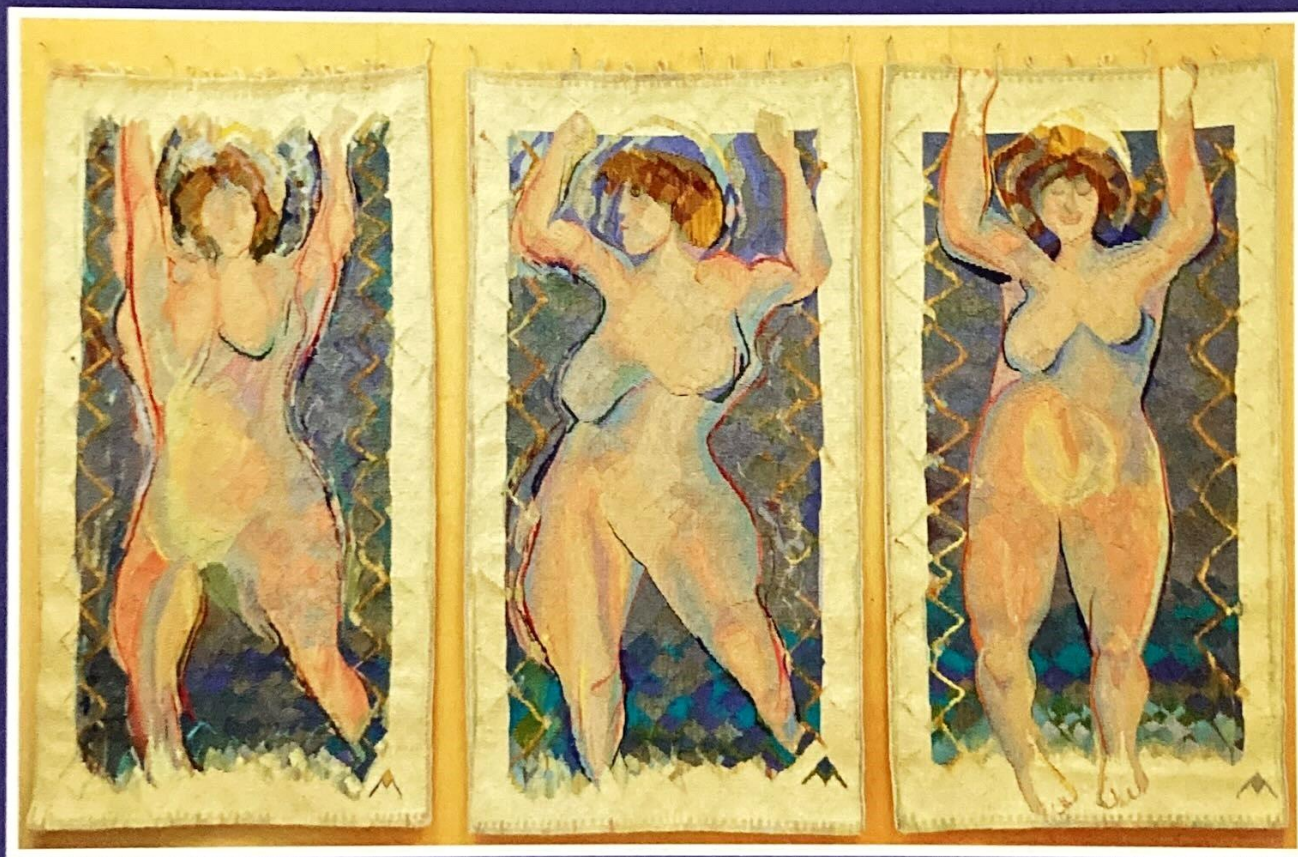


the craft factor

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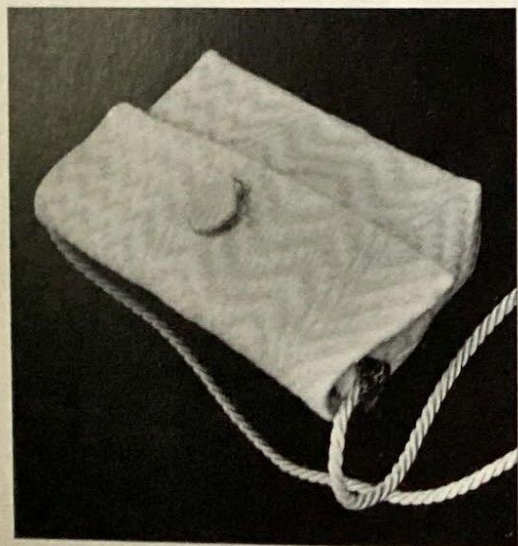
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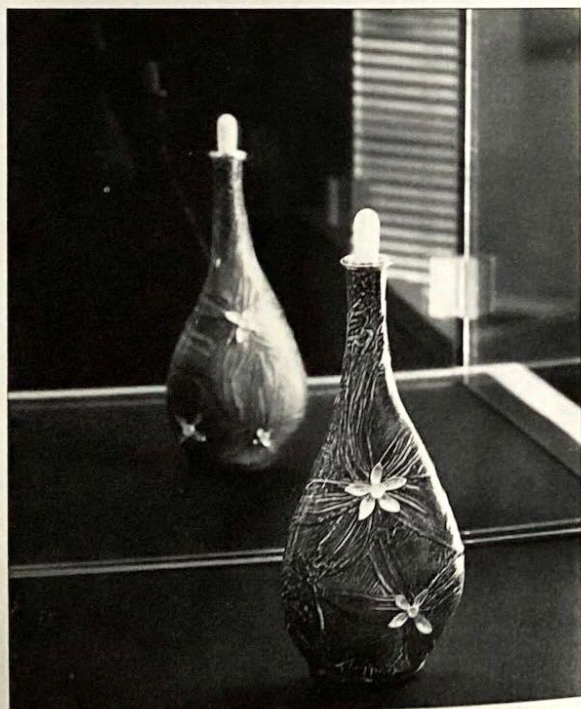


MEGAN BRONER/KAJJA SANELMA
HARRIS *Untitled* Fine silver woven,
sterling silver beads

below:
MEGAN BRONER/ANITA ROCAMORA
Untitled Porcelain, metal 7" h.



SHELLEY HAMILTON/WINSTON QUAN
Purse (Untitled) Silk, cotton, brass



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back cover:

KAJJA SANELMA HARRIS *Searching for Roots* *Tapestry* 152×155×4cm
1987

All photos — Grant Kernan A.K. Photos unless otherwise indicated

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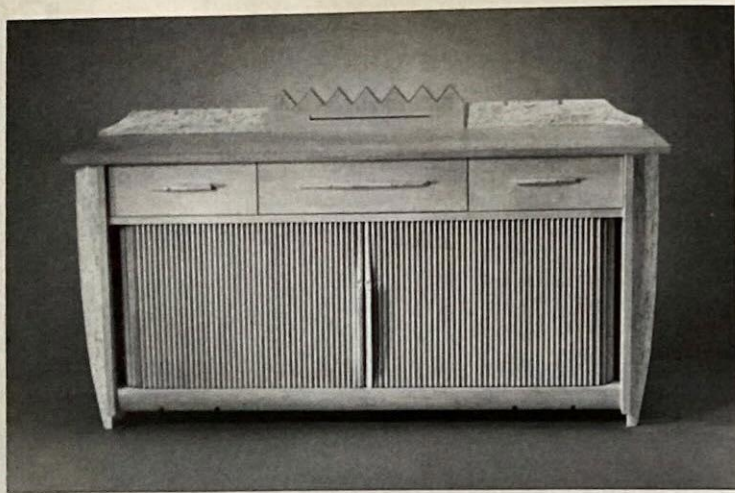


photo credit: courtesy of the artist

WENDY MARUYAMA *Credenza* 1987

CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE DESIGN AND TECHNIQUE 2 CONFERENCE

Michael Hosaluk

Some time ago it became apparent that, for wood-working to grow in Saskatchewan, education was required. The Saskatchewan Woodworkers Guild was established and we have educated the public through annual exhibitions and demonstrations, and educated ourselves through local workshops and conferences learning from some of the best woodworkers in the world. Through this process we have cultivated a lively body of skilled, imaginative woodworkers although few of us in Saskatchewan have any formal training in design or in furniture making. The conferences have enabled us to meet other woodworkers and, as Ed Tabachek, a Winnipeg woodworker who has attended most of our sponsored events, says: "The conferences have been an important source of inspiration and knowledge. They have allowed me to meet and talk with some of the best designer/craftsmen in the world. There is no other access to this type of education in Canada". The conferences and workshops have linked woodworkers in North America resulting in many friendships, and have enabled us to assess and evaluate our work and have pushed us to achieve higher standards and set higher goals.

While furniture design encompasses many aspects, the people we have chosen as instructors for Contemporary Furniture Design and Technique 2 — **Wendell Castle**, **Alan Peters**, **Wendy Maruyama**, **Judy Kensley McKie** and **Gary Knox Bennett** — all produce some of the finest work being done in the area of one-of-a-kind and limited edition furniture. They have helped to establish very high standards.

Alan Peters is one of England's major designer/craftsmen. In 1949, then sixteen years old, he apprenticed to Edward Barnsley and by 1962 had established himself as a designer and maker of modern craft furniture. A turning point in his career came in 1975 when he was awarded a bursary which allowed him time to visit Japan. "This came at a time when I was growing disillusioned with the blandness and uniformity of much modern furniture design. I was searching for some means of making in my furniture a stronger more individual statement". In Japan he became intrigued with the architecture, its sweeping curves and intricate joinery; and with the sense of order, space and simplicity. Since his return he has become more interested in methods of construction, and in form and texture,

resulting in a greater use of solid timber. "Somewhere along the line there has to be a desire to push the craft forward in a personal way, for the creative craftsman has something definite and personal to say, and says it in his work." Alan Peters will present a British and European perspective on furniture design.

Wendell Castle's work has had a profound influence on what is currently happening in furniture design. His ideas constantly progress, ranging from freeform sculpture to the finest cabinetry. Urbane Chapman (a furniture maker in Northfield, Mass.) remarks: "There are many furniture makers making 18th Century period pieces; Castle is among the few who have had the idea of trying to beat the masters of Art Deco at their own game". Wendell Castle has been making furniture since the 1960's and now resides in Scottswill, N.Y., where he operates his school and workshop. He is a leader in our field.

In the current renaissance of woodworking a significant contribution has been made by women. Among this group are Wendy Maruyama and Judy Kensley McKie. **Judy Kensley McKie**, a painter, taught herself woodworking and now makes furniture for a living in Cambridge, Mass. Her furniture incorporates reptile and animal forms and motifs inspired by Eskimo, pre-Columbian, Greek, Egyptian and early American artifacts. Her work sets out to intrigue, amuse and entertain. She describes it as "classical furniture". Her most recent venture involves transforming her designs into cast bronze furniture. Judy Kensley McKie comments: "I think children do the nicest art there is — make the nicest objects — because they're generally lacking in self-consciousness or any need to please, which I think makes their work really fresh. I hope my furniture has that childlike quality".

Wendy Maruyama is Head of the Woodworking and Furniture Design program in Oakland, CA., and has instructed Metalworking and Jewellery Design in the Craft Center in San Diego. Since 1979 she has been designing and making contemporary furniture, both commissioned and speculative. Her work employs traditional methods which address contemporary concerns with surface decoration.

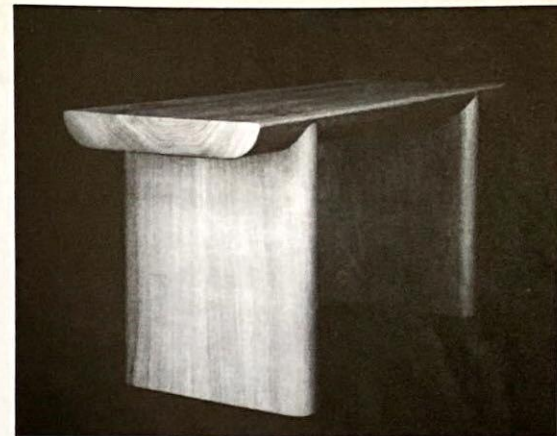


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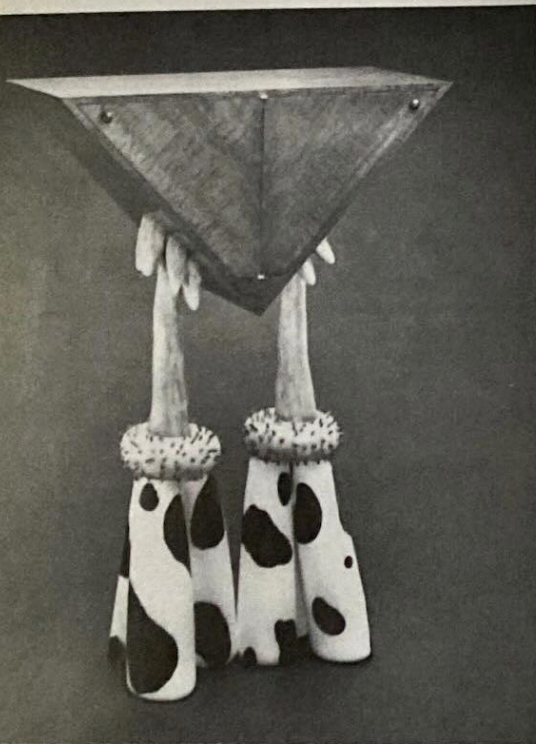


photo credit: courtesy of the artist

top:
ALAN PETERS *Low bench/table*
Acacia 1975

middle:
JUDY KENSLEY MCKIE *Amphibic*
Standing Chest Carved limewood,
paint 28x33.5x17.5" 1988

bottom:
GARY KNOX BENNETT *Bench*



WENDELL CASTLE *Spot* Stained curly maple veneer, painted poplar 56x41x17" 1986

photo credit: courtesy of the artist

Gary Knox Bennett is raw and direct, and so is his work. This evokes new attitudes to furniture design, including incorporating metal, plastic and wood, and using a variety of unique techniques. Bennett studied art, sculpture and painting, and is a self-taught woodworker. He works directly, in response to the materials, making no prior drawings or maquettes of the piece. During the conference weekend he will be constructing a table using techniques he has developed.

All these instructors have exhibited extensively, received numerous awards, contributed significantly to furniture design and are recognized internationally. Their combined talents offer a broad and varied array of knowledge not only for woodworkers but for any designer craftsman in any medium. Marigold Cribb, a basket maker from Saskatoon, says: "It forces one to think in different ways; it expands our vocabulary in materials and approaches; you watch what is going on in a different context". She has found attending workshops and conferences in other media than her own to be more stimulating.

In addition to the international instructors there will be five Canadian instructors: **Lorne Beug, Brian Gladwell, Irvin Lowe, Chris Scheffers and Corin Flood**. Through demonstrations they will offer a variety of information related to furniture design. Topics such as veneering and finishing, surface decoration, alternative materials, jigs and bending wood will be addressed.

In conjunction with the conference there will be an exhibition of work by the instructors and invited local furniture makers giving you an opportunity to view some of the best work being done in contemporary furniture. There will also be an impromptu exhibition of participant's work.

Through lectures and demonstrations the conference will discuss important current issues in furniture design; look at historical, contemporary and future directions; examine the effects of technology and the environment; and explore the relevance of lifestyle to function and design, as well as discussing technical aspects. The conference will operate on an informal basis where participants can come and go as they choose.

This conference promises to be as exciting and stimulating as our first one. Don McKinley, Furniture Master at Sheridan College School of Craft and Design, comments: "There are not many events of this sort. Contemporary Furniture Design and Technique was ambitious and professional. Unsurpassed. No one does it better."

CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE DESIGN AND TECHNIQUE 2

S.I.A.S.T. Kelsey Campus, Saskatoon
August 5, 6, 7, 1989 Fee \$175.00

For further information contact Michael Hosaluk (306) 382-2380
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Collaborate with a Curator

Cathryn Miller

At the opening of "Collaborations" someone suggested that an exhibition of this type should become a biennial event. It was a compliment to all those who contributed to the show, and as curator I was flattered, but my gut reaction was "Not me. Never again!"

Curating any exhibition involves a lot of hard work, patience, attention to detail, and persistence. With a show that includes twenty-two works by forty-two people and is to tour the province, a level of frustration and aggravation is involved which I certainly did not expect when I signed my contract back in 1987.

One of the first things that I discovered is that almost nobody reads their mail, or if they do they almost never reply to it. My careful plan to keep written records of everything, and to avoid using the telephone (which I dislike, and which can become expensive) soon fell apart. There is nothing quite like phoning someone, who has done half or less of what you asked for in a letter mailed two months earlier, and getting the response "Oh. Did you need that? I guess I a) didn't read it, b) forgot, c) threw it out, d) lost it." My favourite response came from a gallery, "Oh, yes. I have that on my desk."

There were other stresses that I had expected: people who were having difficulty with the work they were undertaking and were panicking; people who felt their work was taking a direction quite different from their proposal and were panicking; people who were having difficulties with their collaborators and were panicking; people who thought they would not be done on time and were panicking (that one got to me as well!) Then there was the problem of trying to persuade the various galleries around the province to take an exhibition which I could only describe as *likely* to consist of twenty-two pieces by forty-two people. In many cases I could not even describe what the finished work was going to be or how large. Once there was some interest displayed, I had to juggle the time and space requirements of touring the show to at least six Saskatchewan galleries after the initial exhibition at the SCC gallery in Saskatoon.

And the headaches are not over yet. The show is open but much of the work arrived without the crating that I had expected the contributors to provide so I have to pursue proper packaging before the show goes on tour at the end of December. I have a budget for crating but it is intended for a few crates in which to pack smaller items so that they are less easily lost or damaged, it does not provide for individual crates for every piece, so I will have to get on the phone to the contributors. Further arrangements need to be made with galleries, so I will have to get on the telephone again. And there will no doubt be other headaches which at this point I can not even imagine.

Some of the difficulties I encountered were of my own making. I intentionally tried to keep options open and flexible in order to encourage the participants to experiment and grow - that was the reason for accepting pieces on a proposal basis alone. I knew that under the circumstances of two or more people working together, plans were likely to change as work progressed. It made some aspects of the show much harder to organize, but I think the results justify the extra work.

I have thought a lot about what could be made easier for the next curator: such as, not having to worry about the touring and budgeting aspect which could be handled by someone like the gallery staffperson (provided they were given extra paid hours in which to do it.) I found I wasted a lot of time going over old ground with many galleries because there was a lack of continuity between touring exhibitions. As well, someone on staff has readier access to the SCC telephone, postage meter, computer, typewriter, photocopier, etc. If I wanted to avoid running up my own phone bill or being, however briefly, out-of-pocket on postage and photocopying, I had to make a trip to the office. I did have the advantage of direct access to a good word-processor and printer and that reduced at least some of the work involved.

It would also help to schedule the delivery deadline for three months before the first opening. This would make planning for display and touring easier, and would simplify catalogue production: one could include accurate descriptions and more photographs. As it would, however, mean an increased storage budget, as the SCC Gallery and office does not have enough space.

And, if we are really getting fanciful, a world in which everyone answered their mail would be nice too.

Would I ever curate a similar show under similar working conditions in the future? **NEVER.**

Do I regret having undertaken this one?

No.

There were many rewards to creating this exhibition. There was an excitement and energy in working with people who were trying totally new things, living dangerously. I hope they feel as pleased with the results of their risk-taking as I do. There was the satisfaction of hearing contributors say "We really had fun with this," and "We want to take this farther." There may be pieces in the show that are not "perfect" or at least not what the makers intended and expected, but "Collaborations" was planned to be more than an exhibition: it was to be a learning experience for the people directly involved and for those who come to look at it. And perhaps the people at the opening who said they wished they had undertaken a collaboration for the show will have a chance to do so at some time in the future.

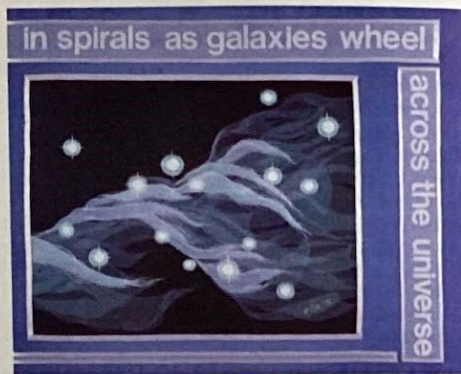


photo credit: Gary Robins

MARTHA COLE *Expanding Universe* Navy satin, bridal nets, organdy, rayon threads 4.6x10.6' 1986

Expanding Universe was seen by Saskatchewan's Science Centre representatives when it was displayed at the McIntyre Gallery, Regina. The gallery found a buyer, Dr. Alan Ross, who very generously donated the work to Saskatchewan's Science Centre where it will hang on the Third Floor. Saskatchewan's Science Centre is scheduled to open in 1989.

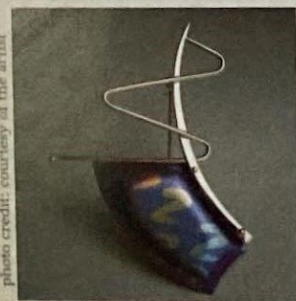


photo credit: courtesy of the artist

DOUGLAS FREY *Brooch* Sterling silver, 14K gold, niobium

This brooch was one of 47 pieces selected from 164 entries for the **4th Annual 6x6x6 Exhibition of Small Scale Fine Art** at the Cartwright Gallery, Vancouver. The exhibition will tour during this year.

KAIJA SANELMA HARRIS' *Searching for Roots* (back cover) is one of a series of tapestries produced as the result of a grant from Saskatchewan Arts Board. A selection of these works were exhibited at Craftspace, Winnipeg from July 25 to August 23, 1988, as part of **Spotlight '88 — Women and the Arts**.

Have you, too, had work accepted into a provincial, national or international exhibition? completed a commission for a private or public building? received a grant for a special project? Why keep it secret?

This page is available to showcase your work, to celebrate the skills and achievements of Saskatchewan craftspeople.

— You never know, showing your work here may win you another commission, another invitation to exhibit.

RITUAL, MYTH & SYMBOL

Kathryn Manry Zolnai

Following Martha Cole's article on "Rituals and Ritual Objects" (Craft Factor, Spring 1988) I was delighted to be accepted into the exhibition group as a participant and resource person. The focus provided by this group has led me to explore further the nature of ritual. The following thoughts are a personal approach to a very large topic and do not necessarily represent the collective ideas of the group, or even my final view, but could be the basis for discussion and new ideas.

It is worthwhile to list some of the multitude of definitions given to Ritual: "communication as play, the repetition of primordial events, theatre, dramatization of social relations, cult enactment of myth, regulated symbolic expression of certain sentiments, channelling of aggression, regulating mechanism of economy and ecology, compulsive neurosis, means of mediation between the sacred and the profane, annihilation of historic time" (1). As a starting point, I have synthesized my view of Ritual from the above and from a few other authors who seemed to grasp the larger picture of Ritual in society.

Symbol is powerful, direct and cannot be reduced to words

Joseph Campbell conceived Rite as being used to evoke the energy of a society's internal belief system, thus Ritual serves to link Man, through the expression of myth and symbol, to both his inner and outer world. Man comprehends and copes with his environment (including his culture) and his psyche through the enactment of Rites. If, as according to Adrian Kavanagh, culture is the conception and enactment of values, then the conception of these values is done through Myth, and their

enactment is Ritual; the two are inseparable (2).

In order to properly address Ritual, we first need to consider our Myths. An expression of the complex of values held by a society, Myths are the symbols and metaphors of universal truths and Man's concept of the Numinous or of his God. The psyche common to the human spirit in all societies is expressed in Myth, and draws upon the themes of their collective imaginations. The true meaning of Myth transcends the characters and events of the tales, addresses Man's basic level of common experience, and gives structure and order to the chaotic world.

The language of Myth is symbol. Symbols are not merely signs for something else. Joseph Campbell uses the term 'affect images' to describe their action, which bypasses the intellect, speaks directly to the emotions, and elicits an immediate response from within. Symbol is powerful, direct and cannot be reduced to words without negating this 'affect image'. Rituals evoke the mythic message symbolically and derive their potency through their directness.

Myth and Ritual help Man to deal with chaos and crisis. They expand his limits, bind him to a universal psyche powerful beyond the individual, and offer the security of a context in which to place his experiences. Ritual is used to affirm and strengthen Myth; the two operate together. Rites are the physical enactment of Myth, and Myth the mental support of Rite (3). Ritual uses symbol to formulate Man's response to the world and his condition. Ritual provides a tangible common experience for the people sharing a system of beliefs and values. Ritual links people to their past and future, and channels their anxiety as they grope for a meaning in their lives. Society thus wards off the threats and stresses it perceives, and affirms its enduring social and natural order.

As Man sees change in the order of things and the stresses on him change, his Rituals also grow and change. They have a lifespan appropriate to the culture they grow in. Ritual threads through Man's cultural evolution, functions adaptively, prevents change from swinging too wildly, and avoids stagnation by progressing with Man's condition and ideas. Ritual is evolutionary, never revolutionary, and never arbitrary; it grows naturally out of an established base of beliefs and needs.

What are the characteristics of ritual on a more concrete and analytic level? Rites can be categorized as private or public, periodic or occasional. They may be Rites of passage, marking transitions in Life (birth, marriage); Rites of celebration (coronations, fourth of July); Rites to affirm faith (Easter, Hanukkah); Rites to assure communal bonding (some sports); Rites as social sacrament (Japanese Tea Ceremony, Thanksgiving); Rites marking natural cycles (harvest); and so on.

Ritual is evolutionary, never revolutionary, and never arbitrary

A few common elements are significant aspects of ritual: 1) repetition, 2) sacredness or significance, 3) formalization, 4) symbolism and 5) intention. It is worth briefly elaborating on these elements.

One event alone cannot stand as a ritual. It must have some expectation of repetition, however seldom or irregularly. A single event is merely a phenomenon — ritual gains meaning through the community reaffirming it.

Ritual transcends the physical by having a sacred or special significance. Beyond the secular plane it must have an extra-ordinary dimension of meaning and symbolism. Ritual removes the participant from the mundane and expands his awareness of the Beyond, the Universal and his concept of God.

Myths are the symbols and metaphors of universal truths

Rituals are formal in that they shape and repeat elements. Symbols must be formally articulated within a framework commonly understood by a society. Formal elements may include the space used, the time of enactment, objects used, sounds and associated words, the people involved and their actions.

The symbolic action of ritual is the most nebulous; its non-verbal nature operates on a deeper level than we can approach intellectually. Society has an established, commonly understood set of basic symbols which, when combined with specific references, impart a certain meaning to that Ritual. Symbols are expressed actively through objects, gestures and bodily movements; the spoken word can merely make reference to them.

Patterns and traditions become rituals not by mere repetition and habit, but by the significance attached to them. Some controversy exists, for example with shaking hands: it can be viewed as a ritual, but certainly not on a conscious level. What separates subconscious Ritual from social habit?

To discuss ritual in contemporary society, we must consider what modern mythology is, Joseph

Campbell: "The laws of earth and of our own minds have been extended to incorporate what formerly were the ranges and powers of the gods, now recognized as ourselves. Hence, the whole imagined support of the last order has been withdrawn from "out there", found centered in ourselves, and a new world age projected as global, materialistic comparable in spirit to the spirit of old age in its disillusioned wisdom and concern for the physical body, concentrating rather on fulfillments in the present than in any distant future. The residence of the spirit now is experienced as centered not in fire, in the animal and plant worlds, or aloft among the planets and beyond, but in men, right here on earth: the earth and its population which our astronauts beheld and photographed rising above the moon into Heaven . . . There were formerly horizons within which people lived and thought and mythologized. There are now no more horizons . . . Our new mythology will be the old, everlasting, perennial mythology, in its "subjective sense", poetically renewed in terms neither of a remembered past nor of a projected future, but of now: addressed to the waking individuals in the knowledge of themselves, not simply as egos fighting for place on the surface of this beautiful planet, but equally as centers of the Mind at Large - each in his own way at one with all, with no horizons" (4)

I will not venture to define our Rituals, but I do offer a few comments on their appropriateness to modern mythology.

We cannot resuscitate old Rituals, which have lost meaning because of our new understanding of Faith, Science and Ourselves. We thus risk losing continuity with our past. We cannot arbitrarily create new rituals either, without reference to our past and a solid foundation in our culture's values. Neither can we forgo Rituals, except to our common peril - Man needs Ritual to sustain Myth,

to connect with the transcendent, to deal with his own paradoxes.

Modern ritual needs to be involving, evolving, cosmic, not too familiar, unifying, and to address the stresses of the modern world. It needs to unite Man with an awareness of his lot and to determine the "affect-images" which evoke a response in him.

Man needs Ritual to connect with the transcendent, to deal with his own paradoxes

Artists are fortunate to be at the forefront of a new expression of values through Ritual. Society needs creative energy; artists raise awareness of our place in the changing world, where humanity's myths are remade. The visual artist can provide the "affect-images", which provoke society to understand Reality. They encourage particular values, and educate Man in the universal truths, which we increasingly depend on. As our horizons disappear, artists can express the human spirit through Ritual, celebrate our universal dreams, and demand new life in a society which has grown stale.

We are given an exciting and challenging task in examining Rituals and employing the "affect-images" of our modern world, hopefully, to give our lives a greater richness and significance.

1. Bruce Lincoln, *Emerging from the Crystals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981)

2. James Shaughnessy, *The Roots of Ritual* (Michigan: William B. Erdman's Pub. Co., 1973)

3. Joseph Campbell, *Myths to Live By* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1972)

4. *ibid*

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FURNITURE



Toilet Box Cedar, inlaid with darker wood 8½×16×12cm c.1567-1320 B.C. Collection of the Royal Ontario Museum

photo credit: courtesy Royal Ontario Museum

Carole Hanks, History Master, Sheridan College School of Craft and Design.

The heritage of the contemporary furniture craftsman goes back thousands of years. In the western world one can trace a cultural lineage back to ancient Egypt. In Bronze Age civilizations tools and hand skills were developed that have survived in relatively unaltered form to the present day, producing in all times and places refined examples of the fine craftsman's art.

The difficulty with studying ancient furniture is that, mostly, it no longer exists. Furniture, whether humble or royal, ancient or merely old, is frequently made of wood and cloth, neither of which long survive the normal vagaries of weather and time. Further, furniture is used, moved, worn out and discarded. Granting the scarcity of actual remains, there is still clear evidence that furniture was prized in ancient times. It is carved into the stone friezes of Assyria, being carried in tribute to great rulers. It was meticulously drawn on painted vases in classical Greece. In the Bronze Age in the Cyclades and in Boeotia, ministrals and persons of rank

were sculpted seated in their chairs. Ancient writings list accounts of gifts of elaborate furniture from one king to another and describe the use of rare woods and costly materials for royal furniture. And in Egypt the furniture, itself, was placed in the tomb with the deceased. Because ancient Egyptians believed, literally, in life after death, they developed elaborate burial practices in which full complements of household goods were put in tombs for the eternal comfort of the soul. At times tomb furniture was made for the express purpose of being buried, but for the most part, furniture for the dead was furniture that was used by the living. So it was that in ancient Egypt a full array of household furnishings was sealed in carefully constructed, dry, protected places. Thus, with the exception of a single complete table from classical Greek times, it is from Egypt alone, in the ancient world that actual chairs, beds, tables and chests have been preserved to the present time.

For nearly 5000 years, the evenness of Egypt's arid desert weather has created ideal conditions for the safe keeping of wood artifacts. From the earliest dynasties, beginning around 3100 B.C., there are fragments of furniture that bespeak a sophisticated knowledge of joinery, carving and inlay. By 1567 B.C., the beginning of what is generally considered the Golden Age of Egyptian culture, furniture of such lavish elegance was being produced, that it can be considered with the finest craftsmanship from any century.

Six basic forms comprise the furniture repertoire of ancient Egypt. They are the bed, table, vase stand, storage chest, stool and chair. While there were numerous variations on these forms, there was not the array of specific forms that we now find customary. There were, for example, no desks, couches, benches, wardrobes, chests of drawers, or bookcases. The simplicity of the Egyptian ensemble represents, perhaps, a less specialized way of looking at life than we do. It certainly represents a less object-oriented life than ours. For all that, the most sophisticated Egyptian furniture did not lack either rich quality or opulent material, nor any knowledge of technique or materials.

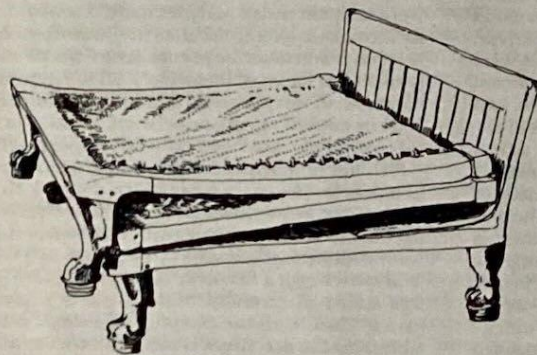
From the earliest times, beds were standard household furnishings, at least in upper-class Egyptian homes, and numerous ancient bed frames are in existence today. The constructional jointing of the frames are categorized into four types based on variations of mortice and tenons that either pin the legs to the frame or the frame to the legs. The technique for webbing the beds ranged from threading and weaving leather straps through slots cut around the frame to simple rush twine being wrapped around the frame and then woven to form the bed surface. Beds often had sculptural legs, carved in hooved or clawed animal form. On the finely crafted beds of the wealthy, carved legs could also be decorated with gold sheathing. By the third dynasty, around 2686 B.C., variations in the simple elevated rectangular shape that was the bed took place. Sloping bed-frames became popular, the foot of the bed being lower than the head. This was achieved either by simply



photo credit: courtesy Royal Ontario Museum

Wooden Headrest 2 pieces doweled together by a rectangular pin with ivory ends 7½ x 11¼ x 4⅞" c.1570-1070 B.C. Collection of the Royal Ontario Museum

eliminating the two legs at the foot of the bed or cutting them shorter than the head legs. Also around this time a new leg support was developed that looks like a steambent piece of wood and was fastened to the underframe of the bed. Since bending was, indeed, carried out by craftsmen at a somewhat later date than this, it is entirely possible that these legs represent wood bending techniques in practice. A third variation was the addition of a foot board, either solid or of openwork and decorated in some way. Headboards were never developed and the only decorative element at the head of the bed was the possible addition of a high sculptured headrest, the form of which is so foreign to a western sense of comfort. Perhaps one of the most intriguing bed variations, however, was the folding bedstead. Divided into three sections along its length, bronze hinges allowed the bed to be folded, accordion style, into a compact square. Since beds were low, usually around 12", the legs did not need to be folded and thus were



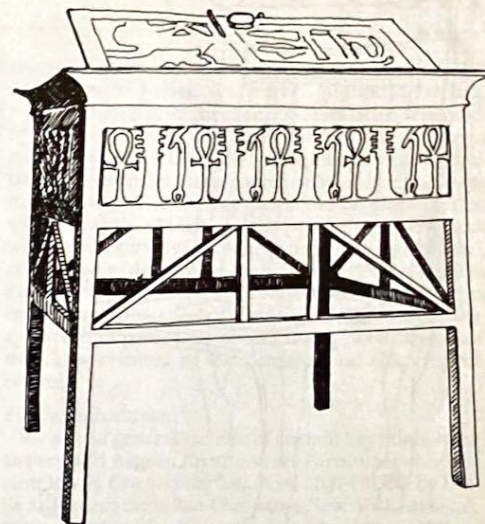
Folding bedstead Light wood, painted white, bronze hinges from the tomb of Tutankhamen c.1350 B.C.

mortice and tenoned to the underside of the frame in the usual manner. This form was not uncommon beginning around 1500 B.C. and seems to have been developed for efficiency in travelling around the country, which was done by military men, priests and nobility.

In contrast to the homely usage of beds, tables in ancient Egypt seemed to be used only specially or ritually. Varying in height and size, they were used by scribes for writing (the average person was not literate), perhaps for playing games upon, and for holding things. Food that was not actually being eaten was placed on tables, perhaps, in daily life, being served from them. There is no conclusive evidence that ancient Egyptians actually dined at tables. Tables placed in tombs were used to hold offerings of food made to the gods. Small offering tables were made of alabaster or other stone, but some of the earliest small tables, dating back to the beginning of the Egyptian dynasties, were made of wood. Considering that wood was an expensive import in ancient Egypt, very early examples are rare and it is not surprising that they were neither plentiful nor large. By the later dynasties, reed and rush became popular as a material for tables.

The earliest tables were small and very low, generally around 18" x 11" with 3" legs. The top and the small, stubby legs were carved entirely out of a single slab of timber. We might call this a stand rather than a table, placing it on top of a proper table. However, these small slab tables were probably used to keep objects or food off dusty floors and the style was popular in ancient Egypt for at least 1500 years. By the fifth dynasty, around 2500 B.C., jointed furniture was being made and tables took on their now familiar form. They were still small and low by our standards, not much exceeding 20" in height or 30" x 15" in surface. Mortice and tenon construction was employed, with dowels pinning the legs for strength. They were usually constructed with leg stretchers half-way between the top surface and the floor, the top often overhanging the legs. Two particularly fine tables from the middle period of dynastic Egypt have cavetto cornice mouldings that support their top structures and connect them to their frames with precisely mitred beading. Finishes ranged from painted decoration to veneering and marquetry to some kind of simple oiled or varnished surface. Though there were some three-legged table varieties, they were uncommon, and the standard four-legged table prevailed.

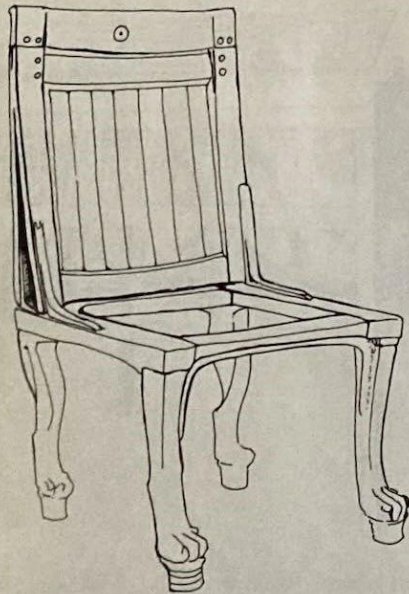
An early variation on the table was the vase stand. Initially vase stands were small low tables, some with side slats to support the vases. They eventually developed into tall elevated stands of open construction for the display and storage of a single vase. Two reasons may be responsible for this development. First, vases with rounded bottoms became prevalent and they had to be supported in some manner. Second, imported wood, while fairly plentiful, was costly. The tall, slender stands used relatively little wood and thus allowed more people the luxury of affording wood vase stands. In any case, the type became a popular piece of furniture in the Middle and New Kingdoms.



Small cabinet Wood, carved and gilded hieroglyphs on blue-glazed composition; lid, two overlapping leaves; wooden bolts with bronze hoops c.1567-1320 B.C.

Tables were also used to hold small storage chests. Often labelled cabinets or caskets, these small chests stored cosmetics, toilet articles, wigs, games and the like. All chests were basically undivided storage spaces, though the smaller ones were sometimes fitted to hold special mirrors or cosmetic jars. Chests had doors or lids with knob handles. Frequently double knobs were employed, to be used as anchors for twine closures. Interestingly, there are few examples of drawers. Of all the basic working components of furniture, drawers seemed to least interest the ancient Egyptian. Chests, large or small, upright or horizontal, were made in abundance. Closures were various and lids followed a number of sloped or flat configurations, doors could be cut in numerous configurations and surface decorations ranged from austere to elaborate, but there were rarely any drawers.

By far the most common piece of furniture used in ancient Egypt was the stool. The earliest type was simply hewn from a single block of timber and roughly finished with an adze. This type dates back into predynastic times and develops from even simpler hewn timber trunks or blocks of stone. The actual construction of wooden stools began early in the dynastic period, likely as far back as 3000 B.C., with mortice and tenon joinery and webbing slots cut for leather or reed seat strapping. It wasn't long before sculptural details were incorporated into the simple, box-like, four-legged stool. Finials were carved in the form of stylized papyrus flowers, legs were carved in the form of hooved or clawed animal legs, and concave seats were carved out of a solid piece of timber or slats.



Sometime during the Middle Kingdom, after 2100 B.C., the folding stool was developed. It was a simple x-frame structure with seat rails and base rails, often embellished with ivory and ebony. By the mid 1500s B.C. the folding stool had become a fashionable piece of furniture. The style was standardized and its most common characteristics were the goose heads carved into the ends of the legs and base rails. Three legged stools also gained some prominence in the Middle Kingdom, though they probably developed much earlier—at the same time as the rough hewn block stools and in a similar manner. The earliest three-legged stools might well have been hewn from a conveniently branching tree. Eventually an elaborate lattice stool form was developed and became the most popular type in the final flourishing period of ancient Egyptian culture. The lattice stool developed out of the simple four-legged style. It was made of four straight legs with stretchers toward the bottom of the legs. The seat rails were mortice and tenoned to the top of the legs and between the stretchers and the seat rails was a lattice work of braces on all four sides. While such bracing may have added strength to the stool, its function seems to have been primarily decorative. Given the casual butt joining on some of the pieces and the carved elaboration on others, an airy effect rather than an engineered one followed. The attractive result was not lost on Egyptian craftsmen who produced such stools in great number. Seats were leather or rush or fitted wooden slats, as was the case with all other four-legged stools. Stools were the commonest form of seating at all levels of ancient Egyptian society. Stools have been found in the graves of workmen, bureaucrats and royalty.

Sometime during the second dynasty, beginning around 2890 B.C., the chair was developed out of the four-legged stool form. This was nearly as early a development as all other Egyptian furniture forms. The basic shape was simple and box-like, the proportions tending toward the square. The legs were square in section or carved into animal-leg forms and attached to the seat rails by mortice and tenons. The back was made in several ways: mortice and tenoned into the back seat rail, cut from the same piece of timber as the back legs or pinned to the seat and strengthened by an elbow bracket. Stretchers were used or not as deemed necessary and decorative lattice work was included on special chairs. The earliest surviving example of a chair also has the slanted wooden back panels that were often used in later models, creating a narrow triangular space above the seat in profile. Chair seats were either flat, constructed of curved panels to form a double cove, or woven of rush. Amazingly enough, some original rush seating has survived to the present day.

Undoubtedly the most spectacular Egyptian furniture was the ceremonial chair. Of essentially the same form as other chairs, it was, however, embellished with carving, inlay, paint and gilding. Elaborate lattice work between the stretchers and the seat was often employed.

Chair Cedarwood, bone inlay; seat originally woven
35¼×18×18in 1500-1400 B.C.

Lavish use of ivory and ebony, faience and carnelian inlay, gold and copper sheathing, and refined design were used to spectacular effect. The decorative and symbolic imagery was that of Egyptian gods, intertwined papyrus and lotus blossoms, geometric patterns, flora and fauna, and hieroglyphic inscriptions. Unfortunately, this elaborate royal furniture also proved irresistible to the grave robbers, who from antiquity have been pilaging the rich graves of dynastic Egypt. Since much of a ceremonial chair was covered in thick gold sheathing, the chair was stripped for its metal content. In the process, looters broke up and burned the chair's wooden parts. A few brilliant examples of this splendid, formal furniture remain and all are housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Fortunately, a copy of the royal arm chair of Queen Hetepheres was made when the decayed original was being reconstructed, and it can be seen in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

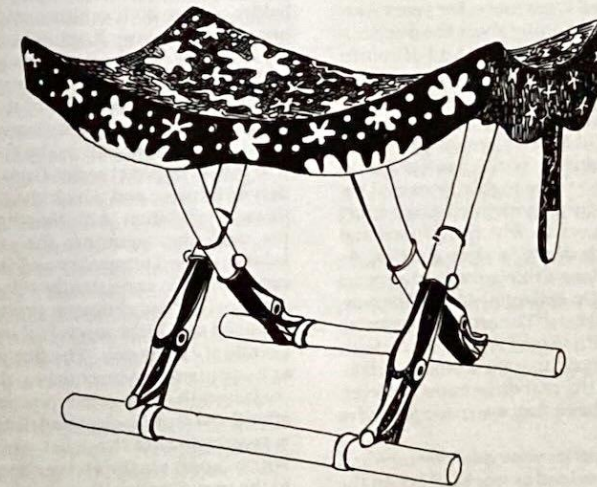
From this listing of the furniture types of ancient Egypt, it is clear that master wood-craftsmen were at work in that country from at least 3000 B.C. This is interesting in light of the fact that most of the timber used was not indigenous to the country. Egypt imported timber on a large scale beginning around 2700 B.C. From areas close to the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea came ash, boxwood, carobwood and elm, along with cedar from Lebanon. Elm and pine were also imported from Western Asia, possibly along with oak from Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). Ebony, used mainly in conjunction with ivory as veneer, was imported overland

from elsewhere on the African continent. An Egyptian expedition to Nubia, undertaken around 2300 B.C., recorded that it brought back 300 asses laden with ebony and ivory. Indigenous Egyptian wood was poor in comparison to the list of their exotic and servicable imports. However, the doum palm, poplar, sidder and sycamore fig were native trees that could be utilized. The widely distributed date palms, perseas and tamarisks were almost entirely unusable as timber. Thus Egyptian artisans were developing their skills on expensive foreign materials. That they reached great heights in craftsmanship and design is without question. But their apprenticeship on material not casually obtainable may well have resulted in their careful and circumspect oeuvre.

Bibliographic note:

For a good general account of ancient Egyptian, Near Eastern and Aegean furniture, see *Furniture in the Ancient World, Origins and Evolution, 3100-475 B.C.* by Hollis S. Baker; Macmillan Company, New York, 1966. A more recent publication, which is a catalog of international holdings and contains technical information and scale diagrams is *Ancient Egyptian Furniture, Volume 1, 4000-1300 B.C.* by G. Killen; Aris and Phillips, Ltd., London, 1980.

World Furniture by H. Hayward is a very general account of styles in furniture, but it does touch on ancient Egyptian work and has a few illustrations of each area discussed.



Stool Ebony inlaid with ivory, gold mounts. The seat simulates a draped leopard skin 1366-57 B.C.



photo credit: Don Hall

LOOK AT IT THIS WAY—ANN NEWDIGATE MILLS

MENDEL ART GALLERY, SASKATOON NOVEMBER 1988

Caroline Heath

Ann Newdigate Mills should drop the chip on her shoulder. She does not need it anymore. For years Ann has been whining and complaining about the discrimination against tapestry as an art form. And of course there has been discrimination. As Lynne Bell says in the first sentence of her catalogue introduction: "Ann Newdigate Mills works in a medium which is frequently marginalized or ignored in fine art territory."

Dr. Bell goes on to explain that in the last few centuries the fine arts have been more highly esteemed because they supposedly require more intellectual effort and more creativity than crafts, which are functional and require only manual dexterity for their creation. As Dr. Bell points out, this rationale thinly covers the tracks of class and gender lines. Dr. Bell quotes from *The Subversive Stitch* by Rozika Parker: "The art/craft hierarchy suggests that art made with thread and art made with paint are intrinsically unequal: that the former is artistically less significant. But the real differences between the two are in terms of **where** they are made and **who** makes them."

In the Middle Ages tapestries were made by men and women and were highly valued as works of art. In the 19th century, the influential English art critic John Ruskin lumped tapestry together with needlework and described it as the 'elementary graphic art of women',

thereby relegating it to the bottom rung on the aesthetic ladder, where 20th century critics and curators have been content to keep it, while painters and sculptors insensitively stepped on the busy fingers of tapestry-makers as they climbed to the top of the fine art ladder. This hierarchy is the focus of the exhibition **Look At It This Way**, an eight-year survey of Ann Newdigate Mills' tapestries, organized by the Mendel Art Gallery.

In the seven panel series from which the exhibition derives its name and which she produced especially for this solo exhibition, Ann Newdigate Mills, according to the catalogue "examines the cultural meanings and values ascribed to tapestry and interrogates the fine art criteria which consistently relegate the medium to a marginal or subordinate position." In a statement mounted next to the septych, the artist explains the double title of each panel: "The first title speaks to the viewer's spontaneous reaction to the work, the second challenges the change in reception that the viewers have after they come up close and discover that the medium is tapestry." That the artist would give a piece a title which "speaks to the **viewer's spontaneous reaction** to the work", rather than a title which emerged from the process of creation, strikes me as odd, simultaneously self-conscious and presumptuous. That she would add a second title, which "challenges the **change in**

reception (when they) discover that the medium is tapestry" is noteworthy then not so much for its presumptuousness as for the insight it gives us into the artist's anticipation of discrimination. An artist who has been abused expects to be abused. Apart from the double-barrelled titles, the tapestries themselves do little to examine artistic values. Helpful as that analysis might be in redressing the injustice to which tapestry has been subjected, that is not what Ann Newdigate Mills has given us. Her *Look At It This Way* series is not an intellectual critique. It is a work of art which one may assume derived its energy from the intensity of the artist's irritation at having suffered so long from disdain and neglect. Perhaps, now that she has vented her hurt and anger and now that the Mendel Art Gallery has given her a one-person show, Ann Newdigate Mills can abandon her defensiveness and we can get down to looking at her art.

The panels in *Look At It This Way* series are large (180 x 90cm), strong works, each of which could stand alone. All are characterized by deep, rich colours and a confident use of line. The last two in the series look like abstract paintings — one has paint on it — but like even the best abstract paintings, although they have immediate dramatic impact they lack subtlety or complexity so do not linger in the mind.

The first five panels incorporate clearly representational images. In #5, *But the happy unhappy medium would not go away/Think about it Otherwise*, the image is centrally positioned. In #1-3, the image is located in the bottom half of the piece and the top dissolves into an amorphous pattern. In all of these panels the representational images are somewhat stiff, whereas the patterns are a veritable dance of light and colour. The two halves of #2 and #3 do not quite hold together; neither line, shape nor colour are used to integrate the very different halves. The first panel, *The Nomad lit a candle and waited/Look at it this way*, does hold together, because the rows of arrows in the upper half curve down and converge around the candle image. A blue shape floating behind the candle and the arrows also serves to unite the two halves. The fourth panel, *Followed by a projective taste/You see what you are*, works perfectly as a whole. The fish image at the bottom is dark and indistinct, allowing the eye to float up to the double facial profiles in the upper half. The profiles open up naturally and emit an intensely imaginative flurry of colour. Ann Newdigate Mills' confident use of line also contributes to the vitality and integrity of this piece.

The other series in the exhibition, called the *Virtue* series, also comprises seven panels. The single, central image in all seven panels is a full-bodied female nude. The women in four of the panels *Patience*, *Prudence*, *Constance* and *Old Girl*, are small, stooped, drab figures framed by the towering outline of a grain elevator. The shadow images behind the women obviously represent



ANN NEWDIGATE MILLS

above: *The nomad lit a candle and waited/Look at it this way (Look At It This Way series)*
Tapestry (Gobelin style) 182.2x97.8 1987
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Edward Busse, Regina

above left: *Edinburgh Performance* Tapestry
(Gobelin style) 90.4x75.4cm 1982 Collection of
the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Regina

gallery schedule

all the women who have gone before — all the women who have cooked and scrubbed and been worn down by the limiting values of their society, which are reflected in their names. The other three women, *Faith*, *Hope* and *Felicity*, are exuberant, Rubens-scale figures, bursting out of their frames, boasting with their leaping bodies and upflung arms: I'm me! I'm strong! I'm full of enthusiasm and joy.

There has always been a didactic as well as a narrative strain in Ann Newdigate Mills' work. It only becomes irritating when it distracts from the remarkable sensuality, originality and whimsy of her work. In some places she weaves words into the visual composition, generally suggesting profound significance but delivering only a distractingly cryptic message, e.g. *Full Circle*, and at the end of the day a prairie sea. Surely in a *Virtue* series, however, she can legitimately take a moral stance. And in this series her didacticism is indeed tolerable, even welcome, because it is not extraneous or arbitrarily imposed but is effectively conveyed through her medium—through colour, shape, composition and metaphor. Her use of line is particularly effective in this regard. In the group of four panels, the defining line is the outline of the grain elevator. In the other three, the defining line, now in red, is the energized, gestural outline of the woman's body, deftly conveying the transfer of power.

From 1981 to 1982 Ann Newdigate Mills studied tapestry at the University of Edinburgh, the only place that

specializes in integrating traditional Gobelin-style tapestry-making with the tradition of modern painting. She participated there in the production of tapestry simulations of paintings. Since then she says she has begun to work loosely from full-scale canvases, in the Gobelin style. (This exhibition includes some preparatory drawings which also stand very well on their own.) The Edinburgh training and encouragement was obviously crucial in her development. So it seems appropriate that the best piece in the show is entitled simply *Edinburgh Performance*. Its central image is an indefinable vortex of colour, line and texture—free and deep, energetic and moving. This is even better than faith, hope and felicity. This is glory. This will leave the spectators who persist in distinguishing between fine art and crafts quibbling in the dust of their own distinction.

Swift Current National Exhibition Centre
Swift Current, Saskatchewan
1 to 31 January 1989

Robert McLaughlin Gallery
Oshawa, Ontario
13 April to 21 May 1989

Little Gallery
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
1 to 30 June 1989

Southern Alberta Art Gallery
Lethbridge, Alberta
15 July to 3 September 1989

The Chapel Gallery
North Battleford, Saskatchewan
1 to 31 December 1989

Dunlop Art Gallery
Regina, Saskatchewan
13 January to 11 February 1990

The Outlook Show

December 31, 1988 to January 26, 1989

This show features an exciting variety of work produced as a result of the creators' experiences with Artist-in-Residence, Michael Holroyd during his year-long stay in the Outlook district.

Opening: January 6

Just Knitting

January 28 to March 2, 1989

Kate Shook from Saskatoon exhibits warm, colourful examples of her knitting abilities, including classic sweaters featuring Irish, Baltic and Fair Isle designs, along with more contemporary examples.

Opening: January 27

Escape

March 4 to 30, 1989

Basil and Glenda Ramadan from Regina exhibit fused and leaded glass work illustrating the concept of "escape".

Opening: March 3

Biennale '88

April 1 to 27, 1989

A juried exhibition of 40 contemporary works by New Brunswick craftspeople organized by the New Brunswick Crafts Council/Conseil D'Artisanat du Nouveau-Brunswick.

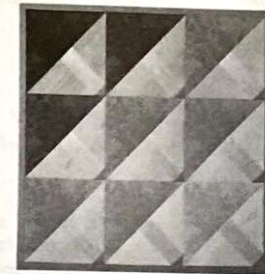
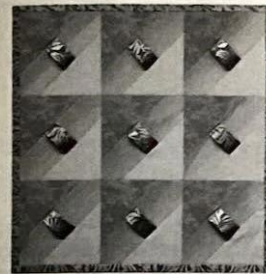
Opening: April 1

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

Open daily: 1:00 - 5:00



LOUISE SLOBODAN *Changing Directions*

Transforming Tradition

SCC GALLERY

OCTOBER 1988

Nancy Cochrane

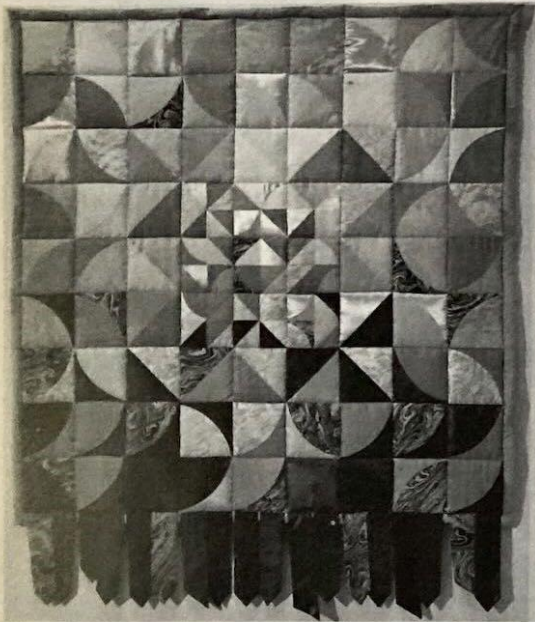
This is an ambitious title for a quilt show. In the past twenty years, the patchwork quilt of our grandmothers' era has undergone a fundamental change. It has emerged from the marginalized "decorative arts" into the mainstream of contemporary art consciousness. New ground has been broken both conceptually and technically. The carefully salvaged scraps from which the old quilts were made have been replaced with an extensive pallet of commercial and handmade fabrics. The constraints on the women who made do with what was at hand are no longer factors. The right colour, texture, and design—including the dyeing or printing of a one-of-a-kind fabric for a single purpose—has become the conscious choice of the artist. The sharing of time-honoured patterns, fundamental to the secret communication between sewers in the past, has been overshadowed by the need of individual artists to express their unique vision. It is still felt necessary by some to add to the cutlines in contemporary quilt catalogues, "No pattern available." The question arises, does this particular exhibition represent such a transformation or merely document it? Does it write a new chapter in the continuing transition or restate what has been said before?

Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* brought women's traditional domestic arts to the attention of the public in an unprecedented statement, serving notice that they were to be taken seriously. Chicago was not transforming the medium but the way we were to experience it. We were forced to concede that the techniques in and of themselves—untransformed—are valid for the creation of art. From the point of view of technique, it was a tradition-

al exhibition. Impeccable craftsmanship and uncompromising attention to detail were central to the success of each placesetting. Technical failure would have trivialized the overall concept.

Only those quilts which represent a new direction and a significant departure from tradition can be forgiven for stinting on technique. Perhaps that is why lapses by artists whose technical skill is sufficient to avoid them (especially if their artistic vision is limited) strike one as arrogant. Quilt artists have dyed, printed, painted, stamped, twisted, pleated and stuffed—as was Pat Cairns' 1982 quilt *Evergreen Playground*, (*Quilter's Newsletter Magazine*, June 1983, p. 37) — slashed, overlaid, cut away, and incorporated non-traditional and sometimes controversial materials, such as metals and plastics. The quilt came off the bed some time ago. It is increasingly difficult to be innovative in this field.

Nerida Benson Mandl's *Double Wedding Ring* is based on a traditional scrap quilt pattern. In her variation, she has controlled the placement of colour by hand-dyeing the cotton fabric. In all other ways, this is a most traditional piece, even to the hand quilting of which it is one of the only two examples in the show; the other also done by Mandl. The impact of the colour upon the viewer is immediately pleasing and skillfully planned, but it does not break new ground. The defects that appear on closer examination are baffling. The quilting is competent — not exceptional — but the construction is not. Most disheartening is her error in selecting an insufficiently dense or bonded batting. The consequence of her choice produced the incurable quilt malaise known as fibre migration, or bearding. Tiny filaments of



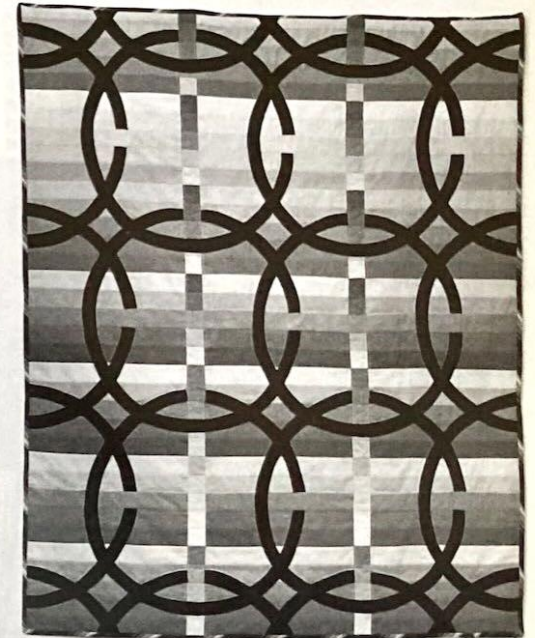
PAT CAIRNS *Bridge Shadows*

Pat Cairns' strengths lie at the opposite end of scale. For Cairns, bigger is better. *View to the West*, is large in scale, with clean lines and flawless control of colour. She has taken simple, traditional patchwork shapes, rectangles and triangles, and mixed them in a masterful and painterly way. For this quilt, tradition must graciously step aside—no apologies necessary. Her other pieces, alas, look like after-thoughts in comparison. The control of colour in *View to the West* is not apparent in *Bridge Shadows*. The scale of the traditional nine patch arrangement abruptly changes in the centre of the piece for no apparent reason. The colour is scrambled; the eye cannot focus. This mottling effect may, in fact, faithfully depict the scene Cairns was trying to recreate, but it is inappropriate to the medium. What is harmonious in nature is not necessarily so in cloth. *View to the East* is similarly disappointing. The light colours in the foreground advance rather than recede, as the uncompromising bulk of the bridge shape demands. The traditional "Storm at Sea" arrangement seems to bear no relation to the overall design. Her unnecessary sacrifice of precision piecing is an additional detraction. *Black and White* also lacks the thoughtfulness and quiet energy of, for example, Cairns' *Secret Sea*, featured in the first **Fiberarts Design Book** (1980). The exception among her smaller pieces is her delightful *Traffic Jam?* Here her fine-tuned sense of the abstract and efficient use of colour create a modest example of what this artist can do.

polyester from the inner layer of the quilt have worked their way through the cotton surface. Pulling on these shaggy protrusions only brings up more. A light or printed surface makes this problem less noticeable. Unfortunately, Mandl has chosen black for her background, and the bearding is painfully obvious. Mandl's co-exhibitors, Cairns and Affleck, deal with bearding in their book **Putting It All Together — A Contemporary Approach to Quiltmaking**. Better choices should have been made at the level of construction. A (traditional) cotton batting, preshrunk cotton flannel sheeting, 80% cotton/20% polyester batting, or a layer of batiste between the batting and the surface layer would have preserved the striking colour on a solid black ground which is this quilt's strong feature. Her smaller piece, *Almost a Wedding Ring*, is an abstraction of the traditional pattern with quite intriguing results. Here black is used to circumscribe rings on a colourful strip-pieced ground. But it is, perhaps, her decorative, framed "mini-quilts" which best depict tradition transformed. These spirited collages only nod to quilting tradition on their way to becoming free-machined, spangled space-scapes for which quilting critique no longer applies.

Under Louise Slobodan's eye and needle the quilt has lost its comfortable cuddliness and gained both a cleanliness of line and a sculptural quality worthy of the show's title. She brings her experience with photography, screen printing, and dyeing techniques to this exhibit. Beginning with the traditional American quilt block, *Pine Tree*, Slobodan has evolved her own vocabulary. There is content and conscience at work in *Disappearing Forest*, the latter, at least, notoriously lacking in most traditional quilts. With minor exceptions, she has controlled the medium. There is both a creative mind at work and a technician identifying and overcoming obstacles to the translation of ideas. Sculptor and painter Anne Truitt believed that "a concept of any importance seems to carry with it the responsibility of inventing methods for its actualization, and the energy to do so." It is this process which is necessary for the "magic" of transformation to take place. Slobodan has left nothing to chance. In her series, *Changing Directions*, texture has become dimension. The appealing shadows of traditional hand quilting have become protrusions and

NERIDA BENSON MENDEL *Almost a Wedding Ring*



recessions, all as tightly controlled as the most disciplined quilting stitch. In one instance, she has cut away sections, revealing a second framed layer beneath. We can look forward to seeing two of Slobodan's pieces in the new **Fiberarts Design Book III**.

Jean Affleck, who employs strip piecing and machine quilting techniques, is probably the most precise crafts-woman of the four. Like Cairns, her shapes are simple and the "Attic Windows" pattern, the starting point for the four quilts in this show, a standard. But unlike Cairns, her workmanship is immaculate. When she states that "the constant position of the light, medium and dark values in any patterns or colours will always give the desired sense of depth," she fails to explain the extraordinary beauty of her quilts. Her focus takes us beyond the predictable. Her windows are openings through which we look in as well as out. It is vision, not formula, which is at the heart of the work. Her concepts are simple. She does not indulge in any unnecessary line or distracting movement but, by her control of colour and design, speaks directly to the viewer. The intense glowing colours of *Facade* and *Gulf Island Sunset* immediately demand and hold one's attention. By slightly varying the value and amount of colour, she has located the source of light within the quilt itself. A trick, perhaps, but masterfully performed.

Tradition transformed? On the whole, probably not. But these four quilters have prepared a feast for the eye

and a contribution to the craft. They are pushing at the constraints of the ordinary, exploring the potential of the medium, while paying homage to the past with its rich and rewarding heritage. The relationship between women and fabric is intimate and enduring. That tradition we can count on perpetually enriching our lives.

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The Craft Factory

Sue Robertson

Thirty-five miles southwest of North Battleford on Highways 14 and 29 lies the Town of Wilkie. At first glance, it is like a lot of other sleepy agricultural towns in the Prairies hibernating for the winter—frost-covered trees give a fresh beauty to the day, neighbours sharing the morning news from the ends of their driveways eye the unknown car driving past. But unlike other prairie towns, Wilkie is the home of Hanwood Woodworks, housed in a 2040 square foot building on the main street of Wilkie.

When you first enter Hanwood Woodworks, the newness of the facility is apparent from the smell of fresh paint. Their latest line of products, custom-made plaques, is proudly displayed on the wall. To the left is the display room where samples of their products may be viewed. Also located in this room is the design area and the engraving equipment. Through the door at the back of this room is the manufacturing area. There I found Byron Hansen, leaning over the shoulder of an employee, examining a piece of wood which was being sanded. The production area was surprisingly clean, sawdust is removed as it is made by vacuum cleaning. Employees sat working at their stations, one sanding wooden bulrushes, two others at scroll saws cutting out pieces of grasshoppers. Since opening, a second scroll saw has been added and a larger sander ordered. Also another full-time employee has been hired. It would seem that they have already outgrown this facility; Byron agreed that they need more space.

Byron Hansen started working with wood fifteen years ago, making cedar chests and furniture. He would fashion toys out of the left-over scraps of wood. He found that he got more pleasure out of making toys so he moved from furniture into toy making. Byron soon discovered that there were a lot of good toy makers in the province and he would have to find his own niche in the craft community. That happened at the Mendel Craft Exhibition in 1982. Challenged by Orland Larson, a jeweller from Calgary, to make a statement about himself, Byron who had farmed for 23 years, created *Irony*, two grasshoppers pulling a sprayer. The grasshopper was to become his best selling line. For Byron, the grass-

hopper represents the courage, strength and tenacity of Prairie people, Byron's personal goal is "to make it Saskatchewan's symbol".

The Hanwood of today has changed a lot from its humble beginnings on Hansen's farm. They now produce twelve gift items and design plaques and trophies made out of fifty varieties of wood. Byron credits Hanwood's development to his partner Isabelle Gress. With fifteen years at the Credit Union, eleven in management, Isabelle Gress brought the necessary managerial expertise to Hanwood. She now handles the administration and Byron handles the design and production. They compliment each other well.

The immediate result of this partnership was the expansion, with the help of the Western Diversification Program, from a one man operation to a hand manufacturing plant with eight employees. The Western Diversification Program (WDP) is a program initiated by the Government of Canada to counterbalance the "boom and bust" problems associated with the resource based economy found in Saskatchewan. Its purpose is to stimulate and foster economic diversity so as to

broaden the economic base in the province. Under this program Hanwood received an interest free loan of \$73,564.00 repayable within 5 years.

How is it that a small company such as Hanwood was able to access funds that many larger firms were unable to? They credit their success to the excellent business plan and proposal that Isabelle put together and "a lot of hell". She called a Minister or Deputy Minister once a day for a month. That perseverance finally paid off. Byron explained that Hanwood would have expanded with or without the money from the program, but because of the program it occurred sooner. Isabelle went on to explain that it also allowed them to "do it up in style", giving Hanwood more creditability.

There is another factor in Hanwood's success. For personal as well as business reasons, other locations for the plant were considered. However, the Town of Wilkie and Hanwood worked together on a proposal which made it more feasible to stay in Wilkie. Already the economic benefits for Wilkie are visible. As well as



Byron Hansen and Isabelle Gress, Hanwood

photo credit: Sue Robertson



Hanwood Woodworks

photo credit: Sue Robertson

employing a staff of eight, Hanwood is responsible for a new cottage industry. Finished parts of flowers, cat-tails, bears and horses are delivered to three women's homes. There, they are assembled, ribbons added, and faces are painted on and are then returned to the plant for pricing and shipping.

Hanwood has always been successful with the products it has chosen to market. Byron is fascinated by people and likes to know "what makes them tick". He watches what people buy, spends time going through furniture and gift stores, and designs products which are complimentary in colour and style to what he sees

there. Isabelle admits that there is also an element of luck involved. For example, when Betty Thauberger of Thauberger & Associates Inc., was in Ontario on business, she happened to show some of the Hanwood products, including the grasshopper, to two men from Boston who suggested Boston as a potential market for the grasshopper. However, it was hard work and perseverance that paid off. At a Canadian Marketplace, Byron met with the Boston Consul to establish contact and pursue the possibility of marketing the grasshopper at "Faneuil Hall" which is located in the hub of Quincy Market in Boston. On top of the Faneuil Hall is a weathervane with a golden grasshopper on it, the grasshopper has become associated with good fortune and tourists to this historical landmark are always looking to bring some of that good fortune home in the form of a souvenir grasshopper. Through the Boston Consul and the Canadian Consulate in Boston a marketplace within "Faneuil Hall" was found.

Another instance of Hanwood's hard work is its new product line. As the result of identifying a need for a

unique gift for retirees and visitors, they developed their line of custom-made plaques. They approached Crestline Coach in Saskatoon, armed with their new line and their strategy of "this is what we can do for you". It worked. Eight months later they approached SARM and requested a booth at their convention. They also gave six plaques to the directors, free with no strings attached. Today, they custom design plaques for 45 out of 299 Rural Municipalities.

What does the future hold for Hanwood? Their business plan is in four stages, over an eight year span. The first stage of their plan is now complete with the building of the plant. The second stage is to expand into a second building which will be built on to the existing facility. The third stage is a further physical expansion which will result in a U-shaped building. Also at this time it is planned to split giftware and plaques into two separate divisions. The fourth stage is training and teaching.

Teaching is important to Byron Hansen. He feels a need to share what he knows with others. Over the years

he has taught a lot of classes. Now Hanwood is involved in a work experience program with the high school. For one hour every second day students come to his plant to learn. One of his staff is a graduate of this program.

With all of the other questions answered there was still one delicate one that had to be asked. Is what Hanwood is producing still handmade? "I don't know where the line is drawn . . . I will always be a craftsman . . . I design and control quality on each and every article". There is no doubt in Byron's and Isabelle's mind that the products produced by Hanwood Woodworks are handmade. I too do not know where the line is drawn.

Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival Juried Exhibition

July 14, 15, 16, 1989
Jurying dates: April 28, 29, 1989

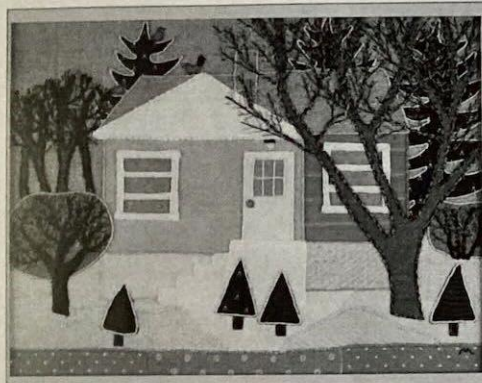
Work submitted for jurying must have been completed after January 1, 1988, and must not have been shown in any other exhibition.

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 contain the *Dimensions* catalogue, including coloured reproductions of the prize winning works and other exhibits.

dimensions '89

Stitched Landscapes

Olive Kalapaca



MARGOT LINSAY
 top: **House in Sutherland** Appliqué 29x39.5cm 1984
 bottom: **The Goose Shepherdess** Appliqué 35x44.5cm 1983

The studio is small with shelves along three walls holding many-coloured threads, yarns, beads and fabrics, all neatly labeled and within easy reach. A work table is tucked under a large window overlooking a secluded garden.

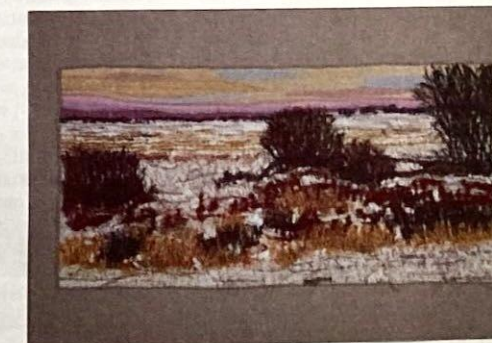
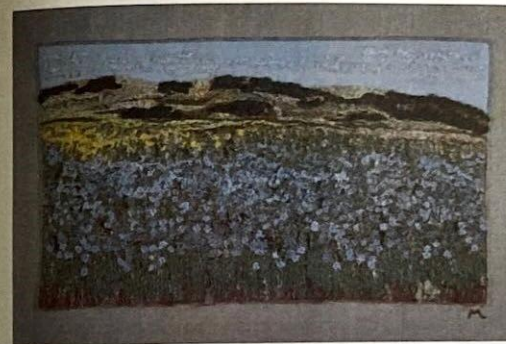
Margot was born and grew up in Offenburg in the Black Forest region of Germany. Traditional embroidery was one of the compulsory basics taught in elementary school. The teachers expected perfection from their pupils. For Margot personal creativity was to come later but the foundation was set and solid. Later, Margot met and married Terry who works for Air Canada, and in 1966 came to live in Canada.

In the late sixties and early seventies when crafts were flourishing, embroidery also enjoyed a revival under the new name of "creative embroidery"; as Margot puts it, "One put as many different stitches into one piece as one could". Classes were offered in "creative stitchery". The first one Margot took was given by Jean Seggie and Shirley McKercher at the University Extension Division. This was her first encounter with creating her own designs.

In the seventies, trips to Denmark and Germany opened up new horizons in appliqué and in this period of her work, appliqué predominates. Her choice of fabric dictated what direction her pieces would take; shiny, satiny, pastel fabrics brought forth castles, churches and fantasy, gingham and flower prints her folk-art, rural and animal scenes.

The eighties brought with them 'fashion' yarns in beautiful textures, glitter and colours. Around this time Margot also discovered a weaving studio on Granville Island in Vancouver that sold hand-dyed, raw silk threads in an array of beautiful colours. These exciting materials started her exploration of free-style, painterly landscapes. Margot also uses commercial six strand embroidery thread, Danish hand-dyed flower thread, Swedish linen thread and pearl cotton.

Margot starts her pictures on a white cotton background. Over this she sews coloured cotton fabrics appropriate to the scene to be depicted, such as brown for the ground and blue for the sky. Over this she layers



many small pieces of yarn of varying colours and thickness. Careful choice of stitches, differing in length and type, and colour integrate to form the scenes. Although there is a vocabulary of hundreds of stitches, Margot finds she uses mostly couching and straight stitches and French and bullion knots. These stitches along with the background, form the scrubby prairie bushes, bright Canola fields, rosehips or spring flowers. The finished embroidery is sewn onto a background fabric that acts as a matting around the piece. The embroidery is then ready for framing. For the unique effects present in Margot's work she uses her experience with appliqué, subtle padding, sparkly thread, and glass and other beads.

Margot's creativity is inspired by trips to places like Beaver Creek and the prairie close to home. She uses her camera to capture the whole scene and to focus in on the small details. Margot says her favourite season is early winter when the first snow brings out the subtle colours and the stark lines made by bare trees and shrubs. Early spring is also a favourite when the snow begins to melt and contrasts with black wet soil, and when patches of green and other plant colours are just starting to show. These scenes and her materials are a well-spring of inspiration for Margot.

It is easy to relate to Margot's latest series of prairie scenes reflecting in stitched miniatures a subtly coloured and textured landscape and it will be interesting to watch the further development of this theme.

Margot Linsay's embroideries *With Needle and Thread through the Seasons* were exhibited jointly with raku earthenware by Olive Kalapaca at the Frances Morrison Library Gallery, Saskatoon, from October 12 to 31, 1988.

MARGOT LINSAY
 top left: **Flax Field near Prudhomme** 10x16"
 top: **Violet, Blue and White Asters** 6x10"
 middle: **Rose Patch near Beaver Creek** 9x15.5"
 bottom: **On a Warm Winter Day** 9.5x19.5"
 Embroideries Silk, various yarns

THE GALLERY — PARTING WORDS

Catherine Macaulay

When our editor asked me to consider writing a short article about my experiences with the Craft Gallery as Gallery Coordinator for the past 3½ years, I wondered whether it would be a case of (in)famous last words, or parting shots. The experiences were so varied, and yet a certain predictable pattern developed, along with general areas of responsibility. What follows is a meandering combination of remembrances of what was, and musings about what might have been.

Visual artists have a reputation in some quarters as being unreliable and difficult to get to meet deadlines. I am very pleased to report that that was not the case in my dealings with craftspeople whose work was selected for exhibition in the Craft Gallery. Except for a very few instances, deadlines were met, complete information was made available when required, and activities and attitudes were professional in every way.

This is particularly important given the way in which the operations of the gallery are presently structured. Once the gallery committee (a volunteer committee composed of active SCC members) makes its selection from proposals received, and establishes the schedule, it really is up to the exhibitor to create enough suitable work and select a cohesive body for exhibition. Very little curatorial guidance or pressure is brought to bear on the craftspeople by either the committee or the coordinator. This is intended to give the artist/craftsperson a free rein in producing a body of work that feels satisfactory.

Now this system does have its disadvantages, the major one being the lack of support available to emerging or developing artists whose work has an intrinsic interest, but lacks a focus or has some technical "rough edges". So far we have only been able to offer general encouragement — "we have not scheduled a show for you at this time . . . go back to the studio or workshop and keep at it." It might be useful if more specific advice and direction were available, if the craftspeople desired it. Thus the gallery could play a developmental role in working with less experienced, younger craftspeople.

It was always an adventure to experience public reaction to various kinds of exhibitions. The "general public" responded best to work that emphasized content as well as technical expertise, work that could be termed "exotic", work that obviously involved a lot of time and technical ability, and work that could be called "traditional". Therefore exhibitions such as recent ones by Helen Cooke and Marigold Cribb made viewers consider message as well as material. Shows such as the

Meeting challenges in a creative and efficient way is the stuff that successful gallery operations are made of!

Botswana tapestries provided an international flavour to the gallery schedule. The exhibition of work by the woodturning instructors impressed visitors by its wonderfully "well crafted" feeling. The exhibition of Saskatchewan quilts circulated by the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils gave viewers the opportunity to respond to a traditional, well-loved craft activity set in a regional context.

One of the things that I noticed, particularly over the past year to eighteen months, is the increasing availability of exhibitions from other parts of the country. The Ontario Crafts Council makes available approximately three exhibitions each year for touring; while we have not yet taken advantage of their availability, we could be guaranteed top quality shows from that source. The Cartwright Gallery on Granville Island in Vancouver will be making selected exhibitions available to other parts of the country; in fact **6 x 6 x 6** will be on tour in 1989 and will be shown at the National Exhibition Centre in Swift Current. The Manitoba Crafts Council, which operates its own public gallery, Craftspace, in a manner similar to SCC, would also be a source of exhibitions. Plans are underway to host the New Brunswick **Biennale '88** in our gallery next spring. Obviously, there are lots of exciting shows out there!

Which leads me to another area of potential development . . . the SCC could be more aggressive about organizing and making available exhibitions that we could offer in exchange. Several of the shows that are put together for exhibition in

our own gallery could be made available for touring, both inside and outside of Saskatchewan. It has been my experience that gallery visitors everywhere are very receptive towards quality exhibitions of craft; touring more work by our own members would expand individual experience and reputation and would enhance the state of craft in general. Our neighbouring craft organizations would certainly be enthusiastic.

The gallery committee presently does not have the mandate to do this (although we did work with the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils, and the Dunlop Art Gallery to organize a province wide tour of **Northern Comfort**—and got our collective wrists lightly tapped by the SCC Board in the process) so either the mandate should be expanded, or the Exhibition Committee be willing to take on

an additional role of exploring touring possibilities for SCC gallery shows. Giving the public an opportunity to see more craft exhibitions, and giving craftspeople in other parts of the country a chance to see our own Saskatchewan crafts are very important parts of the whole role of promoting excellence in craft.

A very gratifying (and useful, I hope) part of my work was building strong relationships with the media. As a result, our gallery's media coverage is as good as any, and better than most. CBC Television and Radio, CFQC-TV, Telecable 10, STV and the *Star Phoenix* have been particularly supportive, and most have staff and reporters who are personally enthusiastic about craft and craft activities. I hope that these relationships can be maintained and strengthened.

So what might the future hold for SCC's Craft Gallery? One of the most

important decisions that is to be made involves relocating the gallery (and the office, too, of course) to a more congenial neighbourhood. Although the gallery now has a supportive group of viewers, there are hundreds more people out there who should be using the gallery on a regular basis. The present location does not produce any "walk-in" traffic and we are very isolated from other facilities that attract a like-minded audience. And I am sure that everyone is tired and frustrated with having to deal with break-ins and vandalism — we can only be thankful that damage has been minimal.

Therefore, the challenges facing the gallery committee and the new co-ordinator are exciting and wide-ranging. Meeting challenges in a creative and efficient way is the stuff that successful gallery operations are made of!

On December 1 Catherine Macaulay retired from her position as the first co-ordinator of the Saskatchewan Craft Council Gallery because of the demands of her job as curator of the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery, University of Saskatchewan. She is actively involved in the visual arts community and is also a fine watercolour artist.

farewell

. greetings

In mid-December, Marigold Cribb took over the position of Gallery Co-ordinator.

Marigold's connection with the gallery goes back to its inception. She was on the SCC Board when the present SCC building was purchased, and when local craftspeople got to work to retrofit the old church space as gallery, office and storage space, Marigold helped with insulation and vapour barriers.

In due course a Gallery Committee was formed to work out the logistics of running a gallery as opposed to touring shows in other galleries. Committee members researched and reported on other galleries and pooled their own experiences, and presented to the Board a philosophy and a system for running the gallery. Guidelines were set up and with Marigold, then Gallery Committee Chairperson, acting as co-ordinator the committee began hanging shows. Six months after shows had started Catherine was hired as Co-ordinator and soon after Marigold left for six months in Australia. Catherine and four successive Chairpersons and Gallery Committees have added their own refinements to the system but it has not changed in any fundamental manner.

Marigold's formal education and employment appropriate to this job include a degree in Art, training in Commercial Art, and experience as teacher, technical writer, office worker and in library displays. Her most useful assets may be however her experience as a practising artist and craftspeople, as a traveller with a longstanding practice of gallery and museum visiting, as a volunteer in art, craft, theatre, libraries and sports, and as a perennial student of almost anything.

THE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM, OUTLOOK

By the time this is published the Artist-in-Residence Program will have ended with a gala wind-up in the Outlook Civic Centre and the opening of an exhibition at the SCC gallery, December 31 to January 26, 1989, focusing on the impact of the program and the artist, Michael Holroyd, on the Outlook arts community during the past year. The following are assessments of the program from representatives of three of the four major interests.

Ralph Reid — Saskatchewan Craft Council

First I must acknowledge the efforts and commitment of the primary group in Outlook—Panorama Pottery and, in particular, Sue Robertson. They saw the possibilities of the Artist-in-Residence Program and had a vision of its impact in the community. Despite many obstacles their persistence generated enough community interest and enthusiasm to convince the SCC to sponsor their application. (SCC had failed on two previous occasions to acquire an Artist-in-Residence program).

Secondly I must acknowledge and commend the Project Review Committee which brought together representatives of the Outlook and District Arts Council, the Outlook Recreation Board and Panorama Pottery as well as a representative from the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture and from the SCC. The group worked well together defining goals, screening and selecting the artist, liaising and being responsible for overall supervision and direction of the program.

Thirdly I must express my thanks and appreciation to Tim Twardochleb of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture for his support and guidance throughout. He excelled in his role as facilitator. He always seemed to be able to help us find a solution.

Finally I must commend Michael Holroyd, the Artist-in-Residence, for his unselfish efforts in actually delivering the program to the people of Outlook. His drive and energy served him well as he faced the many demands upon his time and talents.

While the paragraphs above many appear to be a 'thank you' list, they are really intended to focus attention on what I consider to be the prerequisite for success, namely the fact that many people were in communication with each other at all stages throughout the program. Plans were made, a budget was drafted, activities took place, evaluations were conducted and adjustments were undertaken in an atmosphere of cooperation, flexibility and enthusiasm on all sides. Equally important, the management of the program was able to refrain from daily intervention thereby encouraging people's innate sense of responsibility and bringing forth everyone's best efforts. There were no untoward surprises.

In a nutshell, success of this and subsequent Artist-in-Residence programs lies in working closely with a local group who will spearhead the program. Once the group has focused its goal, the larger local community

must be brought into the action and its goals must be somehow integrated so that the largest number of people have a vested interest in achieving success for the residency. The SCC's role, with the help and guidance of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, is to help the community define its goals in relation to the program and, then, to provide the administrative structure to allow the goals to be pursued. It is through programs such as this that the SCC can fulfill its mandate of promoting excellence in the crafts to the wider provincial community.

Barbara Hamlin — Outlook resident and potter

The Artist/Craftsperson-in-Residence Program has been the highlight of the year in Outlook and surrounding area. It has achieved, in no small measure, one of the most important goals established in the beginning by the organizing committee. That goal being to raise community awareness of the value of artistic endeavour in our lives, to more fully understand the nature of art and the part it plays in personal development.

The Artist/Craftsperson-in-Residence, Michael Holroyd, came to Outlook as a recent graduate from art school and had no experience of the normal community dissent and "ferment at the growing edge". In spite of this he did achieve the goals in several ways. As well as teaching classes, he has written a weekly newsletter for the local paper dealing with artistic concepts — sowing seeds of thought. He has also sought, quite successfully because of his own good natured personality, to portray a philosophy of art that says it can be a joy, fun, exciting to search for the truth through creative manipulation of various mediums. This was evident on Tuesday of each week—open house at the clay studio — when you could find a senior citizen, who had dropped by to find out "What's this Artist-in-Residence about anyway?", or kids from Michael's classes who dropped in after school for fun. Tuesdays at the studio also gave individuals, who do not belong to an organized group, an opportunity to discuss problems and solutions with a person who is interested in listening and experienced in critiquing.

The community, to the best of my knowledge, has approximately eight active potters, five beginning basket makers, several weavers, twenty members of the Saskatchewan Embroiderers' Guild meeting once a week, a china painter and a few woodworkers. We hold

an annual Craft Market using as closely as possible the SCC guidelines.

Michael Holroyd, with help from Tim Twardochleb of the Cultural Committee, Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, is currently holding workshops to form an umbrella group of cultural interests in Outlook so that we can effectively lobby town council for facilities and make use of grants. This may well be the most important contribution of the Artist-in-Residence program to our town.

Thank you Michael Holroyd, thank you SCC and the directors who gave of their time and patience to make this program possible here.

We need a community Cultural Director to work beside every Recreation Director in this province.

Michael Holroyd — Artist-in-Residence

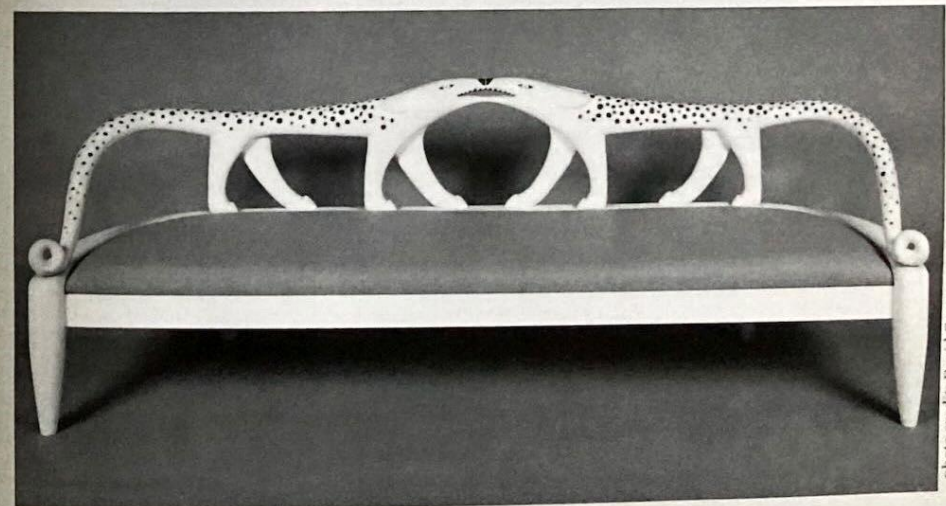
The Artist-in-Residence program has been an excellent program for me and for the community as well. The goal of the Artist-in-Residence program is to provide artistic leadership (visual, performing or literary) in rural Saskatchewan communities for one year. The program is set up by the community so the activities of each Artist-in-Residence vary. In Outlook I spent most of my time instructing, formally in classes and informally in conversation and critiques. I was involved in other activities such as setting up exhibitions, sales, and courses to be taught by people other than myself, and in writing a weekly column for the local newspaper. The only restriction on the community program is that time must be allowed for the artist to develop his own work; the split between community service and personal work is to be 50/50.

I know a great many artists instruct only to make ends meet but if an artist enjoys teaching the Artist-in-Residence program is great. It was one of the reasons I enjoyed this program. I had very little teaching experience before and I learned a great deal. I now know how to instruct and what is needed to run a successful class. I think I might have learned more than my students.

Although an artist may not want to teach as a career the Artist-in-Residence program is still worth considering. The biggest plus, for myself, was the number of people I was exposed to. I met not only people from Outlook and district but from all over the province. I probably came in contact with over three thousand people as a direct result of my job. In art half the battle is getting your name known and I have made great strides this year thanks to the Artist-in-Residence program.

To be totally honest some parts of the program did not work out as I had expected. I expected, as stated in the terms of the grant, to work twenty hours a week on community service and the other twenty hours on my own work. In fact, I worked much longer hours on community service. The demands of the community program worked out to be almost a full-time position. As a result, my personal work did not get the time required to develop far enough to produce the strong portfolio which was one of my personal goals. I do not begrudge the extra time put in on community service as I enjoyed it very much and in the long run it may prove to be more beneficial.

I feel the program is an excellent way to further a career. I want to thank the provincial government for setting up a program which benefits both the community and the artist.



JUDY KENSLEY MCKIE *Leopard Couch* Mahogany; bleached, burned 30.5x90x25" 1983
Collection of Frances and Sidney Lewis



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