

the craft factor

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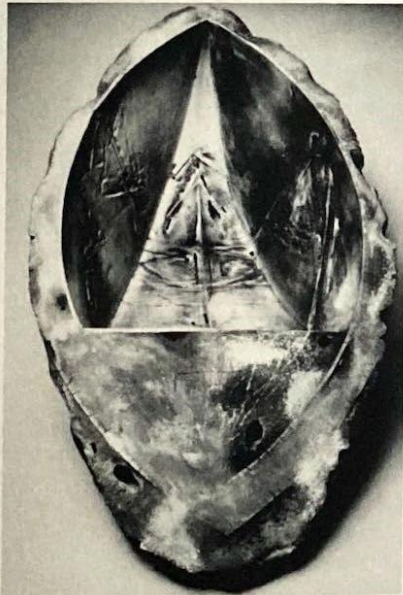
Courtesy of the artist



Courtesy of the artist



Courtesy of the artist



Courtesy of the artist

Clockwise:
 SUSAN ECKENWALDER *Cup (Object to be buried with)* Porcelain, smoke fired, ink, water colour 4½" c1981
 BRIAN BAXTER *Untitled window* Leaded window, various clears and whites 40x20" Private residence Vancouver 1982
 STEVE HEINEMANN *Untitled* Earthenware, slipcast, sandblasted, multiple-firings 80cm l 1985-87 Collection of artist
 GORD PETERAN *Bird Pedestal* Cherry, ebony, bleached English chestnut 37h x 15" sq. 1987 collection Dr. E. Kerr

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 Photo: Grant Kernan — A.K. Photos

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 JIM SATHER *demonstrating at Battleford Handcraft Festival*
 Photo: Menno Fieguth

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JAMIE RUSSELL

Michael Bantjes



The best of Jamie Russell's furniture has an unassuming presence that spurns flashiness in favour of more lasting values. Immediately apparent is his use of curves, lines and planes to achieve a dynamic balance of negative and positive space within and around the pieces. He avoids the obvious and boring by taking chances with expectations of proportion and form; stretching the legs and shortening the back of *Leroy's Stool*; opposing flared legs and spreading struts in the *Drop Leaf Dining Table*; and juxtaposing space-age arcs with a templelike music holder in *Music Stand for Old Hippies*.

Jamie subtitled his show "a personal exploration in technique and design". When I visited his studio this summer, he told me his objective was to integrate design and technique, to find out his limitations and establish a basis for future development. He is firmly committed to not only continuing but improving his solid wood furniture despite economic restraints.

He moved to Ruddell in 1984, partly in an attempt to reduce his expenses. The rural environment and the existing crafts community in the village were also attractions but one of the greatest benefits has proved to be the privacy to concentrate on his work without interruptions. The increasing quality of his work and low overheads have not been enough to prevent his having to subsidize commissions and craft sales from his savings. Rather than compromise his designs and reduce his enjoyment and satisfaction in solid wood construction, he has begun taking commissions for commercial plywood cabinets. Having quit this kind of work six years ago, he is determined to keep a balance now, estimating that by spending no more than a third of his time on plywood construction he can provide three quarters of the income he requires. The repetitive, boring nature of much of the work has proved to be a more enjoyable change from solidwood construction than he predicted. For Jamie, "hard work is a poor man's narcotic" and is much more enjoyable when he does not have to worry about investing time in a piece he may not be able to sell.



Photo: Grant Kernan — A.K. Photos

FURNITURE MAKER

STATE OF THE ARTISAN SCC GALLERY JULY 1987

Despite working 10-12 hours at a stretch, there is a balance in Jamie's life that indicates he may also be able to maintain the balance he wants in his work. He grows a small garden and keeps chickens. His house is inexpensively but attractively renovated and well kept. He lives with his own furniture, which helps to explain his concern and sensitivity to its function. As he says, he is not easy on his furniture and everything about it is designed for his lifestyle. A chair built by one of his grandfathers, both of whom were furniture builders, one a master cabinet maker, the other a serious amateur, establishes a link with his heritage.

In his medium sized shop, Jamie has all the tools he needs to produce his furniture. Bandsaw, drill press, sander, jointer, and lathe circle three walls; planer, tablesaw and benches share the middle; two windows in the fourth wall provide a view of the Saskatchewan River valley. When I visited, Jamie was finishing several tambour top boxes for the Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival market with his usual oil and urethane mixture. The centre of the shop was filled with a plywood reception desk for an office in North Battleford, the modern design with curves and stepped planes by Jamie, the plastic laminate colours selected by the interior decorator.

Jamie resists high flown reasons for his design decisions, explaining that much of his design is a result of his techniques. "I am not tempted by art, function is the backbone of my design". He uses North American hardwoods because they are economical, easy on his blades and non-allergenic, not because of moral outrage at the depletion of rainforests or a special love of the colour and figure in the woods he so carefully selects. In the same vein he claims that his bent laminations are merely a low tech way to make curves. This may be true, but does not explain why he pushes this technique to the limits seen in the wedge inserts and careful contrasting and matching of grain in the laminations of the back corners of his *Afghan Easy Chair*.



JAMIE RUSSELL *Afghan Easy Chair* detail
top left: *Drop-leaf Dining Table* Ash
bottom left: *Music Stand for Old Hippies*
Who Sit on the Floor and Play Guitar
Bent laminated birch plywood, cherry

Photo: Grant Kernan — A.K. Photos

He began designing at age 11; too lazy to follow plans, he devised his own shortcuts while building a plywood scow. However, he is not too lazy to inform himself about design and art. Active involvement in the organization of several conferences on design and technique has brought him into contact with leading designers, builders and their work. Two important influences have been Stuart Welch and Art Carpenter during a four month Baulines Craft Guild apprenticeship in California. Jamie feels Art Carpenter affected his approach to design, one example being the use of simple models to help develop or check design ideas before actual construction.

Stuart Welch encouraged his interest in hand tools, one result being the introduction of carving seen in *Sundance Coffee Table* and *Ragtime*. *Ragtime* is a turtle shaped music box (which plays Scott Joplin); the quilted mahogany shell has been beautifully shaped and sanded on the outside to show the grain, but the delicate and precise marks of the gouge have been left inside. In addition to his connections with Rochester, Krenoff, Castle and Freid, Stuart Welch impressed Jamie with his attitude of 'do it right or don't do it at all'.

The design of some of the pieces of furniture in Jamie's show suffers from a failure to achieve his aim of integrating design and technique. I feel that his ambivalent attitude to art has prevented him from being as critical of his design as his technique. The strength of the show is that it is truly an exploration of design, and not merely a presentation of stock solutions.

In the *Work Table*, Jamie tries to integrate a pair of flared legs which cross a pair of inward curved legs. The curved legs appear to sag, making the flared legs look chunky, an impression reinforced by the light, square top and blocky stretcher. A table which is useful and sturdy and meant to be, looks awkward and unbalanced. In the *Dictionary Stand*, both sets of legs curve the same way, giving a thrusting, assured look, like a soldier at attention.

The gussets at the joint of seat and back legs in *Leroy's Stool* and *Afghan Easy Chair* add strength at an important point but obscure an otherwise crisp and lively junction. The integrity of this decision does moderate visual disappointment. The gussets, struts and locking cams under the *Drop Leaf Dining Table* also have serious functional reasons for being. Visually, they succeed better through their frivolous associations, the streamlined gussets looking bouyant as boat hulls seen underwater, and the crescent childproof locking cams adding a note of whimsy to the otherwise straightforward operation of the drop leaves.

My interest in *Sundance Coffee Table*, unlike the many visitors who wrote their admiring comments in the guest book, is undermined by structural anomalies. I would have liked it better if it had really been held together by its rawhide straps which were so obviously a decorative addition to a sturdy dowel framework. The carved bone pins holding the glass were interesting but the carved skull suspended from the intersecting rawhide was not lean and fragile enough. That Jamie has ability is demonstrated by the turtle shell in *Ragtime*, and I look forward to seeing more carving in the future.

The furniture in this show has the same high quality of construction and finish that have characterized Jamie's work in the past. I feel he could make more use of dovetail or tenon joints, as he has on the front legs of *Leroy's Stool*, rather than being overly dependant on plugged screw joints. The quality of Jamie's design has definitely improved becoming lighter, more graceful and more adventurous. Having incorporated recent influences, his style is evolving and maturing, but is still very much Jamie Russell.

Michael Bantjes is a sculptor and a designer of theatre sets, and environmental and museum displays.

Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival Juried Exhibition

July 15, 16, 17, 1988
Jurying dates: May 6, 7, 1988

Work submitted for jurying must have been completed after January 1, 1987, and must not have been shown in any other exhibition.

The deadline dates are once again well in advance of the Festival dates to allow for jurying, photography and detailed documentation. The summer issue of *The Craft Factor* will again contain the *Dimensions* catalogue, including coloured reproductions of the prize winning works and other exhibits.

dimensions '88

Gale Steck

Incite '87 drew together many of the most experienced craftspeople in the province and offered them the chance to exchange ideas with some really exciting resource people. The accommodation at Fort San could only be classified as "institutional spartan", the natural setting as "Prairie Valley supreme" and the food as "almost awful". The sound and sight of youthful bagpipers was the backdrop for a weekend of intellectual stimulation.

The first day was entirely devoted to the slides provided by resource people. They were exciting, innovative but taken all at once definitely a sensory overload.

Next day we were asked to choose to attend a specific media session. It was so hard to choose! I wanted to go to all the media sessions! I went to listen to Steve Heinemann and was not disappointed. At the same time I was torn between the wonderful calligraphic lines and adventurous use of glass by Brian Baxter and the off-the-wall, innovative basket and gut creations by Pat Hickman and Lillian Elliott.

Steve Heinemann, from Gormley, Ontario, works in clay. Saskatchewan people may have seen his work in "Beyond the Object", a travelling show curated by Brian Gladwell. His present work considers the balance between the natural and the man-made. Recently he has used cast forms roughly shaped on the outside but containing within this shape an imprint resembling an iron. The surfaces are like worn-down shale and are arrived at by sandblasting and the application of coloured metal oxides.

The clay media session took place on a grassy slope in brilliant August sunshine. In a group of ten people interested in talking about their experiences with clay, we tossed around some intriguing ideas. What is the status of the craftsperson in the community compared to those who call themselves artists? Historically, what has been the status of those people? When 'showing in galleries' becomes a way of life for artists and craftspeople, does this fact change or dictate the type of work produced? Does it influence the quality of craftsmanship? I got drowsy in the sunshine and eventually found it hard to keep myself at the task of intellectualizing but I brought away many ideas to work away on in quiet moments.

As the Incite experience matures in my mind, I appreciate the companionship of fellow craftspeople and the time set aside to exchange ideas again, the new ideas offered by the resource people and most of all, the chance for this kind of stimulation offered by the SCC to working craftspeople in Saskatchewan.

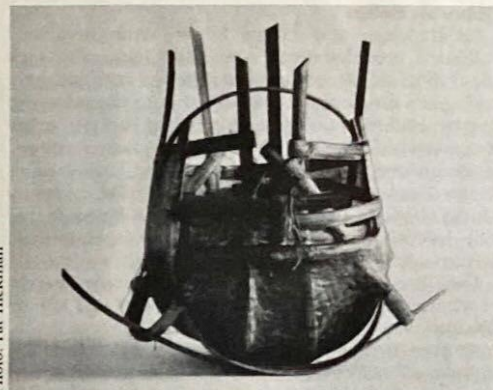


Photo: Pat Hickman



Courtesy of the artist

LILLIAN ELLIOTT/PAT HICKMAN *Samurai*
Mixed materials 14½ x 17 x 15 1986

STEVE HEINEMANN *Untitled* Earthenware,
pressed over mould, sandblasted, multiple-firings
28cm h 1984-85 Collection of artist

INCITE '87 INNOVATIONS
SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AUGUST 7-10

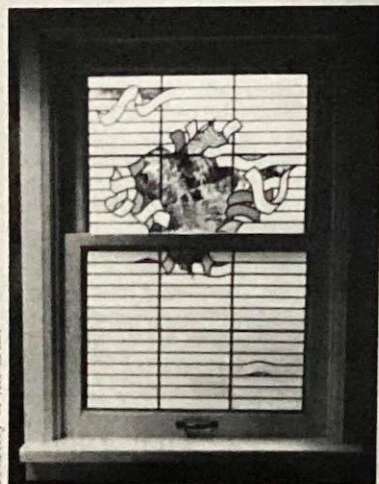
Kelly Brown

Brian Baxter's glass workshop offered a unique and fresh approach to stained glass. Brian was trained in graphic design and was influenced by Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Japanese art. His work has a very untraditional look and is technically well executed. Brian offered a broader understanding of the media and its relative place in art and present day architecture. Discussion dealt with his approach to architectural problems and how glass could be integrated into a particular architectural format.

Brian's work branches away from the traditional direction of stained glass in that he uses coloured glass sparingly and subtly to enhance an overall effect. Brian's view of glass is that it is a medium for working with light and the beauty of glass is in its texture and light content. His latest glass pieces are not intended to transmit light at all but to be reflective. This forces the viewer to look at the qualities of the glass, not through it.

Brian uses sandblasting with different resists to carve into the surface of the glass, and acids applied in a painterly fashion to etch the glass surface creating interesting optical effects. He uses commercially available clear and patterned glass — another notable departure from traditional stained glass — and layers glass using various bonding agents.

It was a pleasure to have Brian as the glass artist at Incite. His approach challenged workshop participants to look at glass in an untraditional way, offering new ideas and experiences. This opportunity to collaborate and exchange viewpoints and insights is a positive and necessary experience for Saskatchewan craftspeople. Opportunities such as Incite are practically non-existent in the province. Hopefully Incite '88 will be as successful.



Courtesy of the artist

Deborah Behm

Pat Hickman and Lillian Elliott, from Berkeley, California, provided the focus for fibre. Hickman, a textile anthropologist, became interested in using sausage casing as a medium after she saw Inuit gut parkas on display. Hickman uses the casings like papier mache to create translucent sculptures. Lillian Elliott, a weaver, screenprinter and writer, specializes in large basket forms. The two women collaborate, with Pat covering Lillian's baskets. In 1985, they submitted a piece to the 12th International Biennial of Tapestry in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The fibre workshop consisted of ten people, several of whom brought slides of their work. Pat and Lillian discussed their own work in detail. There was much interest in Hickman's use of hog casings. Elliott brought samples of her "collapse" fabric, which obtains its textural interest through the spin of the yarn used in the weaving. Both artists addressed the interests of the group, ranging from the production of baskets to the combining of poetry and quilting.

While they were receptive to questions and considered in their critiques, both artists work from specific biases. Their emphasis is on large, strong, "almost ugly" (to quote Elliott) forms; both women agreed this was important for women demanding attention in the art world. Consequently, they attached less significance to small, delicate, "feminine" work which sometimes led them into the same prejudices they were fighting. Permanency was far less a consideration to these women than it was to Susan Eckenwalder, the editor of *Ontario Craft*, who believed artists should focus on permanent works, "burial objects." Even given these biases, the fibre workshop was useful to both the production worker and those making unique items.

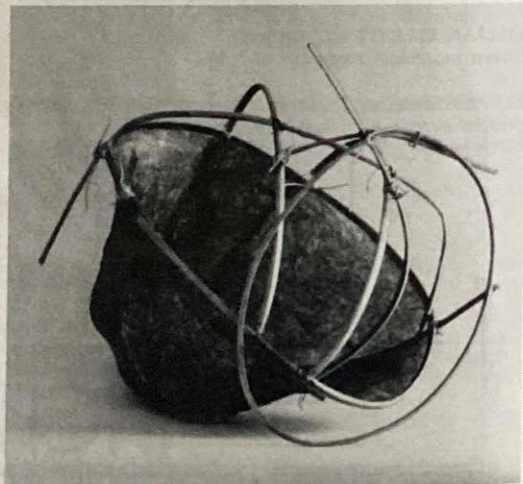


Photo: Pat Hickman

Sandra Ledingham

Most things we create could be said to be collaborative since we never investigate and create in a vacuum. Often the collaboration has been a silent one; occurring over a long period of time, it has involved many experiences and many people. Because the sources for the final idea have been so numerous, because we have absorbed them, chewed them over and regurgitated them as our own, we tend not to consider them collaborations. Instead we think of collaboration as the group input just before and during the actual execution of the project.

I have participated in a few collaborative projects over the years and those that worked best were those where the technical, aesthetic or product related concerns came first and the choice of collaborators emerged after. At Banff, a summer course on 'Collaboration' brought together an arbitrary group of diverse artists with a mere two weeks 'to make it all happen' — it was a groping and confusing experience. The seminar at Incite '87 also brought together a diverse group of folk attempting to find common ground and an idea around which to collaborate. On both occasions, there was a struggle to evoke good ideas, and in Banff to execute them. The results in both cases felt premature and an inversion of the process. However what did occur at Incite '87 was the process of interaction and brainstorming that is fundamental to arriving at final works and is the reason why many people desire a collaborative or co-operative experience. It can break the impasses in our own work and give us new perspectives and feedback on our own progress.

The guest collaborators, Lillian Elliott and Pat Hickman, deemed their collaborative works not better but different from their personal works. They state the great advantage of collaboration is that it provides twice the energy, twice the time and twice the finances which allows for larger undertakings, larger from the point of view of size of works as well as complexity of projects. These two artists have a clear understanding of each others contribution and they have endured the whole process long enough to make collaboration work. In their case one works on the form, one works on the surface; Lillian's forms are of woven wood fibres, Pat's surface of gut. Because they do many collaborations together, one piece of work need not say it all. Therefore they can control more easily problems such as equal input and equal representation in each piece. When Lillian finishes a form, Pat responds to it. Pat may decide the form needs very little in the way of applied gut surface; she may decide it needs lots; or that she has nothing to contribute to an already complete statement, in which case she hands it back to Lillian as her own.



Courtesy of the artist

SUSAN ECKENWALDER *Cup (Object to bury)*
Porcelain, decal, gold lustre, china paint 4" c1976

far left:
BRIAN BAXTER *Untitled window*
Leaded, sandblasted semi-antique & handblown glass 30x20"w Private residence Vancouver 1982

left:
LILLIAN ELLIOTT/PAT HICKMAN *Circle Helmet*
Mixed material 26x28x36 1987

over:
GORD PETERAN *Chairs* Red oak, black leather
30hx19dx18" 1985 collection John Shnier



Courtesy of the artist

Sandra Flood

Susan Eckenwalder, Editor of *Ontario Craft*, gave an unexpected, witty and thought provoking twist to her opening presentation on "The craft revolution and the future" by suggesting that craftspeople are, or should be, making 'grave goods'. I hope to carry that presentation in a future issue of TCF.

My hope of a resurgence of craft writing and writers inspired by Susan's workshop on reviewing crafts was dashed by the small number of participants at Incite. However, in time snatched from gaps in the schedule

— between 6 on Sunday morning, when we were woken by kilted barbarians screaming and skirling their bagpipes through the misty valley and along corridors, and brunch at 11 o'clock — Incite was, for me as Editor, an invaluable chance to talk with Susan about magazine production, to review our two magazines and discuss other topics dear to editors' hearts.

Yoshimi Woolsey

In comparison to previous Incites, Incite '87 was very much focused on the 'thinking' side and quite structured, with the program running roughly according to the schedule. Previous Incites were more 'hands-on' and were so free and loose that they ended up being more like a big party. This helped participants to be open and to try something new without worrying about making mistakes. Either way, how much one learns totally depends on the participants' readiness to learn.

Fort San seems to be an ideal site for Incite with its civilized facilities (flush toilets and showers) although the food bore no comparison to the fantastic home-cooking of the Ruddell community ladies. After attending Incite '87, it is clear to me that Incite has finally begun to shape itself. I would like to see Incite well balanced between 'thinking' and 'doing'. 'Doing' does not have to deal with materials in the regular workshop way. When more of us in Saskatchewan are through with our 'technique' stage and enter into the 'ideas' stage, Incite will see more participants.

**CALL FOR ENTRIES
A SHOW OF COLLABORATIVE WORKS**

The Exhibition Committee of the SCC has planned a show of collaborative works to open in the fall of 1988. Pieces should involve the participation of two or more individuals at least one of whom is a member of the SCC.

All entries will be curated on the basis of proposals, so actual production of pieces can be done after the makers know that the work will be shown.

Proposals should include the names of the individuals involved, a description of their participation, and a description of the work as planned. Any additional support materials such as sketches of the proposed work, photographs or slides of previous work done jointly or separately by those involved, or additional written material will be welcomed.

All proposals should be postmarked by January 15, 1988, but may be sent in before that time to:
Collaborations Curator, Cathryn Miller
Box 51, R.R. #5, Saskatoon, Sask., S7K 3J8

For further information, write to the above address or call 374-9176.

Crafts in Manitoba

Jim Romanow Executive Director Manitoba Crafts Council

From September 23 to 26th, ten delegates from SCC will be attending the Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Canadian Craft Council at Winnipeg. Manitoba Crafts Council will host the conference and a series of workshops, tours, receptions and other jollifications.

The Manitoba Crafts Council was established in the mid seventies to answer a problem faced by increasing numbers of professional craftspeople in the province. The need was access to the market, to the galleries and to the ear of the governing bodies. The answer was the tried and true professional organization.

Manitoba craftspeople needed to be able to regularly contact the market and they needed to communicate ideas about craft, design and all matters technical to improve the quality of Manitoba craft. This required a physical facility. From 1977 to 1986 MCC spent considerable time and effort lobbying governments. The first step was convincing the governments that gentrification of a decaying area is more likely with the support of the arts. The second step was costing a facility; figuring out just what we wanted and needed. The third step was finding the funds to finish the project. The result was Artspace: a six floor fully renovated turn of the century building shared with eighteen other organizations. MCC has a thirteen hundred foot gallery called Craftspace, a five hundred foot office and we share a fourteen hundred foot workshop area with the Manitoban local of CAR/FAC.

We opened Craftspace in November 1986. The budget was shorter than a shoe string. We spent eleven and a half thousand on the fixtures and leasehold improvement. Rent and insurance cost three thousand for the first quarter. We benefit from the low rental cost of \$3.50 per square foot. This kind of statistic has hypnotized many an erstwhile shop or gallery owner. In real terms the gallery will cost **thirty-five thousand** to stay open

***We have two goals
for the next decade:
to raise the average
quality of craft in
Manitoba and in-
crease the incidence
of survival.***

this year. This does not include cost of goods sold. It does presume understaffing and a great deal of volunteer time and blood.

I encourage people to open craft shops and galleries. We need more of them. However, I have witnessed too much optimism from too many craftspeople to hide the figures. I have heard that we could have done it for less. The only way it can be done for less is with sweat equity. It is difficult enough for craftspeople to feed themselves without encouraging three to six months without pay. Incidentally, we don't expect to break even until next year.

The second main facility that we are developing is the workshop area. The leasehold improvements and equipment for the area will cost twenty thousand. We have staged a number of workshops and lectures in this space and rent it at cost to other organizations. The final facility is our office. Having sufficient square footage to house a resource centre, a slide file and an efficient office is a huge improvement.

We have two goals for the next decade: to raise the **average** quality of craft in Manitoba and increase the incidence of survival. Manitoba has its share of superlative craftspeople. We also have our share of inferior crafts. We need to raise the average, and compress the range of quality available to the consumer. The stigma of "handmade" is a result of pioneer values (how many of us learned the difference between "store-bought" and "homemade" from our grandparents or parents?) and poor work masquerading as craft. On the prairies today I believe a twenty thousand dollar annual income is enough to exist decently. Poverty is no spur to creativity. To earn that figure as a craftspeople is difficult. The price of work is low. The total market is limited to around two million people. Easy access is limited to perhaps one third of that. The situation will not change in the next ten years without concerted, organized work.

Our programming evolves from this position. Firstly we try to push craftspeople front and centre whenever we get the chance. Opening Craftspace gives us a big opportunity to do just that. In addition to the regular display and sale of members work, we are mounting members shows roughly every three weeks. This gives all of our members a chance to display their avant garde, or theme focused, or just a body of typical work. We also make an effort to get the members' work into the public media.

Craft on the prairies is cheap, compared to the USA, compared to the rest of Canada.

Secondly we want to make craftspeople aware that they are not unique or isolated. Part of our programming is deliberately focused on giving the craftspeople an opportunity to meet and mix. I have little faith in the theory of solitary genius. The history of society and craft is the slow evolution of ideas from the building blocks of others. We need to be aware of our community; to nurture it and to grow from it. To this end we hold lectures, workshops, and movies of marginally related topics.

We hold generic workshops about design, portfolio presentation, taxes, marketing, etc. These workshops provide craftspeople of all media with the survival skills our society requires. You will have a difficult time existing in the eighties without an understanding of bookkeeping. You **will not survive** without a thorough understanding of how to present and market your craft. This is true even if your market is government galleries and grants.

A less explored area for us is trying to provide workshops on a professional level. Previously we have facilitated such workshops when staged by the craft specific guilds. We would like to use our larger resources to bring in major artists to teach our members. I should point out that there are grants from the Canada Council that will allow any group to do that. The isolation of our location tends to make prairie craftspeople inward looking. This is a great strength. I would like, however, to see more cross fertilization of ideas.



Manitoba Craft Council Craftspace

Craftspeople face an enormous number of difficulties in the next ten years. These problems are magnified on the prairies, where many of us are hanging on by our fingernails. There are three large pressures on Manitobans that are not as bad on the coasts or east of the Sault. Firstly the value placed on our work is depressed. Secondly the design trends are incestuously homogeneous. Thirdly our market, and channels of access, is ridiculously limited.

Craft on the prairies is cheap, compared to the USA, compared to the rest of Canada. The trends from the rest of the country are slow to reach here and often distorted when they appear. Winnipeggers are regrettably eager to purchase Rosenthal slipcast for much more than they will pay for work by local potters of international repute. The educated and affluent market that buys craft in Winnipeg is just beginning to buy "Memphis" ripoffs. I know of three craftspeople unknown in the province that make a decent living by selling

their entire product outside the city; two of them work in extremely limited quantities. This provides two lessons. We all need to access a bigger market than is immediately available. We need to publicize ourselves **and our friends**. The public will not pay hundreds of dollars for a phenomena that is unknown. They need to be reassured that they are not being swindled. This is most easily done if they have heard of, or seen, the work before.

The phenomena of post-modernism is quite interesting. After five years of exhibition it is appearing on the prairies now. It doesn't matter if you are violently pro- or anti-Memphis. The more important question is how much your design owes to particular sources. The worst design flaw I see in prairie craft is too few sources. Partly this is due to geographic isolation. It costs a great deal to visit galleries elsewhere. There are a limited number of teachers from whom to learn. Unfortunately few craftspeople have made much effort to remedy this. The reason design flows out of Toronto and out of New York is

Photo: courtesy MCC

A population of thirty-nine million is within a thousand mile radius.

Craftspeople stand for value. Society has not put that concept in the education system for a number of years. If we want to survive we will need value recognized, identified, and supported.

I would like to live in a world where there was a path beaten to the door of the designer. I do not. I am not by nature a salesman. To hawk wares seems embarrassing and risks the humiliation of rejection. Fortunately I have the option of hawking my work in civilized places: art galleries where work is sold, craft stores, craft fairs, agents. Also I can apply for government support. All of these places require active cultivation. We are back suddenly to hawking my wares. I must

learn the skills of the hawk. I must learn what form of presentation these people are seeking (photos? descriptions? slides?). I must learn why my work appeals to strangers (surface decoration? detail? colour?). I must learn to present my work so these parts are seen. I must go the market. The craftspeople of Manitoba must actively pursue the Saskatchewan, Albertan, Wisconsin and Minnesotan market. A population of thirty-nine million is within a thousand mile radius.

Anyone over thirty has outgrown that romantic myth, that has done so much to harm modern art, of starving in a garret. For every van Gogh that has been discovered after death there have been fifty artists buried with their work. This does no one — not society, not the artist — any good. Most craftspeople in MCC are over thirty. Their greatest strength is having learned to survive while working their craft. Their greatest challenge will be surviving for another ten years. Craft is an exciting, expanding milieu. Our goal is to communicate that excitement to the general population and to the crafts community.

Elevator Dreams

September 26 to October 29, 1987

Jean Kares exhibits an exciting combination of tapestries, warp painted woven works and screenprinted fabric works; all make use of the image of the grain elevator.

Opening: September 25, 1987

Images and Imaginings

October 31 to November 26, 1987

Three-dimensional works in fabric and clay by Nancy Fortier and Dianne Young of Prince Albert communicate a sense of playfulness with materials while presenting something a little unexpected.

Opening: October 30, 1987

Northern Comfort

November 28 to December 31, 1987

This exhibition of afghans by Kaija Sanelma Harris explores a variety of techniques, and provides a sensual experience in colour and texture.

Opening: November 27, 1987

Sundance Teaching

January 2 to February 4, 1988

Lee Brady's series of stained glass pieces are inspired by the beliefs and myths of the Plains Indians. The designs permit experimentation with various treatments: etching, multiple layering, fusing and wire overlays.

Opening: January 9, 1988

Saskatchewan Craft Gallery

1231 Idylwyld Dr. N., Saskatoon (corner of Idylwyld & 34th)

Saskatchewan Craft Gallery exhibition proposals are accepted at any time. For more information or applications contact Catherine Macaulay, Gallery Co-ordinator.

Open daily: 1:00 - 5:00

IS THE PINK FLAMINGO EXTINCT?

DIMENSIONS '87 SCC GALLERY SEPTEMBER 1987

Miranda Jones

Throw out your pink plastic flamingoes folks. If the choice of this year's Premier's Prize is an indicator of contemporary crafts in Saskatchewan, then this is the year of the Muskox. This does not mean that kitsch is entirely dead, far from it, however, all that is flighty, colourful and exotic appears to be on its last legs.

This is not to demean Marg Rudy's winning entry. Her *Man's Long Scarf* made of handspun, handwoven muskox qiviut is a very fine piece. It does, however, represent a certain lack of inspiration which seems to be indicative of much of the Dimensions '87 exhibition. The muskox conjures up images of a treeless and forlorn landscape; of entrenched and stubborn earthiness; and a certain ability to fend off attack by more agile newcomers. This is fitting for an exhibition which contains only a handful of pieces which indicate exceptional creative and manipulative agility and truly innovative effort. In fact it appears that the jurors have compromised severely in their efforts to select mutually agreeable works. This seems to be a common problem in panel juried exhibitions, and should be taken into account when viewing the show. This year's jurors were Karen Cantine, metalsmith from Edmonton; Matthew Teitelbaum, curator at the Mendel Art Gallery; and James Thornsbury, ceramist now working out of Vancouver.

Certainly the earthy, minimal, understated and occasionally downright bizarre are in the majority in this show. As a consequence some of the more interesting entries stand out like sore thumbs. One example is Corin Flood's *Collage #1: City*, a cabinet made of wood, steel, aluminum, marble and copper. This is an exciting piece of post-modern sculptural eclecticism. Skillfully assembled and provoking in its juxtaposition of contemporary and classical methods, materials and motifs, it appears totally out of context in the makeshift gallery of the Battleford Arena. Although somewhat forced in its efforts to find a meeting ground for so many disparate elements, this piece does succeed in striking a disturbing balance between ancient decay and a space age renewal. The only other furniture in the show is by Michael Hosaluk. A highly skilled craftsman, Hosaluk has submitted two virtually identical tables in glass and metal, one black and the other blue. These are similar in design to his 1986 entry, though less ambitious and more derivative. He does himself a disservice by submitting two as this gives them an air of slick mass production however fine the workmanship.

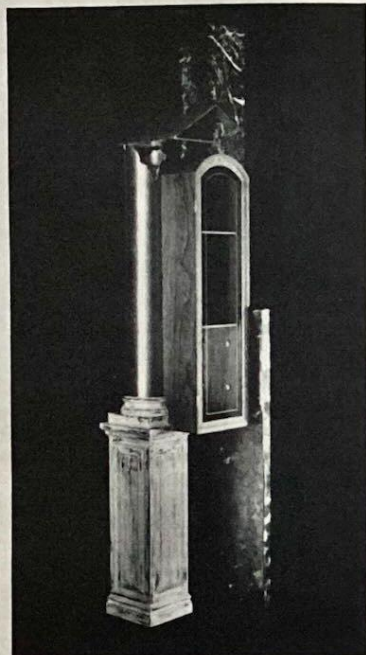


Photo: Grant Kernan - A.K. Photos

By far the strongest representation in the show is in the area of clay, thanks no doubt to juror James Thornsbury's critical influence. Several fine pieces stand out for their simple honesty. Sandy Dumba's *Basket*, made of raku fired clay, is one. Its unusual curved form reflects the stress we would expect to be exerted were the handle made of a metal spring. The simple coils which attach the handle to the basket reinforce this sense of dynamic yet restrained energy. Denise Martin's *Piece of Earth*, a pit fired, burnished clay jar, has a rich black surface suggesting the careful polishing of an archaeological find. Its carved geometric patterning is bold and primitive and well integrated into the form of the jar while it adds to a spiritual sense of ancient times. Lindsay Anderson plays, in an explorative way, with the dynamics of gravity and balance in *Raku Vessel*. A rough edged smoked ring borders a simple bowl, the egg shell delicacy of this piece is enhanced by its fine tuned suspension. Dark smoked hieroglyphs



Photo: Grant Kernan - A.K. Photos

far left:
CORIN FLOOD *Collage #1: City*
Cabinet Wood, steel, aluminum,
marble, copper 92x20x20"

left:
MEL BOLEN *Steve's Fav*
Stoneware bowl Black with brown
& gold brushwork 4x20 1/2"w

below:
LINDSAY ANDERSON *Raku vessel*
with fumed hanging rim 6x20"

on the underside of the vessel can be seen in the mirrored surface on which this piece is aptly displayed. *Steve's Fav*, a stoneware bowl with black, brown and gold brushwork by Mel Bolen, is quiet and strong, confident circular motifs lend an oriental sense of movement to this sturdy piece. Donovan Chester displays a raku vessel with refreshingly different form and Ardin Howard's *Covered Jar, Best in Clay Award*, although less inspiring in form has a luscious glaze of rich blues and lavenders. A variety of other clay pieces belong to a competent production level with the exception of Charley Farrero's *Le Vase Rose* which is raw, crude and gutsy. Though not his most successful piece by any means, this does attempt to go beyond the traditional in its application of painterly coloured clay slips. Not surprisingly most clay pieces sold on opening night.

Although more than amply represented, one of the weakest areas in the show is that of fibre. Given an obvious lack of jurors specialization in this field one is led to suspect they found in fibre a neutral meeting ground. The most outstanding piece is undoubtedly Kaija Sanelma Harris's *Mirage Three*, a doubleweave tapestry suggesting multiple horizons and ghostlike grain elevator forms. Her *His and Her* blankets are exceptional as production pieces, as is most of Harris's work. Of note also are Pat Adam's *Untitled* colour blended woven wall hanging, Cathryn Miller's *Dream Jacket #2* and Lorraine Ziola and Debi Wiggelsworth's *Seeds of Silk*, a handspun, handknit angora and silk cardigan. Full marks also to Annemarie Buchmann-Gerber, who is attempting to push fibre beyond its traditional applications. Gerber combines stitchery with acrylic paint on a woven ground, resulting in a richly textured surface with unusual, though slightly muddy, colour combinations. Her composition lacks strength at this stage.

A variety of competent traditional quilts and samplers pad out the fibre contributions as do a few tired square cut, woven garments. It is sad to see so much effort go into the creation of fabric only to be pieced into an unimaginative and unflattering jacket or skirt. One issue of Italian Vogue will give you a million ideas of what to do with woven yardage... and while we're on the bandwagon, it is always surprising to see so little knitting of consequence in a province of sub-zero winters. There is so much market potential in this country for unique, colourful, well shaped, one of a kind handknits but... where are the knitters hiding?

Last but not least in the fibre section is the wonderful tour de force by Kada and Kitsch, *Together We'll Stand*, a bridal gown in leather, beads and rabbit fur.



Photo: Grant Kernan - A.K. Photos

colour works

Helen Cooke

A splash of colour arrived at the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery in June. Ann McLellan's show exemplifies the current revival of interest in majolica techniques. At one time these brighter colours and low temperature firings usually meant lead-bearing glazes. Contemporary glazes and commercial stains can be food safe thus greatly expanding the colour palette available to the potter.

Ann's show was an exploration of these materials on a wide range of thrown and handbuilt forms of low temperature earthenware, resulting in a variety of beautiful and successful pieces. In some, the design on the surface carried onto the underside with interesting effect. A tall vase, its strong, thrown form complemented by bold loose brush strokes of subtle colour and a bowl with an interwoven rope design in bold colours were my favourite items.

However, among the well-crafted items were pieces which appeared to show a loss of control over the clay. There has to be a way to reduce the amount of slumping in the rims of the platters. The geometric, puzzle like slab bowls spoke of precise assembly and finishing but care was not taken to complete that statement. In all, this show was an exploration of interesting directions and possibilities but inconsistent in quality.

Maybe there is some hope for the pink flamingoes after all. This piece won a **Merit Award** together with the **People's Choice Award** which leads me to conclude what a wonderful beast 'popular' taste is. This entry was obviously a labour of love and I can only guess the wedding was a hoot. The dress represents a novel application of traditional cowgirl costuming which, while not exactly my own taste, could be the beginning of a new fad in bridal gowns, country style.

The rest of the show consists of a smattering of jewellery, turned and carved wood, basketry, glass, dollmaking, and a couple of lovely guitars. Doug Frey's brooch in sterling silver, niobium and 14k gold shows a keen sensitivity towards design as does Lee Brady's glitzy art deco plate and bowl. This lovely setting, which won a well deserved **Best in Glass Award**, sparkles with shimmering gossamer greens, blues and a rich watermelon red. Like translucent fruit ice it looks good enough to eat.

Given the wide variety of mediums, themes, and approaches represented in a show of this nature, one must sympathize to some extent with the task of the juror.

SCC GALLERY JUNE 1987



Photo: Grant Kernan — A. K. Photos

ANNE McLELLAN *Over/Under Earthenware, majolica glaze 3x18"*

It is not easy to put together an exhibition which shows such varied work to its best advantage. Nor is it easy for three individuals of different tastes and experience to agree on judgements of an aesthetic nature. There is after all a very fine line between kitsch and naive, folksy and tedious. Technically the work is all quite excellent. What is most puzzling and disappointing is the conservative tone of this exhibition. Is this the fault of jurors who may have pre-conceived notions of the Prairie 'craft scene'? Is it truly reflective of the work being done here? Or is it the result of compromise? Whichever the case, it is a serious issue which warrants attention before Dimensions '88 takes shape, especially if Saskatchewan is to make a splash in the murky waters of national and international craft recognition.

Miranda Jones is an artist in various media including textile design. She was born in Australia, lived in Newfoundland where she was an active member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Craft Development Association, and is now completing a Master of Fine Art degree at the University of Saskatchewan.

On Reviewing Craft

Susan Eckenwalder

Much of what used to be considered at the heart of art — truth, beauty, function, form, permanence, craftsmanship — is alive and well in the crafts movement . . . only craftsmen may have the guts to discuss these aspects

Given that craft often seems refreshingly quiet, decent, self-possessed, are we endangering its purity by calling for more critical reviews of craft work? Are there things that can be **said** about things that simply **are** — a pot, a quilt, a necklace? I would answer "Yes", providing we avoid aping the rhetoric of what is so dubiously known as art criticism. Only by charting an independent course can the values inherent in much of craft today be maintained. And if we want the job done right, we should do it ourselves.

Oddly, in a society where free speech is fundamental, a craftsman (artist) is often swamped by well-wishers who withhold their true thoughts. One of the ironies of our times is that it is often easier to find someone who will address an artist publicly in writing on the weaknesses of his or her work than it is to find someone who will privately, one-on-one, communicate these same thoughts verbally. As in other aspects of our society, a specialist is now called in where once a friend would do.

Whatever the current situation, however, it is still important that someone dispassionately tell craftspeople when they have the equivalent of bad breath, that is, when their mumbled intentions fail to be heard through their work or when the work has become too trite or cliched for an increasingly sophisticated audience. Ideally, the reviewer, by having to study the work more carefully than a casual observer, can explain why a work arouses a heightened interest in the viewer (user) or why it is left to shrivel in obscurity. Explaining this to a craftsperson can help clarify his or her vision and point toward a surer resolution in subsequent pieces.

Positive, even glowing, reviews can be as effective in doing this as negative ones, for they affirm that the maker is on the right track and provide an ego-satisfying public acknowledgement that encourages a maker to even greater efforts the next time. Bad reviews obviously also have an effect. While it is fashionable to think that artists should ignore their critics, this attitude may reflect more on the current state of much art criticism than on any of its inherent properties. Certainly a craftsperson may choose to ignore the comments, but will at least know where he or she stands. Anger and the feeling of being misunderstood have produced some mighty fine works.

Although I think that establishing a dialogue with the maker is the most important aspect of the reviewer's role, there certainly are others: to aid the public toward a

more informed understanding of the work; to give it a broader context by providing historical references, analysis of current trends, and insights into previous work by the same person; to produce a permanent record of a transient event; to validate or disparage the decision of a curator or shop owner to present the work publicly; to extend the knowledge of the work beyond its environs, whether geographically or through time.

Covering all the above bases is a heavy mandate. Upon whom should we impose it? First and foremost, ourselves. For an editor of a craft magazine, it is sometimes tempting to bring in an "art critic", someone already established as a writer for, say, *Vanguard*, *C*, or *Parachute*. But do we really want a Phillip Monk to obscure, obfuscate, and perhaps deride without understanding works that are deeply entrenched in a craft perspective, a craft ethos and ethic? Rather, I think, we should seek our own independent course, determine our own points of reference, prepare our own case for craft. Granted, there are a surprising number of general arts reviewers who do have a great sympathy for the work (unlike their editors), but there are still comparatively few of these who have attained the necessary sophistication in the field to discuss the relative merits of individual pieces. From time to time, however, they should be asked anyway, since they can provide a valuable outside perspective (art world insights) and in the process learn from looking more closely at craft.

Even more pertinent when it comes to gaining an outside perspective, I would argue, is asking for the intelligent views of people who

are tangentially involved with the field — anthropologists, antique dealers, teachers of colour theory and industrial design, social historians, interior designers, architects. After all, if one is in the process of developing a material culture, as craftspeople are, then it is important to know how the users and cherishers of that culture react to the work. This really is far more craft's natural extended family than is the conventional art market, and quite frankly, I think, a much livelier one. Ultimately, it is far more important to know if a work of craft has lasting **cultural merit** than it is to know if it has **artistic merit** based on the rapidly changing canons of art. (Figurative art is now "in". It was beneath contempt just a decade ago.)

To get back to my earlier point, we who have matured within the craft movement are really its best explicators. For instance, only a woodturner, potter, or holloware maker may truly understand the importance of an interior volume that can be sensed but not seen. Other considerations such as heft, tactility, drape, translucence are best discussed by those who understand their properties — as are considerations such as suitability to purpose, variations on established themes, conscious references to distant cultures. Much of what used to be considered at the heart of art — truth, beauty, function, form, performance, craftsmanship — is alive and well in the crafts movement even though it is currently derided in the black-walled galleries of Queen Street, Toronto. Only craftsmen may have the guts to discuss these aspects while other artists are finding satisfaction in dire social criticism, bleak, massed humanoids, and quickly achieved ephemeral results. And only we know not to underestimate our audience, the readers, for they are us.

So let us write our own reviews, struggle to express our own thoughts. And let us ensure that this writing is clear and forthright.

Jargon is a trap. Yes, one needs a "vocabulary", a few key touchstones so the obvious isn't belaboured, and a few key historical figures and periods that indicate distinct points of view, for instance, in pottery Leach, Hamada, Voulkos, Mochica, Sung Dynasty. But while we speak from intimate knowledge of the field, we should always avoid becoming inbred. (I would say "becoming self-referential" except that the term is a bit of jargon whose meaning seems changed by every curator who uses it.) Just as craftspeople feel a social obligation to acknowledge the importance of the "other" — the person who will have, admire, perhaps use the work — so at all times criticism should also be directed to the "others", the maker and the readers, and should seek to clarify matters rather than fondle its own navel.

If we are to do our own writing, there are a few other traps to avoid. Even though craft is a distinct underdog in some art circles, it is important to avoid becoming craft's apologist or mindless promoter. Craft is not a frail weakling that needs to be nourished at all costs. It is a robust descendent of the first cave dwellers who undoubtedly were as indignant over an ill-conceived object as any who have come after. (As an editor, I've noticed an odd quirk: the weaker the exhibition being reviewed the more likely the reviewer will be nice about it; the more mature the work, the more likely the reviewer will be tough. While no one likes to step on a seedling, this creates a double standard when the trees are being cut down to size.)

It is also important to remember the ethics of reviewing. One shouldn't need to mention this, but a surprising number of people see no harm in reviewing the work of someone they live with or find nothing wrong with accepting money or "barter" from an artist or gallery which is the subject of their review. This clear conflict of interest, however, should not be con-

fused with writing about a person one knows well professionally — providing one is not "doing it as a favour to my friend who could use the publicity."

It is also a good idea to avoid the documentation trap, the notion that by writing about an object one is becoming an extension of it, a part of it. Of course the review is a document, but it is **not** the object itself, not even a small appendage. It is a separate entity with its own standards, its own loyalties. Indeed, one of the most refreshing aspects of craft criticism is that the reviewers in general know that their role is secondary to and comes after the work itself. Perhaps they prod and push a craftsman to new heights, but they never drag or yank him or her after them, accusing the maker of not following their august lead as some other critics have done.

One further consideration: as mentioned before, there is a curious absence today of spoken criticism, yet spoken criticism is the ideal incubation ground for forming written opinions. Rather than worrying about whether someone else will steal our ideas, we should openly discuss them in order to refine, modify, or perhaps abandon them. Ideally, in all fairness, the subject of discussion should be present, but, barring this, a good exchange with anyone who is concerned about the integrity of craft work can lead to some remarkably interesting insights. The reviewers who seem to write the best are often also those who speak freely and frequently, who try to get at the essence of their thoughts in verbal form first. We should all talk, and listen, more.

If these admonitions were not enough, I'd like to offer one more — to those who would criticize the critic. Be nice to reviewers. They are riddled with fears: A) "I will make enemies of my friends by telling them what I really think of their work." B) "I'll be thought of as trying to set myself above my peers." C) "I can't possibly review other people's work when I know how

weak my own is." D) "I'll never be able to make anything ever again now that I've set such high standards for others. They will say 'Who are you to judge?'" E) "I just know I'll change my mind after it's too late." F) "I'll never be able to write well enough to say precisely what I mean." Probably every reviewer who has ever written has felt one or more of these qualms (I ritualistically feel them all.) But, thank goodness, it doesn't prevent most people from going ahead anyway. In truth, you don't lose your friends, you can go on with your

work (often with a greater understanding of it), and you can look yourself in the eye afterward. The very fact that you are writing about the works of others, whether positively or negatively, shows that you've taken a craftsman seriously. And that, in the end, is the greatest good for craft, the greatest reward for a craftsman.

Susan Eckenwalder is the editor of Ontario Craft and CraftNews. She has been a potter for some twenty years.

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We apologize for the omission of the Woodworkers' Guild and their award, The Best in Wood, from the Award Donors list, Dimensions '87.

dear editor

This year, two of my pieces were accepted in the Battleford show, much to my (yes!) surprise and pleasure. While I'm pleased with my acceptance, I also feel that now would be an opportune time to write concerning a problem I've heard expressed about the juried show and with which I agree. This is the issue of critiques on pieces or, rather, the lack of them.

It bothers me that written criticisms are not provided for pieces entered in this exhibition, or in any show, for that matter. Written critiques of work provide the entrant with a different perspective of her work. She may not agree with the reasons given for rejection, but it gives her some insight into how others view her pieces. Often a good critique will suggest areas for change or improvement to an artist or it will reassure her that, while her work was strong, it simply didn't fit the theme of a show. Anyone would admit that there is a vast difference in rejection on the basis of unsuitability of theme and rejection based on what a juror sees as a lack of craftsmanship. Without written comment, how is one to know for which reason a piece was omitted?

Then too, a lack of written commentary poses a problem for people accepted into a show. I've no idea why my pieces, vastly different in materials, techniques and purpose, appealed to the jurors. I know why I liked them and entered them. But they may have been accepted because the jurors believed them to be the most brilliant works ever produced in the province or simply because someone likes sweaters and the basket (1 inch by 1 inch by 1 inch) was small enough to be included without occupying space. And did all jurors agree on the same things? (Unlikely, I would think.) I don't know what other people believe to be my strengths and weaknesses. Yes, it's important to be told — one needs outside opinions on occasion.

I realize that entrants had the opportunity to listen to critiques in Saskatoon after the jurying. For many of us, this is impractical. I have neither the time nor the money to travel to another city to hear the comments on my work.

I can't believe that critiques of a few lines would present much of a problem to jurors. Surely, with 181 pieces entered, they must make written notes on the pieces as they

view them? Surely, these notes must be used in the oral presentations after the jurying? Why can't these same notes be included in the pieces as they are returned to entrants and the comments mailed to successful entrants?

Over the past few years, I've heard unsuccessful entrants express sentiments ranging from anger to frustration to cynicism over the lack of critiques. I've heard successful candidates echo my own feeling — it's nice to be accepted, but puzzling as to why. Some people have not entered subsequent shows. After several attempts, they find it too frustrating to guess what might be criteria for acceptance.

My view of the Battleford exhibition is that it is intended to bring the work of diverse Saskatchewan craftspeople together to provide an opportunity to display what is being produced in the province. If these craftspeople have put their best efforts into producing work for the show, the SCC owes them the courtesy of providing the jurors' views on the pieces in tangible form.

Deborah Behm

Paulette-Marie Sauvé

Tapestry Artist

Excerpts from an interview with Shirley Spidla June 1987

Paulette-Marie Sauvé was born in North Bay, Ontario and now resides in a tiny village near Montreal. She is a founding member of the Montreal Tapestry Biennial and the Quebec Society of Contemporary Tapestry. Her work has been exhibited throughout Canada and internationally. In 1985 she was commissioned to do a tapestry for the new Toronto Dominion Centre. She is the author of two books and has taught across North America and in France. This June she was in Saskatoon for a workshop on Tapestry and Textile Dyes sponsored by the Saskatoon Spinners and Weavers Guild and the Saskatchewan Craft Council.

S.S: Weaving has been with us since early civilization, the Copts, the Pre-Incas and the Columbians. How do you feel the weavings of ancient cultures relate to and contribute to our present society in terms of the historical process and the language of tapestry?

P-M.S: I think that tapestry and weaving are just as important as painting, engraving and sculpture. They should have equal representation in the fine arts. In Europe they have, but in North America they don't seem to have that importance. Ancient artists really used all of those techniques and they were considered equally.

Tapestry was something that had a way of depicting a situation or telling a story. Tapestry weaving itself should not simply imitate painting but it should have its own inspiration. Many painters want to have their paintings woven into tapestry which is absolutely ridiculous. That's not what tapestry is. In preparing a maquette for tapestry

you have to know what the technique is. You have to know the direction of the weave and what weaving is capable of doing.

Usually your inspiration comes from ancient weaves and ancient images. For instance, Shiela Hicks went to South America; she discovered cocoa sacks with little fringes. The fringes were wrapped, so she magnified them. That is how she made her huge wrappings which became world renowned and which many tapestry artists at that time started imitating. Each artist who has gone into the past has discovered some little technique in textile that they have magnified and turned into a contemporary art form. You can take almost any ancient art and turn it into something contemporary but you need to know that [original] technique. That technique doesn't change. The imagery changes.

A lot of people don't understand the difference between painting and tapestry. Tapestry is not painting in wool. It's got its own language. You don't mix colours on a tapestry loom the same way you do on a painting palette. You produce your own shades from different tapestry techniques, from plying wool, from technical steps called shading and hatching. These things don't exist in painting and they are very special techniques that make tapestry have its own personality. So when you talk about ancient tapestries and techniques those are what we use today to build on. We need them. We need to know about them. The more we know about them, the more we can innovate from them and the more we can invent contemporary expressions from them.



Photo: Shirley Spidla

S.S: Are the rediscoveries of the 50's, 60's and 70's continuing to evolve and in what direction do you feel they are moving? How has this influenced your work?

P-M.S: The past twenty years have seen tapestry go in many directions. You no longer have weft covering warp as the simplest tapestry technique. You now have areas of warp showing; you have areas of weft that are exaggerated; you have tapestries that are not done on looms; you have paper making which, of course, has nothing to do with looms at all. And the Japanese are using a lot of warping techniques, they let the warp hang. They play with the different shapes of the warp, and depending on whether they are using nylon or monofilament they can create some very interesting and seductive techniques. On the other hand paper making has taken on a large place in tapestry. It is considered tapestry because paper is made with cotton and linen pulp. Vegetable fibers are considered one of the bases of textile art. Paper can do just about anything. It can become sculptural; it can be painted on; it can have threads felted into it. Off-loom techniques have taken several directions also. People who were doing macrame in the 50's and 60's all of a

sudden in the 70's discovered that they could change it slightly into different knotting techniques that were no longer macrame — such as the wrapping techniques Shiela Hicks had done — then weave those and produce another texture altogether. They are adding and interlocking techniques. So really the traditional tapestry has changed into something that is very vast now.

I still work in the traditional tapestry technique. I use a lot of colour . . . mostly abstract subjects with very few figurative pieces. I have mainly played on the shapes of the tapestry. In the last 4 years I have integrated a lot of wood into my pieces. I'm not a surface weaver; I don't treat the surface with texture weaves and soumack, rya knots and all that. But I sculpt the shapes, the outside contours onto the loom. So, personally, I have taken a direction also that is different from traditional tapestry.

S.S: How do you find inspiration and how do you express those ideas in your work?

P-M.S: Before I moved out into the country the inspiration came mainly from the experiences of my childhood. I was always impressed with waterfalls and the colour of light on water. I have always worked on water scenes in some way. I mainly like the colours I used at that time and have recently reinstated them in my work. The magentas, the emerald greens, the violets and the purples are all colours from the spectra. All colours that you can see reflected on the water especially in marshes and such.

In the early 1970's I was doing environments. They weren't actually saleable. I would use fibers from Italy that resembled silk. It was a little cheaper than silk because I couldn't afford to fill a whole room with curtains of silk. It resembled the touch, the feeling of waterfalls . . . I created curtain filled rooms



Courtesy of the artist

PAULETTE-MARIE SAUVÉ *Totem 2* Wool, acid dyes, wood, acrylic paint 250x150cm 1985

people could walk through and feel the waterfalls on their arms. I wanted people to be surrounded by them, to feel them and go through them. To entice people there would be little hidden rooms at the end where they could discover things. In one room there were costumes where they could dress themselves anyway they wanted to. In another there were neon lights of different colours that would create different psychological effects. There was another room of tubular bells. They were actually tubes of different types of metals that I would hang among the curtains and they would clang together and create musical effects. But then I had to pay the rent and I had to figure out a way to do that. It was my first commission actually which gave me the idea of doing tapestry for a living.

I was invited to participate in a competition in 1974 for a large wall 6'x23'. So that's when I did my first very large tapestry. That started me onto the traditional Gobelin technique and made me abandon the free off-loom techniques, the art form of environments. The prism colours are still there. The marshy colours are still there. I dye all of my yarn. I have more or less eliminated the spinning process in the last four years.

S.S: Do you think that the reason fewer people are presently involved in tapestry, perhaps because they have moved on to other art forms, is due to an economic necessity?

P-M.S: In the 80's we have seen a huge drop in numbers just at the time when it is becoming better known, better understood. I really

don't know all of the reasons. I know a few people who have stopped doing tapestry and it was for purely economical reasons. Because it is a very long process and it's very difficult to make a living from doing tapestry many of them have dropped out. I sometimes wonder how I survived. There have been very rough moments when you wonder how you're going to make ends meet. If you want to make money you don't get into tapestry.

S.S: In the Renaissance there were the cartoonists and there were the artisans or technicians but this is not so much the case in North America today. It is still the case in Europe and why is it different here?

P-M.S: In Europe you will find very many tapestry studios that employ artisans that learn only to

weave. Their job is to interpret cartoons or rather to copy cartoons that have been done by people who are specifically trained to paint with tapestry in mind. You also have a movement that has been in existence for 20-30 years in Europe, private studios where artists who trained in the Gobelin or Aubusson factories have decided that they want to weave their own maquettes and [draw] their own cartoons. This is what we have chosen in North America. You don't find very many studios except in San Francisco and New York where you have technicians who will weave other people's cartoons.

S.S: You are going to be attending Convergence '88 in Chicago. What will you be doing there?

P-M.S: I will offer a course in *Tapestry integrated into architecture* because there are quite a few commissions now being given to tapestry artists. It is very important that they know how to interpret architectural blueprints, to work to scale, to install large pieces, how to deal with contractors, how to read a contract and what are all of the implications. This is what I'll be covering in a five day workshop. We are now seeing tapestry on public walls in many buildings. I enjoy the fact that it is being considered for public buildings because it means that the art is for everyone. I enjoy the fact that people who want to have a large piece of art in a hallway or in a large building in the downtown sector of a large city will consider tapestry because traditionally it has been the art form chosen for large walls. I am very happy with that influence.

SASKATCHEWAN HANDCRAFT FESTIVAL

The Fourteenth Annual Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival took place in the Town of Battleford on July 17, 18 and 19. It consisted of a craft market, a juried exhibition of crafts, and craft demonstrations.

The market had 65 booths. There were 9088 paid admissions for the market, an increase of 450 from the 8638 admissions last year and a new record for the Festival. Total reported sales and orders were \$148,540.00 which is down from the \$153,000.00 total reported last year. The average amount spent by each person attending the market was \$16.35 which is down from an average of \$17.94 per person in 1986. So, it appears that the economy is slowed down a bit and people are generally spending a little less money. Despite this, our increased attendance managed to keep our total sales close to previous years.

Two major changes in the market this year were that no demonstration booths were mixed in with market booths, and the layout of booths was changed to give several shorter aisles running across the arena rather than three long aisles running the length of the arena. Both changes seemed to contribute to easier traffic flow and less congestion and were very well received by marketers and those attending the market.

The exhibition included 54 items by 43 craftspeople. Purchases of an appropriately coloured carpet and of new display screens and lighting resulted in much improved displaying of the exhibits. These purchases will reduce display rental costs in future years. For the first time we used craftspeople rather than the commissionaires as attendants for the exhibition. They were able to provide more accurate and exten-

sive information to people viewing the exhibition. We certainly plan to use craftspeople as exhibition attendants in the future. We all survived the opening of the exhibition, and the odds that the visiting chief fireman will not say "Handicraft Festival" have gone from 13-1 to 14-1 providing you can find anyone silly enough to take your bet.

Sixteen different craftspeople or groups demonstrated 10 different crafts during the Festival. A new stage in the arena was used for the pottery demonstration and this seemed to work very well. It was quite a joy to see the young wide-eyed kids hanging over the railing fascinated with the action of a pot being thrown.

If you have any suggestions for jurors for the 1988 Festival juried exhibition, pass them along to any SCC board member right away.

Pat Adams
1987 SHF Coordinator

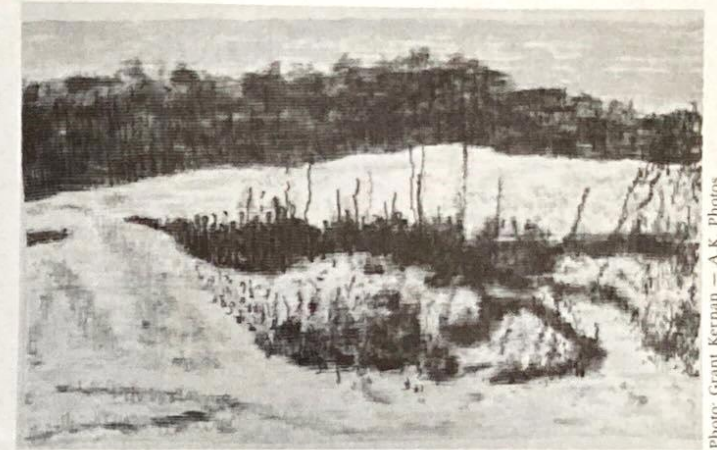


Photo: Grant Kernan — A.K. Photos

JANE EVANS *First Hill* Mural
Warp 2/8 viscose set for warp face
surface and painted, also size 40
cotton sewing thread
Weft

1. size 40 sewing thread overlay
2. 30/3 cotton tabby weave
3. 4/8 cotton reverse overlay figures on double face fabric 1987

Merit Award for Design "Personal Expressions" exhibition juried by Joanna Staniszki (a former recipient of the Bronfman Award for her tapestries) and Jill Couch, **1987 Biennial Conference of the Association of the Northwest Weavers Guilds**

Kajja Sanelma Harris' *Mirage Three* (shown in Dimensions '87 where it won **Handweavers' Guild of America Award, Best Weaving in Show**) will be included in **Fibre Arts Book 3** to be published later this year.

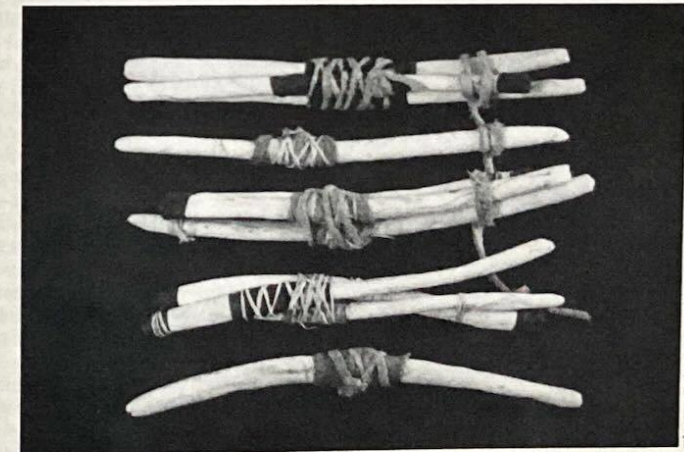


Photo: Brian Ring

BRIAN RING *Untitled (bundle)* Porcelain, wrapped with leather, gauze, bast 15x15cm
Beograd Prize II World Triennial Exhibition of Small Ceramics June 1987 Zagreb, Yugoslavia The prize winning pieces will be exhibited in Austria, W. Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Sydney, Australia (May 1988)

FIRST NATIONAL CANADIAN WOODTURNING SYMPOSIUM

AUGUST 1,2,3

Jamie Russell

Wayne taught 'working dry wood', making the kind of small bowl that is the most common first woodturning project. He made available some birdseye and curly maple bowl blanks and after a short but effective technical introduction turned his students loose. A smooth, whispering sound occurs when a woodturning is going well. This sound came often from Wayne's corner as he led his students through the most basic scraping techniques and onto the riskier but more rewarding shearing cuts. Wayne's objective was to send beginners home with a finished piece and the confidence to keep turning. He did.

Leon Lacoursiere of Delmas, Sask., demonstrated the technique he used to turn the small alabaster vases seen in Dimensions '87. He was constantly surrounded by a flock of admirers exclaiming over his incredibly delicate miniatures and discussing the modification and improvements made to his completely rebuilt and fine tuned lathe. Leon is a shy, quiet person but given a subject he has explored so thoroughly he can impart a healthy chunk of knowledge.

Ron David, Prince George, B.C., taught 'small box turning from exotic woods'. His main focus was on scraping techniques, chucking systems and fine tuning the lathe. Ron is a bit of a techno-fiend and the time and energy he has put into improving an off-the-shelf lathe is impressive.

By contrast Del Stubbs, woodturning super-star from Chico, California, is a fly-by-the-seat-of-the-pants artist. At one point he turned with a hatchet to remind us that all we really need is something spinning and an edge to cut it with. First Stubbs explained the relationship between tool edges and wood fibres, how to sharpen and position tools to get a clean cut. Next he put the tool in your hands and slowly turned the lathe by hand so you could see this relationship. Finally he turned on the lathe and presto! — long, clean shavings are flying. Del is the best teacher for any level of ability that I have ever met.

Francois Lambert of Montreal gave the only presentation on design. Francois is an established turner in the field of large hollow vessels that follow and exploit the figure of the wood. Frustrated with the difficulty of finding appropriate wood and having the figure dictate the final form of the piece, he has switched to using segmented blanks built of contrasting wood. He has also learned goldsmithing so as to embellish his work.

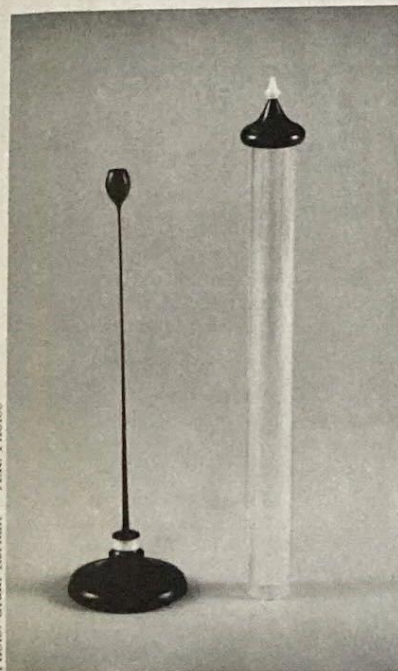


Photo: Grant Kernan — A.K. Photos

LEON LACOURSIER *Miniature Goblet*
Brazilian rosewood, African blackwood,
ebony, ivory 6¼h, case 9½h

The first Canadian National Woodturning Symposium started on July 31 in the lecture hall of Kelsey Technical Institute, Saskatoon. Its predecessor was the Woodturning Conference, held there in August 1982, at which three of the instructors, Ron David, Chris Scheffers and Francois Lambert were present as students, and Leon Lacoursiere, now a miniaturist extraordinaire, started his career at the Del Stubbs post-conference workshop. Giles Blais returned this year as tool making instructor, Mike Hosaluk and Del Stubbs were back as star performers. Wayne Hayes of New Brunswick was the only new face among the instructors.



Photo: Grant Kernan — A.K. Photos

Francois markets aggressively in Europe and the U.S.A., using juried competitions to stimulate his creative process.

Francois spent the first two days of the symposium demonstrating hollow turning technique with his massive, custom-made tools. On the third day he went 'hands on' for those brave enough to attempt it. A number were and I hope to see more vessels featuring this risky technique at next year's woodworkers show.

I consider Chris Sheffers to be Saskatoon's best furniture repair and refinish man. His work often involves duplicating elaborate spindles. In order to do this fast enough to make a living he has to be accurate and to cut cleanly enough not to need to spend hours sanding; and this is what he taught. He also demonstrated the custom-made, lathe router jig he uses for making rope twist spindles.

Anyone reading this magazine has seen Mike Hosaluk's work and may have seen him demonstrating at a craft fair, if so, you will understand why Mike is invited to exhibit and teach all over North America. Like Del, Mike began with a lecture on the how and why of sharpening and cutting techniques as related to his main material, green wood. He then gave students a chance to make shavings and clinch the knowledge. On the final evening and morning of the symposium, Mike and his students turned a huge, ash salad bowl that was christened at the wind-up barbeque.

For me, Giles Blais represents the self-sufficient spirit that keeps prairie people functioning. The son of a blacksmith, Giles makes his living as a teacher. He also builds furniture, carves and turns wood, is a mechanic, welder and stone mason, and makes tools, with a near professional level of skill. In his demonstration he concentrated on tools — types of steel, their uses and where to get them; making a forge; shaping and finishing tools; and anything else you need to know to make your own tools.

A common theme among the instructors was that lathes and tools are made according to tradition and ease of manufacture, not function. Anything you buy will probably have to be modified so don't be afraid to chop, grind, shim or replace anything that interferes with function. If you can't find something you can adapt, make your own.

The symposium was run on an informal basis. Participants could come and go as they pleased from demonstrations. Groups seemed to balance out evenly but I think a little more structure would have helped my own learning. The instructors, however, found it refreshing not to have to repeat a fixed presentation umpteen times and to be able to respond to the demands of a group. I would have appreciated a little more "why" in terms of design as opposed to almost 100% technical "how to".

A lot of good, solid information was available at this event. One hundred and eight woodturners from Winnipeg to Vancouver Island and two from south of the border showed up to take advantage of it. New friends were made and good times had. A round of applause is appropriate for Mike Hosaluk who initiated the symposium, lined up instructors and directed the publicity. Another is richly deserved by Ralph Reid who worried off ten pounds (4.54Kg) and half his hair keeping things running smoothly.



Photo: Grant Kernan — A.K. Photos

above:
RON DAVID *J.R.T. Apple* 7¼×11" w
top left:
DEL STUBBS *Olive bowl* 4×2½"

calendar

November

SNOWFLOWER
Yorkton Arts Council
49 Smith Street East
Yorkton, Sask.
S3N 0H4
(November 1 - 30, 1987)

Phone: 783-8722

HANDMADE HERITAGE ART & CRAFT SHOW

Melfort Craft Society
G. Knudson
Box 3091
Melfort, Sask. S0E 1A0
(November 7, 1987 -
N.E. Leisure Centre)

ARTISAN (Invitational)
c/o Winston Quan
413 - 9th Street East
S7N 0A7
(November 13, 14, 15, 1987)

SNOWFLAKE (Members Sale)
Mrs. Eva Scott
1521 Mackenzie King Crescent
North Battleford, Sask.
S9A 3C5
(November 12, 13, & 14, 1987)

445-8562

*SCC does not accept responsibility for errors or omissions, due to circumstances beyond our control.

EVERGREEN (Juried)
Prince Albert Council for the Arts
1010 Central Avenue
Prince Albert, Sask.
S6V 4V5
(November 14, 1987 12-7 p.m.)

Phone: 922-9608

SUNDOG HANDCRAFT FAIRE

(Juried)
Sundog Arts Society
P.O. Box 7183
Saskatoon, Sask.
S7K 4J1
(November 21, 22, 1987 - Field House, Saskatoon)

WINTERGREEN (SCC Juried)
Saskatchewan Craft Council
Box 7408
Saskatoon, Sask.
S7K 4J3
(November 27, 28, & 29, 1987 - Centre of the Arts, Regina)

Phone: 653-3616

December

LONGSHADOWS (Invitational)
c/o Mel Bolen
Box 2052
Humboldt, Sask.
S0K 2A0
(December 7, 1987 - Tentative)

Phone 682-3223

membership

Membership in the **Saskatchewan Craft Council** is open to all craftspeople working in any media whose work is primarily hand-produced, using hand controlled processing in the final product. Technical competence and skill of craftsmanship in the product are encouraged.

Membership runs for one year, from April 1 to March 31, with the exception of subscribing which runs for one year from date of receipt of membership fee. **Subscribing membership:** Available to any interested individual, non-marketing guild, gallery, group or association. Entitles members to receive **The Craft Factor**. No other benefits are included although Saskatchewan members may apply for upgraded status.

Active general member: Entitles individual members to apply for SCC sponsored exhibitions, for all special events such as conferences and workshops. Eligible to be nominated to

SCC Board of Directors or to serve as Juror on selection committees. Use of SCC resource centre and subscription to **The Craft Factor** and voting privileges. Eligible to upgrade to Active Marketing status.

Active marketing member: Available to individuals through a jurying of work by peers and special application. Same benefits as general membership, plus entitled to apply for all SCC sponsored markets.

Associate membership: Available to guilds, associations and organizations of craftspeople. Such groups receive the same benefits as do individual marketing members.

To apply for subscribing or active general membership, please complete and mail the form along with your membership fee.

Active Marketing and Associate Members **must be juried**. Works are juried annually. Please contact SCC office for application procedures and deadlines.

Saskatchewan Craft Council
Box 7408
Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 4J3
(306) 653-3616

I WANT TO JOIN

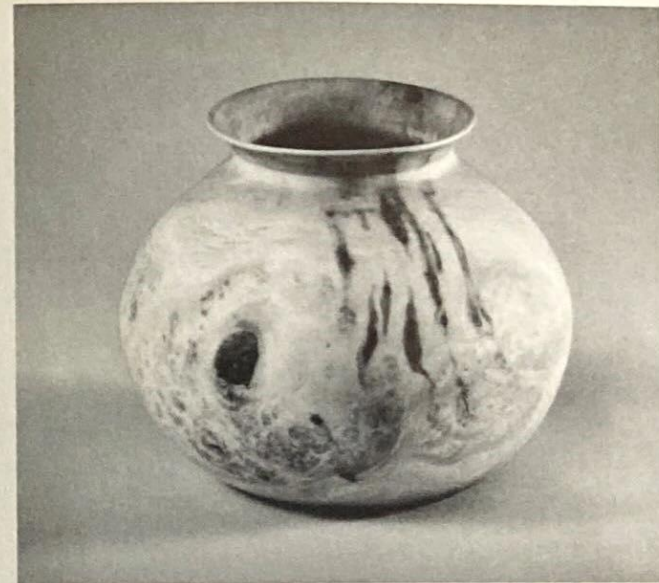
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Address

Craft Specialty

- new member
 renewal
 subscribing (\$20)
 active general (\$35)

Please send me application for:
 Active Marketing Member (\$50)
 Associate Member (\$50)



GILLIS BLAIS **Bowl** Manitoba maple 6x5"

FRANCOIS LAMBERT **Meridien 40** Macasar, ebony, birdseye maple, paduk, ebonized maple, fine silver 7½ x 5½" w
Photo: Grant Kernan - A.K. Photos



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