The contemporary basket makers exhibited recognize the rich history of American basket making in their artistry and innovative designs. Meticulous craftsmanship and traditional methods pay homage to the trappers and farmers of our forebears in Stephen Zeh’s work. Lois Russell twines waxed linen into vessels that are sparingly used but delight with recognizable, sculptural forms. The baskets of Jonathan Kline are sturdy-bottomed, made from the trees of woodlands surrounding his upstate New York home. Often painted, their colors recall the stains of berries and plants used by Native Americans. Inspired by architecture and design, as well as the gardens and woods out her back door, Kari Lonning weaves rattan reed into striking, colorful vessels and sculpture. West Coast basket maker Marion Hildebrandt used cattail leaves, hazelnut branches, bark, and natural twine to evoke her native surrounds, creating baskets of incomparable elegance. Contemporary Nantucket baskets crafted by Harry Hilbert and Gail Halvorsen are a distinctly American handcraft that came out of the maritime cooperage tradition, involving woodworking as much as basketry.
Madrone wood rounds (attached twine, hand twined bur-reed, 4\(\times\)2003
Waxed linen twine, paper fiber
#181/1
8 ½ x 4 ½ inches, 2003
Hazelnut branches
Waxed linen twine warp,
From the Pond,
2002
7 ¼ x 5 inches
CA spice bush branches, bark,
Lois Russell
Black sisal twine, brown waxed
#165R
8 ¾ x 8 inches
Coiled waxed linen thread with
Muddy Spring
2007
6 x 7 ½ inches
Coiled waxed linen thread
Mottled and Squared
1995
Artistic dried rattan nedd, commercial, water-fast dye, engraved indices
3 x 14 inches

Kari Lonning
A native of Redgfield, Connecticut, basket maker Kari Lonning lives and works in a 1900’s schoolhouse on a properly surrounded by gardens and sheltered by expansive views. All of her work is not need extend from studio to greenhouse, raises the possibility of becoming gardens beyond, where the colors of leaves, flowers and vegetables lend inspiration to the pigments she uses to dye her rattan. An abstract photographer as well, Lonning constantly records her surroundings, collecting images that are reflected in the elegant forms and interesting color combinations of her exceptionally crafted baskets. Lonning explored a number of crafts before settling on the art of making baskets. Pottery, textile weaving, woodworking and silversmithing all led to what she refers to as the “building” of baskets. Structure, technique and color are the “architecture” of her craft. Corrugated rooftops, hinged lids and corrugated edges on the panels of her baskets. Zeh employs the methods of Shaker basketry, the traditions of the 19th century woodsmen, Shakers and Native Americans, to create traditional tools such as the drawknife, shaving horse, froe, splitting, pounding, hand- and accents. In the 1980’s, Zeh referred to his baskets as “mottled baskets” as they were not made on the island of Nantucket and included different materials than those found on the island of the 19th century. Hilbert referred to his baskets as “hairy” baskets as they were made on the island of Nantucket and included different materials than those found on the island of Nantucket. Hilbert’s workshop in 1994 became the focus of his study. Crumorated rooflines, hinged lids and corrugated edges on the panels of his Nantucket baskets were not made on the island of Nantucket and included different materials than those found on the island of Nantucket. Hilbert’s workshop in 1994 became the focus of his study. Crumorated rooflines, hinged lids and corrugated edges on the panels of his Nantucket baskets. Heinrich was one such student and is an influential basket maker who created his own inheritance of his elegant forms and interesting color combinations of her exceptionally crafted baskets. Heinrich was one such student and is an influential basket maker who created his own unique basketry style. Heinrich was one such student and is an influential basket maker who created his own unique basketry style.

Nantucket Baskets
Harry Hilbert
A successful Connecticut antique dealer trade by Wilton resident Harry Hilbert (1997 – 2010) learned the art of basket making later in life. As taught skills as a woodworker and cabinetmaker noting the approach to his new craft, and it was the form of the Nantucket basket in particular that became the focus of his exploratory work. Heinrich was one such student and is an influential basket maker who created his own unique basketry style. Heinrich was one such student and is an influential basket maker who created his own unique basketry style.

Small basket mold,
1999
Red oak, cane rattan, mahogany, curly maple, Connecticut, brass
12 x 4 ½ inches

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