

Autumn by Zophia Butrymowicz



Zophia Butrymowicz (1904-1987), born in Poland and noted as one of Europe's leading fiber artists, graduated from the Municipal School of Decorative Arts, Warsaw, Poland, in 1927 and later (1960) obtained a diploma from the institution that is considered the leading center for Polish arts, the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Butrymowicz' formative years occurred during a period of great social upheaval in Poland and at the height of postwar communist influence, when the government tried to impose what was and was not "appropriate" for art. Glorification of the state and affirmation of the equality of the masses were deemed obligations of the artist and the arts. Clarity and craftsmanship were stressed. Thus, fiber arts were seen as one of the best ways to meld art into everyday life.

Autumn, an 8 × 13-ft tapestry, is made of handwoven wool. Rich gold and orange hues on a deep blue-black background evoke images of tree-covered hillsides at the peak of autumnal radiance, ripened wheat fields ready for harvest, or the flames on a hearth staving off the morning chill of a crisp fall day. Texture and form are created by strands and clusters of vertical fibers. The interplay of color and texture generates perspective and warmth. Butrymowicz not only wove her tapestries but also used wool that was spun and dyed by her own hand.

Autumn was commissioned in 1983 by Mayo Clinic and was initially used to cover a large weather map once located in the lobby of the Mayo Building. *Autumn* hangs in the southwest corner on the first floor (lobby level) of the Mayo Building.

In recognition of the important part that art has had in the Mayo Clinic environment since the original Mayo Clinic building was finished in 1914, the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* will feature some of the numerous works of art displayed throughout the buildings on the Mayo Clinic campus in Rochester, MN.

Written by Margaret R. Wentz, BA

© 2007 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research