

Bark Baskets by Jennifer Lee

Artist's Statement

These bark baskets are made from the trees around my house. Following the season of “loose bark moon” or when the bark is slipping, the bark is peeled from a ladder so it won't get ruined during felling. By selectively thinning the forest, which is a 45 year overgrown apple orchard, I've sustained my bark basket supply and improved the woods.

Historical accounts of the use of Ash, Oak, Pine, Spruce, Elm, Chestnut, Linden and Birch barks to cover wigwams encouraged me to try different barks for baskets. These baskets are made from trees that shaded the garden and needed to be taken down.

Buffalo or Bison is the material culture of the Nations of the Western Plains: the Lakota and the Osage. Bark is the material culture of the Northeast woodland tribes: the Abenaki, Ojibway, Narragansett and Pequot.

Joy describes the feeling of taking only bark roots and branches, and making something strong and usable in the tradition of my Native ancestors. People get so happy and proud when they fashion something so beautiful and durable from the woods. The trees make a way for me to share, celebrate, express, participate and contribute.