



NBO Quarterly Review
P.O. Box 277
Brasstown, NC 28902

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quarterly review | fall 2010



National Basketry Organization



NJIJAGIJ-TQO-LUKWEYEK
"My spirit and I work together."
Margaret Pelletier



Spirit Journey
Leandra Spangler

Promoting the art, skill, heritage, and education of traditional and contemporary basketry.

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UPCOMING ISSUE

winter
2010



Karol Lindquist



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ON THE COVER**Artist: Margaret Pelletier**

title: NIJAGIJ-TQO-LUKWEYEK

"My spirit and I work together."

dimensions: 6" diameter x 5 1/2" h

Materials are black ash strips and braided sweet grass. It is a sewing basket decorated with porcupine curlique and sweet grass on the upper border.

Photography by: Mario Studio

Artist: Leandra Spangler

title: Spirit Journey

dimensions: 8" x 21" x 8

Materials are cast paper, artist made paper (cork screw willow; cotton), reed, bamboo, tubing, wire, paint, prisma color

Photography by: Helios Studio

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Fellow members:

The air is brisk and the season reminds me of a late dear North Carolina doll-maker friend, Aggie Lowrance, who would exclaim when I phoned her in the Fall, "honey, the frost is on the pumpkin." A frost is close at hand here on the farm in Brasstown as the temperatures are dropping into the mid thirties every night. I am sure that some folks in the 'hollers' do have had frost on their pumpkins! Festivals abound with celebratory singing, dancing and artists selling their wares. Nature's last hoorah is near and I relish the crimson colors of Fall.

Congratulations to our board and membership as we are \$5,000 from our \$50,000 goal. Please help us attain this challenge before December 31, 2010. Please remember your donations are tax deductible. Thank you for your continued support and hopefully we will continue to receive funding from a most supportive Foundation. We have accomplished a great deal this year. Here are some of the highlights:

- We have transformed our quarterly newsletter into a quarterly magazine and named it the NBO Quarterly Review.
- We have hired a new graphic designer to co-ordinate all aspects of NBO publications.
- We have instituted an advertising policy and will be soliciting ad space so that the magazine can continue to expand our coverage of basketry.
- We have hired a full time web master who will continue to keep our website current and will send e-mail blasts to our membership on a monthly basis.
- Board member Susi Nuss, has developed an NBO Facebook page and is maintaining it to keep it current and relevant to our membership.
- The NBO has received \$10,700 from the North Carolina Arts Council in the last five months; \$5,700 to support the largest basketry exhibition that NBO has ever undertaken at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC and an additional \$5,000 to document the work of four individuals from generational Cherokee basketmaking families.
- Created a student membership level and are developing an outreach program to students studying fiber related courses across the United States, in addition to providing scholarships to students to attend our conferences.
- This past summer we donated \$1,500 to six high school students in Cherokee to visit the Heard Museum in Arizona. This enabled the students to participate in exhibitions and competitions and strengthened our relationship with the Eastern band of the Cherokee Indians. Our Board feels it is important that these students meet and interact with other basketmakers across the country.

I know that many of you are interested in the classes and the teachers for next years' conference. You'll find the complete list of instructors and their class titles on page 18. Complete conference information will be in the winter issue of the Quarterly Review. The Board and I reiterate our appreciation for your renewed memberships, donations and support.

Enjoy Fall!

Michael Davis/ President and Co-founder NBO

NEW FACES

MATT TOMMEY

written by Taylor Bello

For Matt Tommey every basket begins with a walk in the woods. Even as a young child growing up in rural Columbus, Georgia, Matt was captivated by the art of basket making and handcrafts. "I was always into the outdoors and making things out of natural materials," says Tommey. Throughout his high school years he stayed true to his craft and continued to experience nature first hand. He was an active member of the Order of the Arrow, an honor society under the Boy Scouts of America.

Matt graduated from Hardaway High School in the spring of 1991 and enrolled at Young Harris College in beautiful north Georgia that fall. After graduating from YHC in 1993 with his Associate's Degree, Matt transferred to the University of Georgia in Athens where he obtained his Bachelors Degree in Education. Amid the clear skies and cool breezes of autumn, Matt began work at the University Bookstore on campus. There, he stumbled upon a doomed copy of "Willow Basketry" by Bernard and Regula Verdet-Fierz, ready for the trash bin. "It was going to be returned and have the cover ripped off but I rescued it" Matt recalled. Upon further reading, he decided to give some of the techniques mentioned in the book a try using a material plentiful to Georgia and his own backyard - kudzu. Soon he was out and about in the woods gathering kudzu and other knarled vines, shaping them into vessels of art. With the aid of the Verdet-Fierz's literature and his God-given ability to create, Matt's baskets soon caught the attention of peers, colleagues, and others who looked to purchase his work. "My buddies started buying them around Christmas time. I was a junior in college and had only been making baskets like that for less than a year." And thus, the 20-year-old college student stuck his foot in the door of a lifelong career.

Basketry remained a hobby for about 15 years but at this point, Matt doesn't owe his income to basketry alone. He continues to work as a marketing consultant, graphic designer, and musician. In December of 2009 Matt, his wife Tanya, and son Cameron moved to Asheville, North Carolina so that he could pursue his craft full time.

Rib Basket

Dimensions: 12" x 9" x 8"

Kudzu, Honeysuckle, Wisteria bark, Eleagnus

Photography by: Paul Jeremias

Asheville, NC

*Every basket
begins with a walk
in the woods.*





MATT TOMMEY



Hen Basket
Dimensions: 17" x 17" x 10"
Kudzu, Honeysuckle, Eleagnus
Photography by: Paul Jeremias
Asheville, NC

them to prevent shrinkage. After that, he soaks the vines so that they're ready for weaving, divine inspiration then "takes the wheel" and what once

was only a disheveled pile of vines soon arises as a detailed creation that is both traditional and contemporary.

One of the things that make Matt Tommey's baskets unique is the personal touch he incorporates into each and every one of his products. "All of my pieces feature a handmade copper leaf, which represents the medium used in the basket, like kudzu or grapevine – it's my trademark."

Past accolades are only the beginning for Matt Tommey, and he is confident in the future he has with his art. He aspires to raise awareness of the craft, experiment with new forms and mentor emerging artists in order to leave a legacy for future generations. "I want to be known as an innovator who does things that no one else does with natural materials." One day he hopes to see his baskets displayed in museums and private collections all over the world, but one thing is for certain, every basket begins with a walk in the woods. 🌲

Although he attended a few lectures early in his career, Matt's approach to basket making is truly his own. His baskets have been described as "a whimsical collaboration of traditional Appalachian forms and wild, rustic, natural materials". Matt's interpretation of rib baskets and other traditional shapes offer a heartfelt nod to his roots in Appalachian basketry while offering a contemporary expression that is all his own. "Western North Carolina is chocked full of beautiful, easy to find natural materials. I enjoy the harvesting process as much as the weaving" says Tommey. Matt harvests all of his own materials, including vines like kudzu, wisteria, honeysuckle, and grapevine, as well as local bark from poplar and hickory trees, to name a few. He then cleans and separates his haul, curing



Potato Basket
Dimensions: 18" x 12" x 3"
Honeysuckle, Eleagnus & Kudzu
Photography by: Paul Jeremias
Asheville, NC

featured artist
Margaret Pelletier

written by
Michelle Richards & Rich Pelletier



Artist putting finishing touches on basket by mounting lace on the rim.
Photography by: Mario Studio



NJIJAGIJ-TQO-LUKWEYEK Collection
"My spirit and I work together."
Dimensions: 5" diameter and 5" height
Material is black ash strips. Basket is decorated with periwinkle curliques.
Photography by: Mario Studio

I was born on the Waycobah First Nation community on Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, Canada. Cape Breton is a small island 100 miles across at the easternmost edge of Nova Scotia. It is home to five Mik'maq First Nations. Cape Breton is a unique place where Mik'maq culture has been able to flourish over the years.

Basket making has always been an integral part of our culture. Baskets historically have served as both functional pieces that improved our daily lives and as art that served as gifts and presentations to dignitaries for special occasions. Mik'maqs have two types of traditional baskets. The more functional baskets were traditionally made of splints from the black ash tree. These functional baskets have over the years become pieces of art as weaving techniques and intrinsic designs evolved into a more artistic form. Porcupine quill baskets have also always been seen as artistic. These baskets are fashioned from the bark from a birch tree and quills from a porcupine. In fact, there are several Mik'maq porcupine quill baskets that were presented to the British royalty over the last two centuries that are on display in the Tower of London.

As long as I can remember, my mother has been making traditional ash Mik'maq baskets. Some of my earliest memories are of my mother sitting on the floor making baskets. These baskets represented a part of my family's livelihood as my mother, with the help of her daughters, made traditional baskets that my mother and father would travel around the Maritime Provinces peddling. In my early years, I often travelled with my parents peddling the baskets that we made and this entire experience helped to define my future love for basket making.

My father did not encourage us to continue making baskets as he wanted us to pursue educations and careers. He did not want us to become trapped in the poverty cycle that many Native people were caught in. So, when I turned 18, I entered nursing school in Sydney, just down the road from where I grew up. Three years later I started my career as a nurse. I traveled across Canada and the United States working as a Nurse. I had left my childhood and my basket making behind. I finally settled in Northern Maine, where I met my husband and we started our family. I took time off from my nursing work in order to raise my children in the early 70's.

Continued on next page



It had been more than 10 years since I had left Cape Breton and I was homesick. My mother came out to visit and as always has and still does, she travelled with everything she needed to make baskets. We sat together with the children and made baskets for a month. My mother's involvement was a great influence in my re-starting to make baskets again by sharing her knowledge of different styles and techniques and her love of the art. When she left, I continued to make baskets. It helped keep me connected with my native soil and family almost 600 miles away. I opened a small craft shop in our home and sold baskets I made along with other native crafts I

purchased from native artisans along the eastern seaboard of Canada and Maine.

Once the children started school, I returned to my work as a nurse, but this time I didn't give up on basket making. For the next 20 years I pursued basket making as a devoted hobby. I joined the Maine Basket Maker's Alliance as a board member and met people who had elevated their basket making to a fine art. I knew that Mik'maq basket making was once revered as fine art. Mik'maq basket making had become more about function than art. I became passionate about returning our basket making to the level of fine art again.



NJIJAGIT-SAIWI-TQOLUKWEYEK Collection
"My spirit continues to work with me"

Dimensions: 6 1/2" diameter and height is 6"
 Materials are black ash splints and braided sweet grass. Here I have combined a traditional and contemporary design. It has periwinkle curliques at mid basket.
 Photography by: Mario Studio



NJIJAGIT-SAIWI-TQOLUKWEYEK Collection
"My spirit continues to work with me"

Dimensions: 4 1/2" diameter and height is 5 1/2"
 Materials are black ash splints with sweet grass finish. This is a new design combination of traditional and contemporary designs.
 Photography by: Mario Studio



NJIJAGIT-SAIWI-TQOLUKWEYEK Collection
"My spirit continues to work with me"

Dimensions: Basket on the left is 2" diameter and 2" in height. Basket on the right is 1" diameter by 1 1/2" height. Materials on both are black ash splints and finished with sweet grass. This is another combination of traditional and contemporary designs.
 Photography by: Mario Studio

NJIJAGI-TQO-LUKWEYEK Collection
"My spirit and I work together"

Dimensions: 7 1/2" diameter, height 6 1/2"
 Materials are black ash strips and braided sweet grass. It is a fancy basket with lid on a pedestal decorated with periwinkle curliques and lace on the upper border.
 Photography by: Mario Studio

I travelled to visit with basket makers from throughout Maine and the Maritime Provinces. I learned new techniques from them. I experimented with natural dyes. I relearned the uniquely Mik'maq art of creating porcupine quill baskets. I met with archeologists and museum curators to learn traditional designs and methods. It was an exciting time for me artistically, a time in which I was able to grow as an artist and not be driven by a need to "churn out" baskets for retail.

In 1993, I returned to Cape Breton for an exciting opportunity to do health care outreach to native communities. I worked as a nurse during the day, but spent almost every evening and weekend with my mentor and mother, Caroline Gould. I was able to learn from my mother and at the same time experiment with different basket shapes and finishing designs. Traditional Mik'maq basket making had become focused on plain and purely functional baskets. It was both my mothers and my goal to use this time to return basket making to a form of fine art. I not only experimented with the traditional ash and sweet grass baskets, but also with birch bark and porcupine quill baskets. I have a basket displayed at the Nova Scotia Art Gallery titled *Njijagmij Toglukweyak*, meaning "My Spirit and I Work Together" in Mik'maq.

Birch bark and porcupine quill baskets had once represented the high art of the Mik'maq people. It was rapidly becoming a lost art. It had almost died out in the 60's, but I was able to learn the technique from the last Mik'maq porcupine quill artist in Atlantic Canada, Theresa Thomas. This unique art was revived as a result of Mrs. Thomas' teaching a handful of students the art. Today there are only a few artists who are still making this type of basket. I have a permanent display at the Fortress of Louisburg in Nova Scotia of a replica of a quill box that was found in the ruins. I also have another quill box at the Robert Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, Maine.

Since 2000, I have dedicated all my efforts to making baskets. I have been working to perfect my techniques, which has proven to be a never ending process. All of my baskets are hand woven and made freehand, without molds. This means each basket is unique and one of a kind. I continue to use traditional black ash for my baskets finishing them with braided sweet grass and intricate designs. My work has been displayed at official government celebrations and in museums and historic sites.

NJIJAGI-TQO-LUKWEYEK Collection
"My spirit and I work together."

Dimensions: 7" diameter and height is 6"
 Materials are black ash strips and braided sweet grass. It is a sewing basket with lid decorated with porcupine curliques and lace on the upper border.
 Photography by: Mario Studio



I have received numerous awards and recognitions for my baskets including:

Nova Scotia Designer Craft Council – Certified Master Artisan

Maine Arts Commission – Fellowship Recipient

2006 Atlantic Aboriginal Entrepreneur Awards Show – Woman Entrepreneur of the year, Atlantic Region.

I am now seeking to further develop my art of basket making. I am exploring other categories of basket weaving such as Penobscot weaving with sweet grass and the contemporary use of reeds in basket weaving. My goal is to integrate these categories with the Mik'maq tradition of basket weaving using ash splints and sweet grass. I successfully obtained a grant in 2009 from Arts New Brunswick to pursue this goal and I anticipate that a variety of new and innovative patterns can and will evolve as a consequence.

The picture shown on page 5 of me holding a basket, is a design that my mother and I created representing the Mik'maq nation. This was presented to Queen Elizabeth of England when she visited Canada in June.

Making baskets has always been a spiritual experience for me. Creating my works of art comes with such ease as I am simply the physical form that is doing the weave – it is the spirit within me that is guiding me. I am always learning and have found that there is no such thing as a master basket maker, merely a basket maker who has learned that there is no end to what there is to learn. 🍷



NJIJAGI-TQO-LUKWEYEK Collection
"My spirit and I work together."

Dimensions: 4 1/2" diameter and height is 2 1/2"
 Materials are black ash strips and braided sweet grass. It is a square braided sweet grass basket inspired by an old basket seen at a yard sale.
 Photography by:



Pickens County Museum of Art & History, Pickens, SC

Basketry;

Traditional & Contemporary Woven Art
September 11 *through* November 11, 2010

Curated by well known weaver Pati English, this collection of works from some of the most influential Southern artisans working in various aspects of traditional and contemporary basketry includes, in addition to Mrs. English, the artists, Barbara McCormick, Gale McKinley, Tika Tucker, Dolores von Rosen, Laura Lee Zanger, Pamela Zimmerman and Michael Davis. About the show, and her role as guest curator, Pati English said, "It was my privilege to invite artisans from South Carolina and neighboring states of North Carolina and Georgia to participate in this basketry exhibition. It is my vision that visitors will be amazed and engaged by the scope of artistry and history in hand woven fiber art. Basket making from ancient beginnings has survived our changing culture and is one of the time honored art forms of today."

She continued, "The unique display of three-dimensional art is a celebration of beauty and function. With time, skill, care, hands, and natural materials, these artisans enjoy the simple tools in creating their unique connection with nature. Being a slow and meditative process, basket weaving opens a world of possibilities to intersect and

manipulate intricate designs. From simple, functional lines, to contemporary sculptural vessels, weaving satisfies our need for enduring beauty in our surroundings."

The public is encouraged to visit and enjoy this exceptional collection of woven art featuring eight serious and thoughtful weavers who collectively create their vision of contemporary basketry. Preserving and perpetuating this ancient art form maintains a connection to the land and a bridge to the future. These eight artisans will keep the art of basketry alive and ensure this tradition a place in the 21st Century.

The Pickens County Museum of Art & History is funded in part by Pickens County, members and friends of the museum and a grant from the South Carolina Arts Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

BASKET PICTURED: AZTEC SUNSET
Artist: Tika Tucker

Hunterdon Art Museum, Clinton, NJ

Pamela Becker: Patterns and Constructs

October 3 *through* January 16, 2011

This exhibition will present a selection of Pamela Becker's textile wall pieces, baskets, and recent textile constructions as well as a few photo collages that show Becker's love of pattern and design.

Becker's career as a textile and fiber artist spans more than twenty-five years, and reveals an artist whose consummate technique has never stood in the way of exploration and change. From her uniquely crafted and engineered large wall textiles to the highly personal, freer and whimsical current Women series of small textile vessels and constructions, Becker's background and

expertise in textile arts are coupled with her predilection for order and structure in her work. This is visible in the elegant geometry of the artist's ongoing creation of colorful coiled baskets, a group of virtuoso objects that parallel the chronology of Becker's textile arts.

Her unique hanging textiles with their overlapping panels combine dyeing, painting, printing, and sewing and show surprising freedom of details within a highly organized structure. The Women, a growing repertoire of modest-size containers, has allowed the artist a level of play and pleasure in pattern, textile collage, and decorative additions.



Featured artist

Leandra Spangler

written by Jo Stealey



ARKARUA [2004]
Dimensions: 14" x 8" x 8"
twined reed, cast paper, artist made paper (cotton), buttons, paint
Photography by: Helios Studio

Sensuous surfaces and shimmering colors encasing organic forms of twined reed describe my sculptural vessels today. Often mistaken for clay, metal or leather, they tell stories of archaic artifacts, primordial ritual objects, ancient shipwrecks and provide a record of my journey as a fiber artist.

The world of basketry came to me through the back door. In 1986, I fell in love with papermaking the first time my hands plunged into a vat of cloud-like pulp and encountered my artistic epiphany. I then discovered a desire to present handmade paper in three dimensions and this led to an exploration of basketry techniques.

My early baskets reference the columnar and amphora forms of ancient Mediterranean cultures. (GOES ROUND, COMES ROUND, 1996) The twined reed provided a structural "skeleton" and my handmade papers became the "skin" for the twined bones of the vessel. It was the seductive texture of the paper surface that was so important to the aesthetic aspects of my work. The way light fell on a surface creating highlights and subtle variations of shadow was what intrigued me the most. Twenty years later, I still create surfaces, raised, indented and wrinkled, which allow light to dance over impressed textures generating subtle variations of tone and value.

When papermaking and basketry came into my life, my primary career was teaching art to junior high students and my creative spirit had been satisfied flitting from one medium to another making examples for my students. The fusion of papermaking and basketry ignited my need to become a serious artist. The journey evolved slowly. Nine months of the year, I worked to develop a cultural aesthetic in the junior high classroom.



Summer vacation meant papermaking classes and making as much paper as possible. On school holidays and snow days, I twined reed forms and covered them with handmade papers. This balance of classroom teaching and learning my new craft created a pleasant rhythm. I looked forward to my personal time not only as a pause from the intensity of my profession, but also as a renewing period for personal creative growth.

The more I learned, the more I wanted to know. I took workshops from artists whose work I admired, researched contemporary fine craft, became active in local and regional fiber organizations and continued to make paper and create vessel forms. Eventually, I entered juried exhibitions.

Continued on next page

GOES ROUND, COMES ROUND [1996]
Dimensions: 20" x 8" x 8"
Twined reed form, artist made paper (cotton), graphite emulsion, ribbon
Photography by: Helios Studio



ONE HUNDRED HANDS CLAPPING [2004]

Dimensions: 23" x 6.5" x 6.5"
twined reed, artist made paper (rattle snake master and abaca; cotton), crayfish claws (dried, emptied, stabilized), copper foil, wire, copper beads, hematite beads, copper brads, copper wire mesh, ping pong netting, joss paper, graphite emulsion
Photography by: Helios Studio

ODDYSEY [2007]

Dimensions: 9" x 24" x 8"
twined reed, wire, artist made paper (cotton), beads, sewing thread, paint
Photography by: Helios Studio



Realizing my dream, after twenty-five years of teaching art in the public school system, I retired to begin my career as a full time artist in 2000. My time is now devoted to my development as a fiber artist and workshop instructor. If I'm not in the studio, I'm on the computer writing proposals for exhibitions or teaching, preparing work for shipping, updating my website, building my fiber community or dreaming of the next piece.

It is no longer necessary to wait for summer to produce paper for the rest of the year; I make paper several times during the year for my baskets. A pound of unprocessed fiber results in 100, 5" x 8" sheets and I often process several pounds of fiber at one time. Black denim half stuff is the base for my textured paper. The short fibers of cotton are the best to receive and hold impressions of objects such as buttons, lace, zippers, garters, grids, keys, paperclips, bubble wrap, etc. A palette of objects is selected from my collection to impress textures into freshly made, wet sheets of paper resulting in many sheets with a similar feel and look. These sheets of paper are a fossil record of mundane aspects of contemporary culture. This stash of highly textured black paper provides inspiration and materials for future pieces.

When the basket's skeleton is ready for it's skin, my creative process evolves intuitively. My rule of thumb is to find interesting patterns and group them together to apply to the surface. I look at my sheets of textured paper tearing out areas that juxtapose distinctive positive and negative spaces. Again, my paper stash is mined to find more textures that will enhance the developing surface pattern. For instance, an embossed zipper next to a star button may be mated with other zipper/button combinations. Torn textured papers are arranged and rearranged to create a composition that compliments the woven armature. Finally, the paper is attached to the

form and sealed. The paper-covered vessel is completed with layers of paint or graphite.

An urban forager, a crow by nature, I have always been seduced by the elusive quality of ordinary discarded objects as sources for creative potential. As my search for textural objects continued, some of the objects found were too fragile, beautiful or dimensional to be pressed into paper. These cultural cast-offs found their way onto the work as embellishments rather than merely items to emboss the paper. Treasures overlooked or discarded are now given new status as design elements. This could be a grand philosophical statement about social consumption and waste, but the truth is, I love to explore patterns and rhythms created by juxtaposing multiple objects.

Trash to treasure became an obsession. Once when clearing the table's carnage after a football game feast, a bowl full of pristine untouched crayfish caught my eye. The natural raw beauty of the brilliant orange crustaceans made them too precious to throw away. I plucked the pinchers, skewered them on wire to dry slowly, reamed the desiccated meat, stuffed the now hollow shell with paper and glue, wrapped the edge with copper foil and dressed them with handmade paper to become focal elements on ONE HUNDRED HANDS CLAPPING (2004). My fanatical pursuit of creative potentials again led to a new series integrating reclaimed items as design elements. (ARKARUA, 2004, top of page 9)

Similarly, one icy night, the car headlights illuminated a "pile of diamonds" in a parking lot. I immediately returned with a box and broom to sweep up the broken windshield glass, smiling for the security cameras. Washed and sorted, these glittering gems became the exoskeleton for WHERE OTHERS FEAR TO TREAD (2002), my artistic response to the events of 9/11. A series of paper covered reed vessels encrusted with automobile glass followed that night of urban foraging.

Over the years my fiber community in Missouri has been a tremendous support and influence in the evolution of my work. At a regular gathering of local fiber artists, questions were posed to push me beyond the iconic



WHERE OTHERS FEAR TO TREAD [2002]

Dimensions: 19" x 8" x 8"
Twined reed form, handmade paper (cotton), graphite emulsion, woven ribbon and text, automotive glass, gravel
Photography by: Helios Studio

column I was then making: "What if more color was incorporated into the work?" "Is it possible to extend beyond the surface?" "What if you had an irregular opening?" These suggestions challenged my creative thinking.

At this point, I saw color as a distraction, wanting only the singular neutral palette of graphite emulsion on the textured surface. Destined to move forward, artistic evolution continued with an invitation to participate in a collaborative journal project with 13 artists. This exquisite corpse, words or images collectively assembled, provided a perfect entry into a new world of color as each participating artist provided their selected color scheme. I was provoked to learn how to use color by being challenged month after month to use colors not of my choosing, pushing me from a limited palette comfort zone. By the end

of this project, I discovered the thrill of layering color upon color to add depth and richness to the textured surfaces of my own work. Following the journal project, AND THEN . . . DAWN (2004), my first color piece in ten years, explored implied space, ridges and ruffles. It's fiery reds and glowing coppers began the next series in contrast to the austere gray of my previous graphite work.

Through experimentation during the past few years, innovative methods evolved using traditional techniques. I discovered I could twist and collapse loosely twined forms so they no longer resembled baskets and multiple woven forms could be integrated into single pieces as well. (ANOMALA, 2006)

As my artistic journey continued, I discovered the opening of the form didn't need to echo the exterior. Cast interiors of handmade paper or beaded pockets (ODDYSEY, 2007, page 10) were placed between spokes in the baskets. Today I am now thinking as a "sculptor" instead of a "basket maker"; I have given myself permission to exploit the traditional techniques I use. For instance, a wire may run along a spoke to hold a desired twist, encourage a bulge, or weavers may be cut away to create an additional opening.



AND THEN...DAWN [2004]

Dimensions: 19" x 9" x 9"
Twined reed, cast paper, artist made paper (cotton), found objects: card stock, cording, wire, glass and metal beads, paint
Photography by: Helios Studio

ANOMALA [2006]

Dimensions: 9" x 34" x 27"
Twined reed, gut, gold leaf, waxed linen, glass beads, sequin pins
Photography by: Helios Studio



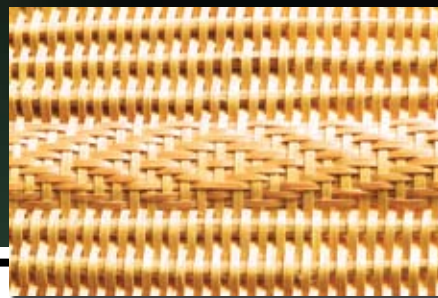
Recent paths in my life have also impacted my art. My current work refers to pods, incubation, growth, blossoming and family (SPIRIT JOURNEY, 2007) reflecting the joy of becoming "Nana" to my wonderful grandchildren. This new series is one of the most exciting yet for me.

In conclusion, like Jasper Johns or Katherine Westphal, I work in a series developing ideas that come from a previous piece, exploring questions that arise from the path not taken – what if I try this? Each new piece has its roots in the work that came before. At times, there seems to be a linear progression and at other times the connections are conceptual or technical. Most importantly, I invite the viewer to be engaged with the form, yearn to fondle and caress each piece and make it their new best friend. My once columnar baskets have transformed into sinuous, organic sculptural forms with openings, still evidencing their origins in basket making. Looking back in review, I see the common thread throughout my work over the past 25 years has been an interest in pattern and texture. My sensual mark is no longer simply embedded into the surface; it has become the form itself. ☒

To see learn more about Leandra's baskets, exhibition and teaching schedule: www.leandraspangler.com

Complex Twills

This is the 21st in a series of articles researched as part of NBO's Basketry Terminology Research Project



1a

1b

Plate 1a: Tray
 Maker: Aaron Yakim
 Material: Hand-split white oak.
 Technique: Ribwork, complex-twill woven "braids" in darker heartwood.
 Photography by: Jim Osborn

Plate 1b: Braid Detail

Our previous article, "Twill-Plaiting and Twill-Randing" (Spring 2010) introduced terms and techniques associated with straight diagonal twills. The over-under movements of the weaving elements were incorporated into the twill names, such as 2/1 twills or 3/3 twills. More elaborate designs in twill-plaiting or twill-randing are known as "**Complex Twills**". J. M. Adovasio uses the term, "**complex shifts**" as the method of producing some twill-plaited designs (1977, p.121). Complex twills add a decorative element to the basketry work and can be structural as well as non-structural. Varying the basketry materials, or implementing color into the weaving adds to the design possibilities. The sheer diversity and intricacy of complex-twill designs is a testament to the imagination and skill of basket weavers throughout the world.

Perhaps the simplest of the complex twills are **Reversing Twills**. In its most basic form, a "reversing twill" is a straight diagonal twill that repeats for as many rows as desired, and then shifts to a diagonal of the opposite direction. Right diagonals may shift to left diagonals, or vice versa. If there is a weaving row in common with both diagonals, then it could be termed a "**pointed reversal**". The visual appearance of this type of twill design lends to many of its common names such as "arrow", "fishbone", or "chevron".

In the central and southern Appalachian Mountains, white oak basketmakers often added decorative twilled "braids" to their rib baskets in order to make them more marketable. The twilled braidwork is basically surface embroidery; and is woven after the rib basket has been completed. A 2/2 straight twill with pointed reversals is the basis for the complex-twill design for the decorative "braids" on Aaron Yakim's white oak tray in Plates 1a & 1b. The "warp elements" are the narrow splits that cross the outside of the basket's rim and inside spine of the flattened handle, while narrow flexible strips of darker heartwood are the twill "weavers". A diamond design has been woven at the center points and "arrows" point to the right and to the left of the central diamond. The spacing and width of the weaving elements influence the shapes. In Yakim's braid design, the narrower weavers have created a more elongated diamond shape and sharper "arrows".

Four pointed reversals are needed to create a diamond or rectangular design. If the design plan is expanded in all four directions, then the same shape surrounds the central diamond/square design creating "concentric patterns". See *Figure 1: Concentric Diamonds/Squares based on 2/2 twill*. The points of reversal are marked with red arrows. Figure 1 illustrates the complex-twilled design used for the Chinese sieve/tray featured in Plates 2a & 2b.

Throughout the world even the most utilitarian of basketry items may have been woven with complex-twilled patterns. This design is accented by taking advantage of the natural properties of the bamboo: thick splits are used for both horizontal and vertical elements, however the outer shiny surface is shown in one plane, while the other has strips which exhibit the inner surface. The use of such thick materials for the plaiting material results in open spaces between the weaving elements, which are essential for its use as a sieve.

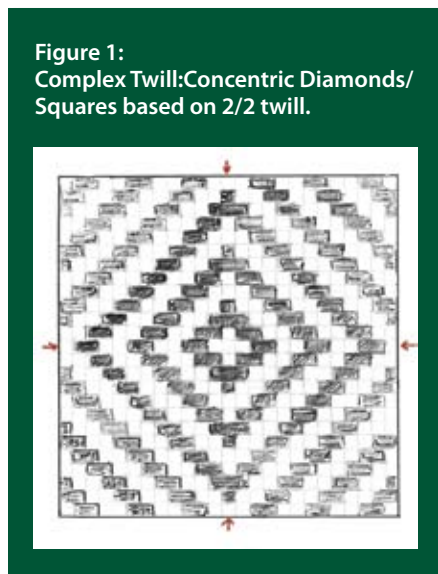


Figure 1:
 Complex Twill: Concentric Diamonds/
 Squares based on 2/2 twill.



2a



2b

Plate 2a & b: Chinese Sieve/Tray
2a: Inside view –1986. Unknown Maker.
 Material: bamboo. Diameter 23", 4"h. Technique: Double layered basket- inner layer is complex twill plaiting; outside layer: modified hexagonally plaiting and basic randing. This form had many uses including as a sieve to separate the grain from chaff during rice harvests in Sichuan Province.
2b: Outside layer of Chinese Sieve/Tray
 Photography of both baskets by: Cynthia Taylor

It is constructed as a double "**layered basket**": inner woven layer is complex-twill plaited, while the outer basket layer has a different construction. Both basketry layers are combined with the rims and top border that add essential strength and unify the structure. In the southwestern United States, among Hopi, Zuni and Pueblo weavers, even more supple basketry materials such as yucca strips were twill-plaited in concentric diamonds (and other complex-twilled designs) and woven in to shallow trays or formed into a sumac ring to create shallow bowl-shaped baskets (Tanner, 1983 pp. 73-77; Wyckoff, 2001, p. 33). *Woven Worlds: Basketry from the Clark Field Collection* displays images of one such Jemez Pueblo "ring basket" as well as documentary images of using them to wash grain (a detail image of this basket also appears opposite the title page). Another Pueblo example, included in "*The Language of Native American Baskets: From the Weavers' View*," an exhibition of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, is visible online see past exhibitions at <http://www.nmai.si.edu>.

The use of color is another way to accent overall design of complex twills as show in the layered Chinese basket in Plates 3a & 3b. The central motif is "*shan xi*", the Chinese character meaning "double happiness". It is a favorite symbol for newlyweds, but is loved by all. This basket actually has three woven "layers", and, thus could be termed a "

triple layered basket". The decorative inner layer is complex twill-plaited with thin flexible dyed bamboo strips, while the outer basket (visible in Plate 3b) is made from heavier and stronger outer bamboo and has an entirely different openwork base construction, basic randed sides, topped by a row of 2/1 twining. Between these two differently woven structures is a layer of woven wider bamboo strips that adds structural support. Black painted inner and outer bamboo rims (secured with a tin band) bind all three layers and are topped by a rolled border. A similarly constructed "foot" is also added to elevate the base. Over-three/under-three straight twill with pointed reversals (see the upper diagram in Figure 2) is the basic structure of the complex-twill design that surrounds the complex-twill plaited "double happiness" symbol in the center. There are four sections to the outer design, which might be termed a "**quartered field**", a phrase used by Adovasio (1977, p.121). By changing the directions of the diagonal twills in this quartered-field design, all four reversals "point" toward the central motif, rather than creating concentric squares/diamonds.

Another version of reversing twills is the "**offset reversal**". In this case the direction of the straight twill diagonals also reverse, but with an intentional shift at the line of the reversal. As a result, the visible diagonals are what we term "offset", creating a different over-all design. Compare the two different 3/3 twill reversals sketched on graph paper in Figure 2. In fiberwork,

Figure 2: Reversing 3/3 Twills
Above: Pointed Reversal. Reversal points and pattern areas common to both right and left diagonals are marked in red.
Below: Offset Reversal. Line of offset-reversal marked with red arrow.
Note: Weaving sequences repeat every six rows as marked at the edge of the diagrams. The pointed reversal has a 5 warp skip in the central pointed pattern area, while the longest "skip" in the offset reversal is three warps



Plate 3a: Chinese Double Happiness Basket Inside view –1986. Unknown Maker, Sichuan Province.
 Material: natural bamboo; dyed bamboo, black painted bamboo rims.
 Technique: Triple Layered basket. Inside layer is complex twill plaited.
 Photography by: Cynthia Taylor

one of the names for this pattern is "herringbone"; Shereen LaPlantz illustrates a 3/3 offset-reversal twill in a quartered field and uses the term "3-block twill" (1993, pp.40-41). Featured in Plate 4, Lucille Lossiah, Eastern Band of Cherokee, is weaving a double-woven rivercane basket at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and in the foreground is her single-woven rivercane basket in progress. Notice the over-all design is woven in 3/3 twill with offset reversals at the center of each side as well as at the corners.

ZigZag is the most common name for straight twills that have three or more pointed reversals. Zigzags can be created horizontally as well as vertically. Again the spacing, and width of weaving elements influence the angles of the zigzags. Sosse Baker has used an over-four twilled zigzag as the major design for her reed basket in Plate 5. This complex-twill design has a basic repeating pattern of: over-4/under-1/over-1/under-1.

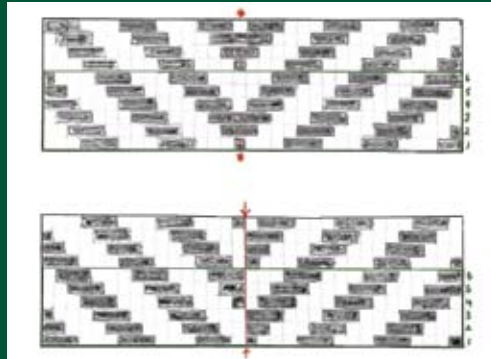




Plate 5: ZigZag
 Maker: Sosse Baker
 Material: reed, dyed reed.
 Technique: Complex Twill-Randing.

or document them. To show how this might be done the complex twill pattern used on the single weave clothes hamper (Plates 7a & b) by Mississippi Choctaw weaver, Linda Favre, is illustrated in Figure 3. The over-all design incorporates two different chains of diamonds, separated by horizontal zigzags. In the diagram, a basic repeating “pattern block” is marked with a pink rectangle. For this design, the “pattern block” requires 18 warps and then repeats; while the particular “complex shifts” of the weaving sequences repeat every 28 rows. Each basket weaver modifies or adjusts the pattern in order to balance the total over-all design field. In Figure 3, a green rectangle shows “the balance”, a portion of the pattern that might be repeated in order to give symmetry to the over-all design. In the detail image, Plate 7b, notice that Favre chose a different point to end her pattern, wove two rows of over-4/under-4 plain weave in natural rivercane and then a band of 4/4 straight twill. By changing to 4/4 randing at the top of the basket, warps could be combined, allowing the basket to narrow at its rim. Her use of color has been carefully chosen to add another dimension to the over-all design; notice the crosses in the center of each diamond are of a uniform color. Marshall Gettys, in *Basketry of Southeastern Indians*, describes favorite designs of Choctaw basketry as “stripes, chevrons, squares, and diamonds which are squares set on the diagonal (1984,p,39).”

Notice the plain weave randing between the over-four stepped zig-zags. The length of the straight diagonals between the pointed reversals has been varied to give balance to the over-all design. Another completely different type of twill-woven basket that shows visible “zigzagging” is a straight twilled double-woven basket which is plaited at oblique angles, such as the rivercane basket that Lucille Lossiah is weaving in Plate 4. All twilled double-woven structures could be considered “complex twills” and many have very elaborate complex-twilled patterns. The use of dyed splints creates a crossed decorative pattern in Rowena Bradley’s over-four/under-four bias-plaited double-woven rivercane basket featured in Plate 6.

Although many weavers know their patterns “by heart” and can reproduce them without visual aids, others record them on paper as a way to teach

Figure 3: Complex Twill: Alternating Diamond Chains. A repeating “pattern block” highlighted in pink; “balance” marked by the green block.

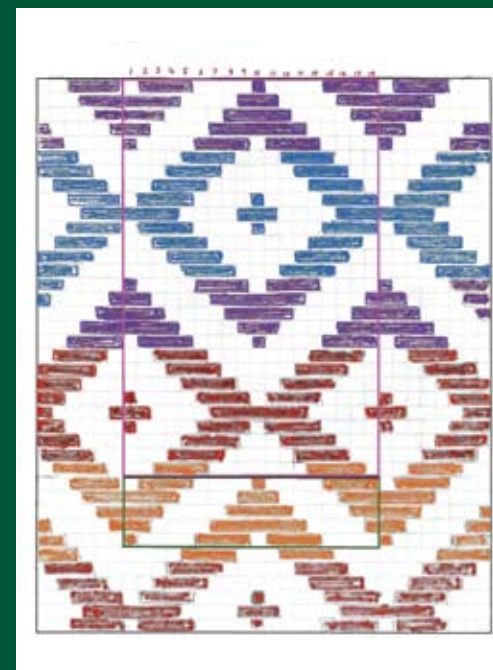


Plate 4
 Lucille Lossiah, Eastern Cherokee demonstrating at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival June 2006 in Washington, DC
 Photography by: Cynthia Taylor

Plate 6:
 Eastern Cherokee Baskets

[basket on left]
 Double-weave twill-plaited Storage Basket with Lid, 1979-80.
 Maker: Rowena Bradley
 Material: Rivercane with butternut and bloodroot dyes, Hardwood carved handles. 81.7 LRMA purchase.
 [basket on right]
 Purse Basket
 Maker: Eva Wolfe
 Collection of the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel, Mississippi.
 81.7 LRMA purchase.



The design possibilities for complex twills are unlimited. When color and painted surfaces are added, then even more possibilities emerge. Representing the complex over/under interlacings in a sketch or by recording them on graph paper or similar grid is a good way to show the exact pattern. Center points and repeats of patterns can also be marked and this information is helpful in planning (or understanding) the number of warp or weft elements needed to achieve the desired design. While many complex twill designs are universal, others may be associated with a particular cultural group. The importance of basketry patterns and who may rightfully reproduce them remains an important topic to indigenous basketweavers. ✎



Plate 7a & b: Lidded Clothes Hamper (1985)

Maker: Linda Favre
 Material: swamp cane, aniline dyes.
 Diameter: at top 14” h with cover 26” h.
 Technique: Single-weave, complex twill, straight twill, and randing. According to Favre, the body design represents the diamondback rattlesnake; the band above that – water; and the spiral on the lid, the wind (Duggan, 2005, p.63). Museum Purchase: 85.50
 Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel, MS
 Photography by: Owen Murphy, New Orleans, LA

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recognizing
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John Garrett

Recipient of the American Craft Fellowship Award

A full-time studio artist living in Albuquerque, N.M., John Garrett (b. 1950) has utilized an eclectic range of materials and techniques in the making of his containers and other forms since the 1970’s. Educated at Claremont McKenna College, Los Angeles (MA), Garrett taught for many years at colleges and universities in California and continues to teach workshops nationwide on experimental basketry. Frequently using the grid as the underlying geometry, Garrett explores the structuring of works composed of individual elements that can stay two-dimensional or become three-dimensional. A two-time recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, Garrett is a pioneer in the emergence and development of the “new basketry”. He has said, “It is because of the great diversity of meanings that can be built into baskets, from the social and cultural to the personal and intimate, that I enjoy making them.”



NEW AGE BASKET NO. 6 [2010]
 Dimensions: 16” x 14” x 14”
 Recycled steel, copper, wire, paper, rivets
 Photography by: Margot Geist

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www.okbasketweaversguild.com

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www.wvbasketmakers.net

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Tidewater Basketry Guild of Virginia -
Guilders Weave
Point Plaza Suites and Conference Hotel,
Newport News, VA
Shirley Murphy, GW Chair - (757) 426-2598
www.tidewaterbasketryguild.org

January 20 – 23, 2001

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Camp Allen Conference & Retreat Center,
Navasota, TX
Monica Impellizzeri - (281) 288-7332
www.intheworks.net

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www.georgiabasketry.com

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Guild
Wildwood Cultural Center, Mentor, OH
www.winterweave.com

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Spring Retreat
Pilgrim Firs Conference Center,
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www.nwbasketweavers.org

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Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center
Lake Yale, FL
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www.lakecountrybasketguild.com

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www.northwestweavers.org

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Nancy Lake - (859) 986-8306
www.ca.uky.edu/agcollege/4h/klc/events/

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Finlandia University, Hancock, Michigan
www.midwestweavers.org

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Shepherdsville, KY
www.thekentuckybasketassociation.org

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Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center,
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www.tennesseebasketry.pcmac-inc.com

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www.coastaldiscovery.org

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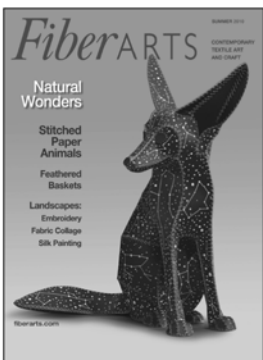
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Mary Jackson

Recipient of 2010 NEA National Heritage Fellowship Award

A descendent of the Gullah community of coastal South Carolina, Mary Jackson was born in 1945 in Mount Pleasant, SC. Jackson learned the art of making baskets at the age of four from her mother and grandmother.

While preserving the culture and history of her ancestors, Jackson infuses the art form with a contemporary aesthetic and expressiveness all her own. With masterful technique, Jackson translates practical designs into finely detailed, sculptural forms. Today, her baskets are owned by such noted individuals as Prince Charles and the Empress of Japan.

Jackson's work has been exhibited at numerous institutions throughout the United States, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum; the Museum of Arts and Design in New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and the Museum of African American History in

Detroit. Her stalwart devotion to the preservation of her unique cultural heritage has earned her numerous awards including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Museum for Women in the Arts (1993) and the first National Bronze Award of Arts Achievement and Excellence given by The International Council of Fine Arts Deans (2007). Jackson has also received a United States Artists Donnelly Fellowship and a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. On December 19, 2009, Mary Jackson received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from South Carolina's College of Charleston.

