

# THE CRAFT FACTOR



THE MAGAZINE OF THE SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL



SPRING/SUMMER 1997

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# Saskatchewan Craft Gallery

**Schedule**  
Open 1 - 5 pm daily

## IN THE GALLERY

### "MUSIC IN YOUR EAR"

Musical Instruments  
Handcrafted by  
Saskatchewan Artists  
Curated by Leslie Potter  
June 6 to July 8, 1997  
Public Reception:  
June 6, 7 to 9 pm  
Curator's Talk:  
June 21, 2 pm

### "CELEBRATION"

Metal Arts Guild  
50th Anniversary  
Touring Exhibition  
July 11 to August 10, 1997

### "DIMENSIONS '97"

Annual Open  
Juried Exhibition  
of Saskatchewan craft  
Jurors:  
Michael Grace  
&  
Marigold Cribb  
Organized by the  
Saskatchewan Craft Council  
August 15 to September 28, 1997

## TOURING EXHIBITIONS

(Partial Listings)

### "EARLY SASKATCHEWAN WOOD- WORKERS"

Curated by Leslie Potter of the  
Saskatchewan Craft Gallery  
&  
Dan Ring of the Mendel Art Gallery

Moose Jaw Art Museum  
June 3 to July 13, 1997

Grand Coteau Heritage  
and Cultural Centre  
Sh Shaunavon  
August 1 to 31, 1997

### "COLLEAGUES IN CRAFT" - A Mentor-Student Project Mixed Media

Lloydminster Allied Arts Council  
BARR Colony  
Heritage Cultural Centre  
September 1 - 23, 1997  
Maple Creek Arts Council  
Jasper Cultural Centre  
October 1 - 23, 1997

## TOURING EXHIBITIONS

(Partial Listings)

### "JUST FOR LAUGHS"

A Mixed Media Exhibition  
of comedy, satire,  
sarcasm, parody

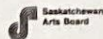
Prairie Trails Arts Council  
Fort Qu'Appelle Library  
June 1 - 23, 1997

Watrous Area Arts Council  
Arts and Crafts Centre  
July 1 - 23, 1997

Weyburn Arts Council  
Signal Hill Arts Centre  
September 1 - 23, 1997



**SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL**  
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# The Craft Factor

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FRONT COVER *Spinning Wheel*, c. 1900  
unidentified wood, metal, leather, nails, string  
Courtesy of Jarotski Family Collection, Canora, SK.

BACK COVER *Untitled wall cabinet*, (1995), Birch with lacquer finish, carved lead, hand-blown Fischer glass, 50 x 71 x 27 cm, by Bob Whittaker.

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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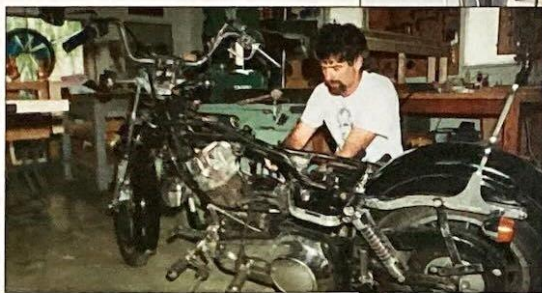
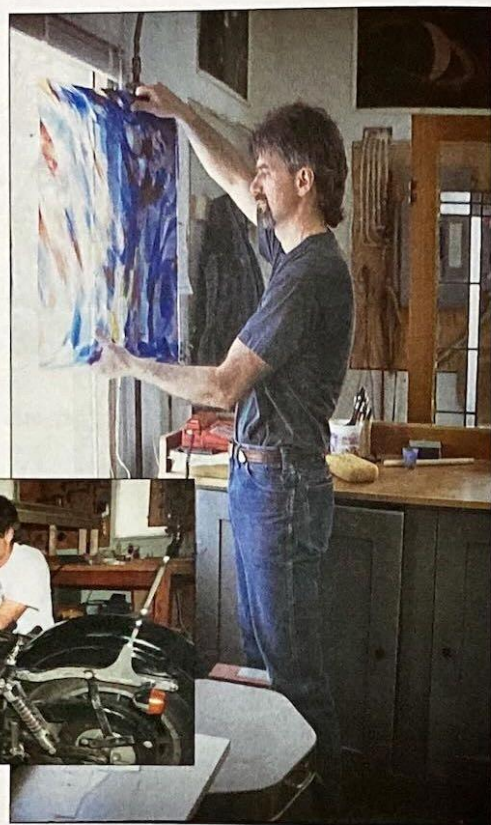
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# Motorcycles and the Art of Glass & Wood

RIGHT Bob Whittaker at work in his studio. Photo by Lee Brady.  
 BELOW Bob Whittaker tuning up his Harley. Photo by Lee Brady.  
 OPPOSITE PAGE *Until the Rains Came* (1993) carved lead, hand-blown Fischer glass, oak frame, 92 x 61 cm, by Bob Whittaker.



**P**icture this: a tall dark stranger, slung low on his Harley Davidson skimming across the prairie landscape, disappearing into the sunset. What could be on his mind? Freedom, danger, or perhaps Art. When the biker is Bob Whittaker then the road becomes the perfect venue for creative problem solving.

Whittaker is recognized in Saskatchewan as a fine glassworker. Many of us have images of his contemporary, beautifully crafted stained glass pieces which Bob has put forward for Saskatchewan Craft Council exhibitions including "Glass First", 1995, "Made for a Cause", 1994-95 and "Dimen-

BY LEE BRADY

sions 94". What most don't see is the other sides of Whittaker's holy trinity—his fine woodworking skills and his Harley. Together with his glasswork, they seem to set up a close balance of technique, artistic expression and inspiration which has served Bob well throughout his career.

Springing forth from Moose Jaw with an interest in woodworking and photography, Bob ventured to Saskatoon to attend university. Photography served to express his artistic nature for these years; a portable art which he packed in his saddle bags as he hit

the road to adventure as; a railroad brakeman, a newspaper photographer (Moose Jaw Times Herald), a construction worker, a coal miner and even a California landscaper. Astride his Harley, Whittaker drifted through thousands of miles scenery before coming to rest again in Saskatoon.

While setting up shop to work with wood, Whittaker came across a publication called *New Glass*, "I had never before seen glass used like this," he says. "These were the kind of windows I would like to make. Stained glass suddenly appeared as a viable way of expressing myself." After learning and apprenticing at Robert Hunt Stained



Eventually, Whittaker's woodworking shop came home to squeeze in beside his glass tables... Spreading out and settling in to his new space, he could finally develop his expression in wood and glass side by side—one discipline influencing the other and the two media being brought together in a comfortable balance. He also made sure that there was room for the Harley which stands guard by the big doors like a gleaming chrome muse.

Glass in Calgary, Bob returned to Saskatoon to set up THE SHIRE STAINED GLASS, one of the pioneer stained glass businesses in Saskatchewan. For two years Bob created glass art, taught classes and sold stained glass supplies from his outlet on Broadway Avenue. This period of work seemed to unleash in Whittaker a creative impulse born of few visual restraints and a wealth of beautiful materials. Thus began the leap-frog course between wood and glass which would describe Bob Whittaker's creative journey for the next 17 years.

Wood took the lead in 1980 as Whittaker completed a cabinet making and millworking course at Kelsey Institute. Stepping back from glass, he began full time work at Highgrade Millworks, earning his Journeyman's Carpentry Certificate in 1984 while working on glass in his basement workshop when time permitted. Eventually, his wood-working shop came home to squeeze in beside his glass tables. Add to the mix a new family of two daughters with his wife, Betty Anne, and you have a small house ready to burst. The explosion came in 1992 in the form of a new 900 square foot wood and glass studio built behind the Whittaker residence. "When I built a studio separated from the house my attitude about my work changed with the move. Good light, lots of space and organization helped me feel more productive and professional." Spreading out and settling in to his new space, he could finally develop his expression in wood and glass side by side—one discipline influencing the other and the two media being brought together in a comfortable balance. He also made sure that there was room for the Harley which stands guard by the big doors like a gleaming chrome muse.

With wood, Whittaker satisfies his sculptor's urge to create in 3-D. He enjoys the control he has with wood, the grain and the subtle methods of surface manipulation which can be achieved with joinery, stains and carving. He has obvious role models nearby in the many talented woodworkers of Saskatchewan, and he also cites James Krenov (Fine Woodworking) and Doug Ayers (Biennial Design Works) as early influences in the treatments of grain, overall joinery, paint and carving.

Whittaker's glasswork rings with prairie lines and textures. He consciously uses the inherent beauty of handblown glass to set up rhythm, colour and opacity. Bob shows a decided respect for the work of glass artist Ed Carpenter, who "made me want to start working in glass", and Ludwig Schafrath—the German 'God' of contemporary stained glass. But Bob's unique crossover of media has seen him develop his own vocabulary of expression; carving the lead in his panels, painting and sandcarving the glass and texturizing and painting the wood to relate to the glass insertions. "I get inspired by songs, books, life and landscape," Whittaker explains. Bob regularly takes runs on his bike to recharge his artistic batteries, smell the prairies, and photograph his world. Returning to his studio, inspired and refreshed, he often enjoys "setting off in a whole new visual direction." He seems to bring the adventure back with him from the road.

Much of Bob Whittaker's work is hidden in private homes. He works primarily on commissioned projects for residences and businesses, exposing clients to expressive glass details in their wood pieces and unexpected wood treatments in their com-

missioned stained glass. Bob enjoys people and finds commissioned work a good way to expose clients to new ideas and materials. "I can satisfy their architectural needs and experience new challenges and solutions in my work." One beautifully custom designed installation can be seen at the Hobo Shop on Broadway Avenue in Saskatoon.

In his easy, softspoken manner, Bob enjoys sharing his insight and talents. He has worked for years within the Saskatoon Glassworkers Guild and the Saskatchewan Craft Council to help educate about and promote glasswork throughout the province. "It's easy to make friends with people who share a passion for glass and it's reassuring in a larger community to have contact with artists who take the production of high quality craft seriously." Besides Craft Council exhibitions, Bob has shown his work at "Glassart", the Saskatoon Glassworkers Guild annual exhibition at the Sedco Centre for the last six years. In 1995 his piece *Landscape Summer* (winner of the Elizabeth Swift award for excellence in glass) was chosen for the prestigious *Stained Glass Quarterly's World Edition*.

What is next for Whittaker's work may not be known until he finishes rebuilding the motorcycle and hits the road. Glass is foremost on his mind, though. With a taste for fusing and mosaics and an eye on ingenious cabinet glass, Bob has a lot to think about on his first spring run on the Harley.

Lee Brady is a glass artist from Saskatoon.

# The Particular History of A Saskatchewan Community Tapestry



**ABOVE** *Another Year, Another Party*, (1996), commemorative tapestry which celebrates the life and work of Kate Waterhouse in pioneering the use of natural dyes for fibre and of Margreet van Walsem who taught spinning, dyeing and weaving using Navajo techniques. Weaving with the yarns of Kate Waterhouse and Margreet van Walsem was done by the following SIAST students and members of the PRINCE ALBERT SPINNERS & WEAVERS GUILD: Sheila Devine, Lorraine Farish, Thérèse Gaudet, Elaine Greve, Mary Hunt, Gail Sheard, Madelaine Walker, and Melanie Wiens. Others involved were: Alice Bergquist, Jill Couch, Ann Newdigate, Shirley Spidla, Annabel Taylor, and Noella Thompson. 114 cm x 162 cm.

"Another year, another party" wrote Kate Waterhouse in 1979 on her 80th birthday in the copy she gave me of the second edition of her *Saskatchewan Dyes: a personal adventure with plants and colours*. Thirteen years later she asked me to have all her dyed fleece, when she moved to a care home in Kerrobert, leaving her little home in Craik where she had experimented with dye plants such as madder and woad—the dye that made the ancient Britons blue. Kate Waterhouse, whose pioneering spirit in the crafts won

BY ANN NEWDIGATE

her a lifetime membership in the Saskatchewan Craft Council, was as much a scientist as an artist. She not only investigated dye plants from the prairie, sending away for seeds to cultivate, but always kept meticulous notes concerning the mordants or water she had used, the time of year that the plants were harvested, and other particular circumstances that would make it possible for her and others to replicate the results. After her book went into a second

printing she received a Governor General's medal for her research and writing. The fleece she gave me was classified according to its provenance and the conditions for dyeing accompanied each bag. The following is but one example of the hundreds of Kate's informative notes:

This is pre-mordanted alum wool, set in a spent umbilicaria dyepot. It's Sask. so you can use it. Thought it would make the display brighter. This alum mordanted wool opens up a new trend of thought and possibilities.

Until her husband George's death, Kate had farmed with him. She eventually had nursed him, reading a book a day to him after he lost his eyesight. She was 62 when he died and she then decided to complete an English grammar course that was left over from her primary education. She was never a quitter, but fortunately for us the adult education officer in Regina suggested that she would enjoy doing a weaving course more than English grammar. And Kate sure had a great capacity for enjoyment, so she took the advice. However since no further courses were available she then wrote away for information, bought books, experimented, travelled if necessary to study, and all this led to a specialty that took her personal adventures with plants and colours into the public realm. In turn she gave many workshops herself.

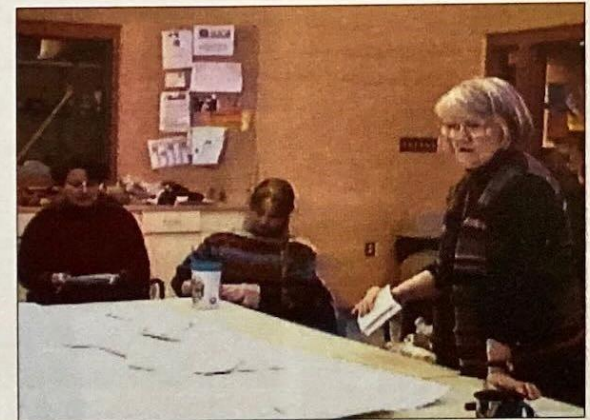
What an honour to be given this very special material, but what a responsibility I was also given by being made custodian of such an important part of this amazing woman's work. Furthermore, to do this responsibility justice, the fleece still had to go through the transformation from amorphous, sensuous colour into tight skeins of useable yarn through the labour intensive process of hand carding and spinning. That in itself would then only be a beginning, and there would still have to be many decisions about what to do with it in order to give it the cultural value and form that it deserved.

For about a year I pondered and explored solutions, had sleepless nights, and finally devised a plan with Annabel Taylor, who runs the weaving program at the Woodlands campus of the Saskatchewan Institute of Science and Technology (SIAST) in Prince Albert. She had been entrusted with our friend, Margreet van Walsem's equally special yarn after her untimely death. In 1971, when, at the Summer School of the Arts at Fort San, I had suggested to Kate that she put her knowledge of native Saskatchewan dye plants into a book, she had said she would do so if I would help her. It was Margreet van Walsem, who was there too, who provided the additional encouragement for Kate.

Margreet van Walsem, whose own contribution to the discipline, and to the arts in general had been considerable, supported the venture in every way, and was responsible for invaluable assistance from the pulp mill in Prince Albert. She had studied theology in Holland before coming to Saskatchewan and, like Kate, started a second career in the arts later in life. She had learned weaving in the authentic Navajo tradition from Anton Scerbinc of Castlegar, and quickly received a commission to do a

RIGHT Annabel Taylor, co-ordinator of the weaving program at the Woodlands Campus of SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), working at the loom on the early stages of *Another Year, Another Party*. Photo courtesy of Annabel Taylor.

BELOW Ann Newdigate co-ordinating the designing of the cartoon for *Another Year, Another Party*. Seated, and participating, are Sheila Devine (left) from the Prince Albert Weavers' Guild and Gail Sheard (right) who was a student in the SIAST weaving program at the time. Photo (image transferred from video documenting the planning and making of the community tapestry) courtesy of Shirley Spidla.



major work, "Palaver," for the Center of the Arts in Regina. When she moved to Prince Albert she saw the need for a support group in the arts, and promptly invited some people, whose work she respected, to participate in a weekly workshop that she voluntarily ran in her own studio. Annabel Taylor was one of the group members who went on to make significant contributions through their own work. What Margreet taught was absolute professionalism. She had a way of laughing—not unkind—that allowed you to know you might rethink something you had done—or not done. She demonstrated that, within the pleasure and sensuousness of the medium, resided a very serious and time-honoured pursuit. She had, after all, lived through the dark days of Holland during the Second World War.

So Annabel and I invited the Prince

Albert Weavers and Spinners Guild to participate in transforming the dyed yarn and fleece into a community tapestry honouring the professionalism and knowledge of these two women whose lives had been so different, but whose values were so similar. Happily the Guild agreed, and after Annabel and I had treated the fleece for possible moth infestation, it was parcelled out, and we all spun up a fair amount. The tapestry was to be made in the weaving studio at the SIAST Woodlands campus with the participation of students in the program.

On a night in February, 1994, when the temperature was about minus thirty-five, the project started to actually take shape when about twenty people met at the home of Thérèse Gaudet for a potluck feast. Later, Thérèse consistently did regular weaving on the tapestry to keep it moving steadily forward. At the feast I showed slides of Kate,

Margreet, and their work to demonstrate their intelligent and professional approach to a textile medium often associated only with hobbyist practices. To prepare for the designing of the tapestry, I gave everyone a 7" x 11" sheet of strong acid free paper and we brought these back to SIAST the next morning with an image conveying our choice of iconography for inclusion in the collaborative cartoon. I also brought books with ancient and contemporary images to inspire technical or symbolic solutions.

Working from all these sources, we developed a scaled cartoon in which everyone added their chosen element. This was satisfactorily resolved by the end of the day; and, in addition, there was also a good firm warp on the loom. The latter had encountered some tension problems that inevitably come from multiple different hands, but these were marvellously dealt with by Jill Couch, who had gained her expertise in New Zealand before coming to Canada. She only participated on that one occasion, but her contribution was most timely. Simultaneously, some members of the Guild (who are not tapestry makers) lent their skills to carding and spinning more of Kate's fleece, to ensure an ample supply of material.

Finally the actual process of weaving could begin. Annabel then co-ordinated, weekly sessions in which students from SIAST, Guild members, and a few others met regularly to work on the tapestry. These sessions were preceded by discussions interpreting the cartoon, and often changes were made to the very spontaneous original images, for technical or aesthetic reasons. I went up to Prince Albert to participate in the actual weaving whenever I could. After each weaving session, there was a group assessment of the success or otherwise of the day's work. These critiques, tempered by Annabel's quiet humour, ensured the quality of structure and design that were at risk from the range of skills involved. Criticism was democratic, with no hard feelings when some part of a woven contribution was taken out and redone by someone else. "Too blue" I was told, for example, on a subsequent visit, but everyone could respect the collaborative and exacting interactions that resulted in the remarkable achievement of *Another Year, Another Party*.

It is important to look at the particular

history that lay between the idea of this community tapestry and the culminating cutting-off celebration. Two years after the cartoon was drawn up the finished tapestry was graciously cut off from the loom by the Minister responsible for cultural affairs in Saskatchewan. The Honourable Carol Teichrob, who is recognized in the arts community for her support and understanding of the difficulties confronting the primary cultural producers, flew from Regina to Prince Albert to perform the ceremonial cutting-off of *Another Year, Another Party*, in a tradition that dates from Medieval times.

**What an honour to be given this very special material, but what a responsibility I was also given by being made custodian of such an important part of this amazing woman's work. Furthermore, to do this responsibility justice, the fleece still had to go through the transformation from amorphous, sensuous colour into tight skeins of useable yarn through the labour intensive process of hand carding and spinning.**

The particular histories, whereby any community tapestry materialises, are probably as varied as the people who have worked on them around the world. In this case there was no institution, benefactor, patron or funding to dictate the imagery. Instead, the imagery and construction developed compatibly, spontaneously, and pragmatically, out of a group collaborative negotiation by those willing to donate their time and diverse skills to doing the various aspects necessary for realisation of the work. This history, honouring the achievements and vision of Margreet van Walsem and Kate Waterhouse, has been documented on video by Shirley Spidla, who also wove on the tapestry, when she visited Prince Albert with me to regularly record the various stages of the work from beginning to end.

In March, 1995, when the weaving of

the tapestry was about two-thirds complete, Shirley Spidla and I visited Kate Waterhouse at the care home in Kerrobert to report to her the happy fate of her fleece, and to record some of her thoughts and experiences with her work and life in general. We found her looking beautiful and reading at the time *Briarpatch*, *MacLeans* magazine, and *On The Take* by Stevie Cameron. A committed social democrat, Kate believed strongly in the power of co-operation. Although the tapestry was not yet quite complete at that time, she had the assurance that it would be, and that the enterprise to which she had committed the last valuable third of

her life would not be forgotten. She died three months later in June at the age of 96. And at the end of the millennium, a tapestry - the real thing done in a Medieval process which basically has never changed - proclaims that many small gestures can constitute a continuum of public experience and knowledge that lives on beyond our various individual lives.

Because of Kate's and Margreet's acute awareness of the important role of politics in daily life and the arts, it was fitting that so important a personage as the Minister of Municipal Affairs should have agreed to complete the chain of this community tapestry. *Another Year, Another Party* had begun, not simply when Kate Waterhouse gave me her yarn, or when Margreet van Walsem invited Annabel Taylor to her weekly investigations into the possibilities for textile arts, nor perhaps at the potluck feast at Thérèse Gaudet's home, or even when we workshoped the cartoon in Prince Albert, but possibly at the beginning of time when the art of weaving was discovered to be an integral part of the fabric of society.

Ann Newdigate studied tapestry at the Edinburgh College of Art, has an MFA from the University of Saskatchewan, won a 12' x 16' commission for the Council Chamber of Moshe Safdie's new Ottawa City Hall, and was the 1990 Visiting Fellow at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, where she was invited to establish a tapestry course in their Fine Arts Program. She exhibits her studio work regularly, has taught Art History and Drawing for the University of Saskatchewan, has given lectures and workshops in places as diverse as Tasmania, Poland and New York, and she writes on a variety of art related topics.

# Craft Commissions

BY GRANT KERNAN

**commission:**

"An artwork commission can be defined simply as the hiring of an artist to design and execute an original work of art as specified by the sponsor commissioning the art. The sponsor or commissioning body may be an individual, a private company, a community-based organization or public institution"<sup>1</sup>

**A** commission crosses your desk. It may be your first. What do you feel? Should you eagerly anticipate the experience or should you worry about what might go wrong? The answer is both. The possibilities span the continuum from creative opportunities to creative compromises; from monetary rewards to monetary losses. By gaining insight into the motivation on the commissioning agent's (sponsor's) part as well as understanding the roles and responsibilities on the part of the artist, you may decide to venture into this mode of operation, better equipped. Let us take a look at how both the commissioning agent and commissioned craftsperson see the process.

## Made to Order

When prospective buyers of craft are searching for something specific, they can't always find it. Or, they may not know exactly what they want, but know they have not come across anything that seems suitable. This is where commissions enter the picture.

Sophisticated shoppers know that almost anything can be made to order. Take Dr. Eunice Janzen, for example. Having commissioned pieces from craftspeople in the past (and at the time this article was being written, amidst a home renovation project) she was in a position to appreciate how a craftsperson's artistic input and skill could result in a rewarding end result. In this instance, it was a bathroom and a hallway which called for a commission. She had anticipated that it would be perfect for a glass art installation, and subsequently asked glass artist, Lee Brady, if he'd be interested in



ABOVE *Untitled Glass Wall*, room divider installed in the home of Dr. Eunice Janzen; 10 mm float glass, textured & sandcarved, metal leafed, 220 cm x 160 cm, by Lee Brady.

taking on the project.

Because she was familiar with Brady's work, Dr. Janzen did not set herself up for disappointment. "To get a masterfully-inspired work," she says, "you must be able to let the artist alone once your commission is agreed upon. You choose the artist. You give him the guidelines. Then, you must put your trust in your decision and you must be openminded about the outcome. Let the craftsperson finish the creative process. Do not interrupt part way through. And pay them along the way."

Having said that, being part of the process is still one of the enjoyable aspects of commissioning for Dr. Janzen. It allows her to satisfy her desire to bring function—as well as art—to her home. Together, Janzen and Brady worked out an aquatic theme in which the goal could be stated as such:

"...a bathroom and a change room which would use glass as a room divider without making the room look or feel smaller and without losing the quality of light..."

Functionality is built right into the project in that it can be knocked down, if circumstances required it. That is, if and when she moves, Brady's work can be removed—leaving a triple glazed window where most people would install a venetian blind.

To further exemplify Janzen's attention to function is the use of glass art in her sitting and dining rooms which provides her privacy.

When asked why she liked to commission, her reply was "to make art a part of my life. While my friends are interested in driving a Mercedes, I drive a family-sized sedan. I prefer to spend my money on art."

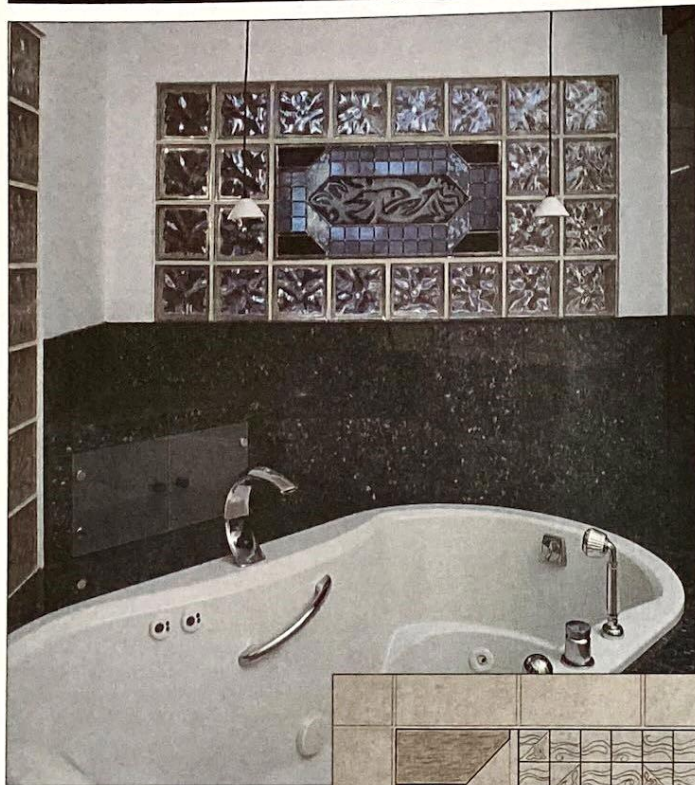
## Commissions = Time & Money

Having a contract in place is very important. Included should be a provision for the time you spend on design; it is prudent to assign a reasonable price to this time. This is so that in the event that the project does not go ahead, the client can still be billed for the design. If the project does go ahead, the design time is

best included in the total bill. Don't be embarrassed or too proud to propose a payment schedule. Materials are expensive, and to cover these, a one third or one half charge upfront—with the balance due upon completion—is acceptable.

Veteran commissioned craftsperson, Lee Brady, offers advice to artisans contemplating their first commission. "Most important is to leave yourself enough time to complete the project on deadline. Do not undercharge to get the job. You will inevitably lose."

It is considered unprofessional to ask for more money than originally agreed upon, unless that possibility has been contracted from the beginning. One common mistake inexperienced artists sometimes make is that they put more work into the project than it needs. More detail and more work which



**ABOVE**  
Untitled Bathroom Panel, sandblasted, kiln-fired stained glass, lead, 40 x 80 cm, by Lee Brady.

**RIGHT**  
Original 1/4 scale, coloured pencil drawings of the bathroom panel design, by Lee Brady.



**“To get a masterfully-inspired work,” she [Dr. Eunice Jansen] says, “you must be able to let the artist alone once your commission is agreed upon. You choose the artist. You give him the guidelines. Then, you must put your trust in your decision and you must be openminded about the outcome.”**

### To Commission or Not to Commission

For woodworker, Don Kondra (who also has worked for Dr. Janzen), commissioned pieces are—as he says—“a sure sell.” Therefore, he prefers to have a commission in place as opposed to making something on speculation that it might sell. He is well-suited to the commissioning process because he sees it as being fairly “black and white.” “You just don’t have a problem when you’ve taken all the steps properly,” he says.

An important factor in Kondra’s preference for commission work is that he gets to deal with the client’s needs from the onset. He lets function start the design process. It

**Don’t be embarrassed or too proud to propose a payment schedule. Materials are expensive, and to cover these, a one third or one half charge upfront—with the balance due upon completion—is acceptable.**

may satisfy the artist should not be upcharged to the client unless he or she has specifically asked for it. The artist is much better off to take a financial loss in order to keep the client happy. This way, the artist is more likely to get work in the future.

To establish costs and turnaround time, a portion of the design must be worked out in advance. When Brady began Dr. Janzen’s renovation, he produced large, 1/4 scale, coloured pencil drawings. At one point, it became evident that the design was too busy and so a second drawing was made. Again, changes were necessary. But in the end, both client and artist were pleased as both contributed to the final outcome.

## The Commercial Commission Route

- Comments from a Public Commissioning Agent

BY CEC COTE

As an art project coordinator, I have been a part of several commissioned projects and have often relied on advertising in the Call for Entry category of craft publications. The advantages of doing this are numerous.

Firstly, is the variety of interpretations of theme which are submitted. Saskatoon is lucky to be rich with the number of talented artists residing here and, for the most part, no two think alike. Every buyer goes into a project with a theme in mind, either very specific or somewhat hazy. The main value of working through a public call for entry is that one draws from a variety of artists who add their unique viewpoint or fresh ideas to the project. For example, the Saskatchewan Liquor Board Store (located on 20th Street and Avenue D in Saskatoon,) required an indoor mural that reflected the cultural history of the Riversdale area, which is rich and diverse. The responding artists provided an amazing variety of interpretations: from very stylized formal designs concentrating on representative symbols for the many cultures; to designs that integrated architectural renderings of original buildings (now either lost to “progress” or standing in a state of disrepair) with notable persons who have made a significant contribution to the business community in the past; to semi-abstract designs recreating an overall mood.

Another example would be the mural project at The Centre At Circle and Eighth. A portion of the project required proposals for Saskatchewan landscapes. The respondents sent in designs varying from the typical, well-known interpretations, to one that was truly unique. Laureen Marchand and Kathleen Lawrence collaborated on their submission. Kathleen, a poet and writer, spent hours researching the history of the land on which the original two Malls are located. The history began with the arrival of homesteaders to present day. She composed two poems, then looked for an artist who could integrate the poetry into a visually pleasing mural (this turned out to be Marchand). The results were a gift that provided a true beginning to the landscape portion of the project. However, this only became evident after all the submissions were received. This is the unknown or surprise element in every project. It firms up the whole; and for me is the greatest, most exciting aspect of commission work. In this instance, it was unfortunate that the wealth of interesting stories from the research could not be put on display to share with the public.

The biggest downside to commissioning is that every entry cannot be utilized, but it does add to the commissioning agent’s knowledge base for possible work in the future. And with thoughts to the future, the advice that I would pass along to artists (and buyers) starting out would be to set reasonable time lines for completion, factoring in extra time for the unknown disasters that shouldn’t happen but always do. Also, be realistic in pricing. Check into other projects and talk with artists who have worked commissions to obtain approximate ball park figures. Research your market—Toronto prices might not apply in Saskatoon. Always insist on a contract outlining parties, location, medium, price, and most importantly, copyright and moral rights to the work upon completion. Make sure that you not only understand each clause but are comfortable with all conditions.

Lastly, two important elements are pricing for each individual step and presentation of your proposal. Pricing involves figuring the overall completion cost then breaking it into steps so that you are paid for your design and then for the remainder of the work. If the project ends with the maquette your time is compensated. Presentation is most important for it gives a clue to the quality of workmanship that can be expected throughout the job.

Hopefully, these few observations will add to the buyers’ and artists’ consciousness to bring about a successful commission experience.

- Cec Cote is the Co-Chair of the Marketing Committee on the SCC Board of Directors and the owner of Phoenix Art Consulting.

gets the creative juices flowing, which, in turn, allows him to fulfill his artistic freedom.

Brady, too, is enthusiastic about the opportunities inherent in commission work. He sees it as a challenge to create solutions for his client. It also provides him with larger-scale projects to work out new techniques. His artistic input is almost always called upon and he usually has a completely free hand.

Michael Hosaluk, woodturner, on the other hand, is not always comfortable with commissioned work. About one year ago, a client approached Hosaluk about making a table. Hosaluk would not take a deposit, nor would he accept a deadline. He says, “I’ll make you something. If you like it, buy it. If you don’t, you have no obligation. Someday, I’ll just pick up the pieces and I’ll finish it for you, but I don’t know when.”

This is a very unusual approach. Hosaluk knows that he is not well suited to deadlines, so he does not accept them. He says “Me? I’m not at all reliable. I can’t put myself or a client through that!”

However, even Hosaluk has his exceptions. He is a very disciplined worker and when a valued commission does come through his door, he attacks it with a professional attitude and he does obey all the rules.

In conclusion, I will say “to commission or not to commission—this is a good question.” While it is true that accepting a commission will make you stretch, when working with your client’s ideas, colour schemes and other restraints such as time and budget, just be a little careful. This way of working is not for everyone. If it goes completely against your grain, think long and hard whether or not you want or need the experience. If you think you can handle it, there is a bounty of opportunity. Most of all—have fun.

Grant Kernan is an independent photographer responsible for the photography seen in this magazine and other SCC publications.

## Copyright & Moral Rights

BY WENDY BLACK-KOSTUK

Unless you have an agent who will ensure your best interests when negotiating contracts, the onus is on you to learn as much as you can about your rights as an artist so you can recognize when a contract is unfair, does not recognize your needs, or is one-sided for the benefit of the client.

You have the right to decide what happens with your work and negotiate the terms of its use with the client. For example, two problems I have encountered dealt with copyright and moral right. To quote from the Saskatchewan Visual Arts Handbook, 1994; published by CARFAC Sask:

"copyright in visual art is the sole right to reproduce or to authorize reproduction of an image or artwork. To reproduce includes to publish (print and offer for sale); to convert into dramatic work; to reproduce, adapt, and publicly present work on film; to communicate work by radio. . . . moral right, which is the creator's right to ensure that others refrain from affecting his or her work in a way that is prejudicial to his or her honour and reputation, is also inherent in copyright. Prejudicial acts include the distortion, mutilation, or other similar modification of artwork. In addition, moral right includes the right to claim authorship of the work." pg. 19

The right to produce or reproduce your artwork in whole or in part in any medium belongs to the owner of the copyright. So if you have signed away your copyright and then see posters, books, postcards, greeting cards, calendars, sweatshirts, caps, etc., being produced using your artwork, you could be deprived of additional income. You also would be prohibited, in the future, from using your own images which appeared on this artwork.

With patience and a willingness to learn from each other during the negotiation process, we will develop a more professional approach to our business.

- Wendy Black-Kostuk is a fibre artist who has had several commissions

### BIBLIOGRAPHY & RECOMMENDED READING

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2. *Commissioning Visual Art: A Guide For Artists And Patrons* - Alberta Culture, 1984, Alberta Cult., Visual Arts, 3rd Floor, Beaver House, 10158-103rd St., Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0X6, (403) 427-2031
3. *Saskatchewan Visual Arts Handbook 1994* - CARFAC Sask, 210 - 1808 Smith St., Regina, SK, S4P 2N4, (306) 522-9788
4. *How To Survive As An Artist* - CARFAC Manitoba, 22 -100 Arthur St., Artspace, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1H3

### Correction

"The Blue Show" review Breaking Borders, *The Craft Factor*, Winter 1996/97. In reference to the modernist painter—Klein—the name was misspelled as Kline.

Apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.

# 1997 Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival

Friday, July 18  
10:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Saturday, July 19  
10:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Sunday, July 20  
11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

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

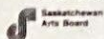
"Dimensions '97"  
Open Juried Craft Exhibition

Battleford Arena & Alex Dillabough Centre  
Battleford, Saskatchewan



SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL

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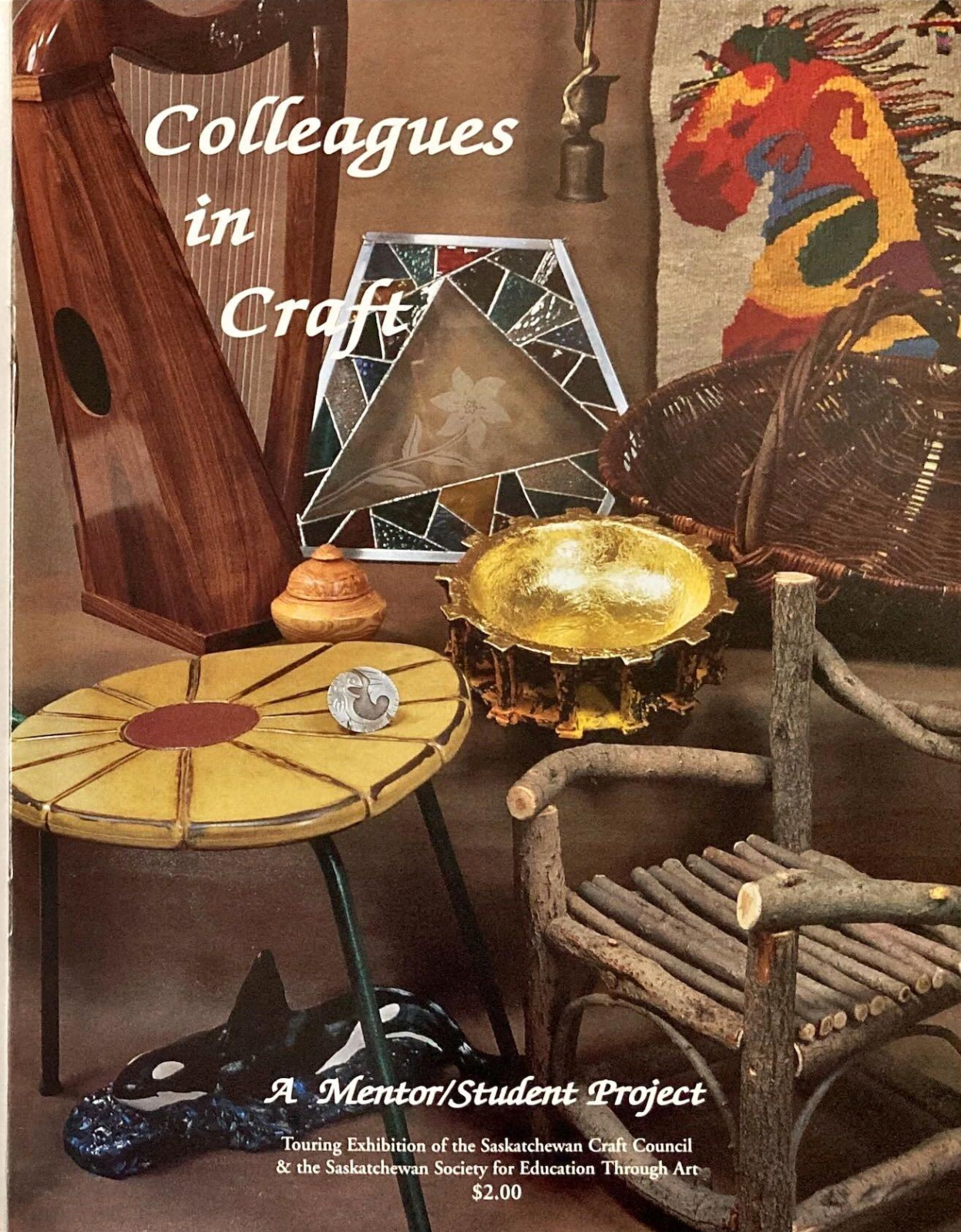
TOWN OF BATTLEFORD



LOTTERIES

THE CRAFT FACTOR • SPRING/SUMMER 1997

# Colleagues in Craft



## CALL FOR ENTRY

11th ANNUAL  
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A Mentor/Student Project

Touring Exhibition of the Saskatchewan Craft Council  
& the Saskatchewan Society for Education Through Art

\$2.00

# Colleagues in Craft

## A Student/Mentor Project

Teachers and role models are important in any career. In a field such as crafts, where many work in isolation and often start with little or no business experience, they are very important. Many young people today experiencing the rapid growth of technology and the pressures of corporate culture have few opportunities to engage in a creative, one-on-one learning process. With this in mind, the Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC) and the Saskatchewan Society for Education Through Art, (SSEA), together with an Artist in Residence grant from the Saskatchewan Arts Board, established The Student Mentorship Program in 1996.

For the Mentorship program, the SCC identified twelve craftspeople, working in a variety of mediums throughout the province, who were willing to work with high school students over a period of time, one on one. SSEA identified teachers willing to help in the selection of students to work with the craftspeople. The Mentor (craftsperson) and Mentee (student) arranged a compatible schedule and format and spent a minimum of 40 hours working together. The Mentor exposed the Mentee to the many facets of their craft. This included design, tool use, safety and marketing. Each created a piece reflecting their time spent together and the results are the items comprising the Colleagues in Craft exhibition.

The enthusiasm of the Mentors at the beginning (and more importantly at the end) of the program was quite infectious. The sharing of knowledge with one another is part of the craft culture and it is this sharing that is evident in the exhibition. Mentors move in and out of a person's life and the unique experience of the Mentorship Project will surely be one of the more memorable ones for the students involved.

Thank you to all those who participated and thank you for being part of a process that hopefully will continue to evolve and enhance the quality of our lives in the future.

- Ivan Olynyk  
Mentorship Project Coordinator

1. D. LYNNE BOWLAND  
Bradwell, SK  
*Sheep: Outstanding in  
Their Field* 1997  
leaded glass (barn board  
frame); fused glass mosaic  
42x70x2

2. TRICIA STRUNK  
Saskatoon, SK  
*Untitled Flower* 1996  
glass panel  
copper foil  
sandblasted  
47x46x.5



1

Due to the distance between our respective residences, my student, Tricia Strunk, a grade 12 student from Clavet School, came and stayed with me for a week in August. Since glass is rather complicated and time consuming, I decided to limit the teaching part to basic sandblasting for surface design and the copper foil technique for panel construction. The week that Tricia spent in Bradwell was just after I had returned home from the Saskatchewan Craft Council sponsored wood-working symposium at Emma Lake, "Conservation & Collaboration." With the conservation aspect of that symposium in mind, both Tricia and I designed pieces that were made out of scrap, wherever possible. My project piece is an extension of a show I had in October, 1996, at the Hand Wave Gallery in Meacham, "Broken Glass" (fused glass mosaics). Most of the pieces for that show were either in the design stage or finished while Tricia was there, so I thought that it was an appropriate style of work for me to include in the mentorship exhibition.

There are three mosaic panels in the piece. With the exception of the sheep, which are made out of commercial crushed glass 'frit', all the small mosaic pieces were cut out of scrap fusible glass. After the pieces were fused they were put together with lead came. The branches on the trees are sculpted lead overlay. The frame is part of a naturally weathered pallet, and the hanging hooks are made out of forged steel. My husband did both the frame and the hooks.

I think the Mentorship Project was very worthwhile and would like to see it continued in the future.

► D. Lynne Bowland, Mentor

# Bowland & Strunk

I was given the chance to learn about glass art through an art class I took last year. I love doing art and thought the Mentorship Project would be fun. I talked with Lynne Bowland and made plans to participate. When I arrived, at Lynne's studio in Bradwell, she showed me around and the pieces she had made. Then she showed me the kind of work that I would be able to do. She demonstrated how to use a glass cutter and how to make certain pieces. Within the next two or so hours I had my first two works completed. They were a butterfly and a heart. I really enjoyed doing this.

The work was complicated, but I just took my time and completed everything.



2

The piece that I made for the exhibition was a picture of a flower that I like to draw a lot. Ever since I was a little girl it was a special thing that I enjoyed doing, so I decided to put the flower in the centre, on a triangle, to make the piece look interesting. On the border I arranged the colours in order from light to dark so that it gave the picture some light in certain spots.

I really enjoyed the project and will never forget the fun or what I learned. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

► Tricia Strunk, Student



3. ELIZABETH CLINE  
North Battleford, SK  
*Memories of Hector Shiell, friend to the trees & friend to me* 1997  
willow, bent high bush cranberry twigs;  
built forms to bend & dry supports  
oiled with tung oil  
65x54x30

4. HEATHER KONOPELSKI  
North Battleford, SK  
*From Daddy's Hands* 1997  
willow  
52x45x35

## Cline & Konopelski

I made my piece "From Daddy's Hands" to look like an antique chair. The feelings behind it are that a father wanted to make a gift for his little girl, and all he could afford were a few screws and nails. So with his creativity, love and imagination, he built the chair for his daughter. It's not perfect but the love behind it fills in all the spaces.

► Heather Konopelski, Student



This was a new experience for me as I have never before been a mentor (or for that matter, a "mentee"). And although in this case I was the mentor, it's hard to say who learned more—me or my "mentee." I suspect it was me!

An important aspect of my learning had to do with my role as mentor. If I were to get another chance to do this, I think I would be more demanding. I would have higher expectations of my student to practise what I have shown her and to produce more. And that means I would give assignments for her to complete on her own in between our one-on-one sessions. And that means I would need to have a more organized teaching plan. Having said that, the most personally satisfying thing for me is that I have seen my own skills in working with wood evolve—mainly through the challenge of creating a piece for the exhibition. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to expand my skills as teacher and artisan.

For my exhibition piece, I chose to work with spring willow that was peeled and dried and has been patiently waiting for me to transform it into whatever it would be in its next life. And here it is! A...what? Well, throughout the process, I saw books on it...so perhaps it is a bookshelf. And now that I think of it, that would be fitting, because besides loving trees, my friend Hector Shiell loved knowledge. Only the skeleton of this "bookshelf" was completed when I heard the news that Hector had died. As I worked to complete it, giving it character and warmth and beauty, my thoughts were with Hector and the many good times we shared. Willow loves water and my tears watered it as I worked. Hence the chosen title. ► Elizabeth Cline, Mentor

5. RICK DIXON  
Saskatoon, SK  
*Fireplace Set* 1997  
mild steel; forged  
70x26x30

6. LEE PEPPLER  
Saskatoon, SK  
*Bough Bell* 1997  
mild steel; forged  
32x6x6

## Dixon & Pepler

The craft of the blacksmith consists of the working or forging of hot iron — taking an unyielding, cold piece of metal and shaping it with the use of fire, hammer and anvil. Plain iron and steel can be transformed into objects of beauty and function, limited only by one's imagination.

This work incorporates most of the basic blacksmithing steps I teach my students. It was chosen to show a balance of the practicality and the beauty of hand-forged iron. The leaves and animal heads reflect my deep love of nature and are included in my work whenever possible.

I began working with Lee by teaching him the basic steps of the blacksmith's craft. This included the use of tools and the basic forming techniques. As well as hands-on forge time, I included the business operation of Dixon Forge, which consisted of demonstrations at craft fairs and the marketing of our products.

There is an old saying "the life so short, the craft so long to learn". The hours we spent together only scratched the surface of this ancient craft. In spite of the time factor, Lee was able to produce several pieces including candlesticks, jewellery, tools and his project piece, the bell.

The main goal of Dixon Forge is to create pieces that are both decorative and functional. The projects Lee and I have produced for this program meet this criteria. The selections include many of the basic blacksmithing techniques such as drawing down, fullering and twisting.

I have found the Mentorship Program to be an interesting and educational process. I hope my efforts have inspired Lee to look at the future of iron work and the continued preservation of the craft. ► Rick Dixon, Mentor



The bell was chosen for my project because it included many of the blacksmithing steps I have learned. It also allowed me to use my interest in art.

The way I got started in the Mentorship Project was by my Dad coming up to me after school one day and asking "how would you like to be a blacksmith?" He explained to me how it would work, and I thought that it would be a great skill to learn. The first day, Rick Dixon showed me around the shop. The next couple of lessons we ran through the steps of the ancient art of blacksmithing (eg. fullering, tapering, bending, squaring, rounding, and making delicate things out of a dense material). The Dixons taught me that practise makes perfect. In blacksmithing, trial and

error is how you learn to be quick and fast. And I made errors, over and over, until I got it right. If I could sum up the experience in one sentence, it would be: Blacksmithing taught me to be patient, attentive, safety conscious and to enjoy myself.

► Lee Pepler, Student

7. DAVID FREEMAN

Tugaske, SK  
Acoustic Guitar: *Mortality*,  
*The Dawn of Time* 1996  
wood, brass pearl abalone, lacquer  
42x15.5x5

8. BRANDI ROLFE

Eyebrow, SK  
*Barb Wire* 1997  
walnut wood  
76x24x26

# Freeman & Rolfe

I regularly teach people to build instruments and never cease to enjoy the process of guiding them through the difficult parts to revel in the glorious accomplishments. For most students, building an instrument becomes more than just that. It transforms them. It is a major point in their life. The mentorship was different as it was a day here and there instead of a seven-week immersion. This required refocusing every time we got together. It also meant we got to know each other over a six month period and the changes we were going through. The friendship I developed with Brandi over this time is good. The perspective of her youth was good to hear.

Teaching this program was different than my usual methods in that we only covered the practical work involved in building instruments. We only touched on the acoustic-

structural theories and balances if necessary. It was "this is what you are going to do using these tools like this". I was

impressed with Brandi's ability to grasp the different applications of tools and proceed with the work. She did a fine job.

Considering her inexperience she did a fabulous job. I commend her on the finished product.

This program reaffirms my belief it is possible to teach someone with little experience and achieve great results. It takes me further in this concept. It is possible to cover the practical aspects without great depth in design theories and still achieve a quality experience.

David Freeman, Mentor

I truly enjoyed this opportunity to get to know the woodworking business, as well as to get to know my mentor David Freeman. In this program, I learned how to do a number of different things such as scrape, sand, carve, cut and how to make the wood look its best. I also came to appreciate the great amount of time and effort it takes to build a harp. Dave also taught me how good an artist you can be determined by the way in which you hide or cover or improvise with your mistakes. You really need a large amount of patience to do this kind of work. I am glad that I had the chance to experience this kind of thing on a hands-on basis. The knowledge may come in handy in the future.

While I was working on my harp, I saw David with other students that take his courses. I saw how he related to them and taught them the basics, as well as to express themselves in their work. He is a great role-model for others in that he illustrates that anything is possible in this life... you have to reach out and get what you want. I enjoyed immensely this brief moment of my life that was dedicated to making an artistic impression of life itself.

Brandi Rolfe, Student



9. SANDRA LEDINGHAM

Prince Albert, SK  
*Cups For A Pronunciation Series 'Winter Blues*,  
*Caribbean Green's Cup & Saucer #5* 1997  
low fired clay/glazes  
23x23x12

10. ADDIE SUCHORAB

Prince Albert, SK  
*Shadows & Reflections* 1997  
low fired clay, glazes, gold leaf  
9x29 dia.

# Ledingham & Suchorab

There is much in the affirmative to be said regarding the Mentorship Program. Following are some comments, thoughts and perhaps, questions. Firstly, reflecting on the past year of "Mentorship", has been the experience of building a new friendship (with Addie). There's something very refreshing about sharing time and experiences with someone who is eager and full of anticipation about all that lies ahead. Secondly, I've been pondering the issue of "influence". Where does it begin and end? How potent is the power of "suggestion"? What about the infinite balance between watching the "school of hard knocks" teach its lessons versus coming to the rescue to "fix it". There is also the delicate question of introducing "new ideas" with introducing things that strike a comfort zone. There is, I believe, a necessity to "stretch", to expose and to encourage our mentees to move from where they currently are to explore the unexplored or what's the point? All of this said, at the end of the day the mentees must feel an "ownership" of their projects. Here I see the Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC) and the Saskatchewan Society for Education Through Art (SSEA) having made an important distinction. The choice of seeing this program not as an apprenticeship but as a mentorship. Thus, placing an emphasis on individual exploration rather than "cloning".

Also, Addie and I have been discussing the issue of process versus product. How valuable or how necessary is it that this program culminates in an exhibition piece? Does this pressure add to process or is it a detriment? Do we (as mentors and as the public) make some assumptions about what this kind of exhibition might (or should) be? Should it reflect process (with all its inherent shortcomings) or should it be about a refined "quality" exhibition piece? Should the exhibition in some way include some steps along the way?

Our conclusion, I think, was something like this: Although this goal, of culminating the project with one piece that reflects the best efforts of the mentee seemed to dominate much of our focus and time, it is perhaps a valuable education. It formed a complete experience rather than only parts of one. It embodies a full spectrum of experiences; from excitement to disappointment, of annoying but necessary details, of fantasies and frustrations, and of persisting to overcome challenges. In the end, there is product, but without a doubt there has been much process.

The Mentorship Project in which I participated was a very fulfilling experience. I was given the opportunity to work one-on-one with a clay instructor and it was a wonderful way to explore the medium. I learned the thought process and the technique of working with clay. This taught me how to develop an idea and express it in clay. Having a dedicated mentor work with you gives you someone to look up to. Having direct guidance and attention resulted in my having a positive outlook on my creations. I enjoyed being around the students at the SIAS ceramic studio—they had a positive influence on my pieces. Having been around a studio environment will be helpful in making a decision about what kind of post secondary education I will pursue. The process of producing an exhibition piece as part of the project was one of the greatest experiences introduced to me. This was a very exciting component; I had never experienced this aspect of expressing my ideas. Lastly, this experience has given me the confidence to pursue clay as a medium of my expression.

"Shadows and Reflections" for me holds my experiences from Europe, my feelings of unfolding adventures, and my aspirations of the future. I've chosen the bowl form in this piece to signify that the Coliseum is more than architecture. It holds history, emotions, life and ritual. Addie Suchorab, Student



My work of the last couple years uses cups and saucers as a vehicle. Cups as a metaphor—containers not unlike our bodies, but also cups as ritual objects. Cups have celebrated occasions of all sorts throughout every epoch of history. They have been the silent witness to the most wicked of collaborations and the most intimate of dreams. They reference success and defeat; they salute and grieve our milestones. They are a voyeur and sage, symbolizing our hope and our most poignant realizations.

Sandra Ledingham, Mentor

11. SALLY MILNE

LaRonge, SK  
*Birch Bark Bitings* 1997  
 birch bark  
 approx. 18x21 (upper picture)  
 approx. 21x11 (lower picture)



11



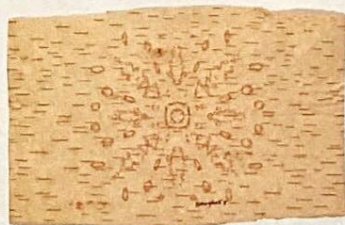
The ancient people of the Woodlands were a nomadic race so everything they made had to serve a purpose and all the art they created had to serve a function. Birch bark bitings were made of the thin layers of bark from the birch tree, which were folded like the paper used to cut out snowflakes, and bitten to make designs such as flowers, bees and dragonflies. The birch bark bitings were then painstakingly copied into moose hide with a feather quill and animal blood. The design was the base for moose hair tufting and porcupine quill embroidery, and the birch bark bitings were usually discarded after use. Usually, the Woods Cree families that lived and travelled in a group had a small number of birch bark biters who were considered experts. Northern beadwork still bears the flower designs influenced by birch bark bitings. In the Cree language birch bark biting is called "design bite".

12. HONEY RATT

LaRonge, SK  
*Birch Bark Bitings* 1997  
 birch bark  
 approx. 27x17 (upper picture)  
 approx. 19x15 (lower picture)



12



# Milne & Ratt

When I was a young girl, I wanted to learn as much as I could from my parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. They were always such willing and patient teachers. Teaching the Cree Culture Program has renewed my interest in the traditional art forms of birch bark biting, moose hair tufting, and porcupine quill embroidery. I love having the chance to pass these abilities to anyone with the interest to learn.

Exposing my work to the public has caused me conflicting emotions. In my traditional upbringing, it is not seemly for a Native person to publicly display their creative and artistic abilities, but I want so much, through my art, to introduce everyone to the quiet, unrelenting pride of my people. To my ancestors, I apologize for flaunting the things you taught me, but I too, have changed with the times.

In terms of the Mentorship project, I must commend my student, Honey Ratt, on her artistic ability. She is way beyond those of her age group. Honey is an exceptional young woman, it's an honour to be her mentor.

Whatever profession she chooses to undertake in the future, she will be a success. **▶ Sally Milne, Mentor**

I like learning about birch bark biting. My mom is keeping some of the birch bark bitings. She is so proud of me. Sally is a good teacher, I liked working with her. **▶ Honey Ratt, Student**

13. SUSAN ROBERTSON

Outlook, SK  
*Raspberry Parfait* 1997  
 cone 6 porcelain, polychromatic  
 acrylic glazes; handbuilt/slab  
 42.5x28x10.5



13

The tradition of craft is one where master teaches apprentice. I have always believed that part of being a potter is the responsibility to pass on that knowledge, to be a teacher of the next generation. When the Mentorship Program was announced, I felt that I had to be involved. I recognized that participating in this project would not be an easy one for me. I am extremely possessive of my studio space and the thought of sharing it with someone was, shall we say, not a welcomed one. I decided to view it as a necessary evil and approached this project with a positive frame of mind. I was very fortunate in being able to find an excellent "mentee" in Laura Stevens. Not only is she a talented individual, she was able to cope with me and my idiosyncrasies. We managed to work well together and have become good friends. There is a saying, "one who teaches, learns twice". This was certainly true in our case. While Laura came with little clay experience, she also was undaunted by it; not knowing that some of the things she tried should have been impossible. By seeing the possibilities through her eyes, I was able to open mine wider. The teacher has been taught!

While the majority of the work that I do at present is production of handbuilt functional vessels, my true love is sculpture. Last year, I finally took time to produce an exhibition which was all sculptural pieces. It was a very successful show and it has given me the confidence to continue in this vein. The form that I have been exploring in sculpture is the cat. I'm not really sure where, why, or how I became so engrossed in doing cats. All I really know is that they are a lot of fun to do, and that they allow me to be as whimsical and expressive as I want to be. For the future, I plan to continue both with my functional and sculptural work. I hope to expand the sculpture to other forms and other media; if nothing else—more bright, happy and fun pieces.

**▶ Susan Robertson, Mentor**

14. LAURA STEVENS

Outlook, SK  
*Breathing Space* 1997  
 cone 6 porcelain, polychromatic  
 acrylic paint, nail polish; handbuilt  
 16x24x47



14

Under the mentorship with Susan Robertson, I learned a lot about pottery, responsibility and life. Susan was more than my teacher, she was my friend. When we started the program, she taught me the basics: underglazing, glazing, to name a couple. My first deed was the never-ending task of wedging clay, but after that we dove right in with sleeves rolled up and ready to go. We made molds with my dad's power tools and used the molds to make some of my first few pieces. This was fun. We experimented with a lot of molds and moved on to working with coils and the extruder, sculpture, and many other variations of working with clay. I took a road trip with Susan to the community college in Prince Albert and sat in on a class taught by Charley Ferrero.

Susan and I had a lot of fun together and we both wish the program had run longer. I thank the Saskatchewan Craft Council for the wonderful experience. **▶ Laura Stevens, Student**

**▶ Laura Stevens, Student**

**▶ Susan Robertson, Mentor**

15. WILMER SENFT

Swift Current, SK  
*Almost Curly* 1996  
 wood, curly maple, purple heart  
 13x17dia.

16. KELLY FORNESS

Swift Current, SK  
*Success* 1996  
 wood, ash  
 12x11dia.

# Senft & Forness

Throughout the course of the Mentorship Project, I taught my student, Kelly Forness, the different components of a lathe and their respective functions; the varied types and names of chisels, how and why they are sharpened in certain ways; how to sharpen the many necessary tools; and the kinds of finishes available. I also spent some time stressing the safety aspects of the work.

I told her I did not want to make a clone out of her—I would teach her how to run the lathe, then it was up to her to use her imagination. It was then time to mount a piece of work on the lathe.

After instructing Kelly as to the preparation and mounting of the wood on the lathe, I helped her guide the chisels to obtain the right angles. After about ten hours of working at this, she started to make very good cuts. Kelly is very enthusiastic and did not have much trouble learning this.

In the hours that followed we made bowls, goblets, boxes, etc. Kelly was able to make the different items using the tools with confidence. She also has a very good eye for shapes, and often would make changes which I liked. **Wilmer Senft, Mentor**



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When I first started my exhibition piece, I had some things to sort out: such as, what size I wanted it to be and what type of wood I wanted to use. Wilmer assisted me in the wood department and together we picked a fine piece of ash.

We started the bottom and made a quick cut line of the bowl and then put it in the microwave to dry.

As it was drying, we made the lid. We made it too small so we got a new piece of ash to work with. Wilmer helped me with some pointers here and there, but then let me do all the carving. We dried the lid as well and then fine tuned both the lid and bowl. I then took the bowl home and stained it with some oil and stain that Wilmer gave me. **Kelly Forness, Student**

17. PATTI SOPATYK

Saskatoon, SK  
*The Shaman* 1997  
 metal  
 4.8x2.8x.1

18. MIKE TESSIER

Saskatoon, SK  
*Diable des Poissons* 1997  
 metal  
 5.7 round

# Sopatyk & Tessier

The majority of my training has been in the Southwestern United States. Because of this, as well as influences from my childhood, I have developed a love for petroglyphs and rock paintings done by early Native Americans. My pendant titled "The Shaman" is loosely based on part of the Bird site paintings, of Horse Canyon, Utah.

Metal is hand-cut, filed, formed and buffed using traditional jewellery making techniques. The surface designs are created by cutting each individual design out of heavy metal and then embossing them onto a higher gauge (thinner) metal. An oxidizing solution is applied to all metal parts and removed with steel wool so that the embossed areas are darker in colour. The bronze and nickel silver pieces are joined using handmade copper rivets. Surgical steel wire is fusion welded onto the back of the piece and formed into a ring. A metal finishing solution is applied to the entire piece to protect against scratching and tarnishing.

I've truly enjoyed being a mentor. I value the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship. Ten years ago, when I first started creating jewellery, I had a few great people who freely shared their knowledge with me. This shared knowledge helped me move forward at a much quicker pace than if I had trudged along alone.

Sharing knowledge with Michael Tessier was a learning experience for both of us. Michael is very creative and has lots of design ideas, which is great. I know that participating in this program has been very rewarding for both Michael and myself. We have established a link through the Mentorship Program which I'm sure will continue into the future.

**Patty Sopatyk, Mentor**



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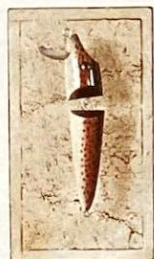
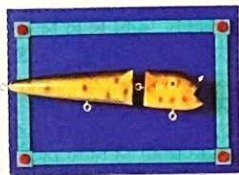
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I decided on this design because I like fish a lot. The title of the piece came to me when I was done, because I thought he looked like a mean fish. Metal is hand-cut, filed, and buffed using traditional metal-working techniques. Scales, fins, fish features are all created by using embossing techniques—wire is cut and formed to create shapes and then embossed onto base metal pieces. An oxidizing solution is applied and then removed with steel wool so that all of the embossed areas appear darker. The top and bottom metal pieces are then soldered together. The entire piece is then re-buffed.

During my five months with Patti, I learned the tricks and techniques of making handmade jewellery. I learned a great deal about the various metals and the different tools to use. I had a lot of fun working with Patti and the staff at Earthworks Jewellery. I am very happy to have had the chance to be a part of the Mentorship Program. **Michael Tessier, Student**

19. DOUG TAYLOR & JASON PURDY  
Livelong, SK  
*Trophy Lures* 1997  
turned poplar, M.D.F., acrylic paint  
commercial hardware  
47x156x13 (3-part piece)

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My student and I had difficulty getting together regularly because of busy schedules. We started by talking about design issues and I gave him reference materials for study. He returned soon with a sketch of his project and was ready to go. After planning construction details and making a few more drawings, we produced four finished items.

Jason worked solo on his chair with a few tips and a tiny sample of method from me.

The chair was taking more time than expected. With time running out, I wanted to show Jason the use of a few more important tools, so I started the three lures. This let him try wood turning basics and learn more about air brushing and finishing techniques. The time was gone before we could generate anymore stuff.

In the middle of our experience, Jason and I travelled to Saskatoon for both public receptions of "Early Saskatchewan Woodworkers" plus other shows at the Mendel. I think this was an eye-opener for Jason. We also had the travel time to finally relax and visit. I think we both enjoyed the experience but couldn't believe how fast one can use up forty shop hours!

Jason was a gentleman in the shop and worked hard and well. I'm surprised and glad he still has ten fingers, though! Good work Jason.

I wanted to show my student that accessible and inexpensive materials can be manipulated by common tools to produce exciting, functional, decorative objects. The chair is a difficult item which has to meet a number of functional rules and still have appeal. The big lures represent the other side of the woodworker's art where hours can be devoted to something simply decorative and fun or even narrative. **► Doug Taylor, Mentor**



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I had an excellent time in the Mentorship Program. I learned about some technical aspects of craft production and about the life of an artist. I learned about the diversity and scope of the production process and what satisfies a maker while he tries to keep production goals and sales in mind.

We found time to explore creative directions after learning basic use and maintenance of common shop tools. I got to work in wood and metal as I built my chair and learned great ways to prepare and finish both materials. I learned that it requires patience and practise to become good at working with these materials. At times I found I didn't have this patience and would have to shift to different parts of the project.

I'm happy to have been selected for this program and hope to look to some form of apprenticeship in a future job. I had an extremely good teacher who showed me different techniques and answered all my questions. I hope that this program continues so others have a chance to be introduced to craft as a career. **► Jason Purdy, Student**

## Taylor & Purdy

21. DENNIS TKACHUK  
Milden, SK  
*Untitled* 1997  
willow  
63x70x70

22. HOWARD HURLEY  
Milden, SK  
*Untitled* 1997  
willow  
38x60x45

## Tkachuk & Hurley

We have some 18 species of willow here in Saskatchewan. For basket weaving, it is best picked in the Fall/Winter months when the sap has flowed back down into the root system. Our resources are renewable and the process is environmentally friendly.

These 2 baskets are comprised of: frames made from diamond willow and a combination of brown river willow interspersed with redosier dogwood. While many people enjoy using these baskets for decorative purposes, they are ruggedly constructed and are made to "tote" stuff. Willow baskets are best maintained by a semi-annual oiling (light mineral oil suggested) to prevent the willow from completely drying out and becoming brittle. I regularly teach a series of Beginner/ Intermediate/ Advanced Basket Workshops, and as such, have an appreciation for what "works" in passing my craft on to others....These classes typically involve groups (10 to 20 at a time) and have proven to be very successful.

Notwithstanding this, I found participating in the Mentorship Program to be both an enjoyable and a unique experience. Working "one-on-one" with Howard afforded us the opportunity to get much more in depth in our pursuit and allowed Howard to complete a fairly complicated style of basket.

Howard is a fast learner, a very good worker, and is of personable character. I am very proud of his accomplishment and we've decided to extend the lessons beyond the allotted 40 hours. If requested, I would be willing to continue my participation in this program next year. **► Dennis Tkachuk, Mentor**

I really enjoyed learning how to make a willow basket. Dennis was a superb teacher, I really learned a lot. I would like to say there was a certain part I liked the most when I was making my basket, but there isn't. I enjoyed every bit of it. I will look forward to learning more in the future with Dennis.

I am seriously considering taking up basket weaving as a hobby and maybe more. For one thing it keeps me busy, I can make a little bit of money on the side, and most of all it is so much fun. Once again I would like to congratulate Dennis on his excellent teaching skills.

**► Howard Hurley, Student**



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23. MADELAINE WALKER  
Christopher Lake, SK  
*Growth* 1997  
fibre - cotton warp, wool  
weft  
tapestry weaving  
75x52

24. TOBIE ALLMAN  
Prince Albert, SK  
*My Painted Pony* 1997  
fibre  
tapestry weaving  
51x35

23



*The mentorship program was wonderful! It has taught me about the Saskatchewan Craft Council and to appreciate the diversity in art and culture. In this program I have studied the history, art form, technique and business ventures of weaving.*

*My personal instructor was Ms. Madelaine Walker, a most gifted teacher and weaver. We spent many happy hours researching, evaluating, and applying the styles and types of weaving. Each culture offers a different pattern, distinct textile, or method of weaving. There is something that cannot be taught or learned: that is, the love of weaving—it seems to develop as one becomes involved in the actual process. Within each project there is part of you, a dream, a belief, a colour, or a particular feel of the fibre. I have experienced that which gives life to a piece of work. I was able to take my training at Woodland Institute in Prince Albert, in the weaving department. There I spent time, talking to and observing the works and technique of many weavers. It was of value to see their personal projects develop. From Madelaine and other weavers I learned to understand, respect and admire their form of art. I now know and value the time, energy and love that goes into every piece.*

*The idea for my exhibition piece comes from the movement of colour and life: like the carousel ponies revolving up and down, around and around in the circle of life.*

*I thoroughly enjoyed the mentorship experience. My student was dedicated, enthusiastic and willing to meet challenges. It was rewarding to see the progress. At the beginning, Tobie knew nothing about weaving, but by the end of our time together, she had learned a great deal and had developed the confidence to make her own decisions about colour, design, etc.*

*We were most fortunate in being able to meet in the weaving studio at SLAST. Not only did Tobie see my work, but benefitted from being exposed to many other weaving activities.*

*This exhibition piece expresses my feelings about the mentorship experience. The seed is planted and with time and nourishment, it grows and blooms.*

► *Madelaine Walker, Mentor*



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# Walker & Allman

Published for the exhibition "Colleagues in Craft - A Student/Mentor Project" organized by the Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC) and the Saskatchewan Society for Education Through Art (SSEA).

The SCC's mandate is to promote, support and develop excellence in craft. The SSEA's mandate is to promote the value of visual art experiences; and to advocate for visual artists education at all levels.

Thanks to the many volunteers in both organizations.

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Front Cover:  
Works by student participants in the Mentorship Project  
Dimensions throughout the catalogue are in centimetres.

Back Cover:  
Mentorship Project students and mentors at work  
(photography by project participants) -  
a) Tricia Strunk, student, glass  
b) Addie Suchorab, student;  
Sandra Ledingham, mentor, clay  
c) Michael Tessier, student, jewellery  
d) Rick Dixon, mentor; Lee Pepler, student,  
blacksmithing  
e) Tobie Allman, student, fibre  
f) Laura Stevens, student, clay  
g) Brandi Rolfe, student, wooden instrument making

The SCC would like to thank all mentors for their participation in this project. A thank you is also extended to the SLAST Woodland Institute Applied Arts Department, Prince Albert, for providing studio space.

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## Itinerary

Saskatchewan Craft Gallery  
813 Broadway Ave., Saskatoon  
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Lloydminster Allied Arts Council  
BARR Colony Heritage Cultural Centre  
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Maple Creek Arts Council  
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Yorkton Arts Council  
Godfrey Dean Cultural Centre  
July 1 - 23, 1998

Station Arts Centre Seager Wheeler Place, Rosthern  
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Rosemont Art Gallery (Neil Balkwill Centre)  
2420 Elphinstone St., Regina  
October 1 - 23, 1998

Prince Albert Council for the Arts  
John Cuelenaere Library  
December 1 - 23, 1998

Battlefords' Allied Arts Council  
January 1 - 23, 1999

"Colleagues in Craft" toured by OSAC  
(Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils)

# Exhibitions



LEFT *Through Time and Space* (1996), wool and mixed fibre tapestry, by Karen Leitch. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

show held in conjunction with the international symposium Making a Place for Tapestry in Vancouver. After moving to Victoria in 1990, Leitch enrolled at the university there, where she graduated with a BFA in painting in 1994.

In "Paths Through Time and Space," she juxtaposes a single large-scale, wall-mounted tapestry with fourteen smaller oil paintings. "Both bodies of work are inspired by my interest in how we perceive and relate to the landscape," she says, "individually, through direct experience, and culturally, through learned attitudes and concepts." In executing her imagery, Leitch works largely from photographs— in this instance, of an early spring trip she took to Greenwater Lake and Cypress Hills Provincial Park. But she doesn't just copy the photographs. Instead, she combines them with her own subjective memories to create ethereal meditations on her solitary interaction with nature. Viewing the exhibition as I did in late autumn, the images of leafless trees and snow crusted ground inspired foreboding thoughts of the months of frigid discomfort that lay ahead. Spring, of course, holds a different connotation as a harbinger of growth and renewal. Regardless of which season the images evoke in the viewer, Leitch's decision to depict the landscape in a transitional phase between the two solitudes of summer and winter draws our attention to the cyclical rhythm of life on this planet.

Small in scale, the paintings have a snapshot feel to them. By focusing on wilderness detail, as opposed to the sweeping vistas we ordinarily associate with the genre of landscape painting, Leitch presents viewers with a dichotomy. On one hand, she decontextualizes the landscape, offering a fragmented view akin to that which a tourist might experience through the lens of a video camera. But the closely-cropped images also evoke a sense of extended meditation, as it is only by immersing oneself in the landscape that one is able to notice botanical and topographical detail. Leitch's interest in landscape painting was sparked by her move to B.C., where she was overwhelmed by the grandeur of that province's mountains, forests, lakes, rivers and ocean beaches. By concentrating on the Saskatchewan landscape here, she reminds viewers of our own province's intrinsic beauty.

Leitch's paintings, for the most part, are workmanlike, but unremarkable. What really caught people's attention when I was in the gallery was her tapestry *Through Time and Space* (1996). Made from wool and mixed fibre, it consists of ten overlapping landscape images arranged collage-like in four rows of three, two, two and three panels each. By adopting a tight weave pattern, she was able to achieve a remarkable degree of verisimilitude.

As a medium, tapestry is defined by the geometric precision of the loom. By presenting irregularly-shaped images woven from loose sketches through a moderately intuitive process, and framing the images by an equally irregular cream-coloured border that ran three-quarters of the way down the left side of the tapestry and half way down the right side, Leitch expresses her determination not to be bound too tightly by technical and mathematical constraints. Replicating the same mix of forest images as in her oil paintings— birch and poplar trees interspersed with patches of leaf and rock-strewn ground and the odd signifier of human intervention such as

## Dialogue between Two Media

BY GREG BEATTY

**Karen Leitch**  
 "Paths Through Time and Space"  
 Traditions Handcraft Gallery, Regina  
 October 24- November 27, 1996

At first glance, tapestry and oil painting would seem to have little in common. But in designing their tapestries, many fibre artists do preparatory pencil and watercolour sketches. This gives them a facility with manual imaging that, in Karen Leitch's case, led her to develop an interest in oil painting. As a founding member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council and the Regina Weavers and Spinners Guild, Leitch has been active in tapestry for twenty-five years. She has participated in a number of group exhibitions, including Canadian Tapestries, a 1993 juried

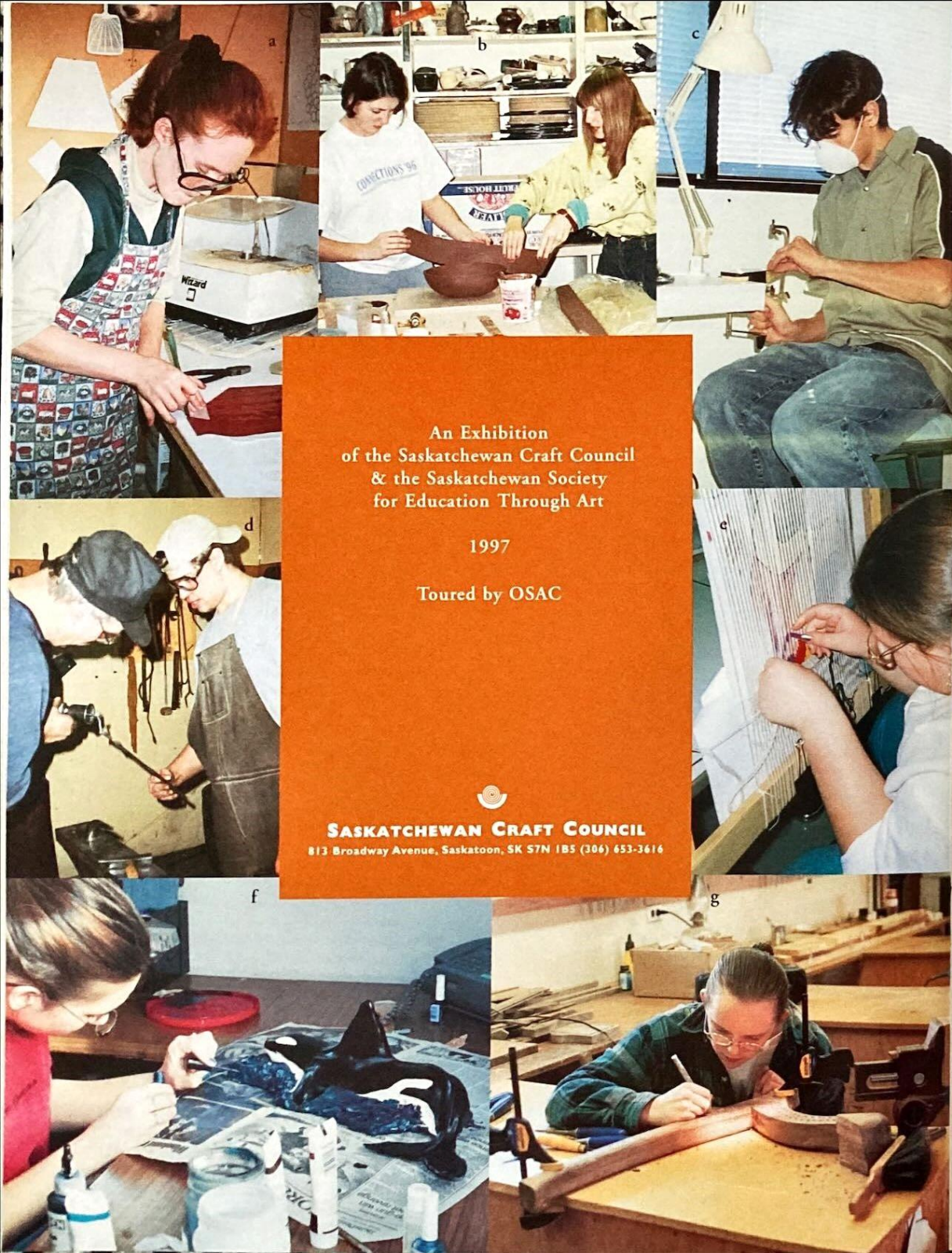
An Exhibition  
 of the Saskatchewan Craft Council  
 & the Saskatchewan Society  
 for Education Through Art

1997

Toured by OSAC



**SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL**  
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ABOVE *Boxing the Compass I and II* (1996), oil on canvas, by Karen Leitch. Photo by Available Light, Regina.

a picnic table or snow fence—she establishes a dialogue between the two media.

The dialogue exists partly in the studio execution of the tapestry and paintings. As anyone who has ever worked with textiles knows, weaving is very labour intensive. "Even working at a reasonably steady pace," notes Leitch, "a tapestry like *Through Time and Space* would have been on my loom for over a year. Painting, in contrast, is a much more immediate medium." By taking time away from weaving to paint, Leitch was able to break the monotony of the former creative process, while at the same time having the satisfaction of seeing a project progress from the initial stage of conception through execution to fruition. The working methods are also different. Weaving, while physically demanding, is stationary, repetitive and contemplative, while painting is more dynamic, as one is always moving back and forth from the canvas to assess the quality of the brushwork.

The dialogue also includes an aesthetic component. In addition to offering viewers an array of wilderness images, Leitch's tapestry also operates on a formal level through her juxtaposition of light-coloured (warm) and dark-coloured (cool) panels. This creates a perceptual tension in the viewer. Indeed, when we move close to the tapestry, its visual cohesion disintegrates. It is only by stepping back that the images become recognizable again. Leitch duplicates this perceptual anomaly to two sets of paired paintings *Subject-Object Split I and II* (1996) and *Boxing the Compass I and II* (1996). Both depict medium and close-up images of women's embroidered slippers set against a brightly patterned background. In symbolic terms, the slippers can be read either as representing the female body in the interior landscape of the home, or as an index for the absent body in Leitch's exterior landscape paintings—the woman presumably having removed her slippers and donned boots to hike in the woods. But by pairing medium and close-up images of the

same tableaux, Leitch creates a similarly disorientating effect as when we step close to her tapestry. The figurative character of both the tapestry and painting also cause us to question the notion of authenticity. In terms of veracity, painting ranks below photography. While the latter may be accepted as evidence in court under certain controlled circumstances, the former is usually regarded as a little more than a rough approximation of the subject it purports to represent. Tapestry lacks this referential history. Yet in the hands of a skilled weaver like Leitch, it does possess the potential to index reality.

The final aspect of the dialogue Leitch has established is ideological in nature. In the past, a binary disjunction has existed between tapestry (craft/female/decorative) and oil painting (art/male/representational). While I am not convinced that this disjunction continues to operate with the same degree of virulence as it once did, it may be that Leitch has encountered isolated pockets of resistance to her fibre practice in her artistic career. Certainly, in Saskatchewan, public and private galleries, inspired by the work of fibre artists such as Ann Newdigate, Martha Cole, Patrick Traer and Heather Cameron, have been quite open to granting tapestry equal standing with painting as an art form. In assessing Leitch's effectiveness as a fibre artist and painter, she is obviously much more at ease in the role of the former than the latter. Given her long association with tapestry, and her relative inexperience with oil painting, this is to be expected. And to the extent that her tapestry overshadows her painting, she offers definitive proof of that medium's power to provoke an emotional and intellectual response in the viewer.

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*.

## Promise of the Prairies

BY DOUGLAS BENTHAM

### "Early Saskatchewan Woodworkers"

Curated by

Leslie Potter  
Saskatchewan Craft Gallery, Saskatoon  
November 22, 1996 to January 21, 1997

Dan Ring  
Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon  
November 1, 1996 to January 5, 1997



ABOVE Early this century, a Doukhobor family poses for a photograph in their native village of Slavanka, in the Transcaucasian part of Russia, prior to some of their members departing to Canada. Photo reprinted from *Plakun Trava - The Doukhobors*, courtesy of the writer.

#### Introduction

Imagine this. It is the late 1880's in the square of a small village in England or Germany or Ukraine. You are standing in front of a poster along with your neighbours. "FREE LAND IN THE CANADIAN WEST" declares the headline. The poster speaks glowingly of the benefits: "The Homestead Act accords every male over eighteen years of age, or a person who is sole head of a family, an invitation to file homestead entry on one quarter section, or 160 acres, of surveyed agricultural land. Pay a \$10 entry to the local Dominion Land Agent". And then get working! "You have six months to take possession of your plot and to make improvements in the form of residence and cultivation. At the end of three years, upon proving you have resided on the land and cultivated it (a minimum of 15 acres), you are granted a deed of ownership for it". You imagine yourself with map in hand locating your own surveyor's pin, reading off the numbers. You dig through a handful of high grasses, grabbing a handful of rich earth, pressing it to your nose, and taking a long exhilarating sniff.

During the homestead period (from the completion of the Canadian

Pacific Railroad in 1885 until the outbreak of World War II in 1939) hundreds of thousands of settlers were enticed to the prairies by the promise of a new life in a new world. Although the largest identifiable linguistic group was that of English-speaking immigrants from Great Britain (or their counterparts moving farther west from eastern Canada or north from the mid-western United States) a 1929 map identifies areas in which "Austrians, Belgians, Czech-Slovaks, Dutch, Danes, Hebrews, Hungarians, Hutterites, Icelanders, Italians, Letts, Mennonites, Mormons, Negroes, Nestonians, Norwegians, Poles, Roumanians, Ruthenians, Swiss, Swedes, Scandinavians and Ukrainians settle in significant numbers." This map fails to identify the 7500 Doukhobors who arrived as a single group in 1899 from the Caucasus Region of southern Russia. And although not at fault for excluding the Chinese (they were not farmers) it should be noted that a significant number of Asian immigrants settled in the Canadian West after completing their duties as labourers building the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Although immigrants with means (mainly English-speaking) were able to bring a substantial amount of tools, implements and furniture most newcomers, especially those fleeing persecution or serfdom in eastern Europe, were allowed to bring only belongings that could be easily carried. Outside of trunks and boxes and the personal effects such containers could hold, many everyday objects had to be left behind. It was understood that raw materials would be readily available for building houses and furniture and that store merchandise would be available to those with money or for barter.

For the immigrant furniture maker means and historic roots would inevitably determine the form of the finished product. Although some woods were cut locally, most were brought in from other regions. The harder woods, where a special colour or grain was desired, were reserved for special pieces. Those softer woods such as fir, spruce and pine were the materials of choice for those of limited means and the immediate need for domestic furnishing. Colour, applied in a wide range of hues and using a variety of techniques, was used to give a piece a distinctive finish and identity. The degree of which to assimilate into the new Canadian cultural fabric (an urgency for some, a reluctance for others) also had its influence on the immigrant carpenter. By the late 1890's conservative opposition was anxious to discredit the ruling liberals and saw Clifford Sifton's immigration policy as a means to that end. "The Anglo-Saxon race" declared the Victoria Colonist "is the best sort of settler for the North West", instead of "the semi-civilized races, who have had the manhood ground out of them between the millstones of Imperialism and Militarism". British craftsmen were, in very short time, producing commissioned furniture in traditional, formal styles for church, school and government and furnishing their own homes with store-bought items. But for reasons of nationality, language, faith and cooperativeness most non-English speaking groups (even those of considerable numbers such as the Ukrainians) chose to establish close-knit communities on the prairies that were often indistinguishable from those in their homeland. In turn they held firmly to traditional structural and decorative craft styles. The weight of the unique social, political and economic climate that prevailed during the homestead period should have bearing on the manner in which the exhibition under discussion is viewed.

Gallery viewers were provided with a cross-section of Saskatchewan's rich woodworking heritage in the exhibition "Early Saskatchewan Woodworkers." Coordinated by Dan Ring of the Mendel Art Gallery and Leslie Potter of the Craft Council Gallery, the show was based on research carried out by Saskatchewan writer, Judith Silverthorne.

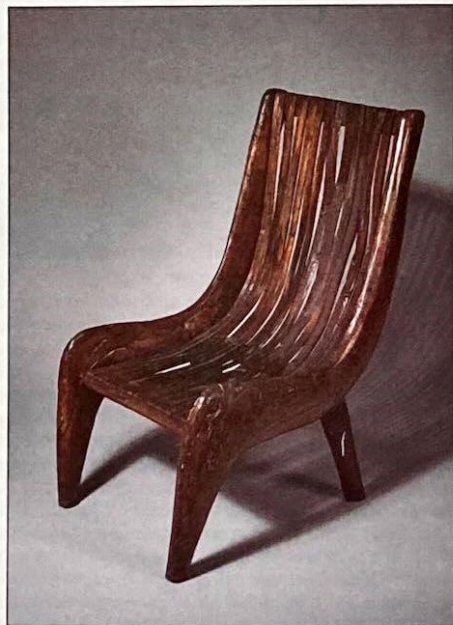




The display was divided proportionately between the Mendel's larger main gallery and the Craft Council's more intimate space. Pieces on display ranged from the staid, provincial styles of the Anglo craftsmen to the exuberant folk styles of Europeans. There were formal chairs commissioned for bishops and politicians, desks, lecterns, hymn boards and fonts through to rustic tables, chairs, benches and cupboards. The Mendel space gave the individual pieces more breathing room but, where this is desirable to isolate and emphasize fine art objects, it tended to cast an aesthetic light under which many were unable to measure up. On the other hand, the Craft Council space created a more domestic ambience in which the objects felt more naturally situated, more in-scale with original intent.

Although the display conveyed a real sense of warmth through handmade ingenuity, and included some fine individual pieces, it also exposed its difficulties. To reflect the breadth and demographics of immigrant woodcraft the research could have extended beyond this group of identifiable carpenters to discuss and represent more concisely the vast community groups in which style, technique and form flowed from deep-rooted traditions and convictions but not necessarily from one recognizable hand. To then highlight this research in an art gallery simply brings too much scrutiny to bear on the relative quality of the objects chosen. But this said, the exhibition must be seen as a success from its broad reception by both the public and the media and, even more so, for the focus it has given to a vital part of our indigenous heritage—one often overlooked or inadvertently destroyed.

Of the English-speaking furniture makers, David Caldwell's carefully crafted willow furniture stood out in sharp contrast to today's 'bent-twig' offerings. His delicate settee from Meadow Lake rewarded careful scrutiny with its offhandish visual affect. Also, of the production woodworkers, Olaf Pearson, a Swede from the Broadview area, was a standout in the display. His finely crafted tool



**TOP** Child's Bench Bed, c. 1925 unidentified wood, paint. Courtesy of Blanche and Mac Proovich, Churchbridge, SK, Olaf Linus Pearson (Swedish, 1868 - 1961)

**ABOVE** Chair, c. 1926-27, unidentified wood. Courtesy of Prince Albert Historical Museum, Prince Albert, SK. The sides of this chair were made from a naturally crooked tree found near Waskesiu Lake.

## Being Human

BY EVELINE BOUDREAU

### "In Our Blood"

Stephanie Bowman

Nora Jacek

Lindsay Embree

Saskatchewan Craft Gallery, Saskatoon

January 24 to March 4, 1997

Love for a particular kind of work can be a passion—it can be "in the blood". "In Our Blood" was an exhibition of mixed-media work by three Saskatoon artists: Stephanie Bowman, Nora Jacek and Lindsay Embree. This title underlines the importance of their art practice in their lives. The common element running through the work of these three artists is the psychological, emotional and physical expression of being human. Everywhere in this exhibition, the figure is an important expressive element. All three artists refer to the human body, but differently. For Jacek it is a surface for narrative, for Embree a mechanism for an identity search, and for Bowman an emotive container for her social concerns.

Inclusion of naïve carving provided a nice foil to the more ambitious furniture projects. Harry Coombs, an Englishman from Maymont, made whimsical animals to amuse his neighbours. And amusing they were in this display: his anatomically "incorrect" monkeys on trapezes garnered chuckles from everyone who viewed them. The sole female represented was Onesime Dorval, a Quebecois who taught in the Battleford area. Her birchbark flower bouquets at the Mendel were beautiful in their intricate detail. Arguably the greatest immigrant folk woodworker was Wasyl Zubenkoff. A Doukhobor from the Kamsack area, his work was conspicuously absent from both the research and the exhibition. But a finely-carved Doukhobor table at the Mendel, and a "little people's cupboard" at the Craft Council, represented this Russian pacifist group admirably.

For the most part, the eastern European craftsmen deserved to be represented by better examples (perhaps this writer's bias) but there are many exquisite pieces available in western Canadian collections from which the organizers could have drawn had they had more detailed information on these sources. But that said, an anonymous Doukhobor spinning wheel (of which there was one in every immigrant household) beautifully summed up the spirit of this exhibition. Affectionately crafted by a husband for the scrupulous use by his wife, it poignantly recognizes a universal truth that echoes throughout the discipline of craft—that the making of things, regardless of time, function or necessity is an act of joy, honesty and of love.

Douglas Bentham is a sculptor from Saskatoon. He has been researching, collecting and curating exhibitions on ethnic crafts for the past twenty-five years.

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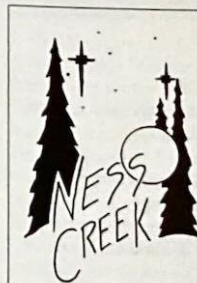
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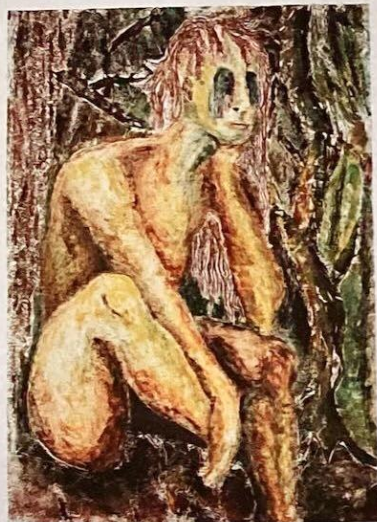


Nora Jacek has been working with the figure for many years through drawings, paintings and printmaking. She has recently moved from the exact rendering of the figure to a more mannerist, abstract representation in her search for a narrative expression. Jacek's printmaking is mostly about rendering atmosphere, mood, and capturing a moment in time. Her image manipulation is achieved with layered colours, varied ink intensity and removal of ink. Combined with her intuition and spontaneity, her results activate the viewers' emotions. For her, the body, which does not need to be realistically represented, becomes a focal point in her expression. For instance, in her monoprint, *If Rubens had been a printmaker*, rich and warm sienna colours are skilfully used, showing a portion of a woman's body as seen from the back. In a waterless lithograph, *Dreaming of the Dark*, the legs and one arm of a human body are shown, without defining its gender. In the collograph, *The Dryad*, a pensive female in lush greenery is depicted. Jacek told me that she has used this image for a few years as a self portrait, projecting in it a primal side of herself. She maintains that this is the way she can get in touch with her own uninhibited inner self.

Embree incorporates photographs and drawings into her prints. With her, we see realistic figures, but we soon realise that the form acts as a vehicle for a deeper search. The people represented are elements of an identity search that Embree has undertaken within her family. In 1991, she went to England with her mother for one purpose: to contact relatives. Embree's piece called *Familiar Faces* (1995) signals her first pictorial representation of her ancestral search. She places photos of herself and her mother with those of her great-grandparents and grandparents. In the five lithographs on fabric composing *What do you remember?* Embree introduces us to herself and her four brothers and sisters as children. The artist points back to their childhood with photographs and scripts. The other pieces represent each sibling and herself as adults, with their personalities and interests, as seen today by the artist. She shares with the viewers numerous family portraits and history, in a search for her own identity.

Bowman's work is not about individuals, but about a state of being and social constraints. It relates to ideas and concepts of the fragmentation of body and soul that she perceives in our modern society—silences, blindness, wounding (or as Bowman says,

RIGHT  
*The Dryad* 1997  
 Collograph;  
 printed with oil  
 based etching  
 inks on  
 Somerset Satin  
 100% cotton  
 rag paper,  
 collaged  
 handmade  
 paper;  
 76.2x111.8 cm,  
 by Nora Jacek.



BELOW *Head of a Woman as 'Shelter'* 1996  
 Ceramic, sawdust firing; raffia,  
 handmade paper,  
 mixed media, steel;  
 92.5x32.5x35 cm,  
 by Stephanie Bowman.



LEFT *Fayes World* 1996,  
 Printmaking; 100% cotton, rayon & linen  
 blend, thermal transfers,  
 Vanson & Handschy  
 lithographic ink; 2 colours printed  
 onto fabric; waterless litho  
 (aluminum plate), thermal transfers  
 onto fabric, machine & hand stitched,  
 91.5x91.5 cm,  
 by Lindsay Embree.



## A Sculptor to be Remembered

BY SHEILA ROBERTSON

**Prairie Sculptors Association**  
 "Second Biennial Invitational Sculpture Show"  
 Dedicated to the Memory of Bill Epp  
 Frances Morrison Library Gallery, Saskatoon  
 September 27 to November 3, 1996



ABOVE *Blanket Bill #1*, bronze, approximately 15  
 cm high, by Bryan Lane.

"broken-ness"). Her work consists of nine human heads, each one made of clay, raku or sawdust fired. They vary in height from 40 to 53 inches, each on its own pedestal or gallery plinth. Eight are female and are black for anonymity, for suffering. The one male head, *Head of a Man Sleeping*, is sawdust fired and more colourful. For Bowman, each of her figures is a vessel, full of feelings and emotions.

A second element shared by the three artists is the interest in material and in process as a means of enhancing expressiveness. They emphasize that their artwork requires an important knowledge and control of their medium in order to evoke an expressive quality. They also have great respect for the experience and time required to produce art, and consider physical labour to be a necessary creative element. For the viewer, the end product is what counts, but for Bowman, Embree and Jacek the process remains integral, even after the pieces are declared finished. All three artists are interested in researching and exploring both ideas and media. Each has one main medium—printmaking for Jacek and Embree, clay for Bowman—but their main concern is the message in relation to the media.

Embree is entering an interesting ground using thermal transfer on fabric. In her waterless lithograph, *Faye's World*, Embree explored a new media: printmaking on fabric. She wanted to translate her sister's life in a way that represented her as a quilt maker. Curious about thermal transfer, Embree didn't hesitate to reach out and learn this technique to satisfy her expression. To represent her brother David in *The Trapper*, she uses overlapping fabric, organza and cotton. She thereby layers meaning: David's occupation, lifestyle and the mood of a winter scene. In her printmaking, Embree says that she is receptive to "the good and bad surprises" of the process.

Bowman is also searching, experimenting with her media in relation to her message. Since 1994, she has been making clay figures adorned with other media. At first, they were completely made of clay, while in this exhibition, the clay work is generally reserved for the heads. In *Head of a Woman as Shelter*, a return to mostly clay is interesting and successful. The notion of shelter or dwelling could be as conceptual as the words Spirit, Breath, Outcast, History, Widow, which are in the names of her other pieces... but is it? The notion of shelter also conjures up an image of a physical structure for the body. Even though the heads are physically imposing, showing strength in their poses, they have in their names and concepts such lightness and fragility. Close-up, they ask for compassion.

In her firmly grounded exploration of the body, Jacek is open-minded, willing to let things evolve. At times, she might even let the technique and process resolve the outcome of an image. In the lithograph, *Only the Devil Laughed*, through her many layers of colours, a mysterious figure energetically bursts out of the red. She told me that although her patience was put to trial, she enjoys the challenge of a piece like this, which pushed her emotionally and technically.

In this current exhibition these three artists are together in the present time. However, reviewing their works shows that each has her own approach to the element of time. I feel that they form a "trio in time": Embree searching for her roots in the past, Jacek communicating with her present environment, Bowman worrying about our society's future. Beyond their attachment to the figure and their preferred medium and practices, these three artists retain individual concepts in their own personal search. Together they have given us fascinating messages about what is "in their blood".

Eveline Boudreau is a ceramist living in Saskatoon and currently studying at the University of Saskatchewan.

Even a casual visitor to Saskatoon could not fail to note the influence of sculptor Bill Epp on the city's public art. While the longtime artist and teacher died in September, 1995, reminders of him are everywhere, in his commissioned bronze monuments.

In particular, anyone strolling along the riverbank will encounter a number of his representational pieces: the statue of former governor general Ramon Hnatyshyn; the circular monument to playing children; the depiction of Gabriel Dumont on horseback. There are also the bronze doors of the Ukrainian Museum of Canada and, across from Midtown Plaza, an image of a young John Diefenbaker selling a newspaper to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. These are but a few of the works left by Epp, who was, unofficially, Saskatoon's sculptor in residence.

He also had a huge impact on the art community, particularly upon emerging artists. He taught sculpture in the art department

LEFT *Bill* 1996, Re-bar and plasticine, 68 x 50 x 50 cm, by Hans Holtkamp.



at the University of Saskatchewan from 1967 until his retirement in 1993. During that time, he encouraged hundreds of students to get in touch with their creativity and to try three-dimensional artmaking. Many of them became friends and colleagues, working at Epp's foundry near Martensville, and joining the Prairie Sculptors' Association, which he spearheaded in 1981.

It is this same group which most keenly feels his loss, and it was natural the members should dedicate their biennial invitational show to Epp's memory. It is also appropriate that the beloved sculptor should be the subject of—or at least the inspiration for—many of the works. Indeed, the exhibition is largely figurative.

Dominating the show is Hans Holtkamp's life-size, unfinished plasticine bust entitled *Bill*. Holtkamp has credited Epp for giving him confidence and encouraging him to become a full-time artist. Certainly, this is a fond portrayal of the sculptor, with his sleeves rolled up and his hands cupped before him as though demonstrating a technique. The work manages to capture not only the man's appearance, with his lean face and the long ponytail under the ever-present beret. It also conveys something of his intensity, his earnestness and, above all, his warmth.

This is a very accomplished sculpture, and I look forward to one day seeing it cast in bronze.

Another, quite different representation of Epp by Bryan Lane is the equivalent of a quick sketch. This small bronze, only perhaps 15 cm tall, is also instantly familiar as a lanky, somewhat stooped figure leaning into his stride, coffee cup in hand as though he just can't wait to get where he's going. The title, *Blanket Bill # 1*, makes reference to Epp's "blanket horse" series from the 1970's. These works also concentrated on line and composition rather than minute details.

There are several works in this exhibition with a spiritual emphasis. In fact, the whole tone of the show, if not of mourning, is definitely subdued. Characteristic of this is Ian Jones' poignant bronze work entitled *Crossing Over*. The tabletop-sized piece depicts a tall figure passing through a gate, a clear metaphor for the transition from life to afterlife.

While more abstract, Kim Ennis' wooden wallwork also suggests transcendence. Entitled *Angel Path #4: Map of the World*, this is a tablet, hollowed in the middle and curving outwards, delicately carved in silver maple and black walnut. The Braille-like raised lines and images imply a maze or chart. Like a transcription in an ancient language, it beckons, promising illumination if it could but be deciphered.

At first glance, Bris Flanagan's beautifully carved mahogany wallwork, *Circle Dance*, seems among the more light-hearted works in the exhibition. At least, the implied circular movement of the dolphins surrounding the central figure of a squid seems playful. Maybe, on second thought, the creatures are engaged in a life-and-death struggle.

Other works emphasizing the crossover between woodwork and sculpture are Jamie Russell's carved, painted coffee table, with its sentinel-like images of red birds; and Michael Hosaluk's wooden bowl, *Remembering Bill*. The latter work, painted solemn black and brown to resemble bronze, suggests a burial urn. The surface of this elegantly shaped, small-necked vessel is etched with parallel lines which, at certain points, suddenly stop. The reference to a life cut short is clear.

A figurative piece by Rick McConnell was perhaps influenced by a romantic bronze sculpture of Epp's depicting the heroine of Tennyson's poem, *The Lady of Shalott*. Epp managed to make the

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RIGHT *Circle Dance* 1996, Mahogany, 1.8 x 29.5 x 61 cm, by Bris Flanagan.



pedestal. The pedestal, marked by deep cracks, is set in stone. The head is carved on the left side and the right side is essentially flat, with details suggested by stain in a turquoise shade. This untitled work creates an interesting interplay between two- and three-dimensional work, leading one to contemplate the true nature of sculpture.

*Lake Nymph*, a ceramic wallwork by Chris Riley, is an androgynous-looking torso decorated with diagonal wavy lines. The glaze has been applied patchily so that rough, deep brown matte areas show through. In addition, thin strips of moose leather are wrapped and tied around the left shoulder and fashioned into a netting around the midriff, from which it dangles in strands like fringe. This embellishment bothered me. The Wild-West evocation seems dissonant with the character of the classic nymph.

By contrast, Elizabeth Yonza's elegant, sensuous female torso appears more self-assured. Carved from black Belgian marble, the work, *Maternity*, has a shiny surface and rippling lines. The rounded surfaces of the breasts and belly set off the flat, unfinished surface of the back.

Sarah Afseth takes a more abstracted approach to the female form in her small bronze, *Society's Shell*. While faceless, the work is wonderfully expressive with its armour-like ripples folding and unfolding to convey form. The implication is that exteriors are misleading. Who knows what's inside the shell? There's a lovely patina in this work, with dark, coppery tones yielding nuances of blue.

There are several sculptures made from found objects, including Jim Korpan's rather spooky, wild-eyed owl, *Iron Raptor*. Two others invite audience participation. Susan Kalapaca's mixed-media installation, *Time is Ticking*, includes a working music box, paper cutouts, a light, and an upturned sink. The theme of the biological time clock is reinforced by a central image which resembles both the clapper of a bell and a very sterile-looking phallus. Don Hefner's assemblage of found objects, mostly from farm machinery, is titled *Prairie Captain's Wheel*. The central form is of a steering wheel, like that of a ship. The wheel, which does (with some effort) turn, is studded with Prairie artifacts, those coloured glass insulators from telephone poles.

Noelle Lucas explores the stereotype of an isolated, dangerous predator in her powerful sculpture, *Lone Wolf*, created from densely packed and twisted barbed wire. The colour and texture of the material perfectly suits the stark, ghostlike image. Even the shadow it casts is eerily compelling.

Another piece demanding examination is Doug Hunter's birch and steel assemblage entitled *Interior Juggling*. A layer of steel unexpectedly enfolds a wooden stump of birch, and within a vertical notch in the stump is a line of five wooden balls, resembling peas in a pod. The concept is simple, and yet it is rich with images of unfolding, ripening, maturing. It seems to point to the artistic process, too; the search for balance, for articulation, for some impulse to emerge into a concrete gesture.

This exhibition, which also includes wooden building blocks and a papier mâché globe covered with images of fish, is decidedly uneven, deliciously diverse, and often quite inventive. I am pretty sure Bill, who was so encouraging of all artmaking endeavours, would have loved it.

Sheila Robertson is a freelance art critic from Saskatoon.

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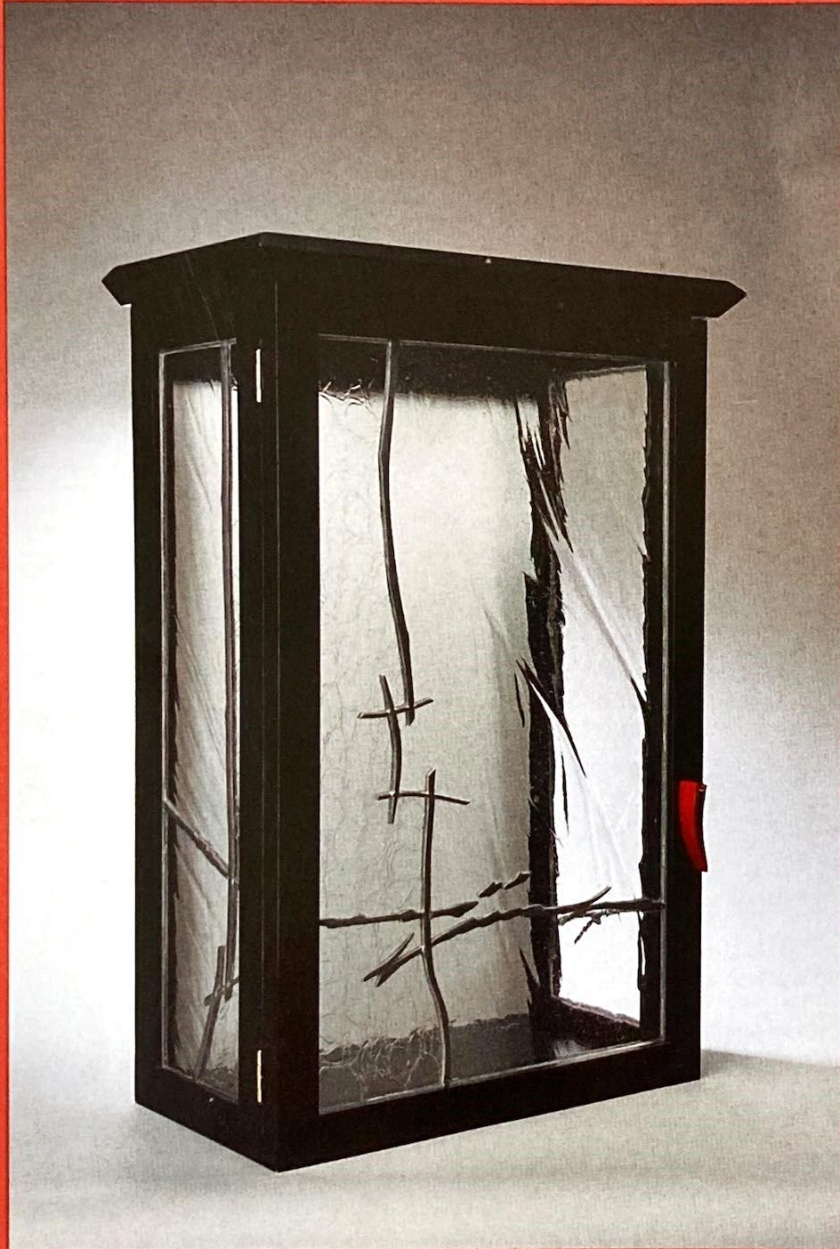
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