

September 2024



## Time Travellers Club

Dear Club Members,

On 14th September 1949 Anni Albers became the first weaver to have a solo exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Albers was born in 1899, and died 30 years ago in 1994. She grew up in Berlin, Germany, and in 1922 began studying at the Bauhaus institute in Weimar.

The school was in operation from 1919 to 1933, and was famous for its integration of Fine Arts with Crafts. The principles and idea studies at the school were key influences in the development of modern design and modern architecture.

However despite the modernism of the design and art women were still banned from certain areas of study. In her second year Anna had wanted to study in the glass workshop with the man who would go on to be her husband, Josef Albers, but was denied, so ended up studying in the weaving workshop. She would have preferred to paint "I thought [weaving] was rather sissy... Just these threads".

That attitude however didn't last and Albers went on to become a master weaver, revolutionising the art form, and creating experimental textiles, combining unconventional materials such as wood, raffia, grass and cellophane.

In 1925 the school moved to Dessau, and Anni married Josef, who was now a junior master at the school. The emphasis of the school moved on to production rather than craft, and Albers designed textiles with a focus on light reflection, sound absorption, durability, and minimising wrinkling and warping tendencies. When the head of the weaving workshop left in 1931 Anni took over her position.

In 1932 the Bauhaus was forced to close by the Nazi party, they felt it was a centre of Communist sympathisers. In 1933, recognising the danger they were in as Jews the Albers left Germany and moved to North Carolina, USA. There they taught at the experimental Black Mountain College, the school focused on learning by doing. In 1949 the Albers moved to Connecticut, and Anni now focused on designing textiles that could be mass produced, some of which are still being woven today.

Over the years she made many trips to Mexico, Peru and Chile where she collected many textiles whose patterns had a huge influence on her work. In 1965 she was commissioned by New York's Jewish Museum to create a Holocaust memorial. Albers was baptised as a Protestant, and referred to herself only as Jewish in "the Hitler sense", but the resultant work is beautiful, and shows a deep connection with Jewish tradition and ritual.

In 1971 they established the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that aims to further "the revelation and evocation of vision through art". The Foundation now administers their estates, and assists in the creation of exhibitions of their works.

Anni wasn't afraid to use colour in her work, but I think some of her most beautiful pieces use some very naturalistic shades, and that's what's inspired your fibre this month, along with Anni's love of combining different materials. The combination of fibres will spin in to a cohesive yarn, but one with a delightful texture. Eider wool comes from a German breed of sheep, the name coming from the origins of the breed... rather than the wool's resemblance to eider duck down.

Happy Spinning

Katie

Fibre Content- In case your parcel is missing the label

20% Eider Wool  
20% Alpaca,  
20% Seacell,  
20% Linen,  
20% Wool

Further Reading-

Six Prayers

<https://thejewishmuseum.org/collection/16696-six-prayers>

The Albers Foundation

<https://www.albersfoundation.org/>

Anni Albers exhibition at Tate Modern in 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/mar/10/observer-anthony-burgess-prize-peter-chappell-anni-albers-tate-modern>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/anni-albers>

Anni Albers

<https://www.nga.gov/stories/who-is-anni-albers.html>

The Bauhaus

[https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bauh/hd\\_bauh.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bauh/hd_bauh.htm)