

R. Leon Russell

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Artist Statement

I have not always been a crafter of baskets and vessels. My years of studying science and music were, in retrospect, the logical prerequisites for this craft. The predictable order in the sciences and the regimented discipline of music taught me the patience necessary to work in a repetitive medium. I learned to view it in detail and explore the subtle nuance. I came to view a coiled vessel as the material manifestation of a musical canon. I learned in constructing cordage that I was simply duplicating the double helix of the DNA molecule.

When I was not a Craftsman, I learned to be a romantic. I learned to feel the greenness of Spring moss through my fingertips. I learned to let the sound of the droplets on the leaves announce the rain before my body felt the wetness. I learned that my life has been a quest of discovering what is behind the visible. As a Craftsman, I attempt to share these perceptions with others. As a Craftsman, I give my emotions conceptual form.



Arroya Series; Reclining Diva

Pine Needles, Contorted Filbert

10" x 11" x 44"

Born: Waynesville, North Carolina, USA, 1947

Education: 1972 MFA; Music (enseignement superieur); Sorbonne: Paris, France

1971 MS; Biology; Auburn University: Montgomery, Alabama

1969 BS; University of Tennessee: Knoxville, Tennessee

Elective Studies: Memphis College of Arts: Memphis, Tennessee

Memphis University, Memphis, Tennessee

University of Washington: Seattle, Washington

Bellevue Community College: Bellevue, Washington

Private Studies / Workshops:

Arline Fisch, Lanny Bergner,

Nancy Moore Bess, John Garrett,

Polly Adams Sutton, J D Kelly,

John McQueen, Terese Ohno,

Marilyn Moore, Leslie Coe, Mike Faulk,

Jiro Yonezawa, Sue Mc Gann,

Katherine Lewis, Fern Jacobs

My work is in numerous private collections throughout the world, several corporate collections and Museums and formerly rotated through United States Embassies and Consulates throughout the world. A detailed listing can be obtained by contacting the Basketmaker.

Honors

Judge, Washington State Fair; 1998 – 2023

Lecturer, Demonstrator; Washington State Convention Center, Seattle, Washington

Judge, San Juan County Fair; 2016-2017

Professional Organizations

Northwest Basket Weavers; since 1989

Northwest Designer Craftsmen; since 1991

National Basketry Organization; since 2017