

Fiber

Traditional fibers are natural. For example, cotton fiber comes from the seed pods of the cotton plant. Wool is from sheep hair. Silk is made from the spun cocoons of silkworms. Today fibers are also made from synthetic materials like plastic acrylic.



*White Oak Basket by
Leona Waddell*

Some fibers, like the cattail reeds and oak splits that are used to make baskets, can be used as they are. Other, thinner fibers, like cotton and wool, can be twisted together (or spun) to make long strands of thread, yarn, or rope. Yarn that is mass-produced is twisted on spinning machines in factories. Some fiber artists prefer to spin their own yarn using a spinning wheel or drop spindle.

Some fiber artists use yarn or thread to weave, knit, or crochet. They might make sweaters, blankets, tapestries, or rugs. Some weaving is done by machine to create cloth. Other fiber artists use cloth to sew. They might make blouses, quilts, banners, or wall hangings.

Fibers, yarn, thread, and cloth can be dyed to add color. Natural dyes are made from plants and insects. Artificial dyes are made from chemicals. Some fiber artists buy thread, yarn, or cloth that has already been dyed. Others like to dye their own materials. By using materials of different colors, fiber artists can create patterns and images.



*City Windows: Fiber Art
By Philis Alvic*