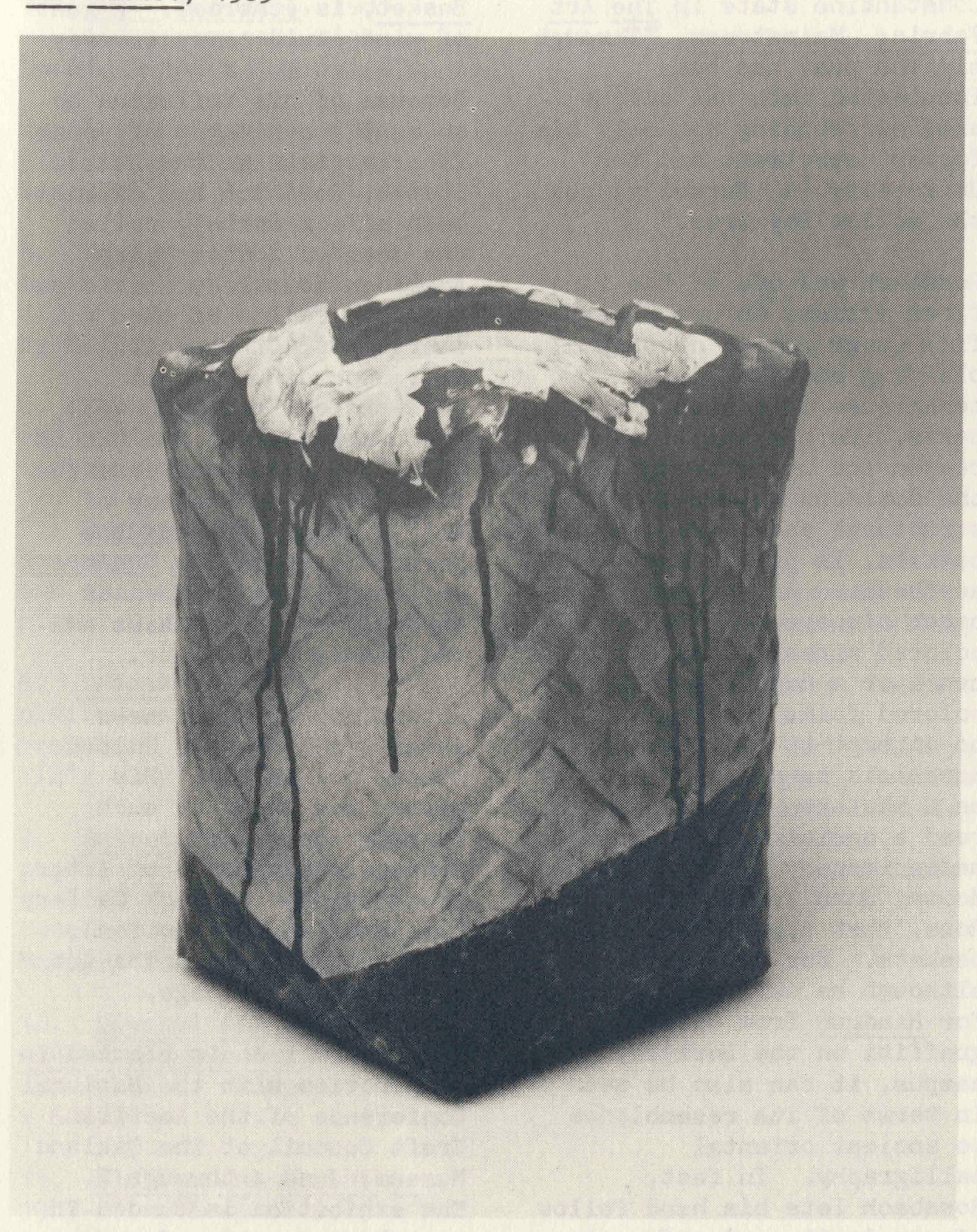
Han Basket, 1985



Ed Rossbach's interest in baskets as a textile art began early in his career. With insatiable curiosity he has probed older civilizations to learn techniques and processes of making baskets and textiles. Through his exploration of rare devoid of added color. The weaves, netting, plaiting and dye processes he has emerged as a "harbinger of new departures and ideas." As Jack woven. The effect, unlike L. Larsen and Mildred Constantine state in The Art Fabric: Mainstream, "Through him the past has been inculcated into the unique area surrounding not only his former department and the University [UC Berkeley] but the entire Bay Area."

Rossbach was one of the first fiber artists to use plastic film (over rolled newspaper), plaiting and ikat dying techniques in contemporary terms. He has said that his reason for using newspaper, the dominant material in his structural and often minimal baskets, is primarily aesthetic. Any material can catch his eye--the jungle of colored wires in a telephone panel or a humble bit of colored foil. Rossbach makes no attempt to disguise the materials he uses. It would be a mistake, however, to read a social message into the media imagery, such as Mickey Mouse, John Travolta or Pete Rose, that appear on his baskets. For example, although he derived the image for Handgun from wall graffiti on the Berkeley campus, it can also be seen in terms of its resemblance to ancient oriental calligraphy. In fact, Rossbach lets his hand follow his curiosity and refers to his work as "rambling" (although he maintains a strong focus and consistency).

His baskets fall into groups or series. His Han Basket from 1985 reflects experimentation with bright lacquer colors and traditional forms, while his latest basket, Patchwork of Newspaper and Pliable Wood, is ash splint structure is gone and the elements are now stapled together instead of the light but sturdy Han Basket, is ethereal. A gust of wind could carry it away.

Because of his influence on so many generations of young fiber artists in the United States, Rossbach has often been affectionately called the dean of contemporary American textiles, and is an honorary Fellow of the American Craft Council. Professor of Design at UC Berkeley from 1950-1979, Rossbach received his MFA in 1974 in weaving and ceramics from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Michigan, during the period in which the Cranbrook philosophy was influenced strongly by the Bauhaus and the Wiener Werkstatte.

Rossbach's work has been shown widely in the United States and abroad. His pieces are owned by such institutions as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Renwick Gallery (Smithsonian Institution), Washington, DC; and The Art Institute of Chicago.

This exhibition is planned in conjunction with the National Conference of the American Craft Council at The Oakland Museum, June 4 through 7. The exhibition is funded in part by a donation from Miller/Brown Gallery, San Francisco.

Carole Austin

Works in MATRIX (all works lent by the artist unless otherwise noted):

- 1. Basket with Newspaper Handle, 1982, newspaper, rice paper, $7-1/2 \times 7-1/2 \times 7-$
- 2. Pete Rose Basket with Twig Handle, 1982, newspaper, rice paper, twigs, 8-1/2 x 9 x 9".
- 3. Small Monument, 1983, plaited newspaper, rice paper, $9-1/2 \times 7 \times 6-1/2$ ".
- 4. Lettuce Basket, 1984, plaited newspaper, spray lacquer, 6 x 8 x 8".
- 5. Handgun, 1985, paper, ash splints, heat transfer, 13- $1/2 \times 6-1/2 \times 6-1/2$ ". Lent by Miller/Brown Gallery.
- 6. Han Basket, 1985 plaited ash splints, rice paper, lacquer, 11-1/2 x 8 x 8".
- 7. Purple Ash Splints with Newspaper and Cloth, 1985, ash splints, newspaper, cloth, $9 \times 11-1/2 \times 7-1/2"$.
- 8. Indonesian Shrine, 1985, plaited ash splints, heat transfer, 11 x 12-1/4 x 5-1/2".
- 9. Beirut Monument, 1985, paper, wood, palm, foil, 13 x 9 x 7". Lent by Catherine Cootner, courtesy Miller/Brown Gallery.
- 10. Plaited Ash Splints with Newspaper Box, 1985-86, ash splints, newspaper, 7 x 9 x 6-1/2".
- 11. Plaited Ash Splint Box, 1985-86, ash splints, 7 x 7 x 4-1/2".

12. Patchwork of Newspaper and Pliable Wood, 1986, newspaper, pliable wood, staples, 8-1/4 x 12 x 9".

Selected one-person exhibitions:

Museum of Contemporary Crafts, NY; Nordness Gallery, NY: Museum West, S.F.; Oakland Art Gallery, Oakland, CA; Ohio State Univ., Columbus; Henry Art Gallery, Univ. of Washington, Seattle; Fiberworks Gallery, Berkeley, CA; Univ. of Florida, Gainesville; UC Santa Cruz.

Selected group exhibitions and bibliography about the artist:

Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, High Styles: Twentieth Century Design (catalogue); Detroit Institute of Arts and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision (book); The Museum of Modern Art, NY, The New Classicism; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Structure in Textiles (catalogue); National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, The Americas and Japan; Textile Museum, Washington, DC, Fiber Constructions (catalogue); Museum of Contemporary Craft, NY, The Dyer's Art (book); USA Today, Washington, DC, traveling exhibition, The Art Fabric: Mainstream (book); Musée des Art Decoratifs, Lausanne, Switzerland, Nouvelle Vannerie (catalogue); Renwick Gallery, Washington, DC, The Object as Poet; Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento, CA, California Crafts XIV: Living Treasures of California, 1985 (catalogue); Milwaukee Art Museum and University Art Museum, Univ. of Wisconsin, Fiber R/Evolution (catalogue).

Selected bibliography by the artist:

Baskets as Textile Art (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1973).

The New Basketry
(New York: Van Nostrand
Reinhold, 1976).

The Art of Paisley
(New York: Van Nostrand
Reinhold, 1980).

The Nature of Basketry (West Chester, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1986).

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