

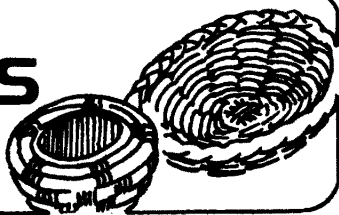
# HOUSE OF MACRAME



macrame & weaving supplies

5416 Penn Ave. So., Mpls. Phone: 927-8307

## OF BASKETS



by Catherine Ingebretsen

Baskets are often classified by how they are made: coiled, wickerwork, twined, or plaited. This is usually a purely physical classification based on one aspect of technique. There are other aspects that we also notice: the symmetry of the design or shape, the closeness of the weave or stitches, the supports, the edge finish.

There is one overall aspect of technique that is evident in all the others: **CARING**. The care that a basketmaker feels for each basket shows in how he/she carries through with the making of the basket. If a weaver really cares about the work he/she is doing, he/she will do the best weaving possible, not just what's necessary. He/she will enjoy the hours put into a finely made basket, even though 5 coarser, or simpler baskets could have been done in the same amount of time.

When people get interested in basketry, one of their first observations is that they seldom see coiled baskets for sale. That is simply because coiling is a slower technique, usually reserved for special baskets. Special baskets are not mass-produced for mass-consumption.

Many people are amazed that all baskets are made by hand. With the exception of the plastic molded "baskets," there is no basket making machine. I feel however, that this may not be entirely true. Because of low wages and high production demands, many humans are turned into machines making x

number of baskets, of the same size and materials, each day of each year. Experimentation takes time. When time is money, and little of it, quickly made, common, functional baskets are produced: Baskets that are sure to sell because they don't confuse anyone with unessential details or unusual materials, designs or shapes: Baskets that can be technically produced without much caring.

I call these "Profane Baskets." They are common, temporal baskets made for functional use in this world only. (This is not necessarily negative.) These baskets don't tell great stories; they do not speak of one's gods; they are not the baskets of friendships. They are not alive! Only a basket made with care is born alive. (Others may be given life through the users caring.) When I speak of care, I'm referring to a person's emotional liking and concern for what they are creating. This feeling in a technically capable weaver usually produces a "carefully" made basket. These baskets are special. They are set aside from the "profane" ones even though they may be of the same materials and techniques. To illustrate this point, I cite a remark made by a friend about a wickerwork basket shown on page 153 of Ed Rossbach's book, Baskets as Textile Art. "If only I could find one so carefully made." This common style basket had been elevated to the point of desirable beauty because of the care of the maker.

Within this group of special baskets, we find many "Sacred Baskets." Uncommon baskets that have been exalted because of the maker's reverence for a person, place, event or thing. Feather baskets; beaded baskets; baskets that have been embellished with beauty of design, of love, of tradition; baskets that are sacred for ceremonies; Baskets that are sacred for the stories they tell.

"Anyone can make a basket . . .  
some care enough to make it special"