



PRESS RELEASE

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Textile Center announces 2024 McKnight Fiber Artist Fellows



From left: *Between the Sun and the Rain* by Amber M. Jensen; *Red Bird Woman* by Rick Kagigebe

(Minneapolis, MN – March 27, 2024) — Textile Center is proud to announce the two recipients of the 2024 McKnight Fellowships for Fiber Artists: Amber M. Jensen and Rick Kagigebe.

Designed to identify and support outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists, the McKnight Fellowships for Fiber Artists provide recipients with a \$25,000 unrestricted cash award. In addition, the fellows receive public recognition, studio visits with critics 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 funded by the McKnight Foundation and administered by Textile Center.

"This year, we received 47 applications from mid-career Minnesota artists. Their innovative and varied portfolio submissions addressed the field of fiber art from materials to technique, sculpture to installation, and from 2-D and mixed media works to fashion and couture. In keeping with the goals of McKnight's Arts & Culture program, these fellowships are a recognition of the recipient's significant body of work, creative achievement, and their sustained contribution to the field of fiber art," says Tracy Krumm, Textile Center Director for Artistic Advancement.

Krumm continues, "This fellowship program is specially designed to support the creative practices of fiber artists in Minnesota. Over the past five years, we've honored 10 distinct fiber artists whose work has supported Minnesota's thriving arts ecosystem. We are proud to have had half of these fellowships awarded to artists in Greater Minnesota—a testament to the strength of fiber art practice as a recognized art form that reaches all across our state. We congratulate Rick Kagigebe, Detroit Lakes, and Amber Jensen, Minneapolis, for being selected to receive the 2024 McKnight Fellowships in Fiber Art, and are grateful to the McKnight Foundation for their extraordinary support of our creative field."

The fellowship period runs from March 1, 2024 through February 28, 2025, with a culminating exhibition at Textile Center scheduled January 14 – March 15, 2025.

ABOUT THE FELLOWS:



Photo by Caroline Yang

[Amber M. Jensen](#) is a weaver, painter, and teacher who combines traditional techniques with her own bespoke improvisations to draw new and different stories out of thread and cloth. Her journey into textiles began nearly two decades ago and she remains devoted to her daily art practice where she creates weavings and paintings embellished with stories and symbols, inspired by nature around her. There is a through-line she can trace from ancestors' blankets to her own work today, and as language of its own, woven cloth holds history.

She received a 2009 Jerome Foundation Emerging Artist Grant from the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, has exhibited her work in numerous group shows, and in 2023 had a solo exhibition at the Watermark Art Center in Bemidji. Her commitment to sharing her love of weaving has manifest in projects with All My Relations Arts in Minneapolis, the Blandin Foundation in Grand Rapids, the 2024 Art Shanty projects, and the North House Folk School in Grand Marais.



Photo by TJ Turner Pictures

[Rick Kagigebe](#), Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe, makes appliquéd mural blankets incorporating elements such as direction, movement, time, space, 3-dimensional layering, and Ojibwe culture. From sketch to sewing to hand-tying, he thinks about a person that the blanket will go to – what can be provided through the blanket in order for them to have a good life? The design may shift while he's working, making him wait until he's shown what changes to make.

Kagigebe made his first blanket as a teenager and hundreds upon hundreds of blankets followed-- for ceremony, gifting, commission, and exhibition. His work has been exhibited at venues in Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, including All My Relations Gallery in Minneapolis, Watermark Arts Center, Bemidji, and the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts in Cedarburg. He has received support from Region 2 Arts Council's Anishinaabe Arts Initiative, the Lake Region Arts Council, and the Minnesota State Arts Board.

ABOUT THE JURORS:

The 2024 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:

M. Rachael Arauz, Ph.D., Boston-based independent curator of modern and contemporary art, whose research and projects have included mid-century abstraction, Mexican photography, and a 2019 exhibition about the founding years of Haystack Mountain School of Crafts.

Rowland Ricketts, indigo farmer and dyer based in Bloomington, Indiana whose work spans art and design. He is currently a Professor in the Eskenazi School of Art at Indiana University.

Namita Gupta Wiggers, noted expert in the field of contemporary craft, a curator, educator and a writer based in Portland, Oregon. She founded and directed the MA in Critical Craft Studies, Warren Wilson College from 2017 to 2022.

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.



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.

The McKnight Foundation logo, which consists of a solid red square with the words "MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION" in white, sans-serif capital letters centered within it.

MCKNIGHT
FOUNDATION

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.

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