

# THE CRAFT FACTOR

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL • FALL 1996 • VOL. 21.2 • \$3.00



# Saskatchewan Craft Gallery

## Schedule

### IN THE GALLERY

#### "DIMENSIONS '96"

Annual open juried exhibition  
of Saskatchewan craft  
August 16 to September 17, 1996

#### "PAPER..... DREAMS, PASSAGES & TRANSLATIONS"

Oriol Dancer  
Monika Wildemann  
Eroca Ellingham  
Kristina Komendant  
Martha Cole  
Medium: paper

September 20 to November 19, 1996

Public Reception: Friday, September 20, 7 to 9 PM  
Curator's Talk: Sunday, September 22, 2 PM

#### "EARLY SASKATCHEWAN WOODWORKERS"

Works from 1890 to 1940  
curated jointly by the  
Saskatchewan Craft Gallery  
& the Mendel Art Gallery

November 22, 1996, to January 21, 1997

#### "IN OUR BLOOD"

Mixed Media by  
Stephanie Bowman  
Lindsay Embree  
Nora Jacek

January 24 to March 4 1997

### 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

BARR Colony Heritage Centre, Lloydminster  
September 25 to October 27, 1996

Swift Current National Exhibition Centre,  
Swift Current, SK  
November 2 to November 27, 1996

Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre, Yorkton, SK  
December 4, 1996, to January 27, 1997

#### "JUST FOR LAUGHS"

Comedy, Satire, Sarcasm, Parody  
Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre, Yorkton, Sk  
August 1 to October 31, 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

Estevan National Exhibition Centre  
September 1 to 23, 1996

Allie Griffin Art Gallery, Weyburn, Sk  
October 1 to 23, 1996



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.

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*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.

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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



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FRONT COVER Mechanical Draught Horse, 104.1 x 50.8 x 91.4 cm, farm machinery parts & leather harness, mouth bit, blinders, by Noelle Lucas.

BACK COVER Untitled #8, Raku, 18 x 36 x 19 cm, by Donovan Chester.



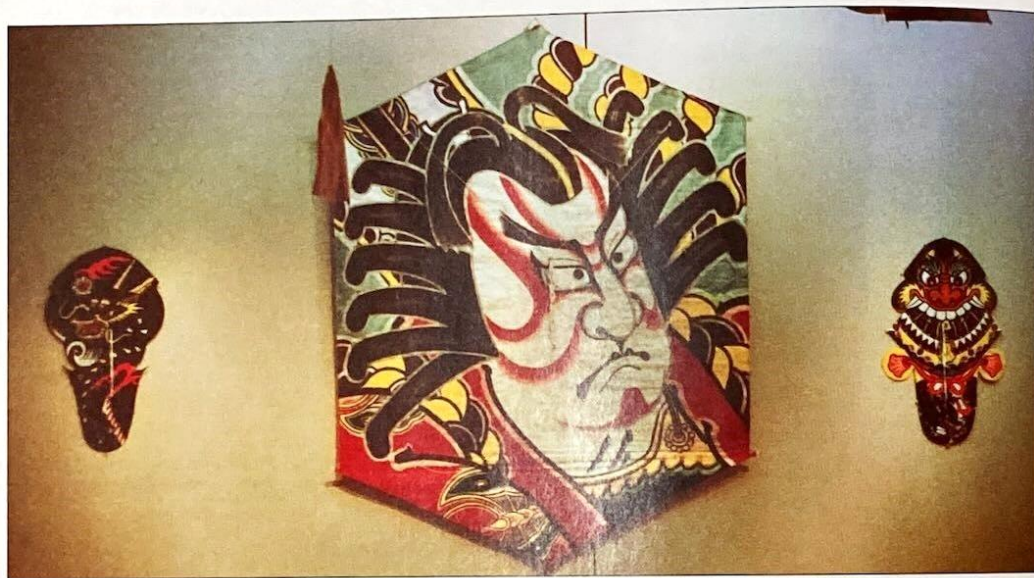
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# The Floating World

BY WENDY PARSONS



A beautiful, exciting exhibition of Japanese kites was recently shown at the Moose Jaw Art Museum. It was sponsored by the Japan Foundation. Kites covered the walls and hung from the ceiling. They came in every imaginable shape and size and were constructed with care and sensitivity out of rice paper, bamboo and paste. These kites came to life. The strong, decorative designs with large flat colour areas spoke to me of centuries old traditions. Where did these designs come from? I began to research the history of kites in Japan.

Kites were invented around 2000 years ago in China. It is believed that they came to Japan with some Buddhist missionaries during the Heian period (794 - 1185 AD).

At first, because of the price of paper, only the rich could afford them. But kites entered their golden age during the Edo period (1603-1868 AD). For over 300

**For over 300 years, Japan closed its doors to other nations. It was during this time that the cost of paper came down. The common folk could now afford to make kites—and make them they did. Each hometown area had a kite design of its own. The Japanese people developed over 120 different kite designs.**

years, Japan closed its doors to other nations. It was during this time that the cost of paper came down. The common folk could now afford to make kites—and make them they did. Each hometown area had a kite design of its own. The Japanese people developed over 120 different kite designs.

A favourite pastime of the poor was flying their kites over the estates of the Samurai, so that they could look down on their betters. This proved so irksome that the Shogunal eventually passed a law forbidding it.

The tradition of wood block printmaking also began in the city of Edo during this time. These prints, called *Ukiyo-e* prints, were popular with the poor and greatly influenced the designs put on kites. Images were that of "the floating world," which was the common expression to describe everyday life. Pleasures of theatre, dance, love and festivals were frequently depicted. The

OPPOSITE PAGE Centre kite is a 9' six sided kite used in the Japanese kite flying competitions. On each side are *Brahman* warrior kites. Photo courtesy of the Moose Jaw Art Museum.

RIGHT Top kites represent fierce *Samurai* warriors; large centre kite (approximately 2' x 5') is that of a demon whose purpose is to ward off evil spirits. Lower kites on the sides depict insects of the Chubu district. Photo courtesy of the Moose Jaw Art Museum



designs were stylized with large flat colour areas. We see these same designs on kites today.

On festival days, kites were—and still are—often given as congratulatory items to children. One popular kite for such a gift is one bearing the image of Kintoki, a folk hero, who was raised by bears in the mountains. Legend has it that he became the strongest person in Japan. To this day, kites (each with a child's name on it) are decorated with legendary war heroes, or with a hero from a children's tale, in the hope that the child will grow up to be healthy and strong. Other popular designs on gift kites include those decorated with a crane or turtle (symbols of long life), carp (a valiant fish who swims upstream), and dragons (symbols of prosperity).

Kites have been used by farmers to invoke a good harvest. Fishermen in the Tohoku district fly kites to determine air flow to ascertain the safety of going out to sea.

Warriors used kites to send messages to allies and to send food in to besieged troops. Old prints even depict warriors suspended from kites shooting arrows down on to the enemy below.

The *Brahman* kites are made in the style of the traditional Japanese warrior kites. They are decorated with demons to ward off evil. Some kites have long tongues sticking out, since such a gesture is thought to frighten away evil spirits.

From the Chubu district, come the kites

in the shape of birds or insects indigenous to that region.

*Yakko* kites, in stylized human form, were originally designed by a maker of swords and horse trappings. His business was poor so he began to make kites. At first, he made images of warriors walking away because he could not draw faces. These are called the *Reverse Yakko* kites.

**Kite makers are valued and honoured in Japan as the nation struggles to keep alive its traditions and hold on to its identity.**

The *Ezo* kite is the newest of all Japanese kites, being only one hundred years old. It was designed by an aboriginal poet who made it in the shape of the island Hokkaido. The design on the kite represents an Ainu chief lamenting to the gods the decline of his people after colonization. The Ainu ancestors inhabited the islands before the Japanese themselves arrived there.

Large six-cornered kites are used in a game consisting of two teams. Each team of 30 to 50 men launches a kite with a portable winch. The goal is to entangle your kite line with that of the opponents—and then by means of friction, to cut the opposition line and set their kite free. At that point, both teams try to capture the fallen kite.

The *Nagasaki* competition kites carry

heavy armour. The strings near the kite are wrapped in linen coated with paste and ground glass. Also, from numerous places along the string, sharp metal blades are projected.

Kite makers are valued and honoured in Japan as the nation struggles to keep alive its traditions and hold on to its identity. Today, the city of Edo is Tokyo. Before World War II, there were 35 kite makers in Tokyo. By 1969, only one remained and he (the kite maker himself) was named a Government designated living cultural property.

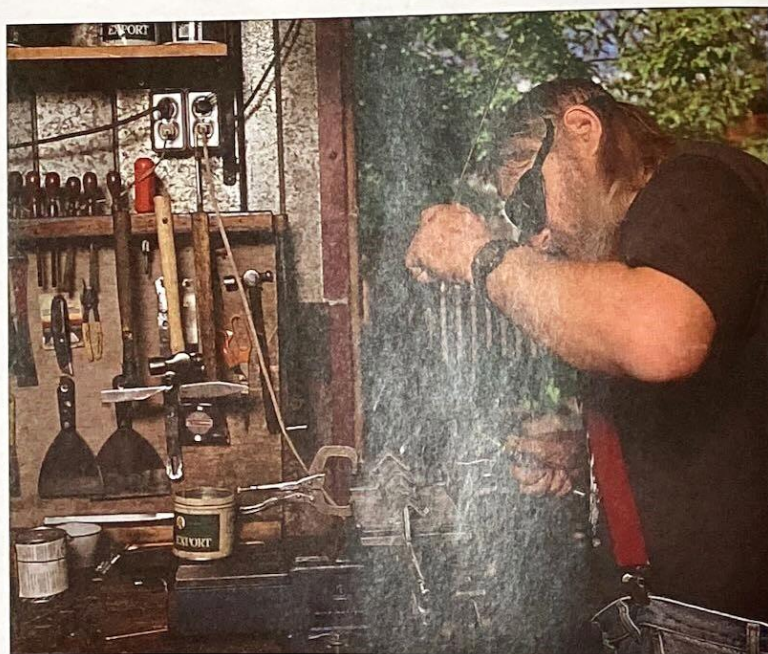
Kites were in danger of being a thing of the past, due to Japan's urbanization and western influences. The number of places where one can fly a kite is growing smaller and smaller. There are becoming very few places, except in large parks or along river banks, where there is room to launch a kite.

However, in spite of the small geographical area, the art of kite making is not dying out. This is because schools are teaching the ancient craft and hobbyists are taking an interest in making and preserving the traditional kites of their home town area. Kites are being collected in Japan as valued works of fine craftsmanship. After all, isn't it through the arts that a Nation develops and maintains a sense of self?

Wendy Parsons is a ceramist from Moose Jaw and the Education Coordinator at the Moose Jaw Art Museum.

# A Symbiosis of Wax and Steel

BY META PERRY



ABOVE Bill Schmidt, candle maker and candleholder maker, welding steel at his work bench. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

**“For me, there’s a real enjoyment in feeling the tension of steel. After you work with it for a while, you start to understand it contains an energy, that it’s not really inanimate. There’s a point, when you’re working with it, where it springs. There is another point at which it begins to bend. Most people wouldn’t feel that,”** Bill Schmidt says as he places a length of keystick into a vice.

The deep-gold candles stand tall in their burnished black steel holders. Their wicks alight with flickering flames, the beeswax candles slowly melt; and, as they do, they release their warm fresh fragrance, filling the air with scent and light. Both candles and holders are the creations of William Schmidt of Honey Comb Crafts of Regina, Saskatchewan. He is a big man, direct and down to earth with a fresh smile and strong hands and forearms. It is not difficult to understand how he can

bend, twist and shape unyielding metal into elegant candle-holders. A tour of this workshop reveals single-candle holders with small round finger loops to carry them; spiralling candelabras for three or more candles; and simple yet sophisticated chandeliers, all interpreting in one way or another the hexagonal motif of the honey comb. “For me, there’s a real enjoyment in feeling the tension of steel. After you work with it for a while, you start to understand it contains an energy, that it’s not really

inanimate. There’s a point, when you’re working it, where it springs. There is another point at which it begins to bend. Most people wouldn’t feel that,” Bill Schmidt says as he places a length of keystick into a vice. His is preparing to do a cold twist. As the term implies, it is a technique that lets Schmidt work the metal without its being hot. He has prepared the cold rolled steel bar in advance by putting it through an annealing process; heating the steel and

then allowing it to cool on its own to remove any internal stress and to make it more malleable. He affixes to the bar a specially-designed tool he himself has made for the purpose, and begins to turn it. Almost miraculously, the steel bar begins to twist in perfect spirals as Schmidt gently applies pressure here and there along its length. In just a few hours, what began as a nondescript metal bar is given shape and meaning, transformed into a centre-piece for a dining table, a functional piece for a bedside table or a central lighting fixture for a hall or dining room.

Not all of Schmidt’s pieces are made by the cold twist method. He is just as ingenious when it comes to fashioning metal using a heat process. He has made a variety of round machetes in various sizes which he uses to shape metal after he has heated it with a torch. He also uses heat to attach the brass candle cups—special sized to hold the candles he makes—to his original-design holders. The process is called braising, and it is exacting work, requiring great care in the cleaning and fluxing of the metal. However, even with all the attention and patience, boobos happen, such as candle cups that end up sideways on the base. Schmidt laughs as he displays one of his unlikely creations. “I’ve got to find a way of making these into wall-mounted candle-holders,” he suggests, his eyes twinkling.

Schmidt’s neat workshop, in the carefully-tended back yard of this north Regina home, is a step back in time. It is reminiscent of an old-time blacksmith shop, its walls lined with tools for cutting, snipping, and soldering. There is an array of metal-working tools, including the many made by Schmidt. The one thing he does not have as yet, and longs for, is a forge. He would like a traditional one, fired by coal and operated by turning a handle to keep the fire going.

Those who have known Bill Schmidt in his earlier years might be a little surprised to



ABOVE Beeswax candles displayed in a steel and brass candelabra, 8" across and 3", 4", and 5" heights, by Bill Schmidt. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

learn he is one of the province’s foremost makers of candles and candle-holders. He had studied drafting and had intended to become an architect, but somehow could not get comfortable with the direction he had chosen. Unsure of just where his future lay, he spent some time as a sheet metal worker before he gave in to his calling as an artisan.

**Many a lucky person has walked away with a pair of candles that Schmidt considers factory rejects. It is a throwback to the days when Schmidt gave his candles away as Christmas presents to his friends.**

“This all started in 1971, as a hobby, with candle-making. Some friends of mine had bought some honey, and here was a

little bit of wax still attached. The ideas of making candles just came to me. I did a little research, started dipping and pretty soon I was making beeswax candles to give to people as Christmas presents,” explains Schmidt. He discovered, however, that other people liked his candles, too, and encouraged him to go into some craft sales and sell them.

His first venture was with the Churchmouse in Regina, at their annual Christmas craft sale in 1982. He sold quite a few candles, and would have sold more, he believes, if he had holders for them. “People started telling me they’d buy more of my candles if they had some holders for them. And that’s how I got started making candle-holders,” explains Schmidt. “It’s kind of funny, you know, how that worked, because now, as far as I know, I’m one of the only people who make the candles and the holders for them.”

There is something of symbiotic relationship between Schmidt’s candles and candle-holders. In his work, hard cold steel and soft warm beeswax come together to form an organic whole that is mutually beneficial, presenting each to advantage.

While it may seem the more difficult part of Schmidt’s craft is the making of the candle-holders, the candles present him with his most perplexing problems. “Beeswax is getting harder and harder to find,” Schmidt says. “The trick is to make contact with a bee keeper and get into a long-term relationship.”

Schmidt buys beeswax only once a year, usually at the end of January, in lots of 1100 to 1200 pounds. This is the only time of year beeswax is available. However, there is stiff competition. Manufacturers of foundations, cosmetics and candles all compete for a limited amount of beeswax each year, and most of the wax that is available in Saskatchewan is currently contracted out. It is possible to find small bits of wax at



LEFT Honey Comb Crafts booth displaying Bill Schmidt originals at Mackenzie Art Gallery's Bazaar, held in Regina each June. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

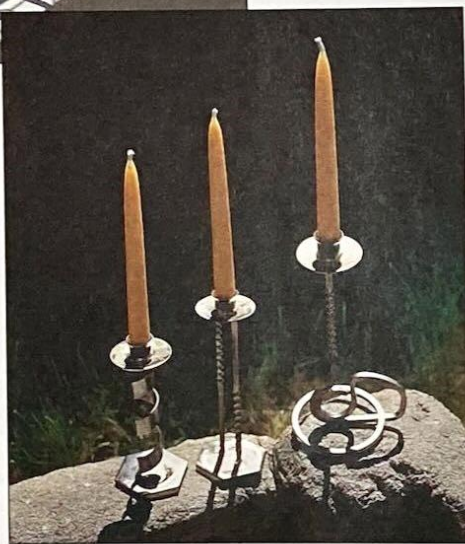
BELOW Beeswax candles in a trio of individualistic steel & brass holders, ranging from 5" to 9" in height, by Bill Schmidt. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

random, but it is hard to find in large quantities. That is way, Schmidt emphasizes, it is so important to ensure a supplier. "The wax supply depends on a delicate balance between honey production and demand for beeswax," Schmidt observes.

He makes about thirty-six hundred candles each year. Most of these—about 60%—are long, tall tapers. About 40% are shorter candles. Then there are some fun items, like his birthday cake candles, which he makes in lots of 432 per batch.

Schmidt makes his candles during the winter months. "If I tried to do this in the summer, I couldn't stand the heat," he says laughing. Keeping the heat consistent enough to ensure the wax stays melted and to keep the dipping process moving along smoothly is not the easiest. When he's making candles, Schmidt's oven is set to 150 degrees Fahrenheit (about 65 degrees Celsius) for hours on end. He notes this probably isn't a desirable thing in the summer but says "I sure keeps the house nice and warm in the winter."

Not only is temperature important. Timing is, too. It is critical to getting the right colour for the candles. Clearly speaking from experience, Schmidt explains the process.



Melting the wax takes time and patience. It must be melted slowly, but can remain in its liquid state for about eight hours. If the melting process is done too quickly, the colour begins to darken. If the process takes too long, the colour again will start to darken. "If you dip the candles too soon, or if the wax stays melted for longer than 12 hours, the colour of the candles will be too dark," Schmidt explains. "You have to work at getting the colour and fragrance just right. And, I don't use any chemicals in my candles."

The dipping process is a slow and arduous one. Schmidt lays out lengths of special

cord, which will serve as wicks for the candles, and then, holding the cord at the centre of its length, dips the ends into the melted beeswax. He does this again and again, producing layered tapers of fragrant beeswax that gradually assume the shape of candles. Even the smallest imperfection is enough to make Schmidt reject his creation. Many a lucky person has walked away with a pair of candles that Schmidt considers factory rejects. It is a throwback to the days when Schmidt gave his candles away as Christmas presents to his friends. He still regards his candles as gifts, each containing a little of Bill Schmidt.

Bill Schmidt and Honey Comb Crafts have come a long way since those first days at Regina's Churchmouse. Although he sold his candles and candle-holders sporadically at first, at the urging of other Saskatchewan craftspeople—notably Wendy Parsons and Zach Dietrich—Schmidt has found a way to become a full-time Saskatchewan artisan. His work can be found at Handmade House in Saskatoon and at Traditions Handcraft Gallery in Regina. And, like many of Saskatchewan's craftspeople, he takes part in the MacKenzie Art Gallery's Bazaar each year. "It's the biggest craft event of the year," Schmidt says. "If you miss Bazaar, you miss the biggest payday of the year."

And yet, there is something about Bill Schmidt that says he would continue to make his candles and candle-holders no matter what else he might do to earn a living. His creations are his own, influenced by the shapes he finds in nature and in the properties he finds in steel. "I can't really think of anyone who's influenced me," he says thoughtfully. "I guess I just started doing it. Mind you, I do read a lot, but I find myself reading only information about craft. I guess I have to admit to being self-taught when it comes to what I do."

Schmidt removes the steel rod from the vice. The steel is twisted into a perfect spiral, ready to be set onto its base. Later, Schmidt will braise a brass candle cup to the top. He holds the piece up, examines the twist critically and then smiles. Another Bill Schmidt original, on its way to making someone's home a little warmer, a little brighter. "Anything you make contains a little of your essence and a little of your energy," Schmidt says. "I discovered I like putting my energy where it isn't wasted."

Meta Perry is a freelance writer covering arts, craft and architecture in Saskatchewan. She is the author of *Regina: A City of Beautiful Homes*.

# Separate Craft Jury Established by Canada Council

BY BRIAN GLADWELL

*The following article was written by Brian Gladwell, one of five jurors who served on the first Canada Council craft jury in May of this year. He also served on a visual arts jury a year earlier. It is in this context, therefore, that Gladwell is positioned to compare directly how craft has fared as a result of a separate competition.*

The Canada Council, by establishing a separate jury for craft recently, has ensured the craft community will enjoy the benefits of peer assessment of applications for individual grants. Craftspeople can now be confident that their applications to the Grants to Professional Artists program will be assessed on criteria appropriate to craft by jurors with specific knowledge of craft. Previously, craft applications were adjudicated by the visual arts jury.

The craft community can expect to see substantially more money flow to craft under the new system. And work whose significance is not as readily understood by a jury of contemporary visual artists will be evaluated within its own context, resulting in more subtle craft practices also receiving funding.

At this year's craft competition, thirty nine grants totalling \$544,700 were awarded. The jury reviewed 286 applications, including A and B long and short term grants, C grants and travel grants. Many more people deserve grants than can be given them, so the process is very competitive. The quality of the applicant's recent work is the principal factor, and it is the jury's job to assess this and rank the applications.

The jury, of five craftspeople, is selected by the Visual Arts Section Officer responsible for craft, Marianne Heggrveit. Regional, language, cultural, discipline and gender balance are considered. The jury included: Robin Hopper, Victoria, ceramics; Elisabeth Marier, Montreal, glass; Sarah Quinton, Toronto, textiles; Pamela Ritchie, Halifax, jewellery; and myself, Regina, furniture.

We each read all the applications before

travelling to Ottawa for the jury meeting. The jury met for six days to review and vote on all the applications from individual craftspeople, plus the twenty applications to the Chalmer's fund. Each grant category was reviewed and voted on before moving to the next.

The slides were the crucial element of the decision making process. They were viewed three times, and with some four thousand slides in all, each slide was viewed very briefly. The first time through, we viewed all the slides in a category, say B long term, to get an overview of what the applications were like. There was no discussion at this point, although if there was consensus that an application was clearly not going to make the final cut, it was eliminated at this stage.

**The successful applications convinced the jury that the grant would result in a body of significant new work.**

The second time through the slides, the work was discussed and reference was made to the text of the application. Each juror in turn commented on his or her perceptions of the work's strengths or weaknesses. This was also the point where a juror might contribute specific disciplinary expertise, personal knowledge of the work, the context within which it was created, or its importance within its field.

On the third viewing, we went through

each set of slides again and then voted a score from one to five for each applicant. Totalling each juror's scores produced the ranking of applications. Knowing the number of grants available in the category, predetermined by the success rate (I'll explain that later), we saw how far down the list the money would go. If there was a tie for the last grant available there was more discussion; and if necessary, we re-voted on the tied candidates to determine the order.

**For What was the Jury Looking?**

A substantial majority of the applications were worthy of the grant requested. And, due to limited funds, most of them ended up below the cutoff point. The successful applications convinced the jury that the grant would result in a body of significant new work. They provided evidence of focused recent work which had laid the foundation for the proposed project, and they conveyed a sense of passionate commitment to the work.

The jury looked for a pattern of growth over time in the work, and especially for recent growth. It looked for a degree of accomplishment appropriate to the number of years of experience. Jurors looked for personal vision and, in the A and B categories, work which resulted in some amplification of its field.

The grants were not viewed as lifetime achievement awards. A long career of recognized accomplishment was not enough without a solid indication that exploration and growth were still taking place, and would continue even further if the grant were awarded. More of essentially the same work, even at the highest level of quality,

was seen as insufficient.

It was also important that the ground-work be well laid for the proposed project. This was a frequent weakness in applications from production craftspeople. Many of these applications essentially said, "I've been a production potter (weaver, etc.) for twenty years and I really need time away from the demands of production to try some new ideas." The accompanying slides would be of explorations from many years ago and of the recent production work. In the absence of any recent creative exploration, the jury had no assurance that the applicant had a clear concept of, and a demonstrated commitment to, the proposed project. Although the jury did support production craftspeople, a record of integration of production work with research and creative development was necessary.

Applications from people doing traditional or reproduction work or model mak-

ing required several discussions among the jury members. They were considered equally as valid as contemporary explorations. But just as skilful craftsmanship alone is not enough in contemporary work, the jury required traditional work to go beyond duplication, to be taken further than reproduction. It looked for some expansion on the practice, a sense of personal authorship in the work.

### How Well does this Serve Craft?

The Canada Council uses a concept called success rates to measure how well its programs serve a particular community: what percentage of applicants from that community are successful, and how does that compare to other communities? Council's analysis, a few years ago, showed that the same percentage of applications from craftspeople

as from painters were successful at the visual arts jury. Therefore, craft was fairly served. I know from my experience on the visual arts jury there were few applications from craftspeople, and they were from a narrow range of practices—primarily work in the area where visual art and craft overlap.

The large number of applications received this time at the craft competition is, I think, indicative of a lack of credibility of the former system within the craft community, which resulted in disproportionately few applications. I would also say the overall quality of the applications to this craft jury and to the previous visual arts jury I served on were similar. Therefore, the separate jury for craft has drawn applications from a substantially increased number of qualified people.

The relevance of all this to craftspeople is that Council uses the same success rates at all the juries in the visual arts section. At the

## Presenting Yourself to the Jury

The crucial element in an application to the craft jury at Canada Council is the slides. While the proposal and the CV were referred to, for short and long term grants the voting was based principally on the quality of work as shown in the slides. For travel grants, the proposal (or reason for travel) was important also.

With 4,000 slides to look at, the jury is in no position to linger over the subtleties of your work. The slides are viewed for about three seconds each, so they must be clear enough to be read instantly. The jury room is only semi dark, so a dark object against a dark background is hard to see and lacks impact.

Make sure there is nothing in the background of the slide that might be mistaken as part of the piece. If the work is placed for photography on a base or backing board that is not clearly separate from the work, these extraneous elements and their suitability are likely to be

evaluated as part of the work. Avoid clever photography, which can make it hard to read the object.

The jury is looking for growth over time, so show your work in chronological order. If you show your earliest work last, you make it hard for the jury to see the direction in which you're moving and it reduces the impact your work creates on the jury.

Choose slides that trace the line of development in your work. Most of your slides should be of recent work, but include a few earlier pieces that represent seminal growth in your work, and explain their significance in your proposal. Ideally there should be consistency in your body of work, but a balance must be found between being so consistent the pieces are all essentially variations on the same idea, and being so divergent that there is no sense of direction. Avoid choosing work that has all been made in the same year. It makes it hard to

current rate, grant applications are funded as follows: one in four A long term, one in five A short, one in seven B long and B short, and one in ten C. Therefore, the more craft applications received, the greater the percentage of the visual arts pot allocated to craft. This is how the separate jury benefits craft. As long as craftspeople, through some mixture of confidence and optimism, apply to the program, craft will enjoy a proportional share of the grants.

However, the establishment of a separate jury for craft means that those who work in the area where visual art and craft overlap must decide to which competition to apply. For example, a maker from a craft background, and using craft traditions, creates site-specific installations in art galleries or artist run centres. Should he or she seek to be evaluated by the craft or the visual art

jury? We returned to a discussion of this issue several times during the week, but did not rule out any work on the grounds that it should have gone to the visual arts competition. In a wrap-up discussion at the conclusion of the week, we agreed the best way for an applicant to approach the issue is to ask, "who are my peers?" In other words, which jury is going to best understand what the work is about?

**As long as craftspeople, through some mixture of confidence and optimism, apply to the program, craft will enjoy a proportional share of the grants.**

### For those who Were Rejected

We also discussed the consistency of the jurying process. We agreed that the same jury, meeting again to consider the same applications, might allocate some percentage of the grants differently. It is not possible to make objective scientific measurements of artistic merit, and in some cases whether an individual juror rates an application a three, say, instead of a four, is a bit of a toss up. Having five jurors and careful discussion minimizes this inherent variability factor, but it's still there.

If the same jury could come to different conclusions, a different jury will definitely do so. Since there is a new jury each time, a rejection by one jury does not mean you won't be successful at the next one.

*continued from page 10*

assess your development. Show your production work only to the extent that it relates to your proposal. Be very cautious in your selection. A single slide of a weak or out of place work can greatly undermine the strength of your application—it would be better to send fewer than the permitted number of slides if necessary.

The program of work, or proposal, is an opportunity to describe your practice and to interpret your work in a way that will help the jury to understand what it is seeing in the slides. The basic outline should be: what I've done; what I'm doing now; what I'd like to do next.

A detailed description of the proposed work is a waste of precious words. Use the proposal as an opportunity to amplify what is seen in the slides—to place the work in a larger context, to describe what it is about. Do not take for granted what the jury knows about your field.

A description of each piece you intend to make, or how you will schedule your time, is unnecessary. The jury is essentially awarding a grant to do a program of new work, based on its assessment of the quality of your recent work. If it considers your work to be strong, then it will trust your judgement and integrity with respect to your future plans. A brief

discussion of an issue you plan to investigate or the general direction in which you'd like to take your work will be enough to confirm that you know where you're going. The most effective proposals posed a question, rather than stating an answer.

Stick to the word count limit, too. If you can't say it in 500 words, you create the impression that you're not clear enough in your own mind about what you're trying to say. As well, we were told that in future only the first 500 words of a proposal will go to the jurors.

Your proposal should also explain significant recent gaps in your curriculum vitae, which might otherwise be seen as a lack of commitment to your work (for instance, you are returning to the studio after four years off for child care). However, your personal circumstances (need, health, etc.) are not a factor, so do not advance them in support of your application. And finally, complaining about a lack of opportunities to develop new work, or lack of previous support, will not strengthen your application. □

**FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM MAY BE DIRECTED TO MARIANNE HEGGVEIT AT 1-800-263-5588, EXTENSION 4269.**

**Summary**

The establishment of a separate craft competition at the Canada Council has already increased the number of grants going to craftspeople. Grants have been awarded to a greater variety of deserving craftspeople. Traditional crafts were treated equally with contemporary craft. The purpose of the grant is creative growth and the development of a body of new and significant work. The criteria is

the artistic merit of your recent work. The competition is stiff, but keep re-applying—it's a fresh slate each time.

Brian Gladwell, a studio furniture maker living in Regina, has shown his work across Canada, in the United States and England. In recent years he has served on eleven provincial and national arts juries.

**People's Choice**

Correction to Spring, 1996, article "By Popular Vote," page 11: The article stated that the Dimensions '89 People's Choice award went to Austin and Jay Mawson for their saddle. This was in error, as the writer was given the wrong information.

The People's Choice award in Dimensions '89 went to Kaija Sanelma Harris for her piece *Diamonds in May*.

The editor apologizes for any inconvenience this may have caused.

# Canada Council Craft Grant Recipients

## March 1996 Competition

**A Grant - long term (\$34,000)**

- Dorothy Caldwell; Hastings, ON
- Kai Chan; Toronto, ON
- Leopold Foulem; Montreal, QC
- Denise Goyer; Carigan, QC
- Kaija Sanelma Harris; Saskatoon, SK
- Marcel Marois; Quebec, QC
- Paul Mathieu; Montreal, QC
- Susan Warner Keene; Toronto, ON

**A Grant - short term (\$6,000)**

no grants awarded

**B Grant - long term (\$17,000)**

- Jennifer Angus; Toronto, ON
- Josée Desjardins; Montreal, QC
- Anne Fauteux; Montreal, QC
- Mimi Gellman; Toronto, ON
- Steven Heinemann; Richmond Hill, ON
- Alastair Heseltine; Hornby Island, BC
- Francis Lemieux; Vancouver, BC
- Paul McClure; Toronto, ON
- Matthias Ostermann; Montreal, QC
- Joel Robson; Toronto, ON
- Ione Thorkelsson; Roseisle, MB
- Anna Torma; Hamilton, ON

**B Grant - short term (\$5,000)**

- Peter Fleming; Toronto, ON
- Kevin Lockau; Bancroft, ON
- Claire Maunsell; Kingston, ON
- Matt Vander Werff; Vancouver, BC

**C Grants (\$5,000)**

- Dawn Jaya; Halifax, NS
- Catherine Jefferson; North Vancouver, BC
- Rachel McHenry; Toronto, ON
- Dianne Sullivan; Calgary, AB
- Wendy Walgate; Toronto, ON
- Betty Weaver; Lillooet, BC
- Lily Yung; Toronto, ON

**Travel Grants**

- Joanne Andrighetti; Vancouver, BC. \$600
- Neil Forrest; Tantallon, NS. \$2,000
- Trudy Golley; Winnipeg, MB. \$1,300
- Barbara Heller; Vancouver, BC. \$2,400
- Paul Leathers; Winnipeg, MB. \$1,300
- Vita Plume; Montreal, QC. \$2,100
- Kinichi Shigeno; Richmond, BC. \$2,500
- Kye-Yeon Son; Halifax, NS. \$1,500

# Dimensions '96

THE TOURING EXHIBITION OF THE SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL • 1996 • \$2.00



# Dimensions '96

**Every spring**, the Saskatchewan Craft Council invites all Saskatchewan craftspeople to submit up to three handmade items for Dimensions, the only annual, open, juried exhibition of craft in the province. This year 95 craftspeople submitted 190 entries for consideration by the Dimensions jury.

Dimensions '96 was selected by two jurors: Kaija Rautiainen, a fibre artist from Burnaby, BC, and Jordan Van Sewell, a clay artist from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Both Ms. Rautiainen and Mr. Van Sewell have an extensive knowledge of the contemporary craft movement, and they gave detailed attention to every entry in selecting Dimensions '96 and in choosing the award-winners. The result is a dynamic, colourful exhibition of 35 works by 31 craftspeople from every craft medium.

The Saskatchewan Craft Council thanks Ms. Rautiainen and Mr. Van Sewell for their invaluable contribution.

The ongoing success of Dimensions depends upon the generous support of a number of groups and organizations, including the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture, and Recreation, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Saskatchewan Municipal Government and the Town of Battleford.

The award donors also make a substantial contribution to Dimensions, with each focusing on a different area of craft production. The Town of Battleford, for instance, not only provides facilities for the exhibition but also previews the work each year in order to select a piece to add to their growing permanent collection. The Saskatchewan Craft Council acknowledges the contributions of the award donors and greatly appreciates their ongoing commitment to the exhibition. A complete list of donors and awards can be found elsewhere in this catalogue.

Dimensions '96 will travel to six major centres in Saskatchewan this year, which is one more venue than last year. The exhibition will first appear at the MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, May 31 to June 30, 1996.

The exhibition will then travel to the Alex Dillabough Centre, Town of Battleford, where it will be shown in conjunction with the annual Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival, July 19, 20 and 21, 1996. A gala opening and awards ceremony will be held at the Alex Dillabough Centre on Thursday, July 18, at 7:30 pm, at which time a total of sixteen awards, including the prestigious Premier's Prize for the outstanding entry, will be announced and presented.

Dimensions '96 will appear in the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery in Saskatoon from August 16 to September 17, 1996 with a public reception on Friday, August 16, 7:00 to 9:00 pm. It will then move to the BARR Colony Heritage Centre, Lloydminster, September 25 to October 27, 1996. Next, the exhibition travels to the Swift Current National Exhibition Centre, a new venue this year. Exhibition dates for Swift Current are November 2 to November 27. The final venue will be the Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre, Yorkton, December 4, 1996 to January 27, 1997.

*Don Kondra, Exhibitions Chairperson  
and Leslie Potter, Exhibitions Coordinator*

Many of the works exhibited in this catalogue are for sale. Please contact the SCC at 653-3616 to make arrangements for purchase.

All measurements are in centimetres; height precedes width precedes length/diameter.

## 1. On the Cover

Selected pieces from Dimensions '96

### 2. Michelle Harris

Box 268, Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0  
497-2952

#### Untitled, 1996

Bowl & jar  
Porcelain, stained slip, glaze, gold lustre  
Wheel thrown, incised slip decoration, overglaze lustre  
Jar: 16 x 16d Bowl: 5 x 29d  
\$110 NFS



2



3



4

### 3. Erna Lepp

1308 Shannon Rd., Regina, SK S4S 5L2  
586-0974

#### Winter Trees, 1996

Bowl  
Porcelain, cobalt & iron slip  
Slip applied at leather hard then carved  
14.5 x 39d  
\$275



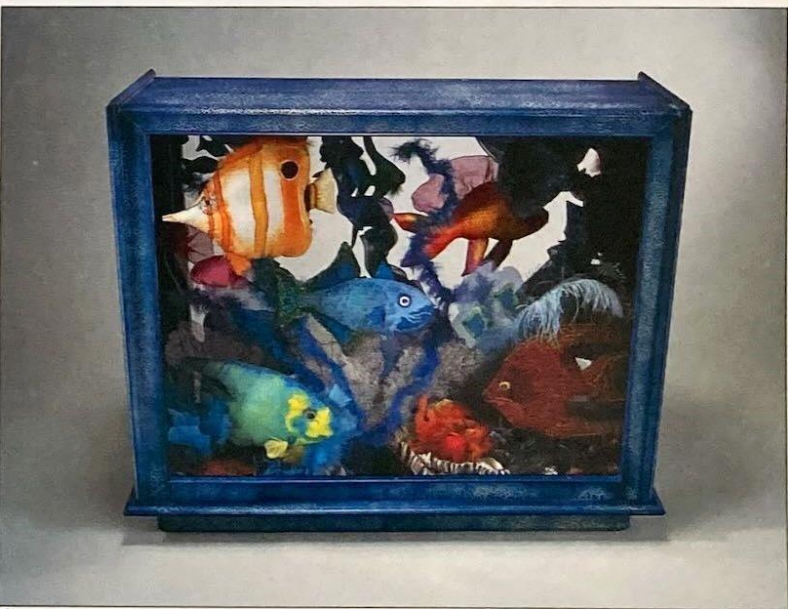
5

### 4. Dwayne Rohachuk

1069 6th St. E., Prince Albert, SK  
S6V 0P6 764-7788

#### Man With Two Hats 1996

Bowl  
Arbutus wood  
Turning  
14 x 22 x 19.5  
\$295 NFS



6

### 5. Grant Irons

3330 Dieppe St., Saskatoon, SK S7M 3S7  
384-1996

#### Encouraging Kay, 1996

Trailing Point Knife (unsharpened)  
ATS-34 stainless steel, 416 stainless steel, nickel silver, vulcanized paper, pearl polymer  
Hand hacksawed, hand filed spine, hand filed piercing, hardened, tempered, polished  
23 x 4 x 2  
\$350

### 6. Sheila Carnegie

Box 1713, North Battleford, SK  
S9A 3W2 445-5934

#### Only In Your Prairie Winter Dreams, 1996

Fantasy aquarium  
Multi-media  
Shibori, serti, wax resist, watercolour, linoblock, screenprint, stencil, stitching, beading, paper mache; wood work by Don Kondra  
80 x 100 x 40  
\$2,000 NFS





7



9



10



8



11



12

**7. Rena Sosulski**

1012 11th St. E., Saskatoon, SK  
S7H 0E9 343-1813

**Autumn, 1996**

Fair Isle Sweater  
Wool, cotton  
Knitting  
74 x 146 x 2  
\$400 NFS  
Model - Tana Fletcher

**8. Doug Ganshorn**

Box 22143, Regina, SK S4S 7H4  
757-5069

**Untitled, 1995**

Vase  
Clay, oxides  
Wheel thrown, pit fired  
16 x 16.5d  
\$65

**9. Gerald Johnston**

Box 222, Pennant, SK S0N 1X0  
626-3545

**The Real Dome, 1996**

Jewelry box  
Birch, cherry, oak, lacewood,  
ostrich leather  
Turning, carving, construction  
23 x 35 x 24.5  
\$1050

**10. Pat Adams**

313 8th St. E., Saskatoon, SK S7H 0P4  
665-0001

**Autumn, 1996**

Tea cozy  
Wool, dyes  
Felting, dyeing  
24 x 34.5 x 3.5  
\$40

**11. Lee Brady**

Box 9136, Saskatoon, SK S7K 7E8  
382-0199

**Upon Measuring the Heavens, 1996**

Vessel  
Glass, sculpey, brass, metal leaf  
Fused, painted, kilnformed glass,  
sandcarved; carved sculpey & brass  
8 x 49 x 49  
\$1,500

**12. Grant Irons**

3330 Dieppe St, Saskatoon, SK  
S7M 3S7 384-1996

**Under The Stars, 1996**

Clip point knife with working choil  
(unsharpened)  
440C stainless steel, brass,  
416 stainless steel, vulcanized paper,  
stabilized maple  
Hand hacksawed, hand filed spine;  
hardened, tempered, polished;  
hand filed bolster  
24 x 4 x 2  
\$350

**13. Lee Brady**

Box 9136, Saskatoon, SK S7K 7E8  
382-0199

**Human Eclipse, 1996**

Vessel  
Glass, sculpey, copper, metal leaf  
Fused, painted, kiln formed glass,  
sandcarved; carved sculpey & copper  
8.5 x 48 x 48  
\$1,250

**14. Carole McLean**

Box 404, Avonlea, SK S0H 0C0  
868-2209

**Naked Truth, 1995**

Sculpture  
Stoneware, cedar  
Hand build & painted  
32.5 x 45 x 32.5  
\$3,500

**15. Ned Herperger**

RR 2, Box 9, Regina, SK S4P 2Z2  
757-7048

**Redeemer, 1995**

Table  
Cherry, Purpleheart (solids & veneer)  
Machining, mortise & tenon, veneering  
94 x 76 x 30  
\$2800 NFS

**16. Charley Farrero**

Box 145, Meacham, SK S0K 2V0  
376-2221

**Bottle and Birds, 1996**

Wall platter  
Stoneware  
Hand built, slipcast elements  
6 x 42d  
\$275 NSF, in private collection

**17. Melvyn Malkin**

601 - 730 Spadina Cres. E.,  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 4H7

244-6264

**7.23.2.96, 1996**

Decorative piece  
Clay, glaze  
Slab, raku fired  
30 x 27 x 4  
\$125

**18. Lee Aaron McKay**

222 Poplar Cres., Saskatoon, SK  
S7M 0A6

653-4572

**Extension 1, 1995**

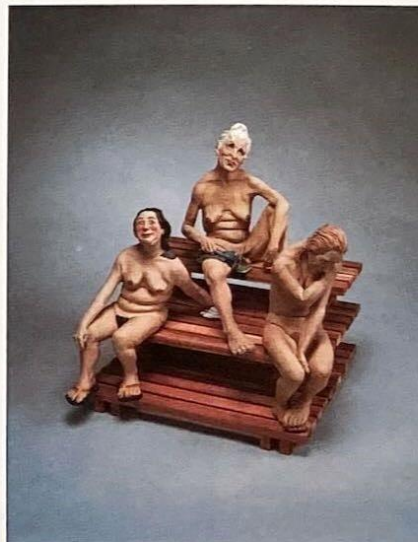
Woodcut print  
Ink & rice paper  
Printmaking  
53 x 70.5  
\$400



13



16



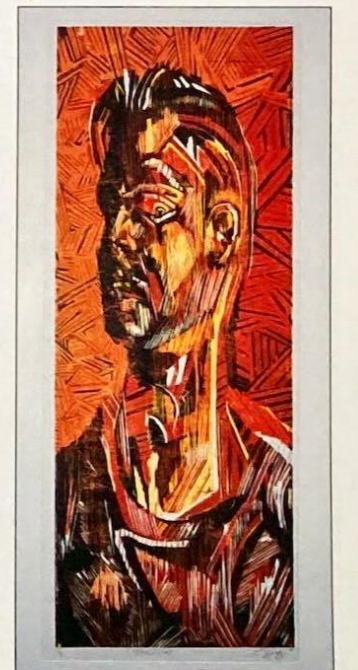
14



17



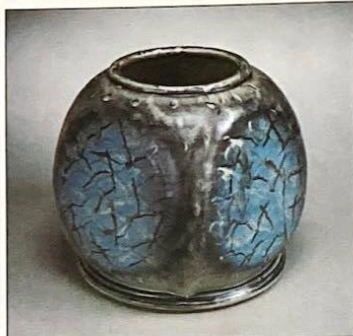
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19



20

**19. Margaret O. Kerr**

246 20th St. W., Prince Albert, SK  
S6V 4G4  
763-7732  
*The Garden, 1996*  
Wall piece  
Wool, cotton, silk, rayon, metal threads  
Various embroidery stitches  
34 x 42 x 3  
\$500

**20. Mel Bolen**

Box 2052, Humboldt, SK S0K 2A0  
682-3223  
*Tenacatita #2, 1995*  
Jar  
Porcelain, glaze, stains  
Wheel thrown, altered, stains  
brushed & sprayed;  
high fire gas reduction  
23 x 26d  
\$225

**21. Gary Greer**

114 Phillips Cr., Saskatoon, SK  
S7H 3N1  
373-7136  
*Louisiana Gentleman, 1996*  
7 1/2" knife  
440-C stainless steel, brass,  
composite ivory, liner material  
Hand hardened & tempered blade,  
hand cut & fitted guard with double  
bolsters; exposed file work on both  
sides of tang and inside edges of all  
bolsters; black & brass tang liners  
with mosaic pins. (handle section  
contains 41 separate pieces)  
33 x 8 x 3  
\$650

**22. Michelle Harris**

Box 268, Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0  
497-2952  
*Swans In Summer, 1996*  
Quilted wall hanging  
Cotton, linen, poly batt  
Machine piecing; hand quilted  
107 x 145  
\$750 NFS



22

**23. Kristina Komendant**

Box 306, Blaine Lake, SK  
S0J 0J0  
497-2546  
*Tea Treasury, 1996*  
Hand-bound book  
Multi-media  
Case-bound and 1/2 bound, marbling,  
painting, calligraphy  
24 x 20 x 1.25  
\$175 NFS



23

**24. Jane A. Evans**

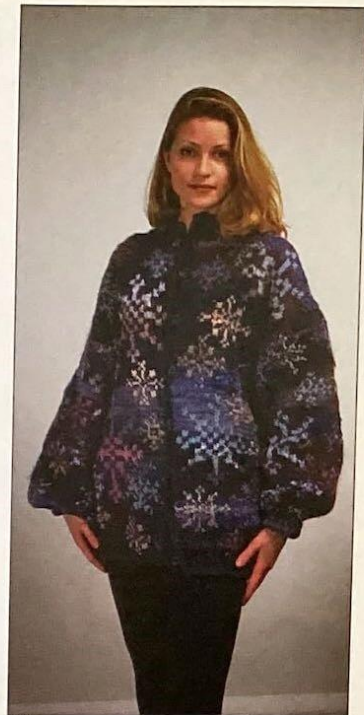
Box 129, Grandora, SK  
S0K 1V0  
668-4548  
*Alpine Splendor, 1996*  
Woven drawing  
Cotton, polyester, rayon, silk threads;  
fabric paint  
Warp painted; woven on 4 shafts with  
added weft accents; embroidered  
35.5 x 36 x 5  
\$600



24

**25. Cindy Lea Hoppe**

Box 1395, Biggar, SK  
S0K 0M0  
948-2947  
*Winter Storm Sweater, 1996*  
Wool, acrylic, mohair, cotton, silk  
Knitting  
80 x 172  
\$500  
Model - Tana Fletcher



25

**26. Jamie Russell  
& Reg Morrell**

Box 157, Vanscoy, SK S0L 3J0  
934-0082  
413 - 26th St. W., Saskatoon, SK  
*Serpent On Top Of The World,  
1996*  
Table  
Birch, 1/8" luan plywood,  
acrylic paint, glass  
Turning, bent lamination,  
carving by Russell;  
hand & air brushed painting by Morrell  
25 x 158 x 55  
\$2,800



26



27



28



29

**27. Douglas Frey**

1012 Aird St., Saskatoon, SK  
S7N 0T1  
652-8562  
*Afternoon Showers, 1996*  
Pendant & handmade chain  
Silver, 14k gold, aqua marine  
Casting, forging, construction, lapidary  
4.3 x 4.6 (pendant only)  
\$600

**28. Gary Greer**

114 Phillips Cr., Saskatoon, SK  
S7H 3N1  
373-7136  
*All Dressed Up And Nowhere To Go, 1996*  
4 1/2" knife  
ATS-34 stainless steel, brass, burl maple, liner material  
Hand hardened & tempered blade with pierced ricasso, exposed file work on tang and crowned butt; sculptured brass bolsters; because of exposed filework - handle slabs had to be completely finished before installing on blade with mosaic pins  
23 x 4 x 2  
\$500

**29. Jo-Anne Dusel**

650 Hochelaga St., Moose Jaw, SK  
S6H 2H7  
692-3257  
*China Mosaic, 1996*  
Wall piece  
Porcelain, china, stoneware, plywood, glue, grout  
Mosaic  
90 x 120 x 5  
\$1,500 NFS

**Back Cover:**

**36. Linda Landine**

213 Albert Ave., Saskatoon, SK  
S7N 1E8  
653-0834  
*Chickens For Dinner, 1996*  
Wall Hanging  
Cotton fabric & batt  
Machine pieced & quilted  
87 x 91 x 1  
\$400 NFS

**30. Sandy Dumba**

223 Rogers Road, Regina, SK S4S 7C5  
586-2416  
*Eclipse, 1996*  
Vase  
Porcelain  
Thrown, slip & glazed  
30 x 22  
\$85 NSF, in private collection

**31. Dwayne Rohachuk**

1069 6th St. E., Prince Albert, SK  
S6V 0P6 764-7788  
*Hands Across The Water, 1996*  
Bowl  
Arbutus wood, paint, oil  
Turning, carving, painting  
16.5 x 35 x 33.5  
\$295

**32. Muriel Carlson**

406 Spruce Dr., Saskatoon, SK S7N 2N4  
249-3562  
*Tea For 3 - 1800 A.D., 1995*  
Pottery  
Turtle River clay, sand, willow, ochre, marls  
Hand coiled, paddled, incising, burnishing, open pit fired in wood & buffalo dung  
3 pieces: 8 - 13 cm high, 8 - 10 cm wide  
\$150 NSF

**33. Mel Bolen**

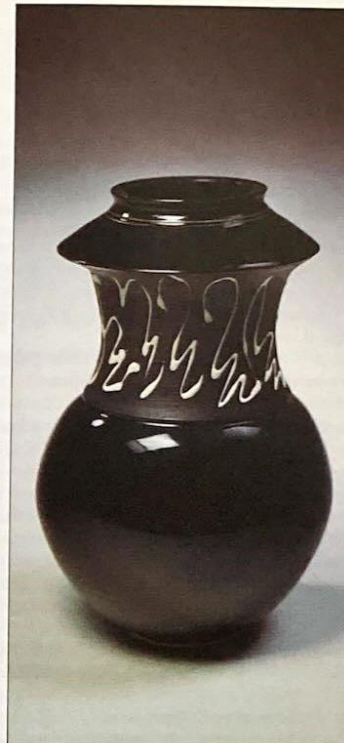
Box 2052, Humboldt, SK S0K 2A0  
682-3223  
*Roger's G.B. 1996*  
Casserole dish  
Porcelain, glazes, stain, gold lustre  
Wheelthrown, handbuild handle, brushed stains, high fired gas reduction  
27 x 40d  
\$225

**34. D. Lynne Bowland**

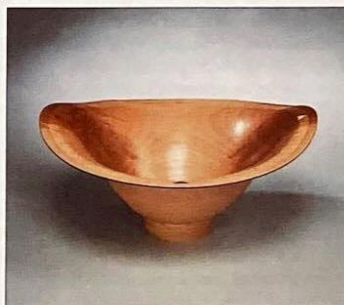
Box 120, Bradwell, SK S0K 0P0  
257-4259  
*Gone Fishin', 1996*  
Three panel screen  
Glass, wood, lead & zinc solder, steel rods & plate, glue, bevels, paint, oil  
Fusing, lead overlay, leaded glass panels; wood work & brazing by Gord Phillips  
174 x 183 x 2  
\$2,800

**35. Myrna Harris**

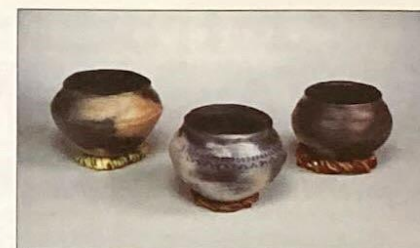
Landis, SK S0K 2K0 658-4532  
*Canola!, 1996*  
Prairie landscape wall hanging  
Merino wool, acid dye, yarns, textured wool, beads  
Pre-dyed wool, felting, embroidery, beading  
39 x 110 x 5.5  
\$800 NFS



30



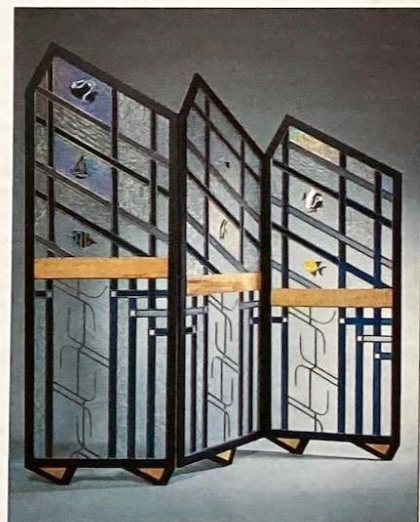
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# Introducing the Award-Winning Craftspeople

**Jamie Russell** is a full-time craftsman who designs and makes studio furniture from his home in Vanscoy, Saskatchewan. In the more recent of his 19 years as a craftsman, he has become known for the reptilian imagery in his designs. He attributes Judy Kensley McKie "with her menagerie of animal furniture," as having had significant influence in his work. And Arthur Espenet Carpenter's "simple, direct approach to design problems" has had an impact on how Russell meets the challenge of implementing his ideas.

The Premier's Prize-winning *Serpent on Top of the World* is part of a series of exploration in animal imagery and arc-stretcher construction. Made from materials which he had on hand and were inexpensive and appropriate for the techniques—eastern birch, local birch, 1/8" Philippine mahogany plywood—the table exemplifies Russell's approach to design. "The bedrock of my design philosophy is to use my materials to achieve a maximum of aesthetic and functional gain with a minimum of financial and environmental disturbance," he says.

Paramount in the craftsmanship of Russell's table is utilizing the right techniques and materials. "The turned members give me pleasant cylindrical shapes easily; and strong, simple round peg in a round hole joinery," he explains. "The bent laminated plywood arc is strong and gives Reg a large smooth surface to paint." ("Reg" is Reg Morrell—see profile below—the artist who painted the details on the piece which depicts reptiles, amphibians, insects, and the like.) Of his work with Reg, Russell says, "I compare working in a collaboration to cutting a curve. Some curves are best cut with a specific gouge, others with a spoke shave or a rasp. If you choose the right tool you just add elbow grease and let the tool give you a fair line. Based on this principal, I took the table to Reg and gave him no more guidance than 'make the snake real and do something simple with the rest. Follow your instincts'." As for the final outcome of the award-winning table, Russell concludes, "Reg's details complement my image and give the piece the same feeling I have of Renaissance, Christian, or Tibetan Buddhist religious art."

As an active member of the Saskatchewan Woodworkers' Guild and the Saskatchewan Craft Council, Russell has an extensive background in coordinating seminars and instructing. He has written for several magazines including *The Craft Factor* and *Home Furniture Magazine*. His works can be found in selected craft markets and local retail outlets, as well as in various galleries across Western Canada and the Pacific coast of the United States. Exhibiting has been important to Russell, as evidenced by the number of shows in which he has participated and his current position as Chair of the SCC Gallery and Exhibitions portfolio. Commenting on the future Russell says, "By year end I will have accumulated enough pieces for a show and am currently looking for a venue for it."

**Reg Morrell**, who has worked on and off as a craftsman over the years, operates Arcane Art Studio of Tattoo & Fine Art in Saskatoon. As an ardent admirer of Leonardo da Vinci, Morrell's two-dimensional surface design is his artistic focus.

In his collaboration with Jamie Russell, Morrell's painting captures the animal imagery in a dramatic and sensual way. "Painting the details of *Serpent on Top of the World* was to him "very exciting" and when considering how important exhibiting is to him, he says, "I love it. I like to hear what people say. I love it when they love it, I love it when they hate it, it's great!" Morrell has exhibited in several art galleries, mostly when he was younger. On a couple of occasions, he has exhibited with Michael Hosaluk and Jamie Russell.

As for the future, Morrell is "in the process of shifting my main focus in my life from tattooing to being a student...and lots of painting, that's it!"

**Carole McLean**, who now resides in Avonlea, Saskatchewan, worked in several mediums and techniques—pottery, fibre, acrylic portraits—before finding her niche in sculpture. After attending the Haliburton School of Fine Arts from 1978 to 1981, stoneware has been her medium of choice and her vehicle to "share with others what I think and feel." Her works, most often Canadian characters, are included in several international collections; and have been shown in numerous galleries—her most recent being at the King Gallery in Toronto. Some of McLean's more notable achievements include winning several SCC Dimensions awards, marketing at Expo '86 and at the Calgary Stampede Art Auction.

The award-winning *Naked Truth*, made from stoneware, depicts the dramatic changes in the female body from youth to old age. The three women sitting nude upon a cedar wood base, which acts as a sauna bench, work together to reveal the emotional, as well as physical, stages of maturity. In creating this piece, McLean's intent was to show "the human form as God made us...with enough humour to take the edge off."

***Serpent on Top of the World***  
(Catalogue 26)  
Premier's Prize

***Serpent on Top of the World***  
(Catalogue 26)  
Premier's Prize

***Naked Truth***  
(Catalogue 14)  
SCC Merit Award

***Extension 1***  
(Catalogue 18)  
SCC Merit Award

***China Mosaic***  
(Catalogue 29)  
SCC Merit Award

***Tenacatita #2***  
(Catalogue 20)  
Tree Award for Excellence in Clay

***Untitled***  
(Catalogue 2)  
Town of Battleford Purchase Award

***Human Eclipse***  
(Catalogue 13)  
Elizabeth Swift Award for Excellence in Glass

Sculpting larger forms, and thereby easing out of the craft show circuit, is McLean's plan for the future. The ease with which she takes this new direction will, perhaps, be guided by the words of wisdom from an old artist friend, who said "I've been accepted with the best and rejected with the best." Carole McLean claims that from that point onward, life as an artist became much easier.

**Lee Aaron McKay** is a recent graduate of the Alberta College of Art in Calgary, where for four years he studied the craft of printmaking. Woodcut (collograph) and lithography have been his techniques of choice and are well suited to his desire to "deal with the figure and how it relates to colour, texture and space."

*Extension 1*, McKay's award-winning piece, exemplifies both his approach to his art and the notion of the extension of the figure in space. Traditional materials—woodcut plate, rice paper, and printing inks—were used to construct the piece, which he created as a "development in self exploration."

As an emerging artist, McKay believes that it is important to exhibit as much as possible. And already, despite his relative youth, he has an impressive beginning: several group and solo shows in Calgary and Saskatoon, as well as a group show in the Czech Republic. McKay is currently enrolled in the BFA program at the University of Saskatchewan and has plans to make a living at his art.

**JoAnne Dusel**, a BFA graduate from the University of Regina, whose major was oil painting, has included craft mediums such as printmaking, fabric murals, and—recently—mosaics, into her human figure wall pieces. "I am drawn to arts and crafts from the medieval era: tapestries, embroideries, stained glass, mosaic and illumination," she explains of her inspirations.

Of the award-winning *China Mosaic*, which is comprised of shards of chinaware pieced together, Dusel says, "I am most intrigued with the symbolism of having to break the dishes (destruction) in order to form the image (creation)." About the commissioned piece which she calls a 'labour of love' she goes on to say, "The concept of arranging many different shapes and colours into the unity of the whole image parallels the eastern concept of 'order out of chaos' and gives a sort of satisfaction to my soul in a mixed-up world."

After a lifetime fascination with mosaics, Dusel began to explore its possibilities approximately ten years ago. Since then she has been instructing, volunteering, exhibiting and winning various awards connected with her craft.

**Mel Bolen**, whose name is synonymous with pottery in Saskatchewan, describes himself as a "compulsive maker and doer." For close to 20 years, he has operated from his home/studio, North Star Pottery, near Humboldt. Prior to the inception of North Star, Bolen instructed at both the Saskatoon and Regina campuses of the University of Saskatchewan. Since those days, spanning 1972 to 1977, Bolen has had a series of appointments reflective of his position as an influential member of the Saskatchewan ceramics community.

For the tenth time, Bolen's work has been selected for the Dimensions touring show. This year's award-winning *Tenacatita #2*, a porcelain/white stoneware jar with glaze and stains, is Bolen's tribute to a beach in Mexico that is "blue, has gulls, pelicans, and is very alive, robust and exotic." He envisions the vase to "show daffodils in all their glory."

To his credit, Bolen has pieces included in several national and international collections, and has participated in over 70 exhibitions including "Clay in Canada," Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1995, and Expo '86 in Vancouver. Bolen continues to keep himself abreast of ceramic trends as shown by his recent educational pursuits at the Banff Centre of the Arts. As for future plans, he says, "Salt kiln is days away from blast off."

**Michelle Harris** is a relative newcomer to the world of pottery. Enrolled as a part time student at SIAST Woodland Campus in Prince Albert, she is learning new techniques at a rapid pace. Her attraction to craft is in the exploration of ideas and patterns in relation to colour and design. Harris enjoys the unpredictability of clay and often throws many variations to study the subtle changes in line.

The lines used in her award-winning piece, *Untitled*, exemplify Harris' focus on surface design in a chrysanthemum-like pattern. In keeping with her current interest in a blue and white theme, the porcelain-thrown bowl and covered jar were fired to 2210°F, before being applied with a blue slip and covered with glaze and gold lustre and incised with a pattern. As part of a series of functional ware, Harris hopes the bowl and jar are striking enough to "stand out on their own."

Harris lives in Waldheim, where she continues to concentrate on "refining forms and injecting visual grace" into her work.

**Lee Brady**, in his 19-year career in glass artistry, has developed a style that is appreciated for its expert manipulation of materials, aesthetic qualities and imagery. "My vessels exhibit a 'ceremonial' nature which can be traced to my interest/fascination with the ritualistic nature of vessels," he says. And inspiration for his images are drawn from Celtic artwork "in their relation to space and how they interlock and articulate."

This year, being one of many years his work will be touring with Dimensions, two pieces were selected. "The figures in the centre are of a mother and child at the time of childbirth," he explains of the award-winning *Human Eclipse*. "It has been my experience that some people are 'eclipsed' by the phenomenon of their children for a time." Using glass as his base, Brady incorporated other materials such as copper, clay, metal leaf, metallic

lustre and sculpey, the latter being a new medium for Brady.

Lee Brady continues to create original designs in his Glass Eye Studio near Saskatoon, sell in retail galleries in Western Canada and Eastern United States, work on commissioned architectural installations, as well as teach various classes. He exhibits in selected North American galleries and his works can be found in several art collections. Winner of numerous awards, including the 1993 Premier's Prize, Brady continues to uphold his reputation as an inventive and skillful craftsman.

**Pat Adams** is a self-taught weaver/felter who, 20 years ago, made a transition from a psychology background and teacher to craftsperson. He makes his living by working at craft markets and retail outlets such as Handmade House cooperative in Saskatoon, of which he is a working member.

The finesse with which he has perfected his craft is evident in his award-winning felted tea cozy entitled *Autumn*. "I go from picturing something in my mind's eye to figuring out the sequence of construction to solving technical considerations to actually producing," he says of the process. Recently, he has been exploring dyeing techniques which result in vibrant colour conducive to making a statement. "On the prairies, power resides in the sky—big expanse, clouds, thunderstorms, sunsets, lots of stars, northern lights, rainbows, wind, dust storms. I strive to depict strong sky in my landscape designs." He goes on to explain his inspiration for *Autumn*. "While out and around the countryside during September/October, 1995, I was repeatedly attracted to views of fully-leaved, fully-green bush or tree lines standing out behind fields of golden-coloured stubble or dried grass. I resolved to do some felted tea cozies that duplicated those scenes that appealed to me."

Adams' related activities include active membership in the Saskatchewan Craft Council and Saskatoon Spinners/Weavers' Guild and 15 years as coordinator for Artisans' Craft Market in Saskatoon. His work has been featured in *Fiberarts Design Book 5*. Several of his works are included in the Saskatchewan Arts Board Permanent Collection and he has exhibited in many galleries across the Province. Winning the Premier's Prize in 1981 was one of several awards he has won over the years as a craftsperson.

**Rena Sosulski** has been a craftsperson since she was very young. As a designer of knitted garments, she views her craft as an "expression of creativity in a practical way."

This is the second year that Sosulski's work was selected for Dimensions. Her 1996 award-winning *Autumn*, a wool/cotton blend of 28 colours, was made as a gift for her sister. Reflective of its name, the sweater depicts images of colourful leaves, wheat stalks, sunsets and brownish red-coloured bushes. The Fair Isle technique (adopted from Alice Starmore, whom she admires) was combined with cables—an innovation she believes to be her own, as she has never seen it done before. The intricate design of the sweater is her own, but is based on traditional XO patterns borrowed from European culture. One can also see traces of Native American motifs as Sosulski wanted to "use traditional techniques in a new way; to create something unique that still reflected the past."

Sosulski was a founding member and first president of the Saskatoon Knitting Guild. Exhibiting her work is a recent endeavour and she hopes to encourage other knitters to exhibit as well. Her future plans are to "sell my work at craft shows and work on commissions."

**Muriel Carlson**, after obtaining her B.A. (Honours) in Anthropology and Archeology at the University of Saskatchewan in 1990, started to integrate her learning and interest in aboriginal art with pottery. A few short years later, she has an extensive background in teaching, writing, marketing and involving herself in numerous craft and environmental-related activities in and around Saskatoon, where she makes her home. Her introduction to exhibiting her pottery began in Dimensions '95 with her piece entitled *With these Hands: A Salute to Native Potters*.

Her 1996 award-winning *Tea for 3 - 1800 A.D.* was made to "celebrate an art form of native women," and to "illustrate how original and beautiful their pottery can be/could be if carried forward in time towards a style that borrows from everyday materials from today, while retaining the methods of yesteryear." In an effort to resemble Aboriginal materials, she used non-processed river clay, sand, willow, ochre and marls in *Tea for 3*. The set was hand coiled, paddled, incised, burnished, and open pit fired in wood and buffalo dung.

Carlson continues to be inspired by the prospect of sharing her knowledge. She says, "I plan (if funding completed) to teach pottery to First Nations women...to restore a cultural tradition to them...let them regain the self expression they once had."

**Jane A. Evans**, an accomplished artist, weaver, teacher, and writer made her home in rural Saskatchewan 24 years ago, after having completed her Education and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Minnesota and Wisconsin. During this time she has earned a reputation as an outstanding fibre artist and her work is included in various art collections in Canada, United States and Australia. It is sold at markets and retail outlets in Saskatchewan and can be found in galleries in many North American centres. Currently, she focuses on woven pictures. She explains the process. "Each picture is carefully planned. It begins with photos and on-site drawings," she continues, "then more in the studio...then warp painting, weaving, and finally embroidery."

As in all her work, Evans' award-winning *Alpine Splendor* is a "crossover of media and functionality...and all of their components satisfy me—colour, texture, topic, emotions," she says. Being one of a series of intimate

(Lee Brady continued)

**Autumn**  
(Catalogue 10)  
**Clara Baldwin Award  
for Excellence in  
Functional and  
Production Ware**

**Autumn**  
(Catalogue 7)  
**The Frontier Mall Award  
for Excellence in Fibre**

**Tea for 3 - 1800 A.D.**  
(Catalogue 32)  
**Battlefords Allied Arts  
Council Purchase Award  
&  
Battleford Environmental  
Awareness Movement  
Award**

**Alpine Splendor**  
(Catalogue 24)  
**Prairie Lily Award for  
Excellence in  
Handweaving**

**Redeemer**  
(Catalogue 15)  
**Wood 'n Works  
Merit Award**

**Louisiana Gentleman**  
(Catalogue 21)  
**Wild Blue Yonder  
Art Gallery Award for  
Excellence in Metal**

**Hands Across  
the Water**  
(Catalogue 31)  
**Saskatchewan  
Woodworkers'  
Guild Award for  
Excellence in Wood**

**Canola!**  
(Catalogue 35)  
**SCC Merit Award**

landscapes called *Places of Peace*, this picture was made for "the love of scenery and growing objects in it."

Evans' dedication to her professional status as a weaver is exemplified by her numerous North American teaching activities, professional affiliations, publications (including her book called *A Joy Forever: Latvian Weaving, Traditional and Modified Uses*), and grants, scholarships and awards. Having been recently nominated for the prestigious Saidye Bronfman Award is the culmination of a quarter century of contribution to the development of weaving.

**Ned Herperger**, who is a teacher by profession and a woodworker for personal satisfaction, recently moved to Regina from Oakville, Ontario, where he studied Furniture Design and Technique at Sheridan College.

Of his award-winning table, *Redeemer*, he says, "The title *Redeemer* is used in the biblical sense of a person who redeems (gets or wins back). It is part of my creative direction to express elements of Christianity through my work." Made from purpleheart and cherry woods, chosen for their complementary contrast and richness of colour, Herperger primarily used mortise and tenon joinery techniques. Traditional and contemporary symbolism manifest themselves in Herperger's pieces in that "the top of the table has ornamentation. Where the vertical and horizontal meet is subtly representative of the Christian cross. It has both traditional and personal connections."

Herperger's personal achievements include exhibiting in Saskatchewan and Ontario galleries and having had his work featured in high profile print media such as *Western Living*, *Toronto Star* and *Flare Magazine*. His future plans are "to continue exploring variations on a theme."

**Gary Greer**, who calls himself a "part-time knifemaker with a full time printing job on the side," started making knives ten years ago after having worked in wood and stained glass. "I got serious about knives in 1986, studied for a year or two and built a workshop specifically for knifemaking and haven't looked back since," he explains of his craft. Function is paramount to Greer. "Being a dedicated bowhunter has also given me the opportunity to field test my designs," he says, "and to keep on improving them as using tools." Aesthetics also play a very important role in Greer's designs. "I love doing embellishments such as fancy filework, inlays, carving, anything that gives the knife that extra sparkle," he says.

For the third time, Greer's work has been selected to tour with Dimensions. The award-winning *Louisiana Gentleman* is a Bowie-patterned knife which historically was used for protection, but also was a status symbol for Southern Gentlemen in the 1850's era. The complex and elegant *Louisiana Gentleman* is comprised of 41 separate pieces, the amalgamation of which Greer describes as being like a jigsaw puzzle. It is made from 440-C stainless steel, 360 alloy cutlery brass and composite ivory. Of the techniques, Greer says, "I fabricated front and rear bolsters, as well as the oval guard. I used 'exposed' filework completely around the handle section, including the inside edges of the bolsters."

Gary Greer lives in Saskatoon, writes for various publications, and has participated in three multimedia shows in Edmonton. He continues to satisfy his customers by incorporating their ideas with his own. He says, "Having a customer phone you back and tell you how happy they are with the way the knife works is the true joy of being a knifemaker."

**Dwayne Rohachuk**, who is a self-proclaimed "woodhead," owns a cabinet-making and finishing carpentry business in Prince Albert. He has been active as a woodturning craftsperson for four years. He is influenced by pottery forms, particularly those of the South Western natives. "My wife, who is of Dakota ancestry, also influences the decorative designs I use to embellish some of my pieces," he says.

Of the award-winning *Hands Across the Water*, an Arbutus woodturned bowl, Rohachuk says, "The four painted triangles represent the races of the peoples in the world. The heartwood of a different colour in the bottom of the bowl represents hands with two fingers touching which recognizes the fragility of race relations. My hope for the future would be to have three, four, or all five fingers touching to signify unity."

Rohachuk is a member of the P.A. Woodturners Guild. He participates in craft markets, sells his wares in gift shops and exhibits his work in local art galleries. In July of this year, he will be having a solo exhibition at the Lakeland Gallery at Christopher Lake.

**Myrna Harris**, fibre artist, has been active in several craft mediums since the early 70's. Pottery was her initial passion. Eventually, she took up weaving. But when—only five years ago—she began experimenting with felting, she was seduced by it. It was felting that won her awards in both Dimensions '94 and '95. She was the recipient of the 1995 Premier's Prize.

The award-winning *Canola!* reflects Harris' appreciation for the everchanging Saskatchewan landscape. "I know what season I plan to depict before I start," Harris explains of her design approach. "I let my colours and materials lead me." *Canola!* was made from Saskatchewan-grown merino and English-textured wool accentuated with beads and yarns. The wool was soaked and "rainbow" dyed. Inspiration for *Canola!* was found right outside her Landis home. "The sight and smell of it was overpowering," she says, recounting its vibrancy.

Harris has exhibited in Saskatchewan, B.C. and Newfoundland. "I am hoping to have a show in Toronto in the Textile Museum...nothing definite," she says of future possibilities.

# Introducing the Jurors

Each year, the Saskatchewan Craft Council entrusts its Exhibitions Committee with the daunting task of choosing the jurors for Dimensions. The Committee not only looks at a wide range of highly-qualified potential jurors but also attempts to vary the specializations of the jurors each year. This, together with the fact that the exhibition is open to all Saskatchewan craftspeople, means that the look of Dimensions is constantly changing, with new and experienced craftspeople having an equal chance to be included.

The jurors spend two full days selecting the show and choosing the award winners. They are specifically instructed not to concern themselves with selecting an exhibition or taking on a curatorial role; instead, they are simply asked "to choose the best among all eligible entries." They are asked to select works that "transcend technique, have content, and are a unique individual expression," keeping in mind that the Saskatchewan Craft Council encourages "creative and educated use of traditional methods, innovative exploration of materials, technical competence, historical perspective, and integrity." The jurors are also asked to participate in a public critique in which they are encouraged to speak about why specific works have been included or not included in the exhibition and to answer questions from the many craftspeople who attend.

This year, the Saskatchewan Craft Council has been fortunate to have obtained the services of two highly-qualified jurors: Kaija Rautiainen from Vancouver and Jordan Van Sewell from Winnipeg.

Kaija Rautiainen is originally from Finland, where she obtained a Teacher's Certificate in Textile Crafts in 1973 and studied Art History at the University of Helsinki in 1975 and 1976. The Academia Paulista de Belas Artes in Sao Paulo, Brazil was where she spent 1981 and 1982 concentrating on painting. Her North American education is comprised of studying Colour Theory and Drawing at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver, as well as a tapestry workshop in San Francisco. Ms. Rautiainen's lecturing and craft activities background is extensive and focused on textile art. Solo exhibitions include shows in Vancouver, Toronto and Finland. In addition to participating in many Canadian and American group shows, she has participated in numerous group exhibitions spanning Finland, Russia, Hungary and Brazil. Her work has been reviewed in publications such as *Hedde* and *Fiberarts* and can also be seen in international collections found in Europe, Asia (Japan), and North and South America.

Jordan Van Sewell is an artist who works primarily in ceramics. A BFA from the University of Manitoba is his academic education which he completed in 1979. His hands-on training includes working with bronze at the Harman Foundry in Vancouver and at Studio Telchman in Winnipeg; glass and paper workshops were taken at Pilchuck Glass in Washington State and with Millie Giesbrecht. Mr. Van Sewell has been a juror on four other occasions and has been instructing various art/craft classes in Manitoba. From 1993 to 1995, he held the position of Executive Director of the Manitoba Crafts Council. Van Sewell's exhibition repertoire includes showing in major Canadian cities, as well as in Arizona, New York, Minnesota and Texas. He has been the recipient of several awards and his work is part of several collections located in California and Manitoba.

## Jurors' Statement

As jurors, we were facing the daunting task of selecting 35 pieces out of 190 entries. For every chosen one, five were to go home without having had the exposure that is offered by the Dimensions show. A juror can only hope that in some way the emotions, talent, and commitment of each craftsman is encapsulated in his or her piece.

Both of this year's jurors are working artists. From that point of view, the selection process becomes even more difficult. We know the diligence and commitment required in our own work and like to think that we recognize these qualities in each one of the entries.

In furniture making, there were both functional and artistically-original pieces. It has been this way in the past and it is reassuring to see the tradition continue. There appeared to be a number of entries by first time and emerging artists. It was good to see woodcut and mosaic as newcomers among the entries. We recognized the well-established art of knifemaking in the province. The healthy competition that we assume goes on here has allowed for startling accomplishments in that field.

We noted the voids in submissions and asked 'where are the baskets, the clothing, the other glass entries?' and we wondered if there could have been more jewellery, since jewellers (as well as weavers and glassworkers) are well established in the province. Perhaps, in the coming years, Dimensions will see more work submitted in these media.

In an exhibition with a mandate to award innovation, to recognize the leading edge, and to push really hard, it would be wonderful to see the submission of all craft disciplines and directions. No other venue has the long history and criticality that Dimensions can boast. Without the broad spectrum of all craftspeople participating each year, the show will wane in importance within the craft community; furthermore, a waning of importance does not appeal to the funders whose continuing support makes craft viable and recognized in the province. Applause to everyone who entered this exhibition and to the supporters who make it happen.

The reality of the '90's is that funding to the arts is often seen as a delicacy whose place on the plate is gone. The continuing support of this exhibition is tantamount to its longevity. The efforts that keep the exhibition a premiere venue for excellence in craft is money well spent. Across Canada and throughout its affiliated craft councils, the SCC show is widely recognized and held in high esteem. It is the SCC with its continuing vision, the funding bodies with their support, and especially the patrons offering cash incentives, purchase and merit awards who can be thanked for the success of the Dimensions exhibition.

— Kaija Rautiainen & Jordan Van Sewell

# Dimensions '96 Award Donors

## Premier's Prize

\$2000 donated by Saskatchewan Municipal Government for the outstanding entry

## Merit Awards

4 awards totalling \$1300 donated by the Saskatchewan Craft Council

## Tree Award for Excellence in Clay

\$300 worth of supplies donated by Tree, Saskatoon

## Saskatchewan Woodworkers' Guild Award for Excellence in Wood

\$300 donated by the Saskatchewan Woodworkers' Guild

## The Frontier Mall Award for Excellence in Fibre

\$200 donated by The Frontier Mall Merchants Association, North Battleford

## Prairie Lily Award for Excellence in Hand-Weaving

\$150 worth of supplies donated by Prairie Lily Knitting and Weaving Shop, Saskatoon

## Elizabeth Swift Award for Excellence in Glass

\$150 donated by Daley and Associates, Regina

## Wood 'n Works Merit Award

\$200 worth of supplies donated by Wood 'n Works, Saskatoon

## Clara Baldwin Award for Excellence in Functional and Production Ware

\$150 donated by Daley and Associates, Regina

## Battleford Environmental Awareness Movement Award

\$100 donated by the Battleford Environmental Awareness Movement to the work most appropriate to their concerns.

## People's Choice Award

\$300 shared donation by The Battleford Quilters (\$100) and Beaver Brook Lodge Motel, Battleford (\$200). This award is determined by votes of exhibition viewers.

## Wild Blue Yonder Art Gallery Award to Excellence in Metal

\$200 sponsored by the Wild Blue Yonder Art Gallery, Arcola

## Purchase Awards

The Town of Battleford, Battleford Allied Arts Council

Published for the open juried exhibition "Dimensions '96," organized by the Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC), a non-profit organization formed in 1975 to nurture and promote the craft community. Craftspeople, supporters of craft, 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.

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## Itinerary

MacKenzie Art Gallery  
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May 31 to June 30, 1996

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Saskatchewan Craft Gallery  
Saskatoon  
August 16 to September 17, 1996

BARR Colony Heritage Centre  
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September 25 to October 27, 1996

Swift Current National Exhibition Centre  
Swift Current  
November 2 to November 27, 1996

Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre  
Yorkton  
December 4, 1996 to January 27, 1997

ISBN: 0-921248-09-1

Editing/Design: Leslie Millikin  
Photography: A.K. Photos, Saskatoon  
Printing: Houghton-Boston, Saskatoon

This catalogue is made possible through funding from



# New Kid on the Block

BY GARY GREER

**U**pon the word *artist* or *crafts-person* in reference to being involved with a group of people who do a similar type of work, one often thinks in terms of traditional crafts. Woodworkers, potters, weavers and painters are some of the long running traditional forms that immediately come to mind. Going a little further and dividing the main groups into subsections, a turner becomes known as a specific type of woodworker, or a fibre artist as a specialized type of weaver. One can walk down the road of traditional craft, take any number of turns, and still arrive at his or her own unique niche.

I have always been a hands-on type of person. Design and fabrication have been a great source of joy for me, ever since childhood. The whole development process—from the first idea being nothing but a spark of electricity in my brain to the physical materialization of the idea through a medium—has been a wonderfully satisfying experience for me. The challenge is finding a niche, keeping my own energy level high and feeling like I can contribute something to the craft—all at the same time.

After about 15 years of walking (stumbling at times) down this road, going right and then left, not ever really feeling like I had found my spot, I turned down a new path. That path ultimately led me to knifemaking. When I look back now, it all makes sense. I got my first jack knife for my tenth birthday and the fascination for knives grew from there. As I got older, I became a hunter; and again, knives grew to a more important level for me. I began collecting them so I could appreciate both their function and their beauty. At the time, making them never entered my mind.

For the next decade, I experimented with drafting, woodworking, stained glass and welding—anything that involved design and fabrication. Then about nine years ago, I was sent on a course to Seattle. While killing some time, I walked into a shop called Atlanta Cutlery.

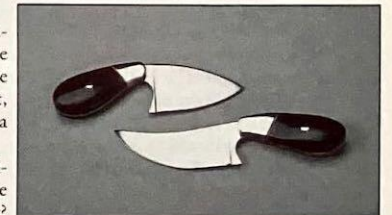
Here were knives of every size, shape and description. I was like a kid in a candy store. I spent over two hours talking to the owner, who himself was a custom knifemaker. It was the closest I'll ever come to having a revelation of sorts. I knew then and there

what I wanted to do. Whatever it took, I was going to be a knifemaker. A tremendous rush of excitement came over me. Why hadn't I thought of this before? It was like everything else I had ever done had been necessary to arrive at this point to continue on in a new direction, using the sum of my past knowledge. Making the decision had been relatively painless. But, now, just how does one become a knifemaker?

This question takes us back to traditional craft again. What could be a more long running tradition than tool-making? Yet my initial search turned up virtually no information. There was no end to information about woodworking, pottery and ceramics, and tools and supplies for all the established crafts, but knifemaking was definitely "the new kid on the block."

The main library had zero books on knifemaking. In talking with all my craftsperson friends, only one other knifemaker in Saskatchewan came to mind. I could see this was going to be a real challenge. Here was an ancient craft for sure, that seemingly had been so obvious, that it had been all but forgotten. This dark cloud surrounding knifemaking spurred me on with even more energy. It was like being an explorer. Every bit of new information led to more understanding, and in turn, more questions.

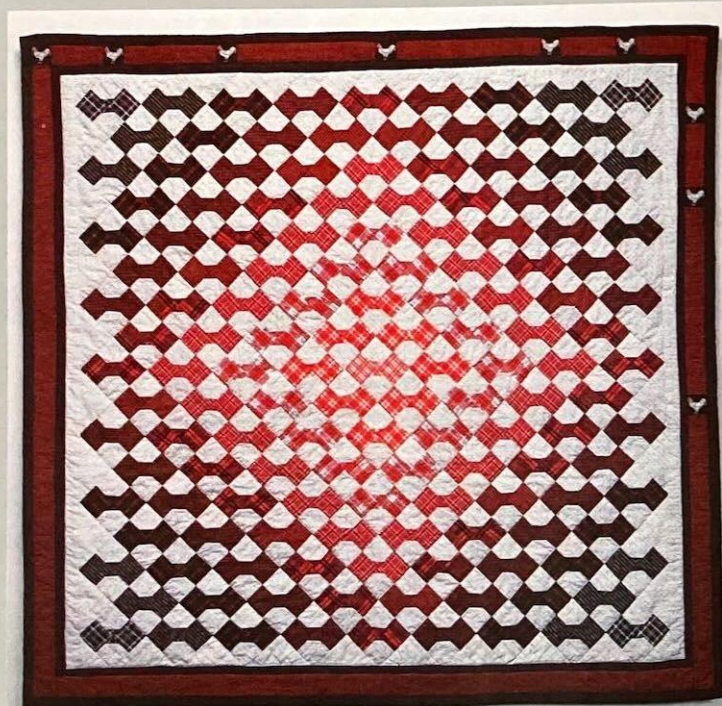
While in Seattle, the store owner gave me a copy of the only regularly published knife magazine in existence called *Blade*. This book proved to be my "Bible" as a reference source. From it, I contacted a



**TOP** Carving Knife, Ladder pattern damascus blade. A203-E nickel, 1084 carbon steel, abalone shell. Hand forge welded blade (550 layers), hardened, tempered, sanded, acid etched, cold blue, 34 x 1.5 x 4 cm, by Paul Bec.

**SECOND FROM TOP** Cat's Claw, Art knife. ATS-34 stainless steel, Rockwell hardness 60, nitrogen treated, triple tempered, brass bolster, handmade brass rivets, Santos Zebra (diamond wood) handle material. Blade is hand polished (mirror finish). Blade length 3", blade thickness 1/8", blade depth 1 1/4", overall length 8 1/2", by Noel Howland. Photo courtesy of the artist.

**THIRD FROM TOP** Two Three Fingers, Set of three finger skinning knives. 440C stainless steel, 416 stainless, black linen micarta, vulcanized paper. Hand hacksawed, hand filed, hand sanded, hand peened bolster pins, hardened and tempered, polished. 13 x 4 x 2 & 16 x 4 x 2 cm, by Grant Irons.



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LEFT Knife and Sheath, stainless steel, pearl polymer, brass, leather; hand hardened & tempered blade, hand filed back, 21 x 6 x 4 cm, by Gary Greer.

dozen or so US bladesmiths and thanks to their willing exchange of information, got enough of the basics to begin experimentation. The next hurdle was supplies. In 1982 there were no knife suppliers in Saskatchewan that I could find access to; and again, the only sources were from the US.

These southern makers had initially gone through the same frustrations as I had in the beginning—only 10 to 15 years earlier. Pockets of knifemakers began to form clubs and organizations throughout the US specifically for the exchange of information and lists of suppliers. Local clubs turned into State knifemaker guilds and an overall body called The American Bladesmith Society was formed from independent, as well as these State guild, members. This ABS designed and implemented guidelines and quality control standards for its members. Of course, the big advantage of having “member of the ABS” after your name was customer confidence. Any maker bearing these credentials certainly had a superior product.

Soon, knife shows sanctioned by this organization began to draw huge crowds in major US cities. Today, knives are selling at major shows in New York, San Francisco and Las Vegas for in excess of \$10,000 each. So-called “investment blades” are becoming a collector’s dream. Some makers are backed up with orders for three to five years and the really well-known ones are not taking orders any more—hence the collectibility and skyrocketing prices for their existing blades on the market.

Compared with our highly organized US friends, I felt concerned about our position here in Canada. Surely, there must be a lot of Canadian knifemakers out there, we just don’t know we exist. I wrote a letter to the

editor of *Blade* magazine expressing my frustrations and, luckily, he published it. Within a week or two, I received quite a few replies back. This confirmed that Canadian knifemakers do exist! Unfortunately, we seem to be like a bunch of albino crows, scattered across the country. I also got letters from Canadian suppliers, which helped greatly, for I then no longer had to order steel and other materials from the US. I forwarded all my new information to the few makers who responded to my letter and, hopefully, helped them as well.

**This dark cloud surrounding knifemaking spurred me on with even more energy. It was like being an explorer. Every bit of new information led to more understanding, and in turn, more questions.**

That was 12 years ago. Today is a different story. In the last five years especially, there has been a tremendous surge in the interest about the knifemaking craft. Classes have sprung up across the Province. We now have at least two well-stocked knife supply outlets in Saskatoon. These suppliers tell me that they have between 40 to 50 regular customers in the Saskatoon area alone. Not bad, considering that 10 years ago, I couldn’t find someone closer than 200 miles to talk to! There are not too many other new crafts that come to mind, when I think of it, that can match the rapid growth of knifemaking.

I am also very pleased to report that the official Canadian Knifemakers Guild has

now been formed as of March, 1994, and the first annual Guild members’ knife show was held in Toronto last June. Collectors from all over the US, and even some from Europe and Asia, attended the show. Most blades sold were in the \$1,000 to \$3,000 price range—very respectable for a fledgling organization. I was disappointed, though, in the requirements for becoming a member of the Canadian Guild. It seems like they created an exclusive “Ontario Old Boys Club”. The standard jurying of work is acceptable to me, but the kicker is that, to retain your membership, you must attend one out of three annual Toronto Guild shows. This almost excludes all knifemakers outside of the Ontario area because of the investment required to get there. Table costs are \$100; and two nights accommodation and air fare could set you back close to \$2000 for the weekend. It would seem more equitable if they could rotate the show location each year. Certainly, Calgary or Winnipeg would be accessible to the Western makers in that case. What we need are local provincial guilds set up, like the American makers did with their State Guilds, but we are a long way from that.

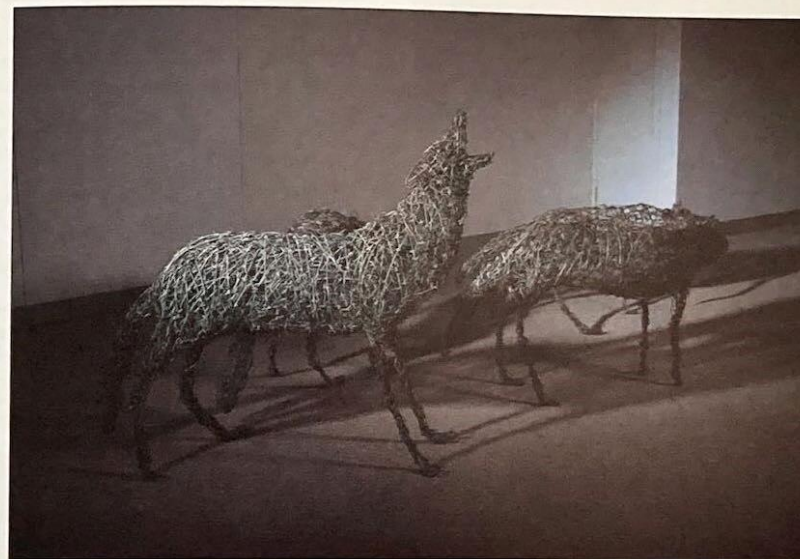
It is the same old story of involvement. You either devote your time to your craft, or start organizing—there never seems to be enough time to do both effectively. Who knows, maybe a Saskatoon Knife Show, featuring local makers, would be more of a reality in the near future. I think public awareness about knifemaking, as well as showing our craft peers that we are serious, has to be increased.

I knew about the Dimensions show put on by the SCC and thought this would be an excellent venue for exposure to bring knifemaking more to light in the art world. I first entered in 1993 and was ecstatic when one of my blades was chosen for the show. No one could remember seeing a knife in the show before. Last year, in 1995, I was fortunate enough, along with two other local knifemakers, to have pieces chosen for the show again. Hopefully, the public will come to accept knifemaking as a recognized art form as it becomes more visible.

So, when you think in terms of traditional craft, keep an open mind, there will always be room for another “new kid on the block.”

Gary Greer is a knifemaker from Saskatoon. His work was selected to tour with the SCC Dimensions exhibition in 1993, 1995 and 1996. For the past two years he has won the Wild Blue Yonder Art Gallery Award for Excellence in Metal.

## Exhibitions



### The Nature of the Beast

BY PAT DOIG

Noelle Lucas  
“In Extremis”  
Saskatchewan Craft Gallery, Saskatoon  
March 8 to April 16, 1996

Stepping through the front door of the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery was not unlike stepping through the “looking-glass”. Leaving behind the street sounds of Broadway, I found myself wandering into a clearing, inhabited by an eclectic gathering of creatures that seemingly had taken over the gallery.

Animal heads, mounted along both sides of the walls for the length of the gallery, gave one the initial impression of being silently approached, surrounded, and observed by representatives of several different species. This thought was quickly dispelled, as my gaze was diverted to the real object of their interest or concern, the *Stealthy Stalkers* roaming the floor beneath them. One could not help but postulate what really went on here after hours, when all the humans had gone for the day...

Having worked with recycled metals, and animals being a life

ABOVE *Stealthy Stalkers*, 1996

Alpha: 122 x 45.7 x 106.7 cm; Juvenile #1: 142.2 x 48.2 x 55.8 cm; #2: 114.3 x 48.2 x 55.8 cm; #3: 152.4 x 53.3 x 61 cm; barbed wire, by Noelle Lucas.

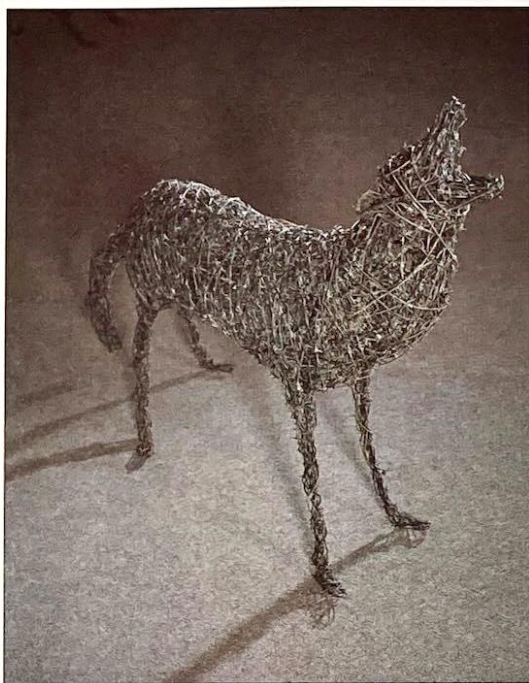
long passion, I was very much looking forward to, once again, viewing the work of Noelle Lucas. Although this was her first major solo exhibition, I first became acquainted with her work in 1994 in her Bachelor of Fine Arts exhibit.

The title, “In Extremis”, means *in extreme conditions*. It refers to animals being forced to live in extreme conditions, to the extent that their way of life is being threatened and is disappearing. It is indicative of the way that we, as humans, have bound them and limited their environment. In the process, we have often redefined the roles of animals according to our own roles or needs, in effect threatening them further. The horse, for example, has been captured, fenced in, used first by man as an instrument of war, then for the power behind the plough, to the present day tool of recreation. The role changed because technology changed.

Changes in technology have similarly displaced and rendered obsolete the farm machinery of past generations. Welding recycled parts of farm machinery from another era conjures up a prairie archaeological bonanza and imbues the resultant animal forms with a similar history of having been influenced by the environment and technological changes. Lucas’ *Harvest Heron*, for example, consists of binder parts on stilt-like legs of rebar, drill press neck and gullet, and a spear-like, sickle guard bill. Like the harvest binder, the *Harvest Heron* has been similarly displaced by the effects of technology; its natural habitat encroached upon and continually



**BELOW RIGHT** *Stealthy Stalkers (Alpha)*, 1996, 122 x 45.7 x 106.7 cm; barbed wire, by Noelle Lucas  
**BELOW LEFT** *Deinos*, 1995, 160 x 63.5 x 17.8 cm; iron binder parts, chain, lever, brackets, by Noelle Lucas.



redefined by man. Standing motionless over the nest of barbed wire, she stands guard, on the precipice, one leg in, one leg out.

The use of barbed wire as a medium, new, or rusted from the effects of age and climate, can bring to mind many conflicting, and even disturbing, images. Barbed wire is meant to keep in, or keep out. It restricts, it confirms territory. The barbs are there to enforce. Taken out of its original context, however, and sublimated into a craft art form, it becomes a process. It is taking a single strand of wire—a line if you like—and re-inventing it into a different form, not unlike a basket beginning to take shape from a single willow. The line defines a form, allows it to expand through the craftsman, the artist, like clay through the hands of a potter. It becomes the antithesis of the original purpose of barbed wire, i.e., restriction. It now expands to give life to an animal form; and in this context, becomes a positive force.

The degree to which the wire in each animal is compact and intricate, or looser and freer, seems to dictate in Lucas' animals, the nature of the beast, if you like. For example, in most of the wall mounted-heads, such as

*Muskox, Buffalo, White Tail, Mule Deer, Antelope Buck, Elk, and Moose*, the compact nature of the wire, itself, seemed to emit an eerie stillness in the animals themselves. This, coupled with the fact that these were heads mounted on a wall, somewhat androgenous, save for the telling bright antlers, gave a likewise eerie trophy room effect to these heads.

In contrast, I found the *Stealthy Stalker* series, with the looser, more transparent nature of the wire, infused with a real life force. The *Stealthy Stalkers* are Lucas' extraordinary wolf pack. They steal across the centre of the gallery floor—*Alpha*, the mother, and her half-grown pups. *Alpha* lifts her head and howls, but not to the distraction of her pups who are intent on whatever it is that draws their attention. The wolves have an inherent strength, and this manifests literally as no armature was needed in their production to attain that strength.

Interestingly, this pack of wolves is seen by Lucas to be "part of her tendency to see objects as groups", an urge she thinks she has to curb. The wolves are life size and when you walk among them, their presence is real. Fortunately, Lucas hasn't curbed her tendency.

*Deinos* is prehistoric in nature. Made of almost prehistoric farm machinery parts, their purpose having once been that of generating motion, they now give *Deinos* his movement, his freedom, as he appears to be zoning in on the heron in the gallery window. Chain, lever, foot pedals, wheel axle bring him to a wary halt. *Deinos* is an example of what Lucas describes as "parts, often suggesting themselves."

*Mechanical Draught Horse* (see front cover), another wall-mounted head, is likewise one of those pieces. One simple piece of machinery that makes up the face of the horse, itself defines the horse brilliantly. This is a draught horse, whereas I was somewhat disappointed in Lucas' other two wire "draught" horses. They lacked the conformation, and therefore the resemblance and magnificence of a heavy horse. *Mechanical Draught Horse* has a wonderful, almost bronze-like natural patina, that speaks of distant rich empires and the nobility of the horse.

The use of found objects such as the leather harness, bit and blinders, while wonderfully appropriate in one sense, is perhaps



questionable to some, when being used unaltered for the same purpose for which they were intended. I must admit, I had some trouble with that.

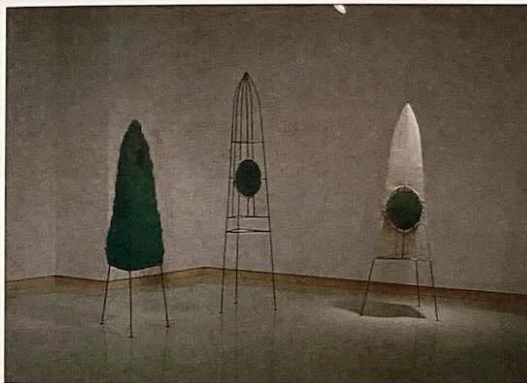
The subtle hues of colour, naturally produced by the elements on metals, camouflage the animals in their technological bodies, and render them adaptable to their new environment indoors or in an outdoor landscape setting.

One is struck by the sheer physical enormity of the task in the production of this wonderful exhibit, and more so in relation to the diminutive size of Lucas.

Noelle Lucas has successfully taken historical tools of production and confinement and re-invented them. She has salvaged their past, giving them new form and the souls of animals.

Pat Doig currently lives in the townsite of Shields at Blackstrap Lake, outside of Saskatoon. She has worked with recycled metals since the mid-80's.

## The Green Grass of the Gallery



BY SUSAN ROBERTSON

**Lorelie Sarauer**  
 B.F.A. exhibition  
 "lolium/festuca"  
 Gordon Snelgrove Gallery  
 University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon  
 May 21 to 25, 1996.

**O**n Friday, May 24, I found myself attending the reception for a BFA exhibition at the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery. I had been invited to help a friend celebrate the final step in achieving her degree and to view the painted canvases, last seen unfinished, crowded into her tiny studio. What I did not expect to see was an exhibition which would challenge my concept of art and craft, and cause me to explore my personal biases.

What greeted me upon entering the Gallery literally stopped me in my tracks. I backed out of the room to check to see if I was in the

right place at the right time. I was. What I was unaware of was that there were two openings that evening. As I congratulated my friend, my eyes strayed back to "lolium/festuca", a B.F.A. exhibition by Lorelie Sarauer. Initial thoughts of "how odd" were soon replaced with a need to know, to understand, why there was grass growing on the ceiling of the Gallery!

Grass. Lorelie Sarauer's sculptures, while mixed media, centred around the use of grass. Long, lush, green grass; her chosen favourite mixture annual rye grass and creeping red fescue; growing in places and ways which one would not think possible. Her first



**LEFT** *Habitation I, II, and III*, steel, paint, cheesecloth, fabric, fishing line, annual rye grass, creeping red fescue, sphagnum moss; by Lorelie Sarauer. Photo by Ricell Funk.

**RIGHT** *Offspring (1996)*; sphagnum moss, fabric, annual rye grass, creeping red fescue, fishing line, plastic; by Lorelie Sarauer. Photo by Ricell Funk.

experiments with grass were in response to a project offered by Susan Shantz, Head of Sculpture at the University of Saskatchewan. The project was to make an item of clothing from non-traditional materials. Artistic inspiration visited her and grass became her chosen medium. The finished product was a jacket made of pieces of grass grown in sphagnum moss encased in plastic screening and quilted together. Her experience in creating this piece caused Lorelie to search for other ways of using grass as a medium for expression.

To Lorelie, there is an aesthetic quality: beauty—to the touch, and to the eye and nose—inherent in newly grown grass. "Nature has rules governing the growth of plants, i.e. grass will only grow upward. I had to choose other materials which would support these constraints," she says. "The steel was chosen for its strength, but also because it is suggestive of (traditionally masculine) industrial and public spaces. I chose the cheesecloth for its transparency and flexibility, and because it is suggestive of domestic spaces and feminine industry. I also like the contrast of the impermanency of grass and cheesecloth with the (relative) permanency of steel."

Lorelie moved from the jacket to working with grass balls. It has been an incredible technical challenge for her to find the right grasses

and structures which would allow growth and maintenance over a reasonable period of time. *Offspring*, an installation piece featuring grass balls suspended from the ceiling with fishing line, was the culmination of her research to date. However, she was unsatisfied with some aspects of the project (difficulty of maintaining the lush growth) and continues to work to resolve these issues.

Another facet of her work reflects her appreciation of nature's inherent beauty and playfulness. Lorelie "...wanted to remove the grass from its natural (albeit domesticated) location, and from its familiar context, believing that this is the best way of engaging the viewers and forcing them to think about their interaction with nature." I feel that she was successful in doing so, especially in *Offspring*, and in *Crop Circles*—a circular patch of grass attached to ceiling panels, intersected by ceiling supports and mounted upside down (grass growing down), on the ceiling.

Other works in the show were designed to imply figurative/dwelling interpretations. *Habitation I, II, and III* were intentionally figurative and on a human scale. Built of steel, fabric, cheesecloth, moss and grass, I viewed them as decidedly feminine, as did the artist. *Cradle*, a large steel bowl with cheesecloth and grass, was in fact a dwelling, beckoning one to crawl in and feel safe. These works inspired in me a feeling of Mother Earth; suggestive of both environment and spirit, yet an oblique commentary on how we fail to appreciate the physical world in which we live.

As we sat over tea in her luxuriant, green backyard (she admits to being an avid spring gardener), we discussed the personal journey that she had to make to be able to break the bounds of a middle class upbringing, those same values that I found challenged in viewing the works in this exhibit. Quoted from her Artist Statement "I assumed that permanency was always the desired goal, especially in sculpture, where the more traditional materials are valued for that exact quality. After producing some bad art in fairly permanent mediums, I began to rethink my position....art doesn't always have to be permanent, nor a commodity—that there's value in art that is for the moment." She also realized that a B.F.A. was about trying different things, taking risks. If this wasn't the time to break the bounds of tradition, when would she ever get the chance? Lorelie has felt that through this experience she has grown significantly as an artist and as a person.

As we talked about this exhibition in the context of craft, we reviewed the continuing discussion of "is it art or craft?". Lorelie expressed her view that craftsmanship is important, a view she credits to her instructors Don Foulds (whose "Ornamental Metalwork" exhibition was reviewed in the June, 1992, edition of *The Craft Factor*), Susan Shantz, and to a lesser degree Les Potter (Exhibitions Coordinator at the Saskatchewan Craft Council). She takes a great deal of pride in how these works were constructed and finished, as well as in their artistic merit. For myself, through this exhibition, I see an opportunity for craftspeople to question their own ideas of medium and possibility, and be inspired to explore the boundaries, real and imagined in their present work.

Sad to say, but true, this work only exists now as a memory; its images preserved in photographs and slides. Where does Lorelie hope to go with this? She hopes to continue working and exhibiting her grass sculptures but is faced with the challenges of finding suitable studio space and earning an income. I encourage her to pursue this endeavour. The artistic community needs to have its notions of medium and permanency challenged. We need to see new work that pushes the envelope of what is safe and acceptable.

Susan Robertson is a potter from Outlook, Saskatchewan, who owns and operates A Wrinkle in Thyme Gift Emporium. She is the Marketing Chairperson of the SCC Board of Directors.



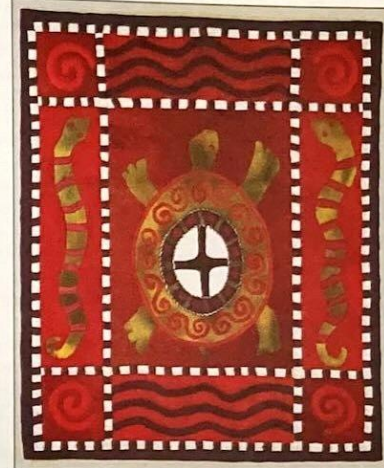
## Tapestries

BY GREG BEATTY

**Martha Cole**  
 "For the Spirit"  
 McIntyre Street Gallery  
 Regina  
 May 17 to June 14, 1996

The Christian church has been subjected to much criticism lately from women dissatisfied with its patriarchal character. In seeking to rectify this situation, some women are working to change the church from within—the promotion of gender-inclusive Biblical language is one example—while others have repudiated church doctrine and begun to investigate Goddess-based religions that predate Christianity. In this exhibition of hand-felted and appliqued tapestries, Regina artist Martha Cole offers viewers a poignant insight into her own search for spiritual renewal via non-traditional means.

The holder of a BFA from the University of Washington, Cole was originally trained as a sculptor. She switched to textiles out of necessity when she found herself without studio space while living in Toronto in the mid-1970's. "I was raised in a moderately Christian home," she notes, "but organized religion never held much significance for me. So I don't consider myself a rebel. Rather,



OPPOSITE PAGE *Snake Shield* (1996); velvet, cottons, satin, buttons; quilting, batting, 15" x 24", by Martha Cole. Photo courtesy of the artist.

LEFT *Spider Spinning her World-wide Web* (1996), antique satin, burlap, cotton, beads, metallic cording, quilting, batting, 78" x 78", by Martha Cole. Photo courtesy of the artist.

RIGHT *Turtle (Mother Earth)* (1994), felt, hand-made, 64" x 75.5", by Martha Cole. Photo courtesy of the artist.

as I reached middle age I began to feel a spiritual void in my life. In this work, I celebrate female aspects of the Sacred as it is represented throughout history. These representations include both universal female symbols, as well as those that are specific to a single culture."

In conducting her spiritual search, Cole found two books to be particularly helpful: *When God was a Woman* (1976) by Merlin Stone and *The Once and Future Goddess* (1989) by Elinor Gadon. According to these sources, virtually every prehistoric society had a strong female component to its spirituality. This was almost certainly due to the indispensable role women play in reproduction. (At this period in humanity's development, the causal relationship between sexual intercourse and childbirth was not understood, so the male's biological contribution was unacknowledged). Because each birth increased the clan's numerical strength, and by extension, chances of survival, it was regarded with profound reverence.

As humanity entered the Bronze Age (c. 4000 B.C.E.), diverse cultures began to abandon their traditional nomadic hunter/gatherer lifestyles to settle in agrarian villages. Those villages that were best positioned to prosper developed into city-states. Consolidation of power through trade and commerce among these states led inevitably to military conflict. The resulting emergence of a warrior class greatly enhanced the social status of men. As their status grew, female-centred beliefs were displaced by religious doctrines validating patriarchal authority.

In *Turtle (Mother Earth)* (1994), Cole presents a hand-felted tapestry illustrating one narrative thread of the Goddess-based mythology that existed prior to humanity's Bronze Age transition to male-orientated religions. The tapestry's central feature is a large turtle surrounded by stylized symbols of female identity. In an accompanying text panel, Cole explains that in certain Neolithic cultures, Mother Earth was believed to be carried on the back of a turtle. A key component of this "world view" was the complete integration of humanity into its natural environment, with particular emphasis on the cyclical processes of birth, death and regeneration. The demise of Goddess-based religions has been attributed to the c. 2500 B.C.E. emergence of northern Indo-European tribes who overran centres of Goddess culture in southeastern Europe, the Near East and India. Their spiritual beliefs were organized around a panoply of despotic "sky gods". This notion of gods dwelling in the

sky, which likely evolved into the Judeo-Christian construct of Heaven, created a separation in the human mind between corporeal and spiritual life. This separation encouraged humanity to disassociate itself from—and eventually, to assert dominion over—nature, leading inevitably to the environmental crisis we face today. Because of the aggressive character of this new religion (deities were often represented by weapons such as long-handled axes and daggers, either alone, or in combination with stallions and stags) its adherents had little difficulty in conquering more peaceful agrarian cultures.

In developing their theories, historians such as Stone and Gadon have had to rely on a relatively fragmented archaeological record. But their analysis does seem plausible. It is true, for example, that female fertility imagery is extremely prevalent in prehistoric art. As humanity began to emerge from its "state of innocence" through the acquisition of knowledge and development of technology, it would have re-evaluated its relationship with nature. If a culture felt confident in its ability to meet the test of survival, it may have adopted a less reverent attitude toward nature. Eventually, other types of binary disassociation would have emerged, promoting misunderstanding and conflict between rival cultures. In such a competitive environment, aggressive societies would have enjoyed an advantage. No deeply held spiritual beliefs can ever be totally eradicated from a subject people, of course, so traces of Goddess-based mythologies did survive. Mary's place in the hierarchy of the Catholic church may be one such manifestation, albeit, through a diminution in her status from a fecund Earth Mother to a virgin conduit for the birth of a male godhead. While Cole has a long history of working in the traditionally female art form of textiles, her reliance on the medium seems particularly appropriate here. In Christian religion, after all, it was the male-dominated disciplines of painting and sculpture that were used to educate, inspire and intimidate believers.

In preparing her exhibition, Cole did extensive research into several indigenous cultures, including the Ashanti (Africa), Aborigines (Australia), Dongson (Vietnam) and Minoan (Crete). She was amazed at the similarities in their iconography. Of course, most of the philosophical issues these cultures grappled with—birth, death, the life-sustaining cycle of the seasons—were the same. In pre-literate societies, a reductive vocabulary of images would have been

developed to represent these phenomena. Some of the more common female symbols presented here include the moon, whose monthly phases recall the menstrual cycle; the triangle (pubic triangle); water (amniotic fluid) and spiral (curves of the female body).

Cole dramatizes this interconnectedness in the applied satin tapestry *Spider Spinning Her World Wide Web* (1996). It consists of a cross-shaped central panel with an image of a golden spider spinning its web. The cross is in-filled by four corner panels depicting smaller brown spiders engaged in a similar activity. In an accompanying text panel, Cole notes that Grandmother Spider was a character in North American Aboriginal mythology, who wove both the universe and human fate in her web. But "World Wide Web" also has currency in contemporary Western society as a term for the Internet. With this knowledge in mind, the large golden spider could be seen as a symbol for "Humanity", while the brown spiders represent specific subgroups. Their placement on the tapestry's four outside corners is evocative of humanity's geographic dispersion over the Earth or, alternatively, its division into four distinct "races". All four secondary webs are identical. While this reinforces the essential commonality of human experience, it also ignores the very real socio-cultural differences that do exist between various national and ethnic groups. By introducing minor modifications in each web, Cole could have alluded to this diversity.

Throughout her project, Cole was cognizant of the issue of appropriation. Rather than simply copy these iconic images from historical sources, she reinterprets them using the formal elements

**BELOW** *The World Tree is Blossoming* (1996), cotton velvets, cotton, commercial felt, quilting, batting, 54.5" x 71", by Martha Cole. Photo courtesy of the artist.



of line, colour and texture. By doing so, she asserts their continued relevance to contemporary society, while remaining sensitive to their spiritual origins. One of the stronger examples of this recontextualization is *Snake Shield* (1996). It features a coiled satin snake positioned on a heraldic shield. That many Neolithic cultures regarded the snake as a female symbol is ironic, given the blame assigned the reptile in Judeo-Christian mythology for leading Eve astray. But because the snake sheds its skin periodically, it was associated with birth, and Gadon speculates on pp 188 of her book that its appropriation by Christian theologians was a deliberate attempt to discredit preexisting Goddess-based religions. A second irony is found in Cole's adoption of a shield motif, which recalls both the initial suppression of Goddess cultures by marauding Indo-European tribes, and the patriarchal notion of heraldic succession. Among the tools of war, of course, the shield qualifies as a defensive weapon. Here, it speaks to a determination on behalf of women, perhaps inspired by contemporary feminist theory, to defend themselves from injustice and abuse.

In a recent cover story on Goddess-based religions, Maclean's asked the provocative question: Is God a Woman? From the number of vitriolic responses it received, many readers obviously found this possibility disturbing. The natural response of men, I think, is to feel threatened. But unlike present-day patriarchy, prehistoric matriarchy was never grounded in principles of gender-exclusion and oppression. Instead, women and men worked together as equal partners. In viewing Cole's tapestries, one is conscious of the strong presence of borders. While this aesthetic strategy may be regarded as a symbolic representation of the physical and psychological constraints women experience in patriarchal culture, I prefer to interpret it as an effort by Cole to establish a place of sanctuary and healing for women, from which they will one day emerge to form a new partnership with men.

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

## Thematic Variations

BY JUDY TRYON

**Donovan Chester**  
"Born in Fire & Smoke"

Saskatchewan Craft Gallery, Saskatoon  
April 26 to June 4, 1996

**L**ike many others with a penchant for and an interest in Raku-fired pottery, I was eager to see Donovan Chester's latest show at the SCC Gallery. Reading the catalogue for "Interregnum," an exhibition of Chester's nonobjective paintings and ceramics at Regina's Rosemont Gallery and attending the artist's talk at the SCC Gallery for this show—entitled "Born in Fire and Smoke"—provided some background and insight into the philosophy of this artist and his work.

Don started his artistic activities at art school in Regina with the desire to be a sculptor. Required classes resulted in him becoming a clay major. When financial constraints inhibited the establishment of a clay studio, Don turned to painting. Later, he returned to clay, making functional stoneware and porcelain, although he hankered to do beyond-the-ordinary art objects. His love of painting and decorating led to much "landscape" painting on clay objects, a type of imagery which is reappearing in recent earthenware work.

When Mel Bolen left the Extension Division of the U of R for a sojourn in Mexico, Don started to teach and ran that studio for ten years, until it was forced to close due to lack of funding. Don jokingly remarked that receiving a regular salary as a member of the U of R staff meant he no longer had to produce functional work and so began his exploration of Raku. After twelve years of working in this medium, he feels he is still learning.

For the as yet uninitiated, Raku is a pottery firing technique with its basis in Japan. As practised in the Western world, pottery made from a thermal shock resistant clay is decorated with special glazes and heated in a fuel burning kiln outdoors until the glaze has melted and is mature. The hot clay object is removed from the kiln with metal tongs and placed in a container with combustible material—paper, sawdust, wood shavings, straw or leaves. After smoking the pottery in the lidded container for a period of time, the pieces may be removed and the surface results "frozen" by water quenching. Alternatively, the pottery may be allowed to cool in the smoking container. Unglazed areas turn black from the smoke and there are a variety of glaze colours from which to choose, with an iridescent patina being very popular, if somewhat predictable.

Don has built his own natural gas downdraft kiln with a roll off top and he works indoors. Hot pots are scooped off the kiln shelf with a garden fork. Because there is no breeze, his pots stay hotter, resulting in better reduction in the smoking process. The smoke produced is drawn off with the use of fans.

Much of Chester's work is textural. In his paintings, perlite may be adhered to the acrylic and manipulated, creating the texture. In the clay works, we see incised markings—drawn, scraped, poked and gouged—as well as the rough pebbled surface so similar to the perlite in the paintings. Don revealed that the texture roughness causes a difference in the refraction of light and therefore in the colour in the iridescent glaze surfaces. Overhead lighting in a home or gallery space also makes a difference in this colour, with mercury vapour lights changing colours to yellows and halogen lighting showing up coppers.

Mr. Chester's work in this exhibition has a number of repeated shapes and motifs which he suggests comes from his painting background and working in series. I suspect this is common to many clay artists, with a basic idea or form worked on in various sizes, with additions or subtractions, with alterations to foot, body, neck or rim with varying degrees of surface manipulation. After several viewings of the exhibit and in trying to be sure I'd carefully looked over and commented on each object, I catalogued the pieces by similar shape or form and checked them against the numerical gallery list. There were indeed, "variations on several themes".

There were three of what I will call "strip" bowls, large uplifted, flaring bowl shapes looking like lattice strips on small closed bases. One was copper, with an interrupted, black, unglazed rim which did not completely enclose the form. Another was also copper, with a jagged black lip surrounding the piece. However, the lattice effect in this interior was irregular, with some closed spaces, various sized spaces and the impression of strips being laid in a less precise manner. The colour in a similar work was deep or old gold matte, with some incising on the clay surface.

Next I examined several wall or table pieces. Mr. Chester states



**TOP** *Untitled #11*, Raku, 10 x 58 x 52 cm, by Donovan Chester.

**SECOND FROM TOP** *Untitled #22*, Raku and wood, 11.5 x 66.4 x 21.5 cm, by Donovan Chester.

that these were originally intended to be set on a table but because of their size and frailty, they are safer on a wall. The wooden legs can now be set out at the edges and don't interrupt the shape. The walnut legs on these pieces arose because of the initial problems with clay legs and are now much preferred.

Three of these table plates had bases with irregular or diamond shaped cut out areas, and three without. All had raised, jagged rims. Texture and shadow were achieved with the use of undulations in the base, pitted surfaces, depressions and "raised bumps". I

## EXHIBITIONS

particularly liked #11 and #1. #11 was a large half plate in blue and copper with a gravelly surface, irregular edge and lip, and two visible walnut legs. #1 was a large round plate which drew you into its centre with spirals of texture. The glorious colours of gold, blue, purple, copper and pink altered position and changed as the viewer did, this being caused by the overhead lights.

Four well thrown plates with wide rims were differentiated by colour treatment.

The three lidded jars with their crisp ginger jar tops were quiet additions to the show. Two of these shapes had been altered by pinching or squeezing.

Trays were another form explored—three rectangular and three square. All were cradled in wooden supports. These cannot be pre-made. Due to clay shrinkage and warping, each cradle must be made to fit the finished piece.

The bases on the rectangular trays were concave arches, the raised rims jagged and irregular. Size and surface colour were different for each. #22 was particularly eye-catching because of its mostly gold colour with flashes of blue, purple and silver. These forms were influenced by a pre-Columbian show Don saw at the Glenbow Museum. They are reminiscent of "metates", ceremonial corn meal grinders whose stone is slightly curved and which feature filigreed animal legs.

The square trays showed a more textural treatment, with incising, impressions, grooves, holes, and raised bumps in the base being used. These forms also had raised jagged rims.

Two funnel shaped bowls were exhibited, each with what appeared to be walnut feet. They featured copper coloured surfaces, unglazed interrupted black rims, impressions, undulations, grooves, holes and creases.

The five forms based on an uplifted flared bowl were most interesting. The tops had been cut away with different curves, angles and straight edges to form four, five, and multi-sided tops, all with added raised irregular lips. Various surface treatments enhanced these complex forms which must be marvellously well constructed to survive the rigours of a raku firing.

The final two vessels in this show are the fledglings of a new form Chester is trying to perfect. He admitted that the "making" technique needs some refinement since similar shapes pulled apart during the bisque firing. These complex objects appear more vase like. Although seemingly based on the aforementioned form, the rims have become walls and enclosed space, albeit there are openings, holes and perhaps a neck. The difficulty involved in forming #8 (see back cover), with all its angles, arches and curves, was intriguing to this writer!

I am a great admirer of Don Chester's work. He is a meticulous craftsman, with a great deal of knowledge which he freely shares.

The works in this exhibition displayed his undeniable expertise with the Raku technique. Perhaps much of what I saw was too familiar to me. I look forward to seeing a further exploration of his many new ideas, the seeds of which can be seen in "Born in Fire and Smoke."

Judy Tryon is a potter and instructor from Saskatoon. She is an active member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council.

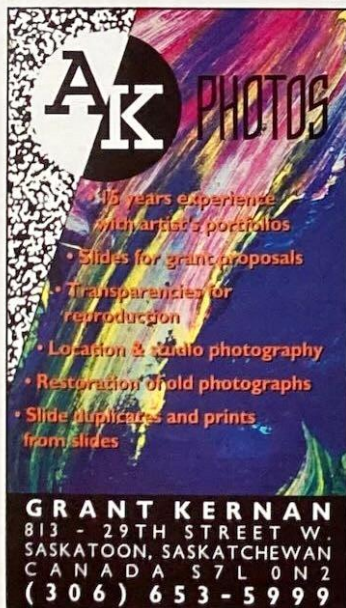
### Commissions Page

The Craft Factor will be undergoing changes in design over a period of time. One of the first features to be implemented will be a "Commissions Page."

Craftspeople are invited to submit professional quality photographs (glossy prints - black & white or coloured) illustrating their commissions for private and public installation. Include identification: title; dimensions; materials/techniques; client; date installed; exact location on site; gallery, agent, interior designer or architect involved.

Those works chosen for publication will be featured on the Commissions Page in the Winter 1996/97 issue of The Craft Factor. For more information, contact:

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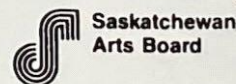
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