



All Tied Up: Knitted and Knotted Works in RAM's Collections

December 21, 2008 – March 8, 2009

- Knotting is one of the oldest techniques used by humans for joining fibers together. Most cultures have employed this method for the creation of functional fiberworks for centuries.
- The distinguishing quality of a knot is its relative fixity—it holds fast. It is structural.
- Knotting can also be used to create a netting, which is an open fabric with threads that are knotted, woven or twisted—think of a fishing net, butterfly net or a net on a tennis court.
- Knots have been used for centuries for a variety of functional purposes, including carrying and pulling objects, dragging loads and tethering animals.
- In the 20th century, contemporary fiber artists investigated a host of traditional knotting practices as a means to explore the past of their chosen medium. These artists broke new aesthetic ground by adapting techniques to construct modern sculptural works with ancient materials.
- RAM's current shows present a variety of approaches to knotting. Arline Fisch's installation in RAM's windows demonstrates her career-long interest in employing fibers techniques to create metal jewelry. Now, Fisch has expanded her range to crochet large sculptural forms in metal.
- Currently, RAM also celebrates the arrival of the Cotsen Contemporary American Basket Collection. The Cotsen gift contains sculptures and vessel-related forms, many of which are fashioned with knotting techniques.
- *All Tied Up* artistically ties the two current RAM shows together – gathering works from RAM's collection that demonstrate diverse knotting techniques used to construct form, structure or surface decoration.
- This show features a wide range of knotting applications to demonstrate the versatility of this method. Rebecca Medel, Joan Michaels Paque and Olga de Amaral fashion large-scale pieces, using either a single knot or many.

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- In her work, *Correton Negro #127*, Olga de Amaral uses a single large knot to create a suspended and entwined sculptural form. The basic knot actually becomes the subject of this piece.
- At the miniature end of the scale spectrum, Jan Buckman's baskets present an interpretation of Native American geometric patterns and Patti Lechman simultaneously creates form and surface decoration by knotting dyed linen thread and working small beads into her compositions.
- Diane Itter established an international reputation for her miniature tapestries created solely with square knots.
- In addition to using knotting to assemble artworks, some of these artists utilize knotting to create embellishments or surface interest. For example, Kiyomi Iwata uses French knots set into the surface of her basketworks to create an interesting surface texture and visual rhythm.
- Waxed thread – linen or cotton – is often used because the sticky surface helps hold the knot tightly.
- Notice the many different sizes of knots in the works in this gallery. Also, think about whether the knotting is used for decoration or texture, or to create the structure. Some of the knots are only visible in the interiors or on the reverse sides of the pieces.
- Knotting continues to be a versatile technique for many fiber artists today.