

Michigan Fiber Festival Instructors 2021

Julie Benac of Monroe, MI has been working in textile/clothing design for 30 years. A graduate of Ray College of Design in Chicago (now part of the Art Institute), Julie has worked in cut and sew in Detroit teaching industrial sewing methods, while simultaneously learning the fiber arts of spinning and dyeing over the years. Today she and her partner, Patrick operate Fresh Lotus Design, a small fiber arts business catering to spinners, felters, and all those with a love for wool. This is her first workshop for Michigan Fiber Festival.

M Theresa Brown is a long time professional portrait artist whose art career embraces many areas of the arts. Her years of printmaking and color work led her to explore the fiber arts. Using many similar skills and accumulated knowledge, she evolved as a hand painter, felter and ecoprinter on natural fibers. Theresa uses natural dyes and low impact synthetic dyes and merges them into unique, beautiful designs on silk, wool, paper and even leather; and, turns her transformed work into artisanal clothing, accessories and art. Her articles and designs in the fiber arts have appeared in international publications such as "No Serial Number" and "Belle Armoire". She has created many "How to" DVD's and eBooks in the visual arts in conjunction with the national art chain, Jerry's Artarama. She has been an instructor at many fiber art shows including Southeastern Animal Fiber Fest, Carolina Fiber Fest, Kentucky Sheep, Fiber Festival, Michigan Fiber Festival and many upcoming new venues. Theresa and her artist husband, Stephen Filarsky, reside in rural NC with their alpacas, chickens and family dogs!

Heidi Bukoski grew up in an artistic household. She learned to sew, knit and weave before going off to college to further her study of weaving and dying. She has spent her life increasing her knowledge of different techniques. She has experimented with most fiber processes and loves to combine them to achieve her desired end. Wire jewelry and surface design have become a part of the repertoire over the past 15 years. She conducted her first workshops in the mid 70's, took time off for family, and now loves to share her knowledge through teaching.

Christina Drennen Coghill is a life long fiber artist. She started crocheting at a young age. Then she learned to spin yarn. Spinning then went into knitting and weaving, followed by dyeing and felting. Christina also picked up an antique sock knitting machine along the way and now creates items on her antique LeGare CSM and all of her other fiber equipment. Christina is a fiber addict and loves all things fibery!! Christina is a certified Redding Method Master Dyer and Redding Method Teacher. She takes her dyeing very seriously, but she also likes having fun with it and loves bright and vibrant colors! When she isn't working with fiber, Christina enjoys spending time with her family and her dog.

Nelly DeVault is a fiber artist from central Indiana who took one drop spindle lesson and was hooked! She purchased a raw fleece shortly after and was spinning for her first handspun sweater at her spinning anniversary. "For me, the desire to create textiles from 'scratch' was an immediate priority and continues to be a guiding passion." Nelly loves to learn about and experience the many wonderful breeds of sheep. She has experimented extensively with blending fibers, and teaches blending techniques from the beginning of the fiber prep process to blending while knitting. She has raised bombyx caterpillars to learn about silk, and alpacas to acquire unlimited spinning fiber. She is an experiential learner and teacher and wants to travel with as many friends on the fiber journey as possible! Nelly lives in Alexandria, Indiana, and teaches classes and workshops in her home area, as well as Bloomington, northeastern Ohio, and this spring at the Great Lakes Fiber Festival in Wooster, OH.

Tina Etter, a fifth generation Detroitier who landed on a small farm in Howell, graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in interior design. She is known for her unique needle felted sculptures such as a hat covered with a coral reef, and fantasy birds from 7 inches to 7 feet tall. Tina has had a booth at MMF for the last 5 years filled with felting wool and appreciates this opportunity to nurture others in the art of needle felting gnomes!

Barb Gallagher has been weaving since she stumbled upon a weaving studio in Los Angeles in the 70's. She says she was so excited, it sent her back to school where she earned a BA in Art from Edgecliff College (now Xavier University) in Cincinnati, Ohio. She did her thesis on rug weaving, but since then she's enjoyed weaving functional art such as towels, scarfs, shawls, and blankets. Barb has been teaching weaving for more years than she wants to admit. Barb is also the owner of Weavers Loft, a retail weaving supply shop as well as the home of her weaving studio. She is an active member of the Weavers Guild of Greater Cincinnati as well as a member of several other Ohio guilds and HGA.

Nicole Gillies from Roving Eye Textiles has been working with the fiber medium for almost 10 years. A graduate of CCS, she has a true passion for the felting process and pushing the boundaries of that technique. She has attended the Michigan Fiber Festival for many years and can attribute many of her skills and experience to the workshops taken there. She is currently a children's librarian at a metro Detroit public library, a mother to 2 young children, and a happy fiber artist teaching classes and selling her wares.

Teresa Goatey and her husband Robin both retired from corporate-type jobs and bought a small farm in central Illinois. She has enjoyed fiber arts most of her life: sewing since her teens, rug hooking since 1980 and spinning and weaving since 1994. Since retirement, her focus has been on expanding and improving on her fiber skills and learning to care for her flock of Finn and Shetland sheep.

Gail Hollinger has worked with fiber for, well – a very long time and learned to spin on a cranky, antique flax wheel, oh – a long time ago. Her museum work gave her opportunities to view historic needlework and needlework tools first-hand. She has degrees in Art and Adult and Community Education. Gail has taught classes on many different arts and crafts including: spinning, weaving, marbling, metal clay jewelry, bookbinding, beading, constructing folk instruments, making boxes for rare books, e-textiles, etc.

Bev Larson has been weaving since 1988 and teaching since 1999. She loves to share the joy of basket weaving with those around her and has done so by teaching in Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and, the Caribbean on Basket Weaving Cruises! Making basket weaving fun, relaxing, and inspiring is her goal. In 2003 Bev won the Eiteljorg Museums Weavers Challenge. In 2009 she added broom making as an outshoot of weaving and it too is now a passion. In 2016 Bev received the honor of being named an Indian Artisan by the State of Indiana.

Kathy McMinn started weaving baskets over 30 years ago. She has owned The Basket Sampler in Highland, MI since 2007. There are many styles of baskets that interest her, from simple pencil baskets to more complicated twill patterns. She often incorporates yarns and fibers into her baskets. She teaches all age groups from preschool to senior citizens. You can see some of her work at her website www.thebasketsampler.com.

Ellen Minard, owner of Ellen's 1/2 Pint Farm, has been hand painting yarns and fibers for thirty years. She travels to many sheep and wool festivals and knitting conventions with her yarns; and, has taught at various spinning & knitting guilds, fiber festivals, and Stitches. "The color inspiration comes from my own personal experiences, especially with nature. I do not have a degree in color theory, just a lot of time spent "playing" and experimenting with the colors, a few classes with some wonderful instructors, and most of all, a great love of vibrant colors!" Yes, you will learn in the class, but the most common comment after someone has taken a class with Ellen is "I had a lot of fun and a great time!"

Ruthanne Morningstar is a largely self-taught fiber artist who lives in a small "Thumb" community where natural materials grow literally outside her door. This happy fact has reinforced a strong affinity for fiber arts and has lead Ruthanne to become an accomplished knitter, spinner, weaver, basket maker, and teacher. Over the years she has taught basketry to the Hopis of Arizona, become a Navajo weaver, shared her skills at the Michigan Fiber Festival and developed lifelong friendships with Native American weavers and traders.

Bex Oliger grew up in her mother's (Carol Leigh Brack-Kaiser) Hillcreek Fiber Studio. She started to learn weaving and dyeing at a young age and has traveled the country for over 35 years with the family business vending and teaching at fiber, weaving and knitting Shows. She helped design and weave several of the projects in Carol Leigh's book, *The Continuous Strand Weaving Method* and assisted at numerous natural dye workshops featured in *Nature Provides: Rainbows of Color*. Bex is now a knitwear designer; knitting, weaving, and natural dyeing instructor and consultant; and, owns Hillcreek Yarn Shoppe in Columbia, MO. She and her husband, Eric; son, Charlie; and apprentice, Alexis, travel to 18 states a year to vend and teach at festivals and for guilds and groups.

Esther Peregrine began raising silkworms over a dozen years ago and fell in love with the whole progression of watching the silkworms spin their cocoons; processing the cocoons into yarn or thread; and, ultimately weaving or knitting a finished silk scarf or shirt. Esther and her silkworms have come to schools, museums, and fiber festivals. She leads workshops on silk reeling and making hankies and caps (mawatas) throughout the Midwest. In addition to domesticated silkworms, Esther raises Cecropia, the largest moth native to North America and spins silk yarn from Cecropia cocoons. Besides silk, if it is a fiber that can be spun she has probably tried it! To follow her fiber journey, check out facebook.com/essiespinner.

Jana Rolston is fairly new to fiber arts, but has had a passion for fiber animals for many years. She enjoys wool prep, making batts and spinning art yarn. She has also taught her 10 year old daughter to spin and to treasure fine wool products. When Jana is not spinning, she enjoys reading, camping and spending time with the family.

Joan Sheridan is a weaver, knitter, spinner, fiber explorer and, since 2000, owner of Heritage Spinning and Weaving in Lake Orion, Michigan. Trained as an educator and curriculum developer by the United States Army, Joan is a natural teacher. She volunteers in the textile conservation department at The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, where she loves combining her passion for textiles with her fascination with history. She has taught and presented at conferences, festivals, for guilds and shops, and on tour in Norway.

Katja Szarafinski has played with fiber since her teens, sold flowers at the Hillsdale County Farmers Market for a decade and is grateful to pass on the teachings she has been given. She home educated her 5 children, owns and operates Allen Day Spa with her daughter, tends extensive market gardens and spends her winters transforming local wool into beautiful wearable art.

Amy Tyler of Interlochen, Michigan has degrees in modern dance, kinesiology, and physiology. She uses this background in art and science to inspire her fiber arts work. She spins, knits, teaches, writes, designs, and thinks a lot about process and creativity. She has had numerous articles published in Spin-Off and PLY Magazine. You can find out more about her work on her website, <http://www.stonesockfibers.com>

Elizabeth Whitton is a fiber lover who turned her love of wool into a thriving needle felting business called Felted Sky. Elizabeth has a knack for designing beautiful small projects that she has made into a line of kits suitable for beginners. Her kits are now sold in nearly 50 shops throughout the US and Canada. She enjoys teaching both in person and online. Her video tutorials have over 180,000 views and many positive reviews on YouTube.

Megan Williams is a maker. She prefers maker because it encompasses all the things she is: sewer, dyer, weaver, spinner, felter, crocheter, leather worker, builder, grower, teacher, and student. She is focused on making both beautiful objects and wonderful communities. Megan owns and runs a small textile arts business called Adventure Textiles. She likes using her business to make products with whatever technique she is currently experimenting. Check out her website, www.adventuretextiles.com for examples of what she does with natural dyes and cyanotypes.

Megan has been teaching natural dye workshops all around Michigan for over 5 years and is excited to bring her advanced beginners natural dye and cyanotype workshops to Michigan Fiber Festival. She structures her workshops as an in depth study into the topic. She hopes every student will learn a lot and be confident in being able to replicate the results at home.