



ROOTS, REEDS, AND VINES: **THE ART OF BASKETRY**

PAMELA **BECKER** CLAY **BURNETTE** ANN **CODDINGTON** KATHY **DULANEY**
DESMOND **ELLSWORTH** SCOTT **GILBERT** AND BETH **HESTER** KARI **LØNNING**
ANNE **SCARPA MCCAULEY** MARTHA **OLSON** KARYL **SISSON** LYNETTE **YOUSON**

Thursday, June 3-Saturday, August 28, 2021
All galleries

**MOSS
ARTS
CENTER**

Throughout history, across generations, and in all cultures and regions of the world, baskets have served both as functional objects and works of art. From the traditions of South Carolina seagrass and Appalachian basketry to innovative and intriguing contemporary forms, this exhibition presents the work of outstanding artists whose creativity and exceptional technical skill come together in objects of beauty and fascination.

A wealth of traditions, techniques, and materials inform and go into creating the works in this exhibition. Among the materials these artists employ are sweetgrass, bulrush, pine needles, palmetto fronds, reeds, honeysuckle vine, white oak, rattan, twine, sticks, fiber, and both linen and rayon thread. Some of the artists harvest and gather their materials directly from nature out in the woods and fields. Others employ or combine found objects as materials—strands of deconstructed rag rug or even miniature wood clothespins! All of these works of art are woven, constructed with weaving techniques and patterns that draw from ancient traditions that come down from European, African, and Native American cultures to more contemporary, innovative approaches. As such, these objects are soaked with the history of their precedents. They embody and reflect the cultural histories out of which they arise, as well as the imagination, creativity, and the inventive minds of the artists that make them.

There is something palpable and comforting for all of us in baskets—whether that stems from childhood memories, the baskets' natural materials and tactile appeal, or even their scent. Appreciation of and respect for the 'handmade,' particularly in the face of mass production and our increasingly technological world, is significant too in valuing this creative practice. Basket-making involves accretive techniques that can be complex, lengthy, and repetitive. Extensive time, dedication, and a great deal of discipline on the part of the artists are required to create these superb works, adding all the more to their value.

The selection of works in the exhibition *Roots, Reeds, and Vines: The Art of Basketry* spans the arc from the traditional to the innovative. Several of the artists in the exhibition have achieved national acclaim, have exhibited widely, and are represented in the collections of major museums. Others are well known in their communities for the excellence of their work and the traditions they honor and keep alive. All of the artists in the exhibition are masters of their medium. Together they offer us a rich glimpse into this ancient but enduring and ever evolving creative process.

Margo Ann Crutchfield
Curator at Large

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

PAMELA BECKER

Flemington, New Jersey

Elegant and exceptionally beautiful, Pamela Becker's vessels or "container-like forms," as she refers to them, reflect her continued exploration of pattern and color. Becker's works, created with a coiling technique used by the ancient Egyptians as well as Southwestern Native Americans, are classic and simple in form, while enriched with vibrant color and intricate patterning.

Becker uses reed as her core material, tightly wrapping each strand with linen and rayon, a process that took years of experimentation with many different core and covering materials to find the combination that she currently employs. For her, landscape is both the source and the inspiration. "Colors and shapes seen when walking in the woods, tending my gardens, or just being outdoors have provided me an unending flow of ideas," she says. Then, "stitch by stitch and row by row," the form slowly grows. Each completed form stands "as a record of the particular event or thought which I was trying to convey and also of the large amounts of time that went into its construction," Becker says.



ON THE COVER:
Clay Burnette
All Screwed Up, 2014 (detail)
Dyed and painted longleaf pine needles
coiled with waxed linen thread
5 x 10 x 23 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Pamela Becker ►
Evening
Rayon, linen thread, and reed
17 ½ x 10 x 10 inches
Courtesy of the artist



▲ Clay Burnette
Slip and Slide, 2018
Dyed and painted longleaf pine needles coiled with
waxed linen thread
6 x 11 x 13 inches
Courtesy of the artist

CLAY BURNETTE

Columbia, South Carolina
clayburnette.com

For over 40 years, Clay Burnette has used longleaf pine needles and waxed linen thread to make coiled baskets. In the sandhills of South Carolina, Burnette sustainability gathers his pine needles, dries them for several months, and then uses a needle and waxed linen thread to stitch them into coils. Using both uncolored and dyed or painted needles, he achieves a natural palette that is warm and sometimes iridescent. Instead of trimming off the needles' sheaths, he uses them to create patterns and textures.

Treating each basket like an adventure, Burnette follows no patterns and makes no preliminary sketches. He prefers to intuitively "plan a basket as it is being made," allowing the organic shapes to "'just happen' with a little coaxing from [his] hands." Embracing a slow coiling process gives Burnette the "freedom to create shapes that are only limited by [his] imagination and time." Delicately balancing skill with the materials' own properties, Burnette's inventive baskets range from recognizable forms to the surprising, unpredictable, and unique.

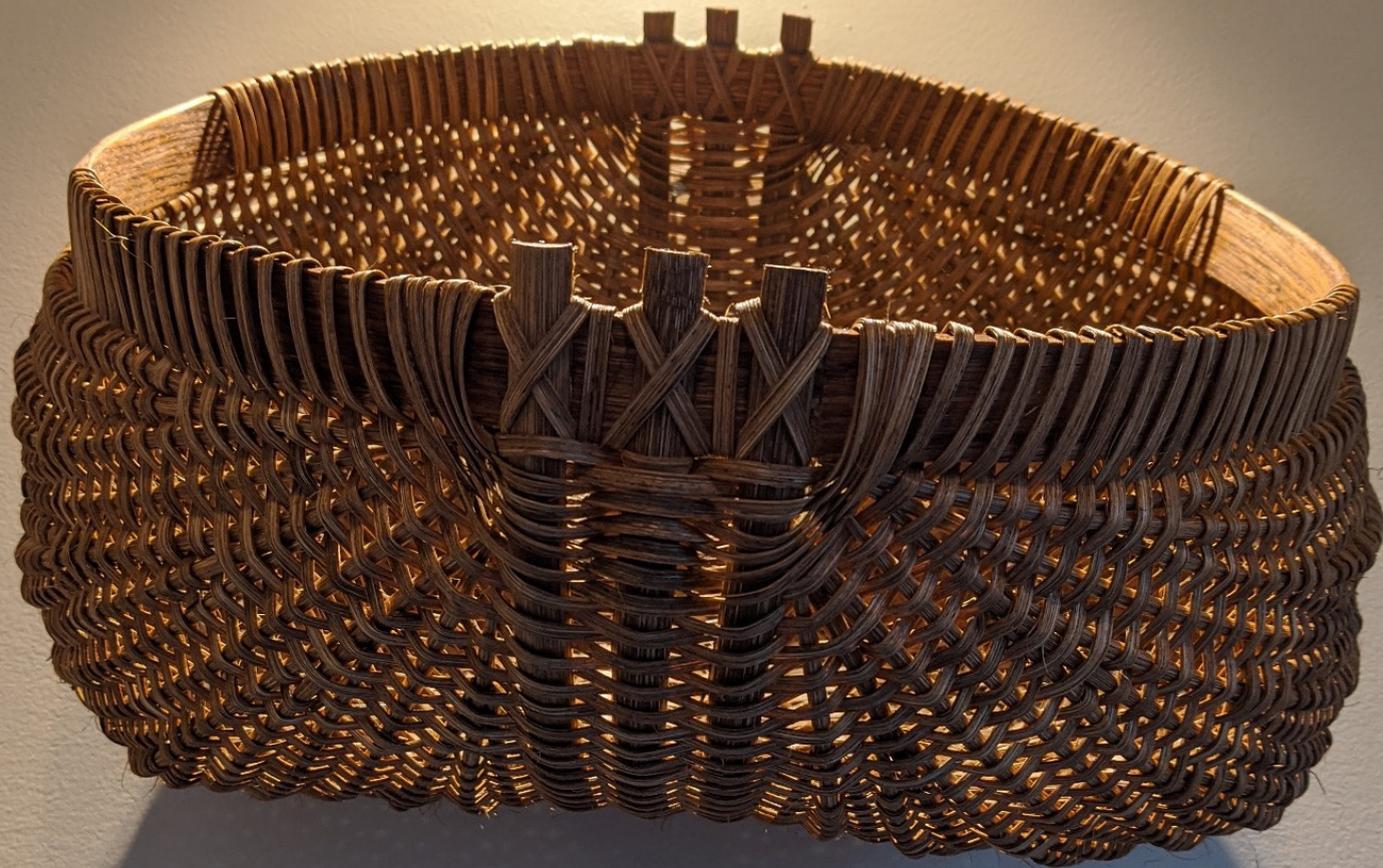
ANN CODDINGTON

Champaign, Illinois
ux1.eiu.edu/~abcoddington/portfolio

"In my work," says Ann Coddington, "I am moving in the opposite direction from the increasingly alienated, technological reality of our everyday life, in which we spend our days scrolling and clicking, searching through bits of data, not actually feeling and sensing, but instead digitally experiencing a virtual world." Using techniques such as tying knots, bending sticks, or twinning string to interweaving fibers, Coddington creates sculptural forms with what she terms "elemental, physical, and tangible processes, human actions that remain within her grasp." The "embodied experience," how the body senses and holds feelings, is an underlying theme in her work. Titled *ephemera*, 2020-2021, the wall installation featured in this exhibition spans the entire back wall of the gallery with up to 100 unique, delightfully inventive individual pieces. Each of these woven sculptural forms evoke and elicit response, from the immediately palpable to the fluid and intangible realm of both thought and remembrance.



► Ann B. Coddington
ephemera, 2015-2021 (detail)
Mixed media fibers
Wall installation, dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist



Kathy Dulaney ▲
Appalachian Potato Basket, 2020
Ash reed and ribbing
13 x 12 inches
Courtesy of the artist

KATHY DULANEY

Floyd, Virginia

"I have always been attracted to things from the past and I've always loved baskets," says Kathy Dulaney, who has been weaving old Appalachian style baskets for 35 years. "I enjoy creating baskets that are strong and useful, and the old Appalachian style baskets were just that," she remarks. For this exhibition Dulaney has created a traditional Appalachian hen basket, used to take hens to market; a basket to store potatoes; and an oriole basket, named after and resembling the oriole bird nest with its small opening and bulbous body. Sharing the history of basket styles and their original uses is important to Dulaney, who teaches weaving to pass this tradition on to others.

DESMOND ELLSWORTH

Fredericksburg, Virginia

Desmond Ellsworth is from Virginia and is a member of the Nansemond Indian Nation, comprising the indigenous people of the Nansemond River, a 20-mile long tributary of Virginia's James River. The Nansemond Indian Nation was recognized as a state within the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1985, and subsequently by the United States federal government in 2018. Ellsworth is also a descendent of the Saponi, Tuscarora, Nottoway, and Meherrin peoples, Native American tribes historically based in the central and coastal plains of North Carolina and Virginia.

Ellsworth started weaving in 2013 and is self-taught with the help of a few Cherokee Nation weavers. He employs traditional southeastern weaving techniques, including the double and single diagonal weaves and customary plaiting that traditionally would have been created with river cane, white oak, maple, cattails/bullrush, and palmetto. With these materials becoming increasingly rare due to urbanization and climate change, he uses commercial reed and chair cane for his baskets.

Several weave patterns in Ellsworth's works encode the heritage and history of his nation. The cross pattern in *Nansemond Story*, 2021, represents the Nansemond signature on the treaty of Middle Plantation between Charles II of England and representatives from various Virginia Native American tribes in 1677. The L-shaped weave pattern symbolizes an oyster surrounded by baby oysters, once a staple harvested by his people; the square signifies the Nansemond territory/villages surrounded by neighbors; and the sun pattern, the artist states, represents "a brighter future for all we do."

Ellsworth sees himself as a contemporary weaver but "my baskets are rooted in the preservation and unconquerable spirit of my ancestors."

Desmond Ellsworth ►
Nansemond Story Basket, 2021
Reed
10 x 9 ½ inches
Courtesy of the artist





Beth Hester
Jessie's Egg Basket, 2000
White oak
14 x 19 x 13 inches
Image courtesy of Scott Gilbert

SCOTT GILBERT AND BETH HESTER

Scottsville, Kentucky
basketmakerscatalog.com

Scott Gilbert and Beth Hester are renowned masters of the Appalachian basket tradition. Gilbert and his wife, Hester, studied the skill and history of their craft under the mentorship of Ollie and Lestel Childress, locally renowned fourth- and fifth-generation Kentucky white oak basket makers. "Beth and I studied with them right up until they passed away. We worked under the apple tree in the summer and in their kitchen in the winter." The exemplary works of theirs in this exhibition are made of white oak and include several varieties of traditional Kentucky egg baskets.

KARI LØNNING

Ridgefield, Connecticut

"All my life I knew that I would make and build things," Kari Lønning says. Lønning began college as a jewelry and metalsmithing major but graduated as a potter, studied design, and wanted to become an architect. She then became interested in weaving; when she began weaving baskets, she found that she could build complex constructions.

Lønning works with rattan, a tropical reed that grows as a long vine that can be dyed any color and worked into intricate patterns. "I have chosen basketry as my vehicle," she has said, "because it allows me to work with color and pattern in ridged form." One of the particularly ingenious techniques Lønning has invented and uses in her work is her "hairy technique," in which she embeds hundreds of shorter pieces of reed woven into the sides of the baskets to create especially unusual and unique forms.



Kari Lønning
Round + Hairy, with Neck, 2020 (detail)
Dyed rattan reed
7 x 8 3/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist



ANNE SCARPA MCCAULEY

Free Union, Virginia
honeysucklebaskets.com/anne

Using wild honeysuckle vines found in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Anne Scarpa McCauley developed her own method of weaving honeysuckle when she was 12 years old. McCauley began creating little circles or wreaths for her hair and then baskets while out tending goats; she has been making baskets, trays, and bowls ever since. A self-taught artist, McCauley remarks that she has never taken lessons, read books, or talked with other basket makers for ideas on making baskets. Her dense and intricately twined works are unique.

Honeysuckle is a vine that grows as many as 30 feet along the ground and up trees in warm weather. Before the vines die with the first frost, McCauley cuts them and strips the bark to reveal the creamy wood inside. "I use natural honeysuckle for my work, without coloring or any kind of finish," McCauley says. "The skinned honeysuckle starts out light green in color and turns a beautiful gold, which deepens the more it's in the sunlight. The baskets I make are strong, lightweight, and have the ability to endure years of use without showing wear."

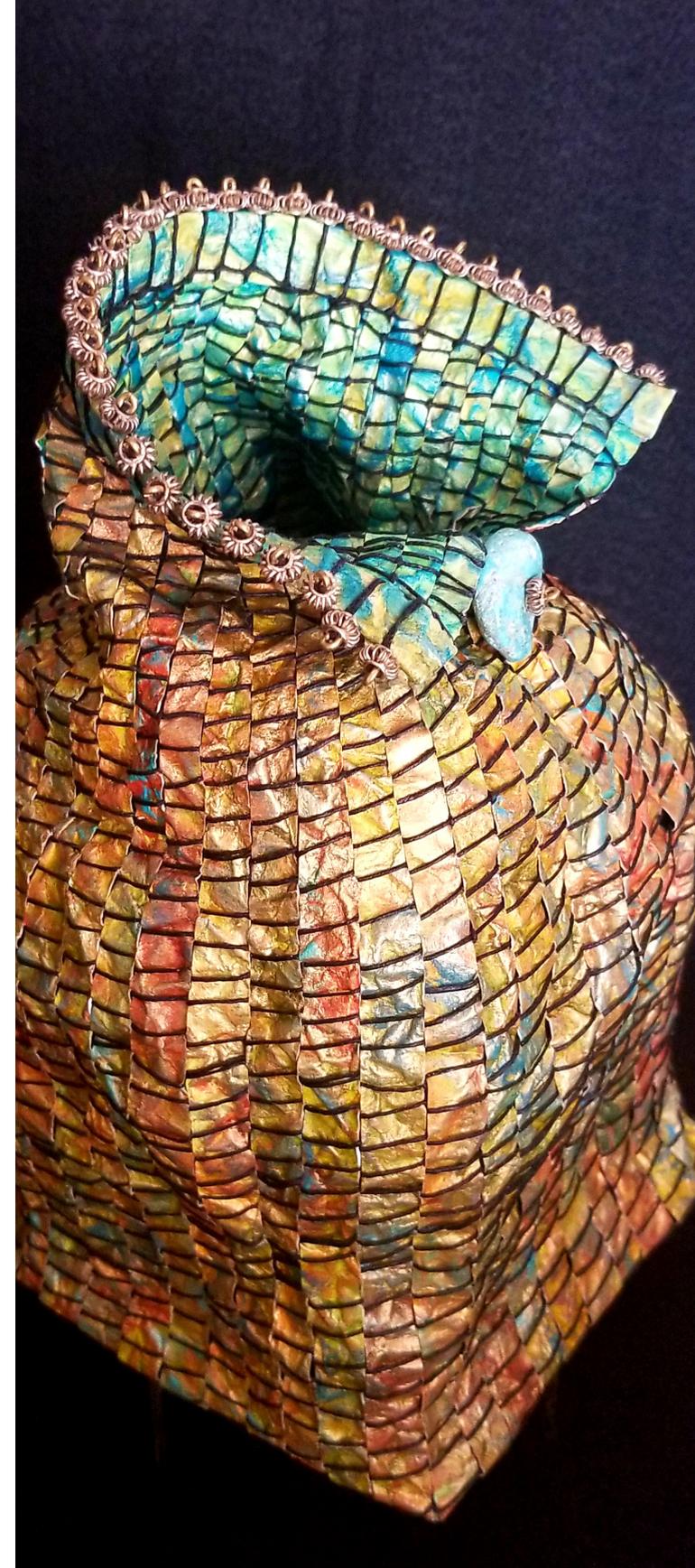
◀ Anne Scarpa McCauley
Selection of Honeysuckle Baskets, 2020-2021
Honeysuckle vine
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

MARTHA OLSON

Blacksburg, Virginia
marthaolsonart.blogspot.com

Created with deconstructed rag rug strands and coiling techniques, Martha Olson weaves her "vessels," as she calls them, out of humble materials that "many would not consider worth using or reusing." Olson's creations are made with paper grocery bags, old rag rug, scrap fabric, found rocks, and beads—"materials that flow in and out of women's lives, some having little importance and [that are] taken for granted, while others hold stories of shared generations." The fragments of rag rug used here in the works on view in this exhibition are from old Swedish rugs woven by Olson's mother-in-law, a subtle reference to not only generational histories, but to the beauty and value of women's work. The titles of Olson's works' are Swedish; *tvattkvinna* means "wash woman" and *kram* means "hug."

While imbued with the artist's personal history, Olson's vessels evoke even more and suggest a wide range of metaphoric possibilities. Several of her seemingly unassuming works, modest in scale with materials that seem soft and malleable, appear to fold or droop into themselves. Olson's works seem ancient and wizened with a few select and almost hidden embedded treasures—Ethiopian trading beads, African jade and turquoise, or found stones—a hint of the exotic hidden in the commonplace. These unusual works, created with common materials, seem to harbor uncommon, intriguing, and mysterious narratives.



Martha Olson
Victoria, 2020
Brown paper grocery bag,
acrylic paint, waxed linen, African turquoise, brass, and aluminum beads
11 x 6 ½ x 6 ½ inches
Courtesy of the artist ▶



KARYL SISSON

Los Angeles, California
karylsson.com/vessels

Using a number of basketry and needlework techniques, Karyl Sisson transforms familiar, undervalued, and overlooked objects into what she describes as “structures that suggest living organisms, indigenous architecture, or ceramic vessels.” Sisson has spent years rummaging through junk stores and scouring flea markets, salvaging cloth, buttons, zippers, and other sewing notions. She recycles these once common manufactured objects into woven sculptural forms laden with patterning, repetition, and a sense of rhythmic undulation. “Patterning and texture are intrinsic to my forms,” Sisson remarks. “They create a tactile and suggestive quality that evokes physical and psychological themes of deep interest to me.” *Pelvic Tilt* (1998) or *Opening Up* (1997), for example, reflect and suggest this, as does the title and form of *Heavy-hearted* (2001). Folding inwards and almost crumpled, Sisson created this work in response to the 9/11 attacks. “It carries the weight and sadness I experienced,” she remarks.

Sisson’s work expands the notion of basketry container and/or vessel into atypical, if not novel, territory. Her exceptionally unusual forms are woven, with some that function as vessels containing interior spaces and others more twisted and closed. All are intriguing and evocative sculptural works of art that juxtapose the familiar with an unnerving sense of the uncanny.

▲ Karyl Sisson
Heavy-hearted, 2001
Vintage cotton/rayon ribbon, thread,
and wood spring-operated clothespins
10 x 16 x 23 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Lynette Youson
Rice Fanner (detail)
Sweetgrass, pine needles, bulrush,
and palmetto palm bottom
2 ½ x 13 x 15 inches
Courtesy of the artist

LYNETTE YOUSON

A fifth-generation sweetgrass basket weaver from the low country of South Carolina, Lynette Youson grew up in a Gullah community where West African basketmaking traditions have been used for generations. Youson learned the craft from her grandmother, has weaved with her mother for over 45 years, and has in turn taught her own daughters. Beautiful and utilitarian, Youson weaves a variety of traditional objects. Fanner baskets, like the one seen here, were historically used to toss freshly picked rice into the air so that the wind would blow away the husks.

Text by Margo Ann Crutchfield, curator at large, with Moss Arts Center graduate assistants Ali Palin and Anthony Pearson.

Notes:

All quotes and statements referenced throughout come from the artists statements on their websites or email and/or conversations with Crutchfield in spring 2021.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Pamela Becker

Winter Night, 2009

Rayon and linen thread and reed
18 ½ x 20 x 20 inches

Calyx, 2008

Rayon and linen thread and reed
20 ¼ x 18 ¾ x 18 ¾ inches

Black with Red Diamonds, 2003

Rayon and linen thread and reed
11 ½ x 25 x 25 inches

Dusk

Rayon and linen thread and reed
26 ½ x 14 x 14 inches

Evening

Rayon and linen thread and reed
17 ½ x 10 x 10 inches

Clay Burnette

Autumn Melon, 2020

Dyed and painted longleaf pine needles coiled with strands of hand-plied, waxed linen thread and copper wire
6 x 13 x 18 inches

Just a Bunch of Baskets, 2020

Dyed and painted longleaf pine needles coiled with waxed linen
Bowl with 45 small baskets;
3 x 16 x 16 inches overall

Slip and Slide, 2018

Dyed and painted longleaf pine needles coiled with waxed linen thread
6 x 11 x 13 inches

All Screwed Up, 2014

Dyed and painted longleaf pine needles coiled with waxed linen thread
5 x 10 x 23 inches

Bulb, 2011

Dyed and painted longleaf pine needles coiled with waxed linen thread
13 x 16 x 16 inches

Ann B. Coddington

ephemera, 2015-2021

Mixed media fibers
Approximately 100-piece wall installation
Dimensions variable; approximately 10 x 30 feet

Kathy Dulaney

Appalachian Hen Basket, 2021

12 x 12 inches

Appalachian Egg Basket, 2021

10 x 12 inches

Appalachian Oriole Basket, 2020

13 x 12 inches

Appalachian Potato Basket, 2020

13 x 12 inches

Desmond Ellsworth

Nansemond Story Basket, 2021

Reed
10 x 9 ½ inches

Miniature Double Wall Basket, 2021

Reed
3 ½ x 3 ½ inches

Winnowing Basket, 2020

Reed
7 x 9 ½ inches

Choctaw Cow Nose Basket, 2020

Reed
6 ½ x 8 ½ inches

Peace Pipe Rectangle Basket, 2020

Reed
6 ½ x 11 inches

Scott Gilbert

9-Inch Egg Basket, 2012

White oak
9 x 10 x 9 inches

Raising a Forest Basket, 2006

White oak
7 x 10 x 10 inches

Beth Hester

Jessie's Egg Basket, 2000

White oak
14 x 19 x 13 inches

Kentucky Egg Basket, 1993

Working under an apprenticeship with Master Basket Maker Lestel Childress
White oak
24 x 17 x 11 inches

Kari Lønning

Round + Hairy, with Neck, 2020

Dyed rattan reed
7 x 8 ¾ inches

Summer Beach Series #3, 2019

Dyed rattan reed
15 x 12 inches

Giant Orange Bowl, 2018

Dyed rattan reed
10 x 19 ½ inches

Akebia Diagonals, 2017

Dyed rattan reed
12 ½ x 15 ½ inches

Blue Seagrass, Red Tracks, 2017

Dyed rattan reed
19 x 13 ¾ inches

Anne Scarpa McCauley

Selection of Honeysuckle Baskets, 2020-2021

Honeysuckle vine
Dimensions variable

Martha Olson

Flask, 2021

Rag rug and wax linen
9 ½ x 6 ½ x 6 ½ inches

Europa, 2020

Kozo, moire, and Ethiopian trading beads
4 x 6 x 7 inches

Liten Flicka, 2020

Rag rug, African jade, and wax linen
3 ½ x 3 ½ x 3 ½ inches

Victoria, 2020

Brown paper grocery bag, acrylic paint, waxed linen, African turquoise, brass, and aluminum beads
11 x 6 ½ x 6 ½ inches

Kram, 2019

Rag rug, found stone, and wax linen
4 ½ x 6 ½ x 6 ½ inches

Tvatkvinna, 2019

Rag rug and found stones
7 ½ x 10 ½ x 7 ½ inches

Karyl Sisson

Moody Blue, 2003

Vintage cotton/rayon ribbon, thread, and miniature wood spring-operated clothespins
9 x 20 x 15 inches
Courtesy of the artist and BrownGrotta

Heavy-hearted, 2001

Vintage cotton/rayon ribbon, thread, and wood spring-operated clothespins
10 x 16 x 23 inches

Pelvic Tilt, 1998

Cotton twill tape, thread, and miniature wood spring-operated clothespins
12 x 15 x 10 inches

Opening Up, 1997

Cotton twill tape, thread, and wood spring-operated clothespins
13 ½ x 27 x 20 inches
Courtesy of the artist and BrownGrotta

Vessel XXI, 1995

Cotton twill tape, thread, and miniature wood spring-operated clothespins
7 x 16 x 4 inches
Courtesy of the artist and BrownGrotta

Lynette Youson

Rice Fanner

Sweetgrass, pine needles, bulrush, and palmetto palm bottom
2 ½ x 13 x 15 inches

XL Egg Basket

Sweetgrass, pine needles, bulrush, and palmetto palm bottom
10 x 14 x 12 inches

XL Ripple/Stand Basket

Sweetgrass, pine needles, bulrush and palmetto palm bottom
6 ½ x 11 ½ x 8 ½ inches

Flower Basket or Magazine Tray

Sweetgrass, pine needles, bulrush and palmetto palm bottom
15 x 16 x 12 inches





ROOTS, REEDS, AND VINES: THE ART OF BASKETRY

Thursday, June 3, 2021, 5-7 PM | Opening Reception

Thursday, June 3, 2021, 6 PM | Artist Talk: Ann Coddington

Outside on the Moss Arts Center patio

Masks are required and social distancing should be followed.

Previous page:
Lynette Youson
XL Ripple/Stand Basket
Sweetgrass, pine needles, bulrush, and
palmetto palm bottom
6 1/2 x 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Ann B. Coddington ▲
ephemera, 2015-2021 (detail)
Mixed media fibers
Wall installation, dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Gallery Hours

Wednesday-Friday, 10 AM-5 PM

Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

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