



Above: Danfoss Universe Tunnel

The tunnel is made in the park in 2005 together with Marianne Nielsen. It is made on an iron skeleton on which 3 tons of willow are placed and woven. The Tunnel is 11 meters long by 6 meters wide and 3 meters high.

Photography by Anne Mette Hvidaa Hjørholm

Right Top:

40 cm x 40 cm x 35 cm
Crowberry roots on a willow frame

Photography by Anne Mette Hvidaa Hjørholm

Right Bottom:

80 cm x 54 cm (bottom diameter).

Crowberry roots and willow

Photography by Anne Mette Hvidaa Hjørholm

New Faces

Anne Mette Hvidaa
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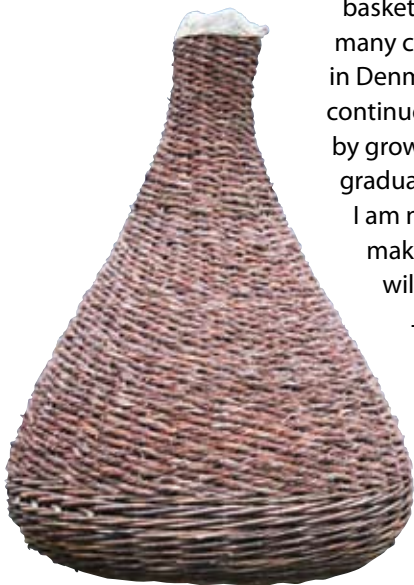
Written by: Anne Mette Hvidaa Hjørnholm

My life with baskets started 25 years ago, although my basketmaking was more of a hobby than a profession.

My formal education is as a textile designer - I graduated in 1989 from the Danish Design School in Copenhagen. For several years, I tried making a living by weaving and designing rugs and furniture textiles, but as the Danish textile industry was outsourcing production to Eastern Europe, this turned out to be a dead end. While searching for alternatives, I started looking further into basket making. I have always seen myself as a person deeply rooted in handicrafts, so doing just design work was not very appealing to me – I needed a hands-on approach to creating artwork.

I have no formal education as a basket maker, but have attended many courses over the years, both in Denmark and abroad. Through continuous work with the willow, and by growing my own willow, I have gradually worked my way to where I am now, actually being able to make a living from working with willow.

Today, my working life is a combination of teaching, making works for exhibitions, arts and crafts fairs, and coordinating the garden department of the National Show, a



large agricultural exhibition. All these jobs result in providing me with a reasonable income.

I transfer a lot of my skills from fabric design and weaving into my baskets. The manner in which I approach both subjects are very similar. While I was weaving, I often chose a simple technique, and by changing the colors and materials found lots of designs and variations. The surface structure was very important. All these considerations are vital to me in my basket making. Additionally, I spend a lot of time gathering and harvesting willow, roots, bark, grasses etc. This means that I spend a lot of my time outside all year round. Although I endure a lot of hard manual labor in my workshop and in the willow field, I have a privileged life. I have many opportunities to visit other basket makers, attend basket festivals, and teach basket making in interesting places here in Denmark and abroad.

I am constantly on the lookout for inspiration to apply to my work. It may be the form of the material itself, shapes found

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Top Left: Tall Organic Sculpture

105 cm x 70 cm x 40 cm
willow and willow bark
Photography by Anne Mette Hvidaa Hjornholm

Top Right: Frame basket with willow bark

80 cm x 75 cm. x 45 cm
white willow and willow bark
Photography by Anne Mette Hvidaa Hjornholm

Bottom: 3 Dimensions

60 - 80 cm. in width x 35 - 50 cm. high
willow, with a center wooden piece, which is a branch wound from a tree.
Photography by Anne Mette Hvidaa Hjornholm



in ceramics, fruits or nuts, just to mention a few. Sometimes all I need is a special curve of a branch or an interesting surface of a tree trunk to inspire me and begin a basket.

The shapes of framed ribbed baskets never cease to fascinate me. They encourage me to keep experimenting with different sizes and shapes of the hoops that form the basis of the basket. It may be just small differences in the hoop sizes which lead to a completely different basket. I use mostly willow for basic construction – the other materials can then be twined, neatly or chaotically woven, to fill out the shape of the basket. I generally use willow that is 3 or 4 years old for the hoops, but hazel, elm, or wild rose branches may also be used successfully. Ideas for new shapes often occur to me while I am working with the hoops. At this point, I try to picture the overall and final shape of the basket. I ask myself, "Should I make this handle high or low, this basket round, oval or D-shaped so that it will hang on the wall?" When the hoops are in place, I construct the final frame. Once the frame is in place, there is no haste – the basket can be left alone for a while, while I am working on another, and I return later to fill out the frame. This makes the frame baskets a very relaxing type of basket to create. I am often working on more than one basket at a time. Other basket types with a woven rim can be a lot more stressful, as you have a shorter time to finish them before the stakes dry out.

I do make a large variety of different baskets other than frame baskets. They are utilitarian baskets for shopping, laundry, firewood and picking mushrooms. These baskets may be done very traditionally but always with great attention to the

shape and the function. I am always trying to improve my skills. Additionally, I do sculptures that are organic forms in a smaller scale and very much like sculpture I made in Poland, in a larger scale like the tunnel I made together with another basket maker at "Danfoss Universe" in Denmark – we used 3 tons of willow, and it took a month to complete!

In the summer of 2011, I attended the 2nd International Wicker Festival and Competition in Nowy Tomysl, Poland. There were 70 participants from 30 countries, weaving side by side for two days. It was so great to be part of this energetic work spirit and see what the other participants were making. Next summer, I will be teaching in Stowe, Vermont at the basketry festival. At Stowe, I will be teaching 3 workshops: Frame baskets, French Open Market Baskets, and Sculptural Work using a chaotic (random) weave. I am really looking forward to this experience – another great opportunity for cultural exchange through the use of willow!

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