

## The Little Loomhouse Arts Programming Overview + Teaching Artist(s) Bio

### Programming

The Little Loomhouse is a fiber art and historic site 501(c)3 non-profit. Their mission is to continue the legacy of their founder by educating students of all ages about the history of weaving and textile arts through diverse programs, residencies, and community partnerships. They have expanded their founder's off-site programs to include multiple traditions in textile arts, informed by their growing pool of diverse artists and collaborators. Their weaving programs help with the development of many 21st Century skills including problem solving, perseverance, global awareness, creativity, and thinking skills. They serve over 6,000 people a year in hands-on programs across Kentucky and Southern Indiana in both on-site and off-site programs in schools, libraries, parks, community centers, and community spaces. Their programs are designed for ages 5 years through adulthood and include both artist residencies and workshops. On-site programs include tours, rotating exhibitions, camps/classes, field trips, lectures, and community events. They are a supportive place for textile research, leadership and artistic development, hosting both Interns and Artists in Residence.

### Artist(s) Bios(s)

**Michelle Amos** is a veteran teaching artist, having conducted over 100 residencies in public schools, community centers, and libraries across the region as a rooster artist for KMAC Museum, Arts for All Kentucky, Little Loomhouse, and as an Independent Contractor. She grew up in section 8 housing in Louisville, Kentucky; worked on fishing vessels out of Sitka, Alaska; briefly owned an apple orchard in Everson, Washington; and is now the Executive Director for the Little Loomhouse. Amos has a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Louisville in fiber construction, has been the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft Resident Artist and Collider Artist in Residence for the South Central Regional Library. Her work includes artistic practice, research, publishing, curatorial projects, and teaching. Her visual art work has been exhibited throughout the Kentucky and Southern Indiana region, including Zephyr Gallery, 953 S. Clay, Louisville Visual Arts Association, Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, Living Arts & Science Center, Mary Anderson Center, Ogle Cultural Center and Carnegie Center.

**Gwendolyn Kelly** is a visual artist and life-long learner with a Bachelor of Fine Arts & a Master of Arts in Fine Arts from the University of Louisville. She has participated in many exhibitions including a one-woman exhibition at Spalding University's Huff Gallery, KY Jelly show at Swanson Reed Contemporary, L is for Louisville! A Children's Abecedary & Art Book, Model Homes and Habitats at Bernheim Forest, the Water Tower Annual, the African American Invitational Art Exhibition at Actors Theater, the Small Works International at Amos Eno Gallery in New York, Kentucky Quilts: Roots and Wings a traveling exhibition of the Kentucky Folk Art Museum, and Woman Force of the New Millennium at The Living Arts and Science Center in Lexington. She has work included in Fiberarts Design Book Six and Seven published by Lark Books and has been awarded Artist Enrichment grants from the Kentucky Foundation for Women. In addition to her studio work, Gwendolyn has provided art-making and creativity workshops across Kentucky. She has worked with the Speed Art Museum, the Kentucky Center for the Arts, the Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation, Louisville Visual Arts Association's Open Doors Program and Children's Free Art Classes, and other organizations. She is a former Kentucky Arts Council roster artist.

**Norma Drish** is a self-taught, bi-lingual, artist born and raised in St Croix, US Virgin Islands, after her parents' families were relocated from Puerto Rico. After 6 years in the US Army and 25 years in the auto

industry, she retired to become a full-time artist. She is currently employed at The Little Loomhouse as a Gallery/Gift Shop Manager and Teaching Artist. This position has allowed her the opportunity to develop our summer arts program as well as other after school programs. When in her studio she creates moments in time in various media including oils, acrylics, pencil, ink, pastel and watercolor. She focuses on genre painting, the everyday and sometimes personal lives of her fellow islanders, and explorations in the natural world.

## **Artistic Content of Programming**

Little Loomhouse programs are inclusive of traditional fiber folk arts. They are able to connect programs to agriculture, science, and math. Their off-site menu includes both artist residencies and workshops in fiber arts, spinning yarn, loom weaving, Kentucky coverlets, Navajo rugs, circle weaving, quilt designs, and beginning embroidery. They design programs in collaboration with the teacher or community leader booking the program. Outcomes are measured through participation numbers, number of finished works, written feedback, student exit surveys which include: "3 things I learned; 2 things I like; 1 thing I didn't like", and teacher/community leader surveys which include a ranking scale on the following: "Overall Quality of Program; Age/Grade Appropriateness of Program; Choice of Literature; Age/Grade Appropriateness of Literature; Quality of Materials and Supplies; Quality of Interactive Projects; Engagement and Interest of Students; Applicability to Other Areas of Study; Artist's Ability to Relate to Students; and Artist's Understanding of Material Presented.

## **Educational Content of Programming**

Little Loomhouse weaving programs help with the development of many 21st Century skills including problem solving, perseverance, global awareness, creativity, and thinking skills. They work with teachers or the community leaders to design a program that helps students meet their educational goals. All of their programs include a cultural or historical component. Some examples of the educational content in programs include the following. In the Fiber & Spinning Workshop students learn how natural raw fibers are turned into yarn, including animal, plant, and insect fibers. They practice processing raw fibers, spinning, and create plied bracelets. In the Loom Weaving Residency, students learn to weave on lap looms. While they are guided to design and create pieces of their own on their lap looms, they rotate turns on a two-harness, foot-powered loom, giving us an opportunity to have a discussion about the development and engineering behind weaving equipment. In Kentucky Coverlet and Navajo Rug programs weaving is taught from a historical/cultural perspective. Weaving in the Round program opens with the cultural and artistic contributions of the Ojibway as original designers for contemporary weaving in the round, and beginner embroidery program is introduced from Central American traditions in creating woven embroidery animals. Educational outcomes are measured as outlined in the previous question with student exit surveys and teacher/community leader surveys.

## **Process for hiring, training, and evaluating my performance/effectiveness**

Little Loomhouse programs are specifically connected to textile history. It can take up to a year or more to become fluent on 2-harness looms, so they typically hire and train teaching artists from the pool of students and artists who have previously engaged in the community. It is through on-site and off-site community programs they meet artists who are contracted to help with educational programs. All paid and unpaid staff receive Loomhouse handbooks, which include a code of conduct, Loomhouse diversity, equity, and inclusion statement, what to do in an emergency, chain of command, and attend a training

program. Depending on their educational background, and how much they already know about textile processes, will depend on how many hours they need to be able to work independently. Most need a minimum of 10 hours. All contract teaching artists shadow one of the seasoned teachers before working on their own. All teaching artists are reviewed through teacher/community evaluation forms. Feedback is read at the conclusion of each program. Adjustments are made to curriculum and re-training artists as needed. Success is also shared at the conclusion of each program.

### **How are participants of all backgrounds and abilities included in programming?**

Little Loomhouse achieves inclusion through adaptations and modifications to plans, tools, or materials. They diversify instruction to include, visual, written, and verbal instruction. A lesson is introduced first in whole group, and then moves to small group, and then one-on-one, rotating around the room. When possible, choices in tools and materials are offered. For example on lap looms, we demonstrate using fingers, small shuttles, and yarn needles, giving the students preference to what is comfortable. What types of special instruction might be needed to accomplish the learning goals is reviewed during the planning period with teachers or community leaders.

### **How do I engage teachers and community center staff before, during, and after programming?**

During the booking process, either in an email or in person the discussion of what the goals or expectations are for the program is discussed. The Little Loomhouse develops a plan that fits. It is at this time special accommodations are addressed. Upon conclusion of the plan we an outline of what can be expected each day with a visual sample. Teacher packets are available for Loomhouse lessons. When needed, and within reason, adjustments are made to plans. Before the last day of programming Loomhouse will submit a teacher/community leader evolution form. The Loomhouse appreciates being invited to open house events or exhibitions the students have done. Loomhouse teaching artists do their best to attend and love sharing collaborative success on social media and to members when it is appropriate. They value teachers and community leaders as co-collaborators.

### **How do I engage participants in the creative and learning process?**

All of our programs have a hands-on component, even demonstrations. They believe learning is best when people have the opportunity to participate.