

Artist Statement — Wenceslao Martinez smartinezw@gmail.com

My life at the loom combines the weaving heritage of my birthplace, Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico, with my formal training in Mexico City. I spent my childhood roaming local mountains, shepherding, and developing a love for the natural world. Tonal variations inherent to undyed wool and desert landscapes continue to fascinate me today.

While immersed in tribal patterns of my Zapotec culture, I began training as a weaver at age nine with my father and grandfather. Five years later a scholarship allowed me to study weaving in Mexico City under Bertha and Pedro Preux at Taller Nacional de Tapiz. There, I embraced weaving as fine art and learned Gobelins, natural and aniline dyeing techniques. Using traditional looms and Oaxacan hand spun wool, I work to elevate basic materials and ancient processes.

My own pattern-driven geometric designs investigate pattern and color beyond Zapotec tradition. When I work with my partner Sandra Jo to translate her Symbolist paintings into weavings, we collaborate to enhance color and compositional detail. One of my greatest joys as a steward of my village's legacy is mentoring the next generation of weavers in Teotitlán. Through mentoring I am able to give back by collaborating with a team of weavers to expand the Martinez Studio line.