

INTRODUCTION

The first interlocking of twisted fibers to make fabric was a major development in the history of humankind. Early weavings were made without complicated mechanical looms or extensive preparation. They were fabricated with natural materials and minimal equipment. There is renewed interest in these early off-loom techniques, which offer enormous versatility and creative opportunity.

As *Weaving Without a Loom* illustrates, threads can be put under tension with simple equipment—a picture frame, a piece of cardboard, a pencil. Whereas the traditional floor loom can be impersonal, more basic tools enable the artist to use free weaving techniques to create expressive new forms and constructions. In some instances, such as weaving on a forked tree branch, the weaving equipment becomes an integral part of the finished work.

In addition to fundamental tools, this book explores a variety of everyday items that can be used for textile construction. Materials take on a new role with unconventional combinations of fiber with metal, paper, wood, wire, nylon, plastic, and rope.

The off-loom approach to weaving offers distinct advantages. Unrestricted by the painstaking procedures and complicated equipment of conventional loom weaving, the artist is free to experiment. In addition to being accessible, inexpensive, simple, and portable, this approach enables ease of construction, spontaneity, and flexibility of design and structure. Basic methods and uncomplicated equipment can be used in elementary projects and more complex constructions. They can be used to create functional items or purely expressive artworks.

Dr. Rainey, an art educator and author of a variety of books on fiber art, has used these off-loom techniques in her own work. She has exhibited at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, the Contemporary Crafts Museum in New York City, and at other museums around the United States. As an art educator, she has experience at all levels of teaching, elementary through adult education.

In this book she encourages exploration of age-old techniques to create exciting new forms. It is an important source for the creation of imaginative and innovative fiber art.

Cassandra Lee Tellier, Ph.D.
Director, The Schumacher Gallery
Capital University
Columbus, Ohio

