



SHIBORI SENSEI

By Aja J. Junior

OPENING THE DOOR, Valerie Doran Bashaw revisits the era of tie-dye with the ancient technique of Shibori. This Japanese art form explodes onto cloth when the artist wraps fabric around a pole, binds it with string, and lets the dye do the rest.

Valerie's current use of Shibori technique did not just fall into her lap; it was placed there. While studying at the Kansas City Institute of Art, where she earned her Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree in fiber, Valerie encountered a woman that would become her favorite teacher as well as an inspiration. Shigeko Spear introduced Valerie to Shibori.

Originally from Japan, Shigeko taught her students about Shibori and other fine art techniques of Japan through a slide collection she composed. Fifteen years ago, Shigeko died, and Valerie inherited Shigeko's slide collection. She has used those slides to become a sensei of sorts, a teacher of the art form to others.

While pursuing her Master's in Fine Arts in fiber at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, she began teaching students as a graduate assistant.

Upon completing her master's, she returned to Missouri to continue her art and teaching. In addition to her position as an artist in residence for the Kansas City chapter of Young Audiences, Inc., which sends professionals of the arts into Kansas

City schools to teach topics ranging from aboriginal art to papermaking, she creates fiber art utilizing resist techniques, which is binding cloth and dyeing it. She also designs printed silk scarves, where she dyes the scarves and stamps metallic pigments.

"Every kind of artist has particular kinds of sensitivities," she says. "Fiber artists are passionate about color and texture."

For the future, Valerie aspires to continue her artwork not just for regional art shows and fairs, but in commercial buildings like hospitals and schools.

Although she has set her sights on becoming a full-time artist at her studio, Woven Wind Fibres Studio at Grandview, the twenty-year teacher hasn't abandoned her first vocation completely as she continues to teach summer courses for The Barstow School at Kansas City.

"I try to phase out being a teacher," she says, "but I love it so much that I keep a bit around."

For more information, call 816-838-2368 or visit www.bestofmissourihands.com/valeriedorانبashaw.htm.

From left: This mixed media collage is made of natural materials, such as bamboo, mica, and feathers. This resist-dyed silk scarf was made by binding the silk then dyeing it.