



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Textile Center announces 2025 McKnight Fiber Artist Fellows



From left: *Little Dots* by Christine Novotny; *Cernunnos* by Shannon Lucas Westrum

(Minneapolis, MN – April 10, 2025) — Textile Center is proud to announce the two recipients of the 2025 McKnight Fellowships for Fiber Artists: Shannon Lucas Westrum and Christine Novotny.

In our 6<sup>th</sup> year of the program, Textile Center is honored to announce Shannon Lucas Westrum, Bemidji, Minnesota and Christine Novotny, Grand Marais, Minnesota, as 2025 McKnight Fiber Artist Fellows. Both of these artists come from strong historic, technical, and material traditions in the field that include on-loom (Novotny) and off-loom (Lucas Westrum) woven structure and natural materials, with a nod to function vs. non-function at play in their work.

“This year, we received 50 applications from mid-career Minnesota artists. Of these submissions, Shannon and Christine’s work rose to the top after a lengthy review process that involved juror conversations, applicant presentations, and an interview process. The open call to apply for these fellowships is an amazing opportunity, with three nationally recognized jurors spending significant time reviewing the submissions and getting to know the work of Minnesota fiber artists,” says Tracy Krumm, Textile Center Director for Artistic Advancement.

“These \$25,000 fellowships are unrestricted and awarded in recognition of the recipient’s significant body of work, creative achievement, and their sustained contribution to the field of fiber art. Nowhere else in the country are their fellowships at this level, specific to the discipline of fiber arts. To date, over half of our Fiber Art Fellowships have been awarded to artists in Greater Minnesota—a testament to the strength of fiber art practice as a recognized art form that reaches across our state. We congratulate Shannon and Christine, both from Greater Minnesota, for their successful submissions.”

In addition to the \$25,000 unrestricted cash award, the fellows receive public recognition, studio visits with critics and mentors from the field, an exhibition at Textile Center, professional development support, participation in a public discussion about their work, an artist residency in partnership with McKnight and the Artist Communities Alliance, and access to Textile Center’s resources including a library of more than 35,000 books and periodicals and a state-of-the-art dye lab. The fellowships are generously funded by the McKnight Foundation and administered by Textile Center. We are grateful to the McKnight Foundation for their continued and extraordinary support of our creative field.

The fellowship period runs from March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026, with a culminating exhibition at Textile Center scheduled January 13 – March 28, 2026.

#### ABOUT THE FELLOWS:



[Shannon Lucas Westrum](#), Bemidji, MN, is a basketry artist who experiments with the fusion of locally sourced materials and rattan as she explores a blend of modern and traditional techniques. Her love of fiber art began in childhood, when she learned to crochet and played with yarn, wood, beads, paper and leather. Her current practice began in the late 1990's, through her work with local community education classes and fiber art guilds. In 2018, she travelled to Ireland to study with Joe Hogan and attend an arts residency at Shankill Castle in Kilkenny.

Since then, Lucas Westrum has received two Creative Individuals Grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board, two Arts Education Grants, and a Region 2 Arts Council Fellowship. Her work has been exhibited across Minnesota, including the Armory Arts & Event Center in Park Rapids and the MacRostie Art Center in Grand Rapids. She teaches basket making workshops in partnership with regional galleries, guilds, and libraries.



[Christine Novotny](#), Grand Marais, MN, weaves vibrant and hearty textiles, exploring the intimacy of labor, materiality, and the relationship of color within different woven processes. Her work explores how colors work together, interact and move, seeking unexpected chromatic kinship in woven form. Integrating bold shapes and atmospheric color blending, she uses a painterly approach to color by bundling yarns and tying knots on her floor loom.

Novotny holds a BFA in Painting from Indiana University and completed a two-year residency at North House Folk School, where she explored weaving and honed her craft. She has been awarded grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, and an Artist Fellowship from the American Scandinavian Foundation in New York. Her work is currently on exhibit in *Nordic Echoes*, at Scandinavia House in NYC, and has been exhibited across Minnesota, including the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis.

Photo by Wolfskull Creative

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#### ABOUT THE JURORS:

The 2025 McKnight Fiber Artist Fellows were selected by a panel of three arts professionals of varying backgrounds, whose careers reflect the field of fiber art in numerous ways. This year's jurors were:

Nicole Archer, Ph.D., Associate Professor in Visual and Critical Studies, Department of Art and Design, Montclair State University, NJ, with an emphasis on research in feminist art, textile and garment histories, and the intersections of art, design, and social justice.

Nicole LaBouff, Ph.D., Curator of Costume and Textiles at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and formerly Associate Curator of Textiles at the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

José Santiago Pérez, artist and educator based in Chicago, with a studio practice focused on material studies and hand constructed objects; currently 2024-25 Visiting Lecturer in Sculpture and Visual Thinking, University of Pittsburgh.

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## ABOUT THE MCKNIGHT ARTIST & CULTURAL BEARER FELLOWSHIPS:

Founded on the belief that Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive, the McKnight Foundation's Arts & Culture program is one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the country. Support for individual working Minnesota artists has been a cornerstone of the program since it began in 1982. The McKnight Artist & Culture Bearer Fellowships program provides annual, unrestricted cash awards to outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists in 15 different creative disciplines. Program partner organizations administer the fellowships and structure them to respond to the unique challenges of different disciplines. Currently the foundation contributes about \$2.8 million per year to its statewide fellowships. For more information, visit [mcknight.org/artistfellowships](http://mcknight.org/artistfellowships).



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## ABOUT THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION:

The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation, advances a more st, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive. Established in 1953, the McKnight Foundation is deeply committed to advancing climate solutions in the Midwest; building an equitable and inclusive Minnesota; and supporting the arts in Minnesota, neuroscience, and international crop research.



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## ABOUT TEXTILE CENTER – A NATIONAL CENTER FOR FIBER ART:

Textile Center is unique as America's national center for fiber art, with a mission to honor textile traditions, promote excellence and innovation, nurture appreciation, and inspire widespread participation in fiber arts. The Center's resources include exceptional fiber art exhibitions, an artisan shop, the region's only accessible professional-grade dye lab, a natural dye plant garden, and one of the nation's largest circulating textile libraries open to the public. Textile Center produces more than 200 classes a year for all ages and skill levels through its youth, adult, older adult, and outreach programs. A dynamic hub of fiber activity for 30 years, Textile Center brings people together in community to learn, create, share, and be inspired by fiber art. For more information, visit: [textilecentermn.org](http://textilecentermn.org).

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