

The Cedar Rapids Museum of Art announces a

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Threading the Needle: Fiber Art in Iowa Iowa Artists Juried Show October 3, 2026 – January 17, 2027

Fiber and textile arts have a rich legacy crafted over tens of thousands of years. In forms that clothed, adorned, comforted, and beautified, these fibers wove together history and culture, telling stories and documenting lives. Despite many years of lack of recognition from the mainstream art world, artists working in fiber built on the traditions of the medium, experimenting with new techniques, continually pushing the boundaries of materials, and exploring complex themes, including those of social issues and identity. Today, fiber continues to be a rich source of inspiration, sparking new and varied ideas for forms, styles, and techniques and allowing artists to demonstrate their immense skills.

This all-Iowa, open call, juried art exhibition seeks to highlight the talented artists working in fiber in the state, drawing attention to the rich variety, conceptual prowess, and technical skill of their work, and to represent the continued legacy of the medium as it appears in Iowa.

The exhibition will be juried by Kim Eichler-Messmer, Astrid Hilger Bennett, and Julia Jessen. Please see below for their bios. There is no fee to enter.

Artists are invited to submit up to 3 works available for display. The submitted artworks must be rooted in fiber or utilize textile techniques but may include additional materials; this includes, but is not limited to, quilting, weaving, needle arts, felting, textile-based sculpture, dyeing, etc., or any combination thereof. The work may encompass any approach from representational to abstract; traditional or functional, to avant-garde.

BRIEF SPECIFICATIONS (see below for further details)

- Applicants must reside in the state of Iowa.
- Artwork must have been created in the past three years.
- All work must be ready for display and must include any specialty hanging or display hardware.
- Artists may submit images of up to 3 artworks available for display (jpegs, no more than 2 images per piece).
 - Jpegs must be at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi
 - Jpegs should include the artwork's title
- Submissions should also include resume, brief bio, and artist's statement.
- There is no fee to enter. Artists are responsible for delivering or shipping their works to and from the exhibition. The CRMA will insure all works while on display.
- Deadline for receipt of images and materials is Friday, May 29, 2026. Entries must be sent to jjessen@crma.org.

Jurors:

Julia Jessen, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

Julia received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Iowa in 2014 and her Master of Arts degrees in art history and museum studies from Syracuse University in 2020. She previously served as the education coordinator at the University of Iowa Museum of Art (now the Stanley Museum of Art) and as the registrar at the Museum of Danish America in Elk Horn, Iowa. She joined the staff of the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art in July 2023, where she curates approximately eleven exhibitions a year.

Astrid Bennett

Astrid Hilger Bennett has decades of experience working with fiber reactive dyes, and more recently, natural dyes, using them for mark making, painting, screen printing, monoprinting, and immersion dyeing. Astrid received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Printmaking at Indiana University. She has exhibited her large-scale work nationally and internationally, including in multiple Quilt National exhibitions, and has taught workshops in university, craft school, and guild settings in the U.S. and Chile. She is a cultural, small business, and artist advocate, having served as longtime manager, marketing director and co-owner of Iowa Artisans Gallery in Iowa City from 1991-2017. As a volunteer, she assists with a sewing space for Open Heartland, a local nonprofit focused on immigrant Latinx members, helping teach women to sew dance costumes for their children. She currently serves as the Surface Design Association's Board Co-Chair and Chair of the Events Committee and enjoys sharing her knowledge and skill set with the next generation of makers.

Kim Eichler-Messmer

Kim Eichler-Messmer is a multi-disciplinary artist and educator. Her work is grounded primarily in textiles through which she explores nature and built environments using pattern, color, structure, line, and rhythm. Currently an Associate Professor of Fiber at the Kansas City Art Institute, Eichler-Messmer earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in textiles from the University of Kansas and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in studio art from Iowa State University. Her work has been exhibited across the U.S. and abroad including shows at the Iowa Quilt Museum (Winterset, IA), QuiltCon, Penland Gallery (Penland, NC), India Quilt Festival (Chennai, India), and Tokushima Cultural Center (Tokushima, Japan). She was an artist in residence at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, and Prairieside Cottage + Outpost. She is the author of "Modern Color: An Illustrated Guide to Dyeing Fabric for Modern Quilts" and has taught numerous workshops on surface design, natural dye, and quilting across the US.

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CALENDAR (Please retain)

March 2, 2026: Submissions open

May 29, 2026: Images and information due to jjessen@crma.org.

July 31, 2026: All accepted artists and works will be notified and posted at www.crma.org

SHIPPING DATES

September 14 – September 18, 2026: If you are shipping your artwork, the delivery must arrive between 10am and 4pm between Monday, September 14 and Friday, September 18, 2026. Ship to:

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
Attn: Melissa Conroy
410 Third Ave., SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Please provide postage for returning your artwork to you after the exhibition. Accepted artwork must be delivered by 4:00pm by September 18, 2026. Work may arrive at CRMA no earlier than September 14 and cannot arrive later than September 18.

Work not delivered on time may not be included in the exhibition.

DROP OFF DATES

September 14 – September 18, 2026: If you are hand-delivering your artwork to the museum, please schedule a time to drop it off between Monday, September 14 and Friday, September 18. Schedule drop off times with Melissa Conroy, CRMA Registrar/Preparator. Accepted artwork must be delivered by 4:00pm on September 18, 2026.

Work not delivered on time may not be included in the exhibition.

October 1, 2026: *Threading the Needle* exhibition reception, all artists and guests invited: 5-6:30 pm. Exhibition continues through January 17, 2027. Artists will also receive 10 free admission passes to use anytime during regular museum hours during the run of the exhibition.

PICK UP DATES

January 25 – January 29, 2027: Schedule an appointment with Melissa Conroy, Registrar/Preparator, to pick up hand-delivered artwork between January 25 and January 29, 2027.

RETURN SHIPPING DATES

Mid-late February 2027: Shipped artwork will be returned to the artist.

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Entry Requirements—Please read carefully.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to all artists 18 years and older, residing in Iowa, working in fiber. All work must be original and completed within the past three years. Only original work is shown – reproductions and giclees are not accepted.

Ceiling suspended work cannot be accommodated.

Work that is unstable, unusually fragile, or beyond the display capabilities of the institution may be disqualified. Substitutions are not allowed.

Within the gallery, hanging hardware is only able to be installed at a maximum height of about 96 inches.

INSTRUCTIONS: Jurying will be by emailed images and information. Please email jpeg images (minimum 300 dpi) of no more than three available artworks to jjessen@crma.org by May 29, 2026. One overall image and one detail of each submission is allowed. Jpegs must include artwork's title. Include work specifications (title, date, dimensions, framed dimensions, media) in your submission. In addition to your images, please include a resume, brief biography, and artist's statement on the work.

ENTRY FEE: None.

AGREEMENT: Submitting an entry constitutes an agreement with all conditions of this show. CRMA has the right to photograph an accepted work for publicity purposes.

LIABILITY: The Cedar Rapids Museum of Art handles works with the utmost care. CRMA provides insurance coverage for damage or loss to fine art pieces only if due to CRMA's negligence. The amount of coverage will be limited to the repair or replacement value, as stated by the artist on the application, in advance of the exhibition.

UPON ACCEPTANCE:

SPECIFICATIONS: All work must be completely prepared for museum quality hanging and display. Hanging work should arrive ready to hang with all hanging rods, devices, and specialty hardware included. Please include written instructions and photos for complicated installations

SHIPPING: All work shipped must be sent in reusable materials and sturdy boxes. See Calendar for Delivery dates. **NOTE:** Artists are responsible for ALL shipping arrangements and payments for both incoming and outgoing artwork. Please note hours of delivery and communicate with shipper so that second attempt costs are avoided. The CRMA will return your work at the conclusion of the exhibition.

The names of all accepted artists will be posted on our website by July 31, 2026.

For questions and/or more information contact:

Julia Jessen

319.366.7503 x202

www.crma.org • email: jjessen@crma.org