

# THE CRAFT FACTOR

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Saskatchewan  
craft council

— FOR YOUR INFORMATION —





front cover and left:  
**Linda Dirkson, 'Rushnyk',**  
36.24 x 227.5cm

far left:  
**Wendy Parsons, 'Revelling Angel**  
**One', 38.75 x 33.75 x 38.75cm**

far right:  
**Wendy Parsons, 'Revelling Angel**  
**Two', 28.75 x 28.75 x 46.25cm**

left:  
**Kathryn Manry, 'Teacups'**

bottom:  
*Rituals workshops participants*



back cover:  
**Klaus Walch, Bowl, high fired,**  
**transparent, opaque and opalescent**  
**enamels, 7.25 x 5"**



Photo credit: Kim Dines

# THE CRAFT FACTOR

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Saskatchewan Craft Council is a non-profit organization formed in 1975 to nurture and promote the craft community. Craftspeople, supporters of crafts and the general public are served by the many and varied programs of the Saskatchewan Craft Council including gallery and touring craft exhibitions, craft markets, workshops, conferences and publications. The Saskatchewan Craft Council is an affiliated member of the Canadian Craft Council.

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# A HOT INCITE

Photography by Available Light



Enamelling workshop, Fay Rooke centre

Outside cold rain lashed the countryside but in the workshops at Sage Hill Convention Centre activity was hot and enthusiasm high. Incite this year was held at the former army camp at Dana. Living conditions were less spartan than at Fort San, a previous site for Incite. Food was varied and plentiful with a choice of fresh fruit at every meal, and kitchen staff who were genuinely hospitable.

A short walk away from the living quarters were the workshops and lecture hall where 47 participants listened, watched, experimented and questioned. Incite started with an introductory talk and slideshow on their work and their medium by the instructors. Fay Rooke, Brian Kirkvliet and Pierre Lheritier ran practical workshops which enabled participants to get a feel for the pleasures and difficulties of working in enamel, lamp-worked glass and metal casting. Technical information, studio procedures and safety precautions were all covered, and were reinforced by illustrated lectures given by Peter Powning on the design of his new studios and the equipment and procedures used to ensure maximum safety, economy of resources and an

enjoyable workplace for himself and his employees.

Slides of contemporary ceramics, enamels and glass (mainly from central Canada) provided by the new Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery at Waterloo, Ontario, and of contemporary international enamels provided inspiration and an overview of the diversity of techniques and imagery possible.

The weekend offered a chance to sample new media, to meet and talk with four distinguished practitioners of their craft, to see (on slide) a wide range of work and to meet fellow craftspeople from around the province. As Peter Powning wrote "I thought the conference was a real success . . . a nice personal atmosphere".



## Enamelling Workshop

Having never participated in an Incite conference, I wondered what this "happening" was all about, so when I noticed that one of the topics was to be enamelling, a particular interest of mine, I knew the time had come to find out.

On the whole, the weekend was a wonderful experience. One normally does not have access to such formidable instructors outside a university system; certainly not for the price of the Incite Conference. Being together with four expert craftspeople from different media provided the perfect setting to sample a wide variety of crafts. While time did not allow any in-depth discussion or work, there was the opportunity to explore the various media and to get a good feeling for the different processes by working with the materials at hand.

The weekend was divided into blocks of time, consisting of lectures, slides, demonstrations, and hands-on participation. With this format, individuals could freely move from one area of interest to another. The instructors were eager to share their knowledge and their

techniques. They were happy to answer all questions, no matter how trite. This give and take of information provided a positive climate for exploration and learning. Most of my time at the conference was spent with Fay Rooke, an extremely talented enamelist. I had worked extensively in this medium years ago in university and was looking forward to my interest being rekindled. I was not disappointed.

Enamelling consists of fusing ground glass to a metal surface through the application of heat. It can take many forms from cloisonné to plique-à-jour and champlevé. These various techniques can be rather complicated and often frustrating, especially to a novice. Fay Rooke gave an excellent introduction to this ancient and beautiful art form. The examples of her work, with its intricate details and exquisite use of colour were masterful.



Fay used a novel approach to working with the materials during the hands-on portion of the workshop. Dry enamels were applied to the surface of copper sheets, which had been cut and altered into abstract shapes. The surface was then directly heated to a red hot temperature using a hand-held propane torch. The enamels melted and fused to the copper forming a shiny glasslike surface. This spontaneous, un-complicated approach and Fay's "Let's have fun" attitude was an exceptional way to introduce

this exciting craft. In the spirit of Incite, Fay maintained that there was no right or wrong approach, only one of experimentation with many ways to use the materials, all of which could produce pleasant and interesting results.

For me, in retrospect, the Incite conference provided a stimulating environment for the exchange of new ideas and techniques. As artists and craftspeople, we most often create in a void, that is to say we produce and work in the privacy of our homes or studios. Often there is little critical analysis or discussion of new ideas with anyone outside our family or friends. Incite not only provides a creative atmosphere but also serves our basic need to communicate as individual craftspeople with our peers. I left the conference feeling refreshed and enthusiastic, knowing that all I had seen, shared and learned would come back to me in the months to come. Incite was a fascinating experience and one I hope to be a part of in the future.

Therese Reitler

Fay Rooke left a list of books about the history and practice of enamelling, now in the Resource Centre at SCC. The magazine for enamelists is 'Glass on Metal' from The Enamelist Society, P.O. Box 310, Newport, Kentucky 41072. The Canadian Enamelling Association (President, Phyllis Broom) 457 Annette St., Unit 1A, Toronto, M6P 1S1, would be a good source of information about courses, suppliers and events.



Hot glass workshop, Brian Kirkvliet left



Sandcasting workshop, Pierre Lheritier right

## Hot Glass Workshop

Brian Kirkvliet is a hot glass expert who has recently begun to concentrate on lampworking. He has been reviving the technique of lamp-worked beads which has almost died out since the 16th century. These beads are made by layering variously coloured molten glass so as to create an image or pattern within the cross-section of the laminated glass. The laminated glass is then stretched out into a "cane" resulting in a reduction in the size of the initial image so that it now looks extremely delicate and intricate. The cane is cut into thin cross-sections revealing the pattern and these are applied to beads and goblets.

Brian gave us the opportunity to learn his techniques. We spent

our time over an oxypropane torch pulling, twisting and layering pyrex rods. It did not matter if you had experience in glass or not. Brian is obviously enthusiastic about what he is doing and he was a very approachable teacher who encouraged everyone in whatever they were making. The only problem people had at Incite was that there were so many interesting things going on and you could not go to them all.

Arlene Lepp



Brian left a list of useful books, suppliers and schools (all in the United States). This is now in the Resource Centre. Nearer at home the Saskatoon Glassworkers Guild (contact person Lee Brady 383-0199) are a good source of information, and the Glass Art Association has a new newsletter 'Glass Gazette' edited by Laura Donefer, Box 653 Station P, Toronto, Ont. MSF 2Y4

## Sandcasting Workshop

The drive to Sage Hill always brings back good memories. As a child I travelled that 39 mile stretch many times going to and from my parent's original home-stead near Rama. This time I was on my way to Incite 89, an event I had eagerly anticipated for some time, to co-ordinate the children's activities during the weekend. I feel that this component of the conference is very important — it allows the parents to participate freely and educates our children.

During the weekend we constructed paper hot air balloons, of which some flew



and the ones that did not looked great anyway. Paintings were done on the theme 'Hot' under the guidance of Dee Lowe. An abstract paper sculpture was created, then burned at night. Some children had the opportunity to sandcast an object in metal. For the finale we climbed up the tower which turned my legs a little rubbery. The children's involvement at Incite was important and should continue in future events.

My goal for the weekend was to learn how to cast metal. I have always wanted to transfer ideas from woodturning and furniture into cast metal objects. We focused on sandcasting, making the moulds from sand Pierre had found in Saskatchewan. Bentonite was added to the sand to act as a binder. The metal we used was lead. Once the sand was packed properly we were able to carve designs into it or use an object to make an impression. If proper procedures were followed it was possible to create finely detailed castings.

My first attempt was to cast a soup bowl with embellishments added by Anita Rocomora and Charley Ferrero. After pouring the molten metal into the mould, the exciting part comes as the sand is knocked away to expose the creation. Mine was no masterpiece but the process had worked.

The next object I created was a free form vessel carved into the sand. What I liked about sand-casting was the spontaneity of the material and the variety of textures that can be created. After successfully completing my second casting I felt I had grasped the basic knowledge needed to cast metal and I was ready to go home and set up a small foundry. Pierre was an excellent instructor, able to answer all my questions about any aspect of casting. He showed how to set up a basic, inexpensive method for casting metal, enabling me to introduce a new dimension to my work.

Sage Hill Convention Center is conducive to events like Incite. Keeping a group of people together for a weekend to interact socially and intellectually creates enthusiasm, and this was demonstrated by everyone's involvement in each workshop.

Events like Incite are very important to the growth of crafts in Saskatchewan. It allows us to expand our vocabulary of design techniques, materials and aesthetics, enabling us to express our ideas through different media and to strengthen our own discipline.

Michael Hosaluk



## SCC ON THE MOVE



**A Gallery large enough to host "Celebration"...**

**A Resource Centre...**

**Integrated office space...**

The 'For Sale' sign at our office and gallery on Idylwyld Drive in Saskatoon is coming down. SCC has sold the building. But that is not all the news. We have negotiated the purchase of a new building — the Northland Books Building at 813 Broadway Avenue in Saskatoon.

The current office and gallery are simply too small. The Saskatchewan Craft Gallery has hosted wonderful exhibitions of quality craft over the past five years but the location is not one which encourages people to drop in, and a number of exhibitions have been turned down because of the small space. So we are really excited about having a gallery that will attract a larger audience and allow larger and multiple exhibitions. Our new home has the room for an expanded Resource Centre as well. The staff is excited about adequate office space with desks for everyone.

We will be out of our present location by May 1, 1990. The Snelgrove Gallery on the University of Saskatchewan campus will show our exhibitions from mid-May to September 1st.

The SCC will rent offices until we can move into the new building in late Fall. We take possession on September 1st. After renovating, we look forward to an official Opening on December 1, 1990. The Opening will coincide with the opening of our 15th anniversary exhibition, "Celebration".

This is an exciting move for the SCC. Our programs have expanded, we are increasing outreach to the community and the appreciation for quality crafts is growing. The Broadway district is already recognized as a cultural area, which makes this move even more exciting.

The SCC is launching a major fundraising campaign and we welcome donations. Your support as a SCC member, a patron or one of the growing community of people interested in crafts is essential to this project. Buy a raffle ticket, donate a craftwork, offer your time for fundraising or renovations — it all helps.

Join us, when you really get involved, the project becomes closer to your heart. And it's fun!

On December 1, 1989, Susan Robertson took on the newly created job of Marketing Co-ordinator. Susan is known to many Saskatchewan Craft Council members for her work as Co-ordinator of the Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival in '88 and '89; Wintergreen '88 and '89 and Southex, Spring Show in '89. She was also the co-ordinator for "Shop Saskatchewan" held during the Canada Games. With a background in administration and marketing, and experience as a part-time craftsperson, she hopes to bring "a sympathetic understanding of craft to the realities of marketing the craft product."

Susan will be responsible for the Saskatchewan Craft Council's three annual markets, the Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival, Wintergreen and the new Saskatchewan's Spring Craft Sale, and she will be taking members' work to the Alberta Spring and Fall Gift Shows in Edmonton. The Marketing Conference, New Directions in Marketing II, will fall under her administration. Susan will be looking at new opportunities for one-of-a-kind and commission work, at portfolio development and promotional displays.



"This is a new position so the Marketing Committee will be developing some long range goals for craft marketing, and setting priorities to reach those goals. We will be breaking new ground in a lot of different areas." Susan sees this as an exciting challenge.

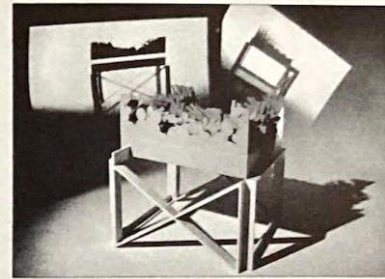
Susan will be working out of her home in Outlook and will be in Saskatoon at the SCC office at least once a week and can be reached at either location. SCC office 653-3616 Susan Robertson 867-8921.

## SHOWCASE

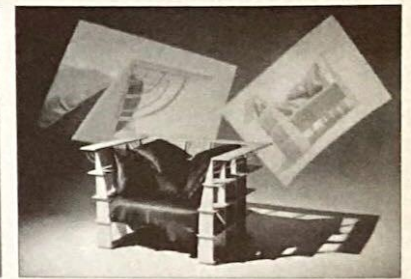
On November 8, 1989, at a Gala Reception at the Royal Ontario Museum, "Prolific Impressions", an exhibition of six works by eight distinguished Canadian designers was officially unveiled and donated to the permanent collection of the museum by Formica Canada. One of the six pieces was designed and made by our own Michael Hosaluk, who was present at the reception.

The six works are made from Surell, a new material made by Formica. Each exhibitor had been given the same design criteria and was invited to participate in the project as a representative of their different design disciplines. The participants included: Architects, Peter Rose and William Steinberg, Montreal; Interior Designers, Glenn Pushelberg and George Yabu, Toronto; Furniture Designer, Thomas Lamb, Uxbridge, Ont.; Del Terrelonge, Toronto; and Michael Hosaluk, Saskatoon. Michael has the additional distinction of being the only participant from outside the Toronto/Montreal area.

Surell is a cast, homogenous surfacing material which is consistent in colour, texture and finish throughout, and has a translucency resembling fine stone. "The designers communicated its translucency and subtle colourways with illumination; they manipulated its finish with sandblasting,



above left: Koen de Winter, 'Aquarium for Frank Gehry's Colorcore Fish'



above right: Thomas Lamb, 'Reference (Loveseat and Surfaces)'

routing, polishing, carving and inlay; and they made use of its physical mass through layering and geometric solids."

In addition to the gift of "Prolific Impressions", Formica Canada has founded the Formica Canada Collection of Plastics which is on display at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Photographs courtesy of Formica Canada



Michael Hosaluk, 'Random Disorder'

left: Peter Rose, William Steinberg, 'Étagère'

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? This page is available to showcase your work.



Cathryn Miller, a weaver, designed and built the set for Persephone Theatre's opening play, Chekov's "Uncle Vanya", which ran from October 12 to 25, 1989. The set was of a theatrical textile called "tiger net" which was cut, sprayed, sewn and stitched. Cathryn Miller has worked in theatre before, designing and making costumes, but this was her first set design.



# PERSONAL EXPRESSIONS

The Little Gallery, Prince Albert October 1989

Text by Adrian Vinish Photographs by Lee Atkinson



"Personal Expressions", an exhibition of works by the Prince Albert Spinners and Weavers Guild, brings home the point that the so-called "minor" arts, or crafts, continue to play an active and healthy role. The show also demonstrates that strenuous intellectual demands and bewildering confrontations are not prerequisites for satisfaction and quality.

In her introduction to the exhibition, Annabel Taylor has written: "Many of us spin and weave because in the complex world of today we need a connection with a process that is simple and direct . . . From willow furniture to delicate cloth; from utilitarian household linens to non-functional wall pieces; each person has found inspiration in her surroundings and in her own way tried to communicate something of that and of her view of the world to the observer."

In identifying "a process which is simple and direct", Taylor has zeroed in on one of the most positive aspects of the show. There is an abundance of natural fibre — wool, silk, cotton, linen, angora, mohair, even willow and vine. These inherently beautiful fibres have been fashioned into a variety of forms featuring exquisite colours and textures.

above: *Peggy Kerr, 'An Autumn Symphony', vines and roots*

left: *Sheila Devine, 'Willow Comfort'*

top right: *Bev Sullivan, 'Winter Warmth', wool*

far right: *Bev Sullivan, 'Felted Hat', wool and silk*

right: *Annabel Taylor, assorted silk scarves*

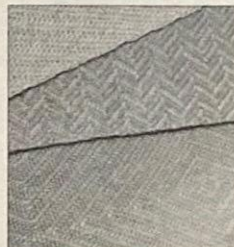
This subtle emphasis on tactile qualities is nowhere more apparent than in Taylor's own works, a selection of eight silk scarves.

Colours are limited to pure whites, natural off-whites, ivory, peach and violets. Monochromatic twill variations allow the natural play of light to bring out the sensuous lustre of the silk. Simple tabby variations are characterized by gentle colour harmonies and, in two pieces, enlivened by the insertion of polyamide ribbon.

Therese Gaudet explores another avenue in subtlety with a matching throw and cushion made from wool, silk and mohair. A broad striped pattern, casting an overall warm but subdued tone, is spiced by random flecks of deep pink, turquoise and deep yellow. The structural strands are also interspersed with brighter threads, providing spark to the pieces without becoming strident.

Several sweaters form a strong component in this exhibition. *My Sweater* and *Jillian's Sweater* by Gail Bilbrough, while solid and tightly knit, offer two different approaches to colour. The first features wonderfully subdued rose-magenta, blue-green alternate stripes in a vertical format. *Jillian's Sweater* is a much more playful venture in an off-checker pattern of reds, yellows, violets, pinks and subtle variations thereof throughout the trunk, while the shoulders and sleeves are ripples of violets, magentas and related greys. *Winter Warmth* by Bev Sullivan is notable for its luxurious fullness of form and exquisitely rich modulation of soft blues and greens, accented by fluid interruptions of yellow. The checkerboard knit-and-purl design and the strongly upthrust collar impart a quality of sculptural relief, making the piece one of the most successful all-round works in the show.

The one overall criticism I would have of the show is that it is too laid back, perhaps even timid. One does not get the sense that the works are reflections of a seeking vision. Notwithstanding the sensitive handling and selection of materials, the "craft" label is too easily applied. I say this in response to the indignation that craftspeople often express at their work being labelled "craft" while in the same breath insisting that jurors be fully conversant with the technical aspects of their work.



Craftsmanship in itself never constitutes significant art, be it in painting, pottery, or whatever the medium.

Technique must be allied with an expressive animating vision.

Having said this, several pieces challenge that designation. Peggy Kerr's *An Autumn Symphony* is a



basket loosely woven from roots and vines, with assorted leaves and other odd bits strewn in. Tendrils sprout out from an organic, barely harnessed core, resulting in a delightful eccentricity. A felted hat by Bev Sullivan is another welcome venture into the unusual. The ragged edges of the rim flow freely from the body of the hat. This, combined with a spontaneous but very refined colour sense, gives a flippant elegance to the work. *Willow Comfort*, a chair by Sheila Devine, contains some wonderful flowing lines.

While the sawed ends on some of the cross members and the profusion of nailed joints are an annoyance, the shaped willow members suggest intriguing possibilities.

The exhibition "Personal Expressions" affirms the highly pleasurable dimensions that lovingly and well-made craft can provide. The majority of the works are undoubtedly conservative, the quality of the works is sometimes at a high level and the occasional jaunts into less familiar territory are an added bonus.

Adrian Vinish is Director/Curator of the Little Gallery in Prince Albert.



## CRAFTBOOKS

by Miriam Caplan

Craft books are not cheap to buy but they are an invaluable source of instruction and inspiration. The province's public libraries are a treasure trove of art and craft books. The Fine and Performing Arts Department in the Frances Morrison Branch of the Saskatoon Public Library has a particularly large and exciting collection of books and magazines of interest to craftspeople. Miriam Caplan, a weaver, who works in that department (and is also on the publications committee) has been hunting along the bookshelves and introduces four books, which have caught her eye.

### American Ceramics: 1876 to the Present

In a chronological exploration of ceramics, Garth Clark describes the development of this craft from 1876 to the 1980s. The social changes as well as the aesthetic changes in taste are discussed and illustrated with numerous examples. Each decade is well covered to provide a balanced overview of the times. Based on his previous book, *A Century of Ceramics in the United States*, which was written to accompany an exhibition by the same title, this book expands and elaborates on the original work providing more background information as well as extending the original time frame.

The book is divided into two sections. The first part, about two-thirds of the book, covers, decade by decade, the aesthetic development in ceramics. Clark covers this change in aesthetics, particularly that of the last 35 years, in a well-thought out, lucid narrative accompanied by numerous colour and black and white plates. While one could quibble over this simple linear time approach, the artificial division does give a useful overview for looking at the significant changes in style, techniques and taste.

The second part of the book, not only has notes to the text, but also a selected list of exhibitions by date and an interesting biographical section of over 150 craftspeople. For those interested in following up their own special areas of interest, Clark provides an extensive and current bibliography including journal articles as well as books. However, of most aesthetic pleasure and interest, are the numerous illustrations of the works themselves.

Clark, Garth. **American Ceramics: 1876 to the Present.** New York: Abbeville, c 1987. 351 p. 140+ black & white reproductions, 100+ colour plates. 1200 entries indexed by subject and artist.

### Jewelry: Contemporary Design and Technique

Although this book is primarily geared to the serious jeweler, the many examples of finished works would be of interest to any craftsman. Evan's focus is on contemporary styles and the processes of different metal-working techniques. The author, a professor of jewelry and metalsmithing at Iowa State University, discusses approximately 65 techniques providing detailed instructions, photographs of equipment as well as works at various states with line drawings illustrating different points.

To reinforce and elaborate on design, Evans provides numerous examples of works throughout the book with a centre colour section consisting solely of selected pieces of jewelry. Although the book was obviously developed with students in mind, it is not an amateur beginner's manual containing different projects. Rather, Evans' approach is toward the serious craftsman who is looking for more information about different techniques. Thus, the book is divided into chapters by various techniques making it a handy reference. The processes are discussed and photographed with some finished objects shown.

Several appendices are given including one on weights, measures and proportions, and one on formulas. However, the appendix on health hazards and shop safety is particularly useful for it describes compound by compound, the physical effects of various compounds and the precautions needed in handling them. In addition, there is a discussion of equipment and shop design taking into consideration current health and safety standards.

Evans, Chuck. **Jewelry: Contemporary Design and Technique.** Worcester, MA.: Davis, c 1983. 296 p. 500 illustrations, 32 in colour.

### Japanese Quilts

Called *sashiko*, Japanese quilts are often made from older, richer fabrics combining colours and designs that have a cultural flavour all their own.

Quilting of materials is not a new technique in Japan, witness the ubiquitous *futon*, and, of course, patchwork and applique had existed for centuries. However, the combining of the three techniques together into ornamental quilts as we now know them, does not seem to have been common until after World War II when American culture exerted such a strong influence.

The book opens with a brief chapter on the history of threadwork in Japan which discusses the background of much of the early work as well as its relationship to the West. This is then followed by numerous colour plates of quilts interspersed with some photographs of the quilters, the processes and people associated with quiltmaking. Initially, the quilts show a strong American influence, then the Japanese predilection for asymmetrical design and subtle use of colour becomes predominant. Design images, such as the origami crane, figure in some of the quilts. The full range of indigo blues coupled with Japanese cultural artifacts such as the kimono are shown. Images which extend beyond a rigid frame sensuously move out of their fixed confines. Page after page of colour plates offer numerous design and colour combinations.

This is the kind of book that needs to be dipped into at different times for the richness of imagery is so great that one almost loses a sense of perspective about the individual quilts — somewhat like eating too many sweets. But like any abundance, taken in moderation, the images enrich one's aesthetic repertoire.

Liddell, Jill & Yuko Watanabe. **Japanese Quilts.** New York: E.P. Dutton, c 1988. 142 p. 135 colour illustrations.

### Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia

Undulating lines and circles, geometric patterns and elongated images of Australian animals such as turtles, kangaroos and serpents mingle together in primitive designs which have an oddly contemporary feel. The warm earthy tones of ochres, greens and reds suggest Egyptian mosaics, Southeast Asian batiks, or even satellite photographs of cities and countries. Pure dots of colour lie next to each other in designs that have their own special symbolism to the Aboriginal people.

"Dreamings" are the religious beliefs characteristic of the Aborigines and their art, dating from prehistoric times. The images of Ancestral Beings, their places of travel and habitation, and their experiences are incorporated in a variety of materials and techniques including bark paintings, sculpture, basketry, wood carving and acrylic painting.

In 1988, the South Australian Museum in association with the Asia Society Galleries mounted one of the most extensive exhibitions of Aboriginal art ever seen in North America. This book accompanied by numerous photographs and examples of finished pieces, works in progress, people and locations provides the background for an appreciation of this unique culture. Included, at the end of the book, is a separate catalogue of the finished pieces as well as a brief biographical index to the Aboriginal artists.

Sutton, Peter, ed. **Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia.** New York: George Braziller, 1988. 266 p. 300 illustrations, 155 colour plates.

The books we will be introducing over the next months will cover a wide range of topics. If your library does not have the books you are interested in ask for them through inter-branch loans. ■

## PORTFOLIO 2: FIONA ANDERSON PATRICK KUTRYK

Fiona Anderson: I have made things all of my life in all kinds of disciplines and finally decided on wood and became a full time woodworker in 1978 along with my mate and partner, Patrick Kutryk. My inspiration comes from nature and natural forms, sometimes these forms become abstracted but I usually end up going full circle back to the natural forms. Sometimes



I incorporate some found natural objects into what I make.

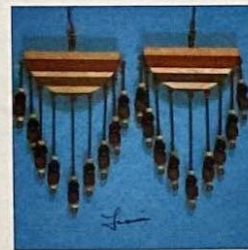
Patrick Kutryk: I became a musician at age 12 and spent the early years of my life playing professionally and touring across Canada and the United

States. As a musician the functional aspects of sound production have been etched in my mind forever and this has given me some insight into the design of musical instruments. However defining inspiration mystifies me. I seek harmony and balance in the objects that I create and when I am successful, I get a kick out of it. The challenge keeps me going.

We work collaboratively on some things and separately

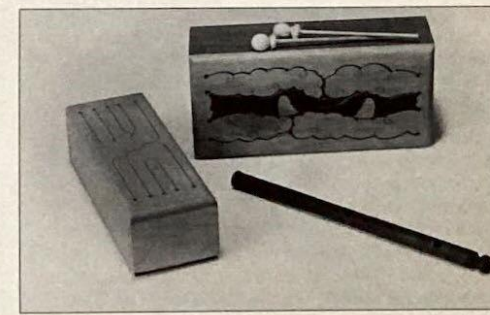


on others. We both like being artisans and in charge of all aspects of what we are doing. We depend entirely upon the marketplace for our living — we have no other source of income. Sometimes the marketplace can be very stressful and financially unrewarding however the rewards of accomplishment, continual learning and the pleasure involved in the creative process keep us reaching for another piece of work."



### Fiona Anderson

Born in Glasgow, Scotland. Emigrated with family to Canada in 1951. Attended University of Saskatchewan from 1973-1976 studying Fine Arts. Exhibited annually in Saskatchewan Woodworker's Guild juried shows, 1982-85, and in invitational group shows at Collector's Choice Gallery, Saskatoon; Handwave, Meacham; and Saskatoon Public Library Gallery. Winner of the Wintergreen Award, Wintergreen Craft Market, Regina in 1982 and 1984. Carved bowls, made in collaboration with Patrick Kutryk, one bought for the Commonwealth Collection 1988; one exhibited in Collaborations, a SCC travelling exhibition 1989. Sells work at all major craft fairs in Saskatchewan and at some in Alberta, and through selected galleries and shops in Saskatchewan and Alberta.



### Patrick Kutryk

Born in Edmonton, Alberta. Exhibited annually in Saskatchewan Woodworker's Guild juried shows, 1981-85, and in invitational group shows at Collector's Choice Gallery, Saskatoon; Handwave, Meacham; and Saskatoon Public Library Gallery, also at the Second and Third National Woodturning Shows, Mendocino, California 1984, 1985. Worked with Del Stubbs, Chico, California, 1984, and consulted with George Zamphir on panpipe design at Saskatoon and Edmonton, 1984. Sells work at all major craft fairs in Saskatchewan and at some in Alberta, and through selected galleries and shops in Saskatchewan, Alberta and California. For further information contact the artists at 1910 York Avenue, Saskatoon, Sask. S7J 1H5, (306) 343-6089.

# TALES FROM A NEARBY VILLAGE

by Shirley Spidla



photo courtesy of the artist

**Kiku Hawkes**, "B.C. Mon Amour, costume for the character of the cell mate"; selenium silver gelatin print; costume, hand-coloured photo-linen, rabbit fur; box, fir; 1987

hardeners cause the emulsion to crack and pull away from the linen base. To get the fix out of the fabric Hawkes uses Permawash, a hypo eliminator, for 5 minutes. Recommended washing time is 5 minutes, however, Hawkes washes each print separately in lukewarm water, 68°F, for 20 minutes. "The thing to remember is that it's a fabric and you should think about it as such. When you're handwashing something you don't just let it sit". The prints are hung on a line or a screen to dry. Although during processing the emulsion is delicate, it is fairly sturdy when dry.

*Tales from a Nearby Village* is the second body of work in which Hawkes has used photo-linen. "My work has a lot to do with who determines history and how it is defined. This was in part an attempt to rediscover women's history. It's all around us but socially we've been raised to believe it never existed. My interest is to recognize what we are and what we can do, not as an imitation of men; and to find ways to work together on a broader scale." *Tales from a Nearby Village* consists of sixteen 21" x 17" x 4" glass-fronted, fir cabinets. These are conceived as being located in a museum in the future. In the top part of the cabinet, a black-and-white, silver gelatin image reflects the present. Below the photograph is a miniature costume, symbolizing a theme such as childhood, women and work, or the anti-nuclear position, and representing a future when all the problems of today have been solved. Hawkes envisages the costumes as belonging to "a travelling opera or dance drama troupe similar to those I saw in Asia where oral history is passed on through theatre. They are embroidered with bells, leaves, and feathers because I want the viewers to have a sense of movement, of what it's like to sit around a fire in a village late at night and see the figures dancing."

Kiku Hawkes worked with sketches and notes which evolved into drawings and eventually patterns for the clothing. The master pattern for the costume was drawn on a separate board in preparation for collage. Using photocopying as a form of shorthand, material was assembled from encyclopedias, literature, museums, magazines and her own photographs to produce an associative symbolism of personal importance. For example, for the robe *All Hallows Eve*, a costume for the character *Gaia*, several goddess images, the Venus of Willendorf and a Cycladian goddess, were photographed from different books. Reproduced in different sizes, these were collaged to form the background design for the robe. An oak tree in the English countryside was duplicated from a picture file. Eliminating some of its branches, the oak was superimposed onto the master layout; funny little fish from a seventeenth century Irish encyclopedia float through the tree branches. The

collaged master pattern is then photographed with a 4 x 5 negative. Enlarged, this is transferred to photo-linen where it is enriched by masking, toning and hand-colouring. The vestment is then handstitched as if preparing it for a special, tiny person and is often further adorned with other significant objects. "The basis for this costume [for *Gaia*] is from eleventh century Japanese costumes. The original would have twelve gauze kimonos and each sleeve would be a little shorter so you'd see all the colours organized to communicate different messages. Rather than make another eleven kimonos I used seven different coloured ribbons to represent the different kimonos underneath."

"In a sense all of this work is dedicated to my mother because she is the person who taught me to sew." *Flight from Shinjuku*, a costume for the character of the war bride, is also dedicated to women all over the world who have left their own cultures to follow men. The present-day image is from Shinjuku, an entertainment district in Tokyo which Hawkes visited. It is a street scene showing neon and fluorescent signs, the one in the center saying "no panty" in English. Underneath the admission price is given.

The costume below is a lace undergarment with long sleeves and skirt covered with a tabard of photo-linen. Long blue ribbons are stitched to the piece as if it was in flight. At the bottom of the tabard, silhouetted with planes, is a map of an European coastline superimposed with the names *Sword*, *Juno* and *Gold*, code names used by the military in World War II for different landing points. "Juno was right in the middle between *Sword* and *Gold* on the page where I'd seen it. I thought this almost summarizes the dilemma that women are caught between — the need for money, and war" Kiku Hawkes says. Hawkes's mother, an Austrian, married an American at the end of World War II and moved to New York City. So above the map, city buildings photographed at night with the Statue of Liberty in the foreground and fireworks in the sky are depicted in Cubist style. Above that a symbol reading as a moon or a plate, and an apple rest between a woman's arms crossed. "The apple represents wisdom, nutrition, but also nurturing. The plate moon represents food, because I know my mother was very hungry at times and the New World was this place of great plentitude where everyone had enough. The gesture of the arms is at once a gesture of protection and a warding off. The title refers to what the flight is about. Are you flying to something or away from something. I think it is a bit of both. You're flying off to the New World and all its mythical potential as in Kafka's "Amerika" or Dvorak's "New World Symphony." You're also flying out of necessity, in a sense you have no choice about what you are doing." She refers to mythical journeys, the Search for the Holy Grail for instance, with their common tale of set-backs, dangers and triumphs. It's about the two choices that a lot of women had at that time — you could either be a prostitute or you could marry to survive.

From the earliest ideas to the final decisions, it took three years to complete this work. The depth of thought and devotion to detail Hawkes brings to her work is evident in these pieces. At present she is starting on a new project. "What I do is look at my own life and see what is happening. I have a boy child now and that has

## SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT GALLERY

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Delores Norman and Jocelyn Mahon

Saturday, December 30 to Thursday, February 1  
Opening: Saturday, January 6, 2-4 pm

Delores Norman and Jocelyn Mahon make rugs using techniques handed down from their grandmothers. They recycle modern materials but their themes are timeless.

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH

Friday, February 2 to Wednesday, March 14  
Opening: Friday, February 2, 7-9 pm

A mixed media exhibition of work by senior students from the Fine Arts Department of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Prince Albert.

THIS IS FOR THE BIRDS

Friday, March 16 to Wednesday, April 25  
Opening: Friday, March 16, 7-9 pm

A light-hearted juried exhibition of objects, in any media and on any theme, and only one criteria — they are to be suitable for use as Garden Ornaments.

RITUAL AND RITUAL OBJECTS

Itinerary 1990

January, Shaunavon; February, Weyburn;  
mid-March/ April, Prince Albert;  
May, Biggar; July, North Battleford;  
August, Swift Current; September, Yorkton;  
October, Rosemont Gallery, Regina;  
November/ December, Estevan.

Saskatchewan Craft Gallery  
1231 Idylwyld Dr. N., Saskatoon  
Phone: 653-3616

Open: 1-5 p.m. every day (except Christmas Day and Good Friday)

changed some of my preconceptions about the nature of being female and of being male so I am re-examining those ideas, searching for patterns of similarities and differences. I connect them to earlier times, project them into the future and strive for a universality." ■

# RITUALS AND RITUAL OBJECTS

Saskatchewan Craft Gallery December 1989

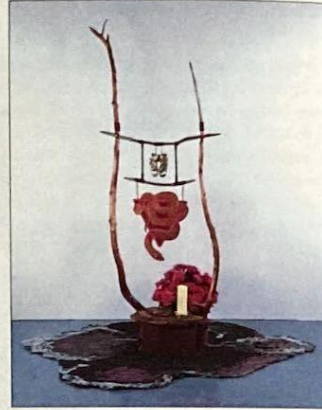
by Miranda Jones



Olesia Kowalsky, 'About Rituals'



Annabel Taylor, 'Robe for the Fates'



Martha Cole, 'Altar to the Earth',  
258 x 252 x 187cm

"Ritual and Ritual Objects," a group exhibition, may leave the observer with the impression that women are the sole purveyors and guardians of ritual. All seventeen exhibitors are women and the work addresses itself primarily to women's rituals in an often feminist, sometimes conservative, and occasionally tongue-in-cheek fashion, resulting in a diverse, if not confusing, array of personal altars devoted to individual interpretations of ritual as it pertains to each exhibitor's life experience. The exhibition has evolved from a process of sharing and group interaction which began two years ago at the instigation of fibre artist, Martha Cole. While not exactly the curator, Cole set the broad parameters for this exhibition, namely, that it should deal with ritual, that it should evolve as a group effort, and that it should be open only to women, who came from all spheres of experience and were not necessarily practicing craftpeople.

A shocking incident took place the very evening I set about writing this review. I am referring to the bizarre shootings of fourteen women at the University of Montreal Campus by a young man armed with a rifle and a hatred of 'feminists'. The incident, though clearly the act of a deranged individual, serves as a horrible reminder of both the need for and the inherent danger associated with the perception of women as a group force. The exclusion of males from this exhibition is not only controversial but possibly detrimental to the final outcome of the show, for it leaves me with a sense of having seen only half the story. Men's involvement, either supportive or otherwise, in both personal and institutionalized ritual can not and, I believe, should not

be overlooked for fear that exclusionary and damaging stereotypes may become further reinforced. Notions of women as childrears, knitters and nurturers could just as easily be extracted from this exhibition as could feminist associations of woman as power source/earth goddess.

From all accounts the group approach and process through which this exhibition came into being was a positive experience for all participants. The documentary video which accompanies the show leaves the feeling of a positive group dynamic and some healthy research. However, as an 'outside' viewer, knowing little of this process, I am ultimately faced with the end product, the exhibition itself. Despite attempts to pull it together by installing fabric columns designed to 'house' the work in a sacred temple atmosphere, there is a remarkable lack of unity to this exhibition both in media and approach to theme. The overall quality and presentation of the individual pieces is disappointing, given that the show was two full years in the making. One cannot help but wonder about the goals and aspirations of the group. This show will be touring a number of much roomier venues but in the confined space of the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery the result is an overcrowded and airless collection of unrelated objects, none of which has the opportunity to assert its individual qualities. For example, Sandra Leddingham's installation of photographs and childhood memorabilia, a miniature shrine of remembrance, loses much of its power due to its dimly lit location in a crowded corner which it shares with the electric wall heater.

The accompanying text tells of Leddingham's memories of cyclical rituals of the birth of chickens and calves and

farm activities shared with her father. The potential sentimentality of such a personal testimony is held in check by the starkness of black and white images while the altar-like installation and photographic floor 'tiles' lead us to conclude that it is memories such as these which ultimately shape our lives and are as important, if not more so, than institutionalized rituals of Church and State.

Other interesting objects suffer from poor presentation including Lynne Bowland's handspun handknitted sweater and cap. For Bowland the "habit" of knitting has a personal ritual significance. The presentation of her sweater on display marionette 'Angela' and her catalogue statement, "... a lot of women are still allowing themselves to be manipulated in their day to day lives" seems an afterthought and bears no relevance to the garments on display. Even the title seems out of place *All dressed up—No place to go*. The shoddy and temporary 'Angela' on her wooden fence suspended from an equally shoddy branch is poorly integrated with the garments and detracts from their intrinsic beauty.

Kathryn Manry's *Family of Porcelain*, oversized cup and saucer sets—including Dad (the mustache cup), Mum (the one with flowers and gold trim?) and the kids—lose much of their impact on a drab circular table top. No doubt her wish to group these into a 'family' format influenced her display decision, however, given the time and resources available, a variety of alternatives could surely have been explored which would have enhanced the symbolism intended. The cups themselves are well made and often humorous. I liked the punk cup with silver lightning motifs, jagged handle and pierced lip.

Also problematic in the display sense is Jean Kares' fetish series, a delightful collection of wrapped, felted and cast female figurines, decorated with beads, sequins,



Jane Coombe, 'Lifespinner, Mask and Medicine Shield'  
107.5 x 61.25 x 7cm

cellophane, bay leaves, thimbles, embroidery and jewelled chains. I would have liked to see these interspersed between wall columns or defining a pathway through the gallery like a series of miniature sentries. Instead they are perched upon triangular stands under make-shift dowelling pyramids, a "postmodern" touch which is out of keeping with the primitive aura emanating from the figurines. These defiant fetishes evolved along with specific themes. "Red as symbolic of the life force/menstrual blood and the clan hearth fire appears in three figurines". "The female as creator, tree of life, source of creative energy and the soul of the world" has also become an important concept in the artist's work. Directly inspired by African fetish figures the work reflects the artist's interest in ritual mythology of the past and of non-western cultures. The care and detail in these pieces conveys the artist's concerns. "The ancient attitude of Earth as Mother and source of all life sanctified every action" says Kares, "if our planet, let alone our species is to survive we need to return to behaving in that sacred manner".

The belief in mother earth and the pagan goddess as a source of feminine strength and ritual significance in womens' lives is reflected in a number of pieces in this show. Only one artist chooses not to question the institutionalized western rituals of Christianity which still dominate our daily lives. Joan Wonnick's *Wedding Shawl* and *Christening Gown and Shawl* are strangely out of place in this temple of irreligious alternatives. Like a white knight, pure, fresh and innocent, these pieces pay homage to the institutions of marriage and the Church. While in terms of technique none of these pieces breaks new ground, their inclusion is significant in the context of this show. I sense that the maker has required courage and conviction to carry these works through to completion. "In addition to defining who I am, my rituals have created a sense of comfort, stability and order in my life."



Jean Kares, 'Tree of Life', 17.5 x 10 x 3cm, cast paper, bay leaves



says Wonnick. Through juxtaposition, this is precisely the effect they have on the viewer.

Beside these white waterfalls of tranquility, Wendy Parsons' *Revelling Angels* perch in hilarious gestures of mockery on adjacent pedestals. The loose clay modelling is perfectly suited to these playful gargoyles. Annemarie Buchmann-Gerber's *Golden Baby Booties* offers another kind of comic relief. Questionably glorified, the pair of golden booties stand on a shaky pedestal festooned with colourful graffiti which proclaims "Live and let Live", "Embrace the affairs of this world openly, fairly and realistically". This piece through its humour and crudity, questions the glorification of humanity. We are reminded not to take ourselves too seriously.

Karen Leitch's *Fortuna*, connects ritual with the creative process itself, as does Jane Coombe in *Life Spinner—Mask and Medicine Shield*, a refreshing piece which speaks of a deep personal commitment. The artist says of her work "This is the first time I have made anything for an exhibition and I have followed my heart's desire in creating and being in touch with the power to merge what comes from the earth with that which comes from within". The artist's sincerity and refreshing process contrasts with the refined and methodical statements of Elaine Muth's *Lovestone Oracle* and Martha Cole's altar. Muth's meticulous, symbolic interpretation of ritual portrays graphically the elements of earth, water, air, fire and spirit. These are enclosed in a mandala which also encompasses human symbols depicting the seven major energy centres within the body. Muth attempts to make connections between the events of our daily lives and the larger cycles and forces of nature. Together with instructions on how to use and interpret the oracle Muth has created an intriguing piece. Her very rational and flawless calligraphic



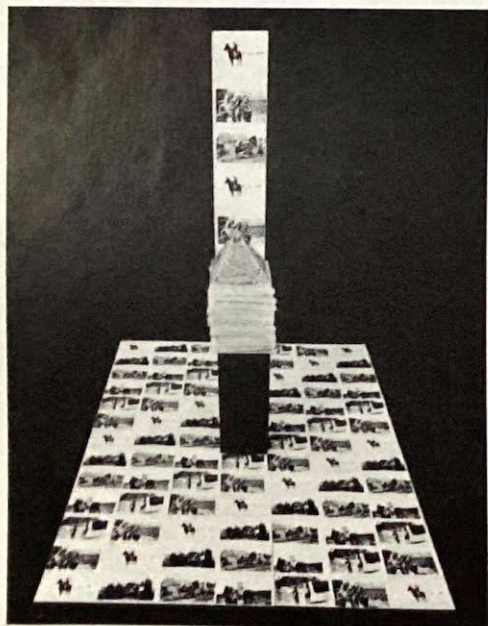
Jean Wonnick, *Christening robe and shawl*

technique almost seem at odds with the gut level connections she attempts to encompass.

In the adjacent corner sits Martha Coles' *Altar to the Earth to Gaia the Mother Goddess*. Rich colours of blood and earth invite the viewer to contemplate the body and soul in relation to the physical world. Unfortunately the inclusion of a vase of silk chrysanthemums and the sophisticated 'polish' of this piece introduce a tone of artificiality which detracts from its overall impact. I suspect the artist's message would come across much louder were the flowers allowed to wilt a little.

The overall lack of cohesiveness in this show testifies to the diversity of the group of exhibitors. In terms of technical sophistication and presentation of ideas however the show is lacking. This comes as a surprise when one considers that each participant had two years in which to develop their contributions. While it is refreshing to see the work of individuals who have never exhibited before and refreshing also that they were given the opportunity to exhibit along with more professional artists in a spirit of encouragement and support, the absence of any overriding curatorial direction leaves the exhibition wanting in a number of areas. One problem with process orientated projects such as this one is that the end product and its presentation often take a back seat. Surely this final communication of ones' achievement is the acid test of a truly successful and rewarding collaborative experience.

Sandra Ledingham, *'Childhood Revisited'*, 192x148x178cm



## WORD SPIRALS

by Martha Cole, Ritual and Ritual Objects Co-ordinator

I started writing this article on "Rituals and Ritual Objects" by circling around to the beginning of this project once again. I re-read all the original proposals and articles, I went through all my notes (such as they were!) and then I read all the correspondence I had received. I thought about the spin-offs that had occurred, the new connections made, the books that had been read and all those conversations and laughter that had circled around and around at our meetings. I also thought about the quiet growing of assurance in each of us, as each tentatively, in her own way and in her own time, integrated the idea and issues from the discussions and meetings into her life and into her work.

We were, and still are, a very disparate group of women in terms of both life and professional experience, personal family commitments and life goals. We held our first meeting in June, 1988. We started with a day of "getting acquainted". Each of us showed slides of our work and talked about what we do and what we thought this project was about. The next day we held a slightly more formal discussion on "Ritual: A Definition, and How It Affects Our Personal Lives". These discussions took the form of both large and small discussion groups with everyone participating and reporting back to the entire group. We decided that a series of 3 day meetings would be the best format to use, proceeded to set up a couple of sub-committees to do various tasks, and determined a list of resource people we would like to interact with. It all sounds quite familiar, doesn't it. At this point, however, the similarity ends.

"Rituals and Ritual Objects" is based on a number of concepts or assumptions which are not common to most exhibitions. These concepts include, among others, assumptions of competence and responsibility, 'woman-process', empowerment, and acceptance of diversity. As the group, both individually and collectively, continued to discuss ritual and to place it in a personal context, the effect of these underlying concepts became more and more apparent.

For me, the first and most basic of these concepts is the assumption of competence. Participation in this project was open to any woman who was a member of the SCC and who was prepared to meet and explore the theme of personal ritual over a period of 18 months prior to and culminating in a final exhibition. There was no jurying or evaluation of the participants. This premise assumes that each artist involved in the project is the person best able to evaluate her own work and to decide her personal affinity to the theme.

An assumption of competence leads immediately to an assumption of responsibility. For example, each member took whatever notes were necessary to her or initiated contact with regard to catching-up if she missed a meeting. There was no checking-up to see if another person was doing what she should. And from this came trust, trust in each other to do what we said we would do. Mutual trust (or respect) in turn generated a greater willingness on each of our parts to be more open and to

give one another support and feedback when it was needed or requested, either on a personal or a professional level. And so the networking and connecting within the group grew and deepened as we continued, through our meetings, to circle around the theme of rituals.

The group, as a whole, assumed responsibility for its own structure and that structure was lateral. Decisions, when needed, were arrived at by consensus and by circling around the issues until all the concerns raised were addressed. Attention was paid to the emotional need of the group to come to know each other before we proceeded to the business at hand — in this case, the "Rituals and Ritual Objects" exhibition. A substantial part of each meeting was devoted to getting (re)acquainted and (re)connected. There was (and always is) time for the personal.

This affirmation of the individual assumes an acceptance of diversity. As well as the diversities stated earlier, the group members came with different personal agendas. Some came to explore the theme of personal ritual, to explore specific ideas directly relating to their work, others to establish connections with other women artists in the province, and some to take advantage of an opportunity to work with women and to experience 'woman-process'. There was also a diversity of commitment with some devoting considerably more time and emotional energy to the process than others. Each member contributed whatever time and energy and expertise she had available and each accepted whatever ideas and support and encouragement she needed to enable her to continue her personal explorations. With a lateral structure all of these diversities could be accommodated.

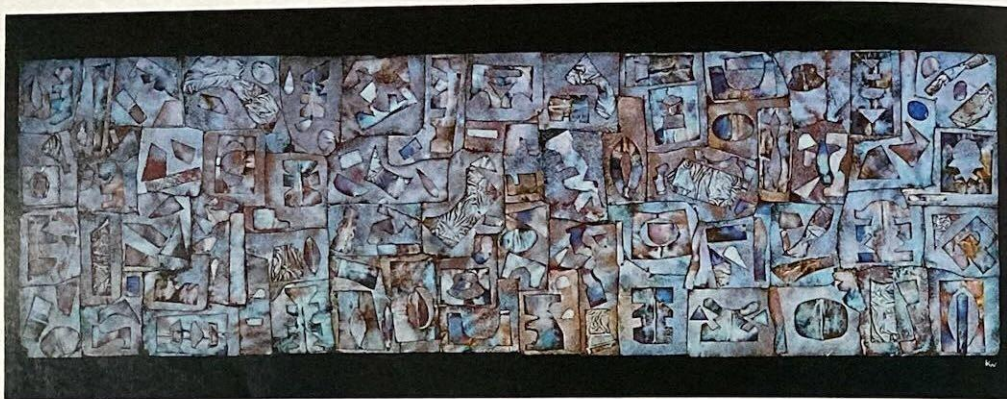
The spin-offs from these assumptions were both profound and numerous. The project became open-ended, in that there was no pre-conceived concept that we were working toward. The open-endedness of the project, in conjunction with the personal affirmation each received, encouraged us to experiment and try new things. The mutual trust we developed made it possible for us to bring tentative ideas and works to the meetings and to ask for feedback, knowing that if it was critical it would be given in a caring and constructive manner. There was a general sense of co-operation instead of competition. Other spin-offs included the ever-widening network of people interested in either the theme or process we were participating in. The deepening of contacts within the group made us each more assured and with that assurance came empowerment.

And now, although the exhibition is complete and touring the province, the process begun with this project is continuing as each of us evaluate what we have gained through the last eighteen months. For myself, I now work with more assurance and I have come to believe deeply in 'woman-process' as an effective way to interact in this world. I am sure that the other women have gained other insights and that we have all grown from the experience.

# A PLAY WITH METAL, GLASS AND HEAT

Klaus Walch October 1989 Saskatchewan Craft Gallery

by Gale Steck



Klaus Walch, Mosaic Collage, enamel, torch and kiln fired, 46 x 16"



left above:  
Bowl, high fired, transparent,  
opaque and opalescent enamels,  
7.25 x 5"

centre above:  
"White in White Tray",  
cedar branch burnt-out on  
enamel, 8.25 x 8.25 x 1"

right above:  
Bowl, inlaid copper wire,  
on white enamel with glass  
lumps, 11 x 1"

right:  
"The Carpenter's Son",  
champlevé enamel, silver plating

left:  
"Moon Rise over Water", silver plating, enamelling, 7.75 x 7.75"



I was able to get a short interview with Klaus Walch, enamelist, in the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery on the day his exhibition "A Play with Metal, Glass and Heat" opened. The gallery was almost filled with the 54 enamelled pieces that made up the show, a variety of work that included 'production' plates and bowls, a large number of wall pieces and experimental vessels of metal and enamel. Klaus and I retreated to the craft gallery basement where we talked about life and work.

Klaus is a dentist at Macklin, Saskatchewan. Enamel work is a spare time activity for him, one that takes a lot of his spare time. Klaus was quick to draw my attention to his preoccupation with experimenting in technique and materials. He states that this preoccupation with "play" is the basis of his exhibition.

Klaus is well read about the history of enamelling. He recently viewed an exhibition in Germany called "Gold in the Kremlin" which included enamelled pieces from the Byzantine period. Although he spoke with awe of the skill exhibited in these pieces he was quick to say that had he learned enamelling in Germany he would have automatically learned and felt bound to continue using traditional methods in contrast to the process of experimental discovery that has produced this present body of work. Klaus learned the basic enamelling techniques at workshops given by Diny Frugte at Macklin. Later he was to explore stained glass with Diane Patterson at the Glassworks studio in Saskatoon.

In the gallery again, I began to look closely at the show. A group of bowls and plates with beautiful, subtly overlaid colours are the best of Klaus' production work — pieces I have admired at his craft fair booths. The overlaying of different coloured enamels on clean, sharp copper forms results in a totally pleasing object. The technique seems completely under his control allowing the viewer to see the piece as a unified technical and aesthetic whole.

Of the many other pieces, some are eye-catching, some are interesting because the techniques are novel or seldom seen. The viewer certainly does have the sensation that the maker has become fascinated with his explorations, and in fact may be so enthralled with this process of exploration that he has lost the ability to select what is really good from what is only momentarily interesting.

*Moonrise over Water* is a silver-plated copper landscape wall piece which manages to transcend material and techniques to become an eerie, quiet and very clear statement. It is a surprise to me that none of the other landscape pieces even approach the strength of this piece. Is this another instance of not being selective enough, of not being able to choose what is visually strong from what is simply technically interesting?

In *Lily of the valley*, a freshly picked lily of the valley, tiny white flowers, stem and stalk, has been dusted with finely ground white enamel powder then fired on a copper plate covered with clear flux and green enamel. The lily of the valley burns away in the firing leaving a very beautiful, white enamel ectoskeleton on the surface, the flower immortalized.

A large collage, formed of jigsaw-like pieces of copper foil is enamelled in soft, semi-transparent, coppery pinks and pastel blues, which allows the complex design of the

individual pieces and overlays to make a visually intricate, interesting and coherent mural. This piece is both kiln and torch fired.

These along with some of the other enamel pieces are solidly good and lasting. Some are definitely a bit of play with materials and not a lot more. Most bothersome to me is the apparent inability of the enamelist to choose what is show worthy. Everything seems to be included under the heading of play. The show feels a bit like a survey course on enamelling with an example of this or that leaving you without any sense of the ideas or feelings of the mind behind them. This, I am sure, is the result of trying everything and pursuing nothing, and can certainly be remedied as the artist begins to settle into a few techniques and push them further to express his own particular visual world.

Klaus Walch included with his exhibition a brief historical guide to enamelling techniques: Enamel is glass applied to and bonded by heat to a heat resistant surface. Glass, which consists chiefly of feldspar, quartz, silica and borax, with mineral oxides for colouring, is ground to a powder and applied to the article to be enameled. The article is heated, the enamel melts and unites with the surface of the work. Enamel in art work has been used to decorate the surface of metal, glass, or pottery.

Enamel as an art form has a long and rich history going back at least 2500 years. In one of its earliest applications enamel was poured between thin gold wires—a forerunner of Cloisonné technique. In the third century A.D. the Celtic tribes of Europe engraved depressions into bronze articles and filled them with enamel to decorate shields, swords and jewellery, Champlevé technique.

From the 4th to the 12th century cloisonné was often combined with champlevé, and opaque and opalescent enamels, to make religious art objects. The skills of these enamellers are unequalled. Their masterpieces often took years to complete. Sometimes using gold as a background the separate pieces normally measured 5 cm or less and were assembled to decorate altars, religious articles, books and jewellery, which were further embellished with precious stones.

The enamel art that was developed mainly within the boundaries of the Byzantine Empire was widely copied in Europe during the Middle Ages. It was characterized by the further development of metal surface treatments, Repoussé and Baisse Taille, that gave added relief to the surface and had the effect of making the glass sparkle even more. From the Byzantine Empire enamel spread to China and Japan both justly famous for their exquisite cloisonné decorated bronze and porcelain vessels.

By the 14th Century, Limoges, France, was one of the most advanced enamel centres and the source of an enamel painting technique which did not require boundaries to separate the colours. These miniature paintings developed into the fashionable 16th century miniature enamel portraits. Also invented in Limoges was Grisaille, in which a white enamel design on a black enamelled background is transformed, through repeated firing and white enamel layers, into a grey on grey design.

Plique à Jour came into vogue in the 19th century and is often used in jewellery enamelling. It is a form of cloisonné but without a metal background, which results in an effect similar to a stained glass window.

# PILCHUCK

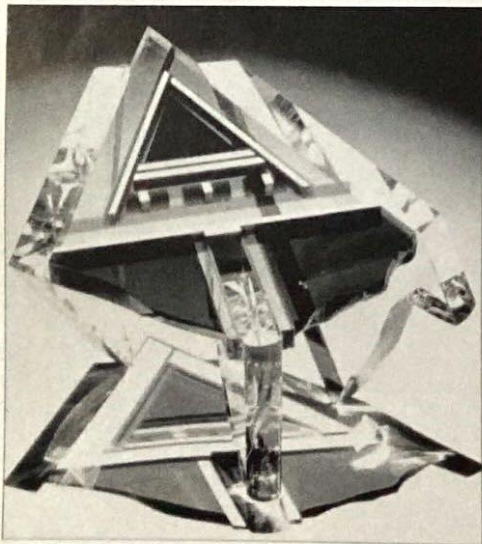
by Lee Brady



photo credit: Lee Brady

For 20 years glasswork has increasingly come into its own as a unique expression of contemporary art. Released from the categories of church and architectural decoration, stained glass as an autonomous art form is now being exhibited in galleries and museums, and appreciated by art collectors and the public. These new-found fields for expression are natural breeding grounds for experimentation and innovation. The result is a keen community of glassworkers who are experimenting in a remarkable range of techniques, exploring the limitless potential inherent in the medium.

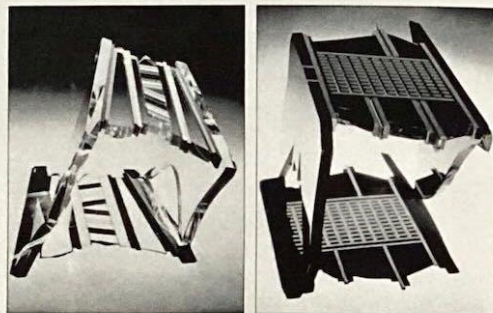
The need for centres of study and communication grew as glasswork evolved over this time; and one of the earliest and best to emerge in the U.S.A. was the Pilchuck Glass School in Washington. Started by Dale Chihuly in 1971, Pilchuck was modeled on the atelier system, on the belief that "art cannot be taught in the same way other disciplines are. Students learn more by being around working artists, by assisting them and by observing them". Situated 50 miles north of Seattle on



photos courtesy of the artist

David Huchthausen (above, right) 3 untitled glass pieces

40 acres of foothills overlooking Puget Sound, the campus provides an inspiring retreat for the students and instructors. The students number 50 and the faculty, teaching assistants and staff also number 50. Set up originally as a hot glass school, Pilchuck, 17 years later, boasts facilities for slumping, fusing, mould making, lampworking, pate de verre and flat (stained) glass, as well as cold working and, of course, hot glass. Pilchuck has attracted the best artists from the international glass community to instruct their workshops. Some of these include Johannes Schreiter, Ludwig Schaffrath, Brian Clarke, Peter Mollica, Paul Marioni, Albinas Elskus, Narcissus Quagliata, Tim O'Neil, Ginny Ruffner,



Dale Chihuly, Flora Mace and Joey Kirkpatrick. The attractions for these artists are the use of the extensive facilities at Pilchuck, the close contact with the glass community in the school and in the Seattle area, and the chance to extend their experience with the medium.

This past summer, with the aid of a Saskatchewan Arts Board grant, I participated in Painting on Glass, a class teaching traditional and experimental techniques such as stained glass painting, enamelling, glass pastels, sandblasting and painting on three dimensional forms. We were encouraged to try everything including all the facilities (except hotglass) outside our immediate area. Technical instruction took place initially on a daily basis allowing us time to develop drawing techniques and future projects, and later on a sporadic basis as questions arose. Much of the best information was the result of questions and discussions arising from the struggle we had with new techniques.

We had plenty of group and individual attention from three experts in our midst. Our instructors were Catherine (Cappy) Thompson and Walter Lieberman. Cappy's flatwork uses themes of mythology and folklore with traditional techniques first employed in the medieval windows of Europe. Her rich textures are carried on to her painted vessels and are touched by a sense of humour and history. Walter's painting is figurative and deals with social and political issues.

Catherine Thompson, 'Falruz and the Elephant King at the Lake of the Moon', painted glass, 24x24", 1983, Corning Museum purchase

Catherine Thompson, "Virgin and Unicorn", lowfire, reverse-painted or blown vessel, 18x14", 1988

Walter Lieberman, "Tired of War", painted glass

Kenneth Leap, painted glass, 2 of a set of 4 for doors

He works on blown, slumped and flat glass. Also to guide us was teaching assistant Kenneth Leap, whose work showed amazing control over the painting medium.

Work goes on at Pilchuck from 9 am to past midnight most days. When our eyes were tired we would wander into the hotglass shop to watch the glass blowing or casting always in progress, or we could exchange talk and ideas with our nearer neighbours studying coldwork with David Huchthausen and kiln-formed sculpture with Mary Shaffer. Friendships were made and a community forged in a short time.

The rooms provided were either a dormitory or shared cottage. The 'board' was an unending supply of wonderfully prepared food. One easily got used to three dinner bells solving small problems like hunger. After each evening meal there were slide presentations by the faculty, staff, teaching assistants or students. There were also some slide lectures on specific topics in the afternoons. The slides and the discussion arising from the presentations were for me as stimulating as the technical information and studio work.



Our class worked with high and low fire paints and enamels on flat and blown glass forms. We experimented with lustres, gold leaf and slumping glass as well as the cold working techniques of sandblasting, engraving, etching and polishing. We also shared in a class effort to produce a large painted vessel for a fund raising auction. The students included undergraduates and graduates, professional artists returning to learn new techniques or simply looking for a renewal of spirit in an artist's community. Others were new to glass, perhaps versed in other materials or perhaps just curious.

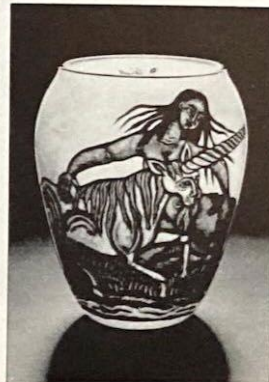
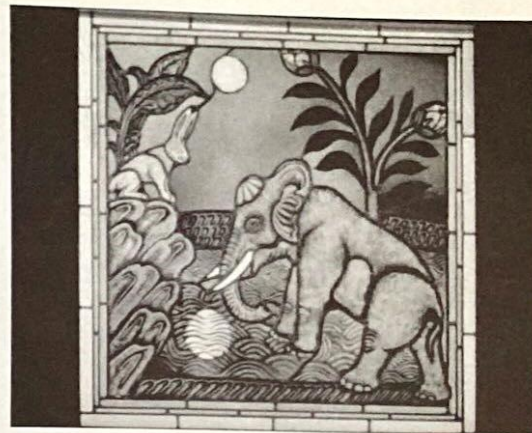
Pilchuck is about ideas. It is not about creating finished work or perfecting technical skills. It exposes participants to the most innovative people in all glass disciplines as well as others struggling with new methods to express their ideas. Glass is a technically demanding medium requiring a considerable amount of equipment. Pilchuck responds to these needs in an atmosphere of a mountain retreat. I would like to thank the Saskatchewan Arts

Board for their assistance in making my Pilchuck sojourn possible.



photo credit: Lee Brady

From May to September, Pilchuck offers five sessions lasting two and a half weeks, each session offers five different workshops. For information contact: Pilchuck Glass School, 107 South Main #324, Seattle, WA 98104.



photos courtesy of the artists

# INSIDE/OUT

Susan Andrews Grace November 1989 Saskatchewan Craft Gallery

by Cathryn Miller



Susan Andrews Grace, "Roll in the Hay"

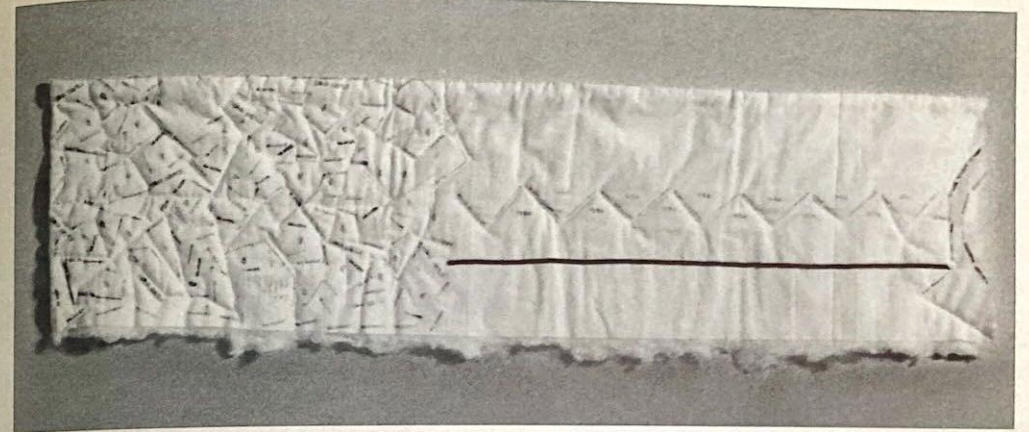
I first talked to Susan about the ideas behind this exhibition when she was preparing her application for an Explorations Grant from the Canada Council, and was intrigued both by the concept of examining the quilting process by inverting some or all of its normal processes, and by her intent to explore one set of ideas through two such unrelated art forms as quilting and poetry. I had seen her previous quilted work and found it attractive and competent, and had included a work in which she had participated in the "Collaborations" exhibition. Susan received her Explorations grant, and "Inside/Out" is one half of the result.

Much of the work that Susan produced during the year she spent working on this project is based, directly and indirectly, on research she had done into the lives and writings of women mystics such as Theresa of Avila. What she found remarkable in much of her reading was what was left unsaid. This, together with the concept of the process of living, from birth to death, was the foundation for both poetry and quilts.

When I asked Susan about the relationship of the poetry to the work in the show, she explained that each was meant to work separately and that the quilted works were not meant to be merely illustrations of the poems. She also remarked that the poems and the quilts are like her offspring, and that like any siblings they are equal but different, make their own very specific demands of her, and even fight with each other occasionally.

Many of the pieces in "Inside/Out" follow the idea of proceeding from birth to death quite closely: from *Holy Family* which shows a baby in its mother's womb in an abstract form, and *Umbilical Quilt* which is wonderfully graphic, to *Granny C* and the coffin-shaped *Burial Quilt 1*. This idea could perhaps have been emphasized more by the way in which works were displayed in the gallery, but practical considerations involving use of space, colour relationships between the pieces and so on may have made this difficult or impossible.

There are two pieces in this show that I have a particular difficulty with, for reasons of content more than anything else. One is *Dish Towel*, an abstracted, perhaps human, form constructed of linen dish towels and knives. There is nothing "wrong" with this work, but I find the implied anger of the knives and the large scale of the piece threatening. Definitely not a work that would be comfortable to live with. The second piece that gives me pause is *Cold Comfort*, a transparent hanging quilt which is gradually losing its stuffing, pages from the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. In one sense I enjoy the graphic representation of the delayed rewards of a religious life, and think the piece is successful in representing this idea. I just have this thing about books, and seeing one disassembled, even in a good cause, makes me slightly queasy. (I hope it was already falling apart!)



Susan Andrews Grace, "T.B. Quilt or T.B. Knocks the Stuffing Out of You", 34 x 126 cm

*Two Chaps Pointedly Interested In Birth Control* I found rather unsatisfactory. Although well-made in a technical sense, I was left with the feeling that in this case the idea itself, and perhaps the words as well, got in the way of the piece itself and left it verging on the "cute".

The *Shrinking Violets* series also left me feeling a bit let down. This group of six shapes in purple and black was the one I had particularly hoped was intended as illustration for poetry. Although some of the individual works within the series worked better than others, I found the group as a whole lacking in coherence beyond the common use of materials, and perhaps an underlying concept of romantic love. Again, perhaps the idea itself got in the way of the work.

Most of the work in the show was very successful, however, both in design terms and in the exploration of the "Inside/Out" concept which was the theme of the exhibition. *Baby Shirt* and *Red Dress* play on the idea of the inside of a thing being as important as the surface, with their transparent exteriors revealing their contents. In *Red Dress*, I particularly liked the small detail of using the check pattern of the interior fabric as a basis for quilted detail on the surface. *Consider Red and Green* was also a strong piece with its simple structure using reverse blocks of red and green, and detailed machine embroidery to break up parts of the flat areas of colour.

My two favourite works in the show were perhaps the most sculptural: *Umbilical Quilt*, with its graphic representation of an umbilical cord against a rich blue background, and *Roll In The Hay*, a series of connected pockets stuffed with hay and left open at the top to reveal their contents. Both pieces used strong, simple forms and an excellent use of materials to support both their visual and intellectual contents.

The pieces that worked best were the ones that most completely balanced form and materials and abstract concepts. The ones that worked less well had perhaps tackled more, and though they may not have succeeded, they reflect the efforts of their maker to combine design and technical skill with difficult emotional and

intellectual concepts. At the very least they caused the observer to pause and question.

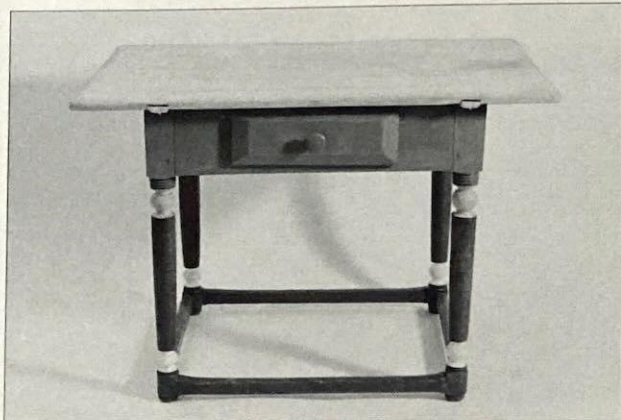
Quilting has grown in the past few years of its history, and although many artists have taken its techniques and produced works that go beyond both function and decoration, few have stretched the limits of the traditional process this far. Susan Andrews Grace deserves congratulations on what she has accomplished.



Susan Andrews Grace, "Burial Quilt 1", 53 x 151 cm

# PRAIRIE FOLK FURNITURE

Text and photographs by Tom McFall



*This multi-coloured pine and birch Doukhobor table from east-central Saskatchewan represents the level of sophistication and accomplishment reached by some turn-of-the-century furniture makers. This was probably the product of a professional, working with a foot powered lathe and hand tools. The technology, technique and general form can be traced back as far as ancient Rome. The extensive restoration of this piece included microscopic analysis of paint drips to determine the original colours.*

The history of furniture making on the prairies spans little more than 150 years, but in that time furniture technology has ranged from split pine and raw hide techniques of the fur trade to current experiments in laser cut fibreboard. Perhaps the most interesting furniture produced was the work of thousands of European immigrants who arrived in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta during the homestead period.



Provincial Archives of Alberta

*Buildings like this typically Swedish barn built by Lars Jonson dotted the prairies.*

For the half century after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, until the outbreak of World War II in 1939, hundreds of thousands of settlers were enticed to the prairies by the promise of new lives in the new world. The largest identifiable linguistic group was, of course, that of English speaking immigrants from central and eastern Canada, the eastern and mid-west American states, and Great Britain. But a 1929 map identifies areas in which "Austrians, Belgians, Czecho-Slovaks, Dutch, Danes, Estonians, French, Finns, Germans, Galicians, Hebrews, Hungarians, Hutterites, Icelanders, Italians, Letts, Mennonites, Mormons, Negroes, Nestonians, Norwegians, Poles, Roumanians, Ruthenians, Swiss, Swedes, Scandinavians, and Ukrainians" settled in significant numbers. Virtually every region, culture and religious denomination of eastern, central and northern

Europe was represented in this settlement rush. This immigration had a staggering impact on the culture and environment of the prairies. In Edmonton, for example, the population increased by 800% from 1900 to 1914, and at least 10% of the newcomers were German speaking.

Immigrants were required to travel with a minimum of personal possessions. Whether arriving individually, in families, extended family groups, villages or entire boatloads, newcomers were only allowed to bring belongings that could be reasonably carried. Items that were imported include: heirlooms, documents, religious articles, books, clothing, fabrics, leather goods, kitchen utensils, dishes, tools, farm implements, seeds and, occasionally, small furniture items such as boxes and spinning wheels. Virtually no larger pieces of furniture were brought to the West by European settlers because many who had woodworking skills, and even those who did not, understood that new furniture would be easy to make or acquire through barter.

Most European immigrants were peasants and even by the turn-of-the-century had not experienced many of the advantages or disadvantages of industrialization. Whereas British and



Provincial Archives of Alberta

*In the early 1900's the Aspen Parkland between Edmonton and Saskatoon had hundreds of Ukrainian homesteads similar to this example photographed near Andrew, Alberta in 1957.*

North American homesteaders were already extensively dependent on mass produced and distributed consumer goods, the majority of Europeans were still more or less self-sufficient.

Among the passengers on the constantly arriving colonist trains were groups and individuals who were masters in one or more of the entire range of traditional domestic, agricultural, industrial and building crafts. The Germans, Doukhobors, Hutterites, Ukrainians and others were capable of re-creating homesteads and communities, craft industries, schools, churches and even libraries independent of North American culture and technology. At various times and places across the prairies, it was possible for a traveller to encounter buildings, farmsteads and villages with their form and detail almost indistinguishable from those of the European homelands.



Every aspect of decorative and functional craftsmanship was transported to some area of the prairies at some time during the homestead period. German smiths, Doukhobor potters, Ukrainian weavers, Polish embroiderers, Icelandic fishermen, Swedish log workers, all practiced their trades. The memories, skills, and tools of traditional furniture making were brought from Europe, and examples of folk furniture made in the West, ranging from the crude and improvised to the

spectacularly artful, still exist.

Furniture with an identifiable ethnic character was only made and valued for a short period of time, and then often only by the first generation. The need and pressure to join mainstream English-speaking society resulted in an early abandonment of many of the traditional decorative and functional crafts. Hand-made, old fashioned, peasant furniture was quickly replaced with mass produced items in the same way that horses were being enthusiastically replaced with tractors.

In some prairie families of European origin, the desire to assimilate has been overwhelming. It is not surprising that symbols of ethnicity as large and conspicuous as furniture, particularly those which reached cultural and functional obsolescence, should be disposed of. In the name of progress, thousands of pieces of prairie folk furniture have been abandoned or destroyed, often by the makers themselves. Examples which still exist in their original context are frequently unrecognized by their owners, and many of the pieces which do appear now at farm auctions and garage sales, or are held by pickers or dealers of antiques, go unnoticed. Some of the most spectacular furniture pieces are shipped to the United States to be sold as "country furniture".



*This undistinguished cupboard may be typical of most of the folk furniture still on the prairies. It was found full of junk at a rural garage sale. It was unpriced and the owner knew nothing of its origin. It was leaning badly and nearly in pieces. The advanced stage of rot at the base suggests it may have been built for and used in a dirt floored house. Its rough-hewn charm has been revived by cleaning, stabilization, paint touch-up, and replacement of the missing fabric front. Furniture pieces like this are much more valuable when their maker's name, ethnic and geographic origin and location in the home can be recorded. Conversely a piece like this loses an important part of its identity when shipped to the American or even central Canadian market.*

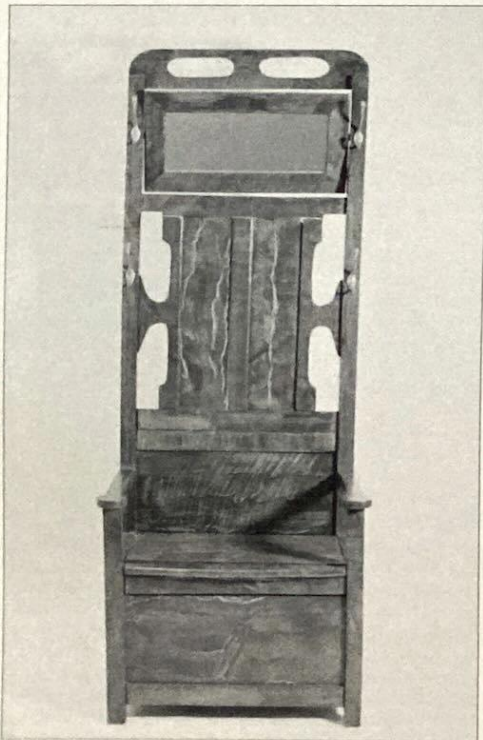


*This functional Mennonite toilet seat is ornamented with ochre and dark red paint and scalloped rails. A piece of fabric may have been tacked around the underside of the seat to conceal the wood or metal pail.*

*left: This Ukrainian chair from central Alberta was constructed of Aspen poplar with pegged mortise and tenon joints throughout. The maker, apparently unfamiliar with the shrinkage of the material, had to repair the chair soon after completion, using nails and covering the dark green first colour with the present ochre. This chair has required no restoration but cannot be sat on safely.*



*This sideboard from a Polish farmstead near Edmonton may be another attempt by a European craftsman to produce North American style furniture. It probably dates from the 1920's or 1930's and uses construction grade spruce, fir tongue and groove wainscoting and inexpensive commercial hardware.*



Until more public interest in this aspect of Western Canadian history prompts preservation initiatives by individuals and institutions, the disappearance of folk furniture will continue. A few knowledgeable private collectors are concerned about this issue. In addition, there are three institutions which are documenting and collecting folk furnishings. The Mennonite Pioneer Village at Steinback, Manitoba, has a substantial collection of Mennonite furniture. The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village near Edmonton, Alberta, has a small collection of Ukrainian furniture, but many of the pieces displayed there are reproductions. The National Museum of Civilization in Ottawa has been acquiring examples over the years but most have never been exhibited. Numerous prairie museums have folk furniture in their collections but a lack of awareness and interest pervades many of these institutions.

The future for western Canadian folk furniture is not all bleak. Other aspects of folk crafts are being recorded, exhibited and sometimes revived. The development of popular and official multi-culturalism, particularly in the performing arts, is encouraging. And regionalism as a cultural and design influence is becoming more prominent. As rare and unappreciated as prairie folk furniture may often be, there are still enough examples in their original locations to be considered a valuable historical and cultural resource. They need to be documented and preserved but they may also provide a stimulating design reference for the development of new furniture appropriate to and expressive of prairie culture. ■

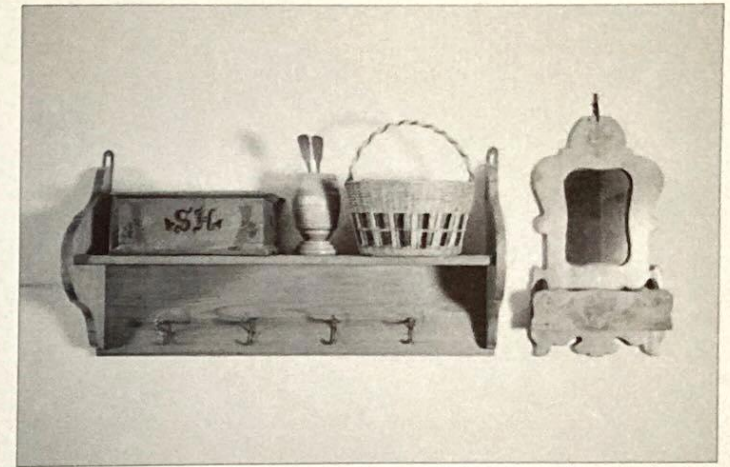
*Tom McFall is an industrial designer practicing in Edmonton and teaching part-time at the University of Alberta. He is the initiator of the Old Folk / New Folk Project being set up to study and document prairie folk furniture and develop new folk-inspired furniture forms that can be crafted or mass produced on the prairies. He welcomes any input which may result in the expansion of the project.*



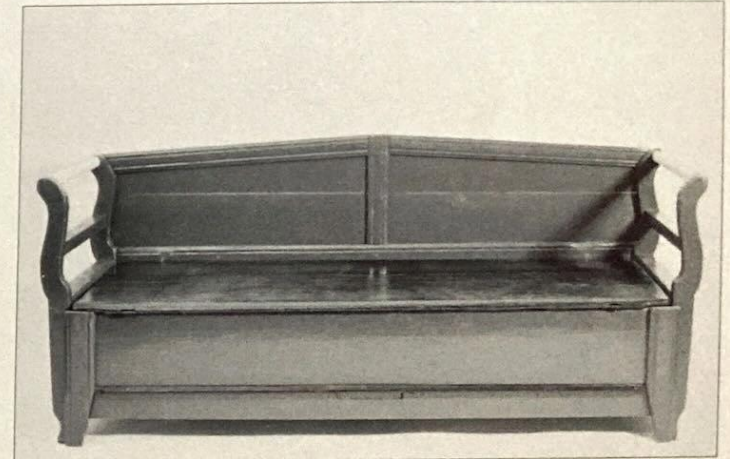
*Some ethnic and religious groups continued to build distinct and recognizable furniture forms. These two tables are typical of Mennonite tables, with their only variation being in colour and decorative detail. Most prairie folk furniture was painted, and removing the original colours reduces the historic, aesthetic and market value.*

*left: This seemingly ugly piece of furniture becomes more intriguing with examination. It was made by someone with basic woodworking skills. The mix of spruce, fir, oak and salvaged crate boards reflect the owner's financial state. The heavy and heavy-handed simulated oak graining (now restored) and the form which was copied from a mail-order catalogue indicate the owner's desire to leave old world aesthetics behind.*

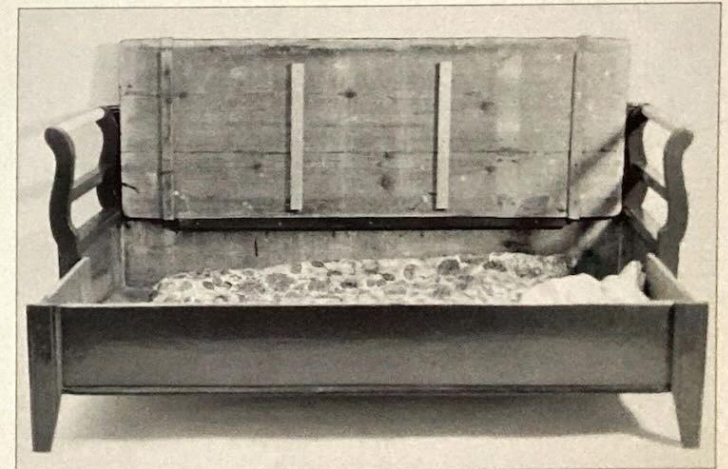
*Many Hutterite colonies have woodworking shops but few continue to make small wood objects like these. The coat rack, box, spooner, basket and comb tray range in date from 1920 to 1940. The flower decorations were done by drawing freehand with lead pencil and colouring with watercolour paints. By the 1950's, commercial decals were popular. Thick varnish was applied over the pine and spruce giving a characteristic amber hue to all these objects.*



*Various kinds of beds were transplanted from Europe. Small Ukrainian houses had plank and sawhorse beds which were re-assembled each night, and some early Danish and Dutch homes had built-in wall beds. Convertible bench-beds such as this Ukrainian example finished in black and CPR brown paint were made by several groups. Scandinavians and Germans produced variations on the theme using more details from Empire and Biedermeier styles and more flamboyant colour.*



*This weathered grey stool with a remnant of brown paint is a good example of the simplest homestead furniture. It is likely of Scandinavian origin but anyone with a saw, knife, primitive drill and rudimentary woodworking skills could have created this.*





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