

New generations of basket makers. Storytelling in first person.

In this exhibition we propose to explore the current universe of basketry in different regions of Argentina, focusing on new generations of basket weaving. Raw materials, techniques, characteristics of different areas, production process, difficulties that appear in the way of doing are some of the topics to appreciate during this journey.

From a collaborative curatorial view, we dialogue with well-known craftworkers, researchers and technicians; we link up with potential audiences to learn more about their expectations and knowledge, and thus, be able to build and identify relevant issues about this field. The importance of spreading the trade through generations is vital, to tell what happens with children, nieces and nephews of the artisans who have formed traditions in Argentine basketwork.

In this virtual exhibition, ten basket makers tell us their own experiences and explain their works.

The aim of this exhibition is to make visible the protagonists of new generations of basket makers, ranging from native, *criollo* to contemporary / urban communities.

It is important to explain that the dialogue with each of the protagonists had to be adapted: on the one hand, due to the current pandemic circumstances, which forced us to have only virtual communication. And on the other, because of the deficiency in technological devices of the basket makers. In three opportunities, we could arrange video call interviews, but mostly we communicated both with text and audio messages. We acquired, however, from their micro stories, a very significant and representative view of their lives as artisans.

Regions, materials, techniques, worldviews, learnings and traditions left their mark on this exhibition's journey.

The concept of basketry brings together a wide range of crafts, with different uses and functions, from baskets, mats, hats, screens, boats, walls and ceilings. This accounts for the ductility of basketry as a technique that, combining warp and weft, produces flat and three-dimensional surfaces using fibers of vegetable origin as raw material. On the other hand, in urban areas there is currently another type of production that

includes recycling, recovery and combination with other techniques and materials.

In Argentina, basketry is one of the less visible craftworks in cultural institutions related to other productions. It shows, however, multiple traditions associated with raw materials typical of each region that respond to various cultural origins closely linked to the environment, the philosophy and life of these people.

Pennyroyal, simbol, corn husk, straw, red willow, tacuara straws, broom grass, caranday palm, Isipó (Argentine native plant), esparto grass are some of the many fibers used by artisans. Local raw materials are much more than the sustenance for production, they are part of their identities. The relationship with the landscape, the blossoming time and tree pruning are part of its own life cycle.

The words and testimonies of these young people add, according to the Brazilian historian called Karen Worcman, to the heritage of humanity. The individual memory - with its narrative of life - gives meaning to the collective memory. That is why the MAP proudly shows this virtual exhibition and bets on new generations of basket makers who telling their own stories, honor their tradition and their teachers despite the adversities they face daily due to the lack of fairs, contests and incentives. This research is worth to generate new projects and proposals.

We are especially thanked to our referents: Natalia Vergara, from Corrientes, Gonzalo Suárez, from Chaco and José Baez from Misiones to give us sources of information in their respective provinces. Likewise, to the basket makers Matilde García and Ramón Héctor Godoy who, from their perspectives, gave us an overview of current basketry.