



SHARON MEYER POSTANCE

I grew up amidst the fields of corn in southwestern Minnesota and now live on a farm in northern Minnesota surrounded by forests and swamps, reeds and willow, and in winter, endless expanses of snow punctuated with drifts of dried grass.

I grew up with an embroidery needle in one hand and a crochet hook in the other. With no exposure or access to the materials of fine art, I created objects with the materials at hand. I attended the University of Minnesota and, intimidated by the studio arts department, majored in English literature and art history. I was familiar with academics.

Over the course of nearly 30 years since my formal schooling, I have read widely in color theory and design. I have worked primarily in fiber with occasional forays into clay. Seeing an exhibition of items from Judy Chicago's Birth Project showed me that needle art can be fine art. Miriam Shapiro showed me that materials can be mixed and matched as needed. *Fiber-arts* and *American Craft* magazines exposed me to a world of beautiful handmade objects.

In 1997 I studied sculptural paper basketry with Mary Merkel-Hess. This opened up a whole new way of working for me in which I can combine the forms of clay vessels with the tactile qualities of fiber. In the vessels, I use recycled paper, handmade paper, papers from Japan, Thailand, Nepal and India, silk from Japanese kimonos, embroidery thread, sisal and jute twine, fleece, wire, pigment, whatever materials the vessel requires.

The coarse fleece of ancient sheep evading extinction; dried, seemingly dead grasses, which in winter bend before the wind but do not break; seed pods with their roughly textured exteriors and silky inner membranes; these are my influences. I want to pay attention to the small, the seemingly insignificant part of our world, the caterpillar that becomes the butterfly, the iridescent green beetle that hides behind the flower. I want my vessels to capture the spirit of the natural world we all inhabit.

Like all fiber objects, it is preferable to keep the vessels out of direct sunlight and heat. They have been finished with a sealant which will protect them from moisture. They can be cleaned with a damp cloth but should not be immersed in water.