

ABSTRACT

Bonds

by

Sydney Jaye Sogol

May 2014

Director: Christine Zoller

School of Art and Design: Textile Design

This report of creative thesis is a visual interpretation of the stages in the relationship between me and my horse, Dolly. The work represents a timeline from when we were first paired at a riding academy, to when we participated in competitions and coped with the various hurdles we have faced together, leading to our current state of companionship. My bond with Dolly has influenced the type of person I am. This bond has given me confidence when facing life's challenges, the most noteworthy of which being my struggle with dyslexia. This body of work is woven because weaving is the joining of two separate groups to become a unified whole through a series of steps. These steps reflect the process of bonding that Dolly and I went through to achieve our current relationship.

Bonds

A Report of a Creative Thesis

Presented To

The Faculty of the School of Art and Design

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Fine Arts in Textile Design

by

Sydney Jaye Sogol

May 2014

© Sydney Jaye Sogol, 2014

Bonds

by

Sydney Jaye Sogol

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF THESIS

Christine Zoller, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Kelly Adams, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Robin Haller, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Mi-Sook Hur, MFA

DIRECTOR OF THE
SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN

Michael H. Drought, MFA

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Paul J. Gemperline, PhD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my parents, family, and friends for their continuous support and encouragement. I also want to thank my teachers for letting me explore every avenue I came up with. I would like to thank Lori Ary for always being there through this process. I want to recognize Dolly, my horse, for teaching me so much about life, love, happiness, and myself.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF PLATES	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
PERSONAL HISTORY	2
PROCESS	5
WORK	11
<i>New Beginnings</i>	11
<i>5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back</i>	15
<i>Search For A Proper Home</i>	20
<i>Injuries</i>	25
<i>Education Creates Distance</i>	31
<i>Learning the Language of Nature</i>	35
<i>Bonded</i>	39
CONCLUSION	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY	46

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Design painted on warp	7
Figure 2.	Design painted on warp detail	8
Figure 3.	Warp stretched out ready to be painted	8
Figure 4.	Drawing design onto warp before painting	9
Figure 5.	AVL Compu-Dobby Loom	9
Figure 6.	Screenshot of weave structure design made in WeaveMaker for <i>Bonded</i>	10
Figure 7.	<i>Bonded</i> being woven on the compu-dobby loom	10
Figure 8.	Dolly and I at Echo Creek Riding Academy	13
Figure 9.	Dolly, my dad and I at a local horse show in 2001	17
Figure 10.	Dolly and I at a horse show in 2002	18
Figure 11.	Dolly and I competing at the State 4-H Horse Show	23
Figure 12.	Dolly and I when we moved to Rosewood farms.....	29
Figure 13.	Greeting Dolly the first time I returned from Earlham College	34
Figure 14.	Dolly and I after our move to Lochill Farm	37
Figure 15.	Dolly and I when I moved back to Chapel Hill.....	42
Figure 16.	Dolly and I during the summer of 2013	43

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE I:	<i>New Beginnings</i>	13
PLATE II:	<i>New Beginnings</i> (detail 1).....	14
PLATE III:	<i>New Beginnings</i> (detail 2).....	14
PLATE IV:	<i>5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back</i>	17
PLATE V:	<i>5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back</i> (detail 1).....	18
PLATE VI:	<i>5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back</i> (detail 2).....	19
PLATE VII:	<i>Search for a Proper Home</i>	23
PLATE VIII:	<i>Search for a Proper Home</i> (detail 1)	24
PLATE IX:	<i>Search for a Proper Home</i> (detail 2)	24
PLATE X:	<i>Injuries</i>	28
PLATE XI:	<i>Injuries</i> (detail 1).....	29
PLATE XII:	<i>Injuries</i> (detail 2).....	30
PLATE XIII:	<i>Education Creates Distance</i>	33
PLATE XIV:	<i>Education Creates Distance</i> (detail 1).....	33
PLATE XV:	<i>Education Creates Distance</i> (detail 2).....	34
PLATE XVI:	<i>Learning the Language of Nature</i>	37
PLATE XVII:	<i>Learning the Language of Nature</i> (detail 1)	38
PLATE XVIII:	<i>Learning the Language of Nature</i> (detail 2)	38
PLATE XIX:	<i>Bonded</i>	41
PLATE XX:	<i>Bonded</i> (detail 1).....	44
PLATE XXI:	<i>Bonded</i> (detail 2)	44

INTRODUCTION

As a child, I was extremely shy and was more comfortable around animals than people. I gained confidence through working with horses. While learning about horses, I also saw improvements in my riding, horsemanship, and people skills, even if progress was slow at times. Riding helped me discover that, if I worked hard, I could conquer any new or difficult task. Learning to take care of and ride horses helped me to develop focus, respect, trust, perseverance, and patience. I transferred the growing confidence gained by working with horses to my struggle with dyslexia.

The series “Bonds” is an exploration of a specific human-animal relationship. The work is an interpretation of how Dolly and I have formed a stronger bond through our shared experiences over the past 13 years. This body of work focuses on the seven key stages that have come to define my relationship with Dolly: introductions, becoming acquainted, beginning to bond, injuries, separation, reconnection, and fully bonding. The work is woven because weaving is the joining of two separate groups to become a unified whole through a series of steps. These steps correlate to the process of bonding that Dolly and I went through to achieve our current relationship.

PERSONAL HISTORY

“The essential joy of being with horses is that it brings us in contact with the rare elements of grace, beauty, spirit, and fire.”

Sharon Ralls Lemon

As a child, I was diagnosed with dyslexia. This learning disability caused me to have issues with reading and writing. I required a special tutor and was taken out of the normal classroom setting for part of each day. It made me feel different from the other students. During this time, the classroom was a frustrating atmosphere for me. Horses became an escape for my concerns about school. Working with animals taught me to be a more effective communicator and demonstrated how important interacting with animals was to my development. From observing horses, I determined I am a visual learner, which meant I learn and retain information best when an idea was visually presented. In the regular classroom, most information was conveyed orally or written down with little accompanying visual information. My reading skills began to improve while I was working with private instructors because they were able to teach me using visual techniques. I slowly caught up to my fellow students due to the assistance I received, but since I had different experiences from the majority of them, I never quite felt like I fit in.

Growing up, my family had many pets with which I formed strong bonds: lizards, gerbils, a guinea pig, a ferret and a dog. I mourned the loss of each one as if a family member had passed. I felt connected to animals all my life and found it easier to be around them. Animals are predominantly visual communicators, which means that animals gather information by watching visual cues of other animals as well as humans (Grandin 2005). Human-animal bonds are created and strengthened by both visual and physical interactions. Humans create bonds with

animals for various reasons: economic investments, companionship, and service-related therapy. Each of these connections influence the kind of bond a human and animal can have. Over time, humans and animals can become co-dependent, both receiving the benefits of having a companion (Sarmicanic 2007). Interacting with animals can help improve self-esteem in children, and can help lower blood pressure (Bekoff 2007). The relationships created between humans and animals are deeply rooted and powerful. They can give a person joy and happiness, as well as extreme sadness. However, it takes time and patience in order for human-animal relationships to establish a true, lasting bond. Humans and animals communicate differently, but once a common language is reached, the relationship can be incredibly fulfilling.

My strongest and most influential bonds have come from horses. One of my first experiences with horses occurred when I was 3 years old. My family took a trip to Wyoming and I was exposed to horses for more than just a pony ride. I would run outside to pet the horses in the corrals any chance I got. From this time on, I was obsessed with being around horses because they provided me with a sense of deep comfort and tranquility. Observing horses in the pasture, I learned the basics of horse body language. For example, it can generally be interpreted to mean the horse is comfortable and relaxed if it is standing with one hind leg cocked. Horses are visual communicators, and I could understand their way of interacting because I, too, process information visually. There was no need for words to express my moods, thoughts, or feelings. Through years of observation, I have come to understand that horses predominantly communicate through visual movements: flicks of an ear, shifting of weight, a swish of the tail, or glaring at another horse (Brandt 2007).

Each horse has a different threshold as to how much they trust and bond with humans. The types of relationships that people and animals form are different depending on the animals' personality. Animals can be introverted or extroverted just like people.

Some horses will bond with multiple people and can be receptive to different people handling them. Others can develop an extremely close bond with a single individual. Horses remember specific people, recognize individual voices, and have preferences for who handles them. In my current relationship with Dolly, I have employed various communication techniques learned from observing animals, horses in particular. Everything I have learned since I began interacting with animals has had a crucial impact on the strength of the bond I share with Dolly.

PROCESS

“Bonds” is comprised of seven woven pieces. Weaving is the process of making fabric by interlocking two different groups of yarn, the warp and the weft. The warp is vertical and the weft is inserted horizontally, intersecting across the width of the warp. To create a warp, the yarn is wound a specific number of times along a designated length. I used lyocell fiber for both my warp and weft yarns. Lyocell is a fiber made from dissolving wood pulp. The non-toxic organic solvent used to dissolve the wood is reclaimed, which makes the process a closed circuit loop (Smith 2014). The result is a process that is less harmful to the environment on which both humans and animals rely. Lyocell is soft, supple, and absorbs colors well, all factors that are essential to the visual interpretation of my relationship with Dolly.

I painted the warps by hand with dyes selected and mixed specifically for each piece (see figure 1, 2). Hand painting the warps allowed me to create specific patterns for each individual woven panel. I accomplished this by tying the warp into small sections to retain the thread order, which allowed me to have control over the position of colors (see figure 3, 4).

The first two panels of this series, *New Beginnings* and *5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back*, were woven on a traditional floor loom with 12 harnesses. Harnesses control the lifting of the warp threads. Multiple harnesses increased the potential for the complex weave patterns. I created patterns designed for the maximum number of harnesses as well as illustrated the concept of each individual panel’s story. I required more intricate weave structures as the series progressed in order to embrace and express the complexity of my relationship with Dolly. Therefore for the remainder of the series, I switched to weaving on an AVL Compu-Dobby loom (see figure 5).

A compu-dobby loom interfaces with a computer that reads weave structures as two-digit binary code, 0 and 1, which translates to the harness being in either an up or down position. The loom is computer assisted, but the weaver is still hand-weaving the fabric. The loom had 24 harnesses, which allowed me to dramatically increase the complexity of my weave structures. I used a software program called WeaveMaker to design the complex patterns (see figure 6). Recognizable shapes, such as horseshoes were placed within the weave structures.

In each piece, there are two panels, one which represents Dolly and one which represents me. There is a central unwoven section, which will be referred to as the drape, and two sections of unwoven warp on the exterior borders of both panels. I hemstitched the edge between the woven and unwoven sections.

Two aspects researched were, how to weave sharp angles and specific shapes on the loom and intentionally leave sections of warp unwoven (see figure 7). To achieve weaving the angles on the edges of the panels, I created paper templates to scale. This guide was used to draw the angle onto the warp. When weaving, I followed this line as closely as possible, manipulating individual threads to achieve the smoothest linear angle. The angles changed throughout the series and softened to become curvilinear.

I interpret the world around me in relation to details because I think in terms of images and pictures rather than in words. To interpret visual details easiest to remember. I designed the work to express the changing relationship between Dolly and me by simplifying the imagery to pure color, texture and shadow. I simplified the concept of our relationship into two color schemes, blue representing me, and orange representing Dolly. The pieces were designed to have my blue panel on the left and Dolly's orange panel on the right. As the panels progress, the colors interact to represent the fluctuations in our relationship. The color palette allowed for an

exploration of color interaction between warp and weft, a unique property to the weaving process. The weave structures were designed specifically to show either the warp or weft as dominant colors. The weft colors were selected to emphasize the warp colors that correspond to the emotional state of each step in the relationship's story. The shift in color and increased intricacy of structures embody the complex emotional interactions that occurred between Dolly and me.



Figure 1. Design painted on warp.



Figure 2. Design painted on warp detail.



Figure 3. Warp stretched out ready to be painted.

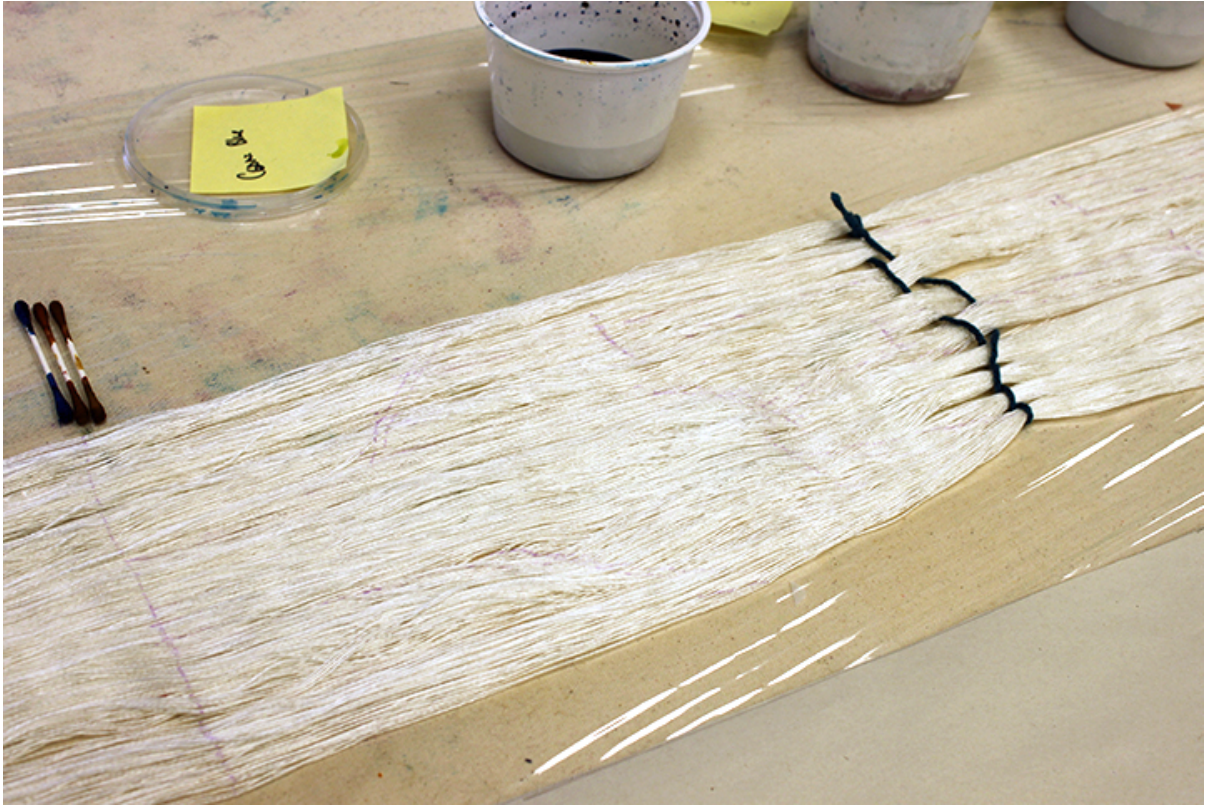


Figure 4. Drawing design onto warp before painting.



Figure 5. AVL Compu-Dobby Loom.

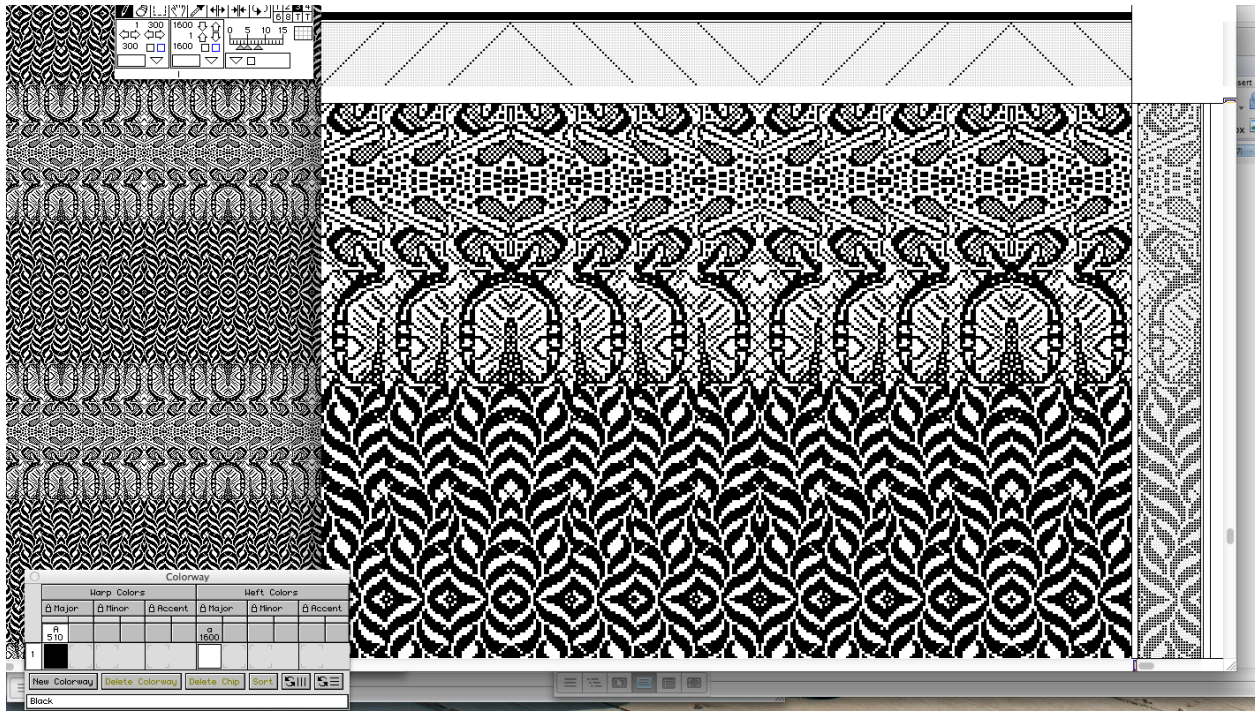


Figure 6. Screenshot of weave structure design made in WeaveMaker for *Bonded*.

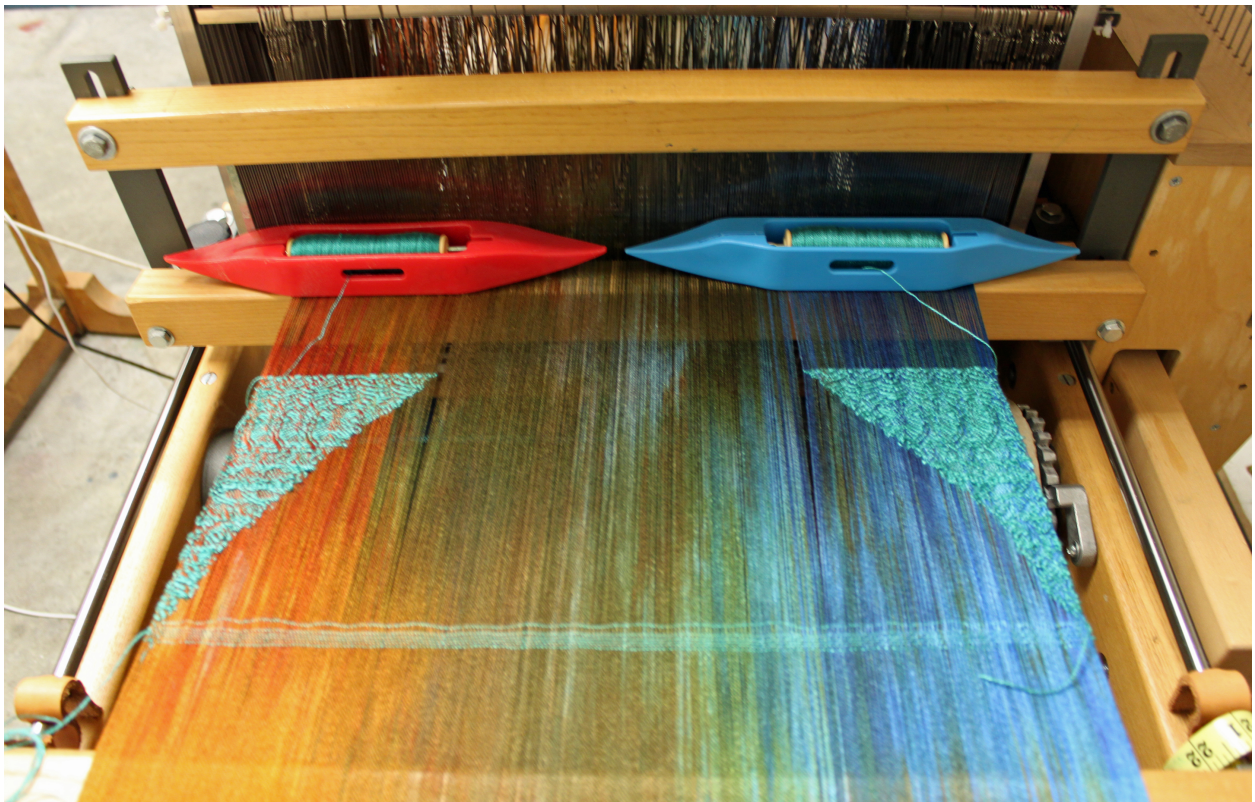


Figure 7. *Bonded* being woven on the Compu-Dobby loom.

WORK

New Beginnings

New Beginnings (PLATE I) is the first piece in the series and is about the establishment of the relationship between Dolly and me. The sharp interior angles of both panels relate to the action of Dolly and me reaching out towards one another. The panel that represents my own experience is angular on both sides because I am bringing my past experiences with horses into this new relationship. Dolly was a rescue horse who was found tied up in a cowshed, malnourished and beaten. Her slate was wiped clean when she arrived at Echo Creek Riding Academy and she was given a new start (see figure 8). This is represented by her panel's vertical exterior edge.

I started to work with Dolly when I was age 12. She had been at the barn for several months, and I was very excited because my trainer trusted me to work to with such a difficult horse. I also felt tentative because she was a green or inexperienced horse, who was uncoordinated and generally hard to ride. Dolly's lack of coordination is illustrated in the jagged orange patterns of the painted warp (PLATE I). In contrast, my panel has a smooth blue horizontal pattern that moves towards the interior. Dolly's panel is a range of orange hues; my panel is a range of blue hues. This is because we did not know each other at this point so there is no color interaction. The focal point of *New Beginnings* is the white section of the drape centered between the blue and orange panels that signifies the gap of knowledge we had about each other at this point.

Both panels are woven with a chromatic neutral, brown, made of an equal mixture of blue and orange used in the warp (PLATE II, III). This is intended to represent how Dolly and I are

equals in the relationship. These color combinations create a blending across the panels. I am a patient rider, therefore, the woven pattern within my panel has curves and a soft feel. Dolly's woven panel contains an angular weave structure that emphasizes her lack of coordination. Dolly's weave structure is also traveling towards the center point because she is working with a new rider and trying to understand new commands.

Dolly was trained as a racehorse, and when she arrived at the farm, all she knew how to do was gallop at top speed. So I worked with Dolly to help her relearn how to place her legs during the walk, trot and canter. Over several months, Dolly and I began to improve. The progress was sometimes slow because she was still being used in the lesson program. In order to progress in the partnership, we would need to grow as a team.



PLATE 1: *New Beginnings*, hand painted and dyed lyocell. 6' X 15'



Figure 8. Dolly and I at Echo Creek Riding Academy.

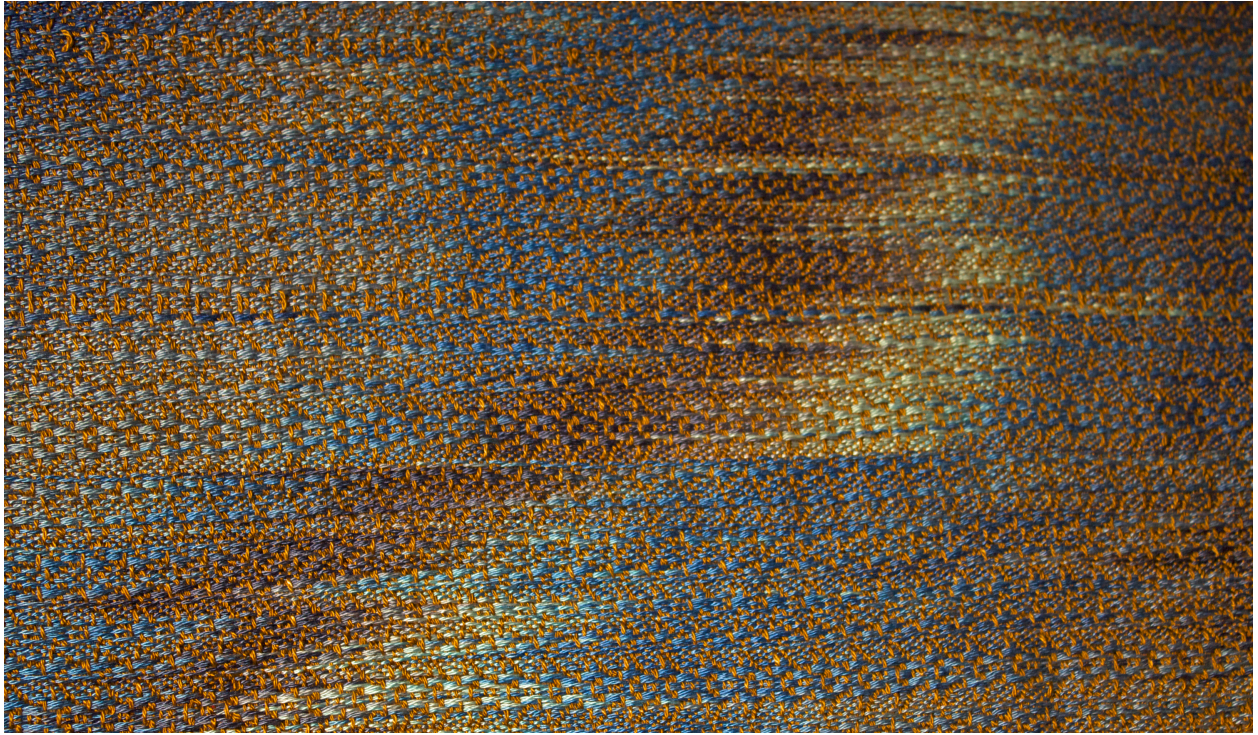


PLATE II: *New Beginnings* (detail 1).

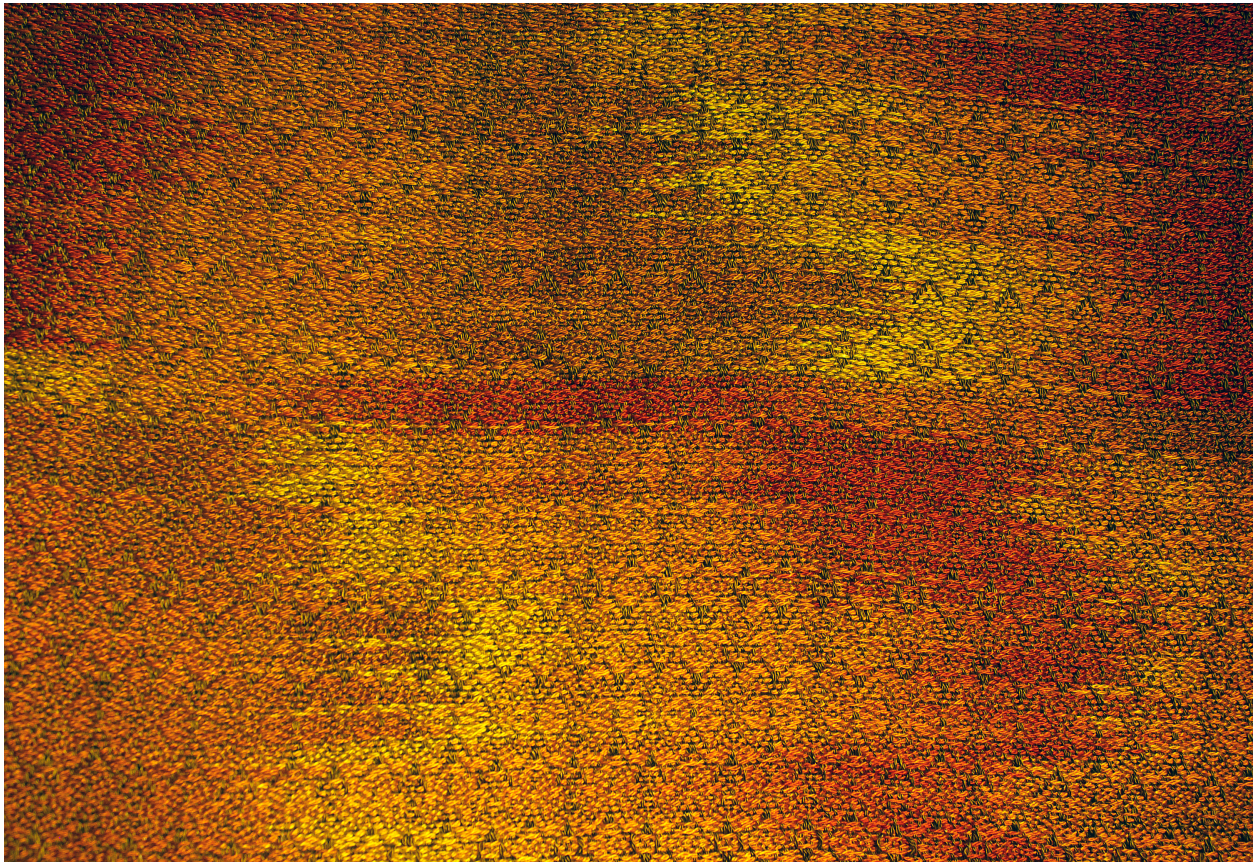


PLATE III: *New Beginnings* (detail 2).

5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back

5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back (PLATE IV) is the second piece in the series. It embodies the ways that our relationship began to take shape over time. My panel interior edge has a strong angle facing Dolly's panel but stops in two places, creating small stair steps. By contrast, Dolly's interior edge has three large stair steps, which represent the struggles that Dolly and I had to overcome to find a common language. Multiple riders in the lesson program at the barn had practiced with Dolly, until I began to lease her (see figure 9). Now I was the only one riding her and it allowed us to build our own unique system of communication.

In the process of finding this common ground, Dolly and I worked on improving our performance by using specific training techniques (see figure 10). We had miscommunications occasionally that set us back and forced us to relearn. The steps in my panel are smaller because, through building the strength of our communication, I was able to understand where we had gone wrong. I addressed the issue by taking a different approach. Dolly and I bonded by working on skills that required us to work together; an example of this is ground tying. Ground tying is a technique used to train your horse to stand still when you drop the lead to the ground specifically when grooming or saddling. Although frustrating at times, when we were finally successful at this technique, it brought us closer. Through it all, we enjoyed working together. This experience is reflected in both the warp colors and the weave structures.

The panels were painted to represent angle brackets (<, >) (PLATE IV). The angle brackets represented how Dolly and I opened ourselves up to the relationship that had begun growing between us. Both panels' colors symbolize this burgeoning growth. The colors are painted to accentuate these shapes by juxtaposing the light and dark hues and by emphasizing the

movement toward the central draped section. In the draped section, our colors are beginning to blend more with one another, creating greens and browns. However, there remains a section of white in the middle representing the many ways our relationship was still only beginning. The relationship was still being established but we worked as equals so the weft color is a chromatic neutral.

The weave structure of my panel mimics the angle bracket (<) that influenced the painted warp (PLATE V). This emphasized that I was open to the relationship's potential and that I wanted to work with Dolly, even though we had some faulty communications at times. Dolly was making the transition from being a school horse into a one-person horse. As a result, she was in a state of confusion for several months. The weave structure has a vertical emphasis, composed of "X's" and "O's" (PLATE VI). The "O's" signified how Dolly would do very well at times and we would come together as an integrated whole. The "X's" symbolized that we would still get our messages crossed. This was a pivotal point in our relationship because we were still working out many of the kinks and only beginning to form a bond that established trust between us.



PLATE IV: *5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back*, hand painted and dyed lyocell. 6' X 12'



Figure 9. Dolly, my dad and I at a local horse show in 2001.



Figure 10. Dolly and I at a horse show in 2002.



PLATE V: *5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back* (detail 1).

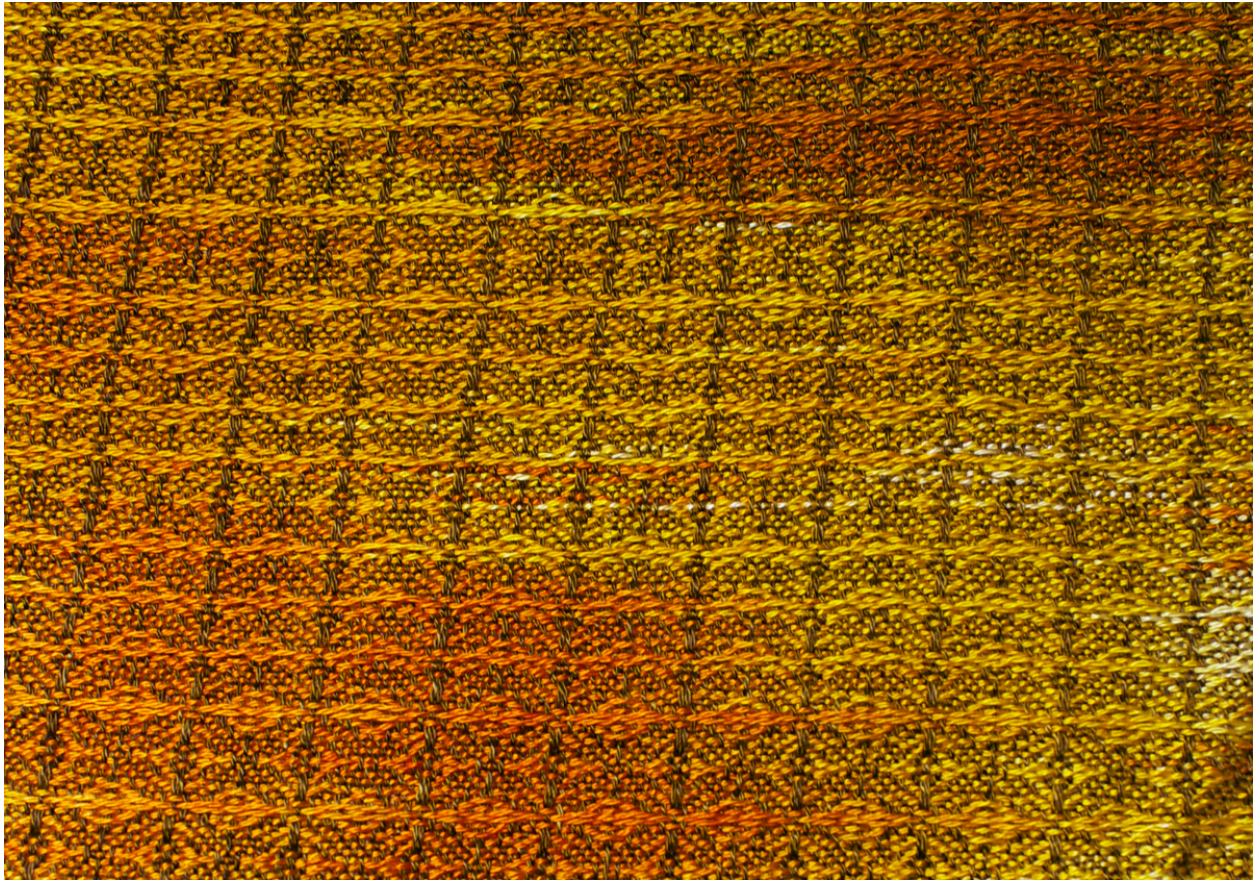


PLATE VI: *5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back* (detail 2).

Search for a Proper Home

The third piece, *Search for a Proper Home* (PLATE VII), tells the story of how our relationship became stronger when faced with new challenges. Due to circumstances beyond my control, I moved Dolly from Echo Creek Riding Academy to High Mirage (see figure 11). This change of environment prohibited Dolly and me from smoothly progressing forward. This challenge is represented by the single disruption of the interior angles in both woven panels. My panel's angular interruption is similar to that found in the previous panel, *5 Steps Forward and 3 Steps Back*, because I know that the change in environment had caused our progress to falter. The exterior angle of my panel is large because it represents leaving the experiences of Echo Creek and the sadness about that part of my life ending. The long unwoven section at the outside edge of my panel represents these past experiences.

The interior edge of Dolly's panel has a different type of disruption. It begins with a smooth angle that abruptly drops off representing an ordeal that Dolly went through while at High Mirage. Dolly had bonded with another mare named Carolina, who broke her leg and had to be put down. Horses are very sensitive and Dolly was distressed at the loss of her friend. This is why there is such a dramatic drop off of the interior angle. She was significantly affected by the loss of her pasture mate and was difficult to work with during that time.

I tried to be supportive of Dolly because she was confused. This is represented by the painted blue streak that has entered Dolly's panel, showing how I was reaching out even more to strengthen our relationship during this tragic time (PLATE VIII). Dolly's panel does not have any distinctive warp color painting because the dominant feature is the blue interacting with the rest of the orange panel. In the central drape of this piece, the orange is reaching out towards the

blue panel but does not quite reach it. The drape's flow is interrupted on my panel's side by a stair step, creating an open space. This emphasizes how the relationship is progressing from the previous pieces and that there is still space to grow. There is a color shift in my panel to incorporate a dark blue-green (PLATE IX). This color palette shift is representative of my learning to work with horses during stressful times, caring for minor injuries and learning to ride in various environments. The softer blues remained dominant in the unwoven section on my panel's exterior edge. Dolly and I were now in an established relationship, which influenced the choice of a weft color. I dyed the weft a mixture of red and black because that would dramatically interact with the painted warp of both panels.

This was the first piece in the series to be woven on the digital AVL Compu-Dobby loom. My panel contains bands of interlocking S-shapes connected to a rounded diamond pattern that is representative of the paths we would follow when riding a jumping course. The interlocking S-shapes directly correspond to the interlocking of our relationship as we gained each other's trust.

Dolly's panel has horseshoe shapes that connect to a more intricate diamond structure. It also has a variation of the S-shape that is turned sideways. The horseshoe shape is important because it represents how critical the health of horse's hooves are to their well-being. The average hoof wall is 15 mm thick, but Dolly's are only 5mm thick. As a result of a thin hoof wall, she has very sensitive hooves, which influence her level of performance. There were many days that Dolly was lame due to a hoof problem. The intricate diamond shapes mimic some of the patterns that we followed when riding. I also use the diamond shape to reference Dolly's show name, Diamond in the Rough.

After Carolina's death, Dolly and I developed a stronger bond that allowed us to have a more solid and stable relationship as we continued to develop our language with additional subtle cues. This new type of communication would lead to better understanding and the possibility of shared meaningful experiences in the future.



PLATE VII: *Search for a Proper Home*, hand painted and dyed lyocell. 5' X 8'



Figure 11. Dolly and I competing at the State 4-H Horse Show.

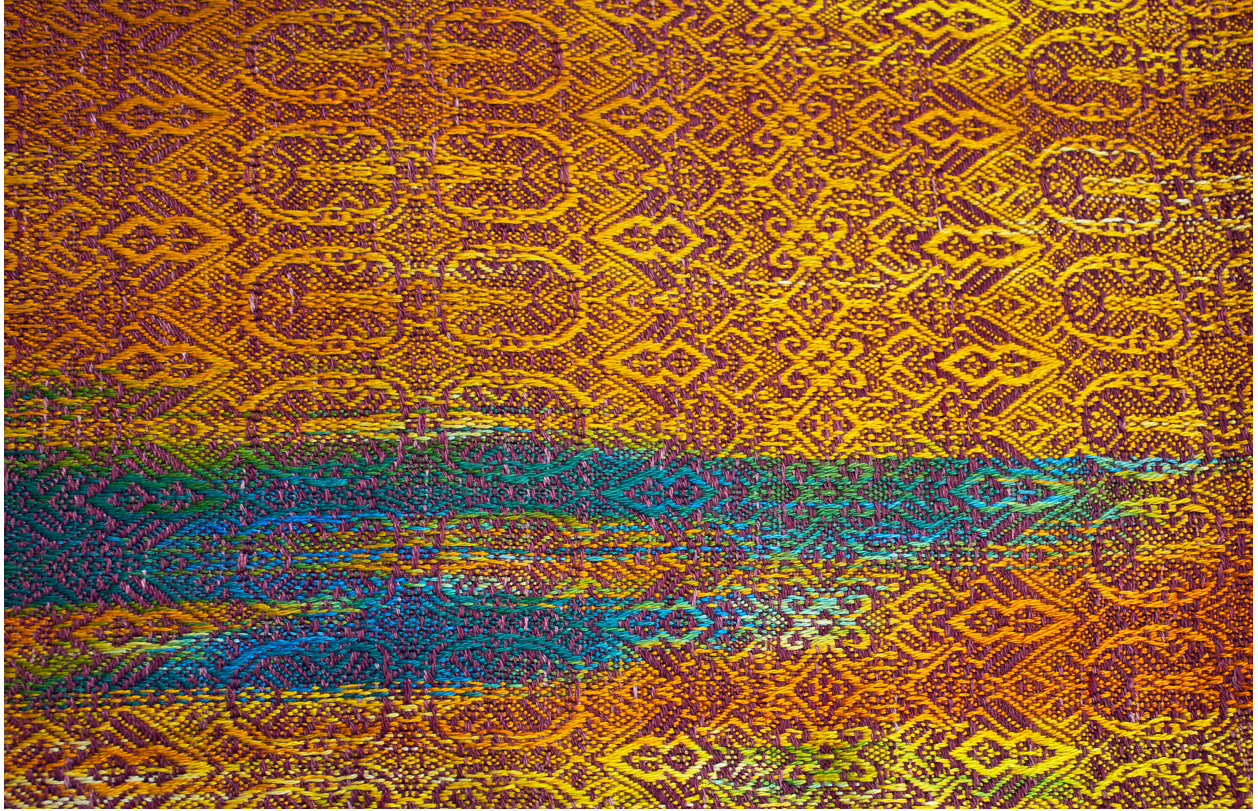


PLATE VIII: *Search for a Proper Home* (detail 1).

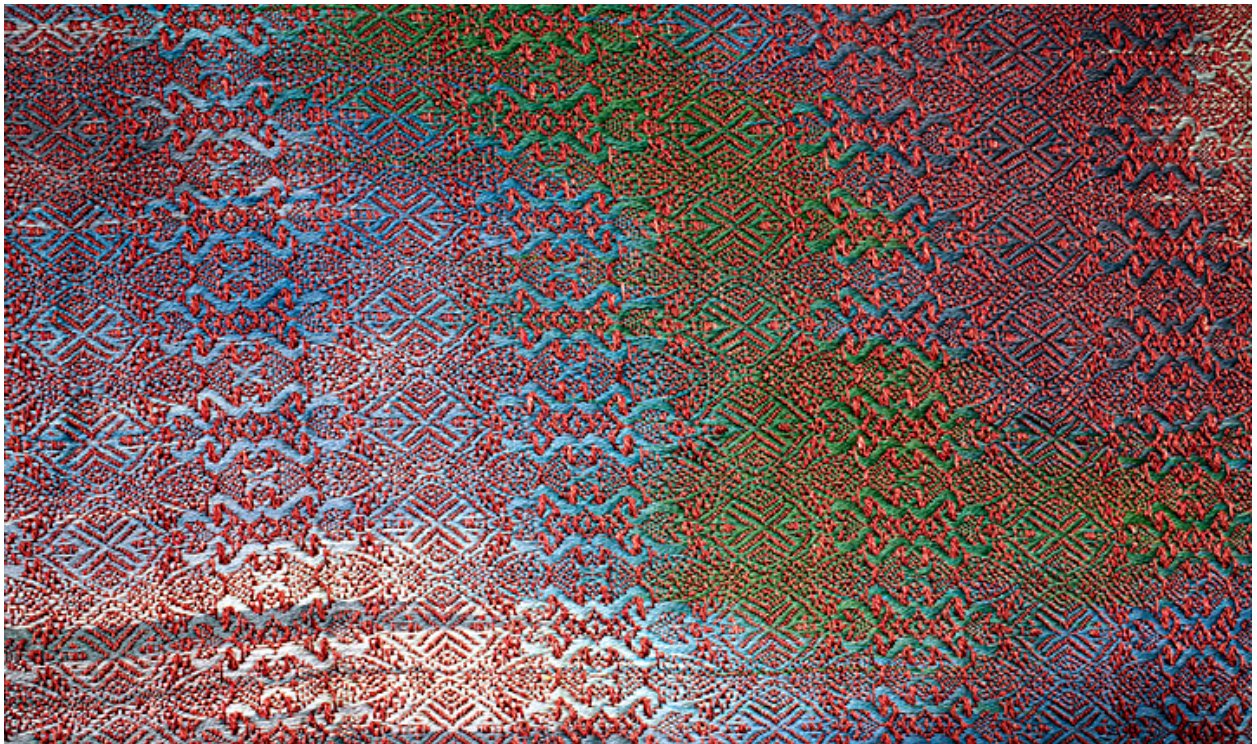


PLATE IX: *Search for a Proper Home* (detail 2).

Injuries

Injuries (PLATE X) is the fourth piece and documents a two-year period when our relationship was forced to change. I moved Dolly to Rosewood Farm, which was to be a fresh start and all of my friends who had a horse were there (see figure 12). However, over time it became a hostile environment for both of us. My panel's exterior edge is a vertical line, which signifies this move (PLATE X). I used the vertical line because I tended to Dolly when she sustained several minor and one major injury while at Rosewood. This is the only place in the work in which my panel does not have an exterior angle. It is a vertical line because my focus is on Dolly and her injuries, which required my full attention. Dolly's minor injuries included bruised hooves, bites, and general scratches, which prohibited me from riding her for short periods of time. Dolly then sustained a major injury, a deep puncture wound that went through her left hind leg. Because of the wound's location on top of a joint, the likelihood of infection was high. Any serious leg injury to a horse can be a life-threatening situation. My mom and I tended to Dolly's leg, which took eight months to fully recover during which time she was unrideable. The interior edge of Dolly's panel has a gentle sloping shape to represent her hind leg. The exterior edge of her panel has a downward angle that allows the unwoven warp to lie on top of the woven panel, symbolizing how Dolly was hidden and protected herself because of her injury.

Injuries tend to either bring people together or push them apart. In this case, Dolly and I bonded in a new way because she was dependent on me to care for her. The painted warp represents this. In my panel, the emphasis is the horizontal movement of the color blue towards Dolly's panel because she required medical attention to heal properly. Her orange colors come

into my panel for the first time in short sections that also emphasize this (PLATE XI). The orange sections in my panel are short and interrupted to represent Dolly's behavioral changes that occurred after she healed. I discovered that the owner of the farm was not regularly turning Dolly out to the pasture in the morning because there was dew that she felt would harm Dolly's hooves. This limited turn out and excessive unused energy resulted in Dolly developing a rearing problem when I rode her. Dolly's panel has softer curves that are outlined with blue from my panel (PLATE XII). The blue represents my comforting and physically embracing Dolly through the healing process.

The drape is painted a red color at the top (PLATE X). It touches the top corner of my panel then travels to the center of the drape where it pools representing the blood from Dolly's wound. My panel is hung low and level with the pooled area to show how I physically tended to her wound. The rest of the drape contains color interactions of blue and orange signifying Dolly and I reaching out to give and receive support.

The weft color is the same red color found in the draped section of this piece. High contrast color interactions in both panels represent how Dolly's injury and the negative environment affected both of us. The weave structures also share similar characteristics. The weave structures in both panels have horizontal bands that symbolize staples used to hold cuts together. The strong angular structures represent the negativity that occurred at the farm during and after Dolly's injury. In addition to the staple shapes, the weave structure in my panel creates vertical stripes to symbolize the veins and blood that healed Dolly's injury. In Dolly's panel, the structure's focus is a diamond with irregular edges and a solid rectangle in the middle to represent the puncture wound.

After Dolly healed, her behavior became sporadic and unpredictable. I knew that she was unhappy. I was also unhappy being at Rosewood because the owner created a negative environment. There was no pleasure in going out and riding, so I moved Dolly and Charlie, my mom's horse, to Lochill Farm, where we still remain.



PLATE X: *Injuries*, hand painted and dyed lyocell. 5' X 6'



Figure 12. Dolly and I when we moved to Rosewood farms.

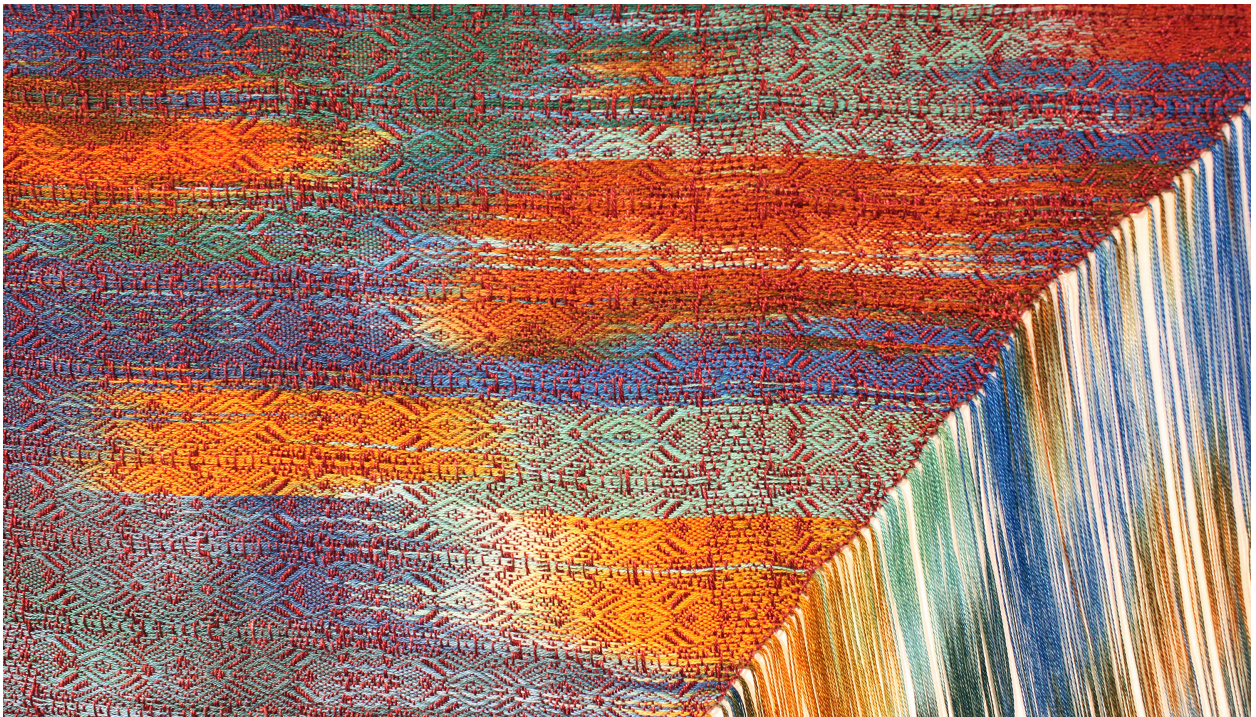


PLATE XI: *Injuries* (detail 1).

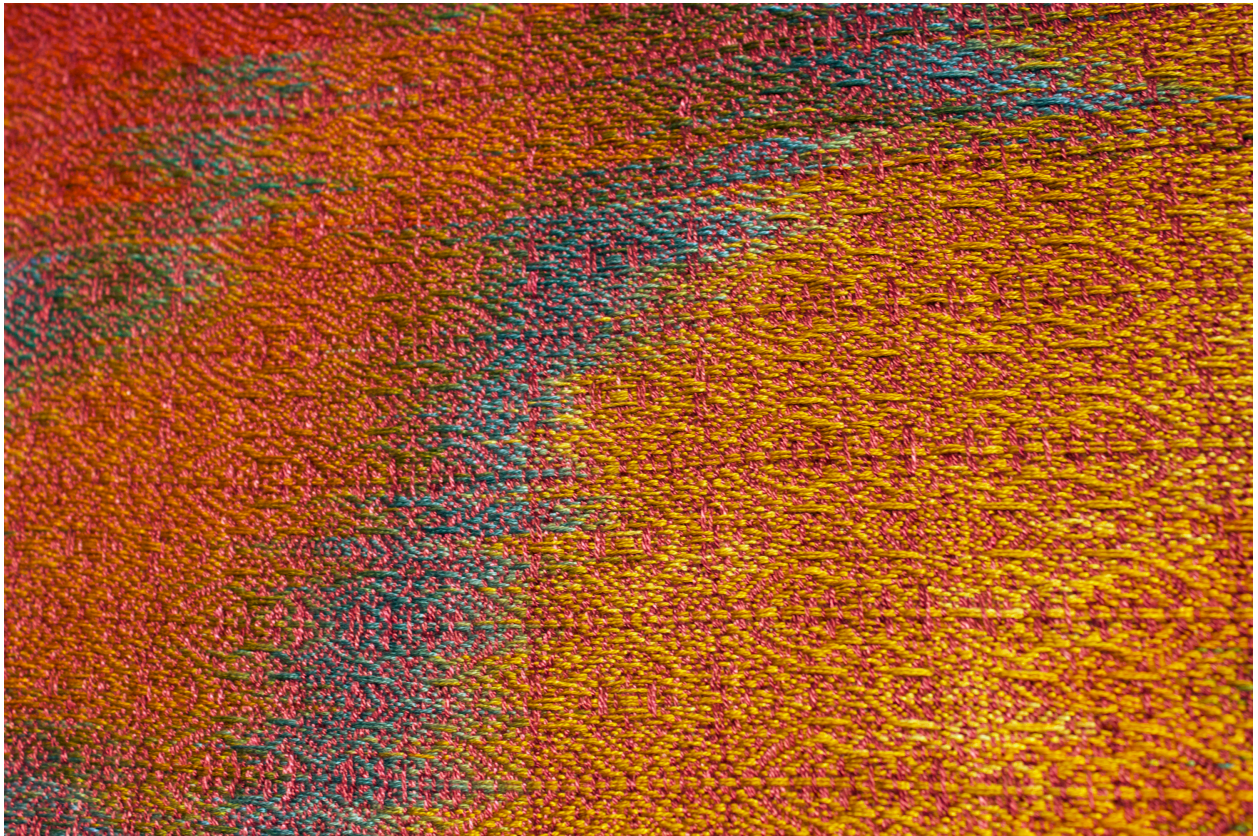


PLATE XII: *Injuries I* (detail 2).

Education Creates Distance

Education Creates Distance (PLATE XIII), the fifth piece, illustrates what happened to my relationship with Dolly when I went to college. Dolly settled in at Lochill Farm with ease. The people were friendly and the atmosphere was very relaxed. Her transition back to being a happy healthy horse is represented by the exterior edge of her panel (PLATE XIV). It is a smooth gentle angle that has a long unwoven section. The unwoven warp represents Dolly's continued growth and healing. It touches the ground to represent the extended time we spent apart and to emphasize the growing bonds that Dolly and I cultivated over the next four years. The interior angle of Dolly's panel is small and smooth because she adjusted well to my absence. My panel's angles are both smooth but the exterior angle is much greater because my attention was being pulled in a different direction, attending an out-of-state college (PLATE XV).

The drape between the two woven panels is the longest of all the pieces in this series and emphasizes the concept of distance. *Education Creates Distance* was designed to hang across a corner creating a shadow. The drape is continuous but the corner physically breaks the shadow, which represents how my communication with Dolly was broken because I moved 500 miles away. This is also represented by the color gradient throughout the entire piece. The transitions are smooth because, even with the distance, when I returned home Dolly and I communicated with ease (see figure 13). My panel has an orange circle painted in the center to express how Dolly was on my mind at all times (PLATE XV). Dolly's panel has light blue-green on the top of the panel, which is dripping down to represent that I am still present and affecting her even when we are apart (PLATE XIV).

The weave structures of both panels begin with individual structures that slowly morph across the length into a single weave structure. This weave structure covers the interior one-third

of both panels. It is subtle and transitions into dramatic patterns that represent Dolly and me. This change represents that the separation affected us in similar ways. In my panel, the weave structure transitions into circular and half circle shapes that re-emphasize the circular shape painted in the center of my panel. In Dolly's panel, the weave structure transitions to a diamond pattern because she remained at Lochill where her environment was consistent and she thrived.

The weft is a high intensity yellow-green and represents the new experiences that Dolly and I were having. I was at college and Dolly was happy and healthy at Lochill. I was excited to return home and continue to strength our bond.



PLATE XIII: *Education Creates Distance*, hand painted and dyed lyocell. 7' X 16'

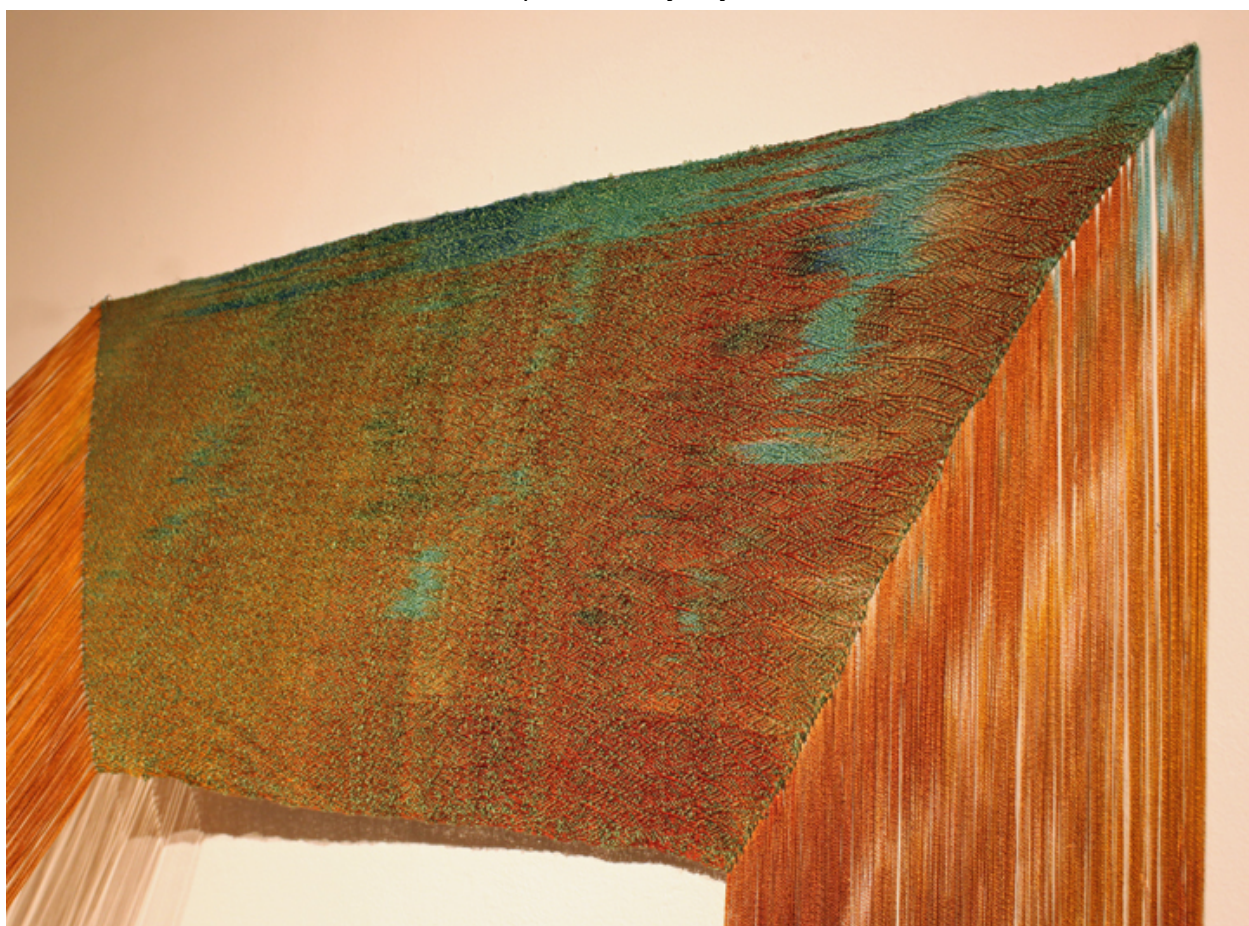


PLATE XIV: *Education Creates Distance* (detail 1).



Figure 13. Greeting Dolly the first time I returned from Earlham College.



PLATE XV: *Education Creates Distance* (detail 2).

Learning the Language of Nature

The sixth piece, *Learning the Language of Nature* (PLATE XVI), represents how Dolly and I reconnected when I returned to Chapel Hill. I was very excited to work with Dolly on a daily basis (see figure 14). At Earlham College, I was exposed to a method of working with horses called natural horsemanship. Natural horsemanship is a technique that encourages people to work with their horses in a positive, non-forceful way by learning to understand the horse's thoughts and reactions (Rivas 2007). It focuses on the horse's body language and encourages people to interact with the horse while keeping in mind how the horse is feeling and why they are feeling that way.

I was already working with Dolly under these general principles, but I embraced the specific techniques and exercises of natural horsemanship. The softer, circular interior edges of the woven panels represent how working in this new way affected our relationship (PLATE XVI). The new techniques strengthened and stabilized our bond. This is represented by how the shapes of our panels appear to fit together. The exterior angles are the same for both panels to show how the attention has shifted to concentrating on building our bond. Our focus is now equally on each other.

The warp was painted to show how connected Dolly and I had grown since I arrived home and resumed consistently working with her. I designed this painted warp to be similar to *Search for a Proper Home* by having linear movements of the blue and orange connecting with the other panel. However, the interaction here is more prominent with three bands of blue and orange appearing in the opposite panel, which continue into the drape and unwoven warp at the ends. The colors switch from orange to blue in the center of the drape indicating that Dolly and I

were communicating using the same language. Both panels are painted to create a diagonal movement from the top outer edge to the bottom inner edge of each panel. This creates a dynamic movement within each panel that represents the complicated lateral movements Dolly and I were practicing.

The weft is bright orange representing the dramatic changes in our bond while utilizing the natural horsemanship technique (PLATE XVII, XVIII). This color makes a significant transformation from the previous piece and emphasizes the renewed excitement of being reunited with Dolly. It also makes my panel appear predominantly yellow. My panel has circular and diamond structures that represent the continuous growth of the relationship. Dolly's weave structure has a jagged edged circle and elongated tiered diamond shapes. Both panels have a variation of a circle to represent the obstacles that stopped our progress on the path to become completely bonded. The diamond shape is elongating to represent the smooth progression of our relationship.

The drape between these panels hangs in three sections that overlap and cover part of Dolly's panel. It represents the different avenues of communication that Dolly and I used: visual, physical, and emotional. Just as the concept behind the diamond shape represents the smoothing out of how Dolly and I work closely together so does the color mixing in the drape.



PLATE XVI: *Learning the Language of Nature*, hand painted and dyed lyocell. 7' X 8'



Figure 14. Dolly and I after our move to Lochill Farm.



PLATE XVII: *Learning the Language of Nature* (detail 1).

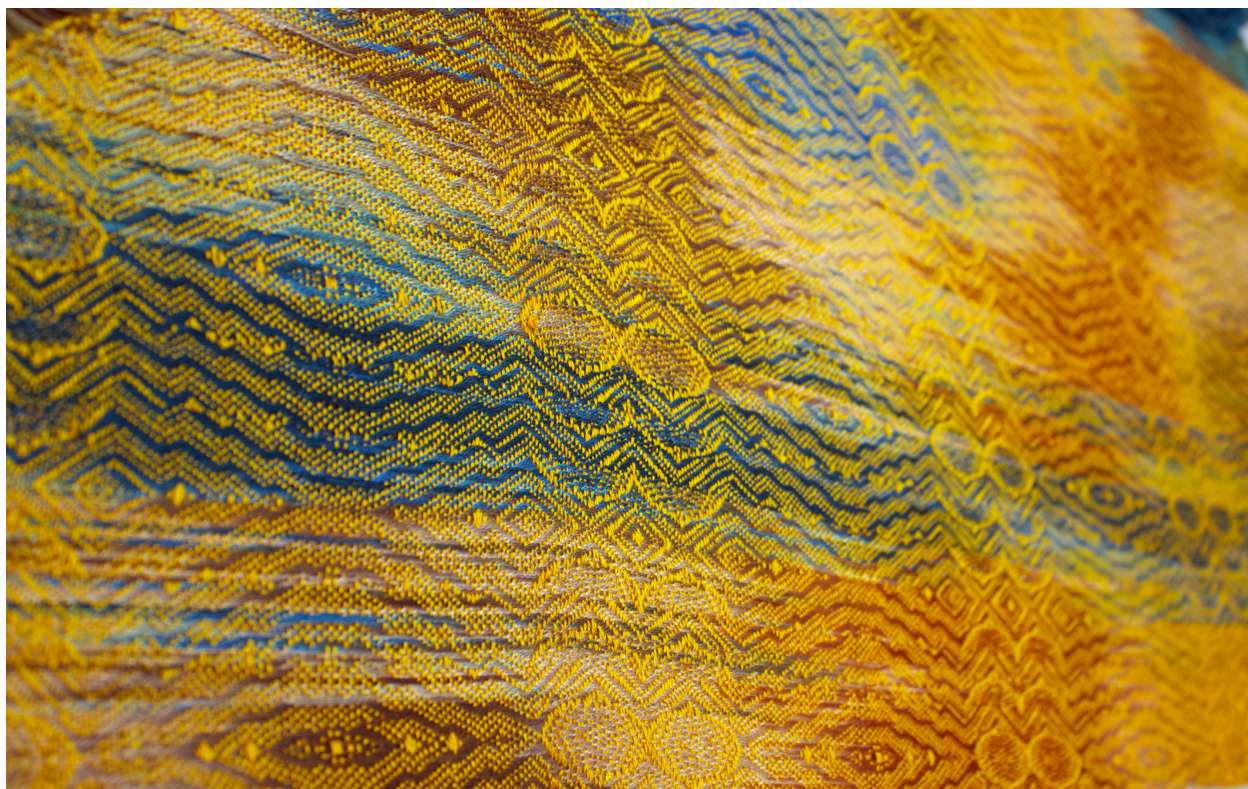


PLATE XVIII: *Learning the Language of Nature* (detail 2).

Bonded

Bonded (PLATE XIX), the seventh and final piece in this series, illustrates the solid bond Dolly and I achieved after being together for over 13 years (see figure 15). This piece embodies the idea of the joining and finding unity between two beings. The panel's interior edges fit perfectly together and represent our bond. Both panels have a color gradient. In my panel, the top portion is blue then changes to green to brown to orange. The reverse hue change is used in Dolly's panel. A neutral green and brown stripe runs the length of the warp and represents the continuous growth that happens within the relationship.

This piece has the shortest drape length in the series because Dolly and I are now at our closest point (see figure 16). I know Dolly's mood by the time I walk her from the pasture to the hitching rail. Dolly, like all horses, can read true emotions and responds accordingly (Thomas 2007). The drape is the blending of the blue and oranges resulting in greens and browns signifying the strength of our bond. The half circle shapes of the interior edges cause the drape to create a transition from my panel to Dolly's panel. The soft, curved movement emphasizes the fluidity of our communication.

In each panel, there are repeating weave structures (PLATE XX, XXI). The weave structure mimics the flow of a horse's mane in the wind when cantering. Dolly's panel also has the horseshoe shape used in *Search for a Proper Home* bringing the story of our bonding full circle and the work to its conclusion. My panel has a diamond pattern that radiates from a central point in a symmetrical pattern. It represents the growth that I underwent over the years with Dolly. The diamond shape also references the bitless bridle's shape that I began using on Dolly in the last year. With this equipment I do not need to put a metal bit in Dolly's mouth

when I ride, but rely on communicating with my legs and seat. We are both happier with this arrangement. Dolly and I learned to trust each other and this culminates in “Bonds” with its fluidity and balance. We have come a long way over the course of 13 years together with a bond that is strengthened by many trials.



PLATE XIX: *Bonded*, hand painted and dyed tencel. 5' x 7'



Figure 15. Dolly and I when I moved back to Chapel Hill.



Figure 16. Dolly and I during the summer of 2013.

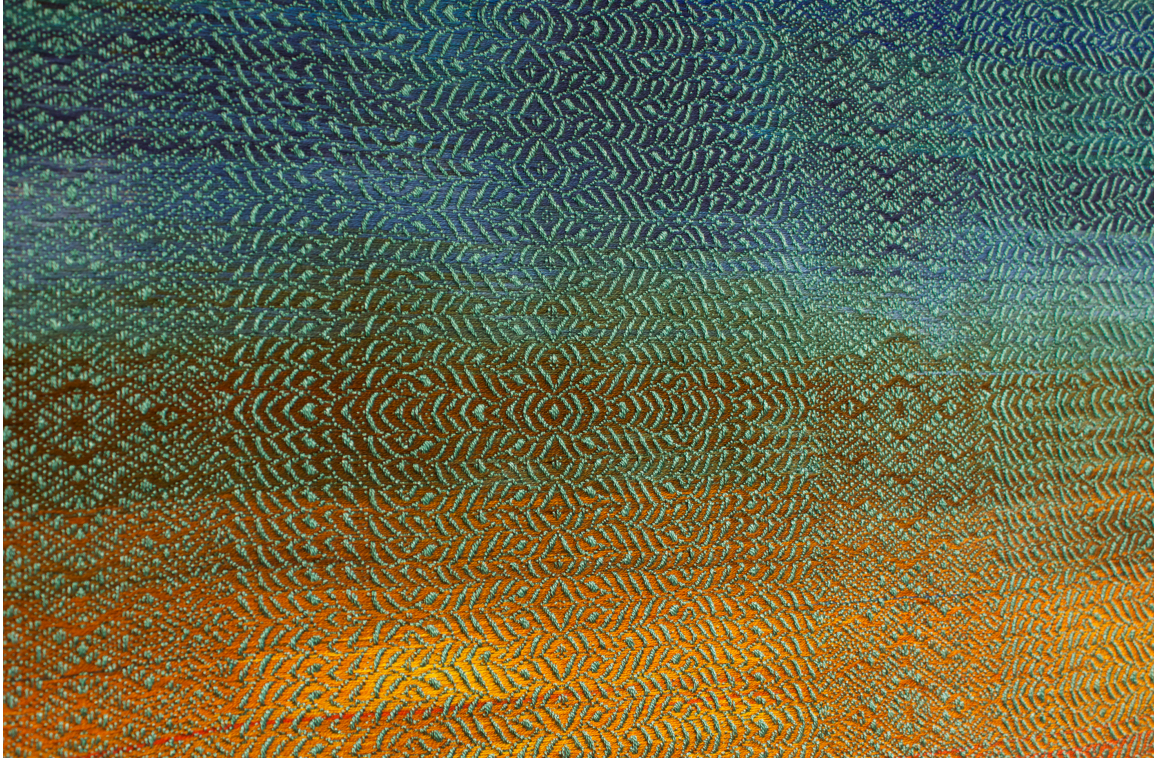


PLATE XX: *Bonded* (detail 1).

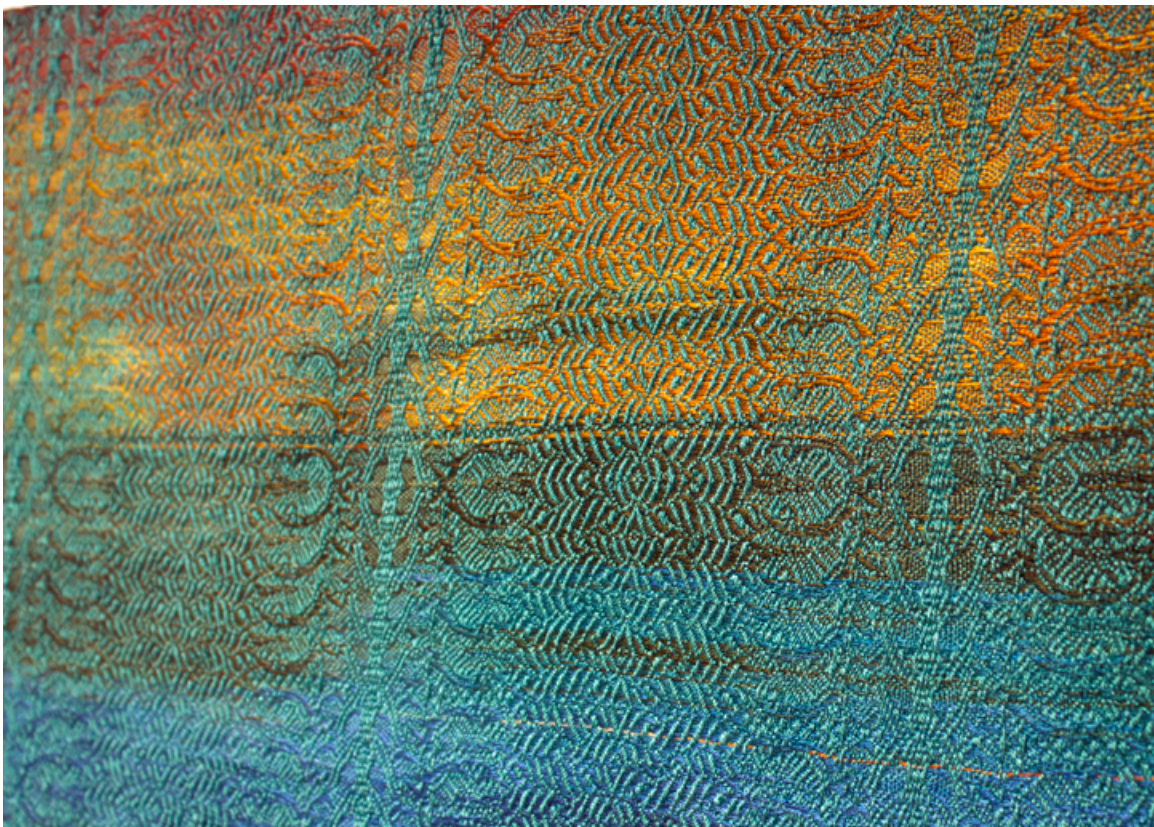


PLATE XXI: *Bonded* (detail 2).

CONCLUSION

“Bonds” illustrates how the different stages of a specific human-animal relationship influenced me as a person. My bond with Dolly allowed me to feel comfortable to take on larger and more complex challenges as I continued to gain confidence through working with her. I confirmed how valuable my relationship with her has been and how she has played a vital role in who I have become.

While the work focuses on a specific human-animal relationship, the concept of this work can be viewed in broader terms to include human-animal and human-human relationships. While I made the work I reflected on the parallels between my relationship with Dolly and those I cultivate with other people. I realized that all those relationships are of equal importance to me. Being around and working with horses has been an invaluable experience throughout my life. This has led me to understand that my relationship and bonds with animals will continue to be a significant aspect of my life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bain, Melissa . "Bonding Behavior of Pets and the Human-Animal Bond." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 152-156.
- Bekoof, Marc. "Introduction Anthozoology: The Study of Human-Animal Relationships." In *Encycolpedia of Human-Animal Relationship*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. Xxxv-xxxix.
- Brandt, Keri. "Communication and Language Human-Horse Communication." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 238-242.
- Gerstner, Geoffery. "Bonding Behavior of Animals Influences Human-Animal Interactions." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 145-152.
- Grandin, Temple, and Catherine Johnson. *Animals in translation: using the mysteries of autism to decode animal behavior*. New York: Scribner, 2005
- Haraway, Donna. "Bonding Horse Whispering, or Natural Horsemanship." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 195-197.
- . "Horse Quotes." Horse Quotes. http://www.babsonarabians.com/Readers_Corner/Horse_Quotes.htm (accessed April 2, 2014).
- Marcum, Heidi. "Living with Animals Horses and Humans: From Prey to Partner." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 1133-1137.
- Meehan, Michael. "Bonding The Attachment between Humans and Animals." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 143-145.
- Reardon, Lynn. *Beyond the homestretch: what I've learned from saving racehorses*. Novato Calif.: New World Library, 2009.
- Reynes, Andrea. "Animal Assistance to Humans Horse-Assisted Therapy: Reaching Troubled Young Women." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 14-16.
- Ricca-Smith, Charlotte. "Build a Better Bond." *Horse*, July 2013.
- Rivas, Mim. "Bonding The Horse "Beautiful Jim" and Dr. William Key: A Personal Essay." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 192-195.

- Sarmicanic, Lisa. "Bonding Companion Animals." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 163-174.
- Smith, Joyce Smith. "Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet." Lyocell.
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5572.html> (accessed April 18, 2014).
- Thomas, Clare. "Animal Assistance to Humans Horse-Assisted Therapy: Psychotherapy with Horses." In *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007. 13-14.

