



Top: Kamme Greift, "Wild Salmon Forever"  
Above: Anne-Kirsti Espenes,  
"Nature does not need humanity"

Top: Randi Heitmann Hjorth,  
"About War and Peace"  
Above: Randi Lium, "Trondheim"

## ARAKNE

### A COMMITTED ARTIST/WEAVERS' COLLECTIVE

The Norwegian tapestry weaving collective ARAKNE aims to improve the visibility of tapestry as an integral part of contemporary art. Formed in 2009, the group currently comprises five weavers who live in Trondheim and the surrounding area. The group got together "for mutual inspiration" and "to have the guts to keep weaving," according to founder Anne-Kirsti Espenes. The group, which also includes Kamme Greiff, Mette N. Handberg, Randi Heitmann Hjorth and Randi Lium, want to pool their efforts and work together. These five women see themselves as textile artists devoted to tapestry as an artistic medium. That it is an all-woman group at the moment is a coincidence, Espenes wrote us by e-mail. There are currently no men doing tapestry in the area.

The name ARAKNE refers to the ancient legend of Arachne, the young Greek girl of lore who was such a skilled weaver that she challenged the goddess of crafts to a contest and was turned into a spider due to her hubris. The story, beloved by weavers, is often considered a commentary on challenging authority. The group is quick to point out that it does not seek to challenge sanctioned political systems, let alone the Norwegian government. Nevertheless, these tapestry weavers "have an interest in what is at stake in society

today, both locally and globally, and focus on current themes and topics". As artists who are involved in their communities and in local issues, they are interested in generating debate. Environmental issues are among the topics they champion – something that is rare in textiles and tapestry.

In late 2009, ARAKNE launched its ambitious five-year exhibition project Verdensveven – Weave World Wide, an up-to-the-minute approach to a traditionally slow and contemplative medium. In annual shows through 2014/2015, the weavers seek to "take the pulse of time" and create "in the present". Each has chosen an aspect of the world today, which she believes deserves attention, both globally and locally. These include environmental concerns (Greiff/"Wild Salmon forever!"); humans' interaction with nature (Espenes/"Humanity is dependent on Nature – Nature does not need Humanity"); and local issues (Lium/"Trondheim – a nicer city!"). At each exhibition, the weavers present a work on a common theme, which consists of panels in the same format, 55 cm x 55 cm.

Arakne, which received some funding from the artists' assistance fund Bildende Kunstneres Hjelpesfond, which among other things supports artists in areas far from the art scene in the capital, Oslo. Randi Heitmann Hjorth coordinates the group's online presence via a (Norwegian) Facebook page and its website ([www.arakne.no](http://www.arakne.no)).