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NIU COLLECTED

July 27, 1996

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, Illinois

Chicago, Illinois

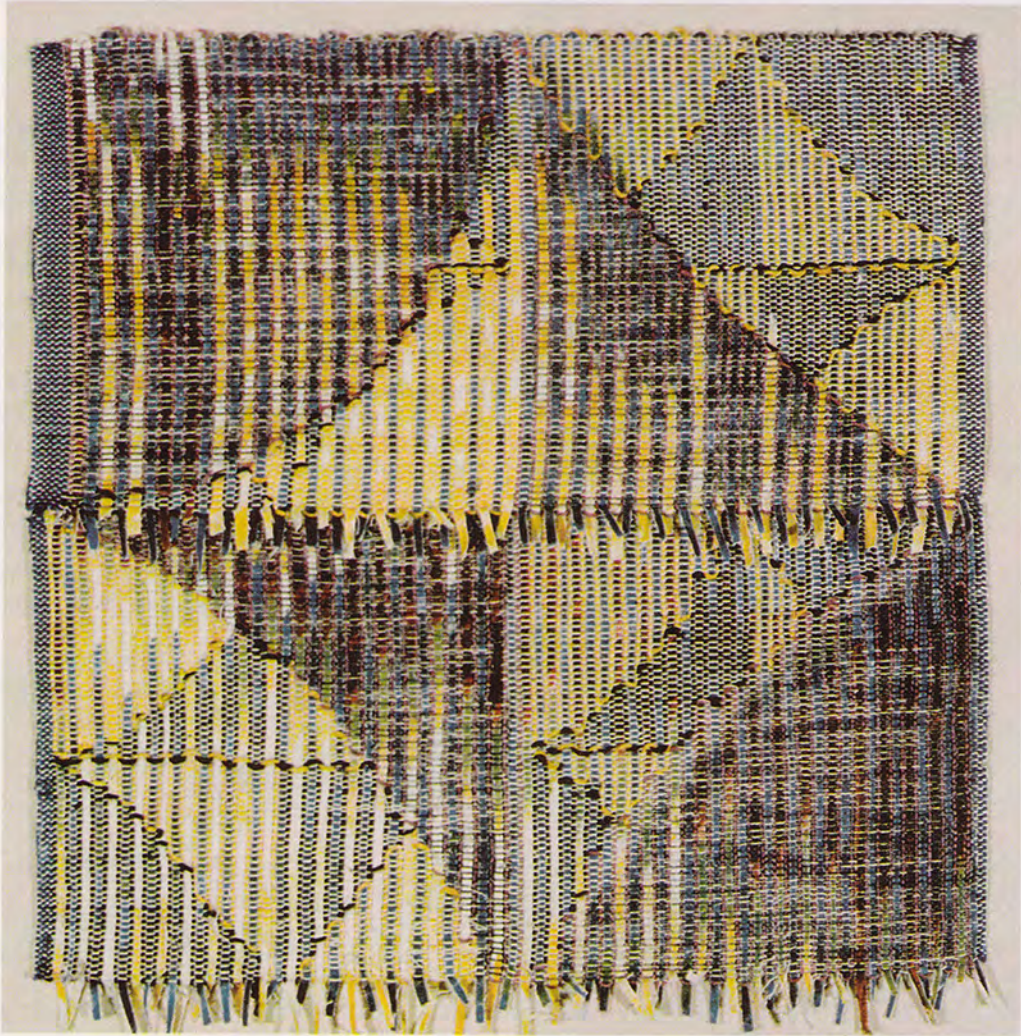
Chicago, Illinois

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rattan canes to support a sheathing of waxed linen and handmade paper. The edges and opening are irregular and meandering, a particular aesthetic characteristic of the artist's constructions. Bolle confirmed: "I like to work with edges and channels." The sometimes bowl-like character of her pieces also relates to her own previous work in ceramics and her admiration for the contemporary clay work of artists like Ruth Duckworth, whom she admires.

In contrast to the sculptural quality of Bolle's fiber piece, the woven fiber construction, *Between the Lines* (page 47), by **Gail Skudera**, appears at first glance to be much more traditional. There is, however, a conceptual element in the work not immediately apparent to the casual observer. The piece began as a painting on canvas, with the painting subsequently cut into quarter-inch strips. Each strip was then in sequence woven into the warp of a tapestry loom with hand-dyed threads interspersed between the canvas strips. The title is a play upon the process of fabrication itself. *Between the Lines* dates back to the mid-1980s when Skudera frequently used the loom. Much of her current fiber work is off-loom construction.

As the works in this exhibit show, the greater Chicago region has long been a rich cultural environment for artists, perhaps not always recognized sufficiently by our cultured cousins on the East and West Coasts. Certainly Chicago collecting over the years has been as acute and perceptive as collecting in most other regions of the United States, and regional collectors remain a highly significant resource for Chicago area artists (NIU alumni included). The willingness of individuals and institutions to chance patronage of emerging talent—the establishment of a vigorous symbiotic relationship between art-maker and art consumer—is crucial to the long-range vitality of an artistic community. The cross-section of art in this exhibition by NIU alumni artists, so generously loaned by the collectors who have supported those talents through acquisition, is a testament to the existence of that vitality.



Gail Skudera

Between the Lines, 1984

Collection of Susan Hanch, owner Help-U-Sell of Des Plaines