



Spring 5-15-1998

## Hmong Artistry on Display at Illinois Wesleyan

Stew Salowitz  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Salowitz, Stew, "Hmong Artistry on Display at Illinois Wesleyan" (1998). *News and Events*. 6987.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/6987>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

15 May 1998

**CONTACT:** Stew Salowitz, 309-556-3181  
or Niki Williams, 309-556-3181

## **Hmong Artistry on Display at Illinois Wesleyan**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- A free exhibit of decorative hand-sewn artistry done by Hmong refugees in this country is showing at Illinois Wesleyan University's Sheean Library through May 27.

"Hmong Artistry: Preserving a Culture on Cloth" incorporates history, customs, myth and adventure in exuberant cross-stitch, embroidery, appliqué, reverse appliqué and batik. The exhibit is on display at the library during its regular hours of 8 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. Sunday.

Through their work, Hmong refugees in this country have maintained a cultural link with their past. Originally from China, the Hmong lived in the mountain regions of Laos before fleeing to Thailand. Hmong colonies developed in Southeast Asia during the 1860s, mostly in response to an oppressive campaign by the Chinese government against the Hmong. During the Vietnam War, the Hmong were forced into refugee camps for their alliance to the United States. After the war, many refugees relocated to the United States, where over 60,000 Hmong reside today.

The work in this exhibit comes from Kansas City, Kan., Hmong Project Refugee Center, now serving nearly 1,500 people. The refugees' work reflects not only the spirit but also the determination for survival of an uprooted people.

The Hmong no longer have a written language, so their hand-sewn designs, called "pa ndau" or "flower cloth," serve as a way to preserve their heritage. With their intricate designs and vivid colors, these works depict scenes and tell stories of Hmong history and culture.

"Hmong Artistry: Preserving a Culture on Cloth" is toured by ExhibitsUSA, a national division of Mid-America Arts Alliance, a non-profit regional arts organization sponsored by the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund. Additional support is provided by the H&R Block Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Phillips Petroleum Foundation, and Union Pacific Foundation. Mid-America Arts Alliance is assisted by six partner state arts agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts, and private contributors.

For additional information, please contact University Librarian Sue Stroyan at 309-556-3172.

### **About Illinois Wesleyan University**

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened

in the fall of 1994 and a \$25 million science center opened in fall 1995. The \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts, a facility housing 60 faculty offices, six classrooms, and other facilities for social science, humanities, business and economics, and interdisciplinary studies' faculty, opened in August 1997, as did a new \$6.8 million residence hall. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 159 highly-selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive +" in its latest edition.