

The Saori Bridges of Elm Park

A Call to Saori Weavers of Worcester and the World to Participate in
A Community Peace Installation in Worcester, MA, USA, Aug.25-29, 2010



Red Wooden Bridge



Rendering by Artist Nancy Smith



Iron Bridge

BASIC FACTS (See “**More About**” Who, Where, When, What & Why Sections below!)

WHO: Saori Worcester Freestyle Weaving Studio, 18 Winslow St., Worcester, MA, USA

WHERE: Elm Park, between Highland St. (MA Rte.9) and Elm St., Worcester.

WHEN: Wednesday, Aug. 25 (dawn) – Sunday, August 29 (dusk)

WHAT: 66 Banners to be hung on two bridges spanning the Elm Park pond: 50 banners (25 on each rail) on the Red Wooden Bridge; 14 banners (7 on each rail) on the Iron Bridge.

HOW: Banners to be donated (artistic labor, materials, & cost of shipping to Worcester) by Saori weavers from Worcester and around the world. Call 508-757-4646 or email mihoko@saoriworchester.com if interested and read **Banner Guidelines** below!

WHY: 1) To raise money for a **Saori Scholarship Fund** for low-income kids & families, mostly within walking distance of our inner-city Studio, by enrolling **Sponsors** for each banner; 2) To promote Saori weaving generally; 3) To promote Saori Worcester Studio; 4) To support the Aug.-Oct. 2010 **Art in the Park** sculpture exhibit; 5) To promote Worcester as a City of the Arts.

See More about Why, What, When, Where, & Who below!

SAORI Worcester Freestyle Weaving Studio Presents:

Call to Saori Weavers (continued)

More about HOW: To obtain the total of 66 banners we need for this project, we are asking you weavers with some Saori experience, both locally and from all over the earth, to donate your time, materials, mailing cost, and Saori spirit by weaving a banner for this exhibition. If, after you read **Banner Guidelines** and **More on WHY** below, you want to join this project, we need to get your **Intent to Submit a Banner** *as soon as possible*: first come, first served (see below for instructions). We must receive your **Banner** by **August 1, 2010**. **Live near Worcester but got no Loom? Try Monday Night Open Studio Banner Weaving, May-July 2010, at Saori Worcester! Click [HERE](#) for info.**

BANNER GUIDELINES: (*Note: Feel free to donate more than one banner!*)

Color scheme & Design: Up to you! Surprise us! This is Saori! Weave thyself!

Length: 4 meters **not** including fringes. Fringes should be at least 15cm on each side. We suggest you set up a 5 meter warp to obtain this final result.

Width: 50 centimeters (cm). Come as close as you can; a few cm more or less we can handle. **NOTE:** If you are using a narrower pre-rolled warp, e.g., 20cm (100 threads) or 30cm (150 threads), you could either weave 2 or 3 banners, or weave one long banner that you (or we) can cut into 2 or 3 banners. Then we'll hang them side-by-side to create a width roughly equal to 50cm. If none of this is possible for you, just send your narrower banner anyway! We'll find a way to include your gift!

Materials: Up to you! However, bear in mind that each banner must withstand handling, wind, rain, and drying in the sun. **Avoid** inserting anything into the warp that could easily pop out under stress. **Avoid nylon**, since even the best flame retardants with which we plan to spray these banners won't keep nylon from catching fire.

Density: Avoid loose or open weaving except as very occasional accents. Use a 5 (or at least a 4) dent/cm reed. Avoid open warp spaces except as very occasional accents. These banners will have to put up with a lot! Make them to last.

QUESTIONS: Ask Nat or Mihoko at mihoko@saoriworcester.com or 508-757-4646

READY TO PLAY? Signal your **Intent to Submit a Banner** by sending us (see options below) your name, address, phone, email, and a brief message about your banner(s) [e.g., Individual or group/institutional weaving? Your own warp or pre-rolled black warp?]

By Post: Saori Worcester, 18 Winslow Street, Worcester, MA 01609 USA. **Note:** Send your **banner(s)** to this address by **8-1-10**. **By Fax:** 508-459-6792 **By Email:** mihoko@saoriworcester.com

Online: Fill in the form at <http://saoriworcester.com/contact.htm> and write a comment.

Need more info to make a decision? See More about Why, What, When, Where, & Who below!

SAORI Worcester Freestyle Weaving Studio Presents:

Call to Saori Weavers (continued)

More about WHY: Let us imagine 3 questions that, you, the donating artist, might ask:

1. *What will I express and accomplish by donating a banner to this exhibit?*

The Saori Bridges of Elm Park will be a demonstration of Saori Worcester's recipe for a peaceful community: **Collaboration, Creativity, and Contribution**. We follow the age-old philosophy that building peace in the world begins with building peace and justice where we live: between neighbors rich and poor; neighbors who speak English fluently and hardly at all; neighbors of all walks of life; neighbors of all religious faiths and ethnic backgrounds; neighbors of all ages; neighbors of all sexual orientations; and neighbors with different degrees of physical, mental, and emotional challenges. Like Elm Park, our Saori Worcester studio has been a place for authentic encounters between people who would otherwise be unlikely to share creative time together. Many diverse people will collaborate and contribute creatively to add beauty, pride, joy, and inspiration to the community they share. Those from outside Worcester who send us their precious Saori contributions will encourage all of us in Worcester, and remind us that we are not alone in our fight against urban poverty and violence, and against estrangement and isolation from each other due to differences that are so superficial compared to our common humanity.

2. *What will my banner accomplish after the exhibit is over?*

Nat will enlist a sponsor (an individual, business, or organization) for each banner. The sponsor will make a donation to the Saori Worcester Scholarship Fund managed by Arts Worcester, a non-profit arts agency. Your sponsor will be able to take a tax deduction for most of that donation, and receive your banner as a "thank you" to be displayed privately or publicly. This Fund will allow low-income people, many of them youth, war refugees, or people with disabilities living within walking distance of our inner-city studio, to take long-term lessons with Mihoko. Saori Worcester will donate all materials for Scholarship students. The Fund will enable us to keep up an economically diverse student community, and strengthen the fragile neighborhood we live and work in.

3. *I'm pretty altruistic, but may I ask: how else will this donation be rewarding for me?*

- Your name (or the name of your group, if your banner is to be a collective work) will be clearly on display during the exhibition, and permanently posted on the web page to be devoted to this exhibit at saoriworcester.com. You may link this page to your own website and/or copy photos and other material from it as you like. You may also use the information on the page to network with your fellow Bridge Weavers!
- We will send you a complimentary set of note-cards to be made from professional photos of the exhibit.

SAORI Worcester Freestyle Weaving Studio Presents:

- We will send you a Certificate of Participation, with photos of both sides of each bridge, suitable for framing.
- The very weaving of this banner, in the project's spirit of Collaboration, Creativity, and Contribution, will bring you joy, peace of mind, and fun!

Call to Saori Weavers (continued)

More about WHAT: We will hang banners over most of the red wooden bridge, leaving a few gaps to encourage waterfowl passage and to discourage human mischief beneath the bridge. By contrast, we will reveal most of the iron bridge, with its heart-shaped scrollwork, by hanging only 7 banners on each side. All banners will be stabilized near the bottom to resist wind and to enhance their reflection in the pond below.

Every evening, Wed., Aug. 25th through Sun., Aug. 29th, from 6-8pm, we will offer **free Saori weaving for the community and lead an acoustic sing-along on the lawn by the Red Bridge**. Bring your own refreshments (no alcohol), musical instruments, blankets, etc.

“Saori Bridges” will coincide with **Art in the Park**, an August-October juried exhibition of sculptures at Elm Park, sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Worcester Arts Council. We expect to publicize **The Saori Bridges of Elm Park** so as to attract tourists from all over as well as area residents. The impact of the project will continue well past the exhibit's end, as we circulate photos, narrative/music videos, and photo-essays worldwide through the Internet.

More about WHEN: We will attach the banners early on the morning of **Wednesday, August 25th** and leave them on display until 6pm on **Sunday, August 29th**. During that whole time, 24 hours a day, teams of volunteers will monitor the installation in shifts, in co-operation with the City of Worcester. (We will begin recruiting these teams in June.) Sadly, the potential for vandalism is real in nearly any American city; in this case, we must protect not only the artwork, but the bridges as well.

More about WHERE: The two bridges of Elm Park are as iconic for Worcester, Massachusetts (the 2nd-largest city in the New England region) as the Statue of Liberty is for New York City. This year is the 25th anniversary of the 1985 reconstruction of the bridges. Elm Park was one of the first pieces of land in the USA bought for public park use (1854). Elm Park showcases the astounding human diversity of Worcester. On a pleasant day one can see children from all over the earth playing together peacefully and joyfully. Immigrants from Albania to Vietnam, Somalia to Ecuador, Iraq to Ghana, Estonia to Brazil, Bhutan to Haiti, along with Americans of every descent: the world comes together at Elm Park.

More about WHO: Saori Worcester is a “mom & pop” home business owned by Mihoko Wakabayashi & Nathaniel Needle. Mihoko, a Saori Leaders' Committee member, established the first Saori studio in the USA (2000). Nat is managing this project overall; Mihoko will direct the hanging of banners on the Elm Park Bridges. Visit <http://saoriworcester.com> for more about all we do!