**SLIPPERY ROCK, Pa.** - Akiko Kotani, Slippery Rock University professor emerita of art, has a message for students and others: Slow down, take the time to watch the rain, smell a flower or listen to the birds. You might find yourself inspired.

Kotani will present a Powerpoint on what inspires her as a fiber artist during a guest-artist lecture at 12:30 p.m. April 12, in SRU's Art Building. Students and the public are invited to the free presentation.

"Rather than just doing a survey of my work, I thought I would focus where my inspiration comes from," she said. "Nature is very important. Living in Slippery Rock, I take my inspiration from things like the rain, temperatures and ambient dust."

Kotani, who taught at SRU from 1979-2000, has exhibited fiber art in 203 group exhibitions and 35 one-person exhibitions. Her work has been shown in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Hawaii State Foundation for Art and Pittsburgh International Airport as well in France, Turkey and Spain. Her fiber art embraces what she calls the "surprising power and attraction of simplicity."

Kotani, who was recently named 2013 Pittsburgh Artist of the Year, will have an exhibition in September 2013 at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. She is affiliated with the Borelli-Edwards Gallery in Pittsburgh.

Kotani said she plans to tell students she finds inspiration in the daily tasks of life and seemingly routine aspects of nature and distills observations into fabric.

"My work celebrates things that we overlook in our everyday lives; we don't pay attention to very simple things that we see, touch, feel and hear," she said.

She said artists should examine themselves and clarify their beliefs and life priorities.

"People are always wondering how you come up with ideas for art," she said. "What I would like to share with my students is that it is like the old saying, you have to first know what you see, what you feel, know what you think. You have to know yourself. That's where you start. And you should be able slow down, especially in today's world."

Born in Honolulu, Kotani received her bachelor's degree in painting from the University of Hawai'i. She worked two years with a Mayan Indian weaver in Guatemala and later studied at the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, where she earned her master of fine arts.

Her appearance was organized by Barbara Westman, assistant professor of art.