

Lenore Tawney: Signs on the Wind: Postcard Collages

Holland Cotter



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Lenore Tawney (b. 1907) is recognized as one of the leading fiber artists of the twentieth century, who helped transform weaving into a new form of visual art. From the 1960s on, she also created whimsical and ingenious postcard collages. Tawney's dynamic cards, of regulation size, were sent through the mail devoid of any protective covering -- in only rare instances were instructions for special treatment, such as hand stamping, included -- to friends and family members and arrived in excellent condition, testimonial to the postal workers' appreciation of the artist's gifts.

Most of the postcard collages were made entirely of paper: photographs, newspaper clippings, magazine ads, musical scores, illustrations from books, antique manuscript pages in various languages, drawings and notes in Tawney's own hand, and assorted other sources. Specific images occur regularly, encompassing animals -- from giraffes and zebras to cats and birds -- and the human element. The postcards subtly develop a range of themes, including childhood, female sexuality, masculine self-aggrandizement, and spirituality. Every collage is embedded with personal references; each card displays a weave of communicative patterns: ornamented words, postmarks, stamps, inscriptions, addresses, printed texts, in turn amusing, satirical, shrewd, and metaphorical.

Lenore Tawney -- Signs on the Wind: Postcard Collages pays homage to the talents of this unique artist, who continues to actively exhibit her innovative work.



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