

Macrame's knot just another craft, it's a tying art

By SUSAN ROGERS

Just a bunch of string tied together in knots? Hardly.

"People who don't understand how much work goes into macrame don't appreciate it," said Jacqueline Bergey Ward of Troy.

Mrs. Ward, who is currently displaying some of her knotted creations at the Troy Public Library, has worked in macrame for about seven years.

Also a talented oil painter and sketcher, Mrs. Ward is not a stranger to the world of art. She received her bachelor's degree in painting and

drawing from the University of Michigan and a teaching certificate in art from Wayne State University.

"I taught for one year at an elementary school in Royal Oak," said the artist, who grew up in Ferndale. "It was called 'art on a cart' and I went from room to room with my equipment since I didn't have a room. It was a real experience," she laughed.

Mrs. Ward began macrame "just for fun," and has transformed it into a rather profitable hobby. "I show and sell my work at art fairs during the summers," she said. "While only a small amount of the work is commis-

sioned, I do it occasionally."

Mrs. Ward's work has been displayed at the Pleasant Ridge Art Fair, the Royal Oak Art Fair, Rochester Arts and Apples, the Rochester Street Fair, La Fayette Park, Meadowbrook, and the Warren Art Fair. She was asked to exhibit her work at the Chicago Art Fair in May and is "really excited about it."

ALTHOUGH SHE works mainly in macrame, her training was in painting and sketching. She describes her painting as "figurative or realistic."

"I paint what I like, and I like textures and surfaces," she said. "Reflective surfaces are fun to paint—glass and metal work well. And I love to paint fabric—I enjoy the challenge of trying to make it look real. My paintings have a lot of draperies in them," she laughed.

Mrs. Ward's macrame creations are something to see. Some as large as four by six feet, tied and knotted intricately to express something as delicate as lace or as rustic as cattle rope.

"I just start in," she says. "Usually I don't have any set pattern in mind, but if I do, I've been known to change it before I'm finished."

"In macrame the work is very controlled and formal," she said. "Although I do appreciate free form very much, I don't work that way."

While a great deal of macrame is done in color and highlighted with various color beads and ribbons, Mrs. Ward prefers natural colors and highlights of slate or bells or rustic woods. "I like natural, simple and rough things," she says.

"A lot of artists make a particular bell or bead the focal point of the whole piece. I only use things that are a part of the whole—nothing over-shadows the whole," she said.

One exception to her rule is a beautiful floor length hanging she did on commission. "The people had an old blue bell they wanted something built around," she said. "And the woman

said she loved Irish fisherman sweaters."

The result? A large macrame door hanging highlighted with a blue bell in the center and tiny blue beads near the bottom. And it resembles an Irish fisherman's sweater.

MRS. WARD DYES all her own material, although she works prima-

ry in neutral colors. "It's a lot easier to sell when it's done in a color anyone could use," she said.



JACQUELINE WARD

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"I usually work in jute and cotton seise and carve all my own headings." These are the wooden pieces that are used to begin the work on and then used to hang the piece when it's finished.

"I have an aunt in Colorado who sent me tons of wood and rocks to use in my work," she said.

Mrs. Ward gave up the career of a professional commercial artist in order to devote more time to raising a family. She worked for commercial firms like New Center Studios, Calvillo Associates and Allied Artists in down-

town Detroit for 7½ years.

"My two sons work with macrame a little, but not much," she said. "I started a door hanging a while back and hung strings in a doorway. The idea was that anybody who walked by could stop and work a little on it. One son did a row, and I ended up doing the rest," she laughed.

Mrs. Ward currently works three days a week at Lincoln Press in Royal Oak. She devotes Tuesdays and Thursdays to her macrame as well as teaching group macrame classes in her home. "I don't paint much any-

more," she said.

"Painting is something you have to keep at all the time and macrame you can pick up and put down. I really enjoy it—it's more than a hobby. It's my second profession," she said.

One of Mrs. Ward's most beautiful pieces contains more than one mile of string. Another took her more than a year to complete. "I was at an art fair recently and heard one person look at my work and say to the other, 'Oh, it's just a bunch of knots,'" she said.

"I just died."



Dancer as Joan of Arc

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