The 60’s explosive environment encouraged experimentation and exploration of the new in every area of the arts. Innovative fiber work emerged out of the intrigue with exploring new concepts rooted in traditional techniques and materials. The result was an emergence of exciting new work.
1965 FABRIC COLLAGE featured a broad range of works.

FABRIC COLLAGE

CONTEMPORARY HANGINGS

AMERICAN QUILTS

SAN BLAS APPLIQUES
FABRIC COLLAGE represented work by Lillian Elliott, Alma Lesch, Elizabeth Jennerjahn, Marie Kelly and Marilyn Pappas. There was also a small exhibit of San Blas appliqués and historical quilts to make reference to tradition.
1967 STITCHING focused on embroidery and included a historical selection section.
The contemporary section of STITCHING featured work by Evelyn Svec Ward (left), and Helen Bitar (right). Also included was work by Lissy Funk from Switzerland, and William Schenk from Holland.
In 1966 THE MINIATURE TAPESTRY was the first exhibition to focus on small scale work. – Later the First International Exhibition of Miniature Textiles was organized by the British Craft Council 1974.
OBJECTS USA was the first major comprehensive craft survey collection that premiered in 1969 in Washington at the Smithsonian National Collection of Fine Art followed by a national tour to 22 museums in the US, and went to 11 countries of Europe.
OBJECTS USA was conceived by Lee Nordness, a New York gallery owner. Having organized ART USA sponsored by Johnson Wax, he convinced them to sponsor a sequel focused on work in the craft media. As he had limited knowledge of the field, he came to the MCC to seek advisory assistance. It resulted in extensive involvement in assembling the collection with the agreement that the museum would receive one third of it at the end of the tour which resulted in 22 fiber works being added to the then small MCC collection. Through the generosity of Johnson Wax most of the balance of the collection was given to other museums in the US who exhibited the show. Of the 250 artists represented 66 were in the fiber section.
Anni Albers (Left) and Ed Rossbach (right)
Ed Rossbach – wall hanging with braided fiber element in plastic tubing
OBJECTS USA

Katherine Westphal – quilted wall hanging – pioneer in contemporary quilting (left), Shiela Hicks – a work from her Moroccan series (center), Claire Zeisler – large 6 foot tall sculpture (right)
OBJECTS USA

Dominic DiMare (left) and Lillian Elliott (right)
Marilyn Pappas (left), Alma Lesch (center), and Susan Long (right)
OBJECTS USA

Carol Funai (left) and Kay Sekimachi (right)
OBJECTS USA

The collection had a great impact as it was an opportunity to view the vast amount of new creative expressions that emerged during the 1960s.
The national and international press it generated was enormous. “With These Hands” a one-hour film broadcast on prime time national television reached a massive audience. Its national and international tour cultivated much interest in new American work and fostered a serious market that and nurtured private collecting.
During the 60s and 70s several thematic shows were presented at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts and American Craft Museum. 1970 CONTEMPLATION ENVIRONMENTS - Many shows in the 60s and seventies reflected social trends of the time.
Ted Hallman created a fiber cube (left) and Alexsandra Kasuba made a stretched fabric environment that included a sculptural floor covering by Urban Jupena. Museum visitors were invited to use the spaces to contemplate.
1972 SCULPTURE IN FIBER – featured-loom work as an update of WOVEN FORMS.
Francoise Grossen
b. Neuchatel, Switzerland

Education:
- Ecole d'Art et d'Industrie, Neuchatel, Switzerland, 1963
- School of Architecture of the Polytechnique University, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1963-64
- Degree in Textile Design, School of Arts and Crafts, Basel, Switzerland, 1967
- Graduate work with Professor B. Kester
- University of California at Los Angeles, 1968
- University of California at Los Angeles, M.A., 1969

Teaching:
The New School, New York City, present
- Art School of the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, N.Y., present

Collections:
- Ovsey Fund, New York City
- Hyatt House, Chicago, Illinois

Residence:
- New York City

SCULPTURE IN FIBER
Francoise Grossen (left), Ed Rossbach (top right) and Ferne Jacobs (bottom right)
1972 FABRIC VIBRATIONS - focused on tie dye
Tie-dye was a technique that became an icon of sixties with tie dyed T-shirts everywhere. This exhibition featured refined and accomplished work by Marian Clayden (left). Garments created by Quinja and Multifarious Maya (right).
Turning the museum into a living center became a successful way to engage the public and bring in young people. In 1972 “Make a Banner – Fly a Banner” was held for a couple of weeks. The museum was set up as a workshop for making banners, and at the end of the event Marilyn Wood, the celebration artist created a parade around Rockefeller Center.

Many other public events were presented in Central Park and West 53rd Street was even closed for an artist event in front of the museum.
1973 SEWN STITCHED and STUFFED – featured another fiber focus – 18 artists including work by Paul Harris
SEWN STITCHED and STUFFED

Room environment created by Catherine Jansen
1974 as wearable art was emerging, CLOTHING TO BE SEEN presented unique handmade clothing.
DENIM ART – a result of a competition organized by Levi Strauss was presented in the main floor gallery.
The first quilt show to feature new concepts of quilting was held in 1976.

NEW AMERICAN QUILT featured work by Gwen-Lin Goo illustrated on the cover.
NEW AMERICAN QUILT
Katherine Westfall (left), Anne Raymo (center), and Helen Bitar (right)
1980 FELTING reported on a revival of an almost extinct skill and featured innovative work and a historical and technical section.
FELTING

Joan Livingstone (left) and Dina Barzel (right)
ART TO WEAR 1983 was an update on unique handmade clothing.
Through the United States Information Agency, ART TO WEAR toured Asia where it had a big influence in Korea.
1986 CRAFT TODAY: Poetry of the Physical

It was a major survey show curated on the 30th anniversary of ACM and the inauguration of the new museum space. It included over sixty works in fiber. As a sequel to OBJECTS USA the work in general reflected refinement and clarity of purpose.
CRAFT TODAY: Poetry of the Physical

Wall works included: Anne Wilson (top left), Lia Cook (bottom left), Warren Seelig (center), Adela Akers (top right), and Nance O’Banion (bottom right)
CRAFT TODAY: Poetry of the Physical

Small works: Diane Itter (left) and Mary Bero (right)
CRAFT TODAY: Poetry of the Physical

Quilting: Nancy Whittington (left) and Nancy Crow (right)
CRAFT TODAY: Poetry of the Physical

Vessel forms: John McQueen (left), Dorothy Gill Barnes (middle) and Jane Sauer (right)
CRAFT TODAY: Poetry of the Physical

Art to wear: Tim Harding (left) and Julia Hill (right)
After touring the US, an adapted version CRAFT TODAY: USA went to fifteen cities of Europe. The exhibition was acclaimed by the press and public.
The show had record breaking attendance - 40,000 in Warsaw – 20,000 in Moscow. There was great response to the American work because it was so different from what was going on in Europe.
The Gates (2005) was a large scale site-specific installation in Central Park by Bulgarian artist Christo Javacheff and French artist Jeanne-Claude, known jointly as Christo and Jeanne-Claude. The vast audience it attracted and the massive press it generated around the world honored the significance of fiber art. Jeanne-Claude in an interview said “It has no message, it has no purpose, it is just ART.”
A vast change has taken place during the 20th century. From a focus on traditional work to the break from tradition in the 1950s, today there is outstanding fiber work being created that is receiving both national and international recognition.

Fiber art receives considerable visibility in exhibitions throughout the country, at museums, galleries and high end art fairs and events.