



Past and Present: Exploring the New Basketry

by Michelle Zikovitz

net, email, blogs, websites, and facebook, sharing and feeding off each other's ideas. Magazines and books are online and are available from all over the world. The inspirations and ideas are mind-boggling!

At this same time there also seems to be a new wave of interest in textiles, basketry, weaving and fibre arts, perhaps because of this worldwide connection. As a basket weaver I find myself still producing those functional and traditional baskets, as there is always that need for "another basket in the home". What seems to be evolving in basketry though is a new way of looking beyond those traditional basketry materials of the past. Beautifully designed papers and tissue, unusual fabrics, wools and fibres are eyed in a new way.

Another trend is the new repurposing of clothing, furniture and materials. Colourful glossy flyers, the plastic mesh around wine bottles and fruits, scrap metals and wires are just a few examples of materials finding their way into baskets. Woven baskets are now sculp-

tural vessels and installation pieces created from just about anything that can be woven, coiled or stitched together. Now when I am out in one of those big box stores I find myself looking at the strapping lying on the floor, or the colorful wires and think to myself how can this be used or incorporated into

a basket.

The possibilities are endless, and the day could be spent browsing the Internet looking at all the wonderful fibre art networks, websites, organizations and artists providing more inspiration and ideas than one could ever produce in a lifetime. **M**

I recently picked up a basketry publication from 1988 and as I was browsing through the pages I came to realize that as much as basketry has changed, the basic concepts and principles have been the same for decades and even longer.

Looking at this 1988 publication made me think back to the challenges artists faced in the 80s, connecting with one another to share ideas and be inspired by each other's work. "Send a self addressed stamped envelope", "phone ... toll free", "request a catalogue" are some of the listings in the advertising pages. Today artists worldwide are connecting through the Inter-



Editors' Note: Join Michelle at her Basket Weaving workshop on Monday July 21st during ASK Festival King 2014 (July 10 - 26). ArtsSocietyKing.ca or check Festival brochure in centre of the magazine.