THE BROOKLYN RAIL

"Marilou Schultz"

By Amanda Gluibizzi
October 2, 2026



Students of the history of computing sometimes note that the first automated machines to behave like computers were industrial looms. Programmed with cards that instructed them which patterns to weave, Industrial Revolution-era looms operated much like the computers of a

century later, which depended on punch cards inserted into their mechanisms to perform calculations. The resulting cloth or print-out tracked the holes in the cards in a one-to-one fashion, developing the first instances of binary "code."

Marilou Schultz's weavings illuminate that history and so much more. In 1994, Schultz was commissioned by the Intel Corporation to weave a replica of one of its Pentium processing chips. Rather than turning to an industrial loom, Schultz wove *Replica of a Chip* (1994) on an upright wooden loom, her tool of choice as well as that of several generations of weavers in her family. A member of the Navajo-Diné nation, Schultz learned traditional weaving from her mother and grandmother (in interviews, Schultz speaks, too, of her grandmother's sheep and the wool they sheared, combed, and dyed from them) and, in turn, Schultz's niece has learned from her. The exhibition *Replica of a Chip: The Weaving Technology of Marilou Schultz* showcases textiles from each member of the family to demonstrate the ways that Marilou Schultz has positioned her practice within historical processes—such as in her *3rd Phase Wearing Blanket* (1977), which references the repeated large patterns and areas of solid color of Navajo weavings between 1860 and 1868—and how she has used them as springboards to pursue new modes of what art historian Briony Fer has termed "textile thinking."

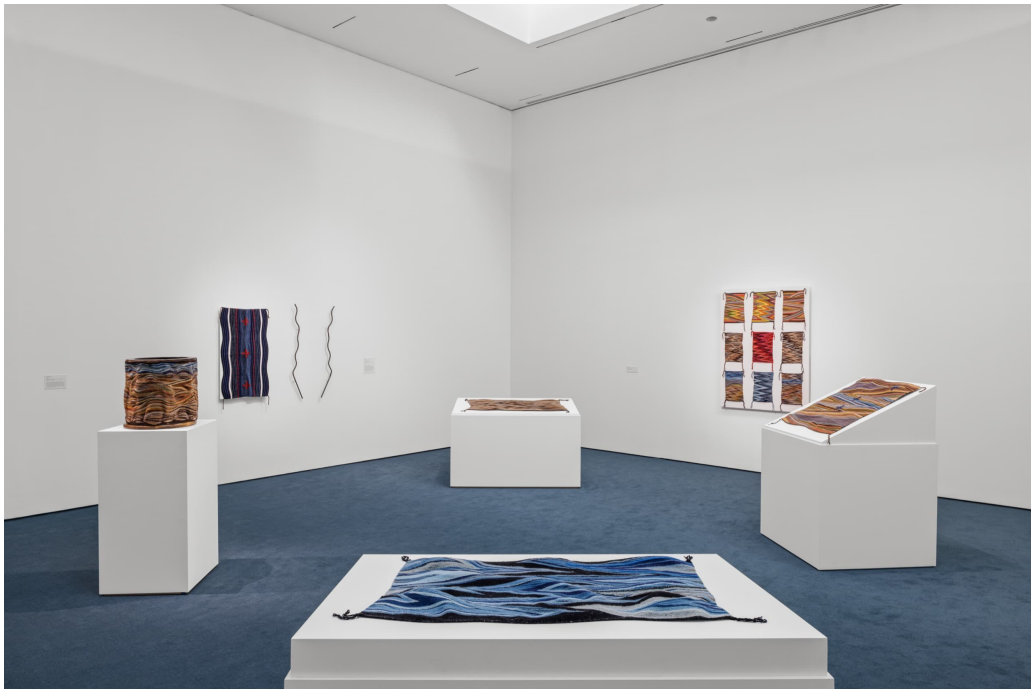


Marilou Schultz, *3rd Phase Wearing Blanket*, 1977. Aniline, indigo, roving respun in the seventies, processed wool, 56 × 30 ½ inches. Courtesy the collection of Patrick and Catherine Maher and CCS Bard and the Hessel Museum of Art. Photo: Alon Koppel.

Perhaps surprisingly, Schultz's *Replica of a Chip* is not included in the exhibition. (It was most recently seen in the New York area in MoMA's 2025 *Woven Histories: Textiles and Modern Abstraction*.) It is represented instead in archival materials such as the cover of Intel's 1994 *Corporate Citizenship Report*, which permits curator Candice Hopkins (citizen of

Carcross/Tagish First Nation) to channel its textile thinking to tell the story of the computing industry's relationship with Indigenous lands and workforces: in another vitrine, news clippings inform us of Fairchild Semiconductor's plant built on Navajo Nation and the peaceful standoff that took place as Navajo employees rejected their poor working conditions. In addition, the absence of *Replica of a Chip* foregrounds Schultz's more recent computing-inspired pieces, such as *Nizhóní AMD* (2008) and *Integrated Circuit Chip & AI Diné Weaving* (2024), bravura weavings that intimate the connections and possibilities of networks, including her experiences as a math teacher and the ancestral webs upon which she draws. Indeed, in *Integrated Circuit Chip & AI Diné Weaving,* the Navajo Spider Woman sits among its pathways; the Spider Woman taught the Navajo to weave. Rather than a duplicative likeness, these are emotive portraits of circuits, full of their possibilities, ramifications, and kinship systems alike.

And what of Schultz's own "technologies," as implied in the title? *Replica of a Chip* exhibits weavings so dizzyingly complex that they are hard to fathom. *Multiple Rugs* (ca. 1980) was woven on a single upright loom, but contains several types of rug patterns—necessitating different techniques—including miniatures of the boldly colored *3rd Phase Wearing Blanket* of her earlier practice; the repeated frontal figures of Yei and Yeibichai styles of weaving (late-1800s—mid-twentieth century), which build on Navajo Sand Paintings of deities; and the interlaced diamonds and alternating diagonals of the transitional period (1880–1900). Different eras overlap; no one rug image or orientation takes precedence over any other. In this rug, Schultz has collapsed the notion of figure-ground as well as historical styles.



Installation view: *Marilou Schultz: Replica of a Chip: The Weaving Technology of Marilou Schultz*, Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY, 2026. Courtesy CCS Bard and the Hessel Museum of Art. Photo: Alon Koppel Photography.

The last gallery contains recent weavings that demonstrate how Schultz continues to push the boundaries and expectations of her medium. These works, many named for the elements such as *Fire, Ko* (2021), *Water, Tó* (2022), and *little colorado river* (2017), are wedge weaves, in which the weft (the typically horizontal) threads are woven diagonally across the warp (the vertical) cords, setting the design awry and creating pulsating zigzags. Schultz exaggerates these moves by designing her own looms, such as a custom-built loom with wavy stretcher bars included in the show, and as a result, her rugs—and not just their patterns—undulate. The textiles in this gallery hang vertically on the walls, recline on steeply slanted supports, and lie flat on plinths with gentler inclines. But they don't lie still: *Water, Tó*, woven in shades of blues and greys, ripples along its length from within the weave itself, suggesting not only the movement of freely flowing water but the percolating genius of its maker, as well.