

Debora Muhl
www.deboramuhl.com

b. July 23, 1957 Doylestown, PA

I am a self taught basket artist from Emmaus, PA. I use a technique based on traditional coiling, in which coils of sweet grass are sewn together with waxed linen threads or artificial sinew. My material of choice is sweet grass (*hierchloe odorata*) which is gathered, combed & sorted by Native Americans in various parts of this country as well as in Canada. The grasses are left in their natural state for their sweet aromas. Some of these coiled sculptures begin on a cut-out segment of gourd and they are all designed in the process as they are made. I began making traditional functional baskets in 1983, but the challenge of mastering my technique and materials has led me to create unique one-of-a-kind art pieces.

Selected Juried Shows:

American Craft Exposition, Evanston, IL Years: 2000 thru 2004
Craft Boston: Circa Now, Boston, MA Years: 2002, '03, '06, '09
Smithsonian Craft Show, Washington, DC Years: 1997, '99, 2001, '03, '04, '05, '08, '10, '11, '12
ACC Baltimore Craft Show, Baltimore, MD Years: 1998, '99, 2001 thru 2003
Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show, Philadelphia, PA 1995, '96, '98, '99, 2001 thru 2003, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2010;2012
Cherry Creek Arts Festival, Denver, CO Years: 1997-1999
Westchester Crafts Show, White Plains, NY Years: 1995-1998
Crafts at the Castle Show, Boston, MA Years: 1997-2000
Crafts America, West Palm Beach, FL Years: 2004, 2005

Recent Honors:

2008 – Commissioned by the PA Council on the Arts to create the 2008 award objects for the Annual Governor's Awards for the Arts in Pennsylvania. Michael Keaton recipient
2008 – "Third Prize in Craft": Art of the State 2008 Greater Harrisburg Arts Council, Harrisburg, PA
2005 – Recipient of the Special Opportunity Stipend from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
2005 – Recipient of the Fellowship Award from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
2003 – Selected as a Niche Award finalist for 2004
2003, 2002 – "Best of Baskets, Leather & Paper" Award, The American Craft Exposition
2002 – "Museum Purchase Award" for the Fuller Craft Museum, Craft Boston: Circa Now
2002 – "Third Prize Award for Excellence in Craft" Baltimore ACC Show
2001 – "First Place award" Crafts category "Art of the State: Pennsylvania 2001" PA State Council on the Arts
2001 – "Second Place Award in Fine Craft" 2001 Mayfair National Juried Exhibition, Allentown, PA
2001 – "Second Prize Award for Excellence in Craft" Baltimore ACC Craft Show
2001 - "Recipient of the Fellowship Award from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
2000 – "Best Use of Materials" award 6th Annual national Juried Exhibition at Artsbridge at Prallsville Mills, Stockton, NJ
1999 - "Grant of Excellence" The Leeway Foundation, Philadelphia, PA
1999 – "Third Place Award – Best of Show" Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show
1999 – "First Place Award" St. Louis Art Fair, MO
1998, 1997 – "Best of Show" Cherry Creek Arts Festival, Denver, CO

Selected Exhibitions:

2012 - Debora Muhl "Deconstructed Basket Forms" Blue Spiral 1 Gallery Asheville, NC
2011 - "Summer Swan Invitational: Contemporary Southern Pottery & Handmade Objects" Atlanta GA

2011 - "Making Arrangements" Cabarrus Arts Council, Concord, NC
 2010/11 - "Winter Show 2010", Green Hill Center for NC Art, Greensboro, NC
 2010 - "Teapots!" Morgan Contemporary Glass Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA
 2009/10 - "Home Sweet Home" Pelham Art Center, Pelham, NY
 2009 - "Fall Salon" Blue Spiral 1, Asheville, NC
 2009 - "Web & Flow" Textile Art Center Gallery, Minneapolis, MN
 2008 - "Craftforms 2008: 14th Annual International Juried Exhibition of Contemporary Craft"
 Wayne Art Center, Wayne, PA Juror: Michael Monroe
 2008 - "Basketworks: The Cotsen Contemporary American Basket Collection" Racine Art
 Museum, WI
 2008 - "Interweave: Innovations in Contemporary Basketry", Salt Lake City Art Center, UT
 2008 - "Local growing Conditions" Collaborative work with David Licata, glass artist, White
 Plains, NY
 2008 - "Fiber Arts Explored I", del Mano Gallery Los Angeles, CA
 2008 - "Art of the State: Pennsylvania 2008" The State Museum of PA, Harrisburg
 2008 - "6th International Fiber Biennial" Snyderman-Works Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
 2007 - "Rhythmic Coils: Sweetgrass Basketry by Debora Muhl" Solo exhibit, Allentown Art
 Museum, Allentown, PA
 2007 - "The Art of Basketry" NBO Exhibit, The Fine Craft Center, Highlands, NC
 2007 - "Mysteries Contained: Contemporary Sculptural Baskets" Craft Alliance, St. Louis, MO
 2007 - "A Survey of Baskets Today" Peter's Valley Craft Center, Layton, NJ
 2007 - "Beyond the Basket: Contemporary Works in Fiber, Metal & Wood" del Mano Gallery,
 Los Angeles, CA
 2007 - "The Tactile Palette: Expressions in Contemporary Fiber" Wired Gallery, Bethlehem, PA
 2006 - "Stitches" Dahlia Gallery, Newton Centre, MA
 2006 - "The Woven Image" with Nancy Kay Anderson & Karen Henderson Grounds for
 Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ
 2006 - "Basketry Invitational 2006" Snyderman-Works Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
 2006 - "The Rhythm of Light" Collaborative work with glass artist David Licata & photographer
 Chrissy Glenn Pearl Art Gallery, Stone Ridge, NY
 2006/05 - "Debora Muhl: Sweet Grass" The Philadelphia International Airport, Philadelphia, PA
 2005 - "Lyrical Coils & Ethereal Webs" with Ruth Wetzel, Pearl Art Gallery, Stone Ridge, NY
 2005 - "Selected Works" del Mano Gallery Los Angeles, CA
 2004 - "Debora Muhl" Solo show The Schumo Gallery, Kehs Hall Fine Art Center, Pennsburg,
 PA
 2004 - "One & Only" John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI
 2004 - "Celebrating Nature: Craft traditions/Contemporary Expressions" Craft & Folk Art
 Museum, Los Angeles, CA
 2004 - "Contemporary Basketry" The Flinn Gallery, Greenwich, CT
 2004 - "Selected Works" del Mano Gallery Los Angeles, CA
 1998-2006 - "Contemporary Baskets" del Mano Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
 2003 - "Baskets Now: 2003" NBO Yeiser Art Center, Paducah, KY
 2003 - "More Baskets" Thirteen Moons Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
 2003, 2002 - "Basketry Invitational" Gallery Materia, Scottsdale, AZ
 2000-2003, 2006 - "Sculptural Objects: Functional Art" Chicago, IL
 2002 - "Contemporary Baskets" Thirteen Moons Gallery Santa Fe, NM
 2001, 2000 - "Sculptural Objects: Functional Art" New York, NY

Permanent Museum Collections:

The Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC
 The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
 The Museum of Decorative Arts, Paris France
 The Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA
 Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA
 Racine Art Museum, Racine, Wisconsin

Current Gallery Affiliations:

Graver's Lane Gallery, Germantown, PA

Publications:

American Craft Magazine "Uncontainable" Feb/March 2012

Fiber Art Today - Carol K. Russell

The Complete Book of Gourd Craft - Summit & Widess

Baskets: Tradition and Beyond - Leier, Peters & Wallace

The Decorated Gourd – Dyan Mai Peterson

Design! A Lively Guide to Design Basics for Artists and Craftspeople - Steven Aimone

Fiberarts Design Book 7 - Susan Mowery Kieffer

500 Baskets – Lark Books & Susan Mowry Keiffer

Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot - Vol XXVIII N0.4 Issue #112 Fall 1997 Published by the Handweavers Guild of America

Ateliers d'Art de France 2001 March/April issue

CraftArts International 2002 April issue #54

Delta Sky 2003 March 2003

FiberArts 2004 November/December

Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot "The New Sculpture" by Kevin Wallace Spring 2005

Crafts Business Magazine: Cover Image Jan/Feb 2006

US Airways Magazine: Art on the Fly, Jan 2006

Crafts Report Magazine: "The Sweet Smell of Success" March 2006

Teaching Experience:

1987-1997 Taught various traditional basketry techniques with rattan reed & black ash, gourd preparation & embellishment & coiling. I taught in various venues, my home, art centers, & adult evening programs in area high schools.

My Statement:

"Music was my first passion. It gave me a vehicle for expressing deep feelings and taught me the necessity of bringing discipline and clarity of vision to my work. Sculptural coiling allows me to create a kind of visual metaphor for the music of my life."

My Material of Choice:

Sweet grass, *hierchloe odorata* is also known as holy grass, vanilla grass or Seneca grass. It is hand gathered by Native Americans in various parts of this country and Canada, then sorted, combed & dries into small bundles. This odorous grass has been used historically in traditional basketry as well as for ceremonial purposes. It is often bundled with sage & cedar leaves and then smoldered in "smudging ceremonies" for the cleansing of one's spirit. The grass releases natural oils as it dries that give off a sweet vanilla-like fragrance that will remain indefinitely in each sculptural basket.