

Jennifer Zurick

"I aspire to create simple, elegant woven vessels that possess a richness of spirit and a presence embodying the soul of the tree from which they came. A fascination with old tribal textiles, finely woven functional containers, and ancient processes fuels my inclination to manipulate fiber. Employing various weaving techniques to inject texture and rhythmic design elements"

Jennifer Zurick is a self-taught artist specializing in black willow bark baskets. She began working in fiber arts as a young girl. She learned to use an inkle-loom for weaving. When she grew up, she used a large floor loom. She built up a small herd of sheep. She sheared the sheep and processed their wool into soft fleeces.

She began making baskets in 1980. She wanted to use fibers she could harvest and process herself. Her favorite fiber is willow bark, harvested from trees growing along the Kentucky River. She is strongly influenced by Native American basketry. She is also influenced by the basket makers she has met on her travels to places like Laos, Nepal, and Ecuador. She visited the lush Ecuadorian Amazon as a Kentucky Arts Council Cultural Exchange Artist.

Perhaps the strongest influence on her work is the forested creek valley where she lives. She is surrounded by the sounds and fragrances of forest and garden. These are the organic elements that inspire her work. She has received two fellowships from the Kentucky Arts Council. In 2010, she received a United States Artist fellowship.

Jennifer says that she wants her baskets to represent the soul of the tree. Do you see this quality in her basket?

