

# *Fiber: Selections from the Blanden Art Collection*

Second Floor Gallery

March 4 – June 17, 2023

**“A good life is like a weaving. Energy is created in the tension. The struggle, the pull and tug are everything.” – Jean Erikson**

**Works created using fibrous materials are part of the human lexicon. Artifacts using textiles and weaving provide insight into culture and society from years past. From clothing to baskets, tapestries and fiber materials are threaded with human existence. The idea that life is like weaving is an informative connection. The small elements of living are brought together to create a life.**

**Fiber art is, by nature, an ambiguous category; it can be considered both a new and an old art form. As a craft fiber, use is practical. Still, the experimental nature can also serve as beauty and an item to appreciate. In the 1960s, there was an intentional revolution in using fiber in creating artwork. The drive to elevate fiber art out of crafty categories into the arena of high art was taken on first by women artists seeking to be seen for the merit of their creations.**

**As fiber-based objects entered the lexicon of fine art, the dismantling or the diminishment of usefulness became stronger. In the hierarchy of art and craft, there is a strong relationship between dominance and subordination. An educated person could dilute the idea of craft vs. fine art into three thoughts; one is based on usefulness or lack of usefulness, two, who the work is associated with, and three, the use of materials.**

**There is an organic rawness related to fiber art. Often the materials are as they are with no manipulation. Yarn is yarn. Fabric is fabric. The materiality of the objects comes from the use of the material. Yarn woven over and overtakes on a physicality of space. As pieces of fabric are sewn together, they become a whole. Fiber beckons to be touched – countering the reality of interactions seen in an art museum. So the very notion of fiber art is a problem. Touch but don't. The interactions with works such as these are formed out of mind and sensory recall.**

**This exhibit the Blanden Art Museum brings together delightful examples of works that are both traditional and non-traditional in terms of materials and approach that are used in their creation. Objects in this show are about the artist's process of making something beautiful from simple materials and expressing themselves. Hierarchy aside, art is about expression, an idea. It is about communication and creating an object of beauty made by hand. Fiber art is about warmth and life, which relies upon our tactile memory and emotion.**