

# WordPlay: Messages in Branches & Bark

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## ARTIST BIOS

### GYÖNGY LAKY

Gyöngy Laky was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1944 and emigrated to the United States as a child. She did her undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley (1967-1971), which is where her activism took root. After postgraduate work at the UC Professional Studies Program in India, Laky founded the internationally recognized Fiberworks Center for the Textile Arts in Berkeley.

In addition to her formative work at Berkeley, Gyöngy (pronounced like “ginger” without the r) joined the faculty at the University of California, Davis in 1978, became a Chair of the Art Department in the mid-1990s, and a Professor Emerita in 2005. Alongside her work in the UC Davis Art Department, she established the Department of Environmental Design and its graduate program. Laky has been a strong advocate for the establishment of an environmental sustainability curriculum in design and art at UC Davis.

Gyöngy Laky’s artwork is exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the United States, including: Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; National Museum of American Art, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC; and the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, CA. Internationally, her work has been included in exhibitions in Canada, Denmark, Sweden, England, Holland, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Italy, Columbia, Philippines, Japan and China.

Besides her art representation, Laky’s work and commentary is well published and documented. Her books include: *Portfolio Series: Gyöngy Laky*, by Telos Arts Publishing, UK, and *Gyöngy Laky: Screwing with Order*, by browngrotta arts, Wilton, CT. The Bancroft Library at UC, Berkeley, released her oral history and her personal papers are in the Smithsonian Institution’s Archives of American Art, Washington, DC. Laky’s art has appeared in numerous books, magazines and catalogs in the US and abroad.

### JOHN MCQUEEN

John McQueen was born in Oakland, Illinois, in 1943. He received a B.A. at the University of South Florida in Tampa in 1971 and an M.F.A. at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia in 1975. McQueen has received three National Endowment for

the Arts Visual Artist Fellowships; a United States/Japan Friendship Commission Fellowship; a Master of the Medium award, James Renwick Alliance, Smithsonian Institution; and an Established Artist Award, Arts Center of the Capitol Region, New York.

While his earliest artworks were made out of sod and adobe clay, McQueen started weaving baskets out of twigs, bark, and vines in 1975, after several formative experiences at Pueblo Reservations in New Mexico. These beautifully constructed baskets made from natural and manmade materials helped propel him as a leader in the contemporary fiber arts movement. In 1979, he began incorporating letters and words into his baskets and wall art, most of which reveal whimsical and playful messages when deciphered.

McQueen has participated in numerous exhibitions, including shows at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Kansas City Art Institute, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles, and the Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum in Trondheim, Norway. His sculptures are part of permanent collections in museums throughout the United States, including: Museum of Arts and Design and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, NY; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT; and Renwick Gallery, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC.