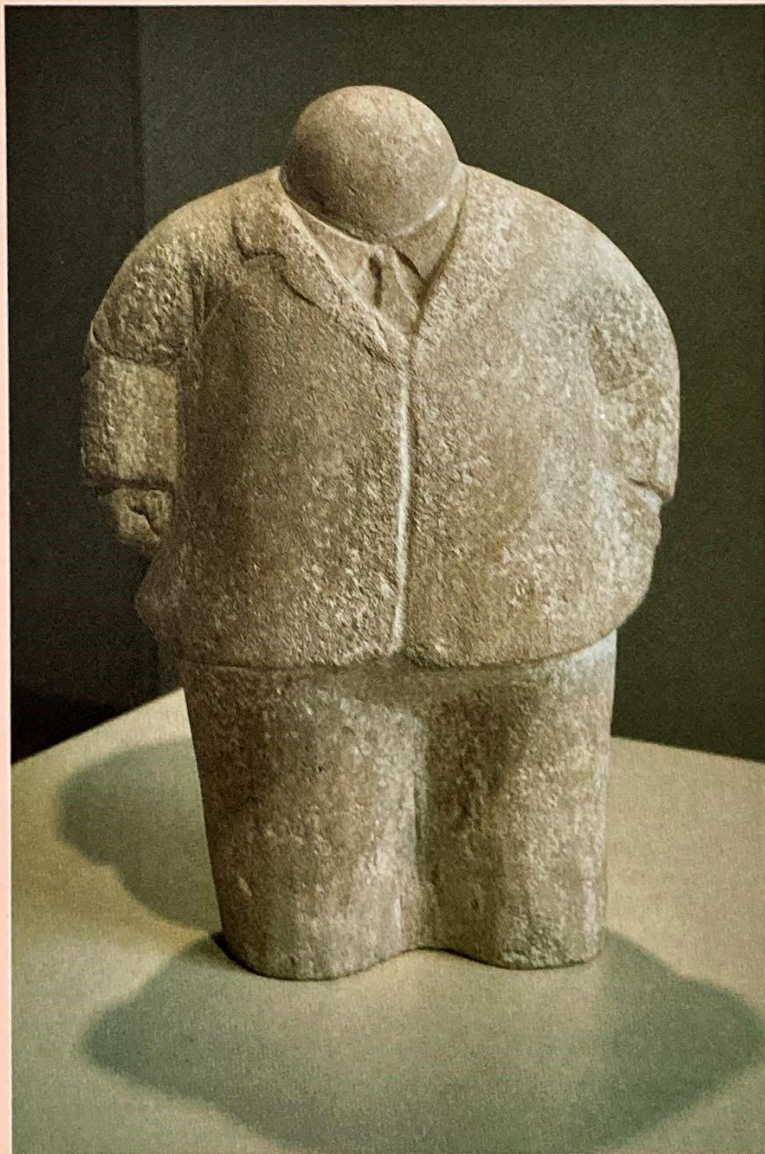


# THE CRAFT FACTOR

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL • SPRING 1996 • VOL. 21.1

\$3.00



# LOOKING FOR BOOKS, VIDEOS OR MAGAZINES ON ARTS AND CULTURE ?

Visual or performing arts, arts management, heritage, multiculturalism or even fundraising and professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers ... it's all at The Resource Centre.

## THE RESOURCE CENTRE



FOR SPORT, CULTURE & RECREATION

1942 Hamilton Street, Room 224  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V7  
Phone: 780-9424 Fax: 780-9442  
Toll free: 1-800-563-3555

Financial Assistance from:



Under the Management  
of Saskatchewan Parks  
and Recreation  
Association Inc.



The Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC) 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 SCC including gallery and touring craft exhibitions, craft markets, workshops, conferences, and publications. The SCC is an affiliated member of the Canadian Crafts Council.

#### SCC Board of Directors:

Donovan Chester, Chairperson  
Mel Malkin, Treasurer  
Elaine Aulis, Communications  
Gail Carlson, Marketing  
Doug Taylor, Education  
Gail Carlson, Standards & Jurying  
Barbara Goretzky, Gallery  
Wendy Black-Kostuk, Membership  
Don Kondra, Exhibitions  
Ken Wilkinson, Advocacy

Winston Quan, Past Chairperson

Executive Director: Ms. Terry Schwalm

*The Craft Factor* is published thrice yearly in April (Spring), August (Summer/Fall), and December (Winter), by the Saskatchewan Craft Council, 813 Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, S7N 1B5, ph. (306) 653-3616, fax (306) 244-2711.

Subscription costs \$12 for 3 issues (includes postage and handling) from the address above.

Comment and opinion are welcome but will be subject to editing for space and clarity. Only signed letters and submissions will be printed. The views expressed by the contributors are not necessarily those of the SCC. Advertising is accepted. Articles published in *The Craft Factor* are the property of *The Craft Factor* and may not be reprinted in whole or in part without permission. Please contact the editor before submitting a completed article.

Editor/Designer: Leslie Millikin

Photography: Grant Kernan, A.K. Photos, Saskatoon (unless otherwise credited)

Printing: Houghton-Boston, Saskatoon

ISSN 0228-7498

This organization is funded by



## The **Craft Factor**

### CONTENTS

#### 4 **The Weavings of My Life**

**GREGORY JOHNSON** discusses how weavings of the Guatemalan Maya are more than just pretty garments. They also function as powerful statements of Maya culture and identity.

#### 7 **The Jeweller's Craft**

**GRAM O'BRENEN** profiles Saskatoon's Megan Broner, whose silver- and goldsmithing has placed her among the best in Canada's jewellery-makers.

#### 11 **By Popular Vote**

**CHERYL WOLFENBERG** comments on the nature of the People's Choice Award which is presented annually in Battleford.

#### 13 **Craft in Ukraine**

**DR. PETER PURDUE** recounts aspects of his trip to Ukraine and discusses how the strong Ukrainian identity has remained intact in spite of the 1917 Revolution. He concludes that it was (and still is) the arts—in part, the folk arts or craft—that have served as a "social glue."

#### 17 **A Twenty Year Tribute**

**SANDRA LEDINGHAM** reviews "Celebration," a 20th Anniversary collaboration of works by the members of Clay Studio Three.

#### 19 **For Cloud Watchers**

**SHEILA CARNEGIE** reviews Myrna Harris' "Felt Inspired," an exhibition of felted pieces shown at the Frances Morrison Gallery in Saskatoon.

#### 21 **Fun Back into Function**

**STEPHANIE BOWMAN** reviews "Just for Laughs," the touring exhibition of the Saskatchewan Craft Council.

#### 24 **Playing with Forms**

**GREG BEATTY** reviews "Re-Formations," an exhibition of clay works by Anne McLellan shown at Traditions Handcraft Gallery in Regina.

#### 27 **Saskatchewan Craft Gallery Schedule**

FRONT COVER *Un Autre Homme des Affaires* 1993, Indiana Limestone, carved  
33 x 17.8 x 21.6 cm., by Doug Hunter.

BACK COVER *Imbongo* 1995, clay, feather, raku glaze, by Sharon Kuntz.

# The Weavings of My Life

## Los Tejidos de Mi Vida

BY GREGORY JOHNSON



... Maya women follow traditional patterns in their weaving . . . Although they do have some flexibility in selecting colour schemes and incorporating new design motifs. In Western art and craft circles, such a rigid adherence to tradition, . . . is frowned upon. But it would be a mistake to dismiss this work as derivative and aesthetically sterile. These textiles are much more than just clothing. They also function as powerful statements of Maya culture and identity.

It has been eleven years since Roszika Parker's book *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* was published. In her groundbreaking survey of women's textile practice, Parker established the potential for this work to function in a politically active manner. In Canada, we tend to associate this potential with academically-trained artists such as Ann Newdigate, Ruth Scheuing, Leslie Sampson and Barbara Todd. But there is a second form of politicized textile practice that is equally deserving of recognition: namely, the traditional folk art of indigenous populations in North, Central and South America. In recent years, the Dunlop Art Gallery in Regina has presented several exhibitions exploring this unfamiliar cultural terrain: most notably, "Ta-Hah-Sheena," which featured hooked rugs from the Standing Buffalo Reserve near Fort Qu'Appelle; "Arpilleras: Cultural Resistance," which featured patchwork tapestries from Chile; and "Los Tejidos de Mi Vida," which featured hand-woven Maya clothing. It is the last exhibition listed (which also was shown at the Wanuskewin Heritage Park Gallery in Saskatoon) that inspired this article.

According to the history books, the Maya of Central America reached their greatest hegemony between 250-850 A.D. They were skilled in art, architecture, astronomy and mathematics, and developed the first advanced form of writing (based on hieroglyphics) in the Western hemisphere. History further records that during Spanish colonization of the New World in the 16th century the Maya were decimated by diseases such as small pox, influenza and bubonic plague and were unable to resist the foreign invaders. In contrast to their experience in Mexico, the Spanish found no significant deposits of gold or silver on Maya territory. But they stayed on as plantation owners, with each conquistador being assigned a number of Maya slaves depending on his rank.

While the Maya have suffered great hardship in the intervening centuries, including

a succession of failed rebellions in the 1700s that were brutally repressed by the Spanish army, they continue to survive as a viable political and economic entity in modern-day Guatemala.

In "Los Tejidos de Mi Vida," an exhibition of contemporary (c.1965-93) hand-woven and embroidered cotton huipils (blouses), cortes (skirts), perrajes (shawls) and other garments curated by expatriate Guatemalan human rights activists Carola and Ron Hoenes, we were provided with further evidence of the vitality of Maya culture.

As the exhibition's title implies, these textiles represent an historically responsive folk art tradition. Maya girls learn the skill of backstrap weaving at an early age. The loom, which the Maya have used for two thousand years, is a model of efficiency. In its unwarped form, it consists of little more than a rope and several loose sticks. After attaching one end of the loom to a fixed support such as a tree, the weaver slips a strap around her hips to secure the other end against her body. The backward action of her hips as she kneels on the ground provides sufficient tension for the loom to operate. Backstrap weaving is extremely labour-intensive. It takes at least four months to weave and embroider one huipil. Each huipil is formed from three rectangular pieces of cloth which are sewn together. A central hole is then cut for the wearer's neck.

In certain Maya communities, men spin yarn, weave and embroider their own ponchos on standard looms and crochet carrying pouches from wool. But the Maya regard backstrap weaving to be a distinctly female practice. The fixed support is referred to as *R'ite Chie* (Mother Tree), an ancestral Maya deity who provides sustenance for all life on Earth. Similarly, the rope attaching the loom to the support is called the *yujkut* (umbilical cord). Prior to incorporating commercial yarns into their practice, the most common method for Maya women to size yarn was to soak it in corn gruel. As an historically important Maya crop, used to make tortillas and an alcoholic drink called balche, corn was equated with human flesh, the primary fabric of the body. This bodily allusion is further underscored by the designations "foot", "heart" and "head" which are assigned to different parts of the warping board. Before a weaver begins, she carefully positions herself so her womb is aligned with the tree. The movements she makes while weaving are said by the Maya to simulate the contractions a woman experiences when giving birth. Indeed, in Maya



OPPOSITE PAGE Child's Huipil by Maya Chuj Kanjobal, San Mateo, Ixtatan. Child's corte by May Kekchi, Coban; bracelet. Photo courtesy of the Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina. ABOVE Ceremonial Huipil and Corte by Maya Ixil, Nebaj; headpiece and coral necklace. Photo courtesy of the Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina.

religion the Moon goddess *Ix Chel* is the goddess of both fertility and weaving.

For the most part, Maya women follow traditional patterns in their weaving which are based on mathematical formulas derived from the Maya calendar. Although they do have some flexibility in selecting colour schemes and incorporating new design motifs. In Western art and craft circles, such a rigid adherence to tradition, which extends even to the manner in which the clothing is accessorized and worn, is frowned

upon. But it would be a mistake to dismiss this work as derivative and aesthetically sterile. These textiles are much more than just clothing. They also function as powerful statements of Maya culture and identity. Interwoven into the fabric are numerous symbols expressing the weaver's spiritual beliefs, personal and family history, and regional, ethnic and linguistic affiliation. (Like North American First Nations, the Maya do not regard themselves bound by artificial borders imposed by colonial au-

thorities. Historically, their territory extended into Mexico, Belize and Honduras, and there are twenty-one distinct language groups).

In a catalogue essay accompanying the exhibition, the Hoeneses noted that the Maya feel most comfortable when they place themselves at the centre of an organized universe. When a Maya woman pulls on a huipil and settles it on her shoulders, she is surrounded by woven designs of plants, animals, birds and geographical features which define her existence. While the meaning of some of these symbols has been lost through time, others are known into present-day. One of the more common symbols on the garments included in the Dunlop exhibition was the snake. Whether depicted realistically, or as a stylized diagonal evoking its twisting movement on the ground, the snake is regarded as the protector of women. Similarly, the bat represents the process by which a Maya god delivers a message to a person in a dream, while a design motif employing four colours symbolizes the four directions- or alternately, the four sides of a corn field. (Black, green, gold, white and red are the five most common colours employed by Maya weavers).

**As one of the more obvious manifestations of Maya culture, garments such as those presented in Los Tejidos de Mi Vida are an anathema to government "death squads", who use their geo-cultural distinctiveness to identify Maya from rebellious regions.**

In contrast to the conventional installation strategy of displaying textiles on gallery walls or in glass display cases, the Hoeneses elected to place their curated collection of garments in an environment that recalled a Maya house or market. This impression was reinforced by the inclusion of Guatemalan newspapers in the gallery, along with taped music, Spanish language TV programs, homemade furniture, woven palm mats, silver jewellery and foodstuffs such as corn, beans and coffee. As Guatemala's largest export crop, coffee is linked inextricably to the battle the Maya are currently waging to preserve their identity.

Guatemala declared independence from Spain in 1821. But this did not improve Maya living conditions. Despite comprising the majority of the population, they continued to suffer discrimination at the hands of a mixed Spanish/Indian Ladino elite, who were intent on displacing them from their traditional homelands and employing them as low-wage plantation labourers. Speaking Spanish, and following

an urban mix of Spanish and American customs, Ladinos regarded Maya Indian physiques, languages and cultural traditions to be markers of low social standing. Democratic elections were held in 1945, and the government embarked on a program of political reform including initiatives in health, education, a free press and limited land redistribution. But the government was overthrown in a 1954 CIA-sponsored coup to protect the interests of the United Fruit Company (then the largest land owner in Guatemala) and several other American transnational corporations who had begun operating in the country in the early part of the 20th century. The next three decades saw a succession of military dictatorships supported by Guatemala's ruling oligarchy. In a country where peasant agriculture has long been an economic mainstay, seventy percent of the arable land is owned by two percent of the population.

In the early 1960s, Marxist and Church groups sought to organize the Maya into a guerilla resistance movement. But the radical political rhetoric employed by some of the activists, who included disgruntled army officers, university students and union leaders, had little meaning for the Maya. By the mid-1980s, resistance efforts were being directed by a well educated cadre of Maya nationalists under the auspices of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). To combat this insurgency, the Guatemalan government instituted a ruthless campaign of oppression. Ironically, ninety percent of the army is composed of Maya men, who are taken from their villages at a young age and brain-washed to such an extent that they are able to dispassionately torture and kill friends and family members. It is estimated that since 1954 one hundred and forty thousand Maya have either been killed or "disappeared" in Guatemala. An equal number of *companeros* (comrades in struggle) have fled the country as refugees, while countless others have been herded into "model villages" where their movements are closely monitored by heavily armed soldiers. Meanwhile, American and European transnationals are devastating the Guatemalan rain forest to produce export crops such as bananas, sugar, beef and cotton. Maya who reject resettlement scratch out a living on marginal mountain land in self-styled "Communities in Resistance". Poverty and illiteracy rates in these communities are extremely high.

In addition to its "scorched earth" military campaign, the government has also attempted to assimilate the Maya into Ladino culture. It does this by denying the Maya their historic link with their "classic" past.

Instead, Ladinos appropriate elements of pre-Columbian Maya culture for their own use in the tourist trade and international beauty pageants. This appropriation is deeply offensive to the Maya as it demeans their spiritual beliefs. As one of the more obvious manifestations of Maya culture, garments such as those presented in *Los Tejidos de Mi Vida* are an anathema to government "death squads", who use their geo-cultural distinctiveness to identify Maya from rebellious regions. Soldiers are actually trained to recognize specific design techniques, colour schemes and decorative motifs employed by different village weavers, and many Maya women have been forced to abandon their traditional form of dress to avoid persecution. (Because of their history of working on Ladino plantations, where they were outfitted with Western-style white shirts and pants, Maya men ceased wearing their ancestral clothing several generations ago. It is the Maya women, who escaped assimilationist pressure by staying at home, who are the true repository of this cultural tradition).

**Soldiers are actually trained to recognize specific design techniques, colour schemes and decorative motifs employed by different village weavers, and many Maya women have been forced to abandon their traditional form of dress to avoid persecution.**

With the 1995 election of a civilian government under President Alvaro Arzu, the Hoeneses feel there is some reason for optimism in Guatemala. Peace negotiations are currently being held with the URNG, and it is expected an accord will be signed soon. But unless the treaty recognizes Maya territorial autonomy and political sovereignty, it will have little impact. For now, they write, "the resistance that allowed the Maya to survive the original Spanish invasion continues to serve them. ... The Maya of Guatemala speak their own languages, say prayers to Maya mountains and ancestors, and keep time according to the Maya calendar." That this is so is due in no small part to the valiant efforts of Maya weavers. And by concluding their catalogue essay with the observation that as participants in an emerging global civilization, the Maya continue to wear their unique cultural identity proudly, the Hoeneses pay a fitting tribute to the courage and dedication of these remarkable women.

Gregory Johnson is a freelance writer from Regina.

# The Jeweller's Craft

BY GRAM O'BRENEN



ABOVE Broner surrounded by the tools of her trade, cutting forms with a jeweller's saw at her workbench.

**"As you can see, I love tools," Broner says simply, referring to a bursting bouquet of plier-types ready atop her bench and the curved drawers below which conceal more implements. A mouth-oxygenated propane torch hangs by her right hand. There's a rolling mill, engraving tools, files, dapping block, all neatly laid out around the perimeter for ready access.**

Megan Courtney Broner doesn't like dwelling on the past, but it's hard to keep from picturing the scene, once you know the story. It was Rome, Italy, in 1971. Broner was still just a girl, but she knew what she wanted. The Italian goldsmiths then kept tight ranks, a vestige of the secret trade it had been for centuries. In any case, the bold New Yorker must have raised a few Mediterranean eyebrows in her door-to-door search for a master to teach her the old craft. "They laughed at me," Broner recalls. "There I was: a 17-year-old who didn't speak Italian. I was a

girl. I was American. They just thought it was very funny. But I was serious. I thought I would sweep floors. It didn't matter, as long as they could teach me something."

She did eventually find a mentor in Carlo Vitali, a young goldsmith only eight years her senior, just one step in a career that, in the intervening 25 years, has taken Broner a great distance—both geographically and aesthetically. She's hammered, formed, soldered, and milled her way through many ounces of gold and silver on the way to becoming one of the country's best jewellery makers. And the slush of a prairie spring

is a long way from either the villas of Rome or the streets of the artist's Long Island birthplace.

Broner first came to Canada in 1973 to study biology at Dalhousie University, becoming a landed immigrant four years later. By the end of the seventies, she had come west and lived in Regina for several years—interspersed with trips back to Rome—before settling in Saskatoon in 1985.

As a hedge against the many distractions of self-employed life, Broner maintains a fairly structured work routine. "I don't schedule appointments in the morning because

that tends to be my best work time. In the afternoon, I will do sketch renderings or meet with clients. If I have to do something that requires creative energy and I don't have it at that moment, I have all sorts of simple things I can do while waiting for the right muse to visit. Of course sometimes you can't afford to wait and you just have to forge ahead."

While the ancient jeweller's craft may call to mind the bespectacled, the round shouldered and the myopic, Broner is nothing like that. Exemplary posture makes the utmost of her five feet eight inches, and her pale green eyes require no prismatic correction. Though the scale of her work is tiny, her studio is a spacious, white-and-red-tiled attic floor of an old east-side house, full of fresh air and prairie light. The visitor there will find little actual jewellery to peruse—work is hustled out the door as soon as it is finished—but the room is all business. "As you can see, I love tools," Broner says simply, referring to a bursting bouquet of plier-



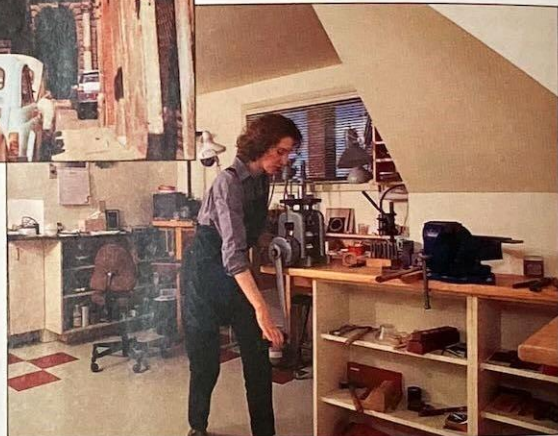
**LEFT TOP** Edifice of the studio in the Old Roman neighbourhood where Broner apprenticed with Italian goldsmiths. Photo courtesy of the artist.

**BELOW** Broner rolling out sterling silver sheet in her Saskatoon studio.

**OPPOSITE PAGE TOP** *Global Orb Necklace*, reticulated sterling silver, 24 K gold foil overlay, 22 K gold, 42 cm by Megan Broner. Photo courtesy of the artist.

**OPPOSITE PAGE CENTRE** *Neo-Natal Pendant*, sterling silver, 18 K gold, diamond, 3.5 cm., by Megan Broner. Photos courtesy of the artist.

**OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM** *Classical Bands*, sterling silver, 18 K gold, peridot, pink tourmaline by Megan Broner. Photo courtesy of the artist.



**Working with Vitali in Rome . . . catapulted her from the realm of youthful pursuits toward mature craft. "I spent a lot of time simply watching Carlo and his partner Aurelio and two master goldsmiths who worked downstairs in the courtyard of the same building. . .," she says**

types ready atop her bench and the curved drawers below which conceal more implements. A mouth-oxygenated propane torch hangs by her right hand. There's a rolling mill, engraving tools, files, dapping block, all neatly laid out around the perimeter for ready access. On her own two capable hands she wears no jewellery, at least not while on the job.

Even by the ancient standards of her craft, Broner's career started early. Her parents met at Cranbrook Academy in Michigan, an art school renown for its blending of fine art, craft and design. Her father, Mathew Broner—himself a painter and teacher—passed on what knowledge he had gleaned from his contacts at Cranbrook to Megan when she was just 12. "The first things I did were made out of coiled wire, which I then hammered. Then I began soldering elements to make more complex forms." That led to experimenting with stones and setting them, and Broner's creative imagination was fuelled by trips to the museums of nearby Manhattan. Looking back, however, she hardly considers herself a child prodigy. "It was about making things. It

wasn't intense—when I wanted to try something, I would just do it. That's my nature."

Working with Vitali in Rome only five years later nevertheless catapulted her from the realm of youthful pursuits toward mature craft. "I spent a lot of time simply watching Carlo and his partner Aurelio and two master goldsmiths who worked downstairs in the courtyard of the same building. I learned a physical approach to working as a goldsmith: how they organized their tools, how they positioned themselves at the bench," she says. "It wasn't just being a goldsmith or making art that attracted me. It was creating something with my hands that was physical, three dimensional. From an early age, that has been important." On subsequent visits, Broner's exploration of jewellery was coloured by the historic environment of Rome itself. It was a rich craft milieu one doesn't often find in North America and an invigorating place to stimulate creativity. "There were specialized goldsmiths, engravers, enamellists, people who made jewellery boxes, woodworkers, restorers of furniture, frame builders, watchmak-

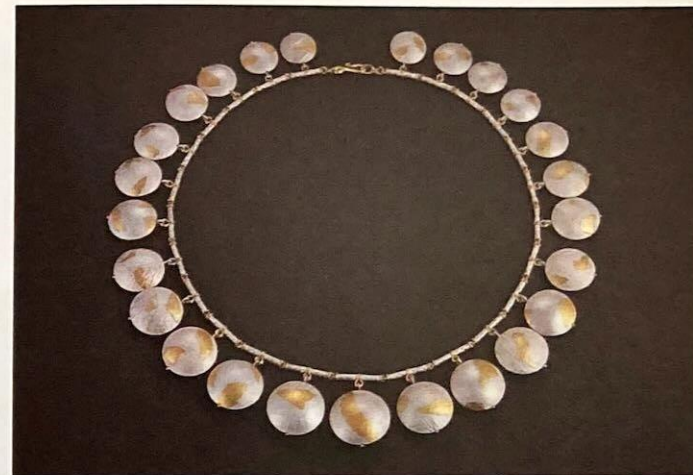
ers, and artists who made large and small-scale liturgical sculptures—a network of people with varied skills working in a small section of Old Rome. Eventually, my Italian was good enough that people might have guessed I was Northern Italian, and by then people took me seriously."

Despite these impressive beginnings, Ms. Broner prefers to talk about what she is doing now. In its mature incarnation, Broner's work is an elegant interplay among several, often divergent forces. "This is something that I designated 'The Classical Band,'" says Broner, referring to a design that somehow manages to appear both ancient and modern simultaneously. She is drawn to natural forms and archetypal references in the creative process. Yet the commission nature of 60 percent of her work obliges her to reign those tendencies in the direction of a patron's preferences. Happily for both parties, customers are drawn to Broner's workshop precisely because of her interest in natural and universal forms—like the Classical Band. Simplicity itself, the silver ring is half-round in cross

section and bears "stripes" of gold at four points of the compass. The design is equally suited to both masculine and feminine tastes, and Broner has adorned its incarnations with stones of many shapes and colours—pink tourmaline, lime green peridot, purple amethyst, yellow citrine, red ruby. Suggesting as it does the four seasons or the four corners of earth, Broner says her gold-on-silver pattern appears in virtually all cultures. Thus it is no accident that this particular design resurfaces repeatedly in her otherwise diverse slide portfolio. "It's one that many people have been instantly attracted to and that both women and men can appreciate."

Broner makes a clear distinction between work she does for clients and the purely creative pieces which are sold through galleries—the Prime Gallery in Toronto, Lynda Greenberg Gallery in Ottawa, Marika Gallery in Banff (as of this summer), the Mackenzie Gallery Shop in Regina, and the Mendel Gift Shop in Saskatoon. The process of striking a design for a new client might begin over tea at her dining table. "I sit down with people and assess what they want and need, within my own aesthetic parameters. It's a kind of collaboration that can be a very rewarding process. But it is very different from when I go into the studio to make jewellery that I'm not creating for a particular person." It's usually impossible for the outsider to tell commissioned pieces from the gallery work—clients bring their ideas, but clearly, they leave the inspiration to the artist. "I think people find it interesting to see something that has a very amorphous form in their mind come to life. A part of themselves is interpreted."

A teardrop shaped pendant in gold, commissioned by new parents to celebrate the



**"It's a matter of proportion—determined by the forces of nature on the visible world. We see it in an eroded landscape, or where the tideline meets the shore, or in the proportions of a tree's branching pattern." While infinitely variable, Broner argues that shapes built by nature are universally, if subconsciously, admired.**

birth of their child, offers a case in point. Though commissioned, the naturalistic shape is classic Broner, which is to say it might suggest anything from a drop of water to a sprouting seed embryo. A small bezel-set diamond is nestled against a soft, rounded silver form; a gold tendril loops alongside to provide a "protective arm" around the little gem. Broner very purposely created the

piece to be a tactile, as well as visual, pleasure. The bulk of the form is concentrated at the lower end, so that in a subtly choreographed three-way interchange among artist, wearer, and viewer, the fullness and smoothness of the object is meant to be held and warmed in the fingers as



much as it is simply gazed upon. In another recent work, a Greek and Etruscan-inspired silver and gold neckpiece, the same concern with both ancient forms and references to the natural realm is evi-

dent, though the piece was created without a patron in mind and toured nationally before being sold. The 25 convex orbs adorning the chain are cut from pieces of reticulated silver, overlaid with asymmetrical pieces of gold foil. Reticulation—a process which allows Broner to explore the elemental qualities of her metals, as opposed to their cultural-material value or “prettiness”—involves heating metal just until the surface melts, leaving the subsurface intact. Upon quick cooling, the surface assumes a random, natural texture dictated by the elemental variables of heat intensity and metal composition. The orbs and their continent-shaped gold highlights call to mind the diminutive scale of planets against the backdrop of space, but also the limitless possibilities contained in a single cell.

**“I think people find it interesting to see something that has a very amorphous form in their mind come to life. A part of themselves is interpreted.”**

None of which is meant to suggest that Broner's interest in natural forms is exercised in a literal way. “It's a matter of proportion—determined by the forces of nature on the visible world. We see it in an eroded landscape, or where the tideline meets the shore, or in the proportions of a tree's branching pattern.” While infinitely variable, Broner argues that shapes built by nature are universally, if subconsciously, admired: “We naturally find value in those things without assigning them value.”

Still more recently, Broner has begun experimenting with the process of granulation perfected by the Etruscans she so admires. It begins with the delicate task of placing tiny granules, perhaps a third of a millimetre across, in a decorative pattern onto a prepared surface. Whether gold or silver, the decorative metals must be copper plated. When the entire piece is heated to just the right temperature, the copper melts and the design is fused to the surface without solder. An exacting technique that is highly precarious at the fusion stage, granulation provides an exquisite and dramatic effect. “The lines and clarity of the design are intensified because there is no solder involved. The more you look, the more surprising the detail is.”

To broaden her colour palette, Broner is also exploring the possibilities of cloisonné, the process of fusing coloured enamel into a pattern of wire-bound cells, or cloisons. “It is a way of introducing colour into my work other than using gemstones, and it too is a

technique used in many cultures over time.” Broner finds her Austrian enamels offer not only different hues, but alternative design possibilities to stone. “You can manipulate the colour and design in a different way. It's possible to do an inlay with stones, but the whole effect is different. Glass is really a liquid form, and there's an immediacy in working with it.”

At 42, with her family strung across the United States, Broner sometimes wonders what life might be like closer to her original New York home. But for now, the lure of the big city doesn't shine as brightly as the quality of life she's found here. Like a lot of creative people, Broner wishes there were enough hours in a day for three careers, and she still entertains the notion of becoming a doctor—part of a desire to put her very

capable hands to some humanitarian purpose. One of her sisters is a physician, and another is studying medicine. Still, she finds in the process of creating beauty from gold, silver and stone something deeply humanistic. “A large part of my attraction to jewelry has to do with the fact that it is borne on the human body,” she says. The moment when the object and the wearer come together is special. “That part of it is very satisfying. The work combines something that is expressive and creative with a connection to the Other. It's work made in response to others.”

Gram O'Brien is a Saskatoon freelance writer.

**Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival**

**Friday, July 19**  
10:00 AM to 8:00 PM

**Saturday, July 20**  
10:00 AM to 8:00 PM

**Sunday, July 21**  
11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

**Craft Market:**  
\$3.25 for a 3-day pass  
Children under 12 free  
Seniors' Sunday: \$1.75

**“Dimensions '96”**  
Open Juried Craft Exhibition

**Children's Playgarden**

**Battleford Arena & Alex Dillabough Centre**  
**Battleford, Saskatchewan**

**SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL**  
813 Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7N 1B5, (306) 653-3616

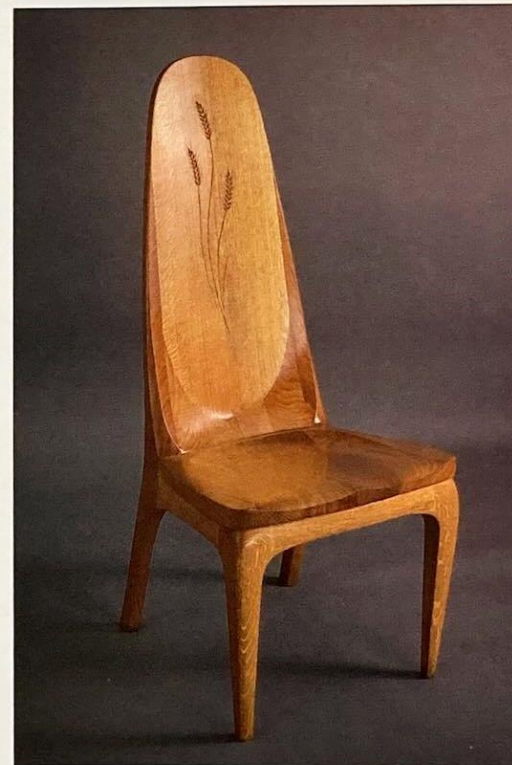
**TOWN OF BATTLEFORD**

**Saskatchewan Arts Board**

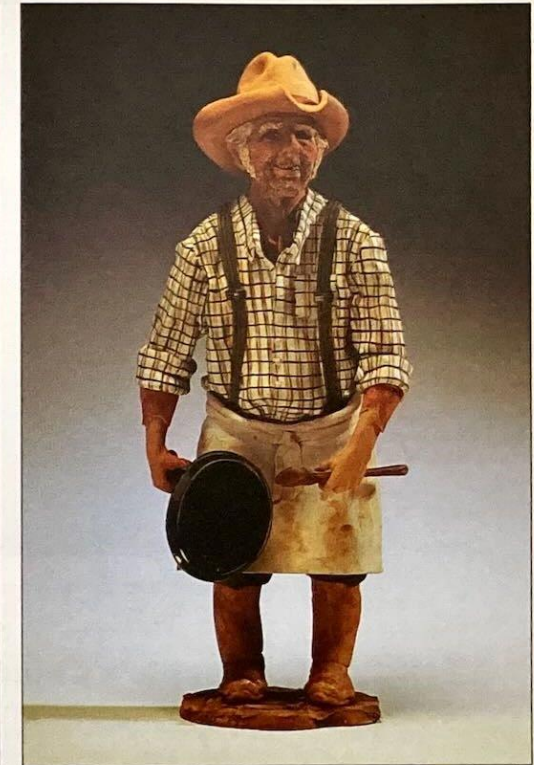
**LOTTERIES**

# By Popular Vote

BY CHERYL WOLFENBERG



ABOVE LEFT *Sculpted Oak Chair*, wood, by Frank Sudol, Dimensions '85 Exhibition and People's Choice Award winner.



ABOVE RIGHT *Camp Cook*, stoneware clay, underglaze stains, ceramic glaze, hand sculpted, hand painted, by Carole McLean, Dimensions '90 Exhibition and People's Choice Award winner.

I have always thought the People's Choice Award to be one of the most important prizes presented at the annual Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival in Battleford. It represents the thoughts, feelings and immediate reactions of the viewing public. In general, it is an award given without bias. It dilutes the lines between the art side of craft and traditionally-done work. In the eyes of the public, the recipient

for that particular year represents the very best that there is to be seen in craft.

This award was first presented in 1985 and is co-sponsored by the Battleford Quilters and the Beaver Brook Lodge Motel. Records for this particular award range from sketchy to non-existent. In the early days, no records were kept as to how many people saw the Dimensions exhibit and how many viewers actually voted. More re-

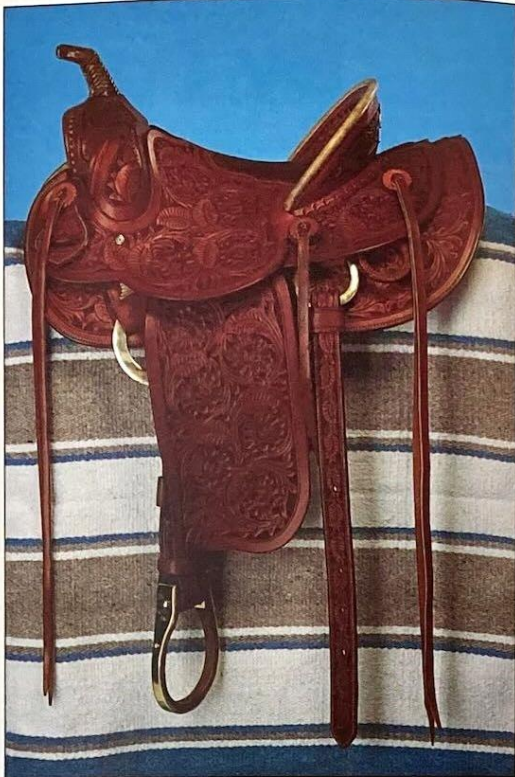
cently, statistics have been dependent on the amount of time the volunteers have to attend to this task.

Despite the lack of numbers, one thing seems very obvious about the People's Choice. Except for 1989 when a hand-tooled leather saddle won both the Premier's Prize and the People's Choice, selection by the jurors and selection by the people have been very different.

Pieces chosen by the general public all seem to have something in common. There is an element about the pieces that people can relate to—the theme of prairie and the western style of living and surviving are very evident. There is an appreciation shown for clean design and clear meaning to a piece. Each of the pieces, no matter what the medium, traditional or non-traditional, functional or non-functional, evoke a feeling for the prairie landscape and times past. There is an immediate emotional response on the part of the viewer—an appreciation for technique and craftsmanship comes later.

Discussions with the various prize winners suggest how strongly they feel about the importance of winning the People's Choice award. Many feel it is almost as important as the Premier's Prize. It reflects public opinion and validates the immediate direction an artisan is moving. Yet it also receives the least amount of recognition, due to the timing of the event. It is for these reasons that I believe this award and its recipients deserve better coverage in the future than they have received in past years.

The People's Choice award has added spinoffs besides gratification and pride for the artisan. For the public, involvement in the decision making process has contributed towards an informal education about the development of fine artisan craft. When people are involved, they look more closely and think about what they are seeing and how they are reacting to it. Dimensions and the People's Choice have done much to make the Saskatchewan Craft Council and the Handcraft Festival an important part of the cultural fabric of the Battlefords area.



ABOVE Saddle, leather, hand tooled, Payson flower design by Austin Mawson and Jay Mawson, Dimensions '89 Exhibition, People's Choice Award and Premier's Prize winner.

Cheryl Wolfenberg is a weaver, frequent marketer in Saskatchewan and Western Canadian juried craft markets, an active member of the SCC and a periodic contributor to *The Craft Factor*. She is also part owner of Traditions Handcraft Gallery in Regina.

### People's Choice Recipients

1985	Frank Sudol	<i>Sculpted Oak Chair</i>	(Wood)
1986	William Hazzard	<i>Black Duck</i>	(Wood)
1987	Pat Kada & Laurie Kitsch	<i>Together We'll Stand</i>	(Leather)
1988	Margaret Knoke	<i>Log Cabin Star</i>	(Fibre)
1989	Austin Mawson & Jay Mawson	<i>Saddle</i>	(Leather)
1990	Carole McLean	<i>Camp Cook</i>	(Clay)
1991	Donald Smith	<i>Ruffed Grouse</i>	(Wood)
1992	Carole McLean	<i>Tkinai-Towa</i>	(Clay)
1993	Frank Sudol	<i>Lacy Birch</i>	(Wood)
1994	Jamie Russell	<i>Where Will The Elephants Go?</i>	(Wood)
1995	Lynne Bowland	<i>Agony In Three Parts</i>	(Glass)

# Craft in Ukraine

BY DR. PETER PURDUE

*This article reflects the insights and experiences of two trips that the author has made to the Ukraine in 1991 and 1994. He visited and observed the teaching of art in daycares, elementary and high schools, schools for visually gifted children, folk art colleges and academies. He believes that there is much about the successful teaching of art that we could learn from Ukrainian educators.*



ABOVE Chernivtsi kindergarten children dressed in national costume. Photo courtesy of the writer.

Folk arts, or the crafts, are the codifications of a people's response to the land and nature. They celebrate nature's bounty, and in their manufacture, pass on accumulated meanings in the form of objects and their decoration. I think it could be argued that the strength and vitality of the folk arts in Ukraine has allowed them thus far in their new path towards Western democracy to avoid the civil disobedience and social dislocation that has been characteristic of Russia and the Eastern provinces of the old Soviet Union.

Ukraine has had massive inflation that makes that of Russia look mild—people have had lifetime savings wiped out. Statements such as "I sold my house in the village for the price of a loaf of bread today" are a sad depiction of the state of affairs. Money and everything is running out; civil servants and virtually everyone are routinely not paid for

two or three months. This is a strictly cash economy—no credit cards or cheques. Hospitals run out of drugs, and relatives of patients are given lists of drugs by physicians and told to try to buy them on the black market. Electricity and water are shut off at frequent intervals throughout the year. Schools and universities have had to close during the coldest part of winter because they couldn't afford to heat them.

In the face of this, Ukrainian people have remained remarkably stoic, relishing their fleeting democracy and waiting—if a little impatiently—for their politicians to get their act together. They are buoyed, I believe, by their strong sense of identity and attachment to the land. The people have an intensely strong sense of who they are and what *is* Ukrainian. This strong national identity is, in large part, attributable to the function of the arts played in the previous

society: particularly folk arts, music and dance.

In the previous society there were very few consumer goods and one could argue that the consumer items of the society were the folk art objects, and that people saved their money to buy these things. Today, you can go into village houses and it is like walking into a museum: kilims on the walls, traditional ceramic-tiled shelves on the walls and fireplaces, and small wood objects used for both special occasion and everyday use—all placed in common sight. The houses themselves are art works what with the traditional designs hammered into the tin sheeting of the roofs and embroidered pillows, cushions and runners gracing the inside. On weekends and special occasions, people dress in their traditional costumes that were made by artisans. People are surrounded by objects of beauty that they

created.

Arguably, two factors were responsible for this: firstly, the folk art colleges that were formed at the end of the nineteenth century; and secondly, the education programme after the 1917 revolution.

The folk art colleges were established and in place well before the 1917 revolution and the start of universal education. The knowledge base of these colleges provided a rich reservoir out of which art curricula was developed. The use of this knowledge is readily apparent as one looks at Ukrainian education.

As for the education program, children in Ukraine start their formal education at age seven. However, there are widely avail-

able daycares and kindergartens that children attend from ages three to seven. Like all education in Ukraine, there is a highly centralized curriculum of what has to be taught; and art and folk culture play an important role. Kindergartens usually have a resident pediatrician, nurses and dieticians. There are also qualified music, art and dance teachers whose instruction form the basis of children's pre-school education. In the daycares I visited—as in the schools—many are decorated with examples of the folk and fine

arts. All of the kindergartens I visited had a set of folk costumes which were made by craftsmen and members of the Artists' Union.

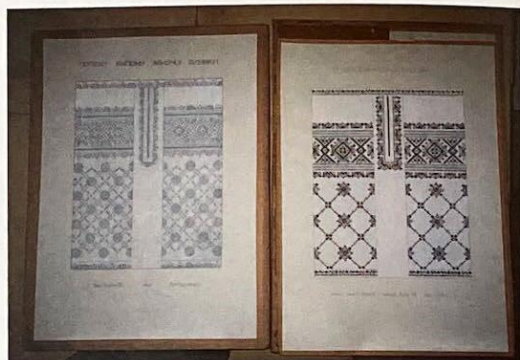
The arts do not have the same ascendancy in the elementary schools as they have in kindergarten—since in the former, the pressure is on to learn to read, write and compute. However, the arts continue to have a very central role in the education process. This is a refreshing contrast to North America, where the shifting vicissitudes of educational

TOP RIGHT Gauche Designs for a blouse from the Kosiv College of Applied Arts.

CENTRE RIGHT Gauche design for ornamental wood decanter from the Kosiv College of Applied Arts.

BOTTOM RIGHT Prize winning boxes from Chernivtsi High School Competition. Approximately 9 x 6" each.

BELOW Leathercraft from the Kosiv College of Applied Arts. Photos courtesy of the writer.



thinking (that is, administration) have usually marginalized arts education—positioning it as a frill or luxury rather than as being integral to the whole endeavour. From the onset of universal education after the 1917 Revolution, art was considered one of the core subjects and its integration with other subjects in the curriculum is seamless and complete.

Prior to 1991, there were adequate curriculum materials for teachers to use in their teaching. I observed a grade three class that was creating geometric embroidery patterns based on traditional village patterns. The children researched the meanings and locations of the patterns they selected. The teacher, for my benefit, said that at this point the children would work out how much thread or how many beads they would need to make the pattern. "We have neither beads nor thread, but the students know how to work it out," she explained. She then asked the students to do so; and without a pause, they then made the computations necessary to determine what they needed. The math curriculum had included these skills.

Beginning in the fourth year of elementary school, students are taught art by a specialist teacher—all other subjects are similarly taught by specialists after the third year.

It appears there are two currents running through art education in the schools. One is the need to produce artists that are fully conversant with drawing, painting and sculpting the human form in the manner prescribed by socialist realism. This entails much drawing in various manners to acquaint the students with structure and surface; and through practice, enables them to draw, paint, etc. what they see in front of them. It is a traditional Beaux Arts training that has not really changed much since Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote his treatise on how to produce an artist for the Royal Academy, and it is not unlike similar curricula of countries such as England, France, Italy, New Zealand and Australia which all have kept the Beaux Arts tradition in their art education.

The second stream, or current, is that of the folk crafts which tends to dominate early education and is gradually superseded by the Beaux Arts training as the student progresses through the school system, reaching its epoque in the academies that produce the traditional fine arts.

The first folk art colleges were started in Scandinavia in the 1830's and '40's in reaction to the encroaching industrial revolution. The impulse was to preserve those

aspects of their culture embedded and manifested in the folk arts which were threatened by industrialization. The traditional folk arts are: wood carving, small wood object manufacturing, weaving, (rugs, kilims, etc.) embroidery, pottery, leathercraft, basketry, and silversmithing or jewellery making. The Scandinavians gathered the craftspeople together into schools, wrote down the craft knowledge involved and proceeded to instruct young people in their manufacture. The Scandinavians were the first

**From the onset of universal education after the 1917 Revolution, art was considered one of the core subjects and its integration with other subjects in the curriculum is seamless and complete.**

Europeans to see that integral aspects of their culture—particularly their historical relationship with nature—were being sundered by industrialization. Many European thinkers commented on this loss; and schools whose purpose was to preserve these crafts/arts, were started all across Europe—the Ukrainian folk art schools were among the latter to be created. Most of the Ukrainian schools were formed between 1870 and 1907. One can track their formation across Europe as industrialization spread out from England and Western Europe. These schools formed at the crest of the wave of industrialization.

In England, writers such as Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin spoke eloquently of the loss of the crafts, their manufacture and the accompanying societal losses. However William Morris in his writing and life work, was craft's most articulate and energetic spokesman. Morris dedicated his life to resurrecting and documenting these dying crafts. He lectured and wrote extensively on the relationship of craft to society and his writings and life examples provided the theoretical and practical underpinnings for the art and craft movement that arose in

England and Europe in the late 19th century.

As was stated earlier, the last folk art college in Ukraine was formed in 1907, a decade before the 1917 Revolution. Their geographic locations were usually in the heartland of a particular people. i.e.) Kosiv College of Applied Arts is in the heartland of the Hutzel people of the Carpathian mountains, as is the College of Applied Arts in Vishnitsa. The latter was founded by an illiterate Hutzel woodcarver, Skrypik, who saw his people losing their traditional skills. The 1917 Revolution and consequent domination by communism had minimal impact on the curriculum of the schools. Of course their was some impact. For example, in the traditional wooden document boxes of the region, the cameo head that may be a central figure on the top of the box, has gone from Stalin to Krushchev. In its present incarnation, it is the image of their pre revolutionary patriot Taras Shevchenko, that tops the box. However, the traditional patterns with all their symbolic meaning and references (usually to nature and the land) have stayed intact.

One could argue that the curricula of these schools were a subversive force in the previous society, as they maintained the integrity of what constituted Ukrainian culture in the face of the domination of the Soviet Empire. A further argument for the strength of this knowledge could be ascertained from looking at contemporary Ukraine.

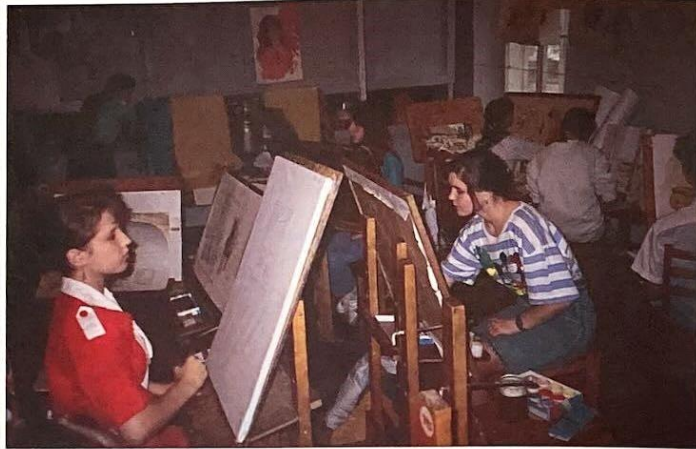
All students learn about the traditional crafts and their meanings as an aspect of their general schooling; as well, the school system provides special education for "visually gifted children." These are special schools staffed by artist/teachers. Selection of students is made by the school, parents, and the children themselves. In the larger centres, the students from age ten spend about a third of their school day getting systematic instruction in drawing, painting, sculpture and art history—480 hours of instruction per year. In smaller centres, the schools usually teach both music and art—both after school. Both follow the same systematic and sequential curriculum that was set out by the national government.

High school, as we know it, finishes for Ukrainian children at age fifteen. At this age, they start to pursue their vocational or academic education. It is at this point that students who have successfully graduated from the art schools then go on to one of the folk art colleges.

All of these colleges provide hostel accommodation for students. The courses are



The courses have a strong beaux arts emphasis on realistic drawing and painting and this forms the underpinning of the programme—they all draw and paint what they intend to make.



designed to be completed in five years, and most students are 20 or 21 when they finish. The courses have a strong beaux arts emphasis on realistic drawing and painting and this forms the underpinning of the programme—they all draw and paint what they intend to make. As well as the arts, the students get instruction in mathematics—particularly as it applies to their craft, language and literature. Also, the schools have rich cultural programmes of music, dance and drama in which all students are encouraged to participate.

After their second year the students are asked to select the particular craft area in which they will specialize. (i.e.) leatherwork, jewellery, weaving, embroidery, ceramics or woodworking. While they receive instruction in all areas, they increasingly work in their selected area. Men traditionally do leatherwork and woodcarving and women do embroidery and weaving; but there is some crossing over of boundaries. They also take art history courses in all crafts (there is an extensive curriculum) and the art historians who teach them have themselves specialized in craft history. The classes are very small by our standards, five to eight students in a class, and all the instructors are complete masters of their craft. The schools are a series of mini craft work-



**ABOVE TOP** Students from the School for Visually Gifted Children (Chernivtsi) at the drawing board.  
**BOTTOM** Students at Vishnitsa College of Applied Arts carving traditional document boxes. Approximately 16 x 10 x 2.5" each.

shops run by the master craftsmen in a very practical and hands-on manner.

As well as passing a series of clearly defined exams, the students in their final year are expected to produce a "masterpiece" in their selected craft in order to graduate. All the schools have museums attached to them that display the masterpieces of previous graduates dating back to when the school was founded. Exemplary pieces of historical craft are also included. On graduating, the students then return to their villages or towns. They either become full time craftspeople or they may become farmers, etc. and do their crafts on the side. They enjoy the personal pleasure that producing art objects gives the individual, not to mention an additional source of income. At the same time, they contribute to their society by carrying on the traditional crafts embodying the historic values and the society's time-honoured way of relating to nature.

Dr. Peter Purdue is a Professor of Art Education at the University of Saskatchewan who initially went to Ukraine as an exchange professor at the University of Chernivtsi and then returned for a four-month sabbatical leave.

## Exhibitions



**ABOVE** *Clay Studio Tea* 1995, earthenware, glaze, mirror, wheat, wood. Table: 59.5 x 31.5 x 21.5 cm by Eveline Boudreau.

## A Twenty Year Tribute

BY SANDRA LEDINGHAM

### "Celebration"

Clay Studio Three - 20th Anniversary  
Saskatchewan Craft Gallery, Saskatoon  
January 26 to March 5, 1996

In 1976, three potters in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, rented space at the back of a drugstore on Temperance Street for a studio, to disentangle a rapidly developing, and messy vacation from

their domestic lives. ...Joan Ashenurst, Marlene Zora and Olive Kalapaca became entrepreneurs and the owners of a small sales gallery they christened Clay Studio Three - The Pottery Shop. Two years later they moved to permanent quarters on Broadway Avenue on the edge of a small business district that was once the centre of the original temperance colony of Saskatoon.<sup>1</sup>

Twenty years later this intimate space has represented 23 women, 17 of whom presented work for the exhibition "Celebration" at the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery which is across the street and down the way from the still going strong Clay Studio Three.

This exhibition spoke strongly to me about the perseverance and far sightedness of this group of potters—potters who it turns out, have all been women. This trait of "stick-with-it-ness" is one women do very well. We have, I think, a sentimental place in us for history. Women artists throughout time have too easily been forgotten and the advantage of a career with longevity has served to reinforce and validate our existence.

The exhibition surveyed a span of 21 years of some of ceramics'

trends. The work included functional pots, sculptural work and one installation piece—a reference to a table at tea time. The latter piece by Eveline Boudreau was an energetic invitation to the gallery space. Its vibrant use of colour, form and scale allowed it to somewhat dominate the space. Entitled *Clay Studio Tea*, it was perhaps a pivotal piece to the show as it pays tribute to the entire 23 past and present members of the gallery. It introduces us to them by way of an inset title with each woman's name on it, plus 10 sundry decorated tea cups. The table, tea pot and tea cups, carries with them numerous metaphors including the use of "reflective" mirror shards and loosely laid wheat kernels as a bed for the placement of the tiles (plates).

One slab tile and the tea pot sitting on the table are left unfired/undecorated. I found myself searching for the metaphor in this aesthetic decision. Perhaps it was a reference to the on-going process/unfinished business of this group of women. Since the tea cups reference each of the current 10 members, it would have added extra information to the personalized tea party by having each cup in some way represent a signature style of each of the potters.

Group exhibitions are never easy ones to install and often challenge the viewer as well. Since the exhibition was titled a "20 year anniversary exhibition," it might have been interesting to consider grouping works, as a chronological walk-through of early works to most recent works, or a chronology of original members through to most recent members. Grouping the various works of individual members each in their own space would have lent more chronology to the development and styles of each of these members. Since group shows have the potential to give us a sum greater than its parts, random placement of member work renders less accessible inferred information that the viewer might glean in a retrospective exhibition such as this.

**AK PHOTOS**

- 15 years experience with artist's portfolios
- Slides for grant proposals
- Transparencies for reproduction
- Location & studio photography
- Restoration of old photographs
- Slide duplicates and prints from slides

**GRANT KERNAN**  
813 - 29TH STREET W.  
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN  
CANADA S7L 0N2  
(306) 653-5999

Several pieces in the exhibition immediately engage the viewer in a dialogue due to their narrative or symbolic nature. *Solitude*, a mixed media piece by Olive Kalapaca (one of the original three in the Clay Studio) draws us into a mini world of feminine solitude. The "composition" of the piece reinforces this melancholy ambience. A small black pot referencing pots of ancient times sits high on a metal three legged stand. Each leg barricades access by gnarled twigs wrapping the metal. Somewhat painfully is seated an isolated small black figure. This piece, which pays attention to all the metaphoric details, is one which is in harmony with itself.

Thelma Howard's piece *Bound by Tradition - Breaking Free* presents two spherical smoke fired forms—one bound by yarn, one beginning to unravel. These two metaphysical forms engage each other in discussion and tension that reflects the human condition. Since the messages are powerful ones, perhaps a more exaggerated wrapping and unravelling of the tethers would punctuate the message with decisive clarity. The combination of the ancient nature of the forms contrasting the unquieting content provide a powerful vehicle for meaning.

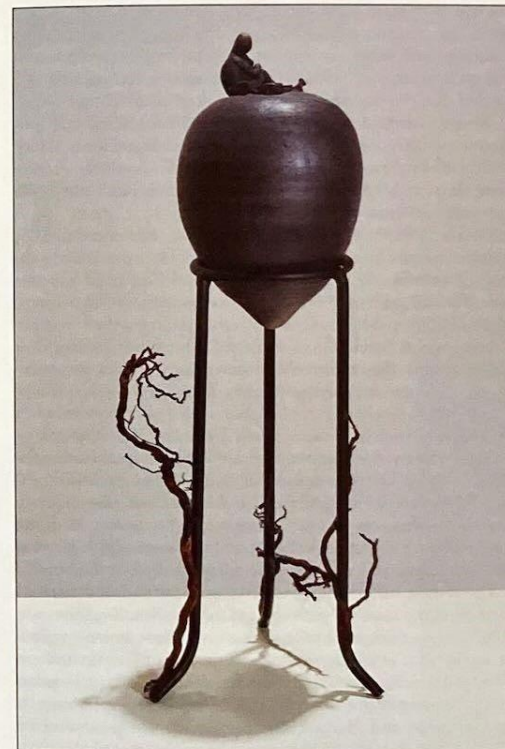
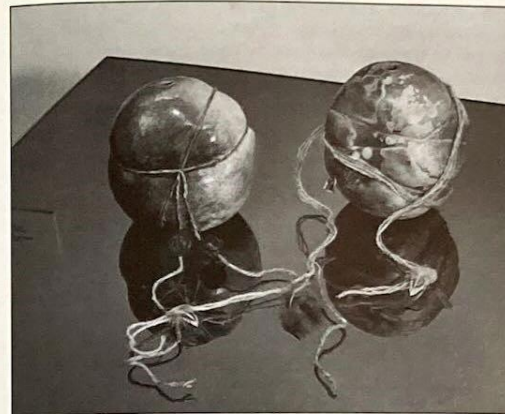
*Imbongo*, a brilliant multi-coloured raku work by Calgarian, Sharon Kuntz, was a show stopper. Colour to dazzle the most comatose observer. Influenced by Kuntz' world travels, primitive art forms are her current inspiration.

The *Klim Mug*, by the late Doris Tweddell, represents a fascinating story very central to the viewing of the mugs. In 1975 Doris made 300 mugs to replicate the Klim milk cans P.O.W.'s converted to drinking vessels in the German prison camps. Doris' husband, Dr. Ian Tweddell who was a P.O.W. in Stalag Luft 3, worked with Doris on her project. The Klim mugs were produced for an Ex-Air Force P.O.W. reunion in 1975. This information, so central to the work, hung on the gallery wall beside the two mugs in the form of an opus framed newspaper article from 1975. Very unfortunately, its presentation did not render this imperative information due to its small print and length. Over-sized blow-up excerpts of the significant information, for example, would have magnified the content. At an average of three seconds per work of viewing time as the given statistic for the general public walking through gallery shows, most would have missed the essence of the Klim mugs.

A collaborative work titled *Celebration* by Lorraine Sutter and Thelma Howard is a still life study in black and white. A picnic *mise en scene* of white napkin, apple, grapes, wine bottle and goblet nostalgically transports us to a 40's photograph. All four black and white objects on the napkin pay a lot of attention to surfaces with lush depth. The subtle slight red of the apple is a lyrical surprise on the otherwise neutral smoked surfaces. The napkin however presents a dilemma, as it is isolated from the other objects in every way. The unglazed white bisque surface is very flat dimensionally and contrasts the other objects—feeling unworked, surfacewise.

Since the 50's craft revival, many folks coming to clay became pot makers; so predictably, the majority of works in this survey consisted of functional pots or vessel references. There were an assortment of vases, plates, cups, planters, teapots, bowls and jars by Joan Ashenhurst, Carol Sanderson, Jan Smales, Marlene Zora, Jean Walters, Lynda Harrington, Helen Cooke, Gale Steck, Ilse Schott, Louise Roy-Mark and Georgia Horsley. *Phyllis' Garden*, a tall wheel-thrown functional vase by Lorraine Sutter, is a fine example of excellence in artistry. The all-over floral surface pattern integrates well with the elegant traditional form. Due to the diversity of work in this show, the more subtle and subdued pieces became somewhat passive and lost. Here again, careful consideration for the installation of the show might have grouped works to lend emphasis to the more meditative pieces.

Kiyoto Kato, curator of this exhibition, in her curatorial talk



**ABOVE TOP** *Bound by Tradition, Breaking Free*, smoke-fired porcelain, wool, wooden beads, feathers, 13 x 12 cm each by Thelma Howard.

**ABOVE BOTTOM** *Solitude* 1995, stoneware, steel, tree roots, sawdust fired, 35.5 x 10 cm, by Olive Kalapaca.

**RIGHT** *Prairie Trail*, Saskatchewan-grown merino wool, commercial yarns, dyeing, felting, stitchery, 44 x 24", by Myrna Harris. Photo courtesy of the artist.

summarized the underlying personification of the works in this exhibition as feminine in quality: domestic—pots and vessels as women understand intimately their use and their forms. Friendly as a women's world strives for that interconnectedness. Ritual and spiritual as in a women's world, we seek a wholeness to ensure our destiny as creators, mentors, mothers, partners and sage.

Sandra Ledingham is a ceramist and instructor in the Applied Arts Department, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAT), Prince Albert. She is also a sessional lecturer in ceramics for the Extension Department of the University of Saskatchewan, a founding member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, and a periodic contributor to *The Craft Factor*.

<sup>1</sup> *Herstory* 1995, Saskatoon Women's Calendar Collective, Coreau Books, Regina.

## For Cloud Watchers

BY SHEILA CARNEGIE

**Myrna Harris**  
"Felt Inspired"

Frances Morrison Gallery, Saskatoon Public Library  
March 4 to April 7, 1996

**A**s a child, stretched languidly amidst windswept grasses, face to summer sun, I frequently watched the clouds, for hours, visualizing intriguing faces and exotic creatures moving in and out of focus. I had opportunity to do so again the other day. Figuratively, that is. Strikingly predominant clouds immediately draw the viewer to Myrna Harris's splendidly textured, wool-felted landscapes. Spectacular clouds. Marvellous prairie clouds. In all fifteen pieces.



However, although Harris deliberately focuses upon the sky as she arranges intricate shapes and incredible blends of colour from pre-dyed merino wool batting, she doesn't stop there. Her love of the land is also apparent. Through seasonal changes, nurturing sunlight and impending storm, the viewer is invited to behold expansive horizons and explore pastureland and grainfield, hillside and poplar bluff.

The major impact of this art form, perhaps, is the dimension of depth that has been realized through the use of both colour and



ABOVE *Prelude to Winter*, Saskatchewan-grown merino wool, spun and commercial yarns, dyeing, felting, stitchery, 14 x 30", by Myrna Harris. Photo courtesy of the artist.

texture. Light and shadow, intensity and movement are achieved first by overlapping and layering, onto a pre-felted background, several different colours or, in a manner similar to that used in San Blas or reverse applique, by cutting away upper segments to expose underlying colour. This technique, in combination with stitchery, using a variety of interesting yarns and threads both on the surface and between layers, enables the conveyance of diverse textural effects. A few of the more recent pieces incorporate experimentation with fabric collage and acrylic paint.

To fully appreciate the dimensional qualities of Harris's work, one must view them from some distance, the ideal of which appears to vary between a few and several feet, depending upon the particular work. In so doing, several pieces are especially successful in drawing the viewer into the landscape.

*Prairie Trail*, a masterful blend of subtle blues with warm golds, beiges, and a touch of rust, emanates solitude and tranquility. The foreground almost glows with stitched pale golden, luminescent grasses; the grooved and grassy trail, leading to a purplish, wooded horizon, is alluring indeed. It is not difficult to feel the sun's warmth on one's back, to smell the clover, to hear the call of a meadowlark, or the buzzing of bees.

Another personal favourite, *Heavenly Show*, evokes an entirely different mood. A myriad of subtle, spectacular colour underlies a blackened sky, pouring sheets of rain to a thirsty land. One can figuratively sink into the softness of the golden fields, embroidered in the foreground. By contrast, bluish-purple hills and grasses, highlighted with a touch of burgundy, add an incredible sense of depth.

Similarly, *God's Country* features a brooding, menacing sky, with dark, foreboding clouds, threatening to spill their burden to the earth. Fields, primarily toned yellow, brown and olive, ripple and undulate in the chill of the wind before the impending storm. The small pieces of voile fabric that have been collaged to the surface and touched with acrylic paint, in combination with stitchery for dimensional effect, are neither obtrusive nor remarkable. However, if Harris decides to pursue experimentation with this media, possibilities abound.

One of the pieces, *Canola Field*, seems to draw part of the landscape into the room rather than the viewer into the landscape. Shades of blue, mauve and grey in both the sky and foreground grasses give the sense of a storm brewing on the distant horizon. Massive, greyed clouds are suspended over a brilliantly blooming yellow canola field, distinctively edged, highlighted with metallic threads. In spite of what may be an authentic depiction of blinding summer sunlight, the contrast, perhaps too dramatic, tends to disengage the field from its surroundings.

In describing the creative process, Harris explains that she begins each piece by selecting a season, somewhat influenced by the warmth or coolness of colours on hand at the time. She then responds to the inherent qualities of materials, and lets each pre-felted piece suggest itself.

Harris acknowledges both the significance of colour, and the dilemma it sometimes presents for her work. On one hand, because pre-soaked, six pound merino wool batts are layered and "rainbow-dyed" in a stove-top dyepot, the dyeing process itself is an unpredictable, exhilarating, serendipitous experience. On the other hand, however, in addition to the emergence of surprising, pleasing, even stunning shades and tones, one sometimes obtains dull or aesthetically distasteful hues. Harris either overdyes these, or pragmatically incorporates them in ground layers or, in small bits, into the landscapes themselves.

The choice of colour, then, stimulates artistic spontaneity yet, at the same time, may somewhat contain and direct it. Certainly, the creative outcome is conspicuously influenced by colour, as clearly evidenced by particular exhibit pieces.

*Prelude to Winter*, recycled from "previously failed" pieces and couched with spun yarn, exemplifies exceptional use of colour. Harris has created a rich tapestry of subtle hues and heather tones...salmon, coral, russet... somewhat analogous in effect and accentuated with touches of violet and silver-willow green, as well as a number of rather amazing colours that defy identification.

Warm, vibrant shades of rust, brown, brick, claret, and burgundy have been combined with metallic threads and hints of blue to successfully characterize *Autumn in the Hills*. Similarly, *Harvest Time*, also a recycled piece, effectively harmonizes blues and greens with gold and burnt orange.

On the other hand, although colour preference is admittedly subjective, I was less inspired by *Autumn Trees*, particularly the mustard yellows. Similarly, *Summer Pasture* and *Field Tapestry*, both of which are embroidered and incorporate recycled sweaters, might be animated by even a slight variation in colour.

In viewing the exhibit in its entirety, I am reminded of first-time prairie visitors that have crossed my doorstep over the years. Depending upon one's perspective, one is impressed by a landscape that appears to be either ever-changing or somewhat repetitive. At first glance, the similarity between *Ordinary Day*, *Cloud Symphony*, *Favourite Place* and *Fields in Bloom* is notable; they all feature the massive, cotton-like cumulus clouds that won Harris the Dimensions '95 Premier's Prize for *This Land Is My Land*. Beyond that, however, differences in theme, season, time, space, medium, colour, shape, and texture become readily apparent. Each piece, in fact, each cloud, is clearly a unique self-expression of the artist.

The artistic use of felting techniques is far removed from its origination, thousands of years ago, as a means of binding fibres into fabric without the benefit of equipment. Perhaps, however, given the significance of felting to the development of Canada and the West, in particular, its application to prairie landscape is rather fitting. Apparently, the fur trade, and consequential exploration by the Northwest and Hudson Bay companies, was motivated by European demand for felted beaver pelt hats. Had that not been the case, Canadian history may well have been different.

Harris, who considers her current work a "culmination of forty years of working in various media", believes she has finally found her niche. She states that felting, to which she was introduced five years ago, "allows me to do everything I like to do". Although she acknowledges the benefit of past workshops, she attributes her obviously rapid advancement to Martha Cole, her mentor, and Alma Scofield, her friend. Given her need for challenge and penchant for exploration, one wonders what direction her future

development will take. However, whether it be manipulation of design, colour, materials, or texture, or an entirely new art form, one can reasonably be certain it will embrace her affinity for the prairies.

Myrna Harris creates, she says, in an attempt to "present the prairies to prairie people". That she successfully does. She also invokes fascinating images for cloud watchers.

Sheila Carnegie, North Battleford, is a researcher and textile artist who designs, dyes, constructs and embellishes garments, accessories and wall hangings. She has participated in juried markets and several group exhibits, including Dimensions 95, and is currently preparing for a 1998 individual exhibit.

## Fun Back into Function

BY STEPHANIE BOWMAN

### "Just For Laughs"

SCC Touring Exhibition  
Saskatchewan Craft Gallery, Saskatoon  
December 15, 1995, to January 23, 1996

The exhibition "Just for Laughs," generated and selected by the SCC Exhibitions Committee, was for me a great success.

I consider success within the parameters of relevance, resourcefulness, and readability. Relevance is the result of interpretation and it considers the audience's experience. Resourcefulness is measured by the amount of self spent on reaching into unknown territory to bring forth original, creative pieces that consider the intended theme. Readability is the communication from artist to the audience, whereby art is brought into the lived experience within society.

The SCC's Exhibition Committee wanted a show that would put the 'fun back into function'. The exhibition "Just for Laughs" seeks to have a dialogue with its audience. The works themselves, 24 pieces by 21 artists, enter into a conversation that is funny, but also thoughtful, interesting and often challenging.

Many exhibitions these days are about shock value and aberrations. As pessimism in our society deepens, artists seek to arrest some larger social reality with works that are anything but constructive. Any extended conversation with the audience can be arrested by explosive and offensive imagery. "Just for Laughs" has accomplished what the medieval theologian Erasmus discovered. Erasmus learned that it was much more effective to use humour and satire to amuse his society while he was calling attention to issues that needed reform.

Works in the show that took familiar concepts of everyday life and imbued them with novel perspectives were the most resourceful. They were often the most readable and thereby significant in creating a relevant response from the

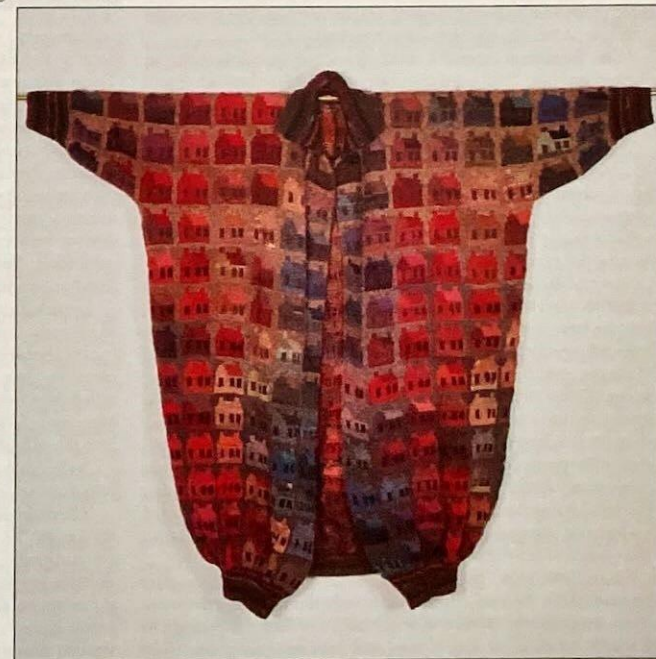
audience. Susan Kargut's *Housecoat* talked to me a lot about issues of home and shelter. I was comforted by the bigness of the sweater and the way in which it invited me to use it as a covering. The 'craft confidence' of technique, colour and texture only added to my need to view home as a place that I should be attracted to and where I want to live.

Another fibre piece in the show was also to be seen as a shelter or a shield. Wendy Black-Kostuk's *George: Dragon Protection Tunic* was made from antique Japanese Obi fabrics, Indian silk and metallic thread. She used applique and machine embroidery to create a piece with strong colours of black, gold and rust which truly made it look stalwart and protecting.

Many of the artists in the show were clearly working within the niche that they have come to be identified with, but they had looked at their materials just a little differently and came up with some amusing pieces. Jamie Russell made a small, half-round table by taking wood for the table legs and shaping them into inverted S's. The wood was then painted (a collaboration between Reg Morrell and Toni Bernard) so that they became snakes. The snake bellies were curving out and under the glass table top with the snake mouths opened and biting the glass at the top to hold it in place. The snake ends were curved to make the feet at the bottom. This provided the structure of the table, and you could clearly see the delicate and intricate painting of the snakes through the top of the glass.

Mike Hosaluk and Mark Sfirri made a small flattened bowl. The long sides of the oval bowl had shapes cut out, so that from above the bowl looked a bit like a bow tie or maybe even a dog bone treat. They called it *Dogs and Bones*, because cavorting on either side of the form were different coloured dogs with different coloured bones in their

BELOW *Housecoat* 1995, wool, cotton, silk, mohair; hand-knitted in "schoolhouse" quilt pattern. 110 x 150 x 4cm, by Susan Kargut.



mouths. The bones that lay strewn between the active animals were still white and obvious targets for the next meal.

Mel Malkin's *Golden Fleece Gymnastics Club* was funny if one is familiar with the age-old practice of gymnastic clubs—or any club for that matter—who like to prove their athletic prowess or human folly by creating a pyramid of human souls. The practice is to take a layer of stupid souls, with another smaller layer of stupid souls, crowned by the fellow who had the idea in the first place, and cheer about it. Mel made this form out of his familiar and well-known ceramic sheep forms.

Doug Hunter's *Un Autre Homme des Affaires*, translated *Just Another Businessman*, was a stone sculpture form familiar to many businessmen who make too much money and leave no time for exercise. The short squat figure suited the heavy Indiana limestone well.

I believe the obvious fun an artist must have had while making the piece showed up in many instances. Bonny Houston must have had a wonderful time blowing glass into strange shapes and colours, watching them form and drop from 'strange fruit' trees. Entitled *Strange Fruit*, each fruit had lip-like shapes of a different colour on top. She used lime greens, oranges, red, clear and mottled glass to create her menagerie.

Barb Goretzky made two clay/pulp raku-fired *Bird Houses*. They seemed quite ordinary until I noticed that the blue petal shaped from the side of the bird house door is really a bird bum with feathers flayed, and obviously Mr. Bird missed the door, "Ouch". In the other house, the fermented berries may have taken their toll and Mrs. Bird is using the sides of the door to pull herself up off the floor where she had obviously crashed.

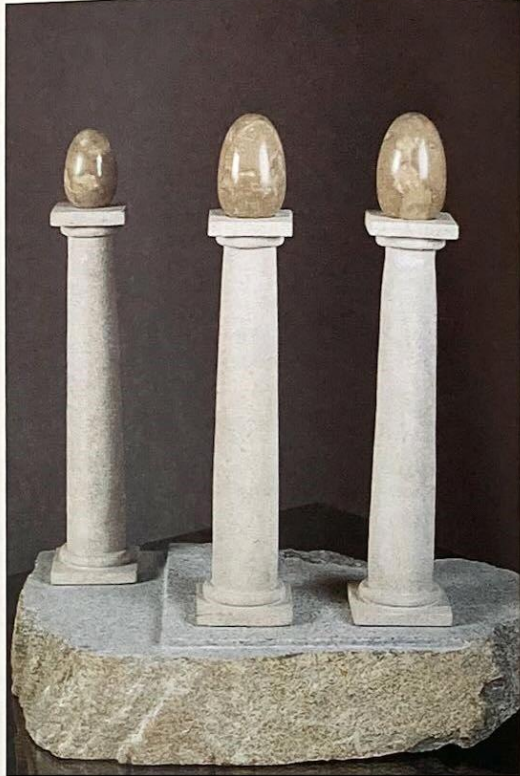
I think Sandy Dumba's piece was the funniest, and I remarked 'that's so funny every time I walked past. Sandy took the dumpy, flaccid shape of a perogie, and made a fish-like body out of clay. She then attached fins and gills. She pinched pursed lips and made big eyes beneath sleepy lids. She glazed her piece on white and then added pink, blue, yellow and pastel purple on white. She then titled it *Perogie Sharks*. It was absolutely hilarious.

Anita Rocamora created a small form that was shaped like an inverted top hat. The brim circumscribed the face beneath it and the hollow of the 'hat' form became the reason for the title, *Fill My Head With Pretty Things*.

One other cryptic piece was made clear by its title. Bob Whittaker created a light box. He developed a stained glass image that obviously depicted some of the situations we find ourselves in when we dream. Stop signs had withered and people flew. A black highway that made the box transversed the form and contrasted the strong bright colours used in the glass.

Some of the artists in "Just For Laughs" used the humour theme to further develop ideas which they had already started to work with, or even to move into completely unknown territory. Lynne Bowland already had been making stained glass grasshoppers based on a Jazz theme, but she had never called a band together. Her piece, *Buddy & the Dew Hops*, confronted Lynne with technical decisions previously unencountered, like how to keep guitar strings breaking when the band really got wound up. There is some wonderful detail work in the piece. A small wooden structure was built up to represent a band stand. Buddy and the Dew Hops were on top of the structure. The band stand floor was a beautiful construction which consisted of white and black pieces of glass laid in a fluted silver form. The final effect was that it looked like a checkerboard.

Susan Robertson's piece, *Caught Red Handed*, was an absolute departure from the kind of work she usually does. Susan's piece was extremely successful in how it, too, took an ordinary expression or idea and expanded it into a new and creative expression. The



concept seems simple enough: fingerprints on mugs with mug shots done at the RCMP office to prove who was caught red handed. There was one yellow mug with red fingerprints on it. But to execute that basic notion with the clarity and precision that Susan did, while recognizing the dialectical political reality in which we live, was very well done. What I am referring to here is the choice of colour she made for the mugs. The rather garish yellow was chosen over brown, or red or pink—because Susan did not want sociological inference made to issues of race and crime. The dialogue that can develop between audience and artist is critical to the relevance of the work itself. Susan's consideration of how pieces can be read, understood or misunderstood is critical in a time such as ours.

Laura Kinzel courageously shared her insight into the grim reality of the radical medical intervention that removed her reproductive organs after she was finally diagnosed with endometriosis. The two pieces in "Just for Laughs" is part of a much larger body of work called the *Chronic Series*. In it, Laura explores the many facets of her experience. These works reflect the way in which Laura has used humour to heal from this ordeal. These works are large fabric pieces, 157x122, that stitch a story about her desire to "piece together and to make sense out of my situation and feelings," as she puts it.

The dialogue that can develop between works in a show like "Just for Laughs" is as significant the works themselves. Ed Gibney's stunning piece, *Ova Envy*, is obviously a play on the Freudian notion of Penis Envy. But it can also be about much more on one level to the artist, on another level with the audience and in this case, with Laura Kinzel's piece. *Ova Envy* suddenly becomes being about women who really can be envious of other women's ova and their



ABOVE *Caught Red-Handed?* detail by Susan Robertson.

RIGHT *Golden Fleece Gymnastics Club*, ceramic; raku-fired, epoxied. 30 x 30 x 8 cm., by Mel Malkin.

OPPOSITE PAGE *Ova Envy* 1992, granite, limestone, dolomite; carved. 41 x 40 x 27 cm., by Ed Gibney.

ability to create human life from their bodies. Ed has carefully hand carved and polished each form in his piece. He has an extreme distaste for power tools and prefers to draw out of the stone by hand each form, just as a mother draws out the life from each of her children.

If the 19th Century was about the death of God, the 20th Century might well be about the death of humanity. Sandy Ledingham's piece, *She Didn't Know If She Was Coming or Going* exemplifies much of the way in which many of us live. Her whirlwind design of dramatic zebra-like patterns in the intense colours of yellow, orange and black quickly remind us of the hectic pace that many of us keep. There is rarely enough time for our immediate families, let alone time for working in and supporting the community around us. But it is working in community, sharing experience and knowledge that is primary to our existence as social beings.

Cecile Miller's ceramic piece, *Get a Grip*, is in many ways about our society's attempt to get a grip on our understanding or what it means to be human social beings. Cecile has made a pile of self-help books, with a cup and saucer sliding off and over the side of the pile. The piece is glazed white, and she has the face of a clock etched into the saucer. I am reminded that time is slipping away and we need to find meaning and significance in our relationships.

I certainly don't mean to imply that there are issues of social reform lurking behind every piece. I don't think Charley Farrero would necessarily appreciate my drawing out an inference to vessels of living water, just because his piece entitled, *Relief Pitcher* reminds me that pitchers are vessels that usually hold some sort of liquid that provides regeneration and renewal. I think he probably went to too many baseball games in his life and that is why his piece is of two ceramic pitchers that have been thrown, formed and then squashed down into a distorted fatigued form. The lids of the pitcher are two dilapidated baseballs and a third torn and tattered baseball lies in between. I think he probably just wanted the viewers to say, 'that's so funny.'

I think Helen Cooke would not intend that I consider the implications regarding decisions about whether or not to give mouth to mouth resuscitation in our age of AIDS, even though I did. I think she just wanted me to enjoy her play with fun and function. Her piece called *Anyone for Mouth to Mouth Resuscitation?* It consists of



two cups and a pitcher. The liquid of the pitcher pours through a small face at the spout through parted lips. The cups have inverted faces—so that when the cups are upside down, the faces are right-side-up. When you fill the cup and drink from it, the cup lip is the lip of the face on the cup.

In fact, there is only one piece in the show that actually says 'I'm about social reform' and that is Bernie Zaharik's work, *Medicare Anniversary Apple, 1962-1992*. It is a small, half-eaten ceramic apple with a strange looking worm looking out of the top of it. There is the obvious suggestion that something is wrong. Therefore, how can I possibly say this exhibition, "Just for Laughs" reminds me of an Erasmusian attempt at reform? I am compelled to make this inference because each piece that I have mentioned represented thoughtful consideration about ideas and issues that are relevant to the social relations of our time and place.

Bryan Lane's work, *Idea Lamp*, seems to exemplify most clearly what I am trying to say. Bryan made a lamp base out of wood and arborite. The lines are stark, geometric and angular. The base is all black, except for a gray-speckled tie and white piece which makes a suit front. The design reminds us of the modern technocratic economy of which we are an integral, but often alienated, part. But on top of the base sits the form of a human head made out of glass. It is clear and fluid and full of life and form. When a switch is pulled on the side of the base, a light comes on inside the head—and we are reminded of the light of ideas, imagination and creative power that is in us all.

It is only by relevant discourse and dialogue that we as a society will grow and develop and not regress and implode. The arts serve as a place of regeneration. The exhibition "Just for Laughs" is an exhibition where camaraderie and conversation exist among the works, and between the artist and the audience. The public culture in which we share common experiences and responses to issues of home, health and happiness is essential to our well-being collectively and individually. Norman Cousins, well known for his research into humour and its affect on healing and health, would applaud the efforts of the SCC Exhibitions Committee and participating artists, as do I.

Stephanie Bowman is a paper and printmaker from Saskatoon.



**LEFT** *Basket*, earthenware, terrasiligata slip, 20 x 45 cm, by Anne McLellan. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

**OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT** *Budget Bowl*, white earthenware, wheel-thrown and cut, majolica glaze, stains and gold lustre, 4 x 29 cm, by Anne McLellan. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

**OPPOSITE PAGE RIGHT** *Purple Iris*, earthenware clay, wheel-thrown, cut and reassembled, 24 x 51 cm, by Anne McLellan. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

## Playing with Forms

BY GREG BEATTY

**Anne McLellan**  
"Re-Formations"

Traditions Handcraft Gallery  
2714 - 13th Avenue, Regina, SK  
February 15 to March 27, 1996

In developing his "theory of forms", the Greek philosopher Plato wondered how a single word, such as *table* or *chair*, could be used to describe all the differently styled objects that function as tables and chairs. After much deliberation, he finally concluded that divergent objects could be grouped together under one name if they shared some essential *form* or *idea* in common. In this exhibition of white earthenware bowls, plates and freestanding sculptures, Anne McLellan explores the Platonic notion of ideal form as it relates to her practice as a ceramicist.

An active member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, McLellan received her BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) in 1981. After working as a production potter in Regina for several years, she decided to return to school in 1987. At NSCAD, she had been taught primarily by male professors. While satisfied with the technical training she had received, McLellan felt the male-dominated environment hindered her ability to define

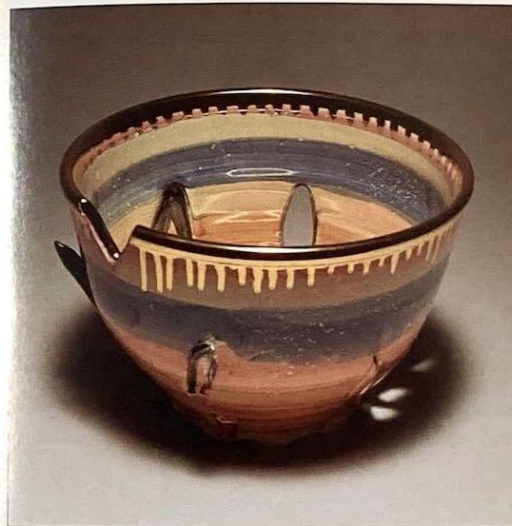
and articulate her female sensibility. Determined to explore this aspect of her creative personality, she enrolled at the Albert College of Art, where she benefited from contact with several female ceramics professors including Lillian Klimek, Sally Barbier and Barbara Tipton. Since returning to Regina with a diploma in visual art in 1989, McLellan has been employed as a pottery instructor at the Neil Balkwell Arts Centre.

"In Re-Formations," she says, "I began by throwing basic pottery shapes like the bowl, plate and cylinder on a wheel. The majority of my pots are made this way. I enjoy the rhythm of throwing and drawing clay on the wheel, plus I feel it gives my work a sharper edge. After letting the shapes dry to a moderate firmness, I cut them into triangular pieces with a knife, then reassembled them using liquid slip and clay coils as adhesives. The process was largely intuitive, as I didn't know what the final result would be. By working this way, I hope to invest traditional pottery forms with renewed meaning while at the same time pushing myself to explore new creative possibilities."

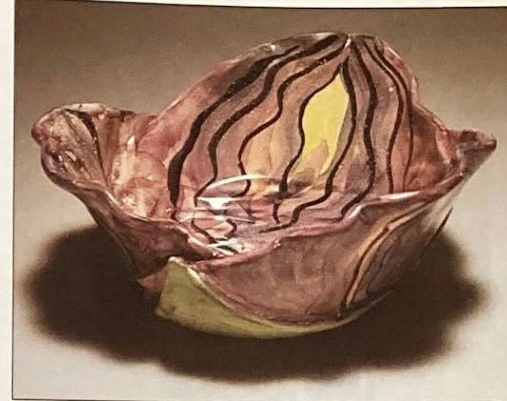
In *Basket*, for example, McLellan presents a slumped earthenware form coated with a terrasiligata slip. The slip gives the clay a reddish-brown colour when fired. While still recognizable as a basket, the form has been subverted in two ways: first, through the modelling of overlapping walls which create an uneven external surface, and second, through the presence of a skewed rim that slants toward the middle. Indeed, even her decision to fashion the object from clay, as opposed to woven plant fibre, clashes with or mental construct of the ideal basket form. These multiple incongruities are reinforced by McLellan's use of five bamboo strips bound together with copper wire as a handle. The bamboo's fragile flexibility generates a certain degree of tension as we wonder if the handle would be able to support the weight of the basket and its future contents.

An even more radical deconstruction of a conventional ceramic shape is found in *Peek-A-Boo*, which consists of four clay slabs joined loosely together to form an open-ended box. Carved into the slabs are several gaping peep holes. Through her makeshift construction technique, McLellan celebrates the ingenuity of her two pre-school children in taking an everyday object like a cardboard box and

converting it to a plaything. By mimicking their behaviour, which is still untainted by the imagination-draining effects of video games and the TV/VCR, she hopes to invest her own practice with similar energy and enthusiasm. With its murky bluish-green colour scheme, the sculpture possesses a much darker hue than most of the work in "Re-Formations." In finishing her fired pieces, McLellan begins by applying a layer of majolica white glaze. This glaze has long been used by ceramists to create a canvas-like background for pictorial and decorative detail. In McLellan's case, she blends commercial stains and oxides such as copper, cobalt and iron with water, and applies this mixture to the glazed surface with a bamboo brush. While she does not consider herself to be a painter, she does use sponges and other painterly tools to achieve a variety of tonal and textural effects, and often inscribes additional imagery into the underlying glaze through a graffito technique.



Despite McLellan's stated intention, not every piece in "Re-Formations" functions as an aggressive adventure in deconstructivism. In *Purple Cabbage Flower Pot*, for example, she presents a rather conventional vessel form modelled after the head of a cabbage. With its purple and green coloration, and crenellated rim pattern (which resembles the leafy crown of the above-mentioned vegetable), the bowl celebrates McLellan's love of gardening and nature. Similarly, *Budget Bowl* offers viewers what, at least at first glance, appears to be a standard bowl. But when we examine it more closely, we discover that several notches have been gouged into the vessel wall, and that the bottom has been perforated by a number of small holes. In conceptual terms, the bowl functions as McLellan's response to recent right wing attacks on Canada's social infrastructure. Its sieve-like quality symbolizes the growing gaps in our once vaunted social safety net, and the consequent increased vulnerability of this country's underclass to poverty, ill-health, illiteracy and despair. Capitalism's inherent hierarchical structure is reflected in the bowl's upper rim. With just a single small notch cut out of it, the bowl's relatively intact appearance dramatizes the upper class's immutability to hard-hearted business measures, reflecting McLellan's belief—which I happen to share—



that the wealthy are not doing their part to help Canada solve its current fiscal problems.

In *Lonely Voyage*, she offers a more introspective analysis of her creative process than that contained in *Peek-A-Boo*. The terrasiligata fired sculpture consists of a small boat delicately balanced on a semi-circular hollow base with a jagged edge. Like *Purple Cabbage Flower Pot*, *Lonely Voyage* is grounded only marginally in a deconstructivist ethos. Instead, the sculpture articulates McLellan's feelings concerning the isolation she experiences as a ceramicist working out of a home studio. Under such circumstances, the creative act becomes a solitary voyage of self-discovery. To be successful as an artist, she feels, one must be willing to endure the privations of such a voyage. By resisting the temptation to develop an extensive social network among her fellow ceramicists, McLellan carves time and space for herself to develop a unique aesthetic vision. The semi-precarious interaction between the boat and its base, on the other hand, refers to the pressure McLellan feels as she struggles to balance the demands of home and family life with her work as a ceramicist. Read in this way, the boat becomes a place not so much a physical, but psychological refuge, keeping her afloat in a sea of personal and professional distractions. Delineated within the boat's bluish-green glazed interior is a cross-like form. While this form may simply be intended as a "structural support", it might also be interpreted as symbolic evocation of McLellan's artistic spirit.

As a production potter, McLellan is well aware of the trap artisans can fall into when they focus too much on market trends. In her commissions work, she has always enjoyed a strong degree of creative autonomy. As she noted during our interview, "If I'm not evolving, then I'm not happy." By adopting a deconstructivist working method in "Re-Formations," she seems to have found a vehicle to push her ceramic practice in a new direction. Indeed, in her more conceptual pieces, she shows definite signs of movement toward ceramic installation, a genre first pioneered in Regina by Jeannie Mah and Ruth Chambers.

Greg Beatty is a Regina visual arts critic and columnist—*Eclectica Ecetetera*—for the Regina Leader Post. He is a frequent contributor to *The Craft Factor*.



**CALL  
FOR  
ENTRY**

**10th ANNUAL  
NOVEMBER 14-17, 1996  
Calgary Convention Centre  
Calgary, Alberta  
180 High Quality Artisans**

For Application Form Write or Call:  
**ART MARKET PRODUCTIONS**

P.O. Box 385, Banff, Alberta T0L 0C0  
Message Telephone (403) 762-2345



**series 96**

red deer college's  
summer school of the visual arts

**5 Day Workshops  
at Red Deer College**

*Accommodation on campus,  
well-equipped studios, professional instruction,  
evening social events*

Craft Workshops include:  
Glassblowing • Pottery • Clay Sculpture •  
Bronze Casting (two weeks) • Hand Bookbinding  
• Bird Carving • Calligraphy • Fibre Arts •  
Willow Furniture • Jewellery • Drum Making •  
Constructing a Folk Harp •



Call now for a free brochure Anne Brodie  
Tel (403) 342-3130 Fax (430) 340-8940  
Email: anne.brodie@rdc.ab.ca  
PO Box 5005 Red Deer AB T4N 5H5



# Saskatchewan Craft Gallery

## Schedule

### IN THE GALLERY

#### "BORN IN FIRE & SMOKE"

Donovan Chester

Raku

April 26 to June 4, 1996

Public Reception: Friday, April 26, 7 to 9 PM

Artist's Talk: April 27, 2 PM

#### "THE BLUE SHOW"

Regina 5

(Ruth Chambers, Cara Gay Driscoll,

Pat Matheson, John Peet, James Slingerland)

June 7 to July 9, 1996

Public Reception: Friday, June 7, 7-9 PM

Artists' Talk: Saturday, June 8, 2 PM

#### "CATCAPHONY"

Susan Robertson

Clay Sculpture

July 12 to August 13, 1996

Public Reception: Friday, July 12, 7 - 9 PM

#### "DIMENSIONS '96"

Annual open juried exhibition  
of Saskatchewan craft

August 16 to September 17, 1996

Public Reception: Friday, August 16, 7 - 9 PM

### SCC TOURING EXHIBITIONS

(Partial Listings)

#### "DIMENSIONS '96"

Annual open juried exhibition of Saskatchewan craft

Jurors: Kaija Rautiainen and Jordan Van Sewell

Organized by the Saskatchewan Craft Council

Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina SK

May 31 to June 30, 1996

Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival, Battleford, SK

July 19 to 21, 1996

Saskatchewan Craft Gallery, Saskatoon, SK

August 16 to September 17, 1996

### JOINT SCC/OSAC TOURING EXHIBITION

#### "CRAFT COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS III"

Includes the work of Wayne Cameron (wood),  
masks by Manjari Sharma, rug hooking  
by Delores Norman and pottery by Anne McLellan

Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre, Yorkton, SK

July 1 to 23, 1996

Arts and Crafts Centre, Watrous, SK

August 1 to 23, 1996

**You'RE A WINNER!**  
**Congratulations!**

No matter who you are or where you live in the province, you win with Saskatchewan Lotteries. Over 12,000 sport, recreation, culture and community groups win every time you buy a Saskatchewan Lotteries ticket. These volunteer groups provide activities which are good for you—and good for the economy.

*Be a winner. Buy your tickets today.*



**SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL**

813 Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7N 1B5 (306) 653-3616





**Return Postage Guaranteed**  
**Saskatchewan Craft Council**  
**813 Broadway Avenue**  
**Saskatoon, SK**  
**S7N 1B5**  
**Publications Mail Registration #4818**