



Whatcom Museum Basketry Exhibitions Showcase Diversity of Artform

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Bellingham, WA, December 1, 2017 —The Whatcom Museum is pleased to host a traveling exhibition, "Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America," February 3 – May 6, 2018 at the Lightcatcher building in collaboration with the National Basketry Organization and The Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri. This is the only West Coast venue of this exhibition. The Museum will also showcase two concurrent basketry exhibitions at Old City Hall from February 3 – May 6, 2018: "Hidden in the Bundle: A Look Inside the Whatcom Museum's Basketry Collection," and a juried exhibition, "Gathered Together: A Show of Work Celebrating Members of the Northwest Basket Weavers Guild."

In "Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America," ninety-three objects provide an historical overview of American basketry from its origins in Native American, immigrant, and slave communities to its presence within the contemporary fine art world. Historical baskets were rooted in local landscapes and shaped by cultural traditions. The rise of the industrial revolution and mass production at the end of the nineteenth century led basket makers to create works for new audiences and markets, including tourists, collectors, and fine art museums.

Today the story continues. Some contemporary artists seek to maintain and revive traditions practiced for centuries. Others combine age-old techniques with nontraditional materials to generate cultural commentary. Still others challenge viewers' expectations by experimenting with form, materials, and scale.

According to co-curators Jo Stealey and Kristin Schwain, "Baskets convey meaning through the artists' selection of materials; the techniques they use; and the colors, designs, patterns, and textures they employ. This exhibition will feel both familiar and alien to visitors. Some objects are very utilitarian while others defy every idea you might have about what a basket could be."

This traveling exhibition is sponsored by the Northwest Basket Weavers, Vi Phillips Guild and organized by the National Basketry Organization in partnership with the University of Missouri. For more information visit americanbasketry.missouri.edu. Additional support is provided by the City of Bellingham and the Whatcom Museum Advocates.

"Hidden in the Bundle" features a selection of baskets from the Whatcom Museum's extensive Native American and First Nations collection. Representing different eras and cultures, the baskets showcase some unique, innovative, and even playful elements of design or decoration. The viewer can explore these creative and practical adaptations while pondering the role of individual expression in the world of basket-making.

"Gathered Together" presents a selection of artistic basketry at Old City Hall by members of the Northwest Basket Weavers Guild (NWBW) in an exhibition juried by Lisa Telford and Katherine Lewis, artists featured in "Rooted, Revived, Reinvented." Members of NWBW will be available on opening day to talk about basketry and the artwork on display.

About the Whatcom Museum

The Whatcom Museum in Bellingham, Wash., offers a variety of exhibitions, programs, tours, and activities about art, nature, and Northwest history for all ages. Its multi-building campus is located in the heart of Bellingham's downtown arts district. The Lightcatcher building and Old City Hall are open Wednesdays – Sundays, Noon – 5 PM. For more information about our exhibitions and admission visit www.whatcommuseum.org.

About the Northwest Weavers, Vi Phillips Guild

The Northwest Basket Weavers, Vi Phillips Guild began with a group of 16 people who loved to get together at Vi Phillips' house on Whidbey Island, Washington to make baskets and share information. These weavers used reed, cedar bark and root, sweet grass, pine needles, and other natural materials to make traditional baskets. Thirty-five years later, the 180 guild members today weave both traditional and contemporary baskets. Several members are nationally known teachers and artists, who have baskets featured in "Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America." For more information visit www.nwbasketweavers.org.

About the National Basketry Organization

The National Basketry Organization (NBO) is a non-profit organization that unites people interested in basketry to provide education and to promote basket making. Founded in the late 1990's, the organization now has over 700 members, most of whom live in the United States and Canada. Although most of NBO's members are basket makers, membership includes collectors, gallery owners, scholars, craft and art schools, and museums.

About the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri

The Museum of Art and Archaeology advances understanding of artistic and cultural heritage through research, collection and interpretation. The Museum helps students, scholars, and the broader community to experience authentic and significant art and artifacts firsthand, and to place them in meaningful contexts. It furthers this mission by preserving, enhancing, and providing access to the collections for the benefit of present and future generations.

Schedule of related events and programs at the Whatcom Museum:

Friday, February 2, 2018, 5 – 7 PM

Member Preview Reception for *Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America*

Lightcatcher building | 250 Flora Street | Museum members only

Members, join us for the opening of this traveling exhibition that presents 93 objects representing historic and contemporary techniques and interpretations of basketry. Enjoy light appetizers, wine, and live music.

Saturday, February 24, 2 – 3 PM

Naturally Speaking: A Panel of Northwest Artists Discuss Fine Art Basketry in the 21st Century

Old City Hall | 121 Prospect Street

Free program; Exhibitions can be viewed prior to or after the lecture with paid admission (Museum members free)

Northwest Designer Craftsmen (NWDC) presents a moderated panel of internationally recognized Northwest fine art basketry artists for a discussion in the Rotunda of the Old City Hall. Panelists will respond to questions from moderator Layne Goldsmith, Fiber Arts Professor Emeritus, University of Washington. They will discuss their use of techniques, materials and influences; innovative approaches and expression of ideas; and their thoughts on the direction of basketry as fine art in the twenty-first century. Panelists include Polly Adams Sutton, Jan Hopkins, Jill Nordfors Clark, Katherine Lewis, Lanny Bergner, Charissa Brock, Dorothy McGuinness, Nancy Loorem Adams, Danielle Bodine, Leon Russell, Judy Zugish, and Bill Roeder. Reception to follow the event. The exhibition, *Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America* can be viewed prior to or after the free lecture with paid admission.

Thursday, March 8, 11:30 AM Coffee, Noon – 1 PM Program

Museum Advocates: *Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Two Basket Artists Discuss Their Artwork*

Old City Hall | 121 Prospect Street

Free program; Exhibitions can be viewed after the lecture with paid admission (Museum members free)

Join the Advocates for coffee at 11:30am followed by presentations by basketmakers Lisa Telford and Lanny Bergner. Both Telford and Bergner are included in the *Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America* exhibition on view in the Lightcatcher building. The exhibition can be viewed after the free lecture with paid admission.

Saturday, March 24, 10 AM – 3:30 PM (lunch break included)

Whatcom Museum Basket Day

Lightcatcher building | 250 Flora Street

\$65 Workshop fee (materials included)

Skilled basket weavers from the Northwest Basket Weavers Guild (NWBW) will be leading four, unique basketry workshops. Instructors will share their knowledge and talents in natural basket weaving techniques, and students will go home with a finished woven basket. Space is limited to 40 students (10 per workshop). Details about workshop options, instructors, and

registration coming soon. Check whatcommuseum.org/events for updates. This event is sponsored by the Northwest Basket Weavers, Vi Phillips Guild.

Saturday, April 14, 1 PM Curators Lecture; 2:30 PM Curators Gallery Tour
***Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America*—Curators Share an Intimate View**
Old City Hall | 121 Prospect Street; Lightcatcher building | 250 Flora Street
Included with admission/Members free

Enjoy a lively discussion as co-curators Kristin Schwain and Jo Stealey lead two presentations about *Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America*. At 1pm in the Rotunda Room of Old City Hall, Kristin Schwain presents a slideshow, "*Canastromania: Or How Basket Fever Transformed American Basketry from 1890 to 1940.*" Schwain will address how cultural responses to the Industrial Revolution enshrined baskets as utilitarian and ceremonial objects, ethnographic artifacts, souvenirs and collectors' items, educational and therapeutic tools, and works of art. Following her talk, walk over to the Lightcatcher at 2:30pm for a fun and informative gallery tour with Jo Stealey, who will highlight specific objects, surprising discoveries made during the research process, and American basketry's entry into fine art in the second half of the twentieth century. Both the talk and tour are included with regular museum admission. This event is sponsored by the Northwest Basket Weavers, Vi Phillips Guild.

Saturday, April 21, 10 AM – 4 PM
Community Art Museum Day
Lightcatcher building | 250 Flora Street
\$3 General admission/Members free

Visit the Museum today and celebrate the innovation and reinvention of basket art. Experience basketry demonstrations, participate in hands-on activities, and meet with basket artists to learn about their work. Basketmakers will be on hand in the Lightcatcher building to discuss *Rooted, Revived, Reinvented*, as well as at Old City Hall to provide information about the Northwest Basket Weavers juried exhibition, *Gathered Together*.

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