the following motels under the name "Vesterheim Conference." To take advantage of special rates, make reservations before August 27. Rates are per person, tax not included.

Heartland Inn  
705 Commerce Dr. (Hwy. 9 East), Decorah  
563-382-2269  
Rate per night: \$90

Country Inn by Carlson  
1202 Hwy. 9 West, Decorah  
563-382-9646  
Rates per night: \$105

Super 8 Motel  
810 Hwy. 9 East, Decorah  
563-382-8771  
Rates per night: \$75

---

Additional lodging options:  
B & B on Broadway, 563-382-1420  
The Bluffs Inn, 563-382-8600  
Dee Dee's Bed and Breakfast, 563-382-2778  
The Dug Road Inn, 563-382-9355

For more Winneshiek County Tourism information, contact the Winneshiek County Convention & Visitors Bureau or the Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce (563-382-3990, 800-463-4692, or [www.decoraharea.com](http://www.decoraharea.com)).

---

## VENDORS AND ADVERTISING

Because of space constraints, there will not be vendors at the *Conference on Norwegian Woven Textiles*. Businesses and artists may take out one-page advertisements in the conference proceedings, which will be distributed to all registrants. Request advertising information on the form when you register, or contact Laurann Gilbertson at 563-382-9681 or [lgilbertson@vesterheim.org](mailto:lgilbertson@vesterheim.org) before August 30. Ads are due September 8, 2009.

### SPECIAL THANKS

For the following gifts and grants to Vesterheim Museum, which have helped to make the *Conference on Norwegian Woven Textiles* and associated programming possible, thank you to: the American-Scandinavian Foundation's Andrew E. and G. Norman Wigeland Fund for support of keynote speakers Solheim, Tin, and Utvåg; the Grace Rikansrud Memorial Lecture Fund (at Vesterheim Museum) for support of special speaker Mary B. Kelly; and the Decorah Hotel/Motel Committee for printing and distributing conference materials.

Thank you also to sponsors of the exhibitions, including Lila Nelson, Blue Heron Knittery, Helen Garnaas, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, John and Veronna Capone, Paul and Carol Hasvold, T. Eileen Russell, Ruth and Dale Hinderaker, Darold and Carol Johnson, Kate Nelson Rattenborg, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Kate Martinson, Arne and Ruth Sorenson, Humanities Iowa, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

