

mentor's introduction

Steve Thunder-McGuire

University of Iowa

Lorraine's dissertation effortlessly balances ways of interpreting culturally embedded art activities. *From the point of view of weaving in Dagestan, Russia,* Lorraine's ability to recognize a weaving project as representing both continuity and improvisation makes it possible for her to play that double recognition as an *insight to be celebrated and understood.* She avoids a research methodology that reduces flexibility so as to be attentive to a complex string of relationships: art production, necessities of survival, patterns of consumption, acquired habits of tradition and the fluidity of contemporary variation. Over the course of three trips to Russia Lorraine cultivated a style of attention, appropriate for ethnographic and anthropological inquiry, and, focusing on meaningful art production.